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'Human trafficking happens in our own community': Janet Campbell on charges laid on Tuesday

By: Angela Peacock
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One day after [charges were laid](#) for human trafficking and child exploitation, Janet Campbell from The Joy Smith Foundation reacts to the news.

"We were very pleased to see that these individuals have been charged, one of the things that we know from all of the files that we work with in our office is oftentimes these cases are unreported," Campbell who is the President and CEO of [The Joy Smith Foundation](#) says.

Campbell says that while she hears about trafficking happening everyday, others may be surprised how common it is. "When people ask if human trafficking really happens in our own community, yesterday is an example of, yes, it absolutely does. And this is something we see in our work every day. But I think the story yesterday really highlights and puts a spotlight on the fact that this, this crime is happening in our own neighborhoods right here in Manitoba."

She says that there are some warning signs that others can be on the lookout for to spot human trafficking.

"You'll notice changes in the child's behaviour or how they dress. It could be a change in the fact that their grades are suddenly starting to drop. It could be their attitude towards certain activities or their community, and these changes are indicators that something could be going on and oftentimes it's really important for people to pay attention to new individuals that come into that circle of influence. Oftentimes these cases are connected to somebody new coming into the picture in the child's relationship."

Campbell says about what happened on Tuesday, "What we know is that a woman befriended these children and through that, they were then introduced to other individuals. That's a very common pattern. So really, paying attention to new influences and new connections in your child's lives is important."

She says that if there is suspicion of something being off, to "pay attention to your instincts. Yesterday, a community member noticed things that just seemed off to them, and they reported it to the police. And this is exactly what we encourage people to do is to trust their instincts. It's okay to be wrong and have that information over to the police and allow them to do their investigations, and it's always confidential. So people don't have to be concerned, and those tips are so important for our law enforcement agencies to receive from the public and oftentimes can be a real game changer in connecting the dots and some of the investigations."