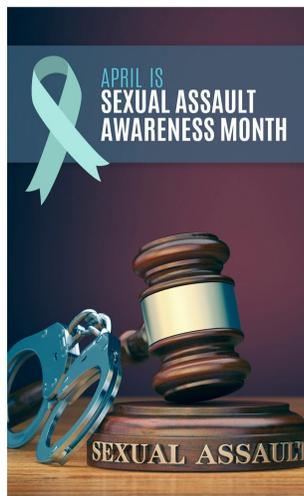




## Amara Observes Sexual Assault Awareness Month & National Crime Victims' Rights Week in April



April 2021 marks the official 20th anniversary of Sexual Assault Awareness Month (SAAM)! The theme, slogan, resources and materials for the national SAAM campaign are coordinated by the [National Sexual Violence Resource Center](#) each year with assistance from anti-sexual assault organizations throughout the United States.

Amara joins the many organizations and advocates around the country in increasing awareness about sexual violence, as a public health, human rights and social justice issue. Sexual assault, as with sex trafficking, requires a firm commitment to increasing awareness and advocating for the resources needed to support survivors in their journey towards healing.

Click [here](#) to learn more about the history of Sexual Assault Awareness Month.

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The 40th anniversary of National Crime Victims' Rights Week will be commemorated on April 18–24, 2021. Amara Legal Center joins organizations across the country in raising awareness of victims' rights and services, and honoring victims and the professionals who serve them.

In recognition of this observance, Amara is pleased to participate in a [Facebook Watch Party](#) sponsored by The Safe Sisters Circle at 5:00pm on April 22, 2021. Amara Attorney Christine Greene will join Executive Director Alana C. Brown of The Safe Sisters Circle and the DC Forensic Nurse Examiners to address: "Keys to Survival: Tips, Tools and Your Rights in Overcoming Domestic Violence."

Mark your calendar and check out The Safe Sister's YouTube channel for replays.

Click [here](#) to learn more about National Crime Victims' Rights Week.



# Amara in the News: Washington Post

"Even when I do everything right, that criminal record comes back to slap me in the face," says Amanda.

The *Washington Post* included Amara in a powerful article on March 24, "Sex trafficking survivors are treated as criminals in Virginia." The article discusses the additional victimization criminal records cause for sex trafficking survivors. Check out the article and learn more about the efforts of the Virginia Coalition Against Sex Trafficking and Amara to have Virginia enact legislation to provide criminal record relief that would give survivors a chance to live self-determined lives.



Click [here](#) to read the full article.

## Amara Client Success Story: Removing Legal Barriers - One by One



Twenty-eight-year old Julia is a survivor of sex trafficking. She contacted the Amara Legal Center seeking assistance with changing the last name on the birth certificate of her two-year old, autistic son, Brian.

Julia and George had been in a prior relationship and both believed that George was Brian's biological father. Although Julia and George lived in different states when Brian was born, George traveled to meet baby Brian and signed his birth certificate. Shortly thereafter, Julia and Brian relocated to the District of Columbia. The relationship between Julia and George began to deteriorate and George stopped contributing financially to the costs of meeting Brian's needs. Determined to ensure that Brian would not have to suffer, Julia filed an action for child support.

The court ordered a DNA paternity test and, to both Julia and George's surprise, the results excluded George as Brian's father. Prior to contacting Amara, Julia had contacted Brian's birth state in an attempt to change his last name so that it would match her own. However, even though she had a certified copy of the DNA test results, Julia learned that she would need a court order—specifically stating that George is not Brian's father—in order to legally change his name. This was another barrier facing Julia and her son. However, our attorney quickly assessed the case and determined that filing a motion to disestablish Brian's paternity would be the best course of action.

Although the statutory time period for challenging paternity expired before Julia sought our assistance, our attorney filed the motion and a supporting brief based on one of the statutory exceptions. Upon reading the brief and hearing evidence, the motion was granted and, as a result, Julia now has the court order she needs to change her son's last name. This is yet another example of how Amara is uplifting and empowering our clients through addressing and eliminating the multitude of legal barriers that they face—one by one!

Click [here](#) to learn more about our legal services.

# Amara Intern, Madi Torrez, Heads to Georgetown University Law School

"I was so excited when I learned about Amara's mission -- it lined up perfectly with my own goals. I couldn't pass up the opportunity to work alongside professionals in this field," says Madi Torrez, one of Amara's amazing interns.



Originally from Arlington, Texas, Madi graduated from Johns Hopkins University in 2020 with a B.A. in Psychology and a minor in Pre-Law. As an undergraduate, Madi designed and conducted a four-year study that shed light on the barriers that survivors of sex trafficking face when attempting to access the services they need to heal.

She did this work as a Hannigan Family Wilson Fellow, a program of the Woodrow Wilson Research Fellowship in Baltimore, MD. "I've known for years that I wanted to work with survivors of human trafficking, but I had no idea what that actually looked like. There's only so much I can learn by doing my own research, and I had yet to actually speak to an attorney who had experience in this area," says Madi.

"Working with Amara not only meant that I could gain insight into this particular career path, but I also could actively learn from an incredible team as well. I've been so fortunate that the staff at Amara are not only phenomenal at what they do, but they also are willing to support me both personally and professionally."

After her experience as a Fellow, Madi was committed to eliminating the many barriers for sex trafficking survivors through effective policy. "I knew that I would need a legal education to make this goal a reality, so I decided to take the next step: law school." Madi recently found out that she was accepted at Georgetown University Law School, and all of us at Amara are so proud of her!

After law school, Madi plans to provide legal services to survivors of human trafficking and to help strengthen public policy that empowers and protects survivors. She also hopes to work with tribal governments to strengthen state and federal responses to the issue of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women. "Working with Amara has played a significant role in reinforcing my commitment to this career path. Interning with Amara has given me confidence that my work will not only be instrumental to securing justice for survivors, but also to introducing proactive and effective legislation."

**If you are interested in an internship with Amara,  
please email us at [info@amaralegal.org](mailto:info@amaralegal.org)!**

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You can support Amara's work to provide free legal services to survivors of sex trafficking and individuals whose rights have been violated while involved in commercial sex.

Make a donation today and be a champion for those who need your help to heal and to live a self-determined life.

Click [here](#) to donate now!



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