

# The Facts

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COVERING BRAZORIA COUNTY ★ WHERE TEXAS BEGAN

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## SEEKING JUSTICE

Through a former Brazoria County woman's story, The Facts takes an in-depth look at the struggles of sexual assault victims and the problems prosecuting their cases in this four-part series.

**SUNDAY:** The trauma never goes away

**MONDAY:** 'I don't believe you'

**TODAY:** How to improve the process

**WEDNESDAY:** Assistance and awareness

## Sexual assault cases difficult to prosecute

By ELIZABETH PARRISH  
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Only after trying to take her own life did Amy have the courage she needed to share her memories about what happened in the woods during a summer party.

Almost a year after that night, aided by support from her college roommate and the university's surrounding community, she returned to Brazoria County to tell police about her memories of being pushed to the ground and sexually assaulted during that party. An advocate from the Women's Center and a police officer listened to her story with genuine concern, she said.

But Amy, a former Brazoria County resident whose real name is being

**"We want to make sure our victims get justice. At the same time, want to make sure we never accuse an innocent person for any crime in this county, not just sexual assault."**

— Jeri Yenne,  
Brazoria County district attorney

withheld to avoid identifying other people connected to her case, said she wasn't directed to the help she needed, she said.

### MAKING A CASE

David Moore, who became executive director of the Women's Center



BARCLAY FERNANDEZ/The Facts

**Executive Director David Moore, left, and victim advocate Susan McIntyre discuss operations recently at the Women's Center of Brazoria County in Angleton. Extensive training is required to counsel sexual assault victims.**

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## Party collects items for infants

By MADDY MCCARTY  
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LAKE JACKSON — While many Brazoria County residents shift their focus to giving to larger organizations during the holidays, they have the chance to benefit area women and children by attending Women Building Community's annual Mrs. Claus party.

The annual Mrs. Claus Party, which will be Wednesday at the Lake Jackson Civic Center, helps the group collect supplies for babies and young children in the area, Women Building Community member Vicki Kirby said.

"What we discovered back when we were first getting started is that many of the food pantries don't have things like diapers, wipes and formulas, things that people with infants really need," said Kirby, one of the founders of the group.

This is especially true during the holiday season, she said, so Kirby

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Facts file photo

**Barbara Franklin, left, receives handmade blankets from Patt Bostick, center, and Tom Bostick during the 2017 Mrs. Santa Claus Drive in the Lake Jackson Civic Center.**

## MRS. CLAUS PARTY

4:30 to 6 p.m. Wednesday in the Plaza Room at the Lake Jackson Civic Center, 333 Highway 332 E.

Those who cannot attend the party are welcome to drop off items throughout the day.

Collecting diapers (including larger sizes), baby food, formula and other items needed by families with infants and toddlers.



BARCLAY FERNANDEZ/The Facts

**Matt Cain of the Radical Empathy Education Foundation puts virtual reality goggles on a guest Friday at Lake Jackson Civic Center. The virtual reality program shows the wearer what to look for in the home of a human trafficker.**

## VIRTUAL WARNING

Computer simulation shows signs someone might be sex trafficker

By ELIZABETH PARRISH  
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LAKE JACKSON

When Billy Cain found out his coworker and close friend of 10 years was contacting his children and talking to them in a sexually inappropriate way, he said he felt shocked and guilty. How could someone he trusted do this to his children without his knowledge?

"Long story short, nothing happened to him because he technically didn't cross a line legally, but through this experience, I realized we knew nothing about sex trafficking," Cain said. "My kids didn't. Their friends didn't. And not just about



BARCLAY FERNANDEZ/The Facts

**Kiley Hughes goes through a virtual reality home of a human trafficker to recognize the signs Friday at Lake Jackson Civic Center.**

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**"This is happening inside families. It's not like a panel van that drives up. This slowly creeps into your family."**

— Billy Cain,  
developer of sex trafficking VR program

## Man tries to abduct teen girl

Investigators not sure if 15-year-old on walk was targeted

By MADDY MCCARTY  
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ALVIN — Brazoria County Sheriff's Office is searching for a man who tried to abduct an Alvin teenager during her nightly walk.

The attempted kidnaping happened at 9:20 p.m. Sunday in the 4800 block of CR 392 near the intersection with CR 185, according to a news release from the sheriff's office.

The suspect is described as a Hispanic man in his late teens to early 20s with a medium complexion, no hair, a groomed black goatee and brown eyes, the news release from Sheriff's Lt. Varon Snelgrove states. The man is about 5-foot-6 to 5-foot-10 in height and 150 to 170 pounds, according to the release.

At the time of the incident, he wore a black hoodie jacket, gray sweatpants and black Nike shoes with white bottoms, the release states.

The man got out of a truck and wrapped his arms around the 15-year-old girl before she screamed for help, Snelgrove said in the release. The girl and culprit fell to the ground, where she managed to fight him off, the release states.

Investigators believe the girl was uninjured, Snelgrove said, so the suspect would be charged with attempted kidnaping, a state-jail felony.

The girl walks regularly  
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## African missionary shares how LJ church's support helps

By MADDY MCCARTY  
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LAKE JACKSON — The congregation of Christ Lutheran Church financially supports multiple overseas missionaries, Pastor Paul Geisler said. On Sunday, they got a chance to see what their money funds with a visit from Missionary Pastor Lancelot

Themba Mkabela.

Pastor Themba, pronounced "Temba," is a Madagascar resident and stayed with a couple from the congregation for the weekend, Geisler said. Themba tries to visit all his supporting congregations, but this was his first visit to Texas, Geisler said.

To ensure a true Texas experience, they took

him to eat at Brian's Bar-B-Q in Clute, he said.

This is a little different than the typical cuisine in Madagascar, Themba said. "They eat rice for breakfast, lunch and dinner,"



THEMBA

he said.

Based in Madagascar, West Africa, Themba serves as a regional representative for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, or ELCA, he said. The Lutheran church in Madagascar has more than 4 million members and is rapidly growing, he said.

As part of his position, he visits partner

churches, visits project sites, processes grant funding, recommends scholarships and handles disaster response requests, Themba said.

The ELCA uses donations for development projects in Africa, which aim to give residents access to basic health care,

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