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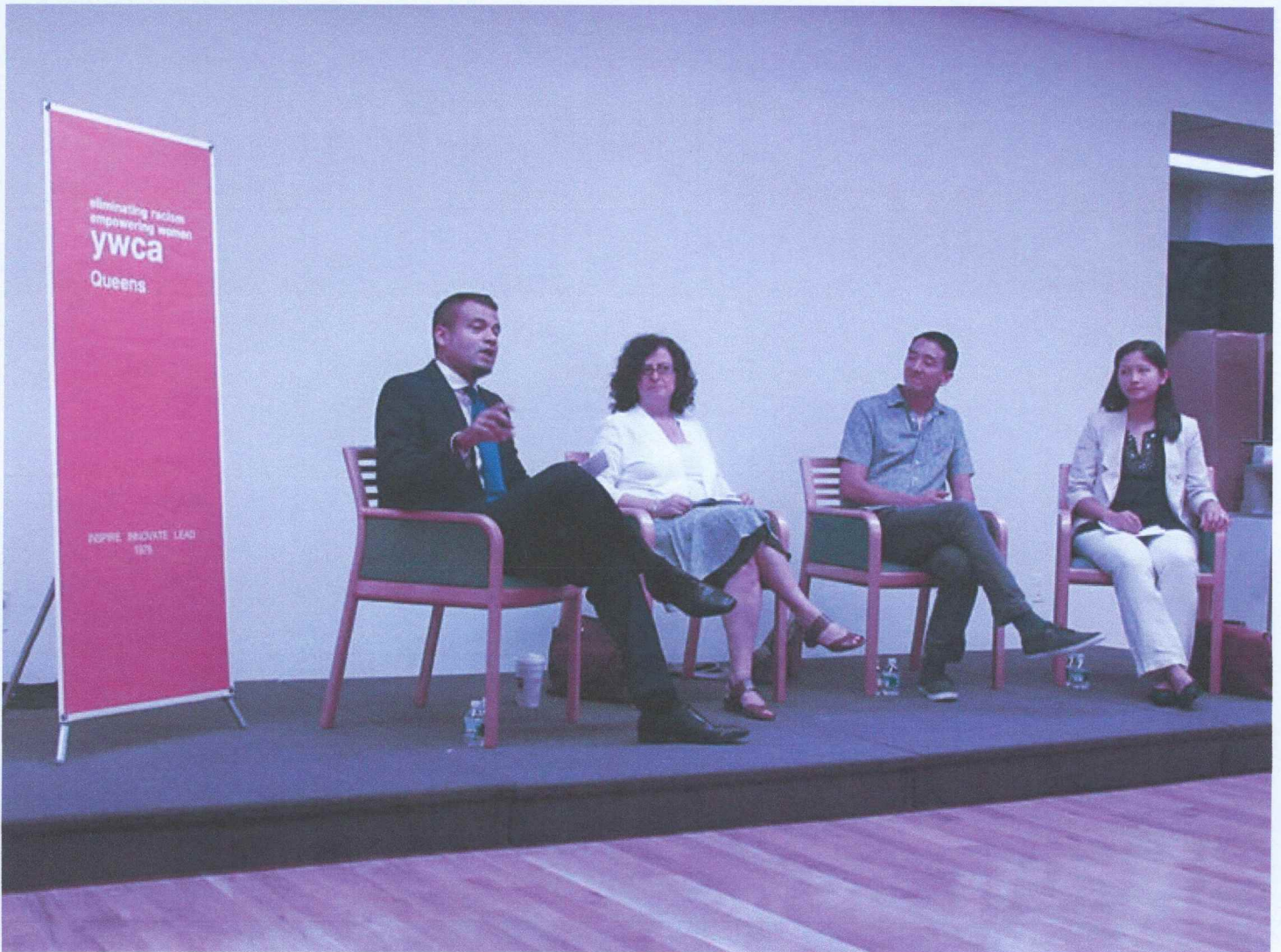
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August 5, 2015 By [Voices of NY](#)

Source: Queens Chronicle

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Human Trafficking in Queens



The YWCA of Queens held a panel on human trafficking led by Kendrick Ross (left), Rita Abadi, Jimmy Lee and Mary Caparas. (Photo by Christine Spagnuolo via Queens Chronicle)

The YWCA of Queens in Flushing, a nonprofit serving low-income and immigrant New Yorkers, organized workshops and a panel discussion July 23 to drive home the message that human trafficking is happening right here at home. In fact, Christine Spagnuolo notes in [Queens Chronicle](#), the U.S. is the “second-highest destination in the world for trafficked women, and most of it happens right here in Queens,” according to experts.

Rita Abadi, Mary Caparas and Jimmy Lee spoke of stories they've heard in their efforts to stop human trafficking and help the victims.

Abadi is a clinician and operations manager for the Mount Sinai Sexual Assault and Violence Intervention Program. Caparas is the manager for "Project Free" at the NY Asian Women's Center, which is a program against human trafficking. She also counsels victims of the trade. Lee is the executive director at Restore, which offers undisclosed safe homes for victims who are able to escape and seek refuge.

"Queens is not only the epicenter for trafficking foreigners in New York, it really is on the entire East Coast," Lee said. "Our partners in other states will often tell us that the victims they take in say they got their start in Flushing or first came to Queens when they immigrated and got involved in the trade."

Panelists emphasized that human trafficking for labor and sex also involves male victims.

How do people from abroad end up as victims of human trafficking in the U.S.? Are victims mostly from abroad or are they U.S. citizens? And why do many women who manage to escape the sex trade end up going back to it? Find out at [Queens Chronicle](#).

Tags: [Flushing](#), [human trafficking](#), [YWCA of Queens](#)

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