

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL - NORTH COUNTY CHAPTER 471

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AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL HOSTS "STOP MODERN SLAVERY & HUMAN TRAFFICKING" 22nd ANNUAL CANDLELIGHT WALK FOR HUMAN RIGHTS SUNDAY, OCTOBER 17, 2010

The 22nd Annual San Diego Candlelight Walk for Human Rights hosted by the North County Chapter of Amnesty International will be held on Sunday, October 17, 2010 at the outdoor amphitheater and pier in Oceanside at 5:30pm.

This year's theme, "Stop Modern Slavery & Human Trafficking" will give the 800+ participants an opportunity to learn that an estimated 27 million people globally have been lured and forced into a life they didn't choose - sold into prostitution and the sex trade, locked up in sweatshops, forced to work for little or no pay. They are victims of Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking. The greatest majority are women and girls.

The event is free to the public. A brief reception – with refreshments, materials, and live music will be followed by a program of outstanding speakers committed to end slavery and commercial exploitation locally and internationally.

Kimberly Hunt, 10 News Anchorwoman, works on and off camera to combat our local sex trafficking issues. In an [undercover investigation in May of 2009](#), in one night Ms. Hunt discovered 1,000 internet ad postings for sex with young girls, in the Mission Valley area alone. San Diego is an ideal place for traffickers because it's a large metropolitan city with paying customers and a lot of runaways. On any given night, there are about [2,500 reported runaway children in San Diego](#) and all of them are vulnerable to being kidnapped and coerced into forced prostitution. The FBI has identified San Diego as a key target for the importation of trafficked children and has labeled San Diego as a "[High Intensity Child Prostitution Area](#)."

Janis Olson is the Executive Director of Nepal Youth Foundation (NYF), a U.S. based, non-profit organization devoted to bringing hope to the most destitute children in Nepal. Now in its 20th year, the NYF provides a multitude of programs by leveraging the wealth of developed countries to help the children. Ms. Olson will address one of the primary issues they focus on, the selling into servitude of girls, some as young as 6 years old. In parts of Nepal, many indigenous families subsist as farm laborers. Unable to make ends meet, 1,000s of families have been forced to sell their daughters to work as indentured servants in far away cities, slaving from dawn to late night. For their work, the fathers receive an average of \$50 a year. Working in the communities, the NYF provides humane alternatives to this practice, and estimates they have liberated 10,000 girls from bonded labor since their founding. Ms. Olson can be reached at 415-331-8585.

An educational update on the San Diego County Human Trafficking Task Force and the North County Regional Human Trafficking and Prostitution Task Force will be provided by the Sheriff's Vista Station Community Oriented Policing and Problem Solving Unit (C.O.P.P.S.), which was awarded a 3-year federal grant for the investigation of Prostitution and Human Trafficking. Of the unit, Sergeant Joseph Mata, a former U.S. Marine, has been with the San Diego County Sheriff's Department for 25 years; Corporal Jim Smith with the San Diego Sheriff's Department for almost 14 years, is currently assigned to the Vista C.O.P.P.S. Unit where in the past 5 years he has been investigating Human Trafficking related crimes; Deputy George Crysler has 10 years of service and he is now assigned to the Vista Station C.O.P.P.S. Unit (West Office).

Phil Ludwig was a police officer when 30 years ago he was involved in breaking up a child trafficking operation which led to the rescue of eleven girls; seeing human trafficking growing exponentially, Mr. Ludwig acted on his desire to restore the children's lives and innocence that was stolen from them and in 1989 he founded Teen Rescue, Inc., a non profit organization with the mission of providing a loving, caring, family atmosphere for teens at risk. Since January of this year, Teen Rescue, Inc. has been also assisting girls who are victims of sexual exploitation by providing comprehensive assistance with food, shelter, clothing, counseling, education, social/life skills training, medical care, life planning, and liaison to legal services. Teen Rescue, Inc., is capable of caring for up to 200 rescued children and is one of the few licensed facilities in the entire United States for age 17 and under, and a part of the Orange & San Diego Counties Task Forces on Human Trafficking and Alameda County DA's Office. Phil Ludwig is available for phone interviews at 909-590-7030.

The North County Chapter's 2010 Digna Ochoa Human Rights Defender Award will be presented to Soroptimist International of Vista (SIV). SIV established the North County Anti-Human Trafficking Collaborative in 2007 to raise awareness and educate the local communities about the horrible crimes of slavery & human trafficking. Their dedication, leadership and joint efforts with Bilateral Safety Corridor Coalition (BSCC) and the Collaborative resulted in establishing Hope House in March of this year, a safe haven where rescued victims find compassionate care takers, benefit from a supportive, generous community, and can once again feel safe and start their healing process. SIV can be reached via e-mail at stoptrafficking@soroptimistvista.org.

Designed as an evening of hope and inspiration, the event will culminate with the symbolic Candlelight "Freedom Walk" along the Oceanside Pier. Participants will be invited to walk in the names of the victims and take up the cause of individuals who need a voice and action to prevent future occurrences. The event is rain or shine - everyone is reminded to dress warmly.

For information please call 760-731-0735 or visit www.Amnesty471.org.

You are invited to our speakers' Press Conference on Oct 17th at 5 pm at the amphitheater; we also hope for stories published prior to the event; please contact us and the speakers directly for phone interviews. Thank you.