



San Francisco Collaborative Against Human Trafficking Culminates Month of Awareness with Youth-Themed Event

(SAN FRANCISCO, February 12, 2015)—Last night, The San Francisco Collaborative Against Human Trafficking (SFCAHT) and the Jewish Coalition to End Human Trafficking (JCEHT), culminated a month of raising awareness with a special youth-focused event at the San Francisco Main Library Koret Auditorium. Held in conjunction with the nationwide 2015 Human Trafficking Awareness Campaign, this diverse occasion focused on promoting education, dialogue and activism against trafficking among Bay Area teens.

“It is essential that the young people in our communities have the knowledge, resources and support to both protect themselves and take a stand against practices that deny a person’s right to live a life free from violence, exploitation and slavery,” said Antonia Lavine, SFCAHT’s Coordinator and President of the National Council of Jewish Women San Francisco Section (NCJWSF), who coordinated the awareness campaign.

Youth leader, MC Venus Morris, moderated the event, which included remarks from Theresa Sparks, Executive Director of the San Francisco Human Rights Commission and Stephanie Nguyen, Fiscal and Policy Analyst, for the San Francisco Department on the Status of Women.

The evening featured several young performers, artists and speakers. Marie, a student from Castro Valley High School, read her poems about human trafficking. Joyce Wu, a high school representative San Francisco Youth Commission, District 7, discussed the importance of raising awareness and youth involvement in anti-trafficking advocacy. Further, Julie Cornfield, a freshman at Palo Alto High School, Heidi and Arianna, from Acalanes Union High School in Lafayette and other student representatives from Santa Clara County, Contra Costa County, and other Bay Area community high schools discussed how they became advocates and student leaders. These youth organized panel presentations, fundraisers, awareness weeks, clubs and coalitions at their schools dedicated to ending human trafficking.

Artworks made by youth were at the center of the evening. All participants in SFCAHT’s annual High School Poster Contest were honored. San Francisco Supervisor Katy Tang, District 4, assisted by Human Rights attorney and SFCAHT Steering Committee representative Rose M. Mukhar presented first prize to Grace Norcini of Woodside International High School of San Francisco for her poster on the theme, “Invisible But Not Forgotten.” Second prize was awarded to Nhu Thuan Dan (Rainie) and Linhan Fu (Teako), also from Woodside, and third place went to Kevin Huo of San Mateo High School.

Additionally, the NCJWSF Section was pleased to announce their newly created, “Nancy Surkin Memorial Scholarship for Survivors of Human Trafficking.” Debra Surkin, daughter of Nancy Elliot Surkin, for whom the honor is named, presented to Sarai T. Smith-Mazariegos, Co-Founder of MISSEY (Motivating, Inspiring, Supporting & Serving Sexually Exploited Youth) the first two awards of this scholarship to youth human trafficking survivors, clients of MISSEY. The scholarship will be awarded annually to survivors of human trafficking served in the Bay Area.

The evening also included a screening of the film, “Child Sex Trafficking: A Day in the Life—A San Francisco Survivor’s Story”—a young woman's story of surviving child sex trafficking that began when she was age 12, produced by Aimee Allison with the San Francisco Department on the Status of Women and directed by Jermone Newton. After the screening, Helen Liang of UNICEF led a discussion with the audience on the issues raised in the film.

Morris concluded the event with pointers on how trafficking affects youth, and what to do if it is happening to you or someone you know, including social media tips and how to offer a helping hand.

Since 2010, the City of San Francisco has formally recognized the dates between January 11 (National Human Trafficking Awareness Day) and February 12 (Abraham Lincoln’s Birthday) as Human Trafficking Awareness Month. During this month, SFOAHT coordinates a community awareness campaign and publishes a calendar of events held by participating organizations.

About SFOAHT

The San Francisco Collaborative Against Human Trafficking (SFOAHT) has a membership of more than 30 agencies representing a broad array of nongovernmental organizations, government agencies, law enforcement agencies, service providers, educators, and community members. Its operation is supported by a joint effort of the National Council of Jewish Women San Francisco Section, San Francisco Human Rights Commission and San Francisco Department of the Status of Women. SFOAHT is committed to ending human trafficking through collaboration, education, outreach, advocacy, and supporting survivors of human trafficking by taking a zero tolerance stance on exploitation, violence, and human trafficking and building a strong group of anti-trafficking advocates and experts in San Francisco Bay Area. More information about the 2015 Human Trafficking Awareness Campaign and SFOAHT’s other activities can be found at www.sfoaht.org.

