

Press Release

Baltimore Conference to Examine Health Effects of Human Trafficking

“Travesty” of Human Trafficking is a Multi-billion Dollar Business

Baltimore, Oct. 1, 2014....A major conference bringing together leaders in the fields of health care, law and social services will kick off a national campaign against human trafficking which has been described as a “horrible form of modern day slavery.”

Sponsored by The Royal Circle Foundation, the conference will take place at Baltimore’s Royal Sonesta Harbor Court Hotel from Oct. 2-4. It begins with a networking/welcoming reception and the Baltimore screening of the documentary *“Not in my Life”* which depicts the global trafficking of children at 5:30 pm on the 2nd.

Prior to the reception, a press conference involving the leaders of The Royal Circle Foundation is scheduled for 5 pm at the Harbor Court Hotel.

This will be followed by two days filled with papers and panel discussions featuring leading experts who will focus on the devastating effects of trafficking on public health and will explore efforts at treatment and recovery.

On Friday evening (Oct. 3rd) an awards banquet will honor Congressperson Barbara Lee (California, 13th Congressional District) with the Foundation's "Inspirations Award" for her years of dedicated service and the championing of human rights for all Americans and local media personality, Donie M. Glover with the Foundation's "Consciousness Award" for outstanding achievements in providing cutting edge commentary and information regarding local and national issues affecting the lives of the African- American community. Last year's recipients were Dr. Frances Cress Welsing and Dick Gregory.

The conference will present information targeted to the health care community for improved awareness, recognition and treatment of the conditions associated with human trafficking; ranging from physical trauma, infectious diseases, illegal organ trafficking to emotional trauma in the form of post traumatic stress disorder, depression and anxiety disorders.

“This conference will serve to make the Baltimore community and the nation aware of the ways in which the travesty of the trafficking of human beings for profit affects each and every one of us,” said Dr. Patricia Newton, conference chairperson.

“Human trafficking is not something that occurs in some foreign country as many

people think. It is happening right here in Baltimore and across the USA, as well. Our children are at risk and the integrity of our families is diminished.”

Conference organizers say that human traffickers make billions of dollars off the backs of human beings who have little control over their lives. They are calling on communities in Baltimore and across the nation to address this growing industry which “tears at the fabric of our souls.”

“Human Trafficking is one of the worst crimes against humanity. It is violent on multiple levels: physical, emotional, psychological, financial and spiritual. It is traumatic and leaves scars that last a lifetime. Like slavery, it steals the human possibility, robs the victims and their family and community of a future productive livelihood. It is a tortuous wealth extraction scheme that must be combatted by every means possible,” said Prof. Hunter H. Adams, III, vice president, Royal Circle Foundation.

The conference has been approved for continuing education for health professionals through Howard University’s Medical School (Washington, DC).

“Human trafficking is a world-wide problem that unfortunately did not end in the distant past with the diminishing of the world-wide slave trade. It is associated with societal disruption, family disintegration, community collapse, diminished personal esteem of the individuals, disruption of life options and opportunity, post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, and suicide. It will continue as long as there is denial, financial awards, and perception of some individuals as commodities,” said Dr. William Lawson, Professor and Chair, Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences, Howard University College of Medicine and Hospital.

The conference will also examine the legal implications of human trafficking.

“We have learned that adequate victim care is a necessary predicate to a successful investigation and prosecution of human trafficking”, said Benjamin Greer, former special district attorney, California Office of the Attorney General and current Staff Counsel, Legal Affairs Department of State Hospitals in Sacramento, CA. “As law-makers continually re-evaluate anti-human trafficking policies it is imperative to recognize, understand and fully credit the victims for their experiences. Services and benefits designed for these individuals should account for their foreseeable injuries and be designed to address their effects. The current T-Visa application process helps to address previous shortfalls in its initial design”.

“This conference will bring together those who wish to advance the discussion on how best to provide support to trafficked victims. Understanding the mental health injuries of human trafficking is in its infancy and the Royal Circle Foundation has provided the ground work and the opportunity for us to begin to address this very significant issue,” said Prof. Adams.

The conference ends with a charge to communities to find workable solutions at the local, state, and national level.

“We welcome the nation to join us in this fight and we urge the Baltimore community to attend this conference. If there is one event that needs to be on everyone’s radar, this conference is it,” said Dr. Newton.

The public can register for the event at: www.royal-circle.org on the Calendar Page.

For more information contact: Patricia A. Newton, M.D., MPH, M.A., Conference Chairperson - 410-637-5474; email: trcfoundation@aol.com. *The Royal Circle Foundation is a non-profit, 501 c3 organization. Registration fees for the conference and other donations are tax deductible.*
