

Zonta Human Trafficking Awareness Event

Submitted March 17, 2009

The Zonta Club of Sanibel Captiva is actively involved in the fight against human trafficking locally, regionally and, through Zonta International, around the world. In 2004, the Zonta Club spearheaded the Lee County Human Trafficking Task Force and has been actively involved in county and regional efforts from its inception. It continues to support the work of local organizations which work to combat human trafficking, including Miracles in Action, the Grace Project, Our Mother's Home and Human Trafficking Awareness Partnerships, Inc.

The Club is bringing the issue home to Sanibel by offering residents and visitors a Human Trafficking Awareness Event on April 16 from 9 am to 1 pm at the Sanibel Library. In partnership with the Florida Regional Community Policing Institute and the Lee County Sheriff's Human Trafficking Task Force, Nola Theiss will be conducting a program entitled "The Many Faces of Human Trafficking", emphasizing that modern day slavery ensnares vulnerable people, including our own American children, documented and undocumented immigrants, and people working in the hospitality and service industries. Eighty percent of victims worldwide are female and 50% are children.

The program, which is aimed at community members, has been presented by Theiss throughout the state of Florida since 2006. Theiss, who has won numerous awards for her work, describes the program as "Human Trafficking 101" with emphasis on the importance of the role of average citizen in recognizing the signs of trafficking and the collaboration of law enforcement, human service providers, churches, community groups and private citizens. Local representatives of organizations which are actively involved in the fight against trafficking in Lee County will also make presentations.

In addition to information about human trafficking as a global and national issue, the program will also cover "next steps", action projects churches and community groups can take to combat human trafficking, including preventative programs, awareness building, and support for law enforcement and governmental and non-governmental agencies. For more information about the course, go to <http://cop.spjc.cc.fl.us/cop/training/humantraffick4.htm>

Churches, businesses, residents and visitors are encouraged to come to this event. There is no charge for the event, but advance registration is required. Light refreshments will be served. To register, please contact Nola Theiss at 239-395-2635 or nola@humantraffickingawareness.org.

