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Conference to address human trafficking

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Minh Dang

AUBURN — A nationally-known activist-educator will be the keynote speaker at a conference on human trafficking later this month in Auburn. Minh Dang will share her personal story of childhood sexual abuse and survival at “Not Here: A Call to Action Against Human Trafficking,” a conference scheduled for 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Friday, Sept. 30, at Auburn Hall, 60 Court St.

She was recently featured in a documentary that aired on MSNBC called “Sex Slaves: Minh’s Story.” Using this documentary, Dang travels the nation raising awareness about child abuse and child trafficking.

Dang is the Bonner Leaders AmeriCorps program director for the University of California at Berkeley’s Cal Corps Public Service Center. She also leads intercultural sensitivity and diversity training for student affairs staff and is a co-facilitator for Adult Survivors of Childhood Abuse meetings in Berkeley, Calif.

Opening the day’s events will be Thomas Delahanty, U.S. attorney for the District of Maine. He will discuss human trafficking from the perspective of the U.S. Attorney's Office.

This interdisciplinary conference is intended to appeal to law enforcement, health care professionals, social service professionals, faith-based organizations and community members. Featured speakers include:

- * Roy Ahn of the Massachusetts General Hospital Division of Global Health and Human Rights in Boston, who will offer an overview of human trafficking and public health.
- * Wendy Macias Konstantopoulos, faculty and medical director of Initiative to End Slavery at Massachusetts General Hospital. She will discuss the implications that human trafficking poses for the medical and nursing professions.
- * Jim Martin of the International Justice Mission, who will consider the role of non-governmental organizations in combating human trafficking through the justice system.
- * Courtney Shaad of Give Way to Freedom. She will present an overview of the psychological impact of human trafficking on the victims

* Arwyn Jackson of Amirah House, who will talk about aftercare programs for trafficking victims.

* Ethan Batstone of Not for Sale, who will discuss community activism in confronting trafficking.

Students from the speech and debate team at Edward Little High School will also be participating, helping kick off the conference and holding a poetry and prose “slam” during the lunch break.

Event registration is \$25 and includes lunch and conference materials.

On Saturday, Oct. 1, a “Not Here Community Rally for Freedom” will be held at Auburn’s Festival Plaza from 5:30 to 9 p.m.

The rally will feature concerts by “Joel & Janna” and Christian rock band “The Wrecking;” monologue and theatrical music presentation by Dennis St. Pierre; multiple screenings of the movie “Sex + Money,” community workshops by Not For Sale, International Justice Mission and the Maine Freedom Project. There will also be various resource displays and events, including a “Freedom March” over Longley Bridge and along the River Walk.

For more information, contact Auburn Police planner Liz Allen at 333-6650, ext. 2070, via email at llallen@auburnmaine.gov or visit www.not-here.me.

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