

MEDIA ADVISORY

[free-them]

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Abbey Park Students Host Awareness Week to Fight the World's Fastest Growing Criminal Enterprise

Nov. 8, 2012 Oakville, ON – Oakville's Abbey Park High School has partnered with anti-human trafficking organization [free-them] for the second year in a row to bring awareness to the issue of human trafficking in Halton Region and Canada by hosting, [free-them] Human Trafficking Awareness Week at the school from Nov. 12 to Nov. 16.

In 2011, Abbey Park High School student Anu Lalith Kumar discovered the issue of human trafficking when a neighbour asked her to put up posters for [free-them]. She brought the issue to her fellow social change council members who got on board with the campaign to raise awareness of human trafficking and raise funds that would aid in the rescue of human trafficking victims. Kumar along with social change council members partnered with [free-them] to organize [free-them] Human Trafficking Awareness Week.

Now a graduate of Abbey Park High School, Kumar says, "I hope Abbey Park can further raise awareness amongst the students on the presence of human trafficking in our community and throughout Canada. High school students are in the prime target range of trafficked humans, so I'm hoping more students will be affected by the severity of this issue and participate in the week's activities, as well as make donations."

[free-them] and Abbey Park High School is pleased to invite you to attend:

What: [free-them] Human Trafficking Awareness Week

Where: Abbey Park High School, 1455 Glen Abbey Gate, Oakville, ON L6M 2V7

When: Each day's events will take place from 10:45 a.m. to 1:25 p.m.

Nov. 12: Awareness display in foyer with survival testimonials, fact cards and [free-them] materials

Nov. 13: Trivia/Games representing human trafficking statistics

Nov. 14: Human trafficking around the world, including CNN's freedom project

Nov. 15: Amazing Race. Students will be provided with codes, which will contain clues based on human trafficking facts.

Nov. 16: Wear Purple Day and screening of the movie, 'Taken' starring Liam Neeson.

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Sheila Gabura, Abbey Park High School teacher leading the [free-them] Human Trafficking Awareness Week, notes, “Many do not realize that this is a local issue. Our social change council is attempting to spread awareness of slavery as a global issue and how it affects us here in Oakville. We are hosting [free-them] Human Trafficking Awareness Week because we can't ignore that there is a real need in our local, national and global community. The events of the week are meant to engage students, to hook them into learning about things they don't know happen anymore, yet are happening more than ever before.”

[free-them] founder, Shae Invidiata will be speaking at this year's [free-them] Human Trafficking Awareness Week. “Our generation will bring awareness to human trafficking, but it is today's youth who will be the leaders of tomorrow and bring human trafficking to an end,” said Shae Invidiata, [free-them] founder. “That is why, we at [free-them] are pleased to support the youth at Abbey Park High School again this year and assist them in taking initiative to create a safer community. Their passion for social change is something to be admired.”

Interview opportunities will be available.



About Shae Invidiata and [free-them]

Invidiata moved to the United States at 18 to pursue a degree in Advertising at Hawaii Pacific University, which is where her journey began in her fight against human trafficking. Seven years later, with an Associates in Marketing from HPU and a BA in Religious Studies from The University of British Columbia, Invidiata works fulltime as a Sales Representative at The Invidiata Team - #1 REMAX Team in Canada, and #2 RE/MAX Team Worldwide 2010.

In January 2010, Invidiata officially founded [free-them], an initiative dedicated to raising awareness and funds to abolish human trafficking in Canada and abroad by partnering with people, organizations, businesses, law enforcement and government to fight human trafficking - slavery today. Invidiata regularly speaks at different high schools, professional groups, public events and speaks with the media to educate, bring awareness, and action to fight human trafficking. [free-them] has lead and organized different events all over Toronto and the GTA, from paneled discussions at The University of Toronto, premiering and bringing the film Call+Response to Toronto, hosting the 2nd Annual Freedom Walk in Toronto, to seeing Criminal Codes amended.

Invidiata with [free-them] was a Stakeholder in MP Joy Smith's Private Members Bills C-268, and C-310 of which both received Royal Assent and amended the Criminal Code in Canada, June 2010, and June 2012. On June 6, 2012, the Government of Canada launched the National Action Plan to Combat Human Trafficking which stemmed from MP Joy Smith's proposal for a National Action Plan that she released in 2010 entitled *Connecting the Dots*, Invidiata with [free-them] was a Stakeholder for this proposal as well. Invidiata has sat on round table discussions for MPP Kevin Flynn in the efforts to create new policies that were brought before the Legislator in June 2011.

Invidiata with [free-them] is one of the founding Coalition members to forming the first Ontario Anti-Human Trafficking Task Force. On October 3, 2011 MP Terence Young gave his Members Statement-SO31- in the House of Commons to recognize the work of Invidiata and her efforts with [free-them] to combat human trafficking.

Invidiata and [free-them] have appeared on and been interviewed by many different media sources, including but not limited to, The Toronto Star, Much Music, CTV, CP24 News, The Morning Live Show CHCH News, The Daily Show Rogers TV, 106 The "X", Actor Eric Balfour "Balfour Yard Blog", Notable.ca, The Drew Marshall Show Joy 1280, Metro News, Inside Halton, SNAP Toronto, and SNAP Oakville.

Invidiata was a nominee for Canadian Women's Fashion Magazine Chatelaine as a Top 20 Finalist for "Canada's Women of the Year 2011" for her work and dedication to fight human trafficking and raise up others to join in the worthy fight. Invidiata was recognized with the YMCA Peace Medallion 2011. Most recent Invidiata was a recipient of the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal, being recognized for her dedication and service to citizens of Canada.

For more information about [free-them] and their ongoing efforts please visit freethem.ca

For more information about MP Joy Smith and her work please visit joysmith.ca

About Abbey Park High School

Abbey Park is a grade nine to 12 school within the Halton District School Board. The school is located in Glen Abbey Gate Oakville, between Third Line and Pilgrim's Way. Abbey Park is an inclusive learning community celebrating student growth through the pursuit of excellence and lifelong learning.

Graduating students will be expected to use literacy and numeracy to communicate effectively; apply critical thinking skills to problem-solving; make healthy lifestyle choices; value diversity; contribute positively to the community and the environment; and think and behave with self-confidence, independence and flexibility to meet the challenges of a dynamic world.