



Giving Hope Today

freedom gala 2013

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A NIGHT TO COMBAT HUMAN TRAFFICKING

February 2013

Dear Friend:

Please find the following invitation to support, sponsor and/or attend the inaugural **Freedom Gala – A Night to Combat Human Trafficking**.

For the past seven years, influential members of the Vancouver community have gathered annually to the **Hope in the City Luncheon**. The 2013 Freedom Gala evolved out of the expanded need to educate the community on this very important issue, and provide much-needed additional financial support for victims.

Human trafficking is the illegal trade of human beings for the purpose of exploitation. Sex trafficking exists in highly-visible venues, such as street prostitution or strip clubs, as well as hidden systems such as closed brothels or child sex "tourism" operations commonly found in residential homes.

Many victims are Canadian. They are our daughters, sons, brothers and sisters. There are an estimated 27 million human slaves worldwide – 250,000 exist in North America. Eighty percent of the victims are teens and children, *some are as young as 6*.

It is a global epidemic and Canada has been identified as both a transit and a destination point for human trafficking. Specifically, Vancouver has been singled out by the U.S. State Department as a port of major concern. Currently only 1-2% of victims are rescued.

Trafficking is a lucrative industry. It is second only to drug trafficking as the most profitable illegal industry in the world. The U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigations estimates that the trade in human life generates global profits approaching \$10 billion annually.

The Freedom Gala will take place on May 10, 2013 at The Sheraton Vancouver Wall Centre. Proceeds from this event will help educate youth in BC high schools on the local risks and traffickers' targeting strategies, as well as benefit Deborah's Gate, a *confidential safe house run by The Salvation Army serving international and domestic persons who have escaped human trafficking*.

Please join us for *an eye-opening evening*. Your support and generosity is kindly requested. Further information and sponsorship details can be found in the accompanying documents.

To sponsor or purchase tables/tickets please contact:

Lenore Rattray, Major Gifts – Sponsorships, The Salvation Army-BC
604.296.3818 / Lenore_Rattray@can.salvationarmy.org

Human Trafficking is a heinous crime against humanity. It is our collective responsibility to eradicate it.

Sincerely,

Ms. Tali'ah Aquilini & Ms. Shannon Belkin
(2012 Freedom Gala Co-Chairs)

COMMITTEE MEMBERS: Shannon Belkin & Tali'ah Aquilini (Co-Chairs),
Keirstead Farris, Sharon Ferriss, Patricia Hyssop, Connie Leighton, Cathy McMahon, Tina Oliver, Isabelle Spothelfer

SIX O'CLOCK RECEPTION · FRIDAY, MAY 10, 2013 · SHERATON VANCOUVER WALL CENTRE