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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Elected officials and law enforcement personnel participate “Stop Human Trafficking” Conference held September 1, 2010 in Raleigh, NC.

Soroptimist International of Raleigh, NC combines forces with Triangle J Council of Governments to deliver region-wide “Stop Human Trafficking” Conference for community leaders and law enforcement personnel on September 1, 2010 in Raleigh, NC.

Raleigh, NC, September, 1 2010 A form of modern-day slavery, human trafficking is the second largest international criminal industry - - behind only drug trafficking - - and the fastest growing. Human traffickers use fraud, force and coercion to recruit and control their victims. North Carolina is ranked in the top ten states for the presence of human trafficking.

Soroptimist International of Raleigh, NC (Soroptimist) - - a non-profit volunteer service organization of business and professional women committed to improving the lives of women and girls - - and the Triangle J Council of Governments (Triangle J COGs) co-hosted a conference, “Stop Human Trafficking” on September 1, 2010 to address this serious issue in our state. The conference was attended by over 75 individuals, including elected officials, city/county managers and law enforcement personnel from across the seven-county region. It was held at the Hayes Barton United Methodist Church in Raleigh.

This conference accomplished its goal of addressing the specific issues and challenges in North Carolina by learning from the experiences in other communities, reviewing promising practices, and considering which practices to adapt and implement in our communities across the region. Equally important is the intended outcome to spur the creation of a timely, seamless referral system for citizens to report potential human trafficking situations to trained and responsive authorities.

The successful day-long session was led by notable speakers, including the honorable Ms. Shirley Franklin, former Mayor of Atlanta, GA; the honorable Ms. Nola Theiss, former Mayor of Sanibel, FL and Mr. Anand Ramaswamy, US Assistant Attorney, Eastern Region, NC. All have proven records for stopping human trafficking; from initiating a powerful public relations campaign to lessen demand, to consulting with communities on how to structure their response, to building a strong case for the prosecution.

More than 40 law enforcement personnel were trained in human trafficking and examined ways to respond to citizen calls regarding potential human trafficking situations. Detective C. B. Congleton, state-wide trainer from Pitt County Sheriff’s office, and Danielle Mitchell, Director with World Relief, conducted the training.

Conference attendees are in a “unique position to end a growing threat to the well-being of the community and save lives of numerous residents,” as noted by Mike Cross, Chair, Triangle J COGs in a recent communication to members of the organization.

Soroptimist has made the elimination of human trafficking one of its primary focuses. The organization has held multiple forums across the state to raise awareness and foster taking action that will put a stop to this abhorrent crime. To learn more about the conference or how you can get involved in the efforts to Stop Human Trafficking, please contact endingviolence@soroptimistraleigh.org.

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About Soroptimist International of Raleigh, NC

Soroptimist is an international volunteer organization for business and professional women. The name, Soroptimist, means "Best for Women." The mission of Soroptimist is to improve the lives of women and girls in local communities and throughout the world. Soroptimist International of Raleigh, a 501(c)(3) organization solely run and operated by volunteers, relies on charitable donations to support its programs. www.soroptimistraleigh.org