

4:ONE debuts with a June 16 film screening

New Oakville group takes aim at creating awareness to fight human trafficking

by David Lea

Oakville Beaver Staff

The co-founder of the recently-formed, Oakville-based anti-human trafficking group 4:ONE is hoping to raise awareness about what she calls modern day slavery by holding a film screening at Encore Cinemas, 171 Speers Rd., on June 16.

Oakville resident Jennifer Potter described the documentary, *Red Light Green Light*, as something that leads viewers on a compelling journey through the complex and often-ignored issue of prostitution with a strong focus on how sexual exploitation can be prevented.

"The more I learned about human trafficking and how it is not just an international issue, but a Canadian one that affects people locally, the closer I got to the point where I just couldn't sit around doing nothing," said Potter.

"When something is significant like that, you just have to do something."

Many of Potter's friends felt the same way, which led to the creation of 4:ONE.

The group's name comes from the statement made by its members that "I for one refuse to accept a world where one individual can be held as the property of another."

The free film screening begins at 7 p.m. and is the first action the new group has taken to raise awareness about human trafficking.

“ It is very common now for girls in high school to be targeted by friends and older men, who pretend to be their boyfriends and groom them for a lifestyle one, two, three years down the road. People need to be aware of what is going on and realize they can have a voice in making a difference. ”

Jennifer Potter
4:ONE, Oakville

"Fighting human trafficking seems to have become the pivotal cause of our generation," said Potter. "It is something so demeaning, where individuals who are vulnerable are taken advantage of. It is such a huge issue, but it is something an ordinary person can stand up against. We have the power to do something if we stand up, speak out, and make our views known."

Potter said the Guelph filmmakers, Michelle and Jay Brock, who run the non-profit organization Hope for the Sold, will be in attendance to answer questions following the film.

The film is making the rounds as the Criminal Code of Canada unveils new laws concerning prostitution in Canada.

Potter said her group supports prostitution laws similar to the Nordic model, which places the emphasis on criminalizing pimps and johns.

She said the majority of prostitutes are victims of human trafficking and noted that the criminalizing of their activities often makes them less inclined to approach authorities for help.

She is hopeful people will see the film so they can recognize a victim of human trafficking.

"I think it is important to be able to see the signs of it in a young girl that you might know. Parents

need to be aware so their daughters will not become victims of human trafficking," said Potter.

"It is very common now for girls in high school to be targeted by friends and older men who pretend to be their boyfriends and groom them for a lifestyle one, two, three years down the road. People need to be aware of what is going on and realize they can have a voice in making a difference."

For more information about the film, visit www.redlightgreenlightfilm.com.



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