

For Immediate Release

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UNION SQUARE WALK-IN EXHIBIT FIGHTS SEX TRAFFICKING

GIFT Box helps ensure that athletes, not human traffickers, are the winners of Super Bowl XLVIII

New York City -- (BUSINESS WIRE) – Jan. 28, 2014 – STOP THE TRAFFIK, the United Nations Global Initiative to Fight Human Trafficking (UN.GIFT), and the Committee to Stop Trafficking in Persons (CSTIP) announced today that GIFT Box, a walk-in exhibit that brings awareness and educates the public on human trafficking, has been brought to the United States for the first time and is on display near Union Square, at Broadway and 17th Street.

As crowds throng to New York and New Jersey for Super Bowl XLVIII, visitors will have the ability to experience a "bait and switch" technique used by sex traffickers. Pedestrians will be lured to enter a big, colorfully wrapped box, only to be confronted inside with the harsh realities of sex trafficking through photographs and survivor stories.

"When STOP THE TRAFFIK launched the GIFT Box during the London 2012 Olympic Games, we knew that it would bring the issue of human trafficking to the attention of communities at street level," said Ruth Dearnley, CEO of STOP THE TRAFFIK. "Sports events draw attention to human trafficking, the world's fastest growing crime. This year as people gather to enjoy the Super Bowl, the GIFT Box will serve as a great opportunity to educate people on this issue and what they can do to stop it. It is a privilege to work alongside others, who believe that together we can STOP THE TRAFFIK."

The U.S. State Department estimates that 27 million men, women and children are trafficking victims worldwide at any given time. As major sporting events like the Super Bowl bring an influx of people, it is recognized that human trafficking may increase in the New York and New Jersey area this month.

Human trafficking is an issue which can occur before, during and after an event. GIFT Box USA (www.giftboxusa.com) will work to lower this risk by raising awareness among both individuals and communities, in order to help prevent and deter the increase of human trafficking during the Super Bowl and beyond.

Dearnley added, "The GIFT Box reminds the public that behind any statistic is a face, a person who has a price tag hung around their neck."

The story of Sofia is typical of many women who have been trafficked. "At 20, I was kidnapped from my home in Mexico by a member of an international trafficking ring, taken to New York, and forced to have sex with men in exchange for money," said Sofia (a pseudonym) from Mexico, whose personal history was provided by Sanctuary for Families. "I was abused up to 20 times a night for 14 months by 5,000 men. If one took too long or didn't pay, my trafficker would beat me for returning to him without all the money. They hurt me and I cried, nobody tried to help me. No one wanted to know the truth."

According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, human trafficking is a \$32 billion industry, making it the second largest criminal industry in the world after drug trafficking. It is also the fastest growing crime.

“Leveraging our resources to prevent human trafficking - or as many refer to it, modern-day slavery - is an important part of the Homeland Security Investigation overall public safety mission to keep the city and its guests safe during the Super Bowl,” said James T. Hayes Jr., special agent in charge of New York. “GIFT Box is a great way to raise awareness of this important issue and provide potential victims with the information they need to seek help, including a toll-free hotline number and website address.”

“After seeing how successful GIFT Box was at the London Olympics, I wanted to bring it to New York,” said Rita Fishman of International Council of Jewish Women (ICJW) and Chair of CSTIP Gift Box Committee. “I am thrilled to have received the support from the city of New York to launch GIFT Box during a major sporting event. My hope is that it will travel the country to help stop human trafficking.”

Girl Be Heard, www.girlbeheard.org, will be performing excerpts of their award-winning “Trafficked” at the GIFT Box location on January 31st at 4:30pm. “Trafficked” tells the story of sex slavery and child exploitation through the eyes of young women.

“Members of the Project Girl Performance Collective have spent time and courage listening to stories from those who can't come forward, and then bringing them to you on the stage in an honest and powerful form,” said Gloria Steinem. “They are helping to make the invisible visible. The result will break your heart – and open your heart.”

Open now through February 2, GIFT Box is presented by the NGO Committee to Stop Trafficking in Persons, in partnership with STOP THE TRAFFIK and the United Nations Global Initiative to Fight Human Trafficking. Partner support has also been provided by ECPAT-USA, The United States Fund for UNICEF and 3 Generation. For more information visit www.giftboxusa.com. The U.S. Trafficking Hotline number is 1-888-373-7888.

About STOP THE TRAFFIK

STOP THE TRAFFIK (STT) is a global movement of individuals, communities and organizations fighting to prevent human trafficking around the world. For more information visit www.stophetraffik.org.

About United Nations Global Initiative to Fight Human Trafficking

The United Nations Global Initiative to Fight Human Trafficking (UN.GIFT) is a global coalition working together to help stop the sale of people, to see the traffickers prosecuted and to protect human trafficking victims. For more information visit www.ungift.org.

About Committee to Stop Trafficking In Persons

The NGO Committee to Stop Trafficking in Persons (CSTIP) is dedicated to the eradication of human trafficking in all its forms through education, advocacy, research and monitoring compliance with United Nations treaties, protocols, laws and resolutions. For more information contact ngocstip@gmail.com. For more information on GIFT Box USA visit www.giftboxusa.com.

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