



For Immediate Release
June 6, 2011

Sisters of Saint Joseph collaborate with St. Louis Hotel and ECPAT to address Human Trafficking

(St. Louis, MO): Human Trafficking is among the many serious issues in need of healing both in St. Louis and throughout the world. While many call it a hidden crime, it exists not only in the St. Louis area, but in virtually every city and town in our country.

After months of collaborative conversation and planning, the [U.S. Federation of the Sisters of Saint Joseph](#) (CSSJ) is excited that the Millennium Hotel St. Louis is taking the steps necessary to sign and implement the six-point [ECPAT-USA Code of Conduct](#). By signing this code the [Millennium Hotel St. Louis](#) will take a stand against the sexual exploitation of children by helping ECPAT (End Child Prostitution, Child Pornography and Trafficking in Children for Sexual Purposes) fight child sex tourism. The [Code of Conduct for the Protection of Children from Sexual Exploitation in Travel and Tourism](#), developed by ECPAT, sets a standard of responsible business practices that effectively crack down on child sexual exploitation.

Discussions with the hotel about the complex issue of human trafficking began when the Sisters of Saint Joseph first contracted with the Millennium for their national event. In speaking of the process that will culminate in the signing of the ECPAT Code of Conduct, Sister Kathleen McCluskey, CSJ, Executive Director of the Federation says, "As Jesus taught us, it's all about building relationships of healing in our world. We wanted to host our national Event at a hotel that supports this mission and spirituality. From the moment they became aware of the horror of human slavery and the role that hotels can play in combating it, the management at the Millennium has been eager to learn and take action.

The Sisters of St. Joseph are pleased to have been partners in a collaboration with the Millennium, ECPAT, and Nix Conference and Meeting Management that has brought us to this important moment. In signing the ECPAT Code, developing policies and procedures for the prevention of trafficking, and educating every person on the staff, the Millennium St. Louis demonstrates a true concern for people, surely for their guests, but also for the world we all live in. They are taking concrete steps to combat a degrading and horrible abuse that threatens the whole human community."

Of this collaboration, Nix says, "[Nix Conference & Meeting Management](#) is thankful for the opportunity to work with the U.S. Federation of the Sisters of St. Joseph and the Millennium Hotel St. Louis on this venture. We support the commitment of Federation of the Sisters of St. Joseph and ECPAT to combat human trafficking. We stand firm in our resolve to protect all children and will unite with others in the industry to bring awareness to the human trafficking issue."

Dominic Smart, General Manager of the Millennium Hotel St. Louis comments, "It is important for all of us to join together to fight human trafficking. Everyone in our hotel will take part in the ECPAT training and be vigilant in helping to keep human trafficking and exploitation of children out of our hotel and our community. Having the Sisters of St. Joseph gather in our hotel brought this issue more clearly to our attention and everyone in the hotel has strong beliefs about it. As a father of three, like any parent, I am sensitive to this cause and feel that every child has a right to a healthy and happy childhood."

The signing of the ECPAT Code of Conduct will take place on July 12, 2011 at the Millennium Hotel St. Louis during the [2011 Event of the U.S. Federation of the Sisters of Saint Joseph](#) where close to 900 Sisters and Associates from across the nation and the world will be gathered. Roman Catholic women religious have been key leaders in the national and international movement to stop the demand for human trafficking.

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[The U.S. Federation of the Sisters of Saint Joseph](#) is a dynamic union of all the Sisters of Saint Joseph of the United States who claim a common origin in the foundation at LePuy, France in 1650. Today there are approximately 7,000 vowed members as well as 2,800 Associates in the United States. Worldwide there are over 13,500 Sisters of Saint Joseph in over 50 countries.

Contact: Joanne Gallagher, CSJ, Director of Communications for the Sisters of St. Joseph of Boston
617.746.2110 or Joanne.gallagher@csjboston.org

federation event collaborates with hotel

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

An estimated 850,000 people are trafficked annually worldwide, according to the U.S. State Department, 20,000 of them into the United States. Human trafficking forces men, women, and children into pornography, prostitution and other sexual exploitation, as well as labor exploitation.

In 1998, the realization that trafficking was a growing problem around the world—and that it was being largely unaddressed—led to the formation of a broad-based coalition of women's organizations, faith-based groups, children's groups, labor groups, and health groups. In 2003 the [U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops/Migration and Refugee Services](#) began educating segments of the public about the horrors of human trafficking. The effort began with members of women's religious communities who have the potential to educate and influence others on behalf of victims of trafficking.

The Millennium Hotel chain is one of the several hotels working to stop the demand of human trafficking. In signing the ECPAT Code the hotel demonstrates its commitment to create an ethical policy against commercial sexual exploitation of children, to train hotel staff to help identify human trafficking, and to partner with government and social service agencies.

Backgrounder

Over 900 Sisters of Saint Joseph and Associates Gather to reflect their global and local mission

WHO: [The U.S. Federation of Sisters of St. Joseph](#) was formed in 1966 to deepen relationships among member congregations within the United States, and to unify efforts to address spiritual, social and environmental issues, both locally and globally. The U.S. Federation is composed of more than 7,000 sisters, 2800 associates, and enjoys Non-Governmental Organization [NGO] status in the United Nations.

WHAT: Close to 900 CSSJ sisters and associates will meet to celebrate their **361st year** of reaching out to the ‘dear neighbor’ throughout the world and their **175th year** of serving in varied ministries among people across the United States. The U.S. Federation of the Sisters of Saint Joseph began in 1966. The Federation is committed to expanding their vision to embrace the global neighborhood while reaching out to local needs.

Keynote speakers during the Event:

Margaret Wheatley a renowned writer, speaker, and teacher who works from the belief that whatever the problem, community is the answer.

Catherine T. Nerney, SSJ, PhD. whose goal is to bring the CSSJ mission and spirituality into a mutually transformative conversation with our contemporary, global situation.

Human Trafficking:

During the event, participants will collaborate with the Millennium Hotel management and members of ECPAT a network of organizations and individuals working together to eliminate the commercial sexual exploitation of children around the world. The goal of this collaboration will be to address both local and global concerns related to Human Trafficking – See June 6, 2011 Press Release for details

WHEN: **Tuesday, July 11 at 11:30 a.m.**

Human Trafficking: A CSSJ Response in collaboration with the Millennium Hotel and ECPAT.

After months of collaborative conversation and planning, the U.S. Federation of the Sisters of Saint Joseph is excited that the [St. Louis Millennium Hotel](#) will be taking the steps necessary to sign and implement the six-point [ECPAT-USA Code of Conduct](#). By signing this code the Millennium Hotel will take a stand against the sexual exploitation of children by helping ECPAT fight child sex tourism. The [Code of Conduct for the Protection of Children from Sexual Exploitation in Travel and Tourism](#), developed by ECPAT, sets a standard of responsible business practices that effectively crack down on child sexual exploitation.

Discussions with [Nix Conference & Meeting Management](#), and the hotel about the difficult issue of human trafficking began when the Sisters of Saint Joseph first contracted with the Millennium for their national event. The Sisters of Saint Joseph are encouraged and pleased with collaborative approach and open discussions on the part of the Millennium in tackling this very difficult issue.

WHERE: **Millennium Hotel, St. Louis, MO**

WHY: Rooted in the zeal of Christ Jesus, Sisters of Saint Joseph and Associates from across the world will gather at Event 2011 to expand their hearts, deepen their relationships through prayer and celebration, and strengthen their zeal for healing the neighborhood of God’s sacred universe.

Human Trafficking is among the many serious issues in need of healing in today’s world. While many call it a hidden crime, it exists not only in the St. Louis area but in virtually every city and town in our country. Roman Catholic women religious have been key leaders in the national and international movement to stop human trafficking.

The St. Louis Millennium Hotel is one of the many hotels working to create an ethical policy against commercial sexual exploitation of children, to train hotel staff to help identify human trafficking, and to partner with government and social service agencies. During the event, we will take time to celebrate the work of the St. Louis Millennium Hotel in this area.

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617.746.2110 or Joanne.gallagher@csjboston.org

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Statement on Human Trafficking and Modern Day Slavery U.S. Federation of the Sisters of St. Joseph

STATEMENT

We, the [U.S. Federation of the Sisters of St. Joseph](#), stimulated by the love of God and neighbor without distinction, call on all persons to work to abolish the horrific crime of human trafficking and modern day slavery.

Impelled by our mission to restore right relationships we are committed:

- to educate about the root causes, consequences and magnitude of human trafficking and slavery
- to minister to survivors of any form of human slavery
- to use our strength as consumers and investors to promote a just society that eliminates the incentives for human trafficking
- to advocate for just laws at all levels that punish traffickers, protect victims and prevent recidivism

IMPACT ON WOMEN AND CHILDREN

Human Trafficking is 21st century slavery and it involves transporting, primarily women and children, within or across borders to be sexually exploited, to work in sweat shops, to be domestic workers, to be objects of sex tourism or to be mail-order brides. Over 15,000 women and children are trafficked to the United States each year.

TALKING POINTS

- An estimated 800,000 people are trafficked across international borders each year. Victims of human trafficking are commonly linked by poverty and lack of opportunity
- Worldwide illicit human trafficking is a \$32 billion business which feeds on the demand for the services of the sex trade and forced labor.
- The estimated number of people trafficked each year into the U.S. is 14,500 -17,500.
- 50% of the people trafficked in the U.S. each year are children.
- Trafficking in persons is more lucrative than drug trading because a person can be sold over and over. Sex trafficking is one of the most profitable industries of organized crime.

ACTION STEPS

- Educate ourselves and others on how to recognize warning signs and patterns, and basic do's and don'ts for working with survivors of trafficking, and how to work in collaboration with secular resources and leaders.
- Raise awareness, volunteer, and advocate for legislation that protects the rights of survivors
- Join an anti-trafficking alliance between local law enforcement and community-based organizations which can assist with the prosecution of traffickers, help protect survivors of trafficking and prevent trafficking in your community.

ADDITIONAL TALKING POINTS

- Trafficking in women and children is both a human rights violation and a development issue. It has tremendous human, social and economic costs, contributing to the spread of venereal disease, and HIV/AIDS.
- Trafficking deprives children of education and the opportunity to achieve their full potential, robbing poor countries of their most vital resource for development – their people.
- The United States is also the major destination country for young children kidnapped and transported for adoption by childless couples.

ADDITIONAL ACTIONS

- Promote fair-trade and denounce slave labor in product supply chains.
- Provide a Safe House a Safe Place for survivors. Become a host community by providing shelter to two women at a time.
- Ask local religious leaders to educate others on human trafficking through homilies and prayer services on the dates of National Human Trafficking Awareness Day (January 11), International Women's Day (March 8), World Day Against Child Labor (June 12), International Day for Elimination of Violence against Women (November 25), Abolition of Slavery Day (December 2), and Universal Human Rights Day (December 10).



<http://www.sistersofsaintjosephfederation.org/>

The Federation of the Sisters of Saint Joseph is a dynamic union of all the Sisters of Saint Joseph of the United States who claim a common origin in the foundation at LePuy, France in 1650. This includes over 7,000 members of 16 Congregations throughout the United States.

Together we strive to embody a vision of all people united in one earth community of love, unity and reconciliation. We do this through collaborative programs, interaction, prayer and ministry. In our conflicted 21st century world, the Sisters of Saint Joseph seek to bring our traditions and vision to life in a way that will speak to our contemporary society and be a positive influence for change.

MEMBERS

The U.S. Federation is a membership organization composed of the vowed members and associates of 16 communities of Sisters of St. Joseph, including autonomous congregations, the Carondelet congregation which has 4 provinces as well as vice provinces in Hawaii and Japan, and Peru, and 2 communities which are provinces of French congregations. Carondelet Center, the general leadership team, is also represented in the Leadership Assembly.

There are over 7,000 members in the communities as well as 2800 lay Associates who relate to them and lay staff who participate in the mission of the communities. We relate to the Canadian, French, and Italian Federations. Throughout the world, there are over 13,500 Sisters of Saint Joseph in over 50 countries.

PURPOSE AND VISION

The purpose of the U.S. Federation is:

- To support in all Sisters of Saint Joseph a continual striving to incarnate CSSJ charism within the mission of Jesus in the church of today and of the future.
- To integrate a continuing exploration of CSSJ charism by an approach that looks toward its living expression as well as its historical roots.
- To collaborate in programs which facilitate the understanding and interpretation of the CSSJ charism as it affects the life and ministry of the members.
- To provide the members with a sense of belonging to a movement greater than one's own congregation.
- To serve as a means of linking leaders and members of CSSJ congregations through the direction of a Governing Board.

Together we discover new ways to deepen and expand the CSSJ mission and the power of the charism exploring new ways of being and acting "more as one."

HISTORY

The Sisters of Saint Joseph were among the first Catholic communities to be founded for the ordinary woman. They were not wealthy or educated and worked to support themselves especially by making lace, a common trade in that region of France. Today, those who are attracted to this still live among the people and offer their lives in love and service. We carry on the heritage of our founders, six French women who joined a Jesuit priest in 1650 to begin a community without cloister or habit and devoted to the needs of the ordinary people. They shared a profound desire for union with God and the "dear neighbor".

The community grew. Then, caught in the political turmoil of the French Revolution, the congregation was disbanded. Some of the Sisters were martyred at the guillotine and others returned to their homes or went into hiding. After the revolution ended, a heroic woman, Jeanne Fontbonne, who narrowly escaped the guillotine herself, refounded the Sisters of St. Joseph at Lyon, France. In 1836, she sent three sisters to Carondelet, Missouri. From there, they spread across the United States beginning new foundations and now are members of the organization known as The United States Federation of the Sisters of Saint Joseph.

MINISTRIES

The basic desire of the Sisters of Saint Joseph is to reflect a “profound love of God and Neighbor without distinction.” Our mission is to love and work so that all may be one. By trying to build relational communities wherever we live and serve, we keep this mission alive.

Today, Sisters of Saint Joseph can be found in soup kitchens, shelters, universities, schools, hospitals, courtrooms, prisons, retreat centers, offices, nursing homes, laboratories, studios and hospices. We are educators, lawyers, doctors, nurses, family therapists, social workers, patient advocates, spiritual directors, parish ministers, theologians, psychologists, physical therapists, administrators, artists, authors, musicians, poets and a myriad of other things.

FEDERATION ORGANIZATION

The Federation is governed by the Leadership Assembly which is composed of the Leadership Teams of all the Congregations.

There are four Regions of the Federation:

- The Atlantic Coast (Boston, Brentwood, Philadelphia, Springfield, St. Augustine, West Hartford, and Winslow)
- The Lakes (Albany, Baden, Buffalo, Erie, Rochester, St. Paul, and Watertown)
- The Heartland (Carondelet Center, Cleveland, Concordia, La Grange, Medaille, Nazareth, Tipton, St. Louis, Wheeling, and Wichita)
- The Pacific Rim (Hawaii, Los Angeles, and Orange)

Much of the work of the Federation is carried on by Committees which are established by the Leadership Assembly/Council to promote the goals and purposes of the Federation.

Committees

- Initial Formation
- Ongoing Formation
- Federation Event
- Research

Interest Groups are self initiated and sustained. They link persons from the various communities around similar interests, ministries, etc. Current Interest Groups include:

- Treasurers
- Development Personnel
- Communications Personnel
- Justice and Peace Personnel
- Federation South
- Latin American Ministers

CONTACTS

- Mary Louise Mitchell, SSJ, Co-chair, Rochester, NY
- Jane DeLisle, CSJ, Co-chair, Orange, CA
- Kathleen McCluskey, CSJ, Executive Director, Boston



Briefing Sheet about ECPAT-USA

ECPAT stands for

“End Child Prostitution, Child Pornography and Trafficking in Children for Sexual Purposes”.

Vision

Realization of the right of all children to live free of child prostitution, child pornography and child trafficking for sexual purposes.

Mission

ECPAT (Ending Child Prostitution and Trafficking) is a network of organizations and individuals working together to eliminate the commercial sexual exploitation of children around the world. Its mission is to ensure that children everywhere enjoy their fundamental rights, free from all forms of commercial sexual exploitation.

How ECPAT Got Started

ECPAT was created in 1991 by a group of NGO workers and other concerned individuals in Asia as the campaign to End Child Prostitution in Asian Tourism. By 1996, the sexual exploitation of children had exploded into an international crisis, so ECPAT widened its scope of work beyond sex tourism to encompass child pornography and the trafficking/prostituting of children for sexual purposes within all countries. [ECPAT International](#) has 80 groups in over 70 countries, including the U.S.

EXPLOITATION IN THE UNITED STATES

The sexual exploitation of children is a **serious problem** in the United States with nearly 300,000 children at risk nationwide. Since 1991, ECPAT-USA has led the charge to protect two types of children:

- a. Those being trafficked to the United States from other countries; and
- b. Those being abused abroad by American **sex tourists**

In recent years, ECPAT’s focus has expanded to include the prevention and protection of American children exploited within the United States, meaning American children being exploited right here, in our own country. ECPAT has Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations. ECPAT groups are very diverse, ranging from small groups of individuals to large coalitions of NGOs. Groups have different roles foci depending on the particularities of the country and region in which they operate. ECPAT’s membership reflects the richness and diversity of experience, knowledge and perspectives that arise from working in widely different contexts.

ECPAT-USA protects children from commercial sexual exploitation. It undertakes research, training, awareness raising, policy development and advocacy to protect:

- Children who are sexually exploited by Americans who travel abroad;
- Children who are trafficked to the United States from other countries; and
- American children who are trafficked and exploited within their own country.

ECPAT-USA is the leading policy organization in the United States and belongs to an international network of organizations that have offices in 73 countries around the world.

ECPAT-USA is not a direct service provider, which means it does not have beds or staff trained in counseling services. It does, however, conduct research, develop policy, advocate, and spread awareness. In addition, ECPAT-USA trains law enforcement, members of the hospitality industry, and members of the community at large to recognize the signs of child sex trafficking and how to properly respond to such situations. ECPAT-USA promotes the Code of Conduct as a means for the travel industry to work with law enforcement and prevent their services from aiding the exploitation of child victims.

The Code of Conduct for the Protection of Children from Sexual Exploitation in Travel and Tourism

The Code of Conduct for the Protection of Children from Sexual Exploitation in Travel and Tourism is the only voluntary set of guidelines travel and tour companies can implement to prevent child sex tourism and trafficking of children. **The Code** is a joint venture between the tourism private sector and ECPAT.



Companies that endorse **The Code** are supported by ECPAT-USA to:

1. Establish an ethical policy regarding commercial sexual exploitation of children.
2. Train the personnel in the country of origin and travel destinations.
3. Introduce a clause in contracts with suppliers, stating a common repudiation of commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children.
4. Provide information to travelers by means of catalogues, brochures, in-flight films, ticket-slips, homepages, etc.
5. Provide information to local “key persons” who will be informally supportive of the Code, at the travel destinations.
6. Report annually to the Code of Conduct Steering Committee.

Why is the Code important in the United States?:

In the United States, 200,000 American children are at risk for exploitation a year. Our youth are strategically targeted and manipulated by pimps who use hotel rooms as venues to abuse children, knowing that systems are not in place to protect the victims. With the use of online classified ads, child trafficking is moving off the streets and behind the closed doors of local hotel rooms.

The children are transported from city to city via U.S. owned airlines and buses by traffickers. Air travel is also a primary means of transportation for child sex tourists– individuals who travel overseas to sexually exploit local children. **The Code** helps these travel and tour companies create programs and policies to identify victims and traffickers so that they can effectively react.

For more information about **The Code**, please visit the [Code of Conduct website](#).

You can also find information about what you can do to promote the Code, at [our Take Action page](#).