



## Florida State U. sorority holds seminar on human trafficking

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(FSView & Florida Flambeau) (U-WIRE) TALLAHASSEE, Fla. -- The women of Florida State University's Theta Nu Xi Sorority, Inc. along with the Alpha Phi Alpha fraternity held a seminar promoting awareness on human trafficking March 1.

The speaker at the seminar was Van P. Williams, a Florida Commission on Human Relations employee and a member of the Alpha Phi Alpha fraternity.

According to the seminar, human trafficking is a form of modern day slavery and many of the people involved end up sending shipments of people to the United States. Usually the trafficking occurs involving commerce and labor.

Williams said during his speech that he began lecturing after he went to a Department of Justice training approximately a year and a half ago. He said he now travels Florida lecturing about the severity of human trafficking.

According to Williams, there have been cases reported in Orange and Pope counties and there are about 18,000 cases reported in the United States annually with approximately 50,000 cases reported worldwide.

"This is a problem that is right at our back doors," Williams said.

Human trafficking yields \$9 billion in profit each year, and is becoming a preferred business for criminals around the world. Upon arrival to the destination country, the people are forced into some sort of labor, often including factory work in a sweat shop or illegal prostitution.

Victims of human trafficking are taken from throughout the world, including Sub-Saharan Africa, Asia, Thailand, Barbados and Brazil. Once the victims arrive at their destination they are forced to submit to the demands of the respective buyers.

According to Williams, many large corporations participate in acts of buying humans that have been taken from their native home in order to find cheap labor. Many of these laborers spend days and nights in the factories earning little or no money.

Throughout the course of the seminar, Williams encouraged the attendees to get involved in helping to aid and support these victims of trafficking. He said to raise awareness by hosting seminars and to develop multimedia material such as pamphlets and billboards.

"The more that we are vigilant and are willing to take a stand to help eradicate this, the better off we will be because law enforcement cannot do it alone," Williams said.

The United States is reportedly taking major steps to abolish human trafficking. One recent act includes the Victims Protection Act, in which victims of trafficking can receive a temporary U.S. visa.

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