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Austin's Neo Soul Slated by Zonta for Poetry Slam to Raise Funds to Stop Human Trafficking in Central Texas

Austin, Texas—The Zonta Club of Austin will present Neo Soul in a poetry slam, April 23 at Zach Scott Theater on the Whisenhunt Stage. This fourth annual Event to Bring Awareness to Human Trafficking will raise funds for local efforts which provide service to trafficking victims and to Zonta International to enhance the status of women globally. Funds raised by the event go to the Zonta Club of Austin Foundation, a non-profit organization. The poetry slam will run from 6:00 to 10 PM. Tickets can be purchased at www.zontaaustin.eventbrite.com Proceeds of the event are given to local community efforts that provide services to trafficking victims and to Zonta International to enhance the status of women worldwide.

Neo Soul is nationally recognized for its poetry slam performances and performs widely in Central Texas. The group performs each Thursday night at Club Illusion in Pflugerville. “Our Zonta Club members work year round to help eradicate this tragic practice. This is no longer referred to as ‘trafficking’ - this is slavery. It affects thousands of people each day and the Zonta Club of Austin is working to bring awareness to this travesty” said President Kara Arteaga. “We work closely with local organizations such as Central Texas Coalition Against Human Trafficking www.ctcaht.org to provide services to victims and to increase awareness which will in turn increase the likelihood cases are reported, investigated and prosecuted.” Human trafficking is the recruitment, harboring, transporting or procurement of a person for labor or services for the purpose of involuntary servitude, slavery or forced commercial sex acts. It forces people to do things they don’t choose to do, with no option to stop and no hope of being released. Cases involving sweat shops, domestic service and brothels have all been identified in Austin and the surrounding areas. In many cases, victims are hiding in plain sight. Traffickers make money by selling human beings or their forced labor. They prey on marginalized members of the community; teens, often naïve about their rights and community resources, are especially vulnerable. Traffickers promise employment, shelter or even affection to attract runaway minors and homeless youth who face the greatest risk of falling victim to human trafficking.

The Austin community combats trafficking through the Office for Victims’ Crime, the Bureau of Justice Assistance-funded Human Trafficking Unit, Central Texas Coalition Against Human

Trafficking, Austin Human Trafficking Task Force, What's Your Response and ALLIES. A National Human Trafficking Hotline (NHTH) offers a nationwide, 24-hour, toll-free telephone number (1-888-3737-888) to help prevent trafficking and provide a resource for local authorities. As more people know about human trafficking, it is more likely to be reported, investigated, and prosecuted.

According to The Texas Human Trafficking Prevention Task Force 2011 report to the Texas Legislature, since 2007 in the State of Texas, 554 human trafficking investigations led to the arrest of 132 suspects. Ultimately, 113 of those suspects were indicted.

The Zonta Club of Austin was organized on May 30, 1951. The club provides service to the Austin community by funding services that help women and children; provides scholarships to young women in business, public affairs, and contributes to graduate level fellowships for women in Aero-space engineering fields. The club also raises money for International service projects to advance the status of women worldwide.

Founded in 1919, Zonta International is a global organization of executives and professionals working together to advance the status of women worldwide through service and advocacy. With more than 31,000 members belonging to more than 1,200 Zonta Clubs in 65 countries and geographic areas, Zontians all over the world volunteer their time, talents and support to local and international service projects, as well as scholarship programs aimed at fulfilling Zonta's mission and objectives.

For more information on the poetry slam and the Zonta Club of Austin go to www.zontaaustin.org or call Kara Arteaga (512)689-6516.