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Embracing Diversity

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Embracing Diversity

02.03.2011 | Culture and Society A Lost Boy of Sudan and human trafficking highlight University of Dayton Human Rights Week activities Feb. 14-18. All events are in Kennedy Union on the University of Dayton campus and are free and open to the public.

"This year's Human Rights Week theme is 'Embracing Diversity to Discover Humanity.' Events and speakers will address a wide variety of local, national and international discrimination issues related to age, race, religion, gender and sexual orientation," said Patrick Boston, vice president of the Human Rights Week committee. "Our goal is to educate students, faculty and community

members about these issues, as well as stimulate discussion about approaches to eradicating these injustices."

The week kicks off at noon Monday, Feb. 14, with University of Dayton anthropology lecturer Simanti Dasgupta discussing sex trafficking, AIDS and the politics of the red-light district in Calcutta, India.

Later that day at 5 p.m., University of Dayton School of Education and Allied Professions faculty Pamela Young and Carolyn Ridenour will discuss discrimination in school systems.

The day will conclude at 7 p.m. with Elizabeth Hummer of the Restavek Freedom Foundation, a non-profit organization committed to ending child slavery, discussing the Foundation's mission and her work in Haiti.

The next day, Tuesday, Feb. 15, Gabriel Bol Deng will discuss his life as a Lost Boy of Sudan who fled his village, earned two college degrees, and founded a nonprofit organization in Sudan to work with the development of his former village. Deng's talk is scheduled for 7:30 p.m.

Earlier that day, communication lecturer Jason Combs and student Mat Cotton will discuss religious persecution and representatives from Catholic Social Services will discuss the organization's efforts to address discrimination and refugees in the Dayton area. The events start at noon and 3 p.m., respectively.

Other events throughout the weekend include:

- **Noon, Wednesday, Feb. 16:** University of Dayton history professor Judith Huacuja will present her research on artists whose work involves Hispanic social issues.
- **2 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 16:** University of Dayton's jazz ensemble will perform tunes by Charles Mingus, Duke Ellington, Count Basie and others, followed by a narration of these jazz performers' struggles against racism.
- **3 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 16:** The Dayton Human Relations Council will discuss civil rights enforcement in Dayton. A workshop about how one can advocate for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender equality follows. Space is limited for the workshop. Register by e-mailing udaytonhrw@gmail.com (url: <mailto:udaytonhrw@gmail.com>).
- **5:30 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 16:** Caryl Nuñez, a senior political science major, will present "Women's Empowerment in the Warm Heart of Africa," a discussion about the work national and international non-governmental organizations that work for women's empowerment in Malawi. Nuñez interviewed with NGO leaders to understand how these organizations define empowerment.
- **7 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 16:** Candace Gingrich-Jones, Human Rights Campaign associate director of the youth and campus outreach program, will discuss discrimination of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender persons in the U.S. in her speech "What Part of 'Human' Don't You Understand?: LGBT Equality in America."
- **Noon, Thursday, Feb. 17:** University of Dayton assistant music professor Heather MacLachlan will discuss Burmese refugees in the U.S. Her presentation will center on tensions in Ft. Wayne, Ind., now home to the largest Burmese population in the U.S.
- **5:00 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 17:** The New Abolitionist Movement, a University of Dayton student organization devoted to combating modern-day slavery, will discuss the turmoil and struggles of victims of trafficking.
- **3 p.m. Friday, Feb. 18 (Sears Recital Hall):** Discrimination for Everybody, a one-act play originally aired by CBS Radio as Created Equal in 1948. The play, adapted and performed throughout the years, presents the "dollars and cents argument against racial and religious intolerance, showing how we pay for discrimination in increased taxes, in a lower standard of living, in wasted skills and in the loss of international good will."

The University of Dayton is a pioneer in human rights education. In 1998, the University launched the country's first undergraduate human rights program. In 2007, the University of Dayton began offering a bachelor's degree in human rights studies.

Students have been instrumental in helping encourage Ohio legislators to pass Senate Bill 235, making human trafficking a felony. University of Dayton representatives attended the ceremony when former Gov. Ted Strickland signed the bill into law in December.

They've also been heavily involved in the creation of Under Our Noses: Modern Day Slavery and What You Can Do About It at the Dayton International Peace Museum, 208 W. Monument Ave. The free multimedia exhibit, which runs through the end of February, examines human trafficking in the region and the nation. Visitors also will learn how they can help combat human trafficking on the local, state and national levels. The museum's hours are 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday and 1 to 5 p.m. Sunday.

For interviews, contact Shawn Robinson at 937-229-3391. For more information on the University of Dayton's Human Rights Week, e-mail udaytonhrw@gmail.com.