SURVIVORS’ Photo Chosen for UN Exhibit

In November, Amnesty International will hold an exhibition at UN headquarters in New York. On display will be SURVIVORS’ staff member Alicia DeLeon-Torres’s photo of a drum circle at one of our healing clubs.

Amnesty International chose the photo from the annual *Global Report on the UN International Day in Support of Victims of Torture*, June 26, 2014, published by the International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims (IRCT). The IRCT is a “health-based umbrella organization that supports the rehabilitation of torture victims and the prevention of torture worldwide.” (*IRCT About Us*, 2014) SURVIVORS is an accredited member of the IRCT and has been selected every year, but one, as a representative of North American member organizations to be showcased in the June 26 global report. The report calls thousands of people worldwide to put an end to torture.

Alicia’s photo (top right) of the drum circle showcases SURVIVORS’ commemoration of June 26th when more than 50 clients, volunteers, and staff attended SURVIVORS’ event. There, they participated in a moment of silence to remember those who lost their lives to torture, shared their stories, and expressed themselves in the drum circle.

The exhibition at the UN tracks the history of the UN Convention Against Torture and will feature a timeline of monumental events. It will showcase the work of the IRCT and its members and highlight the importance of dedicating a day against torture. Our photo will be displayed alongside photographs from several organizations, including Survivors of Torture and Trauma Assistance and Rehabilitation Service, Inc. (Australia), Italian Council for Refugees (Italy), Family Rehabilitation Center (Sri Lanka), and Khiam Rehabilitation Center for the Victims of Torture (Lebanon). The photos will add a personal touch to the exhibition and will show in a colorful format what the torture rehabilitation movement achieves by organizations putting on events and activities in commemoration of the UN International Day in Support of Victims of Torture.

For the full IRCT Report see www.irct.org.
For Museum information see unexhibitsny.org.

Museum App Featuring SURVIVORS

San Diego’s Museum of Man expands its partnership with SURVIVORS to include an interactive mobile application that will provide visitors to the “Instruments of Torture” exhibit with a more meaningful connection to the plight of torture survivors via local poignant personal stories as well as general information regarding why torture occurs, who we are as human beings, and what we are capable of.

The app culminates with a call to action encouraging visitors to take action against torture through a variety of opportunities including advocacy and volunteerism.

The app’s release date is scheduled for January 2015 and is a collaboration of the Museum of Man, the International Legal Studies Program at the California Western School of Law, The Joan Kroc Institute for Peace and Justice at the University of San Diego, and Survivors of Torture, International. The exhibit, which began in 2012, is slated to end in December 2015.

“Your words gave me the strength and positivity I was looking for at this intense, negative phase of my life.” ~ Male client from the Middle East about SURVIVORS.

Contact Information

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Survivors of Torture, International:

- Facilitates the healing of torture survivors and their families;
- Educates professionals and the public about torture and its consequences;
- Advocates for the abolition of torture.

SURVIVORS recently held a screening of Refuge, a documentary by Ben Achtenberg, at the Institute on Violence, Abuse, and Trauma (IVAT) annual conference. Refuge is described by Achtenberg as “a call for awareness and for action.” The film depicts the daily struggles of politically-motivated torture victims who are now immigrants, refugees, or asylum seekers in the United States. Viewers learn how the dedicated social service professionals, volunteers, and advocates – much like the staff, contractors, volunteers, and supporters of SURVIVORS – have united to support torture survivors in their new homes.

Want to learn more about the issues faced by torture survivors while helping SURVIVORS continue to fulfill its mission to educate the public and advocate for torture survivors? Contact our office about a special screening of Refuge with a post-film discussion led by SURVIVORS. More information about the film can be found at www.refugemediaproject.org.

“Today, when I look back, I don’t feel pain. I feel powerful because my life is awesome!” ~ Female client from Africa.

Human Rights Watch Film Festival Returns to San Diego

The Museum of Photographic Arts, in community partnership with SURVIVORS, is honored to host the fifth year of the Human Rights Watch Film Festival in San Diego. The film festival brings to life human rights abuses through story telling in a way that challenges each individual to empathize with and demand justice for all people. For a list of films and ticket information, please visit www.mopa.org/hrwff. The film festival runs January 22-25, 2015.

Mission Statement

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About Us

Survivors of Torture, International was incorporated in February 1997 in response to a need in our community to bring assistance to a segment of the population that struggles with the wounds of politically-motivated torture. It is estimated that at least 11,000 survivors of torture live in San Diego County and 500,000 live in the United States. Torture survivors may be left with lifelong physical and mental health problems if not treated by trained professionals.

Since 1997, SURVIVORS has engaged a caring network of professionals – board members, interpreters, therapists, physicians, dentists – and all of you in the community who give support and encouragement in many ways. To date we have served more than 1,600 clients from more than 80 different countries. Your support enables us to help torture survivors rebuild their lives. Treatment helps survivors heal, reconnect with their families, go back to school, and find employment.

Congratulations, Carmen Kcomt!

SURVIVORS is proud to announce that SURVIVORS’ family member, Carmen Kcomt, has been named a 2014 Hispanic Heritage Month Local Hero by KPBS. We are very proud of her!

Looking for More Ways to Give?

There are countless ways to donate to SURVIVORS. Options include donating your car, collecting old cell phones at your office, school, church, etc. Or, at no cost to you, Ralphs and Amazon Smile will donate a percentage of your normal purchases to SURVIVORS when you sign up for their free giving programs. (Call 619.278.2400 to find out more.)

Thank You to Our 2014 Helping Survivors Heal Fundraising Luncheon Underwriters!

Healing Society Members who make generous five-year pledges. Thank you!

Kathleen Anderson & Jesse Rivera
Jennifer Barrick
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St. Andrew's Lutheran Church, San Diego

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United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture
United Way of San Diego County

Many thanks to our donors and supporters!
Client Demographics

127 new clients and 118 ongoing clients were served during fiscal year 2014 (Oct. 1, 2013 – Sept. 30, 2014).

Our clients were tortured in their home countries due to their race, religion, nationality, social group, or political opinion.

New Healing Group Just for Men

On October 31, 2014, SURVIVORS started a new healing group designed specifically for men. Previously, SURVIVORS hosted the Healing Club, open to all clients, as well as the Art Therapy Group, open only to women. “Many of our clients are male, so we wanted to make sure there was a group just for men.” says Kathi Anderson, SURVIVORS’ executive director. The group is led by Dr. David De Bus, SURVIVORS’ contracted therapist, and Kevin DeKock, MSW Intern (pictured right).

Narrating is a tradition in many cultures, and storytelling can be a source of healing for torture survivors. It allows them to process their experiences of trauma in a safe space with others who have had similar experiences. “The men’s group has been a success,” says DeKock, “and hopefully even more men will attend in the future.” Dr. De Bus and DeKock will welcome the men every Friday morning with coffee, cookies, and a new network of support to assist them on their journey to healing.

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For more information go to www.notorture.org/events or call 619-278-2400

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