

THE LIGHT OF HOPE INSTITUTE

“Promoting Human Rights Around The World”

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Press Release

A Cutting Edge Human Rights Conference Announced

The Light of Hope Institute is collaborating with Arizona State University West, Arizona Department of Health Services, Amnesty International at ASU West and other partners in sponsoring the 2004 Human Rights Conference and Dinner on Saturday, November 20. The conference will convene on the campus of ASU West, 4701 West Thunderbird Road from 9:00 a.m. until 4:30 p.m. The conference is free and open to the public. The dinner will take place at The Ritz-Carlton in Phoenix beginning with a reception at 6:00 p.m. The dinner is chaired by Manny Wong, an eminent leader for human rights causes in the valley and throughout the world.

According to Dr. C. T. Wright, chairman of The Light of Hope Institute, “the purpose of the conference and dinner is to call attention to human rights problems and causes locally and globally.” It is his dream that the Phoenix area will become a leader in promoting human rights efforts. Wright asserts that “the integrated approach of the conference involving scholars, students, educators, activists, clinicians and practitioners will become a model for other stakeholders to emulate.” The theme for this year’s activities is “Promoting Human Rights around the World: Challenges, Provocations and Dispositions.”

The morning session’s keynote speaker and workshop participant is Phoenix-born and award winning author and educator, Stella Pope Duarte. She is best known for her two books, *Fragile Night* and *Let Their Spirits Dance*. During the presentations, she will share her yearlong research into the unsolved murder of 380 young women in Ciudad Juarez. Duarte will discuss how these crimes have impacted protection of women’s rights throughout the world. Additionally, Professor William Paul Simmons of ASU West, a key planner and facilitator of the conference, will offer an historical perspective on human rights. Gilma Cooper, public service director for KSLX Radio, will preside as emcee at the opening ceremony.

The conference will continue with timely and exciting concurrent workshops that are designed to motivate the audience to become aware of some of the contemporary human rights issues confronted daily. The backdrop for the workshops is the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The presenters will highlight topics including women and children rights, HIV/AIDS, immigration, multicultural communication skills, human trafficking, slavery in the 21st century, indigenous peoples, and children’s rights.

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Representatives from several human rights organizations will participate in the concurrent workshops including Arizonans for the Protection of Exploited Children and Adults (APECA), Arizona Department of Health Services, Amnesty International at ASU West, Learning Technologies, A. K. Rice Institute, Disability Network of Arizona, Catholic Social Services, and the New College of Interdisciplinary Arts and Sciences at ASU West.

Following a free lunch and a free movie, the afternoon session will commence at 1:30 p.m. with “The Circle’s Round Table.” The distinguished panelists invited to set at this prestigious round table will represent such groups as the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), Asians American Times Newspapers, faculty from ASU West and Tempe, Mesa Police Department, Arizona Department of Health Services and several other experts. These panelist will dialogue on human rights issues facing today’s society such as the rule of law, corporate and social responsibility, immigration, anti-terrorism, globalization, hunger and cultural diversity as well as human rights problems in China and Africa.

The culminating event is a black tie human rights dinner at The Ritz-Carlton in Phoenix. The keynote address will be delivered by Paul Charlton, United States Attorney, District of Arizona, He will address some of the pertinent human rights issues related to his office. He is the highest ranking federal lawyer in the state of Arizona with the responsibility for prosecuting those who violate federal statutes.

One of the valley’s most recognized human rights advocates and founder of The Asian American Times Newspaper, Manny Wong is chairing the gala dinner. He said, “the dinner will help the valley and the world to prevent the spread of evil, prejudice and hatred.” The proceeds from the dinner will be used to support the work of The Light of Hope Institute including the establishment of a scholarship fund for students interested in volunteerism on the state, national and international levels.

Wong, concludes that the conference and dinner will be successful and that as a result the Valley of the Sun will remain on the cutting edge in the promotion of human rights causes. He noted, “despite the fact that the valley is a most attractive place to live, yet certain segments of the community still experience discrimination, profiling, educational challenges, trafficking, drugs, hunger and homelessness.” Nevertheless, he is optimistic that the valley has a great future if it accepts the findings of the conference and dinner.

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