

Belmont, Tennessee World Affairs Council Hosts Screening of Human Trafficking Documentary

on November 1, 2013

Belmont University's Interdisciplinary Studies and Global Education and the College of Business Administration Center for International Business hosted on Monday the Tennessee World Affairs Council's screening of "Not My Life," a documentary on human trafficking written, directed and produced by Academy Award nominee Robert Bilheimer.

More than 80 people attended the event held in the Massey Performing Arts Center, including Belmont students, students from area colleges, members of the public and area agencies who work to stop human trafficking. "Not My Life" is the first film comprehensively to depict the cruel and dehumanizing practices of global human trafficking and modern slavery. The screening was part of a nationwide program sponsored by the World Affairs Councils of America and made possible by a grant from Carlson & The Carlson Family Foundation.

Filmed on five continents, in a dozen countries, Not My Life features more than 50 interviews with trafficking victims and their advocates in government, law enforcement, civil society, and the private sector. It includes the stories of 10 year-old girls raped in truck stops in the United States and brothels in India, street beggars in Africa, and domestic servants in Washington, D. C. to take viewers into a world that is difficult to imagine, let alone accept.

Following the screening, Dr. Wayne Barnard of the International Justice Mission led a panel discussion of the issues presented in the documentary. Panelists included Free for Life International Chief Executive Officer Colette Bercu, End Slavery Tennessee educator and trainer Karen Karpinski and Second Life Chattanooga Managing Senior Partner Jerry Redman. Each panelist spent five minutes outlining their organization and then took questions from the audience.

"The tears of children look the same everywhere," said Bercu, commenting on how human trafficking is an international problem that takes place in many countries and affects many nationalities.

Bercu and her husband, Dr. Daniel Bercu, founded Free for Life International in 2006. Since that time, they have worked to help rescue and meet the needs of over 400 girls victimized by slavery in five countries, including the United States. The mission of End Slavery Tennessee is to create a slave free Tennessee and holistically restore survivors of human trafficking. The goal of Second Life Chattanooga is to end human sex trafficking. They work to do this by creating awareness that drives action through collaborative relationships with like-minded organizations and individuals to end human sex trafficking in Chattanooga, Tenn. and Southeast Tennessee. The International Justice Mission is a human rights agency that brings rescue to victims of slavery, sexual exploitation and other forms of violent oppression.



