



Sophomore Tom Connell visits the I'm Not For Sale Week table Nov. 2 in the Student Union Building. Students could visit the table to get information about human trafficking and sign a petition to stop sex trafficking throughout the United States. *Anna Grace/Index*

Alumna directs 'Bent'

Play examines discrimination against homosexuals during the Holocaust

BY PHUONG CHU
Staff Reporter

A play about a homosexual man's life during World War II will be performed by Truman students.

The play, "Bent," is about the life of a gay man and his internment in a concentration camp during the Holocaust in Germany during World War II. The main story will feature an all-male cast and reflects the discrimination toward homosexuals, alumna and play director Justine Duda said.

"Most of the time, when people think about the Holocaust, they would think about the Jewish," Duda said. "But sometimes we forget about other groups that the Nazis went after and gay men were one of them."

Despite graduating during May 2012, Duda's passion for theatre keeps her attached to Truman. She currently is directing the play, which was written by Martin Sherman. Duda said she is committed to the play.

Plays at Truman have been an interest for Duda since she was an undergraduate student, she said.

"When I was presented with the idea, I thought it was a great project," Duda said. "There are beautiful moments that moved me when I first read the script. For instance, after the main character is put in the main concentration camp, he meets the love of his life."

As a director, Duda said she enjoys following and staging the journey of all the characters and how their personalities grow during the play.

"The two main characters, even though they are in love, cannot touch, talk or show emotion directly to each other," Duda said. "Otherwise, they would get anywhere from being beaten to killed. It's interesting that after all the obstacles and barriers, we still manage to see the humanity that comes from their love."

Duda said she wants the play to reinforce the importance of equality and being open-minded to different cultures and types of people. She said she wants to celebrate the growing understanding today toward the homosexual community.

"The story itself is sad," sophomore stage manager Jessica Tripp said. "But at the same time, it's deep, intense and somewhat hopeful with the message of being who you are, no matter what you have to go through. The main character in the play initially does not identify himself with homosexuality but ultimately when he does, he frees himself and becomes the person he longs to be."

Senior Cassandra White will design the play's settings, she said. She has been working on the costumes and backgrounds for the play since the beginning of the semester.

White will be making scenes from an apartment to a night club to a train station to a concentration camp to a city, she said. White said that despite their limited budget, she does her best to create the settings.

The crew is currently organizing and planning for the play, White said. She said she looks forward to getting the sets ready for the show.

Audition begins at 5:30 p.m. Nov. 11 in the James G. Severns Theatre and everyone is welcome to participate. Prism, a club that embraces the idea of fairness for the homosexual community at Truman, will sponsor and help fundraise for the show. The play will take place at 6:30 p.m. Nov. 30 and Dec. 1 in The Orpheum at Pickler's Famous. Doors will open at 6 p.m.

I'm Not For Sale Week works to raise awareness

BY SARAH MUIR
Staff Reporter

Human trafficking isn't just a crime reserved for third world countries — it is something happening throughout the United States, according to the U.S. Department of State's 2010 Trafficking in Persons Report. I'm Not For Sale Week worked to draw attention to this problem.

Amnesty International and Students for Social Change sponsored I'm Not For Sale Week Oct. 31 to Nov. 5, sophomore Natalia Albanese said. Albanese is involved with both organizations. One of the goals of the event was to raise awareness about human trafficking and poverty throughout the U.S. as well as internationally, junior Aaron Chisum said.

"Human trafficking doesn't sound like something that happens in America, but it does, and we want people to know it's an issue here, too," said junior Aaron Chisum, Amnesty International president.

Human trafficking is the fastest growing criminal industry in the U.S., and the second largest, according to the U.S. Department of Justice. Worldwide, there are 12.3 million people being trafficked and 300,000 American children are at risk to be trafficked into the sex industry, according to the U.S. Department of State's 2010 Trafficking in Persons Report. The average age of victims is 12 to 14 years old, according to the Justice Department's report.

To raise awareness, Amnesty International and Students for Social Change had a table set up Oct. 31 through Nov. 2 in the Student Union Building, Chisum said. At the table, he said students could get information about human trafficking and sign a petition to send to the three states in the U.S. that do not have explicit laws against human trafficking — Colorado, Wyoming and Pennsylvania.

The goal is to get all of the states standing against human trafficking, Chisum said. Even though federal laws against human trafficking exist across the U.S., state laws still play an important part, according to a Dec. 1, 2011 Associated Press article. Federal prosecutors have limited resources to pursue human trafficking and often rely on states to take care of crime in their borders, according to the Associated Press. A lack of coordination between state laws creates



difficulties for prosecutors. A state with less restrictive laws will make it easier to commit crimes, according to the AP report.

Chisum said Amnesty International and Students for Social Change were handing out handmade red and blue bracelets at the table. The colors represent stopping violence against women and stopping human trafficking, he said. Students could take a picture with a sign that read, "I am not for sale and no one should be." Chisum said this was an event that showed Truman's students will not stand for human trafficking.

Sophomore Joseph Meinert, Students for Social Change president, said his group is planning to create a collage of all the pictures of Truman students holding up a sign that says "Truman Is Not For Sale." Their goal is to get it on the organization's website and Facebook, he said. They also want to get the attention of those who are unaware of the problem, he said.

Students for Social Change screened the movie "Flesh" Oct. 31 in Baldwin Hall's Little Theater, Chisum said. The documentary focuses on the truth behind sex trafficking throughout the United States and the problems victims face, he said. Across the U.S., as soon as a minor enters into prostitution,

a trafficking case exists, according to the "Flesh" website. Victims are held captive through physical threats and constraints, but sometimes psychological constraints are used too, according to the website. To help students further understand the reality of human trafficking throughout America, Carrissa Phelps, a victim of trafficking, was invited to speak at Truman, Chisum said.

Phelps came to campus Nov. 5 to talk about her experience with poverty and trafficking in the U.S., Chisum said.

"Her story is really powerful because she was a victim of poverty and trafficking and now she has an MBA and a law degree from UCLA," Chisum said.

According to Phelps' website she has a new book titled "Runaway Girl," which shares her story and how she overcame her struggles, hoping to encourage others in similar situations.

Other events during the week included Phi Sigma Pi's three-day "Stop Human Trafficking" sales tables, running Nov. 5 to 7, Meinert said. The table featured items from the Rapha House, which is an organization that sells items made by women who have been rescued from trafficking in Nepal and Cambodia, he said.

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