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### **DO YOU KNOW LACY? CAMPAIGN KICKS OFF IN ARIZONA**

PHOENIX, AZ—“Hi, my name is Lacy”. I’m 13 years old. I am rented every night to different men. I live in your community. Will you please help me?”

**ARE YOU OKAY WITH THAT?** The Soroptimist International of the Kachinas are not!

This month Soroptimist International of the Kachinas, in partnership with Shared Hope International (SHI), is kicking off SHI’s national billboard campaign with the first billboard to raise awareness about the exploitation of our children in the rapidly growing sex industry—right here in Phoenix.

- Billboard location: near the intersection of Glendale and 83<sup>rd</sup> avenues.

Shared Hope International, a non-profit organization which exists to rescue and restore women and children in crisis, launched an awareness and training campaign called *Do You Know Lacy?*. On January 12, 2012, SHI will provide a one day training session in Phoenix in an effort to expand the message and provide valuable information on prevention and care for victims and on the legislation needed to stop the trafficking.

Soroptimist International of the Kachinas club in Glendale has worked diligently for the past four years to bring the issues and concerns of Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking (DMST) to Valley residents providing group awareness and educational programs for parents, teens and community members. SIK President Virginia Corder explains that this billboard expresses the

passionate conviction of Soroptimist International of the Kachinas to fight against sex slavery of our young women.

- From 2005-2009, 136 juveniles were arrested for prostitution in Maricopa, Pima, Navajo, Yuma and Yavapai.
- Since 2005, the Maricopa County Attorney's Office has tried more than 82 cases of traffickers/pimps, but only five cases of buyers of sex with children.
- The reported average age of a sexually exploited child's entrance into prostitution in Phoenix is 14.

Corder insists that "More needs to be done to identify victims, assist in their rehabilitation, prevent sex slavery from happening and advocate for better laws and enforcement of those laws". Phoenix is not immune to DMST; it is a local problem and every member of our community should be informed, outraged and fighting against it.