



For Immediate Release
June 24, 2010

Contact: Josh Kamensky
323-205-6634
ptvla@joshkamensky.com

L.A. Businesses To Donate Proceeds For Torture Survivors As Part Of Global Commemoration

*Mayor Villaraigosa, Councilmember Perry, Assembly Speaker Perez
Endorse "Profits for Peace" Campaign*

Effort Kicks Off 30th Anniversary of Nation's Oldest Torture Survivors Organization

Please see Los Angeles Times op-ed "LA, THE CITY OF REFUGE FOR TORTURE SURVIVORS" by Harold Meyerson – 6/24/10 - <http://cl.ly/1TAI>

Los Angeles – Launching a new initiative in conjunction with a global effort on behalf of torture survivors, Los Angeles businesses and restaurants will donate proceeds to the country's oldest torture survivors group.

The "Profits for Peace" campaign will raise funds for the Program for Torture Victims (PTV) to kick off its 30th anniversary year on United Nations Day in Support of Victims of Torture, observed on June 26 by human rights groups across the world. Participating businesses will contribute a portion of their profits to PTV for a day, a week, a month or a year.

Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa praised the new initiative. "Los Angeles has always opened its arms to those in need, and it is in that spirit that the Program for Torture Victims carries on its noble work," said the Mayor. "I hope that people around the city will join me in supporting PTV, and in so doing will help heal the victims of torture who now call Los Angeles home."

"It's vital to have support, relief and care for people who have been subject to torture," said Councilmember Jan Perry, in whose 9th district the Program for Torture Victims is located. "The Program for Torture Victims helps survivors turn unimaginable nightmares into successful lives."

"We are sadly reminded with too frequent regularity of the fact that torture is still used to subjugate and victimize people all over the world," said Speaker John A. Pérez. "The Program for Torture Victims does indispensable work in aiding those who have been victims of torture, and I strongly urge the public to patronize those businesses that have generously agreed to donate their proceeds in support of such a worthy cause."

Participating businesses in "Profits for Peace" to date include Louise's Trattoria (all locations), Takami Sushi and Robata Restaurant, Good Girl Dinette, Mo Chica, La Maison de Crème, Chichen Itza Restaurant, Thai Corner Food Express, Pink's Hot Dogs, Bo Balsim's Hair, Skin and Nail Salon, Handmade by Mariah (clothing and accessories), Studio City Yoga, and Alignment for Life (life coaching and yoga). Patrons must mention PTV or present a coupon, and restaurants and merchants have pledged amounts from 10% to 100% of proceeds. The full list, schedule and a coupon book can be found at <http://www.ptvla.org/news-and-events-30-anniversary.html>.

Some participating restaurateurs have personal connections to PTV's work. "The Pink family traces its history back to Central Europe and Russia and immigrated in the early 1900's to the U.S. to escape the type of torture still inflicted on many others in the world today," said Gloria Pink of Pink's Hot Dogs. "We fully appreciate the vital importance of supporting the Program for Torture Victims Profits for Peace Campaign."

--MORE--

--CONT--

"In the 80's and 90's there was a war in my country," said Peruvian immigrant Ricardo Zarate of Mo Chica Restaurant. "I was very closely affected by war and torture. I'm helping because there was a very difficult moment with mistreatment from the terrorists and the government. Program for Torture Victims helps people who came through that time."

Founded in 1980, PTV is the nation's oldest organization advocating for torture survivors. Through its dedicated staff and volunteers, PTV provides a new lease on life to impoverished immigrant adults and children in Los Angeles whose lives have been shattered by state-sponsored torture.

PTV offers comprehensive medical, psychological, legal and case management services to its clients. In addition, it conducts ongoing research on treatment methods and provides training to legal and health care professionals as well as the general public about the effects of torture on the individual and society.

"Abandoned and aggrieved by their own countries, the thousands of men and women who have walked through our doors from over 65 different countries have sought a new beginning here in Los Angeles – the city of second chances," said new executive director Julie Gutman, a former senior advisor to Mayor Villaraigosa and city commissioner. "With the help of the Program for Torture Victims, they have found that new beginning, re-entering society and the workforce and becoming contributing members of our community."

On June 25, the Los Angeles City Council will honor PTV for 30 years of work on behalf of thousands of survivors of state-sponsored torture and commemorate UN international Day in Support of Torture Victims, declaring June 26 Victims of Torture Day in the city of Los Angeles. L.A. is now the largest port of entry for incoming refugees and asylum-seekers in the United States and home to the highest number of torture survivors in the country.

"I had no job, no home, no family. I wanted to die," said Rossana, a torture survivor from El Salvador who was raped and brutalized during that country's civil war. "PTV saved my life, and I am now able to help others in Los Angeles without fear I will be tortured."

To raise awareness about the problem of torture and the challenges facing survivors here in Los Angeles, PTV will be hosting a number of events in honor of its 30th year. For more information about these events and "Profits for Peace," please visit www.ptvla.org.

Media Availability

Torture survivors, participating business owners, Program for Torture Victims co-founder Dr. Jose Quiroga and new executive director Julie Gutman will be available for interviews on June 25 at L.A. City Hall in Council Chambers at 11 am. Phone interviews and **restaurant visits** can also be coordinated.

###

Program for Torture Victims

3655 S. Grand Ave, Suite 290 Los Angeles, CA 90007
T: (213) 747-4944/ F: (213) 747-4662/ info@ptvla.org
Visit us at www.ptvla.org