



NEWS RELEASE

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Meeting Planning Firm Leads the Charge to End Child Sex Trafficking *Nix Conference & Meeting Management to sign new Code of Conduct*

ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI – Nix Conference & Meeting Management is leading the charge among meeting planners worldwide to help end child sex trafficking. Nix is initiating a first-ever Meeting Planners Code of Conduct in January, Human Trafficking Awareness Month, and encouraging industry peers and competitors to join them in addressing the issue at every hotel where they do business.

“Child sex trafficking is widespread, occurring right now even at luxury hotels in the United States,” said Kimberly Ritter, Senior Account Manager and coordinator of Nix’ initiative to fight child sex trafficking. “Most hotel executives have no idea this exploitation of children exists at their properties. Once they become aware, however, they can establish policies and train staff to identify and take action against child sex trafficking.”

Nix is the first meeting planning company in the U.S. to sign a Meeting Planner’s Code of Conduct, which they developed in cooperation with ECPAT-USA (End Child Prostitution, Pornography and Trafficking). They will sign the new code on Wednesday, January 11, 2012, during a Human Trafficking Awareness Day event at the Soulard Preservation Hall, 1921 South Ninth Street, from 4:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.

Wednesday January 11 is National Human Trafficking Awareness Day, and January is National Slavery and Human Trafficking Awareness Month.

“As meeting and conference planners, we are using our close ties with hotel general managers and other professional resources to raise awareness and help end child sex trafficking,” said Molly Hackett, Principal at Nix.

“This is a wonderful and groundbreaking way to address the issue of child protection in tourism,” said Michelle Guelbart, M.S.W., Private Sector Project Coordinator of ECPAT-USA. “Working with Nix in the conference and meeting management sector is going to open doors that we did not have the resources or connections to access in the past.”

Nix has an extensive reach in the hotel industry, researching more than 700 hotels and visiting more than 50 hotels both within the U. S. and internationally on behalf of their clients each year. As part of their commitment to end child sex trafficking, Nix recently added a clause to their standard Request for Proposal inquiring about hotel policies on human trafficking.

“One hotel responded to our question on human trafficking policies by saying they have pedestrian crosswalks in front of their entrance,” said Jane Quinn, Principal at Nix. “Traffickers, unfortunately, depend on that kind of naivety to carry out their operations.”

Nix discusses child sex trafficking and exploitation in one-on-one meetings with hotel general managers, provides written materials, and encourages them to sign the ECPAT-USA Code of Conduct for hotels.

Nix Conference & Meeting Management first learned about the issue of child sex trafficking in hotels three years ago when a client, the Federation of Sisters of St. Joseph, asked them to inquire about hotel policies on human trafficking while researching sites for a conference.

“This was a request and an issue we had not heard about before,” said Jane Quinn. “As we researched it, we realized we could have a real impact on this crisis.”

In collaboration with the Sisters of St. Joseph, Nix successfully encouraged the Millennium Hotel St. Louis to sign the ECPAT-USA Code of Conduct for hotels in July 2011. That experience inspired Nix to develop a similar code of conduct for their own niche in the industry -- meeting and conference planners.

“The bubble of people in our industry who are aware of child sex trafficking is growing every day,” said Molly Hackett. “Our goal is increase that awareness. We hope that one day soon, we’ll be able to provide our clients with a choice of hotels that are proactive on this issue.”

Meeting planners who adopt the Meeting Planner’s Code of Conduct agree to establish an internal social responsibility policy, implement an action plan with objectives and timeframes, and report annually. For more information on the code, contact Kimberly Ritter at (314) 645-1455 or kritter@nixassoc.com.

Nix Conference & Meeting Management, based in St. Louis, has managed meetings, conferences and trade shows for associations, religious organizations, businesses and nonprofits since 1985. Nix has managed events on four continents and in 17 countries. For more information, call (314) 645-1455 or visit www.nixassoc.com.

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