Author Carissa Phelps to Present ‘Healing and Strength, Hope for Survivors’ April 29 at Cal Poly

SAN LUIS OBISPO – Author and attorney Carissa Phelps, an advocate for the homeless and “transitional age youth” (16- to 24-year-olds), will speak at Cal Poly on April 29.

The talk is free and open to the public. It will run from 6 to 8 p.m. in Chumash Auditorium in the University Union.

In her presentation, “Healing and Strength, Hope for Survivors,” Phelps will share her journey of letting go of a history of abuse, neglect, abandonment and trauma. By sharing her own story of healing and reconciliation, she hopes to inspire others to do the same.

A survivor of child sex trafficking in California, Phelps was abandoned in the lobby of Fresno’s juvenile hall. After running away from group homes, she ended up on the street, homeless and alone. At age 12, she fell into prostitution.

With the help of a dedicated counselor and math teacher in juvenile hall, Phelps found a love for education and went on to earn a bachelor’s degree in mathematics from CSU Fresno. After teaching for a year, she returned to school, earning a Juris Doctorate from the UCLA School of Law and an MBA from the UCLA School of Management in 2007.

She is an advocate for victims’ rights, a motivational speaker, social entrepreneur, youth mentor, and founder of Runaway Girl, an agency that aims to organize survivors of human trafficking and care for survivors and victims in their own communities.

Also during the evening, a 20-minute documentary titled “Carissa” by David Sauvage will be shown, and Phelps will hold a book signing of her memoir, “Runaway Girl: Escaping Life on the Streets, One Helping Hand at a Time.”

The event is sponsored by Cal Poly’s Chicana Latino Faculty and Staff Association; Career Services; the College of Agriculture, Food and Environmental Sciences; the College of Liberal Arts; the College of Science and Mathematics; Kennedy Library; the MultiCultural Center; Orfalea College of Business; Safer; and the Franciscan Federation.

More information is available at www.calpoly.edu/-cllSa.

Note to Editors: To schedule an interview with Carissa Phelps, contact Lee McNeil at lec@carissaphelps.com or 805-318-7676.

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