

Students Premier Human Trafficking Film

November 12, 2010 2:45 AM Joseph Halm
newwave@tulane.edu

A group of more than 50 Tulane social work students were motivated to take action Wednesday (Nov. 10) after viewing a documentary about human trafficking of children in the cocoa industry.



Trevor Gahafer, social work graduate student, takes his turn to sign a petition calling for an end to forced labor of children in the cocoa industry. (Photo by Joe Halm)

Following a screening of *The Dark Side of Chocolate*, about the continued allegations of human trafficking of young boys among Ivory Coast cocoa farms, the students signed a petition urging the Hershey Co. to take steps toward ending the practice on cocoa farms in its production system.

[Social work](#) graduate students Trevor Gahafer and Lindsay Lee organized the viewing of the film, which was produced by Danish journalist Miki Mistrati. The students say it was the first screening of the documentary in the South.

"I've seen it with my own eyes," says Gahafer, a former Peace Corps volunteer. "Trafficking affects all people ? not just women and girls but men and boys as well ? so we wanted to target that gap in awareness about human trafficking."

So far, the film's circulation has been limited in the United States, but Lee hopes the video can lead to a grassroots movement to put an end to human trafficking practices in which young boys are taken from Mali and forced to work in Ivory Coast cocoa fields for no pay.

Lee adds that people can do their part by only buying [fair trade chocolate](#), which currently accounts for just three percent of the overall chocolate market share.

“If it increases to 15 percent, that is a tipping point where the industry as a whole will take notice,” she says. “If everyone in that room only buys fair trade chocolate from now on, that increases the market share. If we're pushing toward that point, that is when corporations will start taking notice.”

A report released in September by several non-governmental agencies said, “Hershey does not have a system in place to ensure that its cocoa purchased from this region is not tainted by labor rights abuses.”