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Speaker reveals reality of sex trafficking

[Kaycie Surrell](#)

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You would never guess by looking at guest speaker Katie Rhoades that she was anything other than a graduate student struggling like the rest of us with work, school, bills and the impending future. You would certainly never have been able to tell that she was once a victim of sex trafficking.

When we think of sex trafficking, we tend to gravitate toward images of Liam Neeson standing in dirty hallways of international hostels searching for his daughter who was forced into the slave trade. According to Rhoades' story, the sex trade isn't limited to foreign countries; it happens right here in the United States under the guise of prostitution.

Prostitution isn't a very well- respected profession in this country, but it isn't exactly flying under anyone's radar either. Movies like "Pretty Woman," "Hustle and Flow" and "Taxi Driver" all feature prostitutes as main characters and seem to lighten the nature of the profession. The truth is, the women who are portrayed in those movies and women that work as prostitutes day to day are part of the sex trade.

"It is how thousands of women in this country live, and it's not a party," Rhoades said.

Courtney Current, SAC Lectures chair and junior public relations major, said they originally wanted someone to visit Missouri State who would debate the legalization of prostitution, but they were led in a different direction toward Rhoades who, due to the nature of her involvement with the sex trade, wouldn't debate the topic. Instead, she provided an insider's perspective.

"I think that human trafficking is a terrible thing that is kind of overlooked or looked at like it only happens in foreign countries and not in our own backyards and in American cities. I think people should be made aware that it does happen," Current said. "It happens in St. Louis, and I'm sure it happens in Springfield."

Rhoades' story is a heart-wrenching one that proves that even a city like Springfield isn't free from the dangers of the sex trade.



Media Credit: [Michael Gullede](#)
Katie Rhoades talked about her experience with sex trafficking.

Rhoades was 19 years old living in Portland, Ore., when she was trafficked. She had been working in a strip club and was approached by the "bottom girl" of her future pimp.

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posted 3/22/11 @ 9:44 AM CST

Hey, Great post indeed. Thanks You for it. It was really interesting and nice to read. Despite of this great style, you know, I found some questions against, but you know, everyone just has it's own opinion.

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