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GRACE FARMS FOUNDATION HIRES ESTEEMED HUMAN TRAFFICKING EXPERTS LUIS C.DEBACA AND RICHARD SCHECHTER AS SENIOR ADVISORS

Advisors to help spearhead Foundation's Justice Initiative advocacy and policy programs



Richard Schechter and Krishna Patel at Grace Farms during a 2017 workshop titled "Breaking the Financial Chains: Disrupting Financial Flows associated with Slavery, Human Trafficking, Forced Labor & Child Labor" © Dean Kaufman



U.S. Ambassador Luis C. deBaca speaking about human trafficking at Grace Farms during the 2015 Justice Initiative Launch © Sasha Arutyunova

NEW CANAAN, Conn., June 6, 2017 – As part of an ongoing campaign to eradicate the many forms of modern day trafficking, Grace Farms Foundation announces the appointment of U.S. Ambassador Luis C. deBaca, the former head of the State Department's Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons, and prominent federal prosecutor Richard Schechter as Senior Advisors. Ambassador C. deBaca and Mr. Schechter will help spearhead the Foundation's Justice Initiative advocacy programs and key anti-trafficking legislation and policy in partnership with Krishna Patel, the Foundation's Justice Initiative Director and General Counsel.

"Grace Farms Foundation is thrilled to officially welcome Ambassador C. deBaca and Mr. Schechter to our team," said Sharon Prince, President of Grace Farms Foundation. "Lou and Rich are esteemed experts in the field and have decades of experience leading the charge to eradicate human trafficking. We look forward to joining forces to put an end to modern day slavery here in Connecticut and around the world."

In 2015, Grace Farms Foundation opened Grace Farms and the acclaimed SANAA-designed River building in New Canaan, Conn. as a new open space for exploring nature, arts, justice, community, and faith. Open six days a week, Grace Farms has served as a platform for public programs and collaborative workshops to respond to some of the most complex human issues of our time, including human trafficking and modern day slavery.

Since the opening, Ms. Patel has been at the center of organizing actions against human trafficking at a state, national, and international level. In June 2016, she partnered with [United Nations University](#) to convene global experts for a workshop, "*Fighting Human Trafficking in Conflict*," that led to language in the first ever resolution by the UN Security Council to combat trafficking by non-state terrorist groups. Ms. Patel has also led innovative big

data platform training sessions for law enforcement in the region, and helped to draft the effective [Connecticut Public Act No. 16-71](#), which has become the most comprehensive state-wide anti-trafficking legislation in the nation. Throughout this time, Ambassador C.deBaca and Mr. Schechter have participated as keynote panelists and strategic counsel. Most recently on behalf of the Foundation, Mr. Schechter helped develop a curriculum to train hospitality industry employees in the state of Connecticut about the signs of human trafficking, per statutes established in Public Act. No. 16-71.

“Over the past year and half, we’ve made great strides in impeding this horrendous crime, but there is much more to be done” said Ms. Patel. “I can’t think of two better people to help us fight this battle and build the private and public partnerships we need to raise awareness and end human trafficking.”

From 2009 to 2014, Ambassador C.deBaca coordinated U.S. government activities in the global fight against contemporary forms of slavery as head of the State Department’s Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons under the Obama Administration. He then served as a Director in the Department of Justice’s Office of Sex Offender Sentencing, Monitoring, Apprehending, Registering, and Tracking. Previously, Ambassador C.deBaca was Counsel to the House Committee on the Judiciary, where his portfolio for Chairman John Conyers, Jr. included: national security, intelligence, immigration, civil rights, and modern slavery issues. At the Justice Department beginning in the early 1990s, he obtained the convictions of dozens of traffickers, helped to liberate more than 600 victims from bondage, and established the Worker Exploitation Task Force and the Human Trafficking Prosecutions Unit. In 2017, he retired from the Department of Justice as one of the country’s most decorated federal prosecutors.

For almost 30 years, Mr. Schechter has prosecuted significant criminal securities, corporate fraud and public corruption matters. He has also successfully investigated and tried cases involving white collar fraud, civil rights, child exploitation, and human trafficking violations. From 1987 to 2005, Mr. Schechter was the Deputy Criminal Chief, a Senior Litigation Counsel and an Assistant United States Attorney in the U.S. Attorney’s Office in the District of New Jersey. In 2002, he was designated a Special Attorney for the Department of Justice to prosecute the Cendant accounting fraud trial, one of the largest accounting fraud cases ever tried. Since 2005, Mr. Schechter served as a Senior Litigation Counsel in the U.S. Attorney’s Office in the District of Connecticut. Committed to the education of younger attorneys, he served as an adjunct professor for four years teaching at Seton Hall Law School. For his last 20 years of service with the Department of Justice, he served as an instructor at the National Advocacy Center in Columbia, S.C., teaching evidence and trial practice to Assistant U.S. Attorneys throughout the Department of Justice. During that time, he also served as the Department’s expert in the area of evidentiary privileges providing advice to countless AUSAs throughout the United States. In his almost three decades as a federal prosecutor, he has received many awards as a prosecutor and teacher, including two Director’s Awards, one of the highest awards given to federal prosecutors. Mr. Schechter retired from the Department in 2016.

To learn more about the Foundation’s Justice Initiative, please visit gracefarms.org/justice.

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About Grace Farms Foundation

Grace Farms Foundation was established in 2009 as a private operating foundation with 501c3 status in New Canaan, Connecticut. The Foundation supports initiatives in the areas of nature, arts, justice, community, and faith, and encourages participation on a local, national, and global level. Grace Farms Foundation carries out its work principally through the publicly available facilities and integrated programs of Grace Farms, an 80-acre property owned and operated by the Foundation, where individuals and not-for-profit organizations can come together to collaborate for good.

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