

# SOARING SPIRITS



PETRA FOUNDATION FELLOWS  
*1989-2015*

# CELEBRATING 25 YEARS

*and a national network of  
leaders working to build  
a more just society.*





Petra Tölle Shattuck

## PREFACE

It is a formidable challenge to do justice to the stories of the one hundred inspiring Fellows who have become part of the Petra Network over the past 25 years. When these leaders tell their own stories the most common theme is, "I didn't do it, the group did it." Their accounts, like their work, are rich with collaborative and collective spirit.

Together and individually, the Petra Fellows work to combat racism, poverty, class discrimination, violence, ignorance, injustice and inequity. Their work has given voice to many silenced or disenfranchised groups, and proven the strength and power of solidarity. The work fits no convenient geographic boundaries — it extends from the fish traps of Kanaka Maoli on the Hawaiian Archipelago to the kivas of Old Oraibi on the Hopi Third Mesa in Arizona; from the migrant labor camps of Florida to the Bracero housing of Watsonville, California; from the backwoods of both Carolinas to pockets of the inner cities of New York, Boston, Washington, Los Angeles, San Francisco, New Orleans, and Chicago.

Petra Fellows are expert organizers, practiced in the use of advocacy on the street as well as at the ballot box. Their tools range from the violin to the pen, from the Internet to the movie camera — and always they inspire others to take action. They emphasize the need for balanced leadership: both stepping back and empowering others as well as working on the front line of change. On a daily basis, they document and fight against injustice, intolerance, public dangers, political corruption, and health and environmental threats.

Fellows have created a legacy of tangible works as they address problems as persistent as those facing the oldest continuously-inhabited community in North America, as intimidating as fascism, as perniciously resilient as white supremacism, as harsh as the back roads of the segregated South, as heart-rending as the battlefields of Southeast Asia, as brutal as worker oppression on loading docks and in the fields, and as violent as the marginalized communities of our cities.

Petra Fellows remain undeterred by threats and scare tactics of those who oppose their work. While nurturing their families and friends, Fellows manage to bring hope where there has been little before. Never satisfied to fix a single problem, they organize to change systemic conditions that create the problems and mobilize communities to ensure their voices are heard to alter the balance of power.

These compassionate warriors are a vital part of a nationwide social movement for social and economic justice.

# THE PETRA FOUNDATION: CELEBRATING 25 YEARS

Petra Tölle Shattuck was born in Nazi Germany in 1942 and grew up on a farm in the shadow of the Holocaust and the Third Reich. She came to the United States in 1961 to work as an au pair for an American family. In search of answers to questions few were then asking in Germany, she stayed in the U.S. to continue her education, earning a B.A. on a scholarship at Pomona College, and a PhD at Columbia University. In her short life as a teacher, scholar, lawyer and activist, Petra was committed to resisting intolerance and promoting justice. She had a special ability to help others who were struggling to overcome barriers, reaching for achievement and seeking to make a difference.

In 1970, Petra began to teach American constitutional law and civil liberties at the John Jay College of Criminal Justice in New York. In 1982, while raising three children, and meeting the needs of an extended family in Germany and the United States, Petra began the study of law, graduating with high honors from Boston University Law School in 1986.

As a teacher and a lawyer, Petra undertook many human rights projects. At the time of her death in 1988 from a cerebral hemorrhage, she and a colleague, Jill Norgren, were finishing *Partial Justice: Federal Indian Law in a Liberal Constitutional System* (Berg 1990), which assessed the treatment of Indian land claims by the federal courts and the Congress. In other projects, Petra tackled issues of racial justice, economic inequality, civil rights strategy, violations of free speech, abusive and discriminatory police practices, and the impact on local communities of federal nuclear power policy.

In the 25 years since it was established to commemorate the life of Petra Shattuck, the Petra Foundation has grown beyond a memorial into a network of individuals, families and communities who are part of an ongoing and never-ending struggle for human rights. Supported entirely by private donations and a few small institutional grants, the Foundation has devoted its limited resources to annual awards to four Petra Fellows and an annual weekend gathering of Fellows and supporters. 100 Petra fellowships totaling \$750,000 have been awarded.

Each year the Foundation through its network has mounted a broad search for grassroots human rights leaders who combine activism and thought,

force of character, independence of judgment and clarity of expression. It has sought out people who are not widely recognized, who have the capacity to overcome obstacles, take uncommon risks, and persevere without the safety net of personal privilege or institutional support.

The metaphor for the Petra Foundation is the kitchen table. In our kitchen the struggle for human rights is always a topic of conversation. Around our table the Petra family has shared the stories and challenges of its Fellows, its founders and its members, a richly diverse group from many racial and socioeconomic backgrounds. Over the years, the extended Petra family has celebrated the births of many children and grandchildren. It has also mourned the passing of some of its most dedicated members, including two of its founders, Eli Segal and John O'Sullivan, and four of its Fellows, Robert Avant, Samuel Cotton, Mary Dann, and Allan Macurdy. New members of the family have been welcomed every year, each contributing in a special way. Finally, at the heart of the Shattuck family and the center of my life is a very special person, my wife Ellen Hume.

This year, as the Petra Foundation celebrates its 25th anniversary and we gather to honor four new Petra Fellows, the Foundation itself is celebrating a change. After a quarter century of annual fundraising to support the awards program, we will not be making new awards after this year and the Foundation will cease its formal operations. But there is a bright future for Petra Fellows, who have been invited by the Center for Community Change, a national organization closely aligned with the values of the Petra Foundation, to become leaders in a national network of grassroots movement builders. Petra Fellows will bring their energy and their commitment to future collaborations with other grassroots leaders across the country. The Center will actively engage Petra Fellows, providing support through training and social media, amplifying their voices and their work, and maintaining the Petra website and the history of the Petra Foundation.

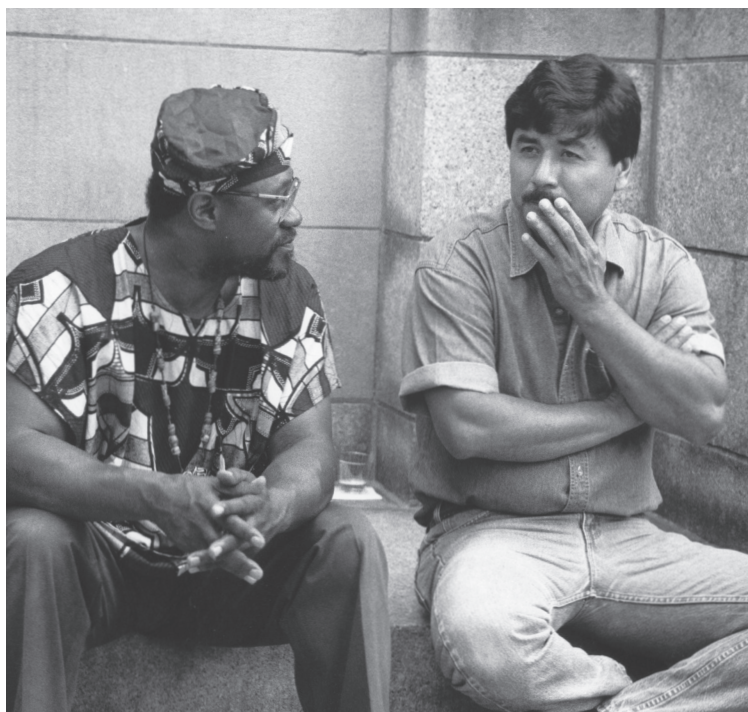
As Scott Armstrong, one of our founding members, wrote in 1988, "Petra Shattuck preferred to see others as but one voice in a chorus of those willing to stand up against injustice." By forging links between Petra Fellows and other leaders at the Center for Community Change, the chorus will grow, and the forces against injustice will be strengthened. Today we celebrate the legacy of the Petra Foundation over the past 25 years, and we look ahead to the exciting opportunities for Petra Fellows in the future.

*John Shattuck*  
June 27, 2015



# PETRA FOUNDATION FELLOWS

*1989-2015*



## 1989

HAVA KOHAV BELLER... 25  
MATTIE BUTLER..... 31  
DAVID HAWK..... 56  
JOAN TIMECHE..... 104

## 1990

GRAYLAN HAGLER..... 54  
KENNETH HUNTER..... 58  
CECILIA RODRIGUEZ... 93  
LINDA STOUT..... 101

## 1991

ROBIN CANNON..... 34  
MURPHY DAVIS..... 41  
KAMAU MARCHARIA... 73  
TOM TSO..... 109

## 1992

ROBERT DE-SENA..... 44  
EARNEST GATES..... 50  
ROBERTA  
GUASPARI-TZAVARAS.. 52  
LEONARD ZESKIND... 116







## 1993

MARCIA CAPUANO.....	35
TIRSO MORENO .....	76
RON PODLASKI.....	87
LUCY POULIN.....	89

## 1994

ELLEN BAXTER .....	24
RON CHISOM.....	38
AL KURLAND.....	68
ALLAN MACURDY .....	72

## 1995

NANCY DORSINVILLE... 45	
GERALD	
ONE FEATHER .....	81
MAYSENG SAETERN....	95
RACHEL YODER .....	115

## 1996

SOCCORRO HERNANDEZ	
BERNASCONI.....	26
KEKUNI BLAISDELL ....	28
SANDRA JACKSON	
CROSS.....	60
KEN PAFF.....	82



Keynote speaker Ruth Bader Ginsburg with guests



## 1997

SAMUEL COTTON. . . . . 39  
LENNY FOSTER . . . . . 49  
RAHIM JENKINS. . . . . 61  
TINA JOHNSTONE. . . . . 64

## 1999

DOLORES FARR . . . . . 47  
TIM SCHERMERHORN . . 98  
JOHN COLE VODICKA. . 110  
HOLLIS WATKINS . . . . 111

## 1998

ACTUAL. . . . . 16  
NAHAR ALAM . . . . . 18  
SUSANA ALMANZA. . . . 19  
FRANK BARDACKE . . . . 22  
JAMES GILMORE . . . . . 51

## 2000

ROBERT AVANT . . . . . 21  
JUANITA KIRSCHKE . . . 65  
NINAJ RAOUL. . . . . 90  
CLAUDIA SMITH . . . . . 99

## 2001

MARTHA OJEDA . . . . . 80  
RHONDA PERRY. . . . . 86  
ELENA RODRIGUEZ . . . 94  
KEN TOOLE . . . . . 106

## 2003

CARRIE DANN  
& MARY DANN. . . . . 40  
CLAYTON GUYTON . . . 53  
ESTHER PORTILLO. . . . 88  
CARRIE THOMAS . . . . 102

## 2002

PABLO ALVARADO . . . . 20  
JAMES CALLEN. . . . . 33  
GERALDINE  
DEGRAFFENREIDT. . . . 43  
HALEEMAH  
HENDERSON. . . . . 57

## 2004

MICHAEL HURWITZ  
& IAN MARVY. . . . . 59  
DANALYNN RECER. . . . 91







John Shattuck and Ellen Hume

2005

OLIN LAGON ..... 69  
 DARBY PENNEY ..... 85  
 PAUL WRIGHT ..... 114  
 AARON ZIMMERMAN.. 117

2006

CHHAYA CHHOUM .... 37  
 EMILY MAW ..... 74  
 EVA SANJURJO ..... 97  
 GINA WOMACK ..... 113

2007

DEVIN BURGHART..... 30  
 TYRONE PARKER ..... 83  
 CURT L. TOFTELAND.. 105

2008

MARY CAFERRO..... 32  
 AUDREY MORRISSEY ... 77  
 VIVIAN NIXON..... 78



John O'Sullivan, co-founder, with daughter Sarah



## 2009

SUSANA DeANDA ..... 42  
 JACQUELINE ROBARGE .. 92  
 JOHN "JT"  
 THOMPSON..... 103  
 PEGGY WHITE WELLKNOWN  
 BUFFALO..... 112

## 2011

JULIAN AGUON..... 17  
 LILLIE  
 BRANCH-KENNEDY ... 29  
 NIKKI LEWIS..... 70  
 BENITA MILLER. .... 75

## 2010

ANU BHAGWATI..... 27  
 MARIA JIMENEZ..... 62  
 WAHLEAH JOHNS..... 63  
 CARRIE ANN LUCAS ... 71

## 2012

ANA GUAJARDO  
 CARILLO..... 36  
 VICTORIA  
 SAMMARTINO..... 96  
 SHELDON SMITH..... 100

## 2013

GRACE BAUER ..... 23  
 REY FAUSTINO..... 48  
 JUAN HARO ..... 55  
 NATALICÍA TRACY .... 107

## 2015

MARIAN  
 EDMONDS ALLEN..... 46  
 PARISA  
 BONITA NOROUZI..... 79  
 FRANCISCO (PANCHITO)  
 PAZ Y PUENTE ..... 84  
 SISSY TRINH..... 108



## ACTUAL



*“There are a lot of people out there who don’t know who to turn to. They are afraid of rejection. They are looking for people who will accept them the way they are and they need people like us.”*

**A**CTUAL — AIDS Children: Teaching Us About Love — an organization founded in 1987 by a mother, a foster mother, and a grandmother of HIV-infected children in New York City. Caretakers were alarmed by the scarcity of information about pediatric HIV/AIDS and frustrated by the lack of personal attention. They established ACTUAL to enhance mutual support among families, to provide information and education, and to advocate for the needs of children and families affected by HIV/AIDS. ACTUAL is an all-volunteer effort. Its leaders are representative of the people they serve: they are poor, they are minorities, and many are immigrants; they are also strong, innovative, and courageous. Since ACTUAL is staffed by people who live every day with the reality of pediatric AIDS, the role they play within the hospital system and community is invaluable. Members reach out to help those intimidated by medical experts and help them navigate their options. They support families facing difficult decisions and devastating emotional choices. “When you first learn that your child has the virus, it’s so hard, you feel so bad,” says member Roberta Brown. “I told this mother, ‘I know what you feel, I went through this myself. Take a deep breath and go.’”

## JULIAN AGUON



**T**he history of Guam, a non-self-governing U.S. territory, is rife with invaders. Colonized, surrendered, captured and recaptured, Guam has been occupied by the Spanish, the Japanese and the United States. Today, Guam is caught in a new cycle of destruction that will culminate in the island’s establishment as a hub for U.S. military operations in the Pacific. The impact on the Chamoru indigenous people is potentially catastrophic.

Since returning to his Chamoru community after college, Julian Aguon has fought to mitigate the degradation that militarization was wreaking on the island’s fragile cultural and natural resources, collaborating on a successful effort to halt the privatization of Guam’s only water provider and commercial port; drafting legislation to protect the Chamoru indigenous culture; and publishing path-breaking articles and books to provide historical context for his work.

Next, Julian decided to use international law as the tool to seek justice.

While in law school, he drafted the first official intervention on behalf of the Chamoru people and delivered it to an audience of 3,000 at the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. His petition, citing U.S. and U.N. officials’ failure to exercise oversight of decolonization, was joined by delegations from many Pacific and Caribbean communities.

Since then, Julian has only intensified his work to focus international attention on the impact of the military buildup on Guam.



## NAHAR ALAM



*“It is shameful in our country to talk about abuse — if you are a woman, you have to suffer. No one wants to hear about it.”*

Nahar Alam came to the United States from Bangladesh thinking she had escaped the cycle of abuse that made her life as a wife a waking nightmare. Without money, English, or friends, she again found herself powerless — this time as a domestic worker. Now, Nahar is a leader in the struggle against exploitation of South Asian domestic workers in the United States. “When I arrived in the United States, there was no one to greet me at the airport. I spoke no English and had almost no money.” She found domestic work that paid as little as \$50 a week. Determined to change her situation, Nahar spent long hours learning English. Nahar was introduced to SAKHI, an organization for South Asian women, who hired her to organize a group of South Asian immigrant women in exploitative domestic positions. Unafraid, Nahar organized protests outside homes of abusive employers and conducted workshops on workers’ and immigrants’ rights, and labor laws. In 1997, Nahar’s group left SAKHI and renamed itself Workers’ Awaaz, where she continues to make an enormous difference in the lives of many women who have come to the United States in search of freedom, only to find themselves isolated.

## SUSANA ALMANZA



*“People have learned that they may not be rich, they may not be politically connected, but that they do have a voice — and they can make things happen.”*

Susana Almanza helped create People Organized in Defense of Earth and her Resources (PODER), a group dedicated to protecting the health of residents of East Austin, Texas. PODER — the acronym is Spanish for “power” — was formed in 1991 to address the social, economic, and environmental impact of high-tech industries operating in the predominantly Latino East Austin. PODER members were concerned that a gasoline tank farm near their homes and schools was endangering their children’s health. The 52-acre tank farm stored 80 percent of the gasoline used by Austin motorists. PODER members went door to door to document the incidence of chronic illnesses in their community. Their research uncovered state records detailing a series of unpublicized leaks and spills. The records revealed that although officials were concerned about the health threats posed by the tank farm, they had never told area residents. Galvanized by their findings, PODER organized the community and prompted the county attorney to launch a special investigation into criminal and civil wrongdoing by the oil companies. Within a year, PODER’s protests led to the closing of the tank farm. Susana has overcome poverty and prejudice to face down some of the world’s most powerful multinational corporations.

## PABLO ALVARADO



*“Through organizing on a local level, workers become good political analysts ... Day laborers are capable of acting for themselves.”*

Growing up in El Salvador where revolutionaries and the army battled for control, Pablo Alvarado saw his fifth-grade teacher murdered by a death squad. As a young man he volunteered to teach adults to read and write. When his family received death threats, Pablo was forced to flee to the United States. Joining thousands of refugees looking for odd jobs on the street corners of Los Angeles, Pablo began to teach reading again. He encouraged his fellow day laborers to stand up for their rights and helped establish a hiring center. There, Pablo and his fellow workers set standards for fair working conditions. In 1997, street-corner committees sent delegates to a conference to develop a Day Labor Union. As lead organizer of the Day Labor Project of the Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights in L.A., Pablo worked with the Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund to defeat anti-day labor ordinances in L.A. “Through organizing on a local level,” Pablo says, “workers learn to become good political analysts. They grow and start to influence others. We see day laborers as people who are capable of acting for themselves.” Success inspired him to create a National Day Labor Organizing Network to narrow the gap between undocumented workers and organized labor.

## ROBERT AVANT (d. 2008)



Robert Avant simply refused to let things be. He fought injustice wherever he saw it. Born the son of a sharecropper in Mississippi, and raised during the most violent period of segregation, Robert worked relentlessly to expand the economic and political opportunities for some of the poorest and most disenfranchised citizens in Panola County.

Robert made history in 1988 when he joined the Panola County, Mississippi Board of Supervisors. Not only was he the first African American in modern times to be elected in that area of the state, but he also was elected to serve as President of the Board for thirteen years.

His sheer tenacity helped convince the federal government to award his community millions of dollars in grants and tax credits. Robert gained federal funding for the county to build low-income housing, enabling families to move from dirt floor shanties into modern homes using “sweat equity.” He took particular pride in gaining a federal grant to bring public water to nearly 300 families, some without running water. Robert was appointed by President Clinton to be on his Water 2000 Board.

Perhaps Robert’s greatest contribution was his singular commitment to empowering the African American community. Robert sought to give people the tools necessary to change the political and economic landscape of their lives.

## FRANK BARDACKE



*“As our cities and towns, our land and our water, become nothing but inputs in a worldwide system of exploitation, loyalty to the home land, to local communities, becomes an act of resistance.”*

Frank Bardacke is a community activist in Watsonville, California, where he is essential to the Mexican-American/Mexican workers in nearby vegetable fields and packing sheds. Frank has served his community for decades by “just joining in the politics of local daily life.” Frank taught at the English-as-a-second-language high school. Through the contacts he made as an ESL teacher, he has been able to participate in the politics of the community. Frank organized food for workers at the frozen food plant during a successful two-year strike. Another effort saved two schools from being razed. Frank worked to build permanent housing to replace the substandard dormitories in which Mexican “guest workers” had been forced to live. He helped forge a coalition of the United Farm Workers, Farm Bureau, and environmental groups to stop the loss of agricultural jobs through the development of farmland. Through the Watsonville Human Rights Committee, Frank helped establish a Spanish-language radio station, the principal source of news from Mexico and of political expression. While Frank has no title and claims no credit, a friend says Frank is the “enriched plasma” in the civic body of Watsonville, without which the participation of hundreds of individuals could not flow.

## GRACE BAUER



When Grace Bauer’s 14 year-old son was sentenced to a 90-day program at Tallulah Correctional Center in Louisiana for stealing a truck radio, she hoped the program would get Corey back on track. “That was the biggest mistake I ever made,” Grace recalls. Corey would suffer horrific trauma at Tallulah. Emotionally scarred, he has cycled in and out of prison.

A grieving mother, Grace attended a meeting at the Juvenile Justice Program of Louisiana and started on the path to becoming a passionate advocate for reform. Working with Petra Fellow Gina Womack, Grace set up a second office for Families and Friends of Louisiana’s Incarcerated Children, told her story, recruited families, and played a key role in winning sweeping state legislation in 2003.

After Hurricane Katrina, Grace left New Orleans and, ultimately, joined with Zachary Norris to launch Justice for Families (J4F), a peer-led, national network of families with incarcerated children, to help drive the growing movement for reform.

J4F began by publishing a first-of-its-kind report, uncovering crucial flaws in the system that burden, alienate and exclude families from the treatment of system-involved youth. Now 2,000 families strong, J4F has been joined by unions, civil rights and faith-based organizations, academics and government officials, all making the case for disinvestment in a morally and fiscally broken system and reinvestment in community-based support services.



## ELLEN BAXTER



*“It is un-American to have human suffering so visible.”*

Ellen Baxter’s work with the homeless was influenced by her fellowship year in Geel, Belgium, home to the shrine of St. Dymphna, the patron saint of the mentally ill. For centuries, the town has integrated mentally ill people into the community. “In Geel, stigma do not exist because a tolerance had evolved over the years and it was there I learned that, if given the chance, the mentally ill and destitute can co-exist in community with others.” Ellen settled in New York City in 1976 hoping to replicate Geel. She researched cost-effective, permanent alternatives to the shelters and SROs (single room occupancy flop houses) where the homeless lived. In 1985, she purchased an apartment building called “The Heights,” and developed a supportive housing program — a living situation complemented by social and mental health services. Ellen recruited people to live at The Heights, discussed the responsibilities of a community, and showed them the building so they could pick out their rooms. Residents receive not just a bed but also the support they need to reconstruct their lives, support that isn’t available in a shelter or psychiatric ward. The Broadway Housing Development Fund, the non-profit corporation Ellen founded, now owns five buildings housing 220 formerly homeless people.

## HAVA BELLER



*“Privately, the film was a way for me to thank the German resisters, on my knees, for standing up against injustice and for sacrificing their lives for people they didn’t even know.”*

Hava Beller’s relentless pursuit of the truth has assured that the German resistance will not be forgotten. Hava is an award-winning documentary filmmaker, recognized for her depiction of political and personal courage in “The Restless Conscience,” a film about resistance to Hitler within Nazi Germany. The film tells the story of those individuals who wrestled with the conflict between their personal and national identities. Moral and ethical choice in the face of adversity is the principal theme of the film. “Throughout the project,” Hava says, “I would constantly ask myself: What would I have done? Would I have had the courage to resist? Would I have risked my own life — and even more so — the life of my son? I still don’t know the answers.”

## SOCORRO BERNASCONI



*“I tell the kids about transformation — that it is possible to change from someone who hits and kills to someone who brings light into the lives of others.”*

The native peoples of the Southwest have had to master the art of transformation. Socorro Hernandez Bernasconi’s work in Guadalupe, a small town on the outskirts of Phoenix, Arizona, is part of this resourceful tradition. She brings incredible will and an unusual ability to transform barriers into fuel to fight for the rights and autonomy of her community. Guadalupe is a poor town with a population that is approximately 45 percent Yaqui Indian and 55 percent Latino. Socorro was the first person from Guadalupe to receive a college degree. She never considered taking the rewards of her education anywhere else. “I went away and got an education so I could bring it back.” She has served her community as an education activist, fighting for the rights of Latino and Yaqui students in the Tempe school district. Socorro was director of the Refugio De Colores — a shelter from domestic violence that used traditional cultural practices and values to respond to the needs of minority women and children. After the tragic death of her son, Socorro changed her focus to helping the at-risk teens of her community end gun violence. Socorro is recognized for 30 years of tireless advocacy for the Yaqui and Latino community.

## ANU BHAGWATI



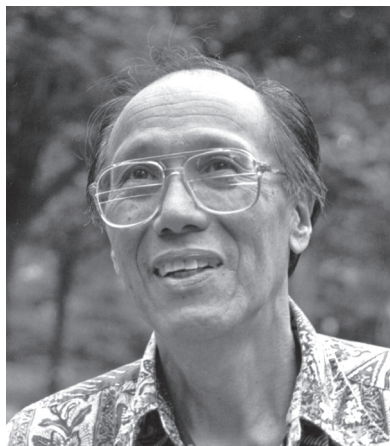
Outnumbered and isolated, “Women Marines,” as the Marine Corps identifies them, face unrelenting hostility, spoken and unspoken.

Anu Bhagwati has had first-hand experience. When she finished her first three-mile fitness run at Quantico ahead of all of the women and most of the men in her platoon, her drill instructor accused her of skipping a lap. And when she could no longer stop or stomach the sexual harassment being directed at female NCOs by her second-in-command, her formal complaint was not only disregarded but the offending lieutenant was promoted.

After five years, Anu decided to take her fight against the systematic misogyny, racism and homophobia in the Marine Corps outside, and, in 2007, she launched the Service Women’s Action Network (SWAN).

Anu sees her challenge as engaging the public in a country where only 1% serve in the military. She testifies on the Hill, appears on television and radio news, writes op-eds and blogs on national newspaper websites. With a part-time and volunteer staff, SWAN answers its peer helplines and expands its reach, partnering with pro bono lawyers, caseworkers and advocates for survivors of combat and sexual trauma, homeless veterans and service members discharged under the “Don’t Ask Don’t Tell” policy. To overcome the obstacles of reentry, SWAN also offers veterans hands-on healing, hosting writing workshops and weekly yoga and meditation classes.

## KEKUNI BLAISDELL



*“In order to restore our health in all ways  
we must be clear on our identity — we are not  
Americans, not American Indians, not even  
Hawaiians. We are Kanaka Maoli.”*

“My toes and feet are deep in our mud. My roots are strong here.” Kekuni Blaisdell, a Kanaka Maoli from the island of Oahu has spent his life promoting the spiritual and physical health of the Kanaka Maoli and restoring their nation. Kekuni went to medical school and during the Korean War joined the United States Army as a medic. In 1966, he returned to Honolulu with his wife and children, to become the Chair of Medicine at the University of Hawaii. Kekuni prepared a comprehensive report on the health of the Kanaka Maoli, documenting that they had the shortest life expectancy of all the ethnic groups in Hawaii and lived disproportionately in poverty. Kekuni sought to address these problems as a whole, and began integrating traditional medicine into his practice and reinforcing cultural identity. As Kekuni examined the overall pattern of suffering, he determined the source of the cultural identity crisis: Kanaka Maoli sovereignty. Kekuni has chosen a difficult road to cultural and political restoration of the Kanaka Maoli. He sees the struggle for independence as lifelong and draws strength from his ancestors and is encouraged by the support of his family who, he says, “are beginning to learn what it means to be Kanaka Maoli.”

## LILLIE BRANCH-KENNEDY



Despite a crime rate in steep decline, America continues to set the world record for mass incarceration. The evidence is overwhelming that our criminal system disproportionately targets and ensnares young black men, with pernicious, long-lasting consequences for their lives as well as for their families and communities.

Lillie Branch-Kennedy wishes to the bottom of her heart that she never had to learn all this first-hand. Driven from Harlem by the 1980's crack epidemic, Lillie and her husband moved to the safer environment of Richmond, Virginia to raise their two children. Her son Donald excelled in school and gained a scholarship to Virginia State. Then, before his junior year, Donald was arrested as an accessory to robbery. His sentence of 127 years was reduced to 28 years on appeal. Thus began Lillie's weekly, 16-hour round-trip commute to a remote “super-max” state security facility, and her education in crime and punishment.

Shocked by the conditions she saw, in 2002, Lillie launched Resource Information Help for the Disadvantaged (RIHD) to provide transportation for families of prisoners and organize them to work for change. RIHD has assisted more than 1,000 families, holding monthly support meetings and hosting children of incarcerated parents at year-round summer and after-school programs. Lillie also cofounded the Community Restoration Campaign to lobby the state legislature for cost-effective, best-practices reform. The task is daunting, but Lillie remains undeterred.

# DEVIN BURGHART



As the Director for New Community's Building Democracy Initiative, Devin Burghart tracked and unmasked white supremacists in all their disguises and countered messages of hate, bigotry, intimidation and violence through research, community organizing, education and training.

With a limited staff, Devin made a big impact. For example, in the late 1990's, Devin responded to white supremacists' use of rock music to popularize their message of racism, intimidation and violence with a multifaceted campaign he called Turn It Down. He wrote and distributed 20,000 copies of a book, produced a CD, organized concert events, developed a web site and created a resource kit to show educators, young people and bands about how to counter white power music. In Germany, anti-racist activists adapted this model to create their own Turn It Down initiative.

After the September 11 attacks, white supremacist groups ramped up their anti-immigrant activities, spurring Devin to action. Capitalizing on the national media attention on the 2004 Iowa state caucuses, Devin launched an initiative called Welcoming Iowa, working with local organizations to persuade 2,000 caucus participants to pass "Welcoming Iowa" resolutions in their precincts. A Welcoming Tennessee initiative, and a book on the anti-immigrant movement followed.

Devin is now the Vice President of the Institute for Research & Education on Human Rights. As white supremacy continues to grow and gain legitimacy under new disguises, Devin will be there to expose and oppose it.

# MATTIE BUTLER



*"I'm about working with those people who can't connect to the economic engine of this country."*

In 1980, a series of fires broke out in Mattie Butler's Chicago neighborhood; one claimed the lives of thirteen children. "I knew those kids, I knew those families. It could've been my children. I got pissed off and hurt." She began investigating the origin of the fires and discovered that arsonists started 90 percent of fires in Woodlawn. She founded Woodlawn East Community and Neighbors (WECAN) to help Woodlawn residents protect themselves from such destructive exploitation. The organization's mission is to address the changing needs and issues of the Woodlawn community and its strategy is "to build from within." Mattie's tireless community activism has had a profound impact on Woodlawn. WECAN has developed housing for neighbors and for the homeless, organized drug and delinquency prevention programs, started a food pantry serving over 500 people, founded a telephone answering service employing former welfare recipients, and began numerous education and support services. "I've seen people move from a place of 'I just can't do it' to 'I can do it,'" she explains. "That makes me know I'm on the right track."



## MARY CAFERRO



Mary Caferro was loath to go on welfare, but the Montana Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) rules counted education toward mandated work requirements, enabling her to take classes at the local university where she worked toward becoming a teacher. Mary had divorced her abusive husband and was struggling to support her four young children while working two jobs. In 1999, when Montana considered disallowing the TANF education credit, Mary joined a local advocacy organization, Working for Equality and Economic Liberation (WEEL), and personally lobbied 130 legislators about the importance of education for lifting women out of poverty and off the welfare roles. Mary's career as an advocate had begun.

Impressed, WEEL hired Mary, which allowed her to go off welfare in 2000. In 2006, Mary became WEEL's Executive Director, and progressives in Montana, taking note of her successes, suggested she run for the state House of Representatives. She accepted the challenge and won.

Displaying an unusual ability to build coalitions across Montana's peculiar political landscape, Mary has racked up an impressive record of wins. She was instrumental in increasing the state's minimum wage and, despite opposition from party leadership and the insurance industry, expanding the state's CHIP program to cover 5,000 more low-income children.

Mary is now a State Senator and the Director of ARC Montana.

## JAMES CALLEN



*“Organized crime and public corruption sap a community's resources and self-esteem ... and deprive its citizens of the opportunity to live, work and raise a family in a decent, democratic environment.”*

In one of his first cases after returning home to Youngstown, Ohio, anti-poverty lawyer James Callen found himself dealing with a corrupt political system dominated by the mob. Realizing that was the way things were done in Youngstown, James knew he either had to leave, or stay and fight. The rackets flourished in post-war Youngstown, as mob families from Pittsburgh and Cleveland fought for control of the place that *The Saturday Evening Post* called “Crime Town, U.S.A.” By the 1980s the steel mills, Youngstown's major employers, closed, and Jim Traficant, a politician with close ties to organized crime, was elected sheriff. James was not about to live under mob rule and founded The Citizens' League of Greater Youngstown. They used community-organizing techniques to break the mob's grip on law enforcement, politics and commerce. James held public hearings to expose corruption, published evaluations of candidates, and testified before the U.S. Senate Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations. Finally, federal authorities launched a concerted campaign to clean up Youngstown; 78 people were convicted on federal corruption charges. For 20 years, James Callen and Jim Traficant were the main contenders in the battle for Youngstown's future. Even though a jury convicted Traficant of corruption, the battle is not over.



## ROBIN CANNON



*“I take environmental justice to heart the same way someone else might take housing to heart. I work on it for you and me, knowing others are working on issues I can't get to.”*

To Robin Cannon fighting to save the environment means “not just land, air, and water — but your social and economic space too.” A long-time advocate for environmental justice, she has helped improve the social and physical environment in her South Central Los Angeles community. In 1985, Robin organized Concerned Citizens of South Central Los Angeles to protest the building of a 65-acre, \$565 million municipal “trash conversion” plant. A mother of four, Robin was concerned that the plant would contribute to her children’s asthma. Her careful research revealed that the plant would release massive amounts of toxins into the air. Concerned Citizens convinced the Los Angeles City Council to abandon the plant and to adopt the recycling plan they advocated. In 1989, Robin brought together a coalition, Communities for Accountable Reinvestment (CAR), to prevent the Bank of America from pulling its branches out of South Central. CAR proved that the Bank of America was not losing money in South Central as it had claimed, and that it had provided only three home loans and no small business loans in the area. Robin is recognized for her relentless pursuit of facts and organizing for social, economic and environmental equity in South Central Los Angeles.

## MARCIA CAPUANO



*“It’s been a rude awakening to realize that no one has an answer on how to best educate kids caught in the cycle of poverty. Sure there’s research out there, but it’s often done in a vacuum.”*

One of six children, Marcia Capuano was born in a rural community outside of Indianapolis. She considered a medical career but her father’s words, “a teacher is as important to the mind as a doctor is to the body,” turned her toward education instead. In 1985, Marcia was appointed principal of Harshman Middle School, the poorest school in Indianapolis. She secured numerous grants to supplement the school’s budget. “It requires more money to educate poor people than it does to educate traditional white, middle-class students. To get a tree to grow straight, you need more resources than you do for a tree that’s doing fine just growing on its own,” she explains. Harshman was able to address a wide range of health and developmental problems by offering a range of services including counseling for students struggling with addiction, anger, depression, pregnancy, and self-esteem problems. To improve the educational chances for all students, Marcia expanded the traditional school day and created an alternative suspension program. Marcia worked closely with police and created a school environment where gangs are not acceptable. For Marcia, “poverty is a debilitating disease for children.” Her prescription of a holistic treatment by the educational system has proven successful.

# ANA GUAJARDO CARILLO



“Most people think Chicago ends at Hyde Park; they don’t even realize we’re here,” says Ana Guajardo Carrillo, founding director of the Centro de Trabajadores Unidos: Immigrant Workers’ Project (CTU) on Chicago’s southeast side.

After graduating from college and serving in the Illinois Army National Guard, Ana pursued a master’s degree in public policy at the University of Minnesota, where she got involved with the United Farm Workers. Out of her class of two hundred, Ana was the only one who went into organizing. Eventually drawn home to Chicago, Ana joined the immigrant rights movement as it mobilized to fight a new wave of restrictions.

In 2008, Ana founded CTU, and its impact has vastly exceeded its small staff and budget. Ana’s grassroots work enabled low-wage Latino workers in southeastern Chicago to recover a quarter of a million dollars in owed wages. CTU workers played a lead role in passage of one of the nation’s toughest wage-protection laws in Illinois. Ana and CTU partners have developed an innovative Community Agreement that binds employers to respect workers’ rights and they are working on enforcing that code.

As mentor to hundreds of young leaders, Ana serves as a powerful role model for Latinas. An influential voice on voting rights and redistricting in Illinois, she is partnering with African-Americans to rewrite Chicago’s long history of worker exploitation.

# CHHAYA CHHOUM



“We were dumped in the Bronx when the Bronx was burning,” says Chhaya Chhoum, after a refugee resettlement program abandoned her family along with thousands of other Cambodians and Vietnamese in urban poverty in the 1980s.

From the age of 16, Chhaya has dedicated herself to this immigrant community, which survived war but continues to suffer the aftereffects of untreated post-traumatic stress and dislocation exacerbated by poverty. Through her work at the Youth Leadership Project (YLP) run by CAAV, one of the first organizations in America to mobilize Asian immigrant communities against institutionalized violence and inequality, Chhaya took on slumlords, overcrowded classrooms, cutbacks in translation services at public assistance centers and local health clinics, built a food and crafts cooperative and catering business, and negotiated for a full-time translator for after-school programs, among other initiatives. Demonstrating Chhaya’s ability to harness the energy of young people, YLP conducted annual, intensive programs to train teens as organizers. After welfare reform, YLP’s teen organizers documented the denial of aid to families without due process and the assignment of mothers to “workfare” in unsafe environments.

In 2012, Chhaya co-founded Mekong, a community-based organization in empowering the Southeast Asian community in the Bronx and beyond through arts, culture, community organizing, healing and advocacy.

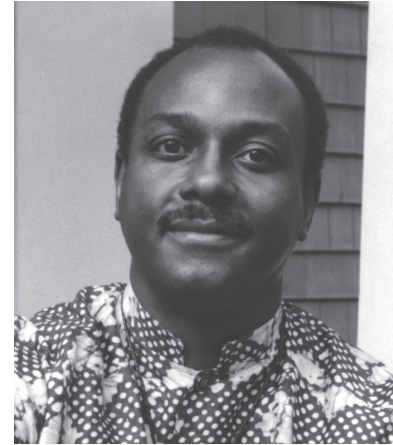
## RON CHISOM



*“With all the crime and drugs and murder out there it’s not easy to keep people positive — to bring people hope. That’s what organizing is all about.”*

Thirty years ago, Ron Chisom, a medical researcher at Louisiana State University Medical School, was approached by a group of heroin addicts from Treme, a black community in New Orleans. They wanted help to overcome their addictions but were afraid that turning to existing clinics would mean arrest or imprisonment. Ron agreed to help and began reaching out to the Treme community. Starting with neighborhood clean-up campaigns, Ron mobilized the community against the conditions that encouraged addiction and violence. As he gained experience organizing, Ron began to appreciate the need for training that would guide people and help them to avoid the pitfalls he had encountered in his early organizing days. “I realized that most of the training I had included no discussion about dealing with racism — and that we needed that to be effective,” he says. Ron founded The People’s Institute to train organizers to combat racism in institutions of all kinds. The Institute grew to over 20 trainers leading workshops all over the country. “People come to us when they have a problem with racism in their organization,” he says. “Often they don’t like to call it that, but [they come because] they can’t get people of color on their board or because there are negative feelings between two groups of employees.”

## SAMUEL COTTON (d. 2004)



*“There is a charge that the African is the perfect slave because he doesn’t fight. I am fighting against that charge. That charge is not true.”*

Most Americans believe slavery disappeared long ago. In 1995, Samuel Cotton founded CASMAS, the Coalition Against Slavery in Mauritania and Sudan, dedicated to raising the awareness of the American public about contemporary slavery and human rights abuses. He has traveled undercover in the heart of present-day slavery, presented his research to Congress and written a book about his abolitionist work. Despite intense opposition, anger, and physical threats, Samuel combines activism with academic thought and international advocacy to communicate the shockingly unknown story of present-day slavery. As Executive Director of CASMAS, Samuel is creating a “Freedmen’s Bureau” to educate, feed, clothe, and house slaves in Mauritania. Almost daily he receives letters soliciting help and solutions from anti-slavery leaders and slaves in Mauritania. Samuel has encountered both apathy and hostility. “This is a study in talking to walls,” he explains. “African slaves have no advocates. There is a public, political, and spiritual indifference.” Samuel accepts the responsibility to battle ignorance of enslavement and hostility toward abolitionists. His credo captures his struggle: “The key to preserving your humanity in the face of oppression is resistance. And it’s resistance whether you win or not. If you don’t accept it, you lose your humanity.”



## CARRIE DANN & MARY DANN (d. 2005)



*"Think the Indian Wars are over?  
Then you better think again!"*

The U.S. formally recognized Western Shoshone lands in the 1863 Treaty of Ruby Valley. But in 1946, the Indian Claims Commission ruled that their vast land holdings had been lost when Congress passed the General Mining Act of 1872. In 1973 an agent from the Bureau of Land Management knocked on Mary and Carrie Dann's door and told them they were trespassing on federal property. Convinced that the U.S. land claim was fraudulent, they helped found the Western Shoshone Defense Project. Carrie and Mary embarked on an epic legal struggle. After exhausting every remedy in the American justice system, they took their case to the international community. The OAS Inter-American Commission on Human Rights decided on their behalf — issuing the first international human rights ruling against the United States in an Indian rights case. The U.S. continued to claim title to millions of acres. On September 23, 2002 heavily armed agents descended on the Dann ranch to confiscate their cattle and horses. The reason for the harassment is simple: Bechtel and the Newmont, Placer Dome, Kennecott and Barrick mining corporations covet the Shoshone land. While some members of the tribe are eager to sell, Carrie and Mary Dann stand firm. They are determined not to sacrifice their sacred places and ancestral lands for the white man's pennies. "The rains will come again," says Carrie surveying her drought-stricken valley, "and the grasses will grow back. But when the Shoshone people are gone from this land, we are dead."

## MURPHY DAVIS



*"People still want to see homelessness as something  
that just fell out of the sky. There is pain in knowing  
we have deliberately caused it all by our public policy  
decisions — and that it is our responsibility."*

Murphy Davis' tireless advocacy on behalf of death row inmates and the homeless has ensured that these two groups are not shoved deep into the shadows of America's consciousness and robbed of their dignity, but are seen as individuals. Spurred by the 1976 Georgia Supreme Court decision to uphold the death penalty, Murphy coordinated a national anti-death penalty campaign bringing together the American Civil Liberties Union, Amnesty International, state coalitions, and religious groups. There had been no organized effort to address the needs of Georgia's death row inmates or to fight for their rights. Murphy established a grassroots anti-death penalty movement, providing counseling, support and a voice to people who had given up hope. Through Murphy's work on the death penalty, she became aware of another societal epidemic, homelessness. She worked to raise awareness of the problem and helped create Atlanta's first overnight homeless shelter. Murphy and her husband, Ed Loring, cofounded the Open Door community, a truly cross-class, interracial environment with a balance of temporary residents and permanent "partners" committed to homeless advocacy and maintaining the Open Door's communal way of life.

## SUSANA DEANDA



**D**emanding clean drinking water is a matter of life and death in Tulare County, California. While publicly funded systems pipe crystalline river water to dairy and agriculture farms there, decades of intensive fertilizer and pesticide use and run-off from animal factories have so contaminated the groundwater that hundreds of thousands of residents are being poisoned by their tap water.

Susana DeAnda is determined to change that. In college, Susana pursued her passion for environmental justice, thinking of her uncles and all farm workers endangered by the crop planes spraying poison as they flew overhead. After graduation, Susana joined Laurel Firestone to work as an organizer for the Rural Poverty Water Project at the Center on Race, Poverty and the Environment. Travelling to poor, isolated communities throughout the Central Valley, they saw horrific evidence of the health consequences of poisoned drinking water. They gathered leaders together to address their common challenges, which led to a coalition of seventeen communities and seven nonprofits.

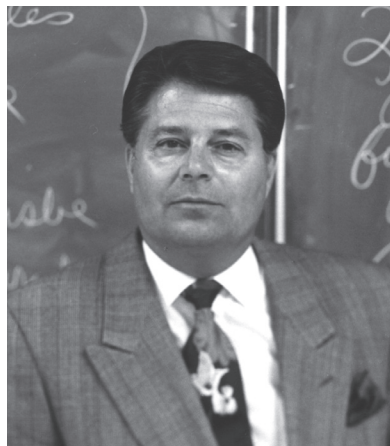
In 2006, Susana and Laurel launched the Community Water Center to focus exclusively on building grassroots capacity for the growing water justice movement. Together, they have organized residents, won seats on local water boards, and secured legislation that directed \$2 million to a pilot project for water quality and wastewater treatment for the Tulare Lake Basin.

## GERALDINE DEGRAFFENREIDT



**G**eraldine DeGraffenreidt is a highly-respected and loved maternal-outreach worker in Chatham County, North Carolina, who has won the trust of young parents and given them the confidence, skills, and opportunities to become responsible, loving parents. As a volunteer Geraldine provided pre-natal counseling to poor and isolated mothers in her rural county, where teen pregnancy is common and many babies are born out of wedlock. Her outreach proved so successful that when her program's funding ended, the county health department kept her on. The key to Geraldine's success is a blend of personal warmth, firmness, and tenacity, combined with a deep knowledge of her community. She did not simply identify what kept poor residents from attending pre-natal classes; she personally transported young parents, bought them lunches and took care of their children while they attended classes. After realizing young fathers were disengaged she founded Focus on Fathers, a support group that encourages young men to play larger and more supportive roles in the lives of their children, complete their education and find jobs. As successful as Geraldine has been in helping impoverished young parents obtain what they need, she has also given them confidence and hope for a better future.

## ROBERT DE-SENA



*“It is my dream to unite people across the nation and give them reasons to accept and be enriched by their differences.”*

For decades, Robert DeSena has empowered urban youth, providing them with positive direction and support. The result is an impressive, growing network of young people who have discovered strength in their diversity and a powerful voice in their unity. As an English teacher at John Dewey High School in Brooklyn, Robert brought together the leaders of six gangs to mediate their differences. Robert realized that traditional mediation was “reactive rather than proactive,” and was ineffective at stopping the feelings of fear, frustration, and inadequacy that resulted in violence. Working with his students, he turned this group into a peer education organization that offered the same sense of loyalty, safety, and togetherness that young people found in gang life. This organization would become the Council for Unity (CFU). As student commitment to CFU grew, it began to encompass social events, parties, community service activities, and student government. The Council’s effectiveness with students from widely diverse backgrounds is due to Robert DeSena’s ability to bring people together by illuminating what they share in common. Robert’s energetic leadership and consensus-building skills have made the Council for Unity an inspirational force in the lives of a growing number of urban youths.

## NANCY DORSINVILLE



*“How does diversity translate into real society? What happens when you have a child from Laos sitting next to a child from Cambodia in a public school classroom when at home their people have been fighting for their entire lifetimes?”*

When Nancy Dorsinville came to New York City from Haiti in 1979, she was excited by the potential and ideals of American democracy. After a short time in America, Nancy became aware of the difficulties and the shortcomings in the American social and political system’s capacity to handle immigrant’s needs. Nancy committed herself to help recent immigrants deal with the host of problems they face adapting to life in America. “Being a displaced person myself has helped me understand the needs and desires of immigrant communities,” she says. Nancy recognized that many asylum seekers grappled with HIV, illiteracy, homelessness, and unemployment not as isolated issues, but as symptoms of socio-economic disenfranchisement. In 1986, Nancy took the first of a series of positions in local government and made focusing on the needs of socially isolated people, particularly those from immigrant communities, a top priority. Nancy works steadfastly to link groups of people, individuals, and communities and government. “You can affect 100 people in direct services, and a few thousand by designing the right kind of program,” she says.



# MARIAN EDMONDS ALLEN



As a woman with a wife and four children, Marian Edmonds Allen understands first-hand the many challenges that members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) community continue to face, particularly in the conservative and deeply religious state of Utah. Since 2011, Marian, an ordained minister, has spearheaded efforts across the state to transform the hostile culture toward LGBT youth.

As the Executive Director of OUTreach Resource Centers, Marian dramatically expanded outreach centers across the state where LGBT youth can access services and supports. Under her inspiring and determined leadership, Marian expanded the number of centers, and developed a template for other organizations across the country to use. Today, 23 such centers, most located in conservative communities, are helping LGBT youth find the resources they need to feel safe and move on in their lives.

Marian is a community organizer — working collaboratively to build strong, strategic partnerships with state government agencies, school superintendents, domestic violence groups, the faith community, NGOs, service providers and, very importantly, parents of LGBT youth. “Our model,” she says, “is to empower communities.” Marian’s new position as the National Program Director for the Family Acceptance Project at San Francisco State University, which works to decrease risk and promote well-being for LGBT children and adolescents, enables her to scale up her work in Utah and nationally, to address the underlying social and environmental issues that contribute to suicide, homelessness and a wide range of other negative outcomes that impact LGBT youth.

# DOLORES FARR



*“When we do not help women bring healthy babies into this world, we are losing our next generation.”*

The Healthy Babies Project operates in the Northeast neighborhoods of Washington, D.C. that have the city’s highest infant mortality rates. Under Dolores Farr’s leadership and vision, the Project has become a model program providing an unprecedented combination of services for low-income pregnant women and their children. From the earliest days of her nursing career she believed in empowering women to demand maximum participation in the decisions about their pregnancies and deliveries. For poor, addicted, or homeless women, who have lost control over much of their lives, such empowerment can be a step toward altering their lifestyles and becoming good mothers. Dolores faced widespread reluctance in the philanthropic community to fund services for pregnant substance abusers. She faced a Medicaid system that denied social services for poor pregnant women. Still, Dolores insisted that the Project provide free services and, through her persistence, secured the necessary funding. The Project is guided by the philosophy that for a baby to be born healthy and remain so, the mother needs help with all of the problems her family faces. Dolores exemplifies dedication, perseverance, and compassion as she helps women who are struggling, against significant odds, to deliver healthy babies and become good mothers.

## REY FAUSTINO



Rey Faustino, the founder of an innovative online platform for profiling non-profit and social services, wants to get the social service sector out of the Internet dark ages.

Growing up as an undocumented immigrant who was nearly deported in his teens because of a mistake made by ICE, Rey was inspired to help others like him. One Degree is the culmination of his own experiences and frustrations that families too often don't have access to the services they need to overcome poverty. Rejecting sponsorship and funding offers that do not comport with his poverty-fighting agenda, Rey aims to give families the real-time, real-world tools they need to hold service providers accountable by building the equivalent of a "Yelp" for non-profits. One Degree's web platform aggregates and organizes information about non-profit and social services so that anyone can overcome bureaucratic impediments and easily search for services.

Rey explains, "Navigating the social safety net is notoriously difficult even for professionals like social workers, counselors and case managers. How can we expect people to do this on their own...? We launched One Degree to shift this paradigm."

Among other accomplishments, Rey is proud of helping a grandmother who was diagnosed with cancer shortly after losing custody of her small grandchildren. Using One Degree, she found an affordable health plan and began the process of reuniting her family.

## LENNY FOSTER



*"I was overwhelmed to hear that Petra Shattuck, a German-American from the East Coast, was working for American Indian rights ... To share this solidarity means a great deal to me."*

In 1972, a group of spiritual leaders went to Minnesota's Stillwater prison to perform a traditional Native American Pipe Ceremony. For Lenny Foster, one of the youngest participants, this powerful experience would set the direction for his life's work. "I could see the hope on the prisoners' faces. I felt so good that I could pray in my native tongue. That was fate. Destiny." Lenny fought to ensure that incarcerated Native Americans have the right to worship, with access to traditional ceremonies. "I've made it my calling to go to institutions where Native Americans are incarcerated and share it with those who didn't have the opportunity to learn the traditions and to draw strength from their spiritual heritage." As the Spiritual Advisor and Director of the Navajo Nations Corrections Project, he is responsible for the traditional spiritual guidance of 1500 inmates in 89 state and federal penitentiaries. Lenny is concerned that today's American Indian youth are less exposed to traditional culture. "The responsibility we have as Indian people to teach our children and youths is great — alcoholism, drugs, broken homes are everywhere — you don't have the role models my generation had." By offering those most in need of support, Lenny shoulders the responsibility to pass on tradition and strength.



## EARNEST GATES



*"We knew the community was changing when you took a cab, gave your address, and the driver didn't flinch. We used to joke that when Giadanoe's Pizza would deliver to us, then you know you've arrived."*

After Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated in 1968, families began to move out of the predominantly black and rapidly deteriorating Near West Side of Chicago. Earnest Gates found himself eager to leave the neighborhood where he grew up. "I was looking for bigger and better things and I then thought: 'What are you doing? You're no different than anyone else. You're running out of the neighborhood and it won't get better if you continue to run away.'" Earnest stayed and rehabilitated his house. Then he turned to his block, until it was transformed. In 1987, the Near West Side became prime real estate when developers decided to build a sports complex for the Chicago Bears. Earnest insisted the community receive an economic development package that included retail stores, commercial businesses, housing, medical facilities, and employment opportunities. The community united to block development and prevented the fifty-yard line from replacing their homes. In 1990, when developers wanted to build the United Center Stadium, community efforts ensured that they invested in the economic, residential, and retail development of the newly-renamed West Haven. Despite the turmoil caused by the transformation of West Haven, all of the senior citizens are "still here," Earnest proudly notes.

## JAMES GILMORE



*"Unfortunately, the police department's idea of enforcing law and order is often in direct conflict with working for social justice."*

Following in his father's footsteps James Gilmore joined the NYPD. Assigned to a pilot community-policing program in the Sugar Hill neighborhood, James was determined to treat the people on his beat as individuals with "dreams and aspirations" not "objects of potential police action." James got to know residents well enough to distinguish hardened criminals from innocent bystanders. Despite repeated death threats and a bomb planted in his home, James doggedly pursued dangerous gangs. In addition to his police work, James contributed his time and resources to the community. He has taken young people on weekend retreats, checked their report cards, and helped them solve school and family problems. He has advised tenants fighting landlords, helped maintain a safe passage program for seniors, and guided addicts into rehab. In 1997, James co-founded 100 Blacks in Law Enforcement, a fraternal organization, to expand the numbers of law officers working for social justice. Members assist victims of police brutality and speak at local gatherings about effective responses to police encounters. Despite harassment, hostility, and disciplinary action, James continues his work, guiding adolescents to assume the responsibilities of adulthood and organizing the neighborhood to improve itself, building by building, block by block.

## ROBERTA GUASPARI



*“With the violin, I can get into kids’ hearts and souls.”*

Roberta Guaspari grew up in a working-class family in Rome, New York. “I would have never had violin lessons if it had not been for public schools,” she says. In 1980 Roberta moved to New York City, where she taught violin classes in East Harlem. Her violin program provided a creative outlet for kids who would not otherwise have been exposed to such opportunities. Roberta’s position was eliminated, due to budget cuts, in 1991. With the support of parents and school administrators, Roberta responded by creating a non-profit foundation, the Opus 118 Music Center, Inc. She solicited artists and musicians to pay for expenses and her salary. The East Harlem Violin Program provides violin instruction to 165 students between the ages of five and twelve. Three-quarters are black and Latino students; most cannot afford lessons or their own instruments. Opus 118 students are provided with violins as long as they make the commitment to try their hardest. Roberta invests in the future by giving kids the gift of music, the feeling of success, and the confidence that they are more than capable of reaching the stars.

## CLAYTON GUYTON



*“Ex-prisoners, drug addicts and dealers are not nobodies. We treat them with respect. They are capable of contributing.”*

When Clayton Guyton moved to East Baltimore, he found a community paralyzed by fear, the sound of gunfire punctuating their days and nights. In 1998, working nights as a correctional officer, Clayton devoted his days to giving teenagers an alternative to drug violence. He opened the Rose Street Community Center and recruited young people to clean up the streets, launched an enrichment program and mounted an outdoor African-American history exhibit. Working with police, Clayton established a physical presence on the corner of Rose Street and Ashland Avenue, the epicenter of the drug trade. The dealers sent their own message — the center was burned to the ground. In response, Clayton pitched a tent on the corner and stood watch around the clock. After six tense months, drug dealers started avoiding the block. A new center was reestablished in row houses donated by the Historic East Baltimore Community Action Coalition. Clayton expanded the Center to serve a thousand community members and opened a 40-bed transitional facility for recently released prison inmates. The Center is open all day, providing a safe space for neighborhood kids. A powerful symbol of resistance, Clayton put his life on the line to transform a dead-end of violence and despair into a road to hope and opportunity.

## GRAYLAN HAGLER



*“The struggle is about having a place in society to be yourself — to control your own future.”*

Throughout his career, Graylan Scott Hagler has fought to hold the forces of corporate America accountable for the socio-economic impact of their actions. As a minister, Graylan has launched his efforts for community empowerment from churches in Chicago, Boston and Washington D.C., and he has been a powerful voice for disenfranchised black and Latino communities.

In Chicago in the 1970s, Graylan founded the first black and Latino coalition in the city and organized a sit-in that forced Sears and Roebuck Corporation to hire several hundred minority employees. In 1981, Graylan moved to Boston, founded a church, and turned to battling drug addiction in his community, starting a drug program that ultimately served hundreds of people a week. Graylan also focused on racial justice, becoming Vice President of the Massachusetts Civil Liberties Union and running for Mayor in order to draw attention to issues affecting the poor.

In 1993, Graylan brought his socio-political awareness to Washington D.C.’s Fort Totten neighborhood, which he described as a “community ripe for exploitation and withdrawal of capital.” As minister of the Plymouth Congregational United Church, he has been instrumental in helping his neighborhood control which businesses are allowed to operate.

## JUAN HARO



Juan Haro, the director of the Movement for Justice in El Barrio, has been an organizer in low-income communities for decades, working across lines of race, class, issue, organization and ego to foster the leadership of those who face multiple forms of oppression — whether organizing to take on massive corporations, unaccountable slumlords or negligent government bodies.

Recently, Juan has worked to keep residents of rent-stabilized buildings in rapidly gentrifying neighborhoods in New York City in their homes. When realty companies use intimidation tactics, such as demanding proof of citizenship, passports and pay stubs, in order to try to seize apartments and clear the way for luxury high-rises, he fights alongside the impacted residents.

Juan also was the lead organizer of the N.Y.C Restaurant Opportunities Center’s successful campaign to raise the minimum wage and to get tipped workers included in the minimum wage. As he always does, Juan insisted that workers take the lead by doing the speaking, the negotiations and the decision-making. One activist he mentors noted, “The people Juan organizes typically work 16-hour days, seven days a week. So, sometimes they will say ‘Let’s do whatever you think’. But Juan always insists that the workers make their own decisions. . . He really cares about the process and, as a result, the people he works with are really empowered.”

## DAVID HAWK



*“Genocide and other kinds of large-scale political murder usually happen in distant lands, away from TV cameras, to globally unimportant peoples whose suffering is quickly forgotten in the vagaries of international politics.”*

David Hawk returned to the United States from Cambodia in 1981 with documentation of horrifying genocide. Between one and three million people out of a population of seven million had been killed and an entire culture had been systematically broken down with the intent to destroy it. Armed with photographs, written records, and oral testimony of the Khmer Rouge’s brutal atrocities, David challenged the world community to condemn the events that took place in Cambodia from 1975 to 1978 and those who orchestrated them. As the Executive Director of the Cambodia Documentation Commission, David spent nine years preparing a complaint against the Khmer Rouge in the World Court, monitoring the U.N. peacekeeping mission, and coordinating various academic, legal, and country specialists’ research on the country’s recent history. Although governments have opposed much of his work, attempting to avoid conflict with China over its vested interests in Cambodia, David has doggedly, consistently, and courageously pursued his work.

## HALEEMAH HENDERSON



A misguided decision by Los Angeles County welfare officials inspired Haleemah Henderson to champion banking services for the poor. Officials spread the issuance of welfare checks over the first ten days of each month, which was convenient for them but penalized recipients whose rent was due on the first of the month. Worse, the county disbursed its money through check-cashing outlets. A veteran of the welfare system, Haleemah knew how the financial system discriminates against the poor and set out to change it. Haleemah joined Strategic Actions for a Just Economy (SAJE). As lead organizer of its Banking Rights Program, she organized welfare recipients and taught financial literacy. She persuaded bankers and county officials to create the first welfare-to-work bank accounts, into which welfare checks could be directly deposited. Haleemah helped pass a law requiring California welfare agencies to offer direct deposit services to over a million and half families statewide. She founded SAJE’s Peer Financial Educators’ Program, which trains community members to teach financial literacy and offers internships, stipends, and job placement services to women on welfare. SAJE’s financial educators implement programs throughout California, using their skills to help the poor combat discrimination in the provision of financial services.



## KENNETH HUNTER



*“When I was growing up, there were no services to help those who were sick. I became a doctor so I could improve the life and health of my people.”*

Kenneth Serapio Hunter grew up in Raiti, a small Miskito Indian village in a rural area of Nicaragua without electricity, running water, or roads. Kenneth overcame incredible odds to become the first person in his village to go to high school and, ultimately, braving deeply ingrained prejudice against indigenous Indians, to graduate from medical school in Guatemala.

Kenneth's work was interrupted many times throughout his career — by right-wing, Guatemalan death squads that forced him from Guatemala, by fighting in Nicaragua between the Sandinistas Army and Miskitos, and by persecution in Honduras where he fled to escape the Sandinistas Army. Amidst the upheaval, he established and maintained a desperately needed clinic in Raiti, served as a doctor for the Miskito and Sumau refugee community in Honduras, and completed special training in pediatric surgery.

When it was destroyed, Kenneth returned to Raiti to rebuild the clinic, now called the Petra Clinic, which was the only medical treatment center in the Miskito and Sumau regions. While he went on to work in a hospital in Puerto Cabezas, Kenneth traveled frequently to the Petra Clinic, where his patients often traveled for days by canoe or foot to seek medical care.

## MICHAEL HURWITZ & IAN MARVY



*“Some folks say that youth are the future. We say that youth are here today and they can make a difference.”*

Very different paths led Ian Marvy and Michael Hurwitz to the gritty Red Hook section of Brooklyn, New York, where they worked together at the Red Hook Community Justice Center. Frustrated by the inequitable results of enhanced policy scrutiny on young people in the name of “community justice” and the shortcomings of referral programs for young, nonviolent offenders, Ian and Michael sought a way to keep children from being swept into the criminal justice system. They found their answer in the transformative effect that work in a community garden had on their toughest young clients.

With the donation of a barren lot, Added Value was born. Through Added Value, Ian and Michael have grown a vegetable farm from the asphalt up, taught business and leadership skills to teens at risk and began to use “food justice” to impart the lessons of social justice. More than 1,000 Red Hook residents have sown and harvested side by side at Added Value, and teens earn weekly stipends for work in the gardens, the market and the classroom. In an isolated neighborhood without a supermarket, where the median income for a family of four is less than \$15,000, residents now use their food-benefit debit-cards to purchase Added Value produce.

## SANDRA JACKSON CROSS



*“My mission is to help people create what they need for themselves by helping families give care to one another.”*

Over 4.3 million children in the United States grow up in kinship-care families, homes of people other than their biological parents — grandparents, aunts and uncles, older siblings, or friends who have taken on the role of parents in shattered or troubled families. Supporting a dependent child can be a complicated new responsibility for people coping with needs and problems of their own. Sandra Campbell-Jackson has made it her life’s work to respond to the needs of these alternative caregivers and of the children in their care. She has brought life to a community of kinship families in Philadelphia and created a model for other communities. Sandra worked as an employment counselor for the 18th Street Development Corporation in South Philadelphia and identified the need for special services to provide support for kinship families. She founded an informal peer support group called R.O.C. (Raising Others’ Children). R.O.C grew to encompass a variety of services — peer assistance, crisis management training, and annual summer camps designed to address the host of issues faced by abused and abandoned children. In her work on kinship care, she has mothered not only many individuals, but also developed a new, more forgiving, and more supportive model for alternative care-giving communities.

## RAHIM JENKINS



*“Who’s killed 120 black women in Washington D.C.? What are we doing about it? This illness of violence is not just in inner city America, but everywhere.”*

Rahim Jenkins wages a daily war against urban decay, which crushes the spirit and potential of Washington D.C.’s most vulnerable citizens. Having turned his own experience of life on the streets into a life of activism, Rahim is a role model for Anacostia’s youth. He spent 13 years with the Department of Corrections but, as the murder rate escalated, Rahim looked critically at his role in addressing D.C.’s problems and decided to make a change. “I realized I wasn’t just sitting in the traffic, I was directing it — indirectly I was responsible for the destruction around me. I started looking at the city and decided I would be part of the formula to fix what was happening.” Rahim began work in a halfway house for parolees, connecting parolees to the community — cleaning up the streets, visiting senior citizens, doing projects for schools and churches. Rahim then founded the Righteous Men’s Commission — an alliance of urban men dedicated to helping black youths, working to defuse confrontations between police and young people and finding alternatives to violence and drugs. Rahim’s life is a powerful example of the ability to change. His demand for dignity, respect, and righteousness encourages young people to change and challenges them to fight for their community.

## MARIA JIMENEZ



Maria Jimenez has lived and worked on both sides of the US-Mexico border. As a child in Houston, she was exposed to segregated playgrounds and was threatened with expulsion from school for speaking Spanish, driving her interest in political science. But, it was not until she returned from a decade in Mexico promoting economic development that she joined the front lines of a battle that would become her life's work.

The 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act encouraged a new generation of immigrants to trust the government. They bought property, built businesses, and applied for residency and work permits. Then, the politics of the border turned ugly. The backlog of immigrants waiting for work and permanent residency swelled.

Maria stepped into the fray, organizing thousands of these “late amnesty applicants” to file a class-action suit. In 1996, with an impending court ruling in the plaintiffs’ favor, Congress stripped the courts of jurisdiction, leaving 400,000 in legal limbo, without working papers, facing evictions and deportation.

Maria mobilized a grassroots network to intensify their appeals for justice, and federal legislation was passed keeping the promises made in 1986 — but doing nothing to address the status of those continuing to migrate over the border. And so, Maria remains on the front lines, tirelessly training new leaders and building the alliances necessary to win the long struggle for rights and dignity.

## WAHLEAH JOHNS



Revenue from contracts to extract vast mineral reserves has long fueled the Navajo economy, but at huge cost to the physical and cultural health of the Navajo people. Growing up in a traditional community atop Black Mesa in Arizona, the site of the largest strip-mining operation on Indian land, Wahleah Johns bore witness to the price.

In 2003, she became the co-director of the Black Mesa Water Coalition, a youth-led organization that launched an unprecedented campaign to challenge tribal governors of communities directly affected by water scarcity to halt the environmental degradation and replace extractive royalties and jobs with sustainable, green alternatives. The Coalition met with tremendous resistance. Some tribal leaders, fearing the collapse of their economy, banished them from their lands.

Wahleah and her team remained undaunted. They “translated” green into Navajo values of reverence for the earth, air and water, as well as respectful intentions toward others and painstakingly built support among 110 disparate chapter councils.

In July 2009, the Navajo became the first American Indian nation to enact green jobs legislation, the Navajo Green Economy Act. As an appointed Navajo Green Economy Commissioner, Wahleah wants to build on indigenous skills, such as ranching, weaving and farming, to grow green, profitable local initiatives. Where thousands live without electricity, Wahleah is exploring ways to finance larger scale, reservation-based, clean energy initiatives such as solar power generation.

## TINA JOHNSTONE



*“The greatest legacy I can give my kids is a safer country in which to raise their own children.”*

During a business trip, David Johnstone was shot by a high 16 year-old boy and was paralyzed from the waist down. Just a month later, David died from a pulmonary embolism. Suddenly a widow and single mother, Tina Johnstone was determined to end gun violence in America. She co-founded New Yorkers Against Gun Violence (NYAGV), and organized the first Silent March, a biennial protest against gun violence. “When I first started educating myself about gun control, I felt as if the public didn’t know anything about guns,” Tina recalls. “It was OUTRAGEOUS. Being outspoken has made me available, my anger doesn’t wane, but my patience does because gunshot stories share one thing: they are horrifying.” Tina spends uncounted hours listening to the stories of other victims, recruiting them to participate, and educating them about current policy. Although NYAGV has had success in advocating for gun safety, Tina often feels isolated and drained by her work. “I want more help. I can’t do this alone. I want to find the ‘me’ in every congressional district so everyone can talk. I’ve committed my life to working to prevent gun death and injury, so that other families might be spared the pain my children and I have endured.”

## JUANITA KIRSCHKE



*“Holding immigrant children and families incommunicado, denying them adequate clothing, exercise, showers or even toothbrushes, says more about those who detain than those who are detained.”*

As an Amnesty International volunteer, Juanita Kirsche initiated a pilot project to work with detainees seeking asylum at a prison in Berks County, Pennsylvania. There, she and other volunteers spent hours interviewing INS detainees about their backgrounds, the current status of their immigration cases, and their need for legal representation. Many are seeking asylum. When they arrive in this country without proper travel documentation, they are immediately detained. Others are non-citizens, detained after convictions of crimes, facing deportation. “Lifers,” are supposed to be deported, but their countries will not receive them. For them, detention becomes an endless sentence. In response to the needs of this growing population, Juanita established the Detention Resource Project, which keeps track of hundreds of cases and ensures those released from detention move on to successfully rebuild their lives. As a result of her efforts, quiet but sure progress has been made. For instance, Juanita promoted a program enabling detainees to view a video that educates them about their rights and explains the legal proceedings they face. Throughout, Juanita’s work with people in immigration detention has focused on lowering the barriers to information and provision of service imposed by circumstances of detention.







## AL KURLAND



*“My dedication to working with young people is to create the things that they otherwise wouldn’t have.”*

In the diverse New York City neighborhood of Washington Heights, Al Kurland fosters leadership and confidence through the old-fashioned tools of athletics and community service. As “godfather” to over 1,000 young people, Al is adept at harnessing community resources to create comprehensive programs for the entire neighborhood. He has designed and directed a range of after-school and athletic programs for the youth of Washington Heights in order to encourage them to work hard, play well, and develop a high level of respect for their community. When he recognized that the absence of school sports programs for young girls affected their self-esteem, Al created the all-female Ivy League. The Ivy League offers competitive softball and track to 200 girls. “We see the transition in these girls,” Al explains with pride. “Some of them turn into athletes. Others change their attitudes and tend to be less critical of themselves and their peers. Overall, the girls are more confident because of their involvement in team sports.” Al considers the opportunity to work side-by-side with young people, exposing them to new opportunities, giving them responsibility and watching them grow, to be a gift.

## OLIN LAGON



*“There’s an abundance of talent that can be tapped when people are made real partners.”*

At an early age, Olin Lagon proved himself an effective leader in indigenous Hawaiian communities. A high-school dropout, Olin grew up poor in communities plagued by violence and drugs. By his early thirties, he was CEO of a community-owned high-tech start-up, Hawaiian Homestead Technologies (HHT), whose mission is to create jobs in those same communities. As an employee put it, “A lot of people don’t think that Hawaiians can work with computers. I guess we’re proving them wrong.”

The path to HHT took Olin through military school, the University of Hawaii, a Fellowship at the East-West Center, an Hawaiian information management company, and a Peace Corps posting in Russia.

The almost instant success of HHT led Olin to another start-up: the Intertribal Information Technology Company (IITC), a strategic alliance among Native Hawaiian, Alaskan Native and American Indian IT companies. IITC quickly won over \$65 million in contract work, which translated to nearly 300 new technology jobs in some of the most economically challenged communities in the United States.

## NIKKI LEWIS



Nikki Lewis got only two days' notice when the restaurant that employed her closed. Inspired by the model of the Restaurant Opportunities Center (ROC) founded by New York City workers who survived the September 11 attacks, Nikki decided to change the way the District's restaurant industry does business.

Working late at night to recruit wait-staff, bartenders, prep cooks and dishwashers in steamy kitchens, Nikki built support for her campaign to reform an industry that, as a colleague put it, "keeps us living in poverty as we prepare cook and serve America's food." She led a research project that collected data from 500 workers and collaborated with advocates and academics on a comprehensive study which found pervasive occupational segregation, unsafe conditions, wage theft, lack of benefits and a federal minimum "tipped wage" frozen at \$2.31 since 1991. The report gained national media attention.

Nikki went on to co-direct ROC-DC, which boasts more than 300 member activists. ROC-DC hosts free courses, including English as a second language, workers' rights and leadership skills. In an industry where nearly 90% of employees have no access to employer-based health insurance, ROC offers its own healthcare package to workers, including undocumented immigrants, for \$35 a week. To educate diners, Nikki organized public flash mobs to celebrate restaurateurs who practice fair labor standards — and to point the finger at those who violate the law.

## CARRIE ANN LUCAS



From a busy law office in Denver, Carrie Ann Lucas fights for clients like the deaf woman whose toddlers were put up for adoption because social workers feared that she could not hear their cries; a family whose homeowners association raised aesthetic objections to a fence to protect their young, autistic son; and a developmentally disabled woman, who was sterilized by her doctor without her informed consent.

Census data indicate that at least 15% of American parents with children at home have some disability. These families have long been targets of ill-informed skepticism about their abilities to parent, as well as discriminatory and illegal intrusions into their private lives.

Carrie Ann, a successful lawyer and nationally recognized advocate for people with disabilities, defies all the myths by personal example. Deaf and legally blind, breathing through a ventilator and getting around in a wheelchair, Carrie Ann proudly parents four thriving adopted daughters with developmental and physical disabilities, all of whom experienced abuse and neglect in their birth families and in the foster care system.

In 2004, Carrie Ann launched the Center for the Rights of Parents with Disabilities (CRPD) to address the full range of needs of parents and children with disabilities through legal help, access to the services essential to successful parenting and advocacy for legislative changes to remove statutory bias.



## ALLAN MACURDY (d. 2008)



*“My attempts as a child to be like, and to look like, the able-bodied was buying into my own oppression.”*

Allan Macurdy was born with congenital muscular dystrophy, but as a scholar and teacher, he works to shatter students' assumptions of what it means to be disabled. As an administrator, he serves as a critical liaison between students with disabilities and Boston University, and as an intellectual activist, he calls for a more comprehensive perspective on all forms of disability. After a summer job at the Institute for Law and Disability while in law school, Allan realized the contribution he could make by using his legal skills to help those with mental and physical disabilities, and he then went on to revise the nation's most comprehensive review of federal and state laws against discrimination towards the disabled. Since 1988, Allan has taught at Boston University School of Law, where he works at the N. Neil Pike Institute for Law and Disability. Allan also is the founding board member of Partners for Youth Disabilities, a mentoring program that matches youth and adults facing similar physical challenges. Allan met his wife, Marie Trottier, through the program, and together they are a team of tenacious and persuasive advocates for the rights of Bostonians with disabilities.

## KAMAU MARCHARIA



*“I organize because I believe in revolution.  
Why can't I go to war to guarantee freedom  
for me, my people and my children?”*

A determined grass-roots leader, Kamau Marcharia's commitment to bringing justice to the most forsaken, and social consciousness to the most isolated, has propelled him to build a strong coalition among Southern communities struggling against racism, ignorance, and despair. At 16, he was wrongfully convicted of assault and sent to prison for 11 years. Upon his release Kamau returned home to Saluda County, South Carolina. The environment was saturated with institutionalized racism. White supervisors were raping black female employees; inappropriate management promotions were being made; racist language went unchallenged. In 1980, he went to a community meeting that would change his life. “Everyone was sitting around talking about their problems, and I said they should start organizing the young people. They said ‘you're hired.’ There was no money to pay me, but I got to work,” Kamau says. He secured an office in back of a barbershop and organized a group of young people whom he taught the importance of pride, respect, and togetherness. The success of this project spurred him on to organize The Concerned Citizens of Saluda and to continue to organize throughout South Carolina to work on issues of race and justice, providing to an ever-growing circle of communities the tools for change.

## EMILY MAW



*“I focus on wrongful convictions in cases of life without parole in Louisiana and Mississippi, the two states with the highest incarceration rates in the world.”*

As the Director of the Innocence Project New Orleans (IPNO), Emily Maw focuses on exonerating the wrongly convicted who are serving life sentences in Louisiana and Mississippi, the two states with the highest incarceration rates in the country — and the world. Raised in England and Wales, Emily’s determination to work on behalf of the disenfranchised led her to the Louisiana Crisis Assistance Center to help with capital cases. Emily left home for Louisiana to align herself with the most despised people in our society: first-degree murderers and rapists.

Emily began her work in the South as a defense investigator. She did this work for five years without pay, contributing to sparing ten people from execution. While devoting 30 to 40 hours a week to death penalty cases, Emily obtained a degree from Tulane Law School, where she finished in the top 10 percent of her class and won awards for her pro bono work. After graduation, Emily was hired by IPNO to lead its expansion in Mississippi. Her nominator wrote, “As I write this (nomination), Emily Maw will doubtless be on the road somewhere in Mississippi... making sure that those who are wrongfully convicted will get their day in court... so that the world knows that mistakes in the criminal justice system cannot be tolerated....”

## BENITA MILLER



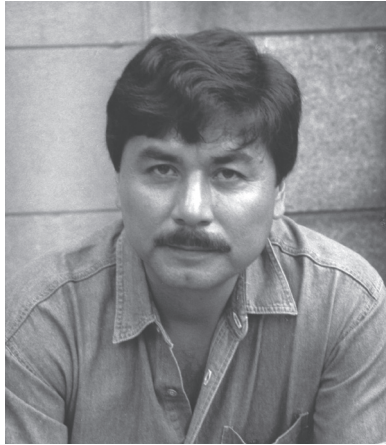
American schools, service providers and courts treat pregnant and parenting teenagers as a social welfare problem, directing scant resources to child protection and sex education — in effect, presuming the young mothers guilty of incompetence and irresponsibility, neglect and abuse.

“By working in this narrow way,” says Benita Miller, founding director of the Brooklyn Young Mothers Collective (BYMC), “we miss the opportunity to help young mothers thrive, build a better future for themselves and their children” and break the generational cycle of poverty.

Frustrated by the limitations of this approach, Benita left her job as a Legal Aid juvenile rights lawyer to build a new model. BYMC enfold each young mother in a personalized continuum of care for herself, her baby and her kin network across health, education, housing, life skills and active community engagement. Indeed, BYMC often operates in loco parentis, from calling to wake girls up for school to helping them find an apartment.

Benita is also creating a network of academics and community-based advocates with the shared goal of promoting alternative poverty reduction strategies, positioning BYMC to serve as a model. Successes include convincing the NYC Department of Education to shut down sub-standard “P-schools” that segregated and warehoused teen mothers. Partnering with the National Women’s Law Center, Benita is working for a federal bill to promote the education of pregnant and parenting students.

## TIRSO MORENO



*“It was hard to change from a fruit and vegetable picker to be an organizer, because everyone knew me as a picker and they didn’t think I had the capacity to lead my people.”*

There are 2.7 million farmworkers in the United States. Farm work is one of the worst-paying jobs in the economy and one of the most dangerous. Laws protecting farmworkers are almost nonexistent. Migrant workers, who are not covered under the National Labor Relations Act, do not enjoy the same rights as citizens do to form a union and negotiate collectively. “Most people do not know what is happening in the fields of America,” Tirso Moreno says. Tirso, the General Manager of the Farmworker Association of Central Florida (FACF), has a clear mission: to establish farm work as an honorable, legitimate, and safe profession and to ensure that farmworkers are treated with justice and dignity. He has worked tenaciously with other advocates toward the FACF’s goals of establishing a living wage; creating adequate and affordable housing; securing safe, sanitary working conditions and access to decent educational opportunities; and giving farmworkers a voice in workplace decision-making. “We have to do this work ourselves. We can’t get it done alone so we teach others about their rights and how to help themselves. These families have been denied opportunities many times,” he explains. “But I believe in myself, I believe in my people. We believe in ourselves.”

## AUDREY MORRISSEY



A mother at 15, Audrey Morrissey went along when her boyfriend “turned her out” to work the streets of Boston to earn money for their future together. As her boyfriend’s abuse compounded the horrors she experienced on the street, Audrey turned to drugs. It took Audrey fourteen hard years to get out.

Audrey found her voice and her life’s work when a woman she had known from the streets invited her to speak at a meeting of survivors and workers from the Department of Social Services. She was invited back.

In 2003, Audrey was hired to join an early-intervention and prevention project at a welfare agency. Her effect on the girls she worked with was electrifying. In group homes and juvenile lock-ups, girls who had never shared their own stories vied to sit next to Audrey, trusting that she would get them the help they so desperately needed.

In 2004, the Massachusetts Department of Social Services asked her to take on a small caseload of girls their professionals had been unable to reach. Hiring a survivor without credentials in this capacity was unprecedented. A typical day would find Audrey leading girls through a 10-week My Life/My Choice curriculum, participating in a statewide effort to reframe the responses of police, social service agencies and the courts to prostitution, or comforting a terrified child who had finally found her tears.



## VIVIAN NIXON



Research has consistently found that post-secondary education is the most successful, least costly method of preventing crime and that prison-based education is the single most effective tool for lowering recidivism. Despite this, Congress enacted the 1994 Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act, effectively dismantling higher education in correctional facilities. States quickly followed suit.

Denial of this opportunity is a cruel injustice to those caught up in a system where 60% are functionally illiterate, and, as Vivian Nixon says, “every sentence ultimately becomes a life sentence because of the collateral consequences.”

While in prison, Vivian worked as a tutor and experienced firsthand the under-education of other women prisoners. Once released, Vivian became a fellow at the Community and College Fellowship (CCF), a program designed to help formerly incarcerated women achieve economic security by pursuing college degrees. In 2004, Vivian became CCF’s Executive Director. Under her direction, CCF’s budget, staff and program participants tripled and its funding swelled. CCF welcomed the first men to the program, started a speaker’s bureau and a theater group, and arranged for CCF students to mentor incarcerated youth at Riker’s Island.

As an ordained minister, Vivian launched Reenter Grace, a project that sends formerly incarcerated colleagues to reach out to African-American faith-based communities, educate them about the impact of U.S. criminal justice policies and advocate a “Christian response” to mass incarceration.

## PARISA BONITA NOROUZI



Parisa Norouzi is the Executive Director of Empower DC. She understands that the development boom in the nation’s capital that is led by powerful interests means the displacement and fragmentation of long established communities, but decisions are made without opportunity for real input and influence from those affected. She succeeds in leading communities to organize themselves to respond to threats through her innovative strategies to inspire people who for years have felt helpless in the face of those with power and money.

Her organization galvanized the community of Ivy City to successfully oppose a plan to use a local school parking lot for tourist buses, despite significant air quality problems already affecting the health of local residents. Parisa had worked with the Ivy City community since 2001 to document neighborhood history, win affordable housing, and pursue a recreation center at the closed school. When the city moved forward with its parking plan, she led a successful lawsuit which garnered press attention and convinced the judge to tour the site, and rule in favor of the community. Never one to shy away from tough political battles, Parisa and Empower DC are also organizing to stop school closings in low-income Black neighborhoods and the demolition of public housing communities. As they do, people are transformed from soft spoken to outspoken, what Parisa calls “the building block of social change.” They have seen that they themselves can Empower DC.

## MARTHA OJEDA



*“Ten years after NAFTA, the aftershocks continue to reverberate in the erosion of workers’ salaries and rights, the further pollution of their bodies, air and water and the sabotaged efforts for legal redress.”*

For Martha Ojeda, the daunting is routine; the impossible simply takes a little longer. As the executive director of the Coalition for Justice in the Maquiladoras (CJM), she brings together labor, human rights, and environmental groups from the U.S., Mexico and Canada in the struggle for basic worker rights. Martha started as a production worker, where she led her fellow workers as they sought to alleviate dangerous conditions. They in turn contributed a portion of their meager wages to help Martha pursue a law degree. When her company shut down, Martha fought successfully for severance pay the workers were due. She led the effort to create a democratic union at the Sony plant in Nuevo Laredo. Branded a troublemaker, Martha was pressured to leave the country or face arrest or worse. She joined CJM and was selected as the coalition’s first Mexican director. At CJM, Martha created a guide to Mexican labor law and coordinated training workshops on workers’ rights under the Mexican constitution and international trade accords. Martha has bravely stood shoulder to shoulder with maquiladora workers facing beatings, legal threats and repression. In doing so, she has become an international leader in the movement for human rights in the global economy.

## GERALD ONE FEATHER



*“We have to learn to live in two worlds, the white man’s world and the Lakota world ... to learn each of their values, which are totally different, in order to survive.”*

Gerald One Feather has dedicated his life to the recovery of the spirit, land, and cultural inheritance of his people, working within the tribal government of the Oglala Sioux and outside it. As a member of the tribal government, Gerald instituted several programs that later became national models. Despite the resistance of the state of South Dakota, Gerald forged the way for the creation of the Oglala Lakota College on the reservation. Bypassing the South Dakota Board of Regents, which refused to help, Gerald enlisted the support of the University of Colorado to establish a model for American Indian education. This model has been replicated to create 26 such colleges on reservations around the country. Gerald has also been involved in the United Nations’ work on indigenous rights and in the effort to restore the strength and independence of The Great Lakota Nation — American and Canadian Indian Law consider the many bands of the Lakota separate tribes. Gerald has been an important force in reexamining treaties and bringing together leaders of both Canadian and American tribes to reestablish the Campfires, the traditional Lakota government. “My vision is to see the Lakota people control their own lands and revive their culture, ceremonies, and traditions.”

## KEN PAFF



*“Being union-minded opens the door to casting off racism and prejudice because in a union everybody needs each other.”*

Throughout the history of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, Ken Paff has stood above the mud slinging, while carefully building the coalitions necessary to promote reform. In his 25 years as a union reform activist, Ken has been unwavering in his commitment to empower workers, wipe out corruption, and restore union democracy. “I wanted to build a movement of working people for justice,” he says. “Politics in this country is not an involving thing, I wanted [the Teamster reform movement] to be the opposite.” In 1976, Ken helped found Teamsters for a Democratic Union (TDU), which dedicated itself to union democratization and reform. Operating on a shoestring budget and in the face of severe opposition and the threat of violence from the union’s old guard, Ken became a national organizer of TDU. Under his guidance, TDU has become a central force in organizing grassroots union reform in the Teamsters and is an inspiration to other unions. Under Ken’s leadership, TDU has won court victories for fair union elections, protected members’ pensions against the embezzlement of corrupt leaders, and made advances for drivers’ safety. “Half the battle is convincing people it’s not up to lawyers and politicians — it’s up to you.”

## TYRONE PARKER



Tyrone Parker’s Washington, D.C. is worlds away from the White House. The neighborhoods of his childhood, which once fostered a sustaining sense of community in spite of racism and poverty, are being torn apart by violence. Tyrone is determined to restore that sense of community.

Early brushes with the law landed Tyrone in prison. Released in 1987, he returned home to find an epidemic of violence. Tyrone’s son was slain by a stray bullet — an innocent bystander to a gunfight at a skating rink. No one was safe from flying bullets — not the elderly on their way to church, not the children playing in the street, not the young men desperate for respect.

Tyrone and four friends formed the Alliance of Concerned Men and sought to staunch the bloodshed at its source. Armed only with their street-smarts, they became volunteer peacemakers confronting violence on a person-to-person level.

Since 1991, Tyrone and the Alliance have sought out the vengeful, confronted Uzi-packing street leaders, brokered truces and worked to provide paths out of crime and violence. Operating on the premise that every individual has infinite worth and dignity, the Alliance takes a comprehensive approach to creating social justice, sponsoring substance abuse programs, life skills training, post-incarceration and afterschool programs that serve hundreds of kids a day.



## FRANCISCO ARGÜELLES (PANCHO) PAZ Y PUENTE



Pancho Paz y Puente is one of the founders of Fe y Justicia Worker Center, a community organization in Houston for low-wage immigrant workers, and he has worked tirelessly to grow the capacity of Living Hope Wheelchair Association, a grassroots organization of immigrants with spinal cord injuries. Since coming to the U.S. from Mexico in 1996, Pancho has served as a teacher and mentor in the immigrant rights movement to build institutions that empower and defend the most vulnerable coming to the U.S.

This servant leader's contributions extend far beyond Houston. In 2004 he co-authored an award-winning popular education curriculum, BRIDGE: Building a Race and Immigration Dialogue in the Global Economy, which confronts issues of divisions and alliance building and has transformed organizing and empowerment in the growing immigrant rights movement. It provides organizers with tools to address issues such as racism, sexism, and homophobia within immigrant communities and frameworks to analyze human rights and globalization in migration. His commitment to modeling decision-making processes that engage the knowledge, experience and power of grassroots communities has inspired a new generation of immigrant rights leaders. Community organizers around the country comment that, "working with Pancho is a transformative and life-changing experience. But he has purposefully stayed out of the limelight, eschewing opportunities to exercise more traditional and visible roles of 'leadership,' out of his deep humility and commitment to growing organic leadership."

## DARBY PENNEY



When Darby Penney took a job with the New York State Office of Mental Health (OMH), she never thought that her own psychiatric history would have any bearing on her work. Though active in social justice movements, she was not aware of the movement by ex-patients to oppose the degradation they experienced in the name of treatment. Then, while staffing a statewide planning advisory committee, she met members of this movement. "I looked around the room," Darby recalls, "and realized that I was one of them, not one of the bureaucratic 'suits.'"

Darby quickly moved to the vanguard, serving for nine years as OMH's Director of Recipient Affairs and becoming an increasingly vocal advocate for the rights of people with psychiatric disabilities. She established peer advocacy programs, and worked to reduce restraint and seclusion, to increase opportunities for self-determination and to promote self-help programs. While Darby's opposition to coercive policies eventually cost her her government job, she remained unbowed.

Recognizing that the United States lags behind many other countries in the use of non-medical, non-coercive healing approaches for psychiatric patients, in 2003 Darby helped found the International Network of Treatment Alternatives for Recovery. To advance the rights of those who belong to the largest disability group in the country, she says, "We must break the stranglehold of the pharmaceutical industry on this field."

## RHONDA PERRY



*“If agricultural subsidies are not replaced by mechanisms that enable farmers to get a fair price from the marketplace, the family farm system of agriculture in this country is going to be destroyed.”*

In the chorus of voices defending the family farm, Rhonda Perry's rings out loud and clear. Born and raised on a Missouri farm, Rhonda returned to the land to confront the powerful interests that threaten the social, economic and environmental fabric of rural America. She runs a grain and livestock farm in central Missouri. Rhonda is also program director of the Missouri Rural Crisis Center (MRCC), a grassroots organization of 5,500 farm families struggling to survive the onslaught of giant agribusiness. Rhonda organized at the local and national level to champion the family farmer and combat the despoliation wrought by factory farming. She helped found the Campaign for Family Farms and the Environment, a multi-state challenge to corporate control of the hog industry. Bridging urban-rural and black-white divides she has created coalitions with environmentalists, unions, consumers and churches. Through MRCC, Rhonda brought 2,500 poor families from 25 counties into monthly food cooperatives. She founded Patchwork Family Farms, a cooperative that helps farmers get a fair price for their pork by working together to market their products throughout Missouri. Patchwork is a successful alternative to corporate farming, demonstrating that sustainable hog production by family farms is economically, socially and environmentally viable.

## RON PODLASKI



*“I often feel as if I'm alone in this work. And then I have to remember that leaders are the first ones to stick their feet into the pond to see if it's safe for everyone else to go ahead.”*

Having served in the United States military from 1966 until 1969, Ron Podlaski is a veteran who has struggled with America's post-war legacy. In 1986, Ron was elected Vice President of the Vietnam Veterans of America Foundation (VVAFF). He hoped to work with the U.S. government to rescue the Amerasian children who had been left behind in refugee camps. In 1991, Ron was sent to Cambodia by VVAFF to address the growing number of disabled victims of land mines. Ron established the P.K. Sethi Prosthetics Clinic and Training Center in Kien Khleang, Cambodia. He found patients who were malnourished and needed medical attention. Ron created a health clinic to attend to the residents' medical needs and later opened a training center. “We trained disabled people to make prosthetics. We created jobs for the blind. We got the first tubular steel wheelchairs in Cambodia by purchasing the technology transfer rights, and beginning production,” he explains with pride. “We hired women facing discrimination because we were interested in hiring people who needed jobs. It was a low-tech and self-sustaining program, and we broke a lot of new ground.” By the end of 1992, the clinic had provided more than 600 amputees with new limbs.

## ESTHER PORTILLO



*"The people I work with fled civil war in their countries. I tell them, if you can survive that, you can fight for your rights as a tenant."*

An investigator from the LAPD flashed his badge, showed his gun and asked who was behind the protest against poor housing conditions. After being taken on a tour of the building, the officer was convinced that he should be investigating the millionaire slumlord that owned the building. The organizer who turned that officer around was 25-year-old Esther Portillo. By that time, Esther had already single-handedly organized tenants in seventeen buildings in Los Angeles and helped found tenant unions in three different communities. Encouraging low-income tenants whose children were ingesting dangerous levels of lead to fight for environmental justice, Esther obtained a license to test for lead, initiated a lawsuit against a slumlord and got the L.A. Housing Authority to redirect city efforts toward detection and prevention, not just treatment. She helped tenants complete paperwork to file complaints and shepherded them through court hearings. Esther's legal clinic in San Bernardino is the first in the county to organize as well as represent tenants. "People here are not accustomed to protest their conditions or attend city council meetings," she says, "but with time I hope that San Bernardino becomes a haven for new organizers and activists who will enrich the daily lives of the poor, and vice versa."

## LUCY POULIN



*"It's a privilege to work with good people and to do good work. There is nothing to prevent me from living my conscience other than myself."*

H.O.M.E. (Homeworkers Organized for More Employment), the low-income housing cooperative which Lucy Poulin founded, serves a poor, rural community of 8,000 in Orland, Maine. H.O.M.E. has offered jobs, food, temporary shelter, education and home ownership to the rural poor for over four decades. In 1957, Lucy joined a Carmelite order; seven years later, the order assigned her to a group in Bucksport, Maine. "I was doing a lot of work with local poor people and I had no real training and no college degree. Slowly, some projects like a knitting and weaving outlet developed out of our various needs. That was the beginning of my work in Orland." Lucy champions what she calls "self-development economics." She created H.O.M.E. to help local home-crafters sell their goods. Now located on 23 acres of land, the co-op has expanded into a free health clinic, a soup kitchen, a food bank, and five homeless shelters. "The main thing is that there is dignity in the exchange," Lucy says. "It's so easy to go down there and take; that's why we structure the exchange to be a home stay and work visit so that we live with the families, work for them, and get to know them."



## NINAJ RAOUL



*“It is past time to correct the U.S.’s indefensible discriminatory policy toward Haitian refugees.”*

After the ouster of Jean-Bertrand Aristide, Ninaj Raoul put her career on hold and traveled to Guantanamo Bay to help the U.S. Justice Department translate interviews Haitian refugees gave to establish their fear of persecution. Ninaj worked tirelessly mediating among refugees, the INS, the U.S. military, and a team of law students. Ninaj helped defuse the explosive atmosphere and played a pivotal role in a lawsuit that established the right of HIV-positive refugees to apply for asylum in the U.S. Back in Brooklyn, Ninaj opened her home to pregnant women who were released and flown to New York with no resources. Scrambling to meet their needs, Ninaj founded Haitian Women for Haitian Refugees (HWHR) and began a volunteer effort to supply new arrivals with housing and public assistance. A grant enabled HWHR to acquire classrooms to help immigrants meet the initial 90-day deadline to apply for asylum or refugee status. Propelled by the continued needs of her constituents, Ninaj organized the community to improve working conditions for domestic laborers and reform discriminatory police policies. She lobbied Congress to gain passage of the Haitian Refugee Immigration Fairness Act, which allowed 50,000 Haitians with political asylum claims to apply for permanent residency status.

## DANALYNN RECER



For decades, Danalynn Recer has been a formidable opponent of the death penalty in the United States. She has deployed her extraordinary skills as an investigator and as a lawyer in the defense of over one hundred capital clients in state and federal courts in Texas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, Mississippi, Alabama, Arkansas, Michigan, Tennessee, North Dakota, Florida, Kansas, California and Nevada.

Danalynn started as an investigator with the Texas Resource Center, which provided post-conviction representation to death-row inmates. She proved tireless in digging into the records and life circumstances of indigent clients to unearth facts that might mitigate sentences and soon gained a national reputation for her “scorched earth” style of investigation.

As an attorney, Danalynn went to Louisiana to do capital trial work alongside Clive Stafford Smith at the Louisiana Crisis Assistance Center. There, she helped to win reduced sentences or acquittals for defendants in capital cases and spared the lives of seven capital charged clients through plea bargains. Danalynn also developed investigative standards and protocols that, together with Stafford Smith’s “creative motions practice,” are now widely copied in other jurisdictions.

In 2002, she founded the Gulf Region Advocacy Center to raise standards of capital trial representation in Texas, where she continues to “pray for the dead and fight like hell for the living.”

# JACQUELINE ROBARGE



Jacqueline Robarge survived a chaotic childhood in a family struggling with mental illness, alcoholism and abuse, and she found her calling when she began volunteering in a shelter for battered women.

In 2000, Jacqueline was invited to work in Baltimore's city jail, where U.S. Department of Justice officials were investigating harmful and discriminatory conditions. Jacqueline discovered that an overwhelming number of the women in the jail had been physically and/or sexually abused, almost half had no stable housing to return to, many were suffering from mental and physical illnesses and drug addiction — yet almost no services were in place to address any of these issues.

Jacqueline resolved to offer practical as well as emotional support to women and to amplify their stories to advocate for change. Her program, Power Inside, provides a continuum of care that Jacqueline frames as a “health and human rights response to women traumatized by violence, the street economy and the criminal system.” Not only does Power Inside provide resources for incarcerated women, including making home visits to their families and advocating for alternative sentencing and treatment plans, but once released, women can drop in to Power Inside's center for safety or rest, food, bus tokens or a phone.

Jacqueline fights the bureaucratic hurdles, inadequate services and public indifference that block the systemic change necessary to prevent women from being re-incarcerated — or ever imprisoned at all.

# CECILIA RODRIGUEZ



A first generation Mexican-Americans born in Texas, Cecilia Rodriguez has been a formidable advocate for peace and for the most vulnerable members of U.S. and Mexican communities. Cecilia has taken on housing rights, local garment sweat shops, labor organizing efforts for farm workers and workers at local factories, and the persecution of indigenous people in Chiapas, Mexico.

Her great courage was fully evident in 1995 when Cecilia agreed to open an office in Chiapas as a representative of the Zapatista National Liberation Army. The office enabled international human rights groups to observe the growing human rights crisis of the indigenous population. Cecilia became a victim of an orchestrated campaign of harassment against the Chiapas-based rebel movement when three men raped her. She responded by making the attack public. “I will not shut up, I will not stop my work or travel to Chiapas or my work in the United States as a representative of the Zapatistas,” she explained. “I will continue to work tirelessly until the Zapatista demands for justice, freedom, and democracy are achieved.”

Cecilia Rodriguez continues her work in the marginalized communities in the U.S. and Mexico, organizing health, education, and agricultural projects in Chiapas and bringing people information on trade issues, environmental justice, immigration problems, abusive labor practices, and civil and human rights.

## ELENA RODRIGUEZ



*“Two young, pregnant Mexican migrant workers were required to obtain parental consent for an abortion, but the only relative they had in Idaho was their sister who was married to the coyote who had raped them.”*

Idaho Latinas and their families have the indefatigable Elena Rodriguez to thank for many of their health and social services. Elena coordinates services for farmworkers and runs the Child Health Insurance Program at Terry Reilly Health Services, one of the few clinics where primary care is available for migrant laborers near Boise. Elena took the clinic's services out into the fields, creatively promoting preventive medicine to migrant and indigenous communities. Prejudice and hostility toward migrant workers did not deter Elena. When ambulance drivers refused to drive to a migrant camp, Elena borrowed a hospital van and drove out herself. As president of Mujeres Unidas, an all-volunteer group, Elena takes on the tough challenge of combating domestic violence and alcoholism in the community and encourages young Latinas to become leaders. Overcoming the Hispanic community's own taboos about family planning and women's rights, she provides financing, transportation and translating help for women in need of reproductive health care. She has promoted parenting skills on Spanish-language radio and lobbied to secure a minimum wage for farmworkers. Elena's tireless struggle against adversity and prejudice and her genuine warmth have earned her the trust and loyalty of thousands of Latinas in Idaho for whom she has been a powerful advocate.

## MAYSENG SAETERN



*“We have to make people aware that violence against anybody is a crime and will not be tolerated. Not everybody understands that yet.”*

Domestic violence is a crime that usually takes place behind closed doors. In many traditional Southeast Asian cultures, the idea of interfering in situations deemed to be “familial,” no matter how abusive, is considered disruptive, disrespectful, and damaging. In this climate of cultural resistance to intervention, Mayseng Saetern — a Laotian refugee, works to help victims of domestic violence. In 1980, Mayseng arrived in the United States from a Thai refugee camp. She recognized that the same patterns of abuse that she had seen in Laos and Thailand continued in the United States. Immigrant women were even more isolated here, with language and cultural differences. Mayseng became a refugee services worker where she learned about assistance programs which many immigrants had not realized were available. “I learned that there were shelters — that there were choices here,” she says. Mayseng helped plan the Asian Community Women's Shelter where she became the women's advocate. As an advocate, she works one-on-one with victims of domestic violence, connecting them to health care, legal advice, emotional counseling, housing, and job training. “I believe that I can make a difference. The problem is so huge I cannot solve everything, but one piece at a time makes me happy.”



## VICTORIA SAMMARTINO



Children who have been abused or neglected are more likely than others to commit an act of delinquency. Those who “cross over” from the child welfare system to the criminal bureaucracy are disproportionately children of color and far more likely to be treated harshly in court. Among nearly 7,500 young people who were admitted to detention in N.Y.C. between 2007 and 2009, 69% were cross-over youth. This is the vulnerable population to which Victoria Sammartino has devoted her career.

In college, Victoria talked her way into leading a poetry workshop for teenage girls incarcerated on Rikers Island. Haunted by the feeling that only the accident of birth family separated her from the girls she taught, she returned to Rikers after college and soon began facilitating creative writing workshops in other juvenile detention facilities and adult prisons. In 2000, with a \$2,000 grant, Victoria launched Voices UnBroken out of her Bronx apartment.

Voices UnBroken now serves hundreds of 14- to 21-year olds living in correctional facilities, group homes and other restricted residential settings. A poet herself, Victoria is committed to “going in to the dark, confined spaces . . . to hear the loud, frightened voices of young people missing from their communities and to deliver the simple message that they are not forgotten, that we are not whole without them.”

## EVA SANJURJO



*“Eventually in Hunts Point we are going to have an awning over us. And that awning is the trees.”*

Before scientists proved a link between air pollution and asthma, Bronx community activist Eva Sanjurjo had her answer. Bordered to the north by the Bruckner Expressway, to the south by a sewage plant, and surrounded by more than two dozen waste-transfer stations, Eva’s neighborhood was a hub for nearly all of New York City’s produce, almost all of its sewage sludge, more than half of its decomposable garbage and as many as two million truck trips a year.

As one of the founders of the Hunts Point Awareness Committee (HPAC), Eva lead her poor and working-class neighbors to protest the toxic effects of industrial invaders on their neighborhood. Among its victories, the HPAC forced a fertilizer plant to make a \$2 million upgrade to its foul-smelling plant, and joined a coalition that won a moratorium on the siting of new waste transfer stations.

In 1998, Eva set her sights on environmental alternatives and helped start Greening for Breathing, which, working with under-funded city parks and state urban forestry programs, developed a strategy to find and persuade property owners to request trees from the city. In five years, the group planted 500 trees with no plans to stop. “Eventually we’re going to have an awning around us,” said Sanjurjo. “The awning is the trees.”

## TIM SCHERMERHORN



*“Defeating the law that eliminates bargaining rights represents a victory, but it’s a defensive victory. We have to change the terrain of how struggle takes place, where struggle takes place, and what we are fighting for.”*

Tim Schermerhorn is a founder of New Directions, a multiracial rank-and-file reform group in the Transport Workers Union Local 100 of the New York metropolitan area. Under his guidance, this movement has dramatically increased democratic participation in union affairs and helped to improve the working conditions of public employees who have been sold out by their union’s leadership. Working at the grass-roots level, New Directions has brought many African-American and Latino men and women into TWU debates from which they had traditionally been excluded. Financed by small contributions from the pockets of union brothers and sisters, New Directions has struggled against vast odds and the substantial resources of an entrenched union machine to give voice to the workplace concerns of the rank and file. It has also reached outside the public employee unions to forge alliances with other labor action groups and progressive organizations concerned with the welfare and democratic rights of all citizens. Tim’s tireless organizing, his conviction that workers must raise their voices and shape their own destiny, and his success in building a multiracial rank-and-file reform group are a model of the best hope for reviving the union movement.

## CLAUDIA SMITH



*“If the government wants to seal the entire border, it has every right to do so. What it cannot do is continue to channel economic migrants to their death.”*

As she was about to graduate from college, Claudia Smith attended a speech given by Cesar Chavez. Since then, she has dedicated her life to serving migrants from Mexico, Guatemala, and elsewhere in Central America. Claudia joined the California Rural Legal Assistance program (CRLA) and became a lawyer to better serve her clients. She established the California Rural Legal Assistance Foundation to carry out activities forbidden to CRLA. Claudia filed a Freedom of Information Act request concerning the I.N.S. standards for treatment of detainees and discovered that there were none. Claudia forced the establishment of standards, and ensures they are enforced. When Operation Gatekeeper began, the threat to migrants increased dramatically. Operation Gatekeeper funnels people attempting to cross the border into inhospitable places and conditions. Predictably, this has not discouraged emigration but put migrants in great danger. Claudia helped file a petition with the Organization of American States charging Operation Gatekeeper is in violation of inter-American agreements. Through politically sophisticated efforts, she attracted the attention of the head of the UN Commission on Human Rights to the abuse of the right to border control. Working with scant financial support, Claudia Smith simply does whatever she can to help her chosen clients.

## SHELDON SMITH



Recruited as a pre-teen to join a youth empowerment organization, early on, Sheldon Smith mastered public speaking and outreach skills and embraced the idea of improving his community by building the power of its residents. On the surface, Sheldon was a sterling example of a teenager overcoming the poverty and violence of his neighborhood. Deep down, he was more conflicted. Spending six months behind bars at 17, Sheldon had plenty of time for reflection and redirection.

After the birth of his daughter in 2009, Sheldon's experience as a new father at 20 inspired him to found The Dovetail Project, a program to teach young black men the parenting and life skills they never had a chance to learn. Sheldon recruits young fathers with a pledge to get them through their GED and into a productive job if they stick with the program. Breaking down their prideful posturing with no-holds-barred exchanges, he guides the men through a 12-week curriculum on topics ranging from felony street law to methods for disciplining toddlers in positive ways.

While Dovetail quickly attracted the attention of the press, academics and community activists, Sheldon is busy looking for more partners to employ his graduates, working to find safe, affordable apartments for his young dads and their children, and trying to expand Dovetail's reach.

## LINDA STOUT



Linda Stout's mission has been to build multi-class and multi-racial social groups dedicated to bringing about change.

Growing up in the poverty of rural North Carolina, Linda remembers the humiliation of being called "white trash." However, Linda believes that "the combination of being a thirteenth generation Quaker and living in poverty gave me a real sense of justice. I grew up believing that anger was OK if you looked for alternative options for change, options without violence."

In 1985, Linda founded the Piedmont Peace Project (PPP), a North Carolina, multi-racial network of textile mill workers, farmers and domestic workers. Despite intimidation by the Ku Klux Klan, PPP has brought water and sewers into impoverished rural communities, registered 15,000 voters, advocated for the rights and working conditions of farmers, people of color, and the disabled. Hundreds of poor, rural North Carolinians have participated in decision-making processes in their communities.

Linda's work with the Piedmont Peace Project and, subsequently, with the Peace Development Fund, on both local and national levels, relies on a non-traditional, non-hierarchical leadership model. Linda's leadership circles bring together the strengths of many people, and she strives to build bridges between communities by identifying and acknowledging barriers of class, race and gender; by understanding how oppression and privilege work; and by building alliances to change the barriers.



## CARRIE THOMAS



*“I was just fed up with all the racism.  
Someone had to speak up, why not me?”*

For decades blacks in Carrie Thomas’ small town of Smithville, Georgia, suffered under an all-white power structure. The police department was out of control. Rogue cops pulled blacks out of their cars and arrested bystanders for obstruction. The white judge meted out harsh sentences to defendants who were denied counsel. In 1999, Carrie hosted John Cole Vodicka, a Petra Fellow who was leading a walk through Georgia to call attention to criminal justice abuses. Carrie remembers feeling “pumped up and inspired to work for change.” As the small group of civil rights marchers passed the “Welcome to Smithville” sign, the chief of police told them they could not parade without a permit. Carrie found her voice. “Well, Chief,” she said, “this is our town and our freedom walk, so you’ll just have to arrest us.” The jailing, trial and exoneration of the “Chicken Pie Six” proved pivotal for Smithville. Carrie founded the Smithville Freedom Center to create change. They launched early reading readiness, after-school and summer school programs to address the needs of black students. The Center helped elect an all-black city council and restructured the police department. Carrie vividly remembers her own turning point: “I was just plain fed up. Someone had to speak up, why not me?”

## JOHN “JT” THOMPSON



*“Our revenge on the system that wrongly imprisoned  
us and destroyed our lives will be to empower leaders  
for change in post-Katrina Louisiana.”*

John Thompson was released from Louisiana’s Angola State Penitentiary in 2003 after serving 18 years — 14 on death row — for a murder he did not commit.

Ineligible for prison programs while incarcerated on death row or serving life without parole, Louisiana’s exonerees, in a cruel irony, are ineligible for reentry support services. Plagued by physical illness and depression and disconnected from their families, exonerees often find their job hunts stymied by the fee for a clean record.

Three days after his release, John went to work at the Center for Equal Justice on behalf of the men who remained In Angola. John threw himself into counseling prisoners, investigating cases and going to court until the day one of his clients was executed. It almost broke him, and he left the Center.

After Hurricane Katrina hit, John launched Resurrection After Exoneration (RAE), the first transitional housing and resource center in the country run by the exonerated for the exonerated. RAE ramped up quickly — providing housing and partnering with local businesses, nonprofits, professionals and volunteers to provide housing, jobs and financial management courses.

## JOAN TIMECHE



*“The Hopi reservation is always home, forever,  
even to Hopis who have never lived there.”*

There are few cultures whose values and beliefs are more diametrically opposite from modern American society than the Hopi culture, which puts group over individual, cooperation over competition, and simplicity over excess. Joan Timeche has spent her life working within her native Hopi tribe and other Native American communities in Arizona to preserve the integrity of tribal life by using the tools of modern business and education. In 1978, after graduating from Northern Arizona University, Joan moved to the Hopi reservation. She worked planning supplemental educational opportunities for Indian students and then in the Hopi Department of Education. She became Director of Hopi Education, and turned her energies to preserving Hopi language and culture by obtaining the funds to construct the first on-reservation high school since the 1950's. Joan's struggle to teach her daughter, Briana, traditional Hopi values and beliefs in the face of formidable modern social and economic pressures, is one aspect of her efforts to preserve the Hopi way of life. She visits the reservation regularly to participate in family and village cultural and religious activities. “The Hopi reservation is always home, forever,” Joan Timeche says, “even to Hopis who have never lived there.”

## CURT L. TOFTELAND



“Prison,” wrote reformer Sir Alex Paterson, “is a place where good may be done by infinite labor, and evil may be done automatically with no effort.” It is that infinite labor that is at the heart of Curt L. Tofteland's story. From 1995 to 2008, under Curt's direction, convicted abusers, armed robbers and murderers imprisoned at the Luther Luckett Correctional Complex in LaGrange, Kentucky, volunteered and recruited fellow inmates, chosen parts, rehearsed and performed fourteen plays by William Shakespeare. “The past is gone,” Curt would tell his unorthodox theater company, “there is only this moment.”

Curt first came to Luckett prison through a program called Books Behind Bars. By his fifth or sixth visit to the prison — working on fight scenes in “Romeo and Juliet” — Curt found he loved the work. He founded Shakespeare Behind Bars and stayed at Luckett for thirteen years, working as a volunteer in addition to his busy, successful career as an actor, director, producer, writer, and educator. At Luckett, not one of the thirty-four Shakespeare Behind Bars participants who won parole or served out their sentence returned to prison for committing new crimes. All the “apprentice magic users,” like Prospero in “The Tempest,” found enough magic in Curt and Shakespeare to guide them toward a different future.

Shakespeare Behind Bars is now in its 20th consecutive year. Curt currently facilitates eight Shakespeare Behind Bars programs in two Michigan prisons, serving two hundred and fifty prisoners each week.

## KEN TOOLE



*“We cannot give a wink and a nod to those who feel they have a right to intimidate their political opponents.”*

In response to the resurgence of white supremacy in the 1980s, Ken Toole helped found the Montana Human Rights Network (MHRN). Under his guidance the MHRN has become an effective grassroots organization and national leader in the struggle to expose and resist the far right and promote democratic values. White supremacist groups were entrenched across Montana — intimidating elected officials, attacking minorities and promoting a climate of racism and intolerance. Recognizing the growing threat to democracy, Ken left the security of his government job to launch a statewide campaign to educate and mobilize the citizens of Montana. In November 2000, Ken won a seat on the Montana state senate campaigning on a broad human rights platform. A consummate organizer, Ken built a network of people and organizations that were prepared to take action against the far right. Furthermore, Ken has fought the anti-Indian movement in Montana. He published the first in-depth expose chronicling the decades-long effort by extremists to overturn federally guaranteed Indian treaty rights. Ken has risked a lot to stand up to the forces of evil in his own back yard, stirring in all of us a renewed determination to protect the freedom of every citizen.

## NATALICÍA TRACY



Natalicia Tracy, the executive director of Boston’s Brazilian Immigrant Center and the coordinator of the Massachusetts Domestic Workers Congress, is a tireless advocate for immigrant women and low-wage workers.

Natalicia was nineteen with an eighth-grade education and no English skills when she left rural Brazil to work as a domestic for a family in the United States. Their promise of opportunity and income met a grinding reality when Natalicia was paid \$25 for over 70 hours of work a week, not allowed access to the telephone or mail, and made to sleep in a three-season porch, even in the winter.

Drawing strength from her own story, Natalicia has worked as a powerful coalition-builder across racial lines and has effectively united labor and faith leaders to support the Massachusetts statewide immigrant rights and domestic workers movement. Displaying a remarkable ability to empower other women, she makes space for them to rise with confidence and to emerge as leaders.

At the Center, which serves 3,000 Latino immigrants annually and provides both direct relief services and training and advocacy for the rights of the community through policy and research, Natalicia has helped spearhead projects like a pro bono legal mediation clinic and legal manual aimed at domestic workers. Throughout, Natalicia has been pursuing her doctorate in sociology at Boston University on the impact of immigration policy on mixed-status families.



## SISSY TRINH



Sissy Trinh is the founder and Executive Director of the Southeast Asian Community Alliance (SEACA) in Los Angeles. Her family fled Vietnam and moved to the U.S. when she was a toddler, and like many Southeast Asian immigrant families, she grew up in poverty. Chinatown is one of the poorest neighborhoods in Los Angeles. A determined advocate for social justice, Sissy realized very few organizations addressed the needs of the Southeast Asian community. She envisioned and created a new program — SEACA, empowering the Southeast Asian community through leadership development, education, advocacy and organizing.

Through Sissy's innovative organizing with youth, SEACA used land use policy reform to take on the City of Los Angeles and a new wave of gentrification slated for Chinatown that was proceeding with no meaningful input from residents. Sissy was the organizer connecting the dots, bringing in land use experts (both traditional and unconventional in her youth members), and moving the policy through City Hall. Under Sissy's mentorship, the youth at SEACA learned about the content and context of the zoning plan, its impact on access and how be powerful advocates to advance a comprehensive vision of social, economic and racial justice. In Sissy's words, "a scrappy little youth group helped to create what the L.A. Times' editorial board called a 'Model of L.A. Planning,'" that will shape the neighborhood for decades to come, and deep and meaningful involvement of residents made the difference.

## TOM TSO



*"A strong and independent judiciary is absolutely necessary to provide justice to the Navajo People."*

As the first Chief Justice of the Navajo Nation Supreme Court at its establishment 1985, Tom Tso played a pioneering role in establishing modern Anglo-American law and legal processes in the Navajo Nation while upholding tribal values, independence, and integrity. At his confirmation, Tom said, "No person can be guaranteed fairness and impartiality from the courts unless the judges and courts are free to carry out their duties without the possibility of any type of influence from any other person or government body." Because the Navajo Nation operates without a constitution, there has been serious debate about the role of the tribal courts in deciding legal issues about the structure of the Navajo Nation government. Tom's calm and steady efforts to maintain the independence and primacy of the Navajo judiciary over Navajo Nation affairs and to keep the court's focus on its judicial mission amid intense controversy has won praise. Tom rejects the melting pot image where "everybody blends together to form an indistinguishable mixture. This is fine for people who come to this country and want to jump into the pot. The real measure of tolerance and respect may well be how successfully the outside world can coexist with tribes."

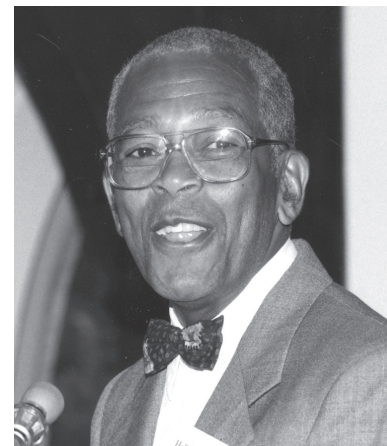
## JOHN COLE VODICKA



*“Surely we can at least be present for prisoners in ways that recognize their humanity. I truly believe that simple acts of kindness and concern ... will reduce this cinderblock and razor wire to rubble.”*

During the Vietnam War, John Cole Vodicka joined the Navy, but his refusal to report for duty led to imprisonment in the brig. During 11 months of confinement, John got a glimpse of what prison was like. After his release, John became an advocate for prisoners' rights. In 1993, John founded the Prison and Jail Project as a grass-roots civil rights organization devoted to protecting and working on behalf of prisoners and their families. It monitors courtroom proceedings, visits prisoners, and investigates incidents of jail abuse and mistreatment of prisoners and criminal defendants. The Project publishes a newsletter, provides support and information to families, confronts legal and political officials about the inequity of the justice system, and compiles information about various county jails for use in investigations by the Department of Justice. Equally important is the outspoken criticism John and his project participants direct against the racism that pervades the criminal justice practices of the deep South. John dedicates much of his energy to increasing public awareness of the problems that exist in the poorest region of Georgia. Through an annual Freedom Walk, John draws attention to the abuses and unjust racial composition of these jails.

## HOLLIS WATKINS



*“Young people are less dependent on the past, have the least fear of change and the best potential for creating a broad vision of a fair and just society.”*

Hollis Watkins is the Co-founder and President of Southern Echo, Inc., an organization dedicated to empowering local residents throughout Mississippi and the Southern region to make political, economic, educational, and environmental systems accountable to the needs and interests of the African-American community. Hollis is a powerful force in the efforts to carry on the unfinished business of the civil rights movement. For the past decade, Southern Echo has organized and supported local redistricting efforts aimed at more effective black political representation, resisting efforts to change the Mississippi constitution to roll back the progress that has been made toward genuine democracy. Hollis was the lead plaintiff in a federal lawsuit challenging Mississippi's districting. Southern Echo organized communities to create environmental safety zones, blocking the placement of toxic waste facilities in black communities. Hollis understands that the struggle for justice requires the development of new generations of leaders. He pioneered an intergenerational model of community organizing that encourages the participation of young people, bringing them into positions of responsibility. “When I was much younger,” he has said, “I got my strength from the older folks; and now I'm a little bit older. . . and I get my strength from young people.”

## PEGGY WHITE WELLKNOWN BUFFALO



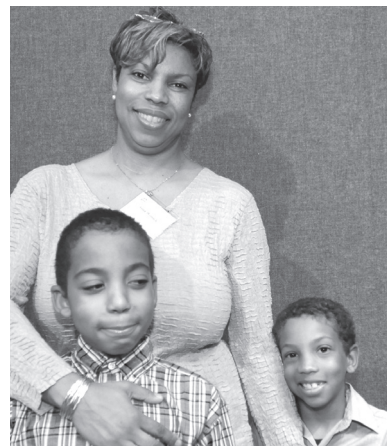
*“Traditional ways can be interwoven with modern ways  
to help our children reclaim the history in our veins.”*

Peggy White Wellknown Buffalo’s land, in the middle of the Crow Reservation, is where women and children took refuge as the Battle of Little Bighorn raged nearby in 1876.

Still suffering from misdeeds by the U.S. government and years of jurisdictional disputes, the Crow on the 2.3 million acre reservation are plagued by inequities, deep poverty and harsh economic and social conditions that pose huge challenges to indigenous communitarian beliefs and to the well-being and future of Crow children. It is precisely those challenges that Peggy works to remedy at The Center Pole, which she founded in 1999.

The Center Pole embodies a communal effort to connect with and honor traditional, spiritual values in order to insure the health and prosperity of the tribe. The straw bale structure housing the Center functions as a learning center, where youngsters receive food, shelter and warm clothing and can participate in cross-cultural academic enrichment activities, leadership training and community service. It is “a place to go to get help to help yourself,” providing resources on college access, business opportunities, global perspectives and social justice issues.

## GINA WOMACK



Gina Womack remembers being unprepared for what she found when she took a job at the Juvenile Justice Project of Louisiana (JJPL), which had filed suit on behalf of more than 500 children incarcerated at the state’s so-called Training Institute in Tallulah. Gina spent her first weeks on the job filing accounts of injuries and abuse, but it wasn’t until the police brought a young, shackled child to the office that she fully realized what she was working toward.

Fielding phone calls from distraught families who had committed their at-risk children to state institutions for treatment, care and job training only to find them ensnared in a brutal system in which parents had no choice or voice, Gina started a supported group, Families and Friends of Louisiana’s Incarcerated Children (FFLIC). “[It] turned out to be the missing piece of the Juvenile Justice Project,” Gina says. “When you put faces and names on this issue, folks see that these aren’t super-predators, or “throwaway kids”... They’re children with families who love them....”

The Juvenile Justice Reform Act, which ordered the closure of Tallulah and laid the groundwork for sweeping changes, became law in 2003. But, there was plenty left to do. Gina became the full-time, co-director of FFLIC, and when Hurricane Katrina swept through New Orleans, she sprang into action once again.



## PAUL WRIGHT



*“For too many, imprisonment is a daily ordeal of assault, brutality ... isolation and exile.”*

With a start-up budget of \$50, “Prison Legal News” (PLN) began publishing from behind bars at two prisons in Washington State in 1990. Paul Wright, its editor, was ordered to “the hole” — solitary confinement — for twenty days for a piece describing guard brutality. The first few issues were banned from all of the state’s prisons. Now, PLN has subscribers in all 50 states and circulates in every medium- and maximum-security facility in the United States.

Imprisoned for 17 years, Paul taught himself law, becoming a skilled jailhouse lawyer, and began to publish a small, monthly newsletter focusing on prisoner organizing and self-reliance. As PLN published evidence of neo-Nazi and racist activity among state prison guards, and broke stories about corporations like Boeing, Microsoft, Starbucks and Nintendo profiteering from prison labor, the newsletter’s support and circulation slowly grew among prisoners, lawyers and others involved in criminal justice. Eventually, PLN’s critiques gained traction with the mainstream media and labor groups.

Released in December of 2003, Paul spent his first day out of prison learning how to use the internet and email, meeting the lawyers working on a PLN censorship case and doing a television interview on prison slave labor. He hasn’t stopped since.

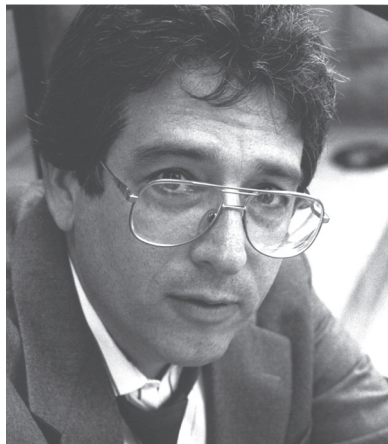
## RACHEL YODER



*“Why should some children have so much and others so little?”*

After graduating from college Rachel met and married Duane Yoder, whose career took them to Fort Wayne, Indiana, in 1979. The Yoders adopted a racially diverse family and deliberately bought a home in an integrated neighborhood. When their daughter, Christina, began kindergarten at an inner-city school, the Yoders were stunned at the difference between the segregated schools of the inner-city and the magnet schools of the suburbs. Disturbed by this gross disparity, Rachel and other concerned community members organized Parents for Quality Education and Integration (PQEI) to work through the courts to desegregate the 36 elementary schools of Fort Wayne. Rachel recruited 40 diverse plaintiffs who were willing to testify against the school system. Making endless rounds of phone calls for months at a time, Rachel kept everyone informed, answering questions and providing encouragement. PQEI reached a settlement with the Fort Wayne Community Schools and the state of Indiana. In 1994, the state agreed to pay \$12.6 million over the next six years. “Why should some children have so much and others so little?” asks Rachel. Her dedication to racial justice has been instrumental in improving the education for 20,000 children.

## LEONARD ZESKIND



*“My work scares people and some people think I’m crazy to do it. I don’t deal with white supremacy in the abstract. I deal with it as it really exists.”*

“The majority of Americans think that the Klan and the Nazis are the bad guys, and the rest of American society is normal. They think that the white supremacists are uneducated people with tobacco juice dripping from their mouths,” Leonard Zeskind explains. “Nothing could be farther from the truth.” Through his research, Leonard has repeatedly demonstrated that hate-group activity is the product of neither a handful of demented minds nor an idiosyncratic subculture, but is a significant trend gradually influencing the political mainstream. “White supremacists are strange, but they are not from Mars. My challenge is finding a way to connect my work to people’s lives and make my material accessible.” In 1982, he began publishing “The Hammer: Anti-Racist, Anti-Fascist News and Analysis.” The magazine attracted national attention for its detailed research and persuasive analysis. Leonard monitors hate groups by infiltrating their meetings, reading their publications, listening to videotapes, and interviewing defectors from their organizations. He lectures on the radical right in training workshops for community groups, law enforcement professionals and clergy and in universities throughout Europe and the United States. Leonard continues his work and mentoring of new activist researchers — “a future generation of Leonard Zeskinds.”

## AARON ZIMMERMAN



*“I believe that telling stories and having them heard is a basic human need. When people who have been silenced have an opportunity to use and strengthen their voice, there’s no telling what’s possible.”*

Aaron Zimmerman was leading creative writing workshops in New York City when he received a call from someone at the Prince George Hotel, a large supportive housing project, looking for someone to launch a writing program for its residents. Finding his own voice through writing had proved a revelation, and it was a dream of Aaron’s to help others use writing as a way of being heard. He jumped at the chance.

Within months, Aaron had founded the New York Writers Coalition (NYWC) with colleagues who shared his conviction that telling one’s own story is a basic human need and who believed in the transformative effect of such storytelling. Aaron then turned NYWC into one of the largest community writing programs in the United States. NYWC tailors workshops to meet the needs of such diverse groups as teenage girls who are at risk of gang involvement; men and women leaving the criminal justice system; seniors who live in a neighborhood being transformed by gentrification; the homeless and formerly homeless; people living with psychological disabilities, with cancer or with HIV/AIDS; and adults who survived the collapse of the World Trade Center.

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