

# SPLC REPORT



PUBLISHED BY THE SOUTHERN POVERTY LAW CENTER  
MONITORING HATE • TEACHING TOLERANCE • SEEKING JUSTICE

SEPTEMBER 2006  
VOLUME 36, NUMBER 3

VALERIE DOWNES



Named plaintiff Edson Silva is one of hundreds of workers who will collect unpaid wages.

## Center lawsuit wins unpaid wages for Katrina workers

NEW ORLEANS — A federal lawsuit filed by the Center has resulted in a major Hurricane Katrina contractor agreeing to immediately pay more than \$200,000 to migrant workers who were cheated out of wages.

The value of the settlement, the first resolution of a lawsuit alleging wage theft in post-Katrina cleanup and rebuilding, could eventually reach more than \$1 million.

The company also agreed to reform its oversight of subcontractors to ensure the protection of workers in the future.

"With this win, our rights are now respected," said Wanderson de Sousa.

As part of the settlement, Belfor USA Group Inc. agreed to pay \$223,000 to 168 workers who have joined the suit. In addition, the company will pay overtime wages due to other employees — as many as 2,000 more — who opt into the lawsuit over the next year. The Center will work with Belfor to identify these additional workers.

### 'A tremendous victory for workers'

"This is a tremendous victory for hundreds of migrant workers who responded to this country's direst need and endured dreadful working conditions, only to be cheated on payday," said JJ Rosenbaum, a lawyer with the Center's Immigrant Justice Project.

"Belfor is setting a good example for other major corporations employing workers in New Orleans," Rosenbaum said. "The

case should serve as a warning for companies that unlawfully profit from the sweat of migrant labor — especially those using multiple layers of subcontractors to avoid accountability for the exploitation of workers."

The settlement in *Rodrigues v. Belfor USA Group Inc.* was approved Sept. 7 by U.S. District Judge Jay C. Zainey of New Orleans.

The Center filed the suit in February on behalf of workers for Belfor and its numerous subcontractors who were systematically denied overtime pay while often working 12-hour days, seven days a week, to remove mold, mud and other contamination from flooded buildings.

"These companies recruited us away from our homes and humiliated us, and we want to make sure this doesn't happen to anyone else," said Moises Rodrigues.

The Belfor case is one of three federal lawsuits the Center filed on behalf of post-Katrina workers in New Orleans. One of the remaining cases involves LVI Environmental Services of New Orleans, another major reconstruction contractor. The other was filed on behalf of immigrants recruited to work for a hotel chain.

The Belfor plaintiffs were originally recruited from 14 states and worked for 11 subcontractors on more than 50 projects.

"Because of their unity and bravery, workers have won an important battle against ongoing wage theft and mistreatment by reconstruction contractors," Rosenbaum said.

## Center report exposes racist extremists active in military

A Center investigation has revealed that neo-Nazis, skinheads and other racist extremists are infiltrating the ranks of the armed forces in large numbers, slipping through the cracks because of ambiguous recruiting standards and pressure to meet wartime manpower goals.

When extremists are identified, they rarely face discharge.

Some are forming networks within the military. Some even openly advertise their violent tendencies and radical views on the Internet in photos replete with Nazi symbols and weapons.

These white supremacists, many of whom advocate race war and the overthrow of the U.S. government, are receiving combat experience in Iraq and Afghanistan as well as training in weaponry and explosives — obtaining skills they could one day turn on U.S. citizens.

The Center released the Intelligence Project report, "A Few Bad Men," on its website in early July, garnering national publicity. It appeared in the Summer 2006 issue of *Intelligence Report*.

### Center president wrote Rumsfeld

Center President Richard Cohen, in a letter citing past problems with extremists in the military, urged Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld to immediately investigate the problem and enforce a zero-tolerance policy.

Rumsfeld, who is already facing widespread criticism over his handling of the war in Iraq, has not responded.

The report, however, did spark outrage in Congress, where 40 members signed a letter to Rumsfeld demanding that the Pentagon adopt the Center's recommendations to expel extremists. The letter was initiated by U.S. Reps. Artur Davis (D-Ala.) and Elliot Engel (D-N.Y.), who also are sponsoring a House resolution urging Rumsfeld to act. The signers represent 20 states and all regions of the country.

U.S. Senator Richard Shelby, an Alabama Republican, also urged Rumsfeld to enforce a zero-tolerance policy. "Military extremists



Robert Lee West, an active-duty airman at Warner Robins Air Force Base, poses with Nazi paraphernalia in a photo posted on a website.

present an elevated threat both to their fellow service members and the public," Shelby wrote. "We witnessed with Timothy McVeigh that today's racist extremist may become tomorrow's domestic terrorist. Of all the institutions in our society, the U.S. military is the absolute last place extremists can be permitted to exist."

### Report cited in Senate hearing

In a July Senate hearing, Sen. Patrick Leahy (D-Vt.), cited the Intelligence Project's report and pressed Attorney General Alberto Gonzales to have the Department of Justice help identify and expel extremists from the armed services.

Rumsfeld's silence is puzzling in light of the history of this

problem and previous responses by members of both Republican and Democratic administrations.

The report comes 10 years after Pentagon leaders cracked down on extremist activities by active-duty personnel — a move that came in the wake of the 1995 Oklahoma City bombing by decorated Gulf War combat veteran Timothy McVeigh and the murder that same year of a black couple by members of a skinhead gang in the elite 82nd Airborne Division.

And a decade before that, Center co-founder Morris Dees wrote to President Reagan's defense secretary, Caspar Weinberger, warning of the threat posed by Ku Klux Klan members in the armed forces and demanding that members of hate groups be thrown out of the military. As a result, Weinberger declared that, "Military personnel must reject participation in white supremacy, neo-Nazi and other such groups." That directive was clarified and strengthened by military leaders during the 1996 crackdown, which came during the Clinton administration.

Now, with the country at war in Iraq and Afghanistan, the military appears to be turning its back to the threat of extremists.

"Recruiters are knowingly allowing neo- (continued on page 3)



## Art teaches tolerance in Alaska

A Fairbanks, Alaska, 5th-grader displays her "inner self-portrait," created in words, that she made during an art lesson designed to prompt students to consider the concepts of prejudice and tolerance. Read more about the innovative project, funded by a Teaching Tolerance grant, on page 5.

CONTRIBUTED

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The Southern Poverty Law Center is a nonprofit organization that combats hate, intolerance, and discrimination through education and litigation. Its programs include Teaching Tolerance and the Intelligence Project. The Center also sponsors the Civil Rights Memorial, which celebrates the memory of individuals who died during the Civil Rights Movement, and the Civil Rights Memorial Center.

SPLC REPORT EDITOR  
Penny Weaver

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A MESSAGE FROM CENTER PRESIDENT RICHARD COHEN

## Bush administration ignoring extremists in military

With Republicans sensing a tide of public anger bearing down on them in the midterm congressional elections, President Bush and his allies are once again raising the specter of foreign terrorists attacking Americans on our own soil if we pull our troops out of Iraq.

But the administration is closing its eyes to the gathering threat of homegrown terrorism and the inadvertent role our own military is playing in training right-wing extremists.

In an alarming report we released in July (see page 1), our Intelligence Project discovered that the pressure of meeting wartime manpower goals has led military officials to relax standards designed to weed out radical racists.

Here is what one military investigator told us: "Recruiters are knowingly allowing neo-Nazis and white supremacists to join the armed forces, and commanders don't remove them from the military even after we positively identify them as extremists or gang members." He went on to say, "We've got Aryan Nations graffiti in Baghdad. That's a problem."

Think about that. Many of these miscreants not only thrive on hate, they plot violence against people of other races and ethnicities and advocate the overthrow

of the U.S. government. And they are allowed to continue serving, even in the Special Forces.

In some cases, these extremists freely organize within the armed services. Hundreds of neo-Nazis identify themselves on the Internet as active-duty soldiers.

Just in the past year, 320 extremists and gang members were identified at Fort Lewis in Washington — but only two were discharged.

Contrast that with how the military views soldiers who are homosexual. Since 1993, when Congress passed the "don't ask,

### In the past, there was bipartisan commitment to protecting our military.

don't tell" policy, the military has discharged more than 11,000 soldiers for being gay. About 800 of those who were booted out, including 80 linguists, were occupying highly critical jobs. Training their replacements has cost taxpayers at least \$364 million.

The only conclusion we can draw is that the Pentagon considers gay soldiers more threatening than neo-Nazis. That's a sad, and frightening, commentary on the current leadership.

In the past, there was a bipartisan commitment to protecting our military from infiltration by extremists. Two decades ago, we presented evidence to Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger that U.S. marines were participating in Ku Klux Klan paramilitary activities. He issued a directive forbidding such participation,

though later events proved this action inadequate. In 1996, the Oklahoma City bombing by Gulf War veteran Timothy McVeigh and the racially motivated murders of a black couple by neo-Nazis serving in the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne Division prompted congressional

hearings and the formation of an Army task force. Afterward, Defense Secretary William Perry strengthened regulations to more clearly define prohibited extremist activities.

But now, military officials have once again let their guard down. We brought this to the attention of Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld but have neither seen nor heard a response.

Our investigation, which received nationwide publicity, sparked calls for action by concerned veterans and politicians alike. VoteVets.org, a non-partisan political action committee headed by veterans who fought in Iraq, urged Senate Armed Services Chairman John Warner to launch immediate hearings to examine the impact of low recruiting standards.

Forty members of the House of Representatives also wrote to Rumsfeld, as did Sen. Richard Shelby, an Alabama Republican. Democratic Reps. Artur Davis and Eliot Engel have sponsored a congressional resolution urging the Pentagon to adopt a zero-tolerance policy for racist extremism.

Still, no action. You can help by urging your U.S. representative to support House Resolution 969. We must make sure our military isn't training the next Timothy McVeigh.



Richard Cohen

## MAILBOX

I thank Mr. [Center President Richard] Cohen for his letter to Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld and the report on racist extremists active in the U. S. military (see story on page 1). As a journalist and as a soldier who is Jewish, this is an issue that concerns me. The fact that the military has turned its head and is allowing extremists to be recruited makes me more afraid than a pending deployment to Iraq.

How will I protect myself, when the military seems unwilling to, from people who would just as well shoot me during a firefight as an insurgent? I don't want to take away anyone's freedom of speech — I believe that if one person is not free, then no one is truly free. However, when that speech affects the cohesiveness of a unit — people who must depend on each other in order to survive in sometimes horrific circumstances, well, it's an interesting debate. Anyway, thank you. I hope it makes them take a second look.

O. C.  
Michigan

Thank you for showing my 10-year-old daughter and me around the Civil Rights Memorial Center. I especially appreciated the way it was set up — the entry room was powerful, as was the hallway showing current action and issues of civil rights on

one side and current acts of violence on the other, ending with the Wall of Tolerance.

My daughter and I both felt even more committed to speaking up and taking action. Taking the pledge [of tolerance] and seeing your name among the many others left us hopeful. Thank you for all the great work you do, and for taking the time to see us.

R. R.  
Oakland, California

Thank you for the wonderful teaching kit *A Place at the Table*. My high school has been experiencing racial tensions, and this video gave my students a brand new perspective on discrimination and prejudice and actually got them speaking to one another! A very powerful tool, especially since the people speaking on the subject were peer experts.

What a change a video makes! Thank you and keep up the good work.

A. V. S.  
Los Angeles, California

I have a fire in my heart for justice and humanity. I have never been so proud to write a check, a small contribution I can make to bring dignity back to Mr. [Billy Ray] Johnson's life story with your help. One must believe that good people out-

number the misguided and angry ones. I hope that you realize your work is remarkable and necessary every day. Please feel proud of what you have dedicated yourself to — and stand tall. We stand with you.

J. M.  
Portage, Wisconsin

Thank you for all you do for those most dependent on your work. As a Christian, it lifts me up knowing that there are people such as you who are the embodiment of what Christ wanted of us. Thank you for standing up for those who are without. You are an inspiration to this nation and part of the hope that we have not lost our way.

P. H.  
Missouri City, Texas

Your reporting in the *Intelligence Report* is outstanding and valuable to the survival of our country as envisioned and framed by the founding fathers in the U. S. Constitution and Bill of Rights. The most recent issue [Summer 2006] is unusually good. We need to be educated more about the "hate intelligentsia." The thinkers are more dangerous than the muscle.

Dr. J. W.  
Roswell, New Mexico

# Center calls for rejection of anti-immigrant ordinances

With Congress unable to agree on the direction of immigration policy after months of highly divisive debate, a number of towns across the country are trying to crack down on unauthorized immigrants by enacting ordinances that are not only discriminatory but will likely prove to be unconstitutional.

The new laws would fine landlords who rent to immigrants without proper documents, deny business permits to employers who hire them and require that all city business be conducted only in English.

"This type of law will lead to discrimination against immigrants and Latinos generally," said Mary Bauer, director of the Center's Immigrant Justice Project. "These ordinances are legally troubled and mean-spirited."

## Letter cites legal problems

In a four-page letter to city council members in Avon, Florida, Bauer pointed out that provisions of a proposed city ordinance are preempted by federal law and thus exceed the city's authority. She also wrote that the proposal raised serious Fair Housing Act concerns and would violate federal civil rights

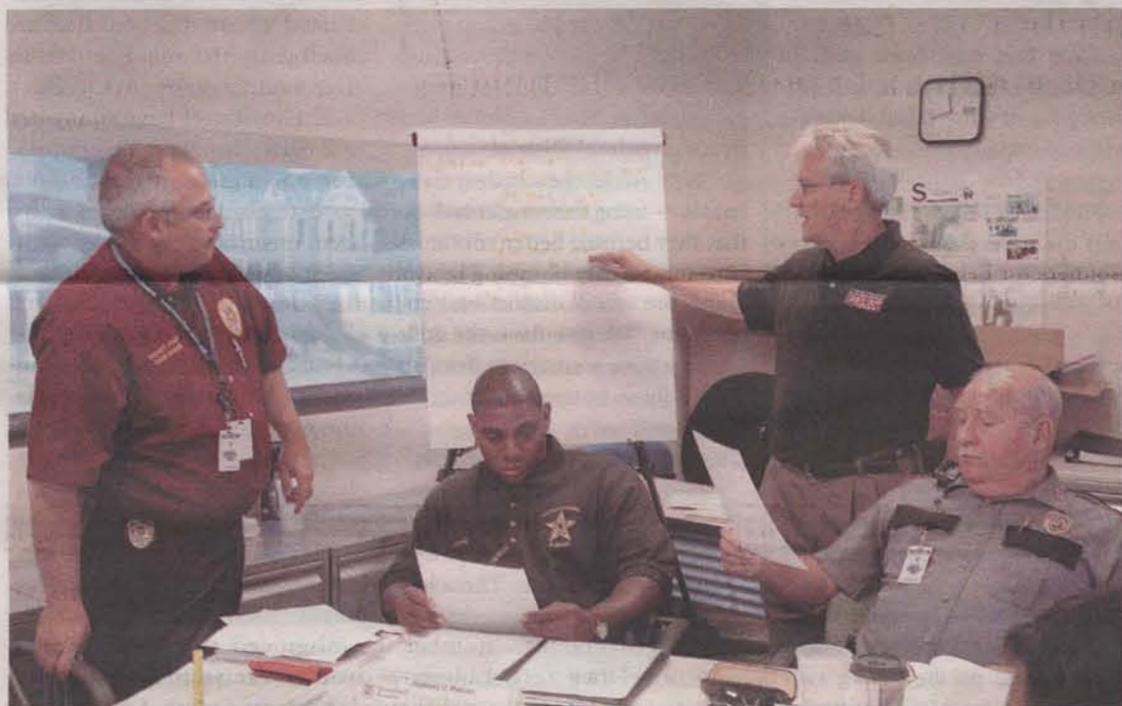
law. In July, the council rejected the ordinance after signaling its likely approval in an earlier vote.

The Avon Park proposal, as are most of those under consideration across the country, was inspired by an ordinance passed July 13 in Hazleton, Pennsylvania. That new law was scheduled to go into effect Sept. 11, but implementation was postponed after a lawsuit challenged its constitutionality.

According to a recent tally, six other towns nationwide have adopted similar ordinances: four in Pennsylvania; Riverside, New Jersey; and Valley Park, Missouri. Such measures have passed preliminary votes in four additional towns, and nearly 30 towns are considering them. Four towns, including Avon Park, have rejected similar ordinances.

"Not only is this type of ordinance bad policy, it would in all likelihood subject a town to protracted and expensive litigation that it would ultimately lose," Bauer said.

Concerned citizens in a number of communities have used Bauer's letter, posted on the Center's website, to argue against the ordinance. In Huntsville, Alabama, the city attorney consulted Bauer before advising the city council to reject the law.



**Center trains law enforcement officers**

Joe Roy, chief investigator for the Center's Intelligence Project, reviews information that trainees gleaned from websites during a small-group exercise following his lecture on recognizing hate groups. State and local law enforcement officers from several states took part in the August training, sponsored by the Center in conjunction with the Montgomery, Ala., Police Department and the Department of Homeland Security. Intelligence Project staffers regularly teach at seminars across the nation, but this was the first held at the Center's office.

# Center report exposes racist extremists active in military

(continued from page 1) Nazis and white supremacists to join the armed forces, and commanders don't remove them from the military, even after we positively identify them as extremists or gang members," Department of Defense gang investigator Scott Barfield told the Intelligence Project. "[Racist extremists] stretch across all branches of service, they are linking up across the branches once they're inside, and they are hard-core."

[After speaking with a writer for the *Intelligence Report*, Barfield resigned from the military under pressure from his superiors.]

Barfield and other military investigators said they recently uncovered an online network of 57 neo-Nazis who are active-duty Army and Marines personnel spread across five military installations in five states: Fort Lewis, Wash.; Fort Bragg, N.C.; Fort Hood, Texas; Fort Stewart, Ga.; and Camp Pendleton, Calif. The Intelligence Project found that hundreds of neo-Nazis identify themselves online as active-duty soldiers.

After the report became public, a group of Iraq war veterans spoke out about the need to crack down on these extremists.

The president and three senior advisers of VoteVets.Org, a non-partisan political action committee, sent a letter to Senate Armed Services Chairman John Warner, calling for "immediate hearings to examine the impact of low recruiting standards in the military."

"We cannot overstate the corrosive effect ... lowered standards have on our military," wrote the veterans, two Democrats and two Republicans. "They are hurting readiness, morale, and unit cohesion by allowing criminals and skinheads to permeate the ranks."

## Intelligence Briefs

tracking extremist activity

### Congressman addresses hate group

COLUMBIA, S. C. — Colorado congressman and likely presidential candidate Tom Tancredo received a warm welcome from members of the neo-Confederate hate group League of the South (LOS) when he spoke in South Carolina on Sept. 9, according to a report by the Center's Intelligence Project.

While Tancredo's hard-line "deport 'em all" stance on immigration has made him a favorite politician of white supremacists, this marked the first time the congressman has appeared at an event associated with a hate group.

Tancredo addressed the standing-room audience of 200-250 from behind a podium draped in a Confederate battle flag. To the congressman's right, a portrait of Robert E. Lee peered out at the crowd of Minutemen activists, local politicians, and members of LOS and the Sons of Confederate Veterans. The Confederate trappings of the event found a mismatch in Tancredo's standard nativist polemic, which stayed clear of references to Southern heritage or direct plaudits for the LOS, a Southern white nationalist organization dedicated to "Southern independence, complete, full, and total."

Tancredo's appearance was part of a five-day sweep through conservative South Carolina, which hosts an early GOP primary and has seen the Southeast's largest percentage gain in foreign-born residents since the 2000 Census.

### Anti-gay leader Fred Phelps sued

TOPEKA — A Kansas "church" whose members picket military funerals has hired an attorney who specializes in First Amendment cases to defend it against a defamation lawsuit by the father of a Marine killed in Iraq.

Albert Snyder sued the Rev. Fred Phelps and Westboro Baptist Church after church members staged a protest at the funeral of his son, Lance Cpl. Matthew Snyder, in March. The church also posted pictures of the Maryland protest on its website.

Members of the Topeka church contend the deaths of U.S. soldiers are God's punishment for America's tolerance of homosexuality.

The elder Snyder, of York, Pa., filed a federal lawsuit in June claiming the protesters violated the family's right to privacy and defamed the Marine and his family at the funeral and on the church's website. Phelps has denied any wrongdoing.

Westboro Baptist has hired attorney Jonathan Katz of Silver Spring, Md., to represent it. The case had been stalled for several weeks while Snyder's attorneys sought without success to serve

notice of the lawsuit on the church and its members. In August, a court gave Snyder's lawyers permission to use alternative methods of service.

### Raid yields guns, Nazi paraphernalia

CHICAGO — Police discovered a large cache of weapons and Nazi paraphernalia in a firefighter's apartment on Sept. 8.

Acting on a tip, police raided the North Side apartment and found two fully automatic rifles, more than 60 other guns, ammunition, a bulletproof vest with swastika patches, posters of Adolf Hitler and other Nazi paraphernalia.

Cook County prosecutors charged Ted Kozak, 55, with two counts of felony unlawful use of a weapon, said police Lt. John Franklin. He could face additional charges in court. Police found Thompson and Sten submachine guns, for which Kozak did not have a federal license.

They also found receipts for guns that were not in the apartment, dating back to 1991.

Police are investigating what Kozak might have done with those weapons. Franklin said police have reason to believe some weapons might have gone to individuals in Michigan.

### Klan leader's son arrested in attack on father

SPENCERVILLE, IND. — The son of former Klan leader Jeff Berry, who was sued by the Center in 2000 for kidnapping a news crew, and a friend have been charged in a brutal July 1 beating that left Berry in critical condition.

Jeff Berry, 53, was at a barbecue party here with his son, 35-year-old Anthony, and Anthony's friend, Fred Wilson, 21. Police say that Wilson confronted Jeff Berry and threw a lawn chair at him. As the two tussled, Anthony Berry allegedly punched his father in the head, beating the elder Berry even after he collapsed.

Police arrested the younger Berry and Wilson and charged both with battery.

Police say they don't know why the fight erupted, but Jeff Berry was left in critical condition with a swollen brain stem. Doctors gave him only a 50 percent chance of survival and said that even if Berry lived, his life would never be the same.

The July attack came some 18 months after Jeff Berry's release from prison, where he served more than three years for his role in holding two journalists at gunpoint in 1999. Before being sent to prison, Berry was the national leader of the American Knights of the Ku Klux Klan. At the time, the group was known as the largest and most aggressive Klan faction in America, with some 27 chapters by the year 2000. Today, the American Knights is defunct.

## Forestry workers get justice in settlement of Center lawsuit

JACKSON, MISS. — An Idaho-based forestry company doing business across the South will pay substantial damages and enact far-reaching reforms to bring its labor practices into compliance with the law under a settlement agreement in a Center lawsuit.

The settlement in the class action, *Salinas-Rodriguez v. Alpha Services LLC*, approved by a federal judge here on Sept. 5, is a major victory for abused and cheated workers. It is also a major step forward in the Center's Immigrant Justice Project (IJP) campaign to rid the forestry industry of rampant exploitation of workers. Cases against three other companies are pending.

The plaintiffs are indigent immigrants who left their homes and families in Latin America, often spending their life savings or mortgaging their homes, to come to this country under the federal H-2B guest worker program. They perform arduous work for forestry contractors who certify to the U.S. government that no American workers can be found for the jobs.

Workers routinely toil 60 or more hours each week but earn substantially less per hour than the prevailing wage employers are required to pay under the H-2B program. They are not paid overtime and often have to pay for their own work tools, visas and travel expenses, in violation of the law.

"Because of language barriers and their vulnerable status under immigration laws, these workers may be the most exploited in the nation," said IJP Director Mary Bauer. "I have never seen an industry where such wanton violations of the Fair Labor Standards Act are the norm."

The South is the largest timber-producing region in the country, accounting for more than 60 percent of all the nation's timber harvest.

The Alpha settlement is a package of agreements that provide safeguards for current and future workers. In addition to paying the plaintiffs and class members large sums of money, which remain undisclosed under the terms of the settlement, Alpha agreed to:

- enter into a consent decree ensuring compliance with the federal laws that protect migrant workers;

- provide IJP with complete access to Alpha's files, workers and supervisors to conduct periodic audits of the company's compliance with the law;

- not require workers to surrender their passports or other identification documents to the company or its agents;

- not require deeds, deposits or collateral of any kind as a condition of employment; and,

- not retaliate against the plaintiffs in any way.

When notice of the settlement agreement reached former Alpha workers in Ecuador, they wrote to thank the IJP staff. "Our dreams and aspirations were frustrated," they said. "We had big debts due to what was proposed to us did not emerge. On the contrary, they exploited us and we acquired losses."

"For this reason we want to emphasize that your help is uplifting for us who found ourselves without hope."

## International groups turn to Center for advice on tolerance education



Center President Richard Cohen (left) welcomes the Honorable Francis Ole Kaparo, speaker of Kenya's National Assembly, at the Civil Rights Memorial Center. Kaparo led a delegation of Kenyan legislators when they visited the U. S. in early September. The group included a stop at the Center on its itinerary.

Long a resource for groups confronting hate and bias in U.S. communities, the Center is having a global impact as well.

In recent months, the Center has hosted European, African and Asian delegations whose goal was to learn how the organization combats injustice and seek advice for implementing similar programs in their countries.

In February, Martin Rickerd, the British consul general for the southeast United States, visited the Center in connection with a report he completed for the British ambassador. He consulted the Center on the current state of race relations in the United States.

Rickerd and his staff met with Center legal director Rhonda Brownstein, chief intelligence analyst Joe Roy and Jim Carrier, author of the Center's handbook *Ten Ways to Fight Hate*.

Center staffers told Rickerd that the face of hate and intolerance in the United States is very different than it was during the Civil Rights Movement.

### New strategies for change

Brownstein said increasingly conservative federal courts have made it more difficult to pursue civil rights litigation, forcing organizations to use public policy advocacy and other strategies

for social change. She cited as an example the Center's successful advocacy for juvenile justice reform in Alabama, Louisiana and Mississippi.

In addition to learning about litigation strategies, other visitors have focused on the Center's efforts to monitor hate activity and promote tolerance through its Intelligence Project and Teaching Tolerance program.

Several groups that visited the Center were on trips coordinated by the U.S. Department of State as part of a program focused on professional development for civil rights advocates in foreign countries.

Groups from Bulgaria, Morocco, Indonesia and elsewhere have met with staffers to discuss the Center's overall mission, its specific programs and how it functions as a non-governmental organization.

During a recent videoconference with the U.S. Embassy in Estonia, government leaders in that country discussed a series of incidents in the capital where skinheads threatened ethnic minorities. Members of the Estonian delegation discussed their own attempts to build tolerance education into the country's school system and requested Teaching Tolerance materials, such as teaching kits and lesson plans on which to model their programs.



### Noted labor activist visits Center

Andrew Blejwas, communications coordinator at the Center, explains displays of contemporary hate and discrimination at the Civil Rights Memorial Center to Dolores Huerta. The noted activist, who co-founded the United Farm Workers of America with Cesar Chavez in the 1960s, visited the Center and spoke at a public event on Sept. 14. Huerta, of Bakersfield, Calif., is one of the nation's most respected human rights leaders.

## Grant helps art teachers teach tolerance in schools

FAIRBANKS, ALASKA — With the help of a Teaching Tolerance grant, a small group of art teachers was able to reach thousands of students with lessons of tolerance.

Using an \$800 grant, the five art specialists created lesson plans that could become a permanent part of the curriculum for teachers in the Fairbanks North Star Borough School District.

"We teach teachers in their classrooms — using their students — so that they become better educators and art teachers," said Barbara Short, the school district's art coordinator. "We give them the skills to allow their students to flourish artistically and personally."

### Tolerance lessons reach thousands

Short and the other specialists developed eight separate lessons for students from K-6th grades and special education. These lessons were taught for 12 weeks over the spring to about 300 elementary teachers and their 7,600 students.

"All lessons had at the core the teaching of tolerance," Short said.

For 4th-grade students, art teacher Jenifer Cameron used as the basis of her lesson the Six Flags of Tolerance designed for the United Nations during the International Year of Tolerance in 1995. Using their own ideas for shapes that represent ideals such as love, friendship and kindness, the students then created their

own versions of the banners.

In a lesson developed by teacher Linda Pfisterer for 6th-graders, students designed birds of tolerance. Using construction paper and oil pastels, the students each created a bird and then wrote messages of tolerance for their birds to carry around the world.

The variety of lesson plans fit well with Teaching Tolerance's mission for the classroom.

"By imbedding tolerance-related, creative art activities with opportunities for reflection and discussion, the teachers used art education for social understanding and change," said Teaching Tolerance Grants Coordinator Rhonda Thomason. "Because teachers have little time to prepare challenging lessons, these grant projects model a major goal for Teaching Tolerance grants — replicating and sustaining good ideas for maximum student impact."

Short said that teaching tolerance was central to their mission.

"Tolerance means showing understanding or leniency for ideas, beliefs or people different than one's own," Short wrote. "We strongly believe that tolerance has got to be taught."

Since 1997, Teaching Tolerance has awarded more than \$1 million in grants to help K-12 educators implement innovative anti-bias projects in classrooms, schools and communities.



A Fairbanks, Alaska, 1st-grader drew a self-portrait during a lesson designed to help children recognize that there is a broad range of skin colors, with none being white or black.

# Center sues hotel chain for abuse of migrant workers

**N**EW ORLEANS – After Hurricane Katrina scattered its workforce to the winds, a major hotel chain here did what many other U.S. businesses are doing: It sent recruiters to Latin American countries to lure migrants to work for low-wage, benefit-free jobs – in the process shutting out New Orleanians who were forced to flee the flooded city.

Humberto Jimenez was living in Peru when the recruiters came

on Aug. 16 filed a federal lawsuit against the hotel chain on behalf of Jimenez and 81 other guest workers.

The suit accuses Decatur Hotels LLC and its president, F. Patrick Quinn III, a prominent New Orleans entrepreneur, of violating the Fair Labor Standards Act by failing to reimburse workers for the exorbitant fees they paid. Decatur owns about a dozen luxury hotels in New Orleans and is one

from Peru, Bolivia and the Dominican Republic, were falsely told they could live in the United States permanently.

“They’re on a dead-end road,” Bauer said. “Their profound debt makes them desperate to work – but Decatur doesn’t give them enough hours. And if they switch jobs, they’re breaking the law. In effect, they are captive workers in a situation of virtual debt peonage.”

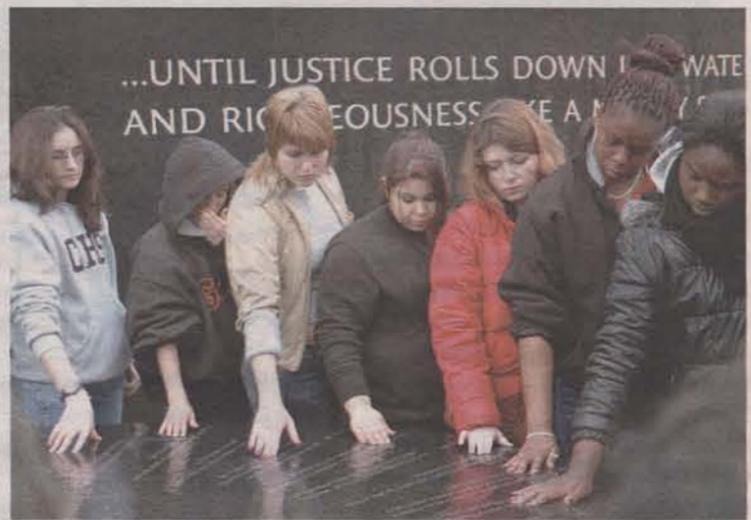
President Bush has proposed legislation that would expand this guest worker program, an idea being pushed by the corporate sector but opposed by the Center and many labor and immigrant rights organizations because of the inherently abusive nature of the program.

“It’s modern-day slavery,” said Teresa Ortiz, another hotel worker. “What are my options? I go home to Bolivia, poorer than when I got here and deeper in debt. Or I break the law to find another job.”

An issue in New Orleans, one that is fueling anti-immigrant fervor in the United States, is the idea that immigrants are taking jobs away from U.S. workers. But in reality, in many cases, U.S. businesses are actively recruiting workers in impoverished countries because they can pay lower wages and exploit captive workers who have few rights and little ability to speak up for better wages and working conditions.

To recruit guest workers, Decatur had to certify to the U.S. government that it could not find U.S. workers to fill the jobs. Indeed, in its request to the U.S. Labor Department, Decatur claims to “have offered work to hurricane evacuees” but “no one applied.”

The Center is working with the New Orleans Worker Justice Coalition to bring the plight of New Orleans migrant workers to the nation’s attention. Co-counsel in the lawsuit are the National Immigration Law Center and New Orleans civil rights attorney Tracie Washington.



Students from throughout the country regularly visit the Civil Rights Memorial and add their names to the Wall of Tolerance.

## Name on Wall of Tolerance is symbol of taking a stand

*Lauren Securo, a student at The Gordon School in Rhode Island, visited the Civil Rights Memorial Center on a school trip. Following is a letter she wrote about her experience.*

When I put my name up on that Tolerance wall, I felt like I had already made a difference. By seeing my name up there in big, bold letters and hearing all my friends cry out LAUREN SECURO! when my name reappeared for the 10th time made me feel great.

**O**n the last day of my trip to the South, my class visited the Civil Rights Memorial Center. I don’t think that my time there could be expressed in words. That’s how wonderful it was. That monument, with all its silence and tranquility, just made me stop and think.

### Behind name is pledge

That’s not just my name up there. Behind it is a pledge, a pledge to do anything I can to keep racism or stereotypes or racial injustice from continuing to grow like an unwanted weed. My name is a symbol, a symbol of one more person taking a stand on what they know is right. It may be just a name, but it is one step closer to a non-racially-discriminated-against world!

Think about those 40 people on that stone, all dying for what makes our world the way it is now. What gets to me is the fact that all those people gave up too much to make the world better for me, for my children and my children’s children. I don’t think you could die leaving behind anything better than that. I learned that all at the museum; well, at least that’s when it all really sunk in for me.

Thank you so much for letting me have the opportunity to realize this, realize that I can make a difference and stand up for what I know is right.



Mary Bauer, director of the Center’s Immigrant Justice Project, speaks at a press conference announcing the new lawsuit. Immigrant workers behind her display enlarged visas and wear handcuffs to symbolize their exploitation.

to his town. With opportunity beckoning, he joined hundreds of other men and women who each paid between \$3,500 and \$5,000 to obtain the hotel jobs and join the ranks of this country’s “guest workers.” To pay the fee, he took out a mortgage on his house.

“Four thousand dollars is a lot of money in Peru,” Jimenez said. “I came here to make enough money to see my child through college. If I had known the truth I would never have come.”

The truth was, he couldn’t make ends meet on what he earned – much less pay back the mortgage. But under the U.S. government’s H2-B guest worker program, which enables businesses to bring these workers here, he wasn’t legally allowed to work for anyone else.

As part of its campaign to protect the rights of abused immigrant workers, the Center

of the largest locally owned hotel chains in Louisiana.

“This lawsuit illustrates how U.S. businesses systematically recruit and exploit vulnerable immigrants to drive down wages and undercut worker rights,” said Mary Bauer, director of the Center’s Immigrant Justice Project, which is representing the workers. “These men and women were driven by economic desperation to leave their homes and come here in search of the American dream. But they were betrayed and now find themselves living a nightmare.”

### Recruiters made false promises

Recruiters under Quinn’s employ promised workers 40 hours of work per week and plenty of overtime. Instead, they found themselves working about 25 hours a week, sometimes far less. Some of the recruits, who came

## Schools prepare for Mix It Up Day

**M**illions of young people in thousands of schools are preparing for the Center’s fifth annual Mix It Up at Lunch Day, to be held on November 14. During the event, students cross social boundaries in their schools, take a different seat in the cafeteria and meet new people.

“Mix It Up Day helps teach young people the value of integrated living,” said Tafeni English, who directs the program. “By mixing and mingling with people who are different from us, our biases

and misperceptions can fall away.”

A survey of organizers from last year’s event showed that Mix It Up at Lunch Day produces powerful results. Students become more comfortable interacting with different kinds of people and make new friendships across group lines — strong evidence that prejudice reduction and improved inter-group relations are taking hold.

As Desire Lopez, a student at an Arizona high school put it, “Mix It Up brings people together.”

Based on survey findings that the program’s effects were strongest in schools that conducted related activities before and after the Day, the program is equipping this year’s participants with a “Mix It Up Planner” that offers thematic boundary-crossing lessons for each month of the school year.

“Mix It Up at Lunch Day kicks off a yearlong exploration of social boundaries,” said English. “Our new planner will help classrooms and youth clubs ‘stay in the Mix’ all year long.”

## Journal includes Dees in list of top lawyers

**T**he National Law Journal, a weekly newspaper for the legal profession, includes Southern Poverty Law Center founder and chief trial counsel Morris Dees in a recent compilation of America’s 100 most influential lawyers.



Morris Dees

said associate editor Michael Moline.

“Simply holding a high office or position of authority was not enough, and judges and non-practicing lawyers were not eligible,” he said.

The 100 were announced in “Profiles in Power,” published in the June 19 edition. Lawyers were chosen through Journal staff research and reader nominations.

“We were looking for lawyers who had a national impact in their fields and beyond, especially over the past five years — lawyers who have the power to shape public affairs, launch industries, shake things up and get things done,”

The Journal cited Dees’ continuing role in all aspects of the Center, 35 years after its founding, and his use of the tort system to put the Aryan Nations and other hate groups out of business. The Journal also noted, under Dees’ leadership, the Center doubled its legal staff in the past two years, added a new project to protect the rights of immigrant workers and won an Oscar last year for its documentary *Mighty Times: The Children’s March*.

## TRIBUTE GIFTS RECEIVED BY THE CENTER FROM JUNE 2006 THROUGH AUGUST 2006

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The Center accepts gifts in memory of someone who has died or in honor of a special occasion such as a birthday, anniversary or graduation. Donors may also give a gift just to say "thank you." The Center will send a card to the person honored or the family of the deceased. Complete this form and mail it with your contribution.

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# Endowment supports Center's future work

The Center's work would not be possible without the financial and moral support of caring individuals across the nation. Because of their consistent generosity, the Center has enjoyed great success in funding Teaching Tolerance, the Intelligence Project and its legal work.

But the Center has long been convinced that the day will come when nonprofit groups will no longer be able to afford to garner support through the mail. That's why, in 1974, the Center's board of directors began setting aside a certain amount each year to build an endowment. Today the endowment stands at \$164 million.

The Center was one of the first social action organizations to recognize the importance of saving for the future. Although colleges have long understood the wisdom behind building endowments, most organizations like the Center — groups that often touch many more lives than the typical college — have not. As a result, some groups have not been able to sustain themselves and continue their valuable work.

Today, many nonprofit organizations — including the ACLU, the Anti-Defamation League and the Sierra Club — have come to recognize the critical nature of building endowments. Like the Center, they understand that programming commitments they make today will create future financial obligations.

In this new century, America remains a nation of great promise. In communities across the country, thousands of people are seeking to tear down social, economic and racial barriers that still sometimes separate us. But there

are others who try to use those divisions to sow seeds of hatred. And there are many more whose apathy in the face of intolerance allows this hatred to grow.

As the nation's diversity increases in the coming years, so will the challenges to promote tolerance and acceptance. To help ensure that the Center is ready to meet those challenges, its board of directors has restricted the principal and income from the Center's

The Center was one of the first social action organizations to recognize the importance of saving for the future.

endowment to cover the costs of the Center's future programs and activities.

The caring individuals who help the Center continue its crucial daily work are helping to establish the Center as an organization poised to carry on the struggle for tolerance and justice — for as long as it is needed. The Center's educational and legal efforts have affected the lives of millions of people. With the help of the Center's endowment, millions more will benefit in the future.

## Scroll of Remembrance

The Southern Poverty Law Center pays tribute to the memory of deceased supporters who included the Center in their Wills or other planned gifts. The Center gratefully acknowledges their bequests, received from August 1, 2005, through August 31, 2006.

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## Leave a legacy through Partners for the Future

Partners for the Future is a special group of donors who include the Center in their estate plans. These supporters are helping ensure the Center's long-term success. Would you consider joining us?

There are several ways to join Partners for the Future. You may include a bequest to the Southern Poverty Law

Center in your will or living trust. You may provide for the eventual distribution of assets, such as those held in retirement fund accounts or life insurance policies, potentially gaining tax or financial benefits.

After planning for the financial security of your family and loved ones, we hope you will consider joining Partners for the Future by making a planned gift to the Center.

For information about the many planned giving opportunities available at the Center — with no obligation — please contact our planned giving department by calling toll-free 1-888-414-7752 or by mailing the form below. You can also visit us online at [www.SPLCenter.org/donate](http://www.SPLCenter.org/donate) or e-mail us at

[plannedgiving@splcenter.org](mailto:plannedgiving@splcenter.org).

If you have already included the Center in your will or estate plan, please

contact us so we can update our records. We want to officially welcome you as a Partner for the Future!

The Center is already included in my will or estate plans. Please welcome me as a Partner for the Future.

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Civil Rights Memorial

# Center wins special-education services for Louisiana students

**H**ARVEY, LA. — Hundreds of special-education students in Jefferson Parish who were systematically denied the help due them under federal law are now getting desperately needed services under a new action plan approved by the Louisiana Department of Education.

The Center filed a class action administrative complaint in February 2005 after its investigation found that the Jefferson Parish school system failed to educate the mostly poor, primarily African American students diagnosed with an emotional disturbance — children at the greatest risk of dropping out of school and becoming part of the criminal justice system.

The school system routinely suspended or expelled children for minor offenses related to their disabilities and segregated special-education students in self-contained classrooms or trailers, a violation of federal regulations. Jefferson Parish

classified more than 800 students as emotionally disturbed.

“The state investigated our allegations and was appalled at what it found,” said Courtney Bowie, a Center attorney who specializes in special-education issues.

Also working on the case are Jim Comstock-Galagan of the Southern Disability Law Center and Eden Heilman, the Southern Poverty Law Center education fellow at the Juvenile Justice Project of Louisiana.

The state agreed to settle the case in August 2005, granting all of the relief that Center lawyers demanded and more.

## Special master to oversee changes

The settlement required the appointment of a special master to oversee special-education services in Jefferson Parish. It also required major systemic changes, including provision of psychological services and counseling; im-

provement of academic progress at all grade levels; elimination of harsh, illegal disciplinary practices; less restrictive environments; and significant expansion of access to vocational training.

Appointed in December, the special master — D. Joe Olmi, a professor at the University of Southern Mississippi in Hattiesburg — will monitor compliance of Jefferson Parish’s implementation of the corrective action plan for two years.

The Center’s special-education legal team is now addressing similar problems in the East Baton Rouge Parish school system — the largest in the state since Hurricane Katrina displaced thousands of New Orleans students.

On May 10, the Center filed a class action administrative complaint with the Louisiana Department of Education that outlines an array of deficiencies in the East Baton Rouge system.



## Memorial attracts youth groups

Montgomery, Ala., day campers wearing bright T-shirts encircle the Civil Rights Memorial. Designed by Maya Lin, who also created the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C., the black granite monument honors those who died during the Civil Rights Movement. It serves as a vehicle for education and reflection about the struggle for equality, and youth of all ages visit throughout the year.

## IN MEMORIAM

# Keith Freedman (1966-2006)

**K**eith Freedman, 40, creative director for the web firm Razorfish’s Los Angeles office and designer of the Planet Tolerance section of the Center’s website Tolerance.org, died of heart failure on March 12. He was a talented athlete, artist, designer and jokester.

Freedman was passionate about both sport and art. He received a fine arts degree from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, where he majored in painting and minored in graphic design and art history. His paintings included abstract and representational works, including portraits that amazed his friends.

“There was a sense you were looking into someone’s soul, such was the way Keith was able to capture humanity in his work,” said his friend Michael McWatters.

Freedman started out as an entrepreneur, making money by creating a line of whimsical t-shirts and paintings that he sold at Faneuil Hall in Boston. He followed his talent and his passion for art into design, creating fanciful characters like Broccoli Spoonhead long before there was a Sponge Bob Square Pants.



After moving to Los Angeles, Freedman involved himself in design work and eventually joined Imagistic, an Internet services company that has partnered with the Center on a number of website projects.

Freedman was also a caring and generous mentor to his friends and everyone he met.

“The personal Keith was about the best person you could hope to know,” said McWatters. “Generous,

concerned, caring, warm, supportive and kind. Always ready with a laugh, passionate about design, lifestyle, music, food and fitness. He pursued life doggedly, and enjoyed nearly every moment of it.

“In Keith’s life is a lesson,” McWatters said. “Here is someone so passionate about so much, and he reached out for everything with an open mind and an open heart. Though he was young when he passed away, he had experienced much of the best life has to offer, and he did so with true happiness. He had a wealth of friends who will miss him dearly. His was a model life.”

Freedman’s friends made contributions to the Center in his memory.



## Dees greets Center supporter

Barbara Duke (center) of Lawrence, Kansas, and her friend Marilyn Curtis of Oklahoma City stopped by the Center on August 1 as they traveled through the South, visiting Civil War and Civil Rights Movement sites. Greeting Duke, a Center supporter since 1993, was founder Morris Dees.

# Family foundation supports Immigrant Justice Project

**W**hen the Karsten family decided to support the Immigrant Justice Project, they were excited to get involved in a new Center initiative.

“One of the things that is integral to our gift giving is the philosophy of providing seed money,” said Liza Karsten. “When we initiate money toward a brand new program, it is in the hopes that it will inspire others to contribute in the future.

“When you can watch a program grow, it’s extremely rewarding. It’s been thrilling to watch the Immigrant Justice Project do that,” she said.

The Southern Poverty Law Center created the Immigrant Justice Project (IJP) in 2004 to address the unique legal needs of migrant workers, a group particularly vulnerable to workplace abuse.

IJP’s first lawsuits were brought on behalf of immigrant tree planters in an effort to reform the abusive employment practices rampant in the nation’s forestry industry. IJP also organized and participated in a congressional briefing in Washington, D.C., to highlight the abuses those workers face.

After Hurricane Katrina devastated the Gulf Coast, IJP investigated the exploitation of immigrant workers who are doing the backbreaking cleanup work in New Orleans. They brought a series of lawsuits to force large cor-

porations operating in the city to properly pay their workers. (See related stories on pages 1 and 5.)

Earlier this year, IJP also launched Esperanza, which means “hope” in Spanish, aimed at ending gender discrimination and sexual harassment of immigrant women in the workplace. The project educates immigrant women about their rights, informs the public about the problem and files lawsuits against companies breaking the law.

The Karsten family has supported SPLC for more than 20 years and in 2005 gave a more substantial gift for IJP. They are committed to continuing this important and unique work and have already renewed their generous support of this project for 2006.

The Karsten Family Foundation began as the brainchild of Marilyn Karsten, who is committed to teaching her family the art of philanthropy. Each year, the family gets together to determine which organizations will receive its support, and today both children and adults are involved in how funds are given away.

“Our parents instilled in us the values of social justice,” said Liza Karsten. “There are so many who are less fortunate than we. By helping the Immigrant Justice Project, we are helping protect the rights of the most powerless in our society.”



## Children’s advocate tours Center

Center President Richard Cohen and Lecia Brooks (right), education director of the Civil Rights Memorial Center, give a tour to Xochitl Bervera. Bervera co-directs Families and Friends of Louisiana’s Incarcerated Children, an advocacy group that works with the Center on juvenile justice issues. Bervera uses community organizing as a strategy to ensure that reform wrought by litigation or legislation is enforced by the people affected.