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SPLC REPORT

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TEACHING TOLERANCE • FIGHTING HATE • SEEKING JUSTICE

DECEMBER 2006
VOLUME 36, NUMBER 4

Center sues federal immigration agency

Residents terrorized as unlawful raids sweep rural Georgia

One morning in September, 15-year-old Marie Justeen Mancha was alone in her bedroom, getting ready for school, when she heard strange men shouting and yelling. She rushed into the living room and found herself surrounded by immigration agents who had burst into her home. With her mother away on an errand, she was terrified.

"One was holding a gun," Mancha said, "and that really scared me. And they were screaming 'illegals' and 'Mexicans' and stuff like that. And they asked me if I was illegal, and I said, 'No.'"

Mancha, a wisp of a girl who speaks with a gentle Southern accent, said the agents asked if her mother was in the U.S. illegally. "I was scared they were going to take her," she said, "even though she's from here. It scared me," Mancha said. "I thought me being born in the U.S., they couldn't do this."

Mancha is a U.S. citizen, born in Texas. Her mother, Maria Christina Martinez, was born in Florida. They and three other U.S. citizens of Mexican descent, also terrorized by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents in a massive series of raids in southeast Georgia, filed a federal lawsuit on Nov. 1 against ICE.

The lawsuit, brought by the Center, charges that ICE agents illegally detained, searched and harassed Latinos solely because of their appearance — in violation of their Fourth and Fifth Amendment rights — during an extensive campaign to drive them out of the area.

A sixth plaintiff is a landlord who suffered damage to his rental properties when ICE agents broke into numerous trailers that were rented by Latinos.

ERIN S. LESSER

Marie Justeen Mancha tells reporters at a news conference about her terrifying experience with immigration officers. With her are her mother, Maria Christina Martinez (from left), also a plaintiff in the Center's lawsuit, Atlanta attorney Brian Spears and Center chief trial counsel Morris Dees. Both Justeen and her mother are U.S. citizens.

"It's outrageous that this could occur in America today," said Morris Dees, Center founder and chief trial counsel. "These ICE agents swooped into town, armed with everything but search warrants, and started rounding up people — citizens and noncitizens alike — merely because they had brown skin. Imagine the fallout if this had happened to white people."

The raids began on September 1 and lasted for several weeks. They were ostensibly intended to locate undocumented immigrants who worked at a poultry plant in Stillmore, a town of about 1,000 people in Emanuel County.

But rather than conduct a raid only at the plant, dozens of agents fanned out across residential areas in three counties — stopping motorists, breaking into homes and threatening people with tear gas and guns. Hundreds were terrorized. Many actually fled into the woods.

"These kinds of dragnet tactics are completely inconsistent with our constitutional guarantees," said Mary Bauer, director of the Center's Immigrant Justice Project and attorney for the plaintiffs. "Just because you are poor and have brown skin doesn't mean you don't have rights under the law. We want to make sure this doesn't happen again."

Bauer said hundreds of residents were *(continued on page 4)*

Millions of students 'Mix It Up' across the nation

Winston-Salem, N.C. — The little boy with the sand-colored hair looked uncertain as he left the lunch line at Hall-Woodward Elementary, clutching a plastic tray of French-toast sticks and tater tots. He paused and eyed a table near the front of the cafeteria. A teacher's voice rose above the din: "Find someone you don't normally sit with!"

So the boy kept walking, all the way to the opposite side of the room, where a teacher spotted him and directed him to a table of girls. "Go ahead and sit here," she told him. He looked at the empty seat next to a girl from another class. And then he shook his head. "I don't think she wants me to sit there, that's the thing," he said.

The girl paused her conversation with the girls sitting across from her and looked up at the boy. "Hey," she said, "what's your favorite movie?" The boy smiled, set down his lunch tray and leaned into the conversation.

EMILY RASINSKI/EVENING SUN

Second-graders Ashley Xiao and Briana Craumer sit together at the table for students with May birthdays at Spring Grove Elementary in Hanover, Pennsylvania, on Mix It Up at Lunch Day.

These youngsters were among the 4 million students in more than 10,000 schools to participate in the Center's fifth annual Mix It Up at Lunch Day program on November 14. On the Day, students are asked to sit with someone new at lunch. In the process, they learn to appreciate human differences.

"One of the best ways to become more tolerant is to spend time with different kinds of people," said Tafeni English, Mix It Up's director. "Too often, students stay in their own groups and never take the time to get to know new people. The Day helps students break out of their comfort zones."

Bringing down the walls between different groups of students is exactly what the Mix It Up program aims to accomplish. Last year, a survey of organizers showed that the Day helps raise awareness about social boundaries in schools, successfully gets students talking with new people and even fosters new friendships across group lines.

During the 2006-2007 school year, Mix It Up will work to keep schools engaged beyond the one-day event.

"Our research tells us that the program is most powerful when students 'Mix It Up' throughout the year," said English.

Many schools already have committed to additional Mix It Up lunches, while others have pledged to use the thematic monthly lessons provided in this year's Mix It Up Planner, which was sent free of charge to every school that participated in Mix Day. Some are designing their own follow-up programs, to be funded by the program's grants initiative.

Hall-Woodward principal Essie McKoy acknowledged the value of Mix. "Programs like Mix It Up are important because they help us learn to celebrate the diversity that we have," she said. "We are so much more alike than we are different."

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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.

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A MESSAGE FROM CENTER PRESIDENT RICHARD COHEN

Realism, compassion lacking in immigration debate

Perhaps the most striking thing about our national debate over immigration is the utter lack of attention to the root causes of mass migration from Mexico or to the moral dimensions of the injustice and human tragedy that is unfolding before our eyes.

Mexicans and other Latinos have been coming to our country for more than a century — lured by businesses seeking cheap labor and by government policies that promote temporary work programs.

This migration accelerated greatly in the 1990s, in part because of the devastating impact on Mexican agricultural workers from the North American Free Trade Agreement. About two-thirds of the 12 million undocumented immigrants in our country have arrived since 1995, shortly after NAFTA took effect. The vast majority of unauthorized immigrants, about eight in 10, are from Latin American countries. And three-fourths of those are Mexican.

Today, these immigrants are among the most abused, exploited and denigrated people in our society.

Like the Irish of the mid-1800s and other waves of immigrants that have arrived on our shores, they provide the muscle at the lowest rung of our economic ladder. They make hotel beds and help put food on America's tables. They process poultry and work in construction, making products and services less expensive for all of us. Yet, they are vilified just for being here and are increasingly at risk of physical violence from border vigilantes and racist thugs.

TOM COGILL

Richard Cohen

Yes, many cross the border illegally, in search of a better way of life. But tens of thousands of Latino "guest workers" are recruited each year by major U.S. corporations seeking cheap labor to harvest vegetables, plant pine trees on giant timber plantations in the South or fill other low-wage jobs. Many lured here find only broken promises, pain and misery. Unscrupulous companies routinely cheat immigrants out of their rightful pay or force them to work in unsafe conditions, knowing they have little recourse.

> We must ensure that immigrants are not exploited for profit and are not subjected to violence and hate.

As a nation, we can and should do better. We should greet immigrants with compassion and treat them with dignity.

And we must seek realistic solutions. As we've seen repeatedly in these first years of this new century, belligerence and ideological rigidity do not work.

Rounding unauthorized immigrants up and throwing them out of the country – a notion favored by many conservative pundits – is not a realistic option. Arresting, detaining and then deporting such a vast number of people would cost U.S. taxpayers hundreds of billions, if not trillions, of dollars and would require the creation of a virtual police state built on racial profiling. The potential for human rights violations is enormous.

Even if we could enforce a mass deportation, it would have severe economic consequences, as undocumented workers now make up nearly 5 percent of the U.S. labor force. And, with families being literally ripped apart, the human suffering would be incalculable.

We can stop the mass flow of economic refugees, but we must start by promoting economic policies designed not solely to extract profits from Mexico but to help our long-troubled neighbor strengthen its communities and build an economy that will sustain its people.

At home, we must reject the apocalyptic fantasies of political demagogues and the depraved appeals of white supremacists who seek to inflame racial passions.

We must ensure that immigrants, regardless of their status, are not exploited for profit and are not subjected to violence and hate.

We must stand for justice and tolerance on behalf of those who have left behind broken communities to seek a better future for their families. Whether we can muster the courage and wisdom to do this will be a true test of the American spirit.

MAILBOX

Thank you for taking up the cause of immigrant labor in New Orleans! With so much immigrant-bashing going on — particularly here in Arizona — it is so great to hear good news for a change!

P. B.
Sedona, Arizona

You have my deepest respect for the work you are doing. I am retired and live on a modest fixed income, but while I am not a big contributor, I am a consistent one. I also send your Teaching Tolerance publications to our local high school. We must expose our young people to these ideas. In these troubled times, your achievements and your message mean so much. Thank you!

T. W.
Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania

The Center does excellent, effective and committed work as reflected in your recent lawsuit [against Katrina contractor Belfor] that brought positive results. I have been a contributor for many years because I sincerely and passionately believe in the works and efforts of the Center.

H. K
Atlanta, Georgia

Today I received my requested materials on Teaching Tolerance and was overwhelmed with them. I am teaching a new elective class at our alternative school that is entitled "History Through Media" and have had very few materials to work with until your package arrived. I am so excited and cannot wait to develop my curriculum using these materials.

Receiving these videos, at no cost, will enhance my ability to bring quality materials to my students. In my excitement this morning I ran to my principal and showed him all that I had received, and he had just seen one of the videos last night in his class that he is taking at UAB. He said that it was wonderful and it would be something the students would benefit from watching.

Again, thank you for offering these materials to us. Please know that they will be put to very good use in my classes.

K. B.
Hoover, Alabama

I just wanted to send a huge thank you to all of the people at Teaching Tolerance for the amazing classroom materials you make available to educators. I sent away for pretty much every resource that relates to my grade level — I'm an 8th grade language arts teacher — to use both in my classroom and during advisory time. I was so overwhelmed with the amount of information and resources I received, I had them placed in the professional section of our library so that all of the teachers in our building can benefit. Thank you so much — from everyone at Eyer Middle School!

T. A.
Macungie, Pennsylvania

Our Teaching Tolerance materials arrived yesterday! Thank you for this extraordinary gift to help us in our teaching of tolerance and understanding.

I used *A Place at the Table* and *Mighty Times* at a previous church and look forward to sharing all the Teaching Tolerance resources here at St. Joan of Arc between the day school and religious education program.

Your very existence is a sign that there is a force for good working in our world.

M. E.
Nashotah, Wisconsin

Your center is contributing exceptional work to the social make-up of our country. I am so impressed with the resources that you have made possible around the country and with the work and dedication of Mr. Dees all these years. Rather than receive a Christmas gift in a teacher exchange at school, I have asked the individual who has drawn my name to make a contribution to your center instead. The amount won't be much, but your center stands as a beacon of light for so many. Thank you so much for all that you do!

W. D.
Portsmouth, Ohio

I used *Starting Small* this semester with pre-service teacher education students here at Northland Pioneer College in northeastern Arizona. I had so much success and was able to fully engage the students. I found that the book is far superior to the many "textbooks" available that cover the topics of diversity.

D. H.
Holbrook, Arizona

Center report details dangerous shifts in racist skinhead movement

The number of racist skinhead gangs has more than tripled since 2002, leading to a rise in skinhead criminal activity across the country and threatening a renewed era of violence not witnessed since racist skinheads unleashed a wave of bloodshed in the late 1980s, a new report by the Center's Intelligence Project reveals.

The report, "Motley Crews," tells how the skinhead subculture in the United States "has entered a free-for-all phase, with new and unaffiliated local, state and regional crews proliferating rapidly." It appeared in the Fall 2006 issue of *Intelligence Report*.

The report documents how, at the beginning of 2002, there were only 18 skinhead gangs, or "crews," in the United States, most of them under the control of Hammerskin Nation, a coalition of regional groups that dominated the skinhead subculture in the U.S. for more than a decade. But now, according to the report, there are 59 active crews, only six of which are loyal to Hammerskin Nation.

"More and more of these newcomers subscribe to the ultra-violent ethos and disorganized crime profiteering of a chaotic band of Midwest-based gangster skins known as Vinlanders," the report states.

Although Hammerskin Nation skinheads have been responsible for serious crimes and violence, the group, which at its height had thousands of members in the United States and Europe, acted as a stabilizing force. Now, with challenges to Hammerskin Nation's power proliferating, many smaller skinhead crews will likely seek to boost their own notoriety through violence.

Significant increase in violence

"In the last couple of years, we have seen a significant increase not only in the number of active skinhead groups, but also in the level of violence they are producing," said Mark Potok, director of the Center's Intelligence Project and editor of the *Intelligence Report*. "The movement was once dominated by a single powerful organization, the Hammerskin Nation, that tended to keep the lid on violence. Now, we're seeing a large number of smaller organizations vying for power and prominence, and that raises the potential for even more criminal activity."

In October 2005, as "Motley Crews" details, the Vinlanders hosted the first official Blood and Honour Council, a unity conference of independent regional and statewide skinhead crews. The meeting was attended by at least 60 representatives of more than a dozen skinhead organizations. Among the crews represented at the gathering were the Ohio State Skinheads; the Hoosier State Skinheads, from Indiana; the New Jersey Skins; Arizona's Canyon State Skins; the rapidly growing Maryland State Skins; and the Keystone State Skinheads, a Pennsylvania-based gang with nine chapters that regularly sponsors hate rock festivals and "white power picnics."

Also present were members of the National Alliance, a neo-Nazi hate group, and the Imperial Klans of America, the country's largest and most dangerous Ku Klux Klan faction.

Skinheads gather to organize

According to official minutes of the meeting obtained by the Intelligence Project, the members of the Blood and Honour Council (which is also known among white supremacists as the Council of 28, since B is the second letter of the alphabet and H is the eighth), decided they would meet once a year in the future, and that any racist crew "meeting the council criteria" would send two representatives. They also established a "uniform code of appearance and conduct" for "large scale public actions," consisting of "dark polo or dress shirts and nice pants, either black or tan. ... [O]utdated racial symbols such as the swastika, SS bolts, Confederate battle flag, etc., should be avoided."

The council, held in Logan, Ohio, was an important event because it marked the first formal, organized challenge to the authority of Hammerskin Nation, which has dwindled to about 150 members in the U.S, though it remains a huge influence abroad.

"Hammers have been dropping their patches [quitting membership] all over the place," says Matt Browning, a skinhead expert and police detective in Mesa, Ariz. "Skinhead [criminal] activity has easily doubled in the last couple of years, and the Vinlanders' influence is huge. They're more violent, they're more technically savvy in terms of using the Internet to organize."

'Each a human hand grenade'

Summarizing the views of Detective Browning and other law enforcement authorities, "Motley Crews" reports that, "As any gang cop knows, the most dangerous member of a street gang is not the 'O.G.' ("Original Gangster") with a well-established street reputation, but the newbie looking to do whatever it takes to make a name for himself and his gang. The skinhead scene in this country has become a land of the white power up-and-comers, each of them a human hand grenade, just looking for an excuse to pull their own pin."

SPECIAL

Independent neo-Nazi skinhead crews from around the country convened in Logan, Ohio, in October 2005 for the first gathering of the Blood and Honour USA Council, which aims to create a united front.

Intelligence Briefs

tracking extremist activity

'White power' vandals target churches

African-American churches in Charles County, Md., have been targeted in a rash of racist graffiti hate crimes.

In the latest incident, members of Zion Baptist Church in Welcome, Md., arrived for Sunday morning service on Nov. 12 to find "KKK," "White Power" and "Bang Boom" spray-painted in bright orange on a roadway leading to the church's parking lot.

Police believe the "Bang Boom" graffiti was a reference to an anonymous bomb threat received by the church a week earlier.

In all, there have been 11 such cases in Charles County since August.

The Federal Bureau of Investigation has assigned agents to work with the Charles County Sheriff's Office to bring the vandals to justice.

"When they're spray painting 'white pride' and 'KKK,' that's not a perception problem. That's a real problem," said Charles County Sheriff Frederick E. Davis. "It's something that needs to be stopped."

The chairman of the deacons at Zion Baptist Church, Charles "Pete" Williams, said that while the church is considering new security measures, there has been no drop in attendance from its usual 200 to 250 worshippers on Sundays.

"We're coming together to do what Christians do: pray. And pray for the people who are doing this," Williams said.

Skinhead sentenced to life for savage assault

HOUSTON — David Henry Tuck, 18, was sentenced to life in prison Nov. 17 after he was convicted of aggravated sexual assault for beating and sodomizing a Latino youth at a party in the suburban town of Spring last April.

Witnesses testified that Tuck hurled racial slurs and shouted "white power" while attacking the 17-year-old victim with a patio umbrella pole.

Doctors at first did not expect the victim to survive. He was hospitalized for more than three months and underwent more than 20 surgeries to repair the damage to his internal organs.

"Even if you give him life in prison, it will be more mercy than he showed that night," prosecutor Mike Trent told the jury. Trent presented a chain of witnesses who detailed Tuck's role in numerous previous attacks, including the vicious, random beating of a Latino man outside a convenience store by Tuck and two other racist skinheads.

"He is an evil person, and he is not going to change or get better," Trent told the jury. "We need protection from him. You are the only ones able to provide that."

After the jury pronounced the life sentence, Tuck's mother hugged the victim's mother in court and said, "I am so sorry."

Black youths arrested in hate crime attack

LONG BEACH, CALIF. — Ten African-American youths, aged 12 to 17, nine of them girls, were arrested and charged with hate crimes for allegedly taking part in an attack on three young white women by a group of around 25 African Americans outside a popular Halloween night block party.

Witnesses said the assailants pelted the victims with small pumpkins, then surrounded them and said, "We hate white people, f--- whites!" before attacking, first knocking the victims to the ground them stomping and kicking them.

One of the victims was struck repeatedly in the head with a skateboard and suffered 12 facial fractures, including four to her eye socket. The other victims suffered concussions and multiple bruises.

The attack, which witnesses said lasted several minutes, ended only when an African-American man who happened to be driving by stopped and yanked the assailants off the prone victims. The attackers then fled. Ten of them were arrested soon after and charged with felony hate crimes and assault with a deadly weapon. The remaining assailants are still at large.

Neo-Nazis rally against immigration

AUSTIN, TEXAS — About 20 members of the National Socialist Movement (NSM), dressed in neo-Nazi, storm-trooper uniforms with swastika armbands, gathered for a Veteran's Day anti-immigration rally on the ground of the Texas Capitol here.

"If we have the freedom of speech, then we're here to test it," said NSM organizer Tim Bishop.

The neo-Nazis were outnumbered almost 10 to one by anti-racist counter-demonstrators, who chanted, "Nazis go home," as the neo-Nazis stomped on a Mexican flag, railed against Jews and waved signs that read, "Support Our White Troops," and "Protect Our Borders — Remove Aliens."

"I hate racism, and I believe that it has to be confronted every time it arises," said Cindy Beringer, a 65-year-old activist. "It doesn't make sense that they would have their rally on Veterans Day either. They are just nuts."

University of Texas Anti-Racism Network coordinator James Clarke said, "Our presence here tells them that no one in their right mind agrees with them. We want to keep their group small and disorganized."

Settlement wins back pay for cheated forestry workers

In another victory for the Center's Immigrant Justice Project (IJP), a forestry company agreed to pay more than $200,000 to resolve claims that it systematically cheated and threatened its workers.

Under the proposed settlement, which still must be approved by the court, Express Forestry Inc. of Leslie, Ark., will pay $220,000 to as many as 300 migrant workers who at one time worked for the company.

Victory in reform effort

"This is a huge victory with respect to our goal of making sure the forestry industry starts treating workers fairly," said IJP director Mary Bauer. "These migrant workers have suffered unnecessarily, and we are extremely happy that they are finally going to see some justice."

Recinos-Recinos v. Express Forestry was filed in April 2005 on behalf of three Guatemalan tree planters, Hugo Martin Recinos-Recinos, Pablo Recinos-Alvarado and Alberto Alvarado. Thousands of migrant workers like them have been systematically cheated by forestry companies in the South after being recruited as part of the H2-B "guest worker" program. The program allows U.S. companies to hire temporary foreign labor if they certify they cannot find Americans to take the jobs.

"Express cheated its workers," said Bauer. "Workers often had to leave the deed to their homes in Guatemala, and many paid extraordinary sums of money, sometimes $2,000, to get the job in the first place.

"When they arrived at their jobs they were paid less than minimum wage, didn't receive overtime pay and worked upward of 70 hours a week planting trees. They were essentially in a system of debt peonage."

The abuses were not limited to violations of federal wage and hour laws. The company also threatened workers in an attempt to intimidate them into withdrawing from the suit, which was given class-action certification in February. In November, a federal judge in New Orleans reprimanded the company for failing to provide documents sought by Center attorneys, saying Express "provided evasive, incomplete and, in certain instances, downright deceitful responses in the case."

Bauer said the case was important to the Center's work on behalf of forestry workers because it sends the message that companies that treat their employees illegally will have to face serious consequences.

Forestry plaintiff Hugo Recinos-Recinos and Kristi Graunke, an Immigrant Justice Project attorney who handled his case

The Center has two other forestry cases pending. A federal court on Sept. 28 granted class action status to one, *Escolastico de Leon-Granados et al. v. Eller and Sons Trees, Inc.*, enabling IJP to litigate on behalf of thousands of workers rather than only the handful who joined the case as named plaintiffs.

Landmark ruling in another case

In addition to certifying the class, U. S. District Judge Clarence Cooper ruled that a six-year statute of limitations, rather than two years, as Eller attorneys argued, applied in the lawsuit. It was the first time a court has determined a deadline for migrant workers to file claims under the Migrant & Seasonal Agricultural Worker Protection Act in Georgia.

The statute-of-limitations ruling may double the number of workers IJP will be able to serve, said IJP attorney Andrew Turner. Under Eller's proposed two-year statute, the size of the class would have been fewer than 2,000. Now that the court has given eligibility to workers who were employed by Eller since 1999, the class may be as large as 4,000.

"We are always gratified to be able to serve more poor people in one case," Turner said. "It maximizes our efforts. The good decisions on statute of limitations and on class certification are very much related. Both have broadened the reach of the Eller case that helps us to bring justice to more people."

A third forestry case, against Idaho-based Alpha Services LLC, was settled earlier this year.

As part of the settlement agreement with Express, the Center agreed to include a statement from the company in any written material announcing the settlement. The statement says the "defendants have stated that they decided to settle this case to avoid the costs and hassles of future litigation."

Settlement funds will be distributed to the original named plaintiffs in the case, 46 opt-in plaintiffs who joined the litigation and as many as 300 class members who worked for Express between April 1999 and April 2005.

Bauer said $135,000 will go to the 49 people who actively participated in the case and $75,000 will be distributed among the remaining class members.

Border vigilante ordered to pay in Center-sponsored suit

An Arizona jury, acting in a lawsuit sponsored by the Southern Poverty Law Center, ordered border vigilante Roger Barnett to pay $98,750 to a family of Mexican-Americans he terrorized in 2004.

The verdict marks the first time Barnett, 62, has been held legally responsible for his violent treatment of Latinos.

Barnett, who controls 22,000 acres in southern Arizona through ownership and state leases, is one of the most prominent border vigilantes along the U.S.-Mexico border. He claims to have captured more than 10,000 people who crossed his land, and publicity about his personal campaign helped inspire other self-appointed groups of border watchers like the Minutemen.

The jury deliberated just three hours on Nov. 22 before ruling against Barnett for threatening two Mexican-American hunters and three young children with an assault rifle and insulting them with racial epithets during an October 2004 confrontation. All members of the family were born in the United States.

"The Center's support of the case was critical to our success," said Jesus Romo Vejar, an attorney who received financial support from the Center in order to bring the civil action.

Children continue to suffer

According to a psychiatrist who testified at the trial, all three children suffer from chronic Post Traumatic Stress Disorder as a result of the encounter. The lawsuit sought punitive damages for negligence, false imprisonment and emotional distress.

The Center awarded Vejar, the local attorney, a Strategic Litigation Grant to fund his out-of-pocket litigation costs, including expert fees and depositions. The grant project was created to help local lawyers bring civil rights and other important cases that otherwise might not move forward.

"Without the Center's support, we could not have afforded research and the development of key evidence," Vejar said.

Verdict is second Center victory

The ruling against Barnett marks the second court victory won by the Southern Poverty Law Center against anti-immigrant vigilantes in the past two years. In August 2005, two Salvadorans who were illegally detained and assaulted on a Texas ranch in 2003 were awarded a 70-acre ranch near Douglas, Ariz., that formerly belonged to their attackers.

STEPHEN MORTON/AP PHOTO

Center sues federal immigration agency

(continued from page 1) traumatized by the raids. "Many children continue to live in fear that they will be taken away by immigration officials merely because of the color of their skin," she said.

Plaintiff Ranulfo Perez was standing outside his home in Adrian, in Emanuel County, when he was suddenly surrounded by about 15 men holding guns. One of the men grabbed Perez by the shirt, jammed a gun into his side and threw him against his truck. The agent twisted Perez's arm behind his back and held him that way for 10 minutes while other agents searched his home and property. The agent then suggested Perez and his family should leave the area for two weeks to avoid any further incidents.

Mobile home park operator David Robinson looks at the damage in the floor of one of his rented trailers that he said was caused by immigration agents during raids. Illegal immigrants were handcuffed and taken away. "These people might not have American rights, but they've damn sure got human rights," Robinson, one of the Center's plaintiffs, said. "There ain't no reason to treat them like animals."

The other plaintiffs are Maria Margarita Morales of Oak Park, in Emanuel County; Gladis Alicia Espitia of Oak Park; and the landlord, David Robinson of Metter, in Candler County.

Robinson said he has "no way to check" whether tenants are U.S. citizens. ICE agents, looking for illegal immigrants, damaged his rental properties during the raid, he said.

"They're just going to have to quit doing this, having all these people's lives on a yo-yo string," Robinson told reporters at a press conference, accusing the federal government of timing the raids for political gain prior to November's elections.

"I mean that's what I feel like it is," Robinson said. "It's just a yo-yo that, every two years, they make these raids, and they don't realize that it's human beings involved. And if they're going to enforce the immigration laws, they need to go ahead and do it, and do something, but just quit playing around with people's lives."

The suit was filed in Atlanta in the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Georgia. It seeks not only compensatory and punitive damages but a court order enjoining ICE from using similar tactics in the future. The Center is asking the Court to approve the lawsuit's injunctive relief claim as a class action on behalf of all Latinos in the affected area.

New teaching kit aids literacy and tolerance

In October, the Center's Teaching Tolerance program began shipping copies of its latest curriculum kit, *Rhinos and Raspberries: Tolerance Tales for the Early Grades*. The kit includes a hardcover book for teachers that offers 12 multicultural stories and 10 lesson plans, as well as softcover books for students.

Rhinos and Raspberries is a story anthology for preschoolers and elementary school students. Designed to complement character education programs, the book includes bridge-building activities to reduce prejudice and improve inter-group relations.

The unusual title is drawn from two stories in the anthology — *The Prince and the Rhinoceros*, a South Asian tale about the importance of speaking kindly, and *Raspberries!*, a tale about cooperation among a group of animals with differing abilities.

Tens of thousands of educators have already put the kit to use in their classrooms and are spreading the word about its availability. Denny Wymore, an elementary school teacher in New Mexico, for example, wrote: "I love *Rhinos and Raspberries*! This is such a good way to teach cooperation and tolerance. ... My principal is reviewing the material and is interested in more copies. Thank you so much!"

New kit is free to educators.

The enthusiasm from teachers like Wymore is reflected in teacher feedback. Early returns from the kit's evaluation forms show that it is increasing students' appreciation for differences, improving their interpersonal skills, and heightening their reading and comprehension skills. Nearly 90 percent of educators have reported that *Rhinos and Raspberries* is better than other character education products they use, and half say the kit is superior to other literacy materials.

"Research tells us that children as young as three can begin to develop prejudices," said Jennifer Holladay, Teaching Tolerance's interim director. "Through the generosity of the Center's supporters, *Rhinos and Raspberries* will help ward off prejudice's development and instead nurture tolerance in the hearts of millions of young children this school year."

Center grant helps create global student network

La Puente, Calif. — Like many other teachers, Nancy Gibson is constantly searching for new ways to promote multicultural understanding among her students.

Gibson, who teaches students from a variety of ethnic groups in the Multilingual Academy at La Puente High School, spends her days with students who are normally reluctant to speak English and often see themselves as very different from their English-speaking peers. Her innovative project, with the help of a Teaching Tolerance grant, has begun to change that.

CONTRIBUTED

Students at La Puente High School reflect a range of ethnicities.

For several years, Gibson used an "e-pal" classroom exchange program to help her students communicate with students in other countries. The program allows teachers and students from around the world to find pen pals in foreign countries and learn about other cultures. Using technology, Gibson developed her own "One World Project," which builds on the pen pal model.

"An important part of the 'One World Project' is the development of student podcasts," said Gibson. "Podcasting has become a very popular medium for broadcasting information and ideas and is an emerging technology for use in education that enriches the learning environment."

The term "podcast" refers to an audio or video file that is distributed over the Internet and available for playback on personal computers and devices such as iPods. Gibson says they are particularly useful for a project like hers because they allow students to not only read about what their peers are doing, but to listen to them as well. They also involve students deeply in the writing and production of the broadcasts. All are available for downloading on the school's website.

The Teaching Tolerance grant helped Gibson pay for technical equipment for the project, including microphones, software and video iPods.

But while the technology is key to making the program happen, the students say interacting with students in countries such as Norway, Poland, Romania and Sri Lanka and learning about their countries has been the most rewarding part of the project.

One student says she likes the project because "I get to talk about the other cultures and learn about what other students like to do."

Most students say that the project has helped them realize that while they are different, they have much in common.

"What I like learning about is different foods, celebrations and music," said one student. "What they do is similar to us. They celebrate some of the same holidays in other countries."

One thing the students at La Puente and the other countries have in common, says Principal Ava Smalley, is that all are struggling to learn English.

"The 'One World Project' is an excellent way to tie the learning of English to relevant issues," Smalley said. "It also builds the students' confidence when they see other students who are also learning English."

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. For information, visit www.teachingtolerance.org, and click on "Grants."

Immigrant Justice Project attorney JJ Rosenbaum, who represents post-Katrina workers, poses by some of the thousands of petitions Center supporters completed.

Thousands petition to protect workers

The Center has submitted to President Bush the names of 20,528 people who signed a petition calling on his administration to protect thousands of migrant workers from exploitation as they work to rebuild New Orleans.

"We are grateful that thousands of our members have joined with us to seek fairness for migrant workers who are being ruthlessly abused by Katrina contractors while the Department of Labor sits on the sidelines," said Center President Richard Cohen. "Most of the victims are poor — people who have no lobbyists in Washington and who do not write campaign checks to politicians."

The Center initiated the Internet and mail petition campaign in April, after the Department of Labor ignored rampant, well-documented labor abuses by government and private contractors. Many used multiple layers of subcontractors to avoid responsibility for mistreating workers, the Center charged.

In the course of interviewing more than 500 migrant workers who went to New Orleans to help clean up and restore the city after Hurricane Katrina, the Center's Immigrant Justice Project (IJP) documented widespread labor abuses involving theft of wages by employers, violations of workplace health and safety standards, and threats of retaliation against workers who asserted their rights.

Many workers reported they were denied overtime pay — and some reported not being paid at all. Some of their personal stories can be read in the IJP report *Broken Levees, Broken Promises: New Orleans' Migrant Workers In Their Own Words*, available at www.splcenter.org.

Center filed three lawsuits

Because of the administration's failure to enforce federal wage-and-hour standards, the Center filed three federal lawsuits against companies working in New Orleans. One of those suits, against major disaster contractor Belfor USA Group, was settled, with workers recovering hundreds of thousands of dollars in unpaid overtime wages.

The petition drive ended with the submission to Bush in October.

In a letter accompanying the petition, Cohen urged the president to hold the administrator of Labor's Wage and Hour Division accountable for failing to protect workers there. In late August, Bush used a recess appointment to install corporate lawyer Paul DeCamp as head of the division. As a senior policy adviser in the division since July 2005, DeCamp has been heavily involved in the department's handling of labor issues in New Orleans.

JIM WEST

Mix It Up Day is a hit

Students at Waverly Middle School in Lansing, Mich., display beautiful smiles during Mix It Up at Lunch Day. More than 4 million students across the country took part in the Nov. 14 event. See story on page 1.

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Center receives bequest from Partner for Future

Even though retirement could have afforded Jackie Bellizzi time to slow down, her move to Albuquerque in 1998 meant only a new community in which to immerse herself.

A 1956 graduate of Marquette University with a degree in physical therapy, Bellizzi dedicated her life to helping others, which included becoming one of the Center's "Partners for the Future." She died on April 21 at 71.

Partners are special donors who include the Center in their wills or estate plans, thereby extending their support for the Center's work beyond their lifetime.

CONTRIBUTED

Jackie Bellizzi

Bellizzi, who earned a master's degree in speech pathology from the University of Denver, was a member of the board of directors for nearly every organization in her hometown of Joliet, Ill. She served on the boards of the United Cerebral Palsy of Northeastern Illinois, Will County Sheltered Workshop, Joliet Business and Professional Woman's Club, Altrusa Club, Friends of Sunny Hill Inc., and the Greater Joliet Area of the YMCA. All that work was in addition to her full-time position with the Joliet public schools.

"Jackie believed that people must be actively involved in improving their situations," said her friend Janet Cross. "And she therefore strived to give them the tools so they could help themselves."

Rather than take life easy in her retirement, Bellizzi used the time to become even more involved in her community. Upon moving to Albuquerque, she quickly began her volunteer work there, donating her time and energy to the Albuquerque Civic Chorus, her church choir, the U.S. Census Bureau and the United Way. She also served as an ombudsman for the Department of Senior Affairs.

In addition to those duties, Bellizzi visited nursing homes on a weekly basis to act as a spokeswoman on behalf of the residents. This led to one of her favorite jobs – playing the piano and leading sing-a-longs at several retirement homes.

"She spent her retirement years rolling up her sleeves and donating her time," said Karen Isburg Sorbero, director of the Sunny Hill Nursing Home in Albuquerque.

While visiting Sunny Hill, Bellizzi identified an unmet need: ice cream. Believing that no one should have to go without that treat, Bellizzi initiated the opening of an ice cream parlor at Sunny Hill to serve the residents.

"Jackie was truly a remarkable person," said Cross. "She was one of the most accepting people I have ever known; everyone was her equal. Jackie definitely made the world a better place – one person and one step at a time."

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 November 1, 2005, through November 30, 2006.

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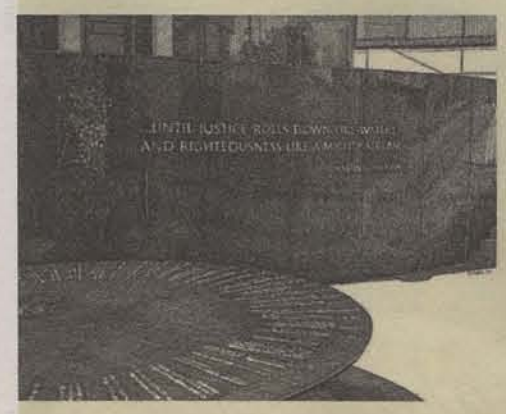
Partners for the Future is a special group of donors who include the Center in their estate plans. These supporters are helping ensure the Center's long-term success. Would you consider joining us?

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.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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 this form. You can also visit us online at www.SPLCenter.org/donate or e-mail us at 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!

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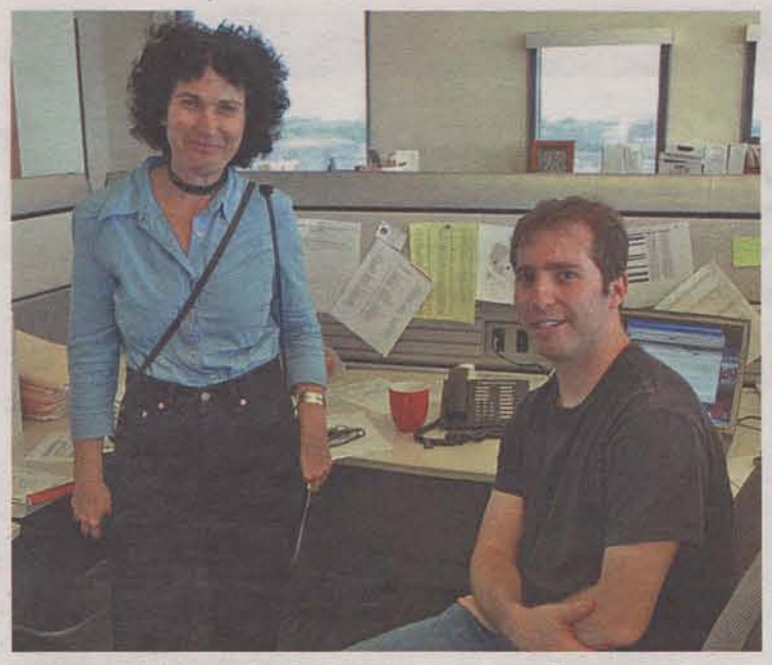

'Friend' visits on way to Israel

Gila Wdowinski of Laguna Beach, Calif., poses with law fellow John Pollock while visiting the Center in November. Wdowinski, a "Friend of the Center" who donates monthly, is a computer programmer originally from Israel. She came to the Center on her way to visit family and friends there.

'Partners for the Future' gift brightens the future for many

When they designated the Center as a beneficiary in their charitable remainder unitrust, Ambassador Henry L. Kimelman wrote that he and his wife, Charlotte, were "delighted to be Partners for the Future, to help ensure that the Center's great endeavors and its legacy will continue for many, many years."

This was high praise, coming from a couple with a nearly 50-year record of public service.

Beginning in the 1960s, Kimelman became one of the United States' most important envoys to the Caribbean. He served as Commissioner of Commerce for the U.S. Virgin Islands and as a member of the U.S. delegation to Trinidad and Jamaica for the independence ceremonies of both countries, and he was the Virgin Island's delegate to the Caribbean Organization.

CONTRIBUTED

Henry L. Kimelman

Charlotte Kimelman

Kimelman named ambassador

Kimelman's peerless dedication to America's relationship with the nations of the Caribbean continued in the 1980s when he became the U.S. Ambassador to Haiti. Subsequently, in 1984, he became the first American ambassador to be awarded Haiti's highest civilian decoration, the Grand Cross of Honor and Merit. Kimelman served stateside, as well – as chief of staff to the legendary Stewart L. Udall, Secretary of the Interior under both Presidents Kennedy and Johnson. In 1967, President Johnson appointed Kimelman to the board of the National Parks Foundation.

While a young Naval officer in WWII, Kimelman married Charlotte Kessler, who was to become his lifelong partner in service.

In January 2006, Mrs. Kimelman presided over the dedication of the $18-million Charlotte Kimelman Cancer Institute, a comprehensive cancer detection and treatment center in St. Thomas. The Kimelmans worked for nearly 20 years, in partnership with the government of the Virgin Islands and the surrounding community, to realize their dream of a state-of-the-art facility serving all of the people of the Lesser Antilles. In introducing Mrs. Kimelman on dedication day, George McGovern — former U.S. senator, presidential candidate and longtime friend of the Kimelmans – praised her "warm heart, clear mind and absolute integrity."

While serving as finance chairman for Senator McGovern's 1972 presidential campaign, Kimelman met Morris Dees, who headed direct-mail fundraising for the campaign. Their friendship – and mutual admiration – has grown over the decades. "Henry and Charlotte are two of the most public-spirited people I know," said Dees. "They are generous with their wealth, their personal time and their talents in the service of the least among us."

In a recent letter to Dees, Ambassador and Mrs. Kimelman wrote: "Following your career for 35 years has been a joy for both of us, but also a remarkable experience sharing your dreams for a better, more caring and compassionate America. Morris, you made those dreams a reality almost beyond comprehension."

Morris Dees Justice Award goes to Texas federal judge

New York — A federal judge, often called the "real governor of Texas" because of his sweeping rulings in noted civil rights cases, was presented the 2006 Morris Dees Justice Award, which is named for the founder of the Southern Poverty Law Center.

U.S. District Judge William Wayne Justice, of the Eastern District of Texas, received the award at a Nov. 16 ceremony here.

The renowned international law firm Skadden Arps Meagher & Flom partnered with the University of Alabama School of Law to create the award in honor of Dees, an Alabama graduate, for his lifelong dedication to public service. It will be given annually to a lawyer who has devoted his or her career to serving the public interest and pursuing justice, and whose work has brought positive change in the community, state or nation.

The award's selection committee recognized Judge Justice, 87, for his lifelong efforts to protect civil rights and safeguard constitutional rights during more than 30 years as a federal district judge. His notable cases dealt with integration, prisoners' rights, procedural due process, equal access to education, treatment of immigrants, dilution of voting rights and care for the mentally challenged.

More than 100 people from across the nation, including judges, law school deans, bar associations and his former clerks, joined in nominating Judge Justice. "Judge Justice has, just like Morris Dees, been a front-line soldier in many of the pitched battles that have shaped American justice for the last half century," the nomination noted.

Born in 1920 in Athens, Texas, Judge Justice graduated from the University of Texas School of Law in 1942, joined the U.S. Army and served in India during World War II. In 1946, he began practicing law in Athens with his father, who was a voice for the disadvantaged. After serving as city attorney for eight years, Judge Justice was selected by President John F. Kennedy in 1961 to serve as the U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of Texas. In 1968, President Lyndon B. Johnson appointed him to the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Texas, sitting in Tyler. Judge Justice took senior status in 1998.

Although his career on the bench has been a long and distinguished one, Judge Justice is best known for two cases, *Ruiz v. Estelle* and *United States v. Texas*.

In 1972, inmate David Ruiz wrote his civil rights complaint, which was combined with others to become *Ruiz v. Estelle*. The trial, which began in October 1978, lasted a year; 349 witnesses testified. The case resulted in a complete overhaul of the Texas prison system.

In November 1970, Judge Justice ordered the Texas Education Agency to begin desegregating the state's public schools. The order, known as *United States v. Texas*, applied to more than 1,000 school districts and 2 million students.

His ruling in *Plyer v. Doe* in 1982 opened the doors for the children of undocumented immigrants to attend public schools, tuition-free, through grade 12.

In presenting the award, U.S. District Judge Keith P. Ellison said that Judge Justice "has, through his hard work, high purpose and undaunted courage, helped make the American dream accessible to those for whom it was previously thought hopelessly out of reach."

DAVID LUBARSKY

Morris Dees congratulates Judge Justice, the first recipient of the Morris Dees Justice Award.

Judge Justice was selected by a distinguished committee that included noted law school professors and some of the nation's top civil rights lawyers, including Mary Bauer, director of the Center's Immigrant Rights Project.

Skadden is known for its premier corporate practice in New York and around the globe as well as its support of public interest law and service.

Dees is a 1960 graduate of the University of Alabama School of Law. He co-founded the Center in 1971 with Joe Levin, also an Alabama graduate. Dees serves as the Center's chief trial counsel.

Dees and President Clinton speak to lawyers

Former President Bill Clinton greets Center chief trial counsel Morris Dees at a hotel podium in Las Vegas. They are longtime friends, having first met while working in the 1972 McGovern presidential campaign. Both spoke at a legal conference on October 12.

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