

# HUMAN RIGHTS OBSERVER



## Announcing our New Name: The Advocates for Human Rights

We are now The Advocates for Human Rights. We have changed our name and our look, but not our mission. The Advocates continues to be an independent nonprofit organization committed to promoting and protecting human rights locally, nationally, and internationally.

We also remain committed to all aspects of our work, both in the United States and overseas. The Advocates will continue to involve committed volunteers in cutting-edge human rights projects and connect important local human rights issues to the

global human rights movement. Our new name will help resolve the longstanding confusion that our former name, Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights, created about the scope of our work and our status as an independent nonprofit organization, not a state agency.

We appreciate your ongoing interest and support of our work. Please visit [www.theadvocatesforhumanrights.org](http://www.theadvocatesforhumanrights.org), our new website, for continuing information on our program work, news, and events.

## International Women's Day



Keynote speaker Robin Morgan  
(all IWD photos by Melissa Toft)

The Advocates for Human Rights and the Human Rights Program at the University of Minnesota co-presented the 13th annual International Women's Day Celebration on Saturday, March 15th. This year's event drew over 500 participants to Coffman Memorial Union on the University of Minnesota campus for a variety of activities centered on the theme of "Women Leading for Gender Justice." The

day-long celebration included a keynote address, eleven workshops on women's human rights, a plenary panel, film, visual arts, and music.

Keynote speaker Robin Morgan, activist, author, and leader in both the U.S. and international women's movements, addressed "Global Feminisms - The Politics of the 21st Century." She spoke of a multiplicity of feminisms spanning centuries and

transcending geographic boundaries. She addressed a wide range of issues being challenged by women activists. "Our work is to support them, to listen to them, to share whatever mistakes we've learned from, and to follow their leadership." She spoke of connectivity as the core of feminism, countering the compartmentalization of a patriarchal system, and urged participants to "find your own point of keenest outrage" as a starting point for effective activism.

*Continued on page 8*



IWD participants Suhag Shukla, Harbir Kaur, and Darwesh Singh

**Inside:**

Announcing our New Name:  
 The Advocates for Human Rights...1  
 International Women's Day...1, 8  
 From the Director's Desk...2  
 The Advocates Celebrates 25th  
 Anniversary...3  
 Observing TRC Hearings in Liberia...4  
 Human Rights at Home...5  
 The Advocates' Ahmed Sirleaf Receives  
 Amnesty Human Rights Award...5  
 Healing Through Faith Conference...6  
 Training Volunteers to Assist  
 Detained Immigrants...6  
 Regional Conference on Domestic  
 Violence Legal Reform...7  
 The Advocates Releases Report on  
 New Bulgarian Law...7  
 Recent Asylum Victories...9  
 Thank You to Recent Refugee and  
 Immigrant Program Volunteers...9  
 Parents Get Involved in  
 Human Rights Education...10  
 Women's Program House Party...11  
 Many Ways to Give...11  
 Advocacy Update...12  
 Staff and Intern Update...13  
 Asylum and Immigration  
 Conference...14  
 Human Rights Law and Policy  
 Conference...15

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**The Advocates for  
 Human Rights**

The mission of The Advocates for Human Rights is to implement international human rights standards to promote civil society and reinforce the rule of law. The Advocates was founded in 1983 by a group of Minnesota lawyers who recognized the community's unique spirit of social justice as an opportunity to promote and protect human rights here at home and worldwide. We are a non-profit, volunteer-based organization that investigates and exposes human rights violations; represents immigrants and refugees in our community who are victims of human rights abuses; trains and assists groups that protect human rights; and works through education and advocacy in Minnesota to engage the public, policymakers and children about human rights and cultural understanding. The Advocates holds Special Consultative Status with the United Nations.

# From the Director's Desk

*This year we are celebrating our 25th anniversary at The Advocates for Human Rights. Throughout the year, we will be highlighting distinguished alumni from our staff and board at our events and in our newsletter. For the first newsletter of our anniversary year, we have asked the organization's first full-time executive director, Barbara Frey, to write a guest Director's Desk.*

**-Robin Phillips  
 Executive Director**

I know I speak for the founders of this esteemed organization in recognizing with pride this 25th anniversary milestone. 1983 was a year that in some ways seems very far away. Ronald Reagan was in the White House. Don Fraser and George Latimer were firmly ensconced as Mayors of the Twin Cities. The Cold War was in full throttle with its proxy wars in Central America, among other spots, resulting in tens of thousands of deaths and disappearances. Nelson Mandela was behind bars on Robbin Island in South Africa. Women's rights had not yet been recognized as human rights.

The names and faces that dominate the international and local political scenes have changed in the years since The Advocates for Human Rights was established. Yet, the organization's principles – to promote and protect international human rights and the rule of law – are as vital in today's world as they were at its founding.

Anniversaries are a time to reflect upon the progress that we have achieved organizationally and internationally. No one doubts the importance of The Advocates as an authoritative voice for the rights of human rights victims. Our accomplishments in protecting the lives of immigrants, lower caste children, death row inmates, victims of domestic violence, and survivors of trauma, stand as a testament to the commitment and hard work of thousands of staff and volunteers. We can appreciate this moment as sort of a collective "It's a Wonderful Life" experience and think of what kind of "Potterville" we might be living in without our human rights work these past two decades.

The Advocates' policy leadership has also had a tremendous impact. The Minnesota Protocol, drafted two decades ago, remains the international standard that defines States' obligations to undertake adequate investigations and autopsies regarding extrajudicial killings. The Protocol was included in United Nations standards for investigating the mass killings of the 1990s in various regions.

Another hallmark of The Advocates is its methodology of investigating domestic violence as an international human rights violation. The international pressure from these investigations has provided the necessary leverage for women's advocates across Eastern Europe and the former Soviet States to adopt and enforce laws that protect women in their homes.

The Advocates' work in human rights education is a model for how to build respectful classrooms, communities and courtrooms. From its unparalleled "Energy of a Nation" curriculum on the rights of immigrants, to its role in training court personnel about the challenges faced by survivors of domestic violence and torture, The Advocates has changed minds and changed lives through education.

We have much to celebrate this 25th year. Here in Minnesota, however, we never allow ourselves the luxury of basking too long in glory. So, we shall toot our horn once or twice and then move on to the work of the day. In the pages of this newsletter you will see there is much work to be done and your services – whether senior partner, teacher, storyteller, student, engineer or artist – are still greatly needed. Don't delay. The Advocates needs you so that the organization can continue to make history. Toot! Toot!



**Barbara A. Frey  
 Executive Director (1983 - 1996)**

# The Advocates Celebrates 25th Anniversary



Founding member Jim Dorsey giving a retrospective of The Advocates, with Dotty Bieurance, Rufino Magno, executive director Robin Phillips, and Chair of the Board Aviva Breen

The Advocates for Human Rights is celebrating its 25th Anniversary this year! It will be an exciting time for The Advocates to look back at how far we've come over the past 25 years and look ahead to a challenging yet hopeful future. The 25th Anniversary committee has been busy planning events that will take place throughout the year to commemorate this momentous occasion.

On January 10th, The Advocates kicked off the 25th Anniversary year by hosting an open house in its downtown offices. Educational stations were set up around the offices, including photo displays, videos, literature, and activities explaining the organization's work. Participants were able to meet The Advocates staff and get a behind-the-scenes look at some of our current projects.

There was a very large turnout, with founding members, board members, staff, past and present volunteers, supporters, advisory committee members, students, and members of the community in attendance.

Aviva Breen, Chair of the Board of Directors, opened the brief program, followed by founding member Jim Dorsey, who gave a retrospective of the organization, discussing the growth and change that has taken place. Finally, Robin Phillips, executive director, announced the organization's name change to The



Victoria Gbojuel, external relations officer of the OLM, at the Energy of a Nation display

Advocates for Human Rights. Phillips discussed the mission of the organization, emphasizing that The Advocates for Human Rights will remain committed to all aspects of its work.

David Parker sold signed copies of his book, *Before Their Time: The World of Child Labor*, and guitarist Jesús Purisaca entertained the crowd with delightful Latin American music as they toured our offices.

Thank you to **Whole Foods, Safari, Holy Land, Tam Tam, Joe Bieurance, Dorothy Parker, Ellen Sampson, Sandy Johnson, and Nancy Speer** for donating food and beverages for the open house.

Information on upcoming 25th Anniversary events may be found on our website: [www.theadvocatesforhumanrights.org](http://www.theadvocatesforhumanrights.org).



Americorps VISTA members at the Education Program display

## 2008 25th Anniversary Human Rights Awards Dinner Thursday, June 5, 2008

Keynote Speaker Ishmael Beah  
author of *A Long Way Gone: Memoirs of a Boy Soldier*  
Honoring Barbara A. Frey and Samuel D. Heins with our  
2008 Don and Arvonne Fraser Human Rights Awards  
Special Recognition Awards to Padilla Speer Beardsley,  
David Kistle, and Faith Einerson  
Reception and Silent Auction at 5:00 p.m.  
Dinner at 6:30 p.m.

At The Depot  
In the Historic Mill District,  
Downtown Minneapolis

For ticket information, call 612-341-3302 ext. 101, or  
visit our website at  
[www.theadvocatesforhumanrights.org](http://www.theadvocatesforhumanrights.org).

# Observing TRC Hearings in Liberia

In anticipation of public hearings beginning in the United States in summer 2008, The Advocates' staff members Jennifer



Team with TRC senior secretariat staff: Mark Kalla, Richmond Anderson, Emily Willits, Stephen Manley, Nathaniel Kwabo, Jennifer Prestholdt, and Gabrielle Mead

Prestholdt and Laura Young traveled to Liberia at the end of January to observe the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) public hearings taking place in Monrovia. The traveling group also included management team

member Mark Kalla and volunteers Emily Willits and Gabrielle Mead, all of Dorsey & Whitney.

The Liberian TRC began the public hearings phase of its work on January 8, 2008. During four weeks of testimony, survivors of the Liberian conflict – both victims and perpetrators of severe

human rights abuses – came forward to reveal their experiences to their fellow Liberians and to the world. The public hearings have captured the interest of the Liberian people, both in Liberia and in the Diaspora, due in part to the high profile individuals coming forward and the deeply compelling stories presented.

Mark Kalla remarked of the hearings, "I was impressed by the thoroughness and dignity of the TRC process. The Commissioners will be sitting through months of testimony... however, [they] were patient and respectful to the various statement givers. I was particularly impressed by the testimony of a woman who had been mutilated and is still being stalked by a person that the victim indicated was now part of the Liberian National Police. The Commission did not back away from the allegation, but challenged the National Police (who were present at the hearings in significant numbers) to help find the perpetrator."

The Advocates team met with representatives from numerous government ministries, as well as the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). The group also worked closely with TRC staff units throughout the trip. Emily Willits commented, "I was incredibly impressed with the hard work the TRC Commissioners and staff are doing in Liberia. We were



The Advocates Wellstone Legal Fellow Laura Young with Liberia President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf

invited to be a part of a day-long workshop for children about the TRC process. It was evident that the children left the workshop with a greater understanding of the impacts of the war and the role of the TRC in helping the country to recover from it."

Laura Young had the opportunity to travel with President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf's convoy through Margibi and Bong Counties on February 4th. "President Sirleaf is at once awe-inspiring and very down-to-earth. More than simply a chief executive, she is working to educate and empower the Liberian people through all her interactions," Young said of her day with Sirleaf.

## Save the Date!



### Diaspora Public Hearings

June 9-14, 2008

Hamline University, St. Paul, MN, USA

The Advocates for Human Rights is pleased to announce that the first ever public hearings of a national truth commission to be held in a Diaspora community are coming to Minnesota.

The nine members of the TRC of Liberia will travel to Minnesota to preside over the hearings on various themes related to the Liberian Diaspora experience and the role of the United States in the Liberian conflict.

For more information, go to <http://liberiatr.c.mnadvocates.org>, or email us at [Liberia-TRC@advrights.org](mailto:Liberia-TRC@advrights.org).

**Give Your Statement to the  
Liberia TRC in the U.S.!**  
**Call 1-800-799-3688.**

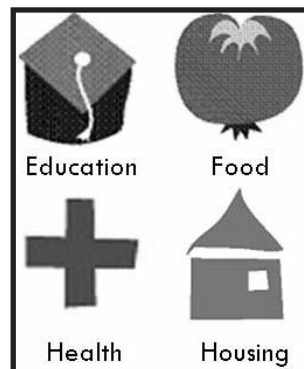
## Human Rights at Home

Most people in the United States know that there are human rights abuses occurring around the world, but many do not realize that there are human rights being violated here, as well. Discrimination, lack of access to quality education, and barriers to achieving an acceptable standard of living all constitute threats to the fundamental human rights of people in the United States. To address these issues, The Advocates for Human Rights has created *Discover Human Rights* toolkits to help people advocate for positive social change. These toolkits encourage people in this country to “*get informed, get involved, and get others interested*” in human rights in the United States.

The *Discover Human Rights* toolkits focus on specific human rights issues to evaluate the human rights situation in the United States against international rights standards. Each kit contains local and national fact sheets, quizzes, lists of local and national resources, take action guides, and downloadable PowerPoint presentations and lesson plans. Toolkits focusing on education, food, health, and housing are already available, and more will be added throughout 2008.

To use the toolkits, visit [www.DiscoverHumanRights.org](http://www.DiscoverHumanRights.org) and click on the purple button. First, “*get informed*” by reading the fact sheets and news stories about human rights issues in the United States. You can test your knowledge with our interactive

online quizzes. Next, “*get involved*” using our take action guides and resource lists to advocate for human rights in your community. Finally, “*get others interested*” using our lesson plans and PowerPoint presentations to educate your school or community group about human rights or to launch your own local human rights campaign.



Graphic by Igor Dukic

Around the world, social justice advocates are already engaging the language and values of human rights to fight for a better, more humane world. Now, on the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, it is time for the United States to return to a leadership role in the struggle to improve human rights both internationally and in our own communities. You can help by visiting [www.DiscoverHumanRights.org](http://www.DiscoverHumanRights.org), educating yourself about human rights and applying new perspectives on human rights in your work and in your community. Together, we can achieve long-term improvement in respect for human rights both in the United States and around the world.

## The Advocates’ Ahmed Sirleaf Receives Amnesty Human Rights Award



Ahmed Sirleaf Leading a Discussion at the Buduburam Refugee Camp in Ghana

award at the UST-Law Chapter of Amnesty International’s Fourth Annual Human Rights Awards Banquet on Wednesday, April 9, 2008.

As a Program Associate of The Advocates for Human Rights’ Liberian Truth and Reconciliation Project, Mr. Sirleaf works tirelessly to educate the public about the TRC process and to encourage members of the Liberian community to participate in the rebuilding of Liberia into a country that respects human rights. Mr. Sirleaf has taken statements for the TRC in Minnesota and in Buduburam Refugee Settlement near Accra, Ghana. He speaks regularly about the TRC in academic and other settings, and he will play an integral role as The Advocates for Human Rights prepares for upcoming TRC public hearings in the U.S. and in drafting its report and recommendations to the TRC in Liberia.

Given the depth of the trauma suffered by most Liberians and the need for post-conflict reconciliation, Mr. Sirleaf plays the important role of an advocate for human rights in his community. The Advocates for Human Rights is proud to have Mr. Sirleaf as a member of its human rights team!

The University of St. Thomas Law School’s Chapter of Amnesty International has awarded Ahmed K. Sirleaf II its 2008 Human Rights Award. In doing so, the chapter recognizes Mr. Sirleaf’s outstanding commitment to public service in defense of international human rights. Mr. Sirleaf received the

## Healing Through Faith Conference



Rev. William Harris of International Fellowship congregation in Atlanta presents on key issues in the Liberian Diaspora with fellow panelists Pastor Charles Goah, Doris Parker, and Marie Hayes

Faith leaders from the Liberian Diaspora community came together on March 7-8 to consider the important role congregations play in supporting the reconciliation process in Liberia and the Diaspora. The Advocates worked together with conference hosts, Luther Seminary, and faith leaders to plan an interfaith conference that would meet the training needs of Liberian pastors, as well as begin a dialogue regarding reconciliation and healing. Distinguished presenters from the

Luther Seminary faculty, The Advocates' staff, and the Liberian community presented sessions on forgiveness as a spiritual journey, ethical considerations for TRCs around the globe, key issues in the Liberian Diaspora, human rights law and advocacy, pastoral care and counseling, alternative dispute resolution, forgiveness from the Islamic perspective, and psychosocial support for victims of war trauma. Webcast versions of sessions were also available to interested individuals who were unable to attend.



Pastors Francis Tabla and Stephen Coe of Minnesota at the Healing Through Faith Conference

## Training Volunteers to Assist Detained Immigrants

For approximately eight years, The Advocates has been a participant and coordinator of The Minnesota Detention Project, which provides free legal consultation to individuals who are detained by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and are in removal proceedings. This work is vital. Often, clients lack even a basic understanding of the proceedings or their legal rights and options. The opportunity to consult with an attorney gives clients an opportunity to better understand their own situation. The Detention Project has many committed partners, including attorneys from the community, the Immigrant Law Center of Minnesota, Centro Legal, and students from William Mitchell College of Law and the University of St. Thomas Law School clinics. Recently, the volume of clients needing assistance has grown exponentially, due to a greater focus on enforcement of immigration laws in lieu of federal reform. The volume has begun to outstrip the resources of the volunteers.

In response, The Advocates coordinated training for new volunteer attorneys to learn about representation in the detained master calendar hearing setting. Held in the afternoon on February 15, 2008, the training received an outstanding response. Immigration Court Administrator Danny Ponce de Leon arranged for the use of one of the courtrooms so that mock hearings would have the greatest impact. Judge Kristin W. Olmanson led the mock hearings in her courtroom, and provided

insight for newer practitioners. Judge Olmanson even came in on her day off to participate in the training. Daniel Pornschloegl of the Office of Chief Counsel (opposing counsel in these proceedings) also participated, playing himself in the mock hearings, and provided tips for inexperienced practitioners. Mr. Ponce de Leon assisted in arranging a tour of the detained hearing space, client visit area, and holding area in the ICE facilities.

Given the tremendous response, The Advocates will be reprising the training and making it available in an abbreviated form to law firms or other interested groups. Because of the acute need, individuals are asked to commit to shadowing an existing Detention Project volunteer at least one time, and then being available to volunteer in the future. If you are interested in learning more about this project or getting on the list for future trainings, please contact Emily Good at [egood@advrights.org](mailto:egood@advrights.org) or 612-341-3302 ext. 122.

Thank you to **Professor Virgil Wiebe (UST Law School)**, **Sheila Stuhlman of The Immigrant Law Center of Minnesota**, **Selena Britzius-Negash of Centro Legal**, and **Paula Duthoy** – all Detention Project volunteers who contributed invaluable training materials and expertise.

# Regional Conference on Domestic Violence Legal Reform

The Advocates, in partnership with the Bulgarian Gender Research Foundation, sponsored a Regional Conference on Domestic Violence Legal Reform on February 12-14, 2008, in Sofia, Bulgaria. One hundred participants from 29 different countries attended, presenting on drafting, passing, and implementing civil and criminal domestic violence laws.

Participants at the conference were teams of government officials and nonprofit advocates, most coming from the Former Soviet Union and Central and Eastern Europe. They represented



Judge Mary Lou Klas, Retired, Ramsey County District Court

a spectrum of progress on development of laws and policies that protect victims of domestic violence. Staff and volunteers of The Advocates used their knowledge based on decades of experience in the region and in the State of Minnesota to promote best practices in writing and implementing laws and in creating a coordinated community response. Experts from countries with existing laws shared success stories and lessons learned in their efforts to make domestic violence laws a reality in their home

countries. There were many lively discussions as participants considered the most important provisions necessary to achieve victim safety and offender accountability.

Speakers discussed numerous factors necessary for

implementation of the laws. They emphasized the necessity of adequate training and resources for law enforcement and the judiciary, and social service programs to provide a remedy for victims of violence. The Advocates demonstrated the use of its website, [www.stopvaw.org](http://www.stopvaw.org), as a research and training tool for countries of the region. Staff also presented the results of The Advocates' monitoring of Bulgaria's Law on Protection against Domestic Violence (see article below).



Rosa Logar of the Vienna Intervention Center for Domestic Violence and Genoveva Tisheva of the Bulgarian Gender Research Foundation

The Advocates' staff, volunteers, and conference participants were re-energized by the group's resolve to use this knowledge to enact and implement effective laws against domestic violence and advocate for an effective community response to this important human rights issue.

The Women's Program has added a section to its website, [www.stopvaw.org](http://www.stopvaw.org), dedicated to the Regional Conference materials, and is continuing to consult with the participants on numerous issues.

## The Advocates Releases Report on New Bulgarian Law

The Women's Human Rights Program has just released a report on its findings on Bulgaria's new domestic violence law. *Implementation of the Bulgarian Law on Protection against Domestic Violence* is a joint publication of the Bulgarian Gender Research Foundation and The Advocates. The report presents findings on the successes and challenges of the law and makes recommendations for improvement.

The law creates a remedy for domestic violence victims in Bulgaria by allowing them to petition the court for an order for protection. Overall, implementation of the domestic violence law has been positive, but challenges still remain for all sectors, and legislative amendments are needed. For example, the authors found that the Directorate for Social Assistance (DSA) is in need of more training on the dynamics of domestic violence.

The DSA is failing to initiate applications on behalf of incapacitated or juvenile victims who need their assistance. Furthermore, battered mothers are at risk of losing their children to child protection services. However, Bulgarian police are making good progress in implementing the law, and NGOs in Bulgaria are doing an excellent job by providing important legal, social, and psychological services to victims and coordinating the community's response to this problem.

Overall, Bulgaria has taken important steps in combating domestic violence by passing the law, conducting trainings, and monitoring its implementation. It is essential, however, that key players continue to identify and remedy obstacles to effective implementation of the law to best promote victim safety and offender accountability.

*International Women's Day continued from page 1*



Participants at an IWD workshop

Other voices articulating this year's theme included a Kenyan woman and her family singing songs of girls' empowerment; women from a variety of religious backgrounds exploring human rights and religion; women from

Yemen, Brazil, Bulgaria, and Iraq talking about the role of women in their countries; a group of activists exploring the global water crisis and engaging participants in a "water bottle band;" Native American and Latina women discussing the intersection of women's and indigenous rights; and the dynamic music of hip-hop singer and songwriter Maria Isa.



Panelists Teresa Ortiz, Barbara Frey, and Laura Waterman Wittstock

"Women and Indigenous Communities:

The Struggle for Human Rights" was the focus of a plenary panel convened to highlight the recent adoption of the U.N. Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Barbara Frey, Director of the Human Rights Program at the University of

Minnesota, outlined the significance of the new declaration in upholding group or collective rights for the first time in international law. She also spoke of the work of State Senator Mee Moua on the issue of grave desecrations in Thailand and its painful effect on Hmong family members living in Minnesota and elsewhere. Laura Waterman Wittstock, Native leader and activist on indigenous issues, described seeking a balance between tribal law and traditions as a source of indigenous identity and the cultural traditions of the Western world. She encouraged participants to



An IWD participant at the "Voices and Images of Women" exhibit

support the efforts of tribal women's groups to re-establish the tradition of women as leaders in their communities. Teresa Ortiz of Worker's Interfaith Network spoke about her work recording the stories of women in Chiapas, Mexico involved in or affected by the Zapatista movement for indigenous rights. In addition to the panel discussion, a workshop on the recent "Maze of Injustice" report from Amnesty International explored sexual violence in the Native American community and the complexities of the legal response to such violence.



Senator Amy Klobuchar speaking at IWD

Senator Amy Klobuchar spoke during the plenary session, as well, discussing important international women's human rights issues.

A record number of co-sponsoring organizations provided displays and information about their work and opportunities for further involvement in women's issues at tables around the Great Hall. Four films were screened and followed by discussion. An exhibit of "Voices and Images of Women" was provided by Luella Greene.



Maria Isa performing at IWD

Special thanks to: **Tammy Tucker of Sweet Tea Design** for designing our print materials, **Melissa Toft** for photography, and **Bob Vaaler** for video projection and taping.

Food and coffee for IWD 2008 were provided by the following generous donors: **Au Bon Pain; Bread and Chocolate; Breadsmith; Cosi; Cub Foods; D. Brian's Deli; Dunn Brothers Coffee (Univ. Ave., Mpls); Franklin Street Bakery; Good Earth Restaurant, Roseville; Great Harvest Bread Company; Hampden Park Co-op; Key's; Kowalski's; Luna Bars; Peace Coffee; The Produce Exchange; Trotter's Cafe and Bakery; Wedge Co-op; and Whole Foods Market/St. Paul.**

## Recent Asylum Victories

**Jeff Keyes** (Briggs and Morgan) won withholding of removal for a Liberian client. The case initially had been denied by a judge in New Jersey. **Emily Good** (The Advocates) won remand by the Board for further proceedings.

A man from the Democratic Republic of the Congo also won asylum after his case was remanded by the Board. Attorney **Kim Cramer** initially represented this client in his hearing before the Judge, where his application for asylum was denied. The appeal to the Board of Immigration Appeals was handled by **Sara Lathrop** (formerly with Lind, Jensen, Sullivan & Peterson), who won a decision from the Board ordering remand to grant asylum.

**Laura Thomas** (now at the University of Minnesota Law School) represented a woman from Kenya who was granted asylum by the Asylum Office based on her political opinion.

**Josh Hauble** successfully represented a Cameroonian man at the Asylum Office who was seeking asylum based on his political opinion.

**Jenna Hannigan** and **Jana Bruder** (both of Dorsey & Whitney) represented a man from Chad who was granted asylum at the Asylum Office and the Immigration Court.

**Mardi Savage** (Briggs and Morgan) won asylum for her client before the Immigration Court after a two-year battle to obtain documentation of the client's claim. The government waived appeal in the case.

**Dan O'Fallon** and **Dan White** (Robins, Kaplan, Miller & Ciresi) represented a Liberian asylum-seeker who was granted asylum by the Immigration Judge in March. The Advocates' Program Associate **Ahmed Sirleaf** provided expert testimony.

Finally, **Anne Lockner** (Robins, Kaplan, Miller & Ciresi) wrapped up a 10-year battle for her Ethiopian client, winning asylum.

## Thank You to Recent Refugee and Immigrant Program Volunteers

Many thanks to the following individuals: attorneys, paralegals, interpreters, and translators who participated in new cases or in Detained Court in December, January, and February:

Abby Benson	Toni Dembski-Brandl	Julie Matonich	Mark Thieroff
Jeb Bowlus	Richard Diner	Laura Meyer	University of Minnesota,
Sara Brown	Sonya Dotson	Sam Musse	Immigration Clinic
Kahla Bunde	Michael Fondungallah	Annie O'Neill	University of St. Thomas,
Lindsay Carlson	Collete Adkins Giese	Nancy Peterson	Immigration Clinic
George Carroll	Rachel Hughey	Kate Phlom	Caroline Vantine
David Clark	Christopher Huntley	Michelle Rivero	Barbara Weissberger
Linda Close	Amelia Jadoo	Rachel Romsaas	David Wilson
Jessie Collings	Roger Junnila	Sonya Royston	Dick Zonneveld
Richard Cox	Elaine Kumpula	Pam Stein	
Katie DeGrio	John Mandler	Elizabeth Streefland	

The following people have been remembered through *in memoriam* gifts to The Advocates for Human Rights:

Stan Breen

Emily Sandall

Norbert and Harriet Hennessey Rohl

Gary Wynia

# Parents Get Involved in Human Rights Education



Actor educators from Climb Theater with second grade students at Lake Harriet Community School

misunderstandings about the lifestyles of families who make up the school community, including multiracial, single parent, same-sex parents, half siblings, stepparents, and adoptive parent families. The committee has had full support from the school's administration and has experienced many successes.

In the EYES Project, photographer Andy Edgar took pictures of every student's eyes and displayed them on a large banner in the front hallways of both campuses, creating a sense of belonging and community for each child in the school. Another initiative is the Families All Matter Book Project, which helps to construct a welcoming and respectful atmosphere for all students. This project uses a collection of children's books that celebrate many different families, ethnic backgrounds, and family structures to teach children about how families are different and the same.

A group of engaged parents has formed a committee at Lake Harriet Community School to address diversity and human rights education. The committee is a great example of how individuals can help promote human rights in their home communities.

Lake Harriet Community School (LHCS) is a K-8 school nestled in the heart of the Fulton and Linden Hills neighborhoods in Southwest Minneapolis. LHCS is a community school known for its parental involvement, supportive community partners, and quality staff.

The Diversity Committee arose out of a need to address

On February 11th, 2008, in honor of National African American Parent Involvement Day, the Diversity Committee helped organize a day focused on addressing issues of race, equality, immigration, and human rights. The Advocates for Human Rights led a workshop on the "Journey of a Refugee," which gave students the opportunity to empathize with a refugee's experience when coming to a new country and to discover what they could do to make immigrants and refugees feel more welcome. In another workshop, actor educators from Climb Theater performed an original interactive play entitled, "We're all different and that's o.k.!" In the play, Prince Unique and Queen Different (pronounced "differaunt") taught students that "same same = boring boring" and things are more interesting when people are different. Throughout the month of February, each classroom was visited by a parent volunteer who assisted in teaching about a range of human rights-related topics from refugees and race to resolving issues on the playground. These activities and others have all helped foster human rights awareness in young learners.

**The Advocates for Human Rights and Fredrikson & Byron, P.A. are pleased to announce a new lecture series:**

**"Celebrating the 25th Anniversary of The Advocates for Human Rights and the 60th Anniversary of the United Nations"**

Founders, Board members, volunteers, and staff of The Advocates will present six lectures throughout 2008.

The lectures will take place on the third Thursday of every other month beginning in February at Fredrikson & Byron, P.A. from 12 to 1 p.m.

For information on the individual lectures, please visit our website:

[www.theadvocatesforhumanrights.org](http://www.theadvocatesforhumanrights.org)



Drawing done by a kindergarten student at Lake Harriet Community School

# Women’s Program House Party



Regional Conference on Domestic Violence Legal Reform in Sofia, Bulgaria, at which 29 countries from the former Soviet Union and the Balkans shared their successes and challenges in creating effective legal reform on domestic violence. She also provided an update on a grassroots campaign for a new domestic violence law in Morocco and shared plans for the upcoming training in Armenia on advocacy and lobbying for a new domestic violence law. The Women’s Program is grateful to Ruth Usem, a longtime supporter and member of our Advisory Committee, for her wonderful hospitality at this event.

House party Host Committee member Susan M. Hadley (second from left) and other guests at the party



House party attendees and guest speaker Robin Morgan (seated left)

Nearly 100 people gathered at Ruth Usem’s Lake Harriet home on Friday evening, March 14th, to celebrate International Women’s Day and support the Women’s Human Rights Program. The special guest at the event was author and feminist activist Robin Morgan, keynote speaker for the 13th Annual International Women’s Day Celebration on March 15th and longtime leader in the international women’s movement. She spoke about the challenges of funding for women’s human rights work and the urgency of supporting this work on the local, national, and international levels. She also cited the overriding importance of education as key to women’s empowerment and progress toward equality. Women’s Program Director Cheryl Thomas described the excitement of presenting the recent

## Many Ways to Give:

### Monthly Giving

For your convenience, The Advocates for Human Rights now has a monthly giving option!

Gifts of any amount can be automatically transferred each month. This method of giving creates steady and sustainable support for our programming.

Go to [www.theadvocatesforhumanrights.org](http://www.theadvocatesforhumanrights.org) and click on “Support Us.” You may change your monthly giving option at any time by contacting The Advocates.

To speak to a staff member about this option, please call Sarah Herder at (612) 341-3302 ext. 126.

### Planned Giving

The Advocates for Human Rights operates on the generosity of its supporters.

To receive information about including The Advocates in your estate, please contact Sarah Herder at (612) 341-3302 ext. 126 or at [sherder@advrights.org](mailto:sherder@advrights.org).

### Combined Federal Campaign

Employees of the federal government may choose to select The Advocates for Human Rights through the Combined Federal Campaign. Please go to <http://www.opm.gov/cfc/donors/> to learn more.

# Advocacy Update

## **Liberian Temporary Protected Status**

The Advocates for Human Rights is working in coalition to secure permanent resident status for the thousands of Liberians currently in the United States under a temporary status set to expire in March 2009. Kicking off the 2008 campaign with the Organization of Liberians in Minnesota, Jewish Community Action, the Minneapolis Urban League, and many other local and national allies, The Advocates participated in a staged reading of *Tap the Leopard* on January 27, 2008. Attended by over 250 people, the event presented the first act of Kia Corthron's drama depicting the emotional and physical journey of former slaves between America and Africa. The 2008 Liberian Permanent Resident Status Campaign has events planned throughout the year to ensure that Liberians, who have lived legally in the U.S. since the outbreak of civil conflict in 1991, are not forced to leave in 2009.

## **State Immigration Policy**

The Advocates for Human Rights continues to work closely with the AFFIRM coalition as the Minnesota Legislature considers numerous immigration-related legislative proposals in the 2008 Session. Many thanks to Kathy Moccio and Rose Grengs for their tireless efforts as The Advocates' advocacy volunteers at the Capitol. To receive email updates on our advocacy work and learn how you can become involved to affect change, join the mailing list at [www.energyofanation.org](http://www.energyofanation.org).

## **United Nations Shadow Report**

On the international front, The Advocates for Human Rights participated in the combined NGO Shadow Report to the U.S. Periodic Report on compliance with the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD). With the help of volunteers at the law firm of Halleland Lewis Nylan & Johnson, The Advocates contributed to the report *The Rights of Immigrants in and Migrants to the United States: A Critical Look at the U.S. and*

*Its Compliance under the Convention*. The Advocates contributed to the Shadow Report's section on Education, thanks to the help of volunteer Tom Church. Long-time volunteer Penny Parker represented The Advocates at the U.N. at the Committee's February 2008 meeting in Geneva. Recognizing many of the concerns raised in the Shadow Report, the Committee in its Concluding Observations requested that in its next report, the U.S. provide information on legislation applicable to refugees and asylum seekers and on the mandatory and prolonged detention of a large number of non-citizens.

## **Women's Human Rights: Call to Make a Difference**

Around the world, violence against women and girls is a devastating problem. Each day, women and girls are raped, beaten, burned, trafficked, enslaved and in different ways subjected to horrendous violence. In some countries, 70 percent of women will experience gender-related violence in their lifetime. No country is immune – the violence crosses all borders and affects women of all ages, social groups, religions, and classes.

Groundbreaking legislation has been introduced in the United States Senate to address these horrifying abuses. The *International Violence Against Women Act (I-VAWA)* will provide \$1 billion over five years in U.S. foreign assistance for long-term prevention, economic development for women, programs to change public attitudes and social norms, and legal and health reforms – all intended to end violence against women worldwide.

## **Take Action:**

**Contact your Senators and ask them to co-sponsor this historic bill. You can reach your Senators by contacting the Senate Switchboard at (202) 224-3121 to be connected with the appropriate office.**

**We are seeking donations for the silent auction at the Human Rights Awards Dinner on June 5th, 2008.**

We welcome donations to be bid on, such as gift certificates, tickets to events, services, airfare, and tangible items.

Your contribution will go toward supporting The Advocates' programs and projects.

Please contact Katie Gaughan at (612) 341-3302, ext. 110, or [kgaughan@advrights.org](mailto:kgaughan@advrights.org).

**The Advocates is seeking in-kind donations of the following:**

- Laptop
- Laser printer
- USB drives
- New office supplies
- Digital camera
- Phone system

Please contact Kay Kautio at (612) 341-3302, ext. 101, or [kkautio@advrights.org](mailto:kkautio@advrights.org).

## Staff and Intern Update

**Aysem Senyurekli** joined our staff as Program Associate in the Education Program. Aysem received her Ph.D. in Family Social Science from the University of Minnesota, where her research focused primarily on the experiences of immigrant and refugee families. Welcome, Aysem!



Aysem Senyurekli, Program Associate in the Education Program

**Tim Tennant-Jayne** joined our staff as the Receptionist / Administrative Assistant. Previously, Tim was the Program Assistant with Rural AIDS Action Network (RAAN) in Minnesota. Tim graduated from Cornell College with a Bachelor of Special Studies and a major combining study from the fields of Psychology, Religion, and Sociology. He also currently serves on the National Council of Affirmation: United Methodists for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer Concerns. Welcome, Tim!



Deirdre O'Brien, Midwest Coalition Fellow and Tim Tennant-Jayne, Receptionist / Administrative Assistant

**Deirdre O'Brien** joined the Liberian Truth and Reconciliation Diaspora Project as the Spring 2008 Midwest Coalition Fellow. She received her J.D. from City University of New York Law School and LLM from the Irish Centre for Human Rights, National University of Ireland, Galway. Welcome, Deirdre!

### Thank you to each of our talented interns!

**Bridget Coleman** (University of Minnesota) and **Katyana Melic** (Macalester College) with the Education Program; **Tracy Baumgardt** (University of Minnesota), **Alexandra Douglas** (Macalester), **João da Fonseca** (Hamline University), **Grier Martin** (University of Minnesota Law School), **Evangeline Simmons** (William Mitchell College of Law), **Sulafa Simsaa** (University of Minnesota), and **Alycia Wright** (University of Minnesota Law School) with the Women's Program; **Tooni Akanni** (University of Minnesota), **Galen Baynes** (Macalester College), **Sara Brown** (University of Minnesota), **Carrie Burton** (University of St. Thomas School of Law), **Emmett Costel** (Macalester College), **Ira Liston** (Macalester College), **Tatyana Nosenko** (University of Minnesota), **Lauren Randall** (University of Minnesota), **Mina Shahin** (Macalester College), **Geoff Ward** (University of Miami), and **Enany Yigezu** (University of Minnesota) with the Refugee and Immigrant Program; **Tim Connelly** (University of Minnesota), **Mariana Ferreira** (University of Minnesota School of Law), **Tarja Hamalainen** (University of Joensuu), **Chelsea Hanson** (Hamline University School of Law), **Amanda Lyons** (University of Minnesota School of Law), **Erin McCabe** (Macalester), **Monica Nevin** (Hamline University School of Law), and **Robyn Skrebes** (University of Minnesota) with Special Projects; and **Adam Hennings** (University of Minnesota) and **Breanna Kelly** (University of Minnesota) with Communications and Development.

A very special thank you to:

**Tom and Marlene Kayser**

who outfitted the entire office with new computers!

The staff of The Advocates is very grateful for their generous donation.



Mary Hunt, Program Associate in the Women's Program, enjoying her new computer

# Asylum & Immigration Conference 2008: Immigration Law in the New “ICE” Age of Immigration Enforcement May 1-2, 2008

This year, our Annual Asylum Conference will be held in collaboration with the American Immigration Lawyers Association (AILA) Minnesota/Dakotas Chapter. Not just for immigration practitioners, this two-day conference is designed to provide critical information for volunteer attorneys in the Asylum Project, the Minnesota Detention Project and the Walk-In Legal Clinic. Immigration law changes quickly. Make sure you have the latest information to represent your client.

Hear from the Asylum Office, Immigration Court, and Board of Immigration Appeals. Meet experts and mentors. Hear about new enforcement tactics affecting your *pro bono* client. Learn best practices for responding to ICE Raids. Get information on federal litigation, immigration law updates, crimes, detention, bond, family-based immigration, consular processing, and much more.

The conference will be a month earlier this year, so be sure not to miss out!

**Date: Thursday, May 1 - Friday, May 2, 2008  
8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.**

**Place: Eagan Community Center  
1501 Central Parkway, Eagan, MN**

Join the AILA Minnesota/Dakotas Chapter for a reception and presentation of the Immigrant of Distinction Award following the Conference on Thursday, May 1.

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### REGISTRATION FORM

(Please photocopy and use separate Registration Forms for each person registering.)

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Firm \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_ City, State, Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone # \_\_\_\_\_ Fax # \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_  
State(s) for CLE Credit \_\_\_\_\_

**ATTENTION NON-AILA MEMBERS:** AILA will not accept conference registrations from persons who provide representation without authorization in violation of 8 CFR § 292, such as for-profit “immigration consultants” and “notarios.” If not an AILA Member, please sign as proof of compliance with the above restrictions: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Registration Fees

Both days \$380  
One day (either May 1 or May 2) \$225

Send registration/payment (**checks made payable to AILA MN/Dakotas**) to:  
Sarah Stensrud, Aronson & Associates, P.A., 1221 Nicollet Mall, Suite 506, Minneapolis, MN 55403

AILA MN/DK Chapter Members may register online at <http://www.ailamndak.org>.

**REFUND & CANCELLATION:** All cancellations will be charged a \$25 administrative fee. No cancellations will be processed after April 25, 2008. Registrants who do not cancel, yet fail to attend, will not receive a refund but will receive the conference materials. All cancellation requests must be received in writing.

Questions about the Conference? Contact Elizabeth Streefland by phone (612) 605-1199 or email [elizabeth@streefland.com](mailto:elizabeth@streefland.com).

# 2008 Human Rights Law and Policy Conference 2008

## Human Rights and the U.S.: The Past, Present and Future of Dignity and Justice for All

**June 30, 2008**

This year's annual human rights law and policy conference will take a look back at the human rights movement that has brought us into the 21st century and what the future holds for human rights in the U.S. and around the world. An experienced line-up of human rights practitioners and activists will address topics such as:

- Women and Human Rights
- U.S. Foreign Policy and Human Rights
- Conflict and Human Rights
- Human Rights Issues and Ideas for the 21st Century
- How to Take Human Rights Activism to Heart

**Date: June 30, 2008**  
**8:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.**

**Place: Dorsey & Whitney**  
**Suite 1500**  
**50 South Sixth Street**  
**Minneapolis, MN**

For more information, visit our website at  
[www.theadvocatesforhumanrights.org](http://www.theadvocatesforhumanrights.org).

### JUNE 30, 2008 LAW & POLICY CONFERENCE REGISTRATION FORM

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Affiliation/Organization/School \_\_\_\_\_

Phone # \_\_\_\_\_ Fax # \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

PLEASE REGISTER ME TO ATTEND THE 2008 HUMAN RIGHTS LAW AND POLICY CONFERENCE ON JUNE 30, 2008:

- \_\_\_\_\_ \$125 (general)
- \_\_\_\_\_ \$50 (non-profit)
- \_\_\_\_\_ \$30 (student)
- \_\_\_\_\_ I request a scholarship to attend because I am unable to pay the fee. I will pay \$15.00 to cover lunch.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I request a scholarship to attend because I am unable to pay the fee. I do not want a lunch.

Please apply a 10% discount for registering before June 20, 2008.

TOTAL REGISTRATION FEE: \$\_\_\_\_\_

- \_\_\_\_\_ Check (please make payable to The Advocates)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Visa
- \_\_\_\_\_ Mastercard

Credit Card #: \_\_\_\_\_

Expiration Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

REGISTER BY: June 26, 2008

CLE AND CEU CREDIT:  
CLE credits to be applied for. Certificates for CEU credits will also be provided.

REFUND & CANCELLATION:  
All cancellations will be charged a \$25 administrative fee.

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Julia Kashaeva at (612) 341-3302, ext. 127 or  
[jkashaeva@advrights.org](mailto:jkashaeva@advrights.org)

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<b>Colleen R. Beebe</b>	Education Program Director
<b>Ramla Bile</b>	Assistant to the Executive Director / Administrative Associate
<b>Angela Bortel</b>	Women's Program Staff Attorney
<b>Alena Chaps</b>	Women's Program Assistant, St. Joseph Worker
<b>Kimberly Condon</b>	Education Program Assistant, VISTA
<b>Mary Ellingen</b>	Women's Program Staff Attorney
<b>Mary C. Ellison</b>	Women's Program Legal Fellow
<b>Emily Farrell</b>	Education Program Associate
<b>Katie Gaughan</b>	Development and Communications Assistant, VISTA
<b>Emily Good</b>	Refugee & Immigrant Program Staff Attorney
<b>Sarah Herd</b>	Development and Communications Director
<b>Mary Hunt</b>	Women's Program Associate
<b>Julia Kashaeva</b>	Education Program Assistant
<b>Kay Kautio</b>	Administrative Director
<b>Michele Garnett McKenzie</b>	Refugee & Immigrant Program Director
<b>Deirdre O'Brien</b>	Midwest Coalition Fellow
<b>Rosalyn Park</b>	Staff Attorney, Special Projects and Women's Program
<b>Jennifer Prestholdt</b>	Deputy Director
<b>Malinda Schmiechen</b>	Refugee & Immigrant Program Staff Attorney
<b>Kathy Seipp</b>	Education Program Associate
<b>Aysem Senyurekli</b>	Education Program Associate
<b>Ahmed Sirleaf</b>	Special Projects Program Associate
<b>Kyrsten Skogstad</b>	Refugee & Immigrant Program Assistant, LVC
<b>David Takassi</b>	Refugee & Immigrant Program Associate
<b>Tim Tennant-Jayne</b>	Receptionist / Administrative Assistant
<b>Cheryl Thomas</b>	Women's Program Director
<b>Laura Young</b>	Wellstone Legal Fellow

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