

PUBLISHED BY THE MINNESOTA ADVOCATES

HUMAN RIGHTS



FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

OBSERVER

International Women's Day

Minnesota Advocates Celebrates - Many Voices, One Vision

The nearly 400 people who attended Minnesota Advocates' 9th Annual International Women's Day Celebration on March 6 took away with them both a renewed energy for the challenges facing women, and a wealth of resources to use as they pursue progress in women's human rights.

In conversations during the day and in written evaluations, women and men spoke of ways the discussions begun at this year's event would continue – in the workplace, in their church and ethnic communities, in organizations and clubs, in the classroom, and in their families.

One attendee spoke of "renewed passion." Another said, "I enjoyed the sense of community."

What most inspired people at our celebration of International Women's Day?

"(It is an) inspiration that there are people doing this work ... All the topics (can be used) in class – I'm a teacher ... Being able to gather together to make a difference in our world! ... Ideas to approach gender-based violence in my community ... The whole day is a springboard for a lot of discussion on issues raised."

Minnesota Advocates' event, at Mondale Hall at the University of Minnesota, was a partnership with the Human Rights Program at the University of Minnesota and the Women's Foundation of Minnesota. It was one of many celebrations around the world that week, inspired by the United Nations 4th World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995.

Minnesota Advocates' celebration of International Women's Day was its usual mix of speakers, discussion groups, art and entertainment. The keynote speaker was Bonnie J. Campbell, former director of the U.S. Justice Department's Office on Violence Against Women. She spoke of her broad experience with women's issues on the national and international level. Despite much progress in many areas, she said the "the struggle for human rights for women is a long way from being over." (see

related article, page 3).

In all, 19 different breakout sessions focused on women's human rights and the platform planks formulated at Beijing – what the United Nations has done for women; legal issues facing refugee and immigrant women; women in U.S. prisons; the strength and energy of older women; abortion policy; nurturing a culture of peace; emerging human rights issues for girls; and more.



Bonnie Campbell

The women of color theatre collective, Mama Mosaic, performed excerpts from their *Bride/Price* production, and the day
Continued on page 15

Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights
Presents

THE 2004 HUMAN RIGHTS AWARDS DINNER

This year's award will be presented to
The Honorable Walter F. Mondale

June 16, 2004
The Depot, Downtown Minneapolis
Details, see page 3

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The Observer is published by

Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights
 650 Third Avenue South, #550
 Minneapolis, MN 55402-1940
 Telephone: (612) 341-3302
 Client Line: (612) 341-9845
 Fax: (612) 341-2971
 Email: hrights@mnadvocates.org
 Website: www.mnadvocates.org

Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights

The mission of Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights is to implement international human rights standards to promote civil society and reinforce the rule of law. Minnesota 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 human rights victims; trains and assists groups that protect human rights; and works through education and advocacy in Minnesota to engage the public, policy makers and children about human rights and cultural understanding. Minnesota Advocates holds Special Consultative Status with the United Nations.

From the Director's Desk

In December, Governor Tim Pawlenty called for the reinstatement of the state death penalty, a punishment Minnesota has rejected since 1911. Minnesota has long maintained the position, consistent with the overwhelming majority of the international community, that government sponsored killing is not an appropriate form of punishment. In fact, the death penalty violates international human rights standards and is ineffective in achieving any criminal justice goals beyond simple retribution.

Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights is committed to complete abolition of the death penalty in the United States and around the world. Many lawyers in Minnesota have long worked to ensure equal access to the justice system by taking on death penalty appeals in cases in other states. Last year, we restarted our Death Penalty Project to support these lawyers and provide public education and advocacy to ensure that Minnesota does not join other states in this violation of human rights.

Under international law, the death penalty violates the right to life and the right to be free from cruel, inhuman and degrading punishment. Currently there are 112 countries – most of the world - that reject the death penalty in law or practice. Of the 34 executions of child offenders since 1990, 19 were in the United States. The Council of Europe has formally requested that the United States take concrete steps towards ending executions in order to retain its Observer status.

In addition to the conflict with international human rights standards, the system of administration of the death penalty in the United States is extremely flawed. Since 1973, 113 prisoners have been released from death row in the United States after evidence emerged that they were innocent of the crimes for which they were sentenced to death. One was Albert Burrell, a death row inmate in Louisiana who was exonerated with help from Death Penalty Project volunteers, Steve Pincus and Chuck Lloyd. Illinois

declared a moratorium on the death penalty after 17 death row inmates were found to have been wrongfully convicted; several other states are re-considering capital punishment or have declared moratoriums on executions.

Ninety-five percent of death row inmates cannot afford their own attorney. Individuals charged with committing the same crime often receive different punishments. Blacks who kill white victims are several times more likely to be sentenced to death than whites who kill black victims. Minnesota already has a larger disparity between black and white imprisonment rates than any other state. According to a study by the Council on Crime and Justice, black defendants are almost twenty times more likely to be imprisoned than are white defendants.

Moreover, the death penalty does not prevent future crime. Studies have consistently failed to show that the death penalty deters crime more effectively than other punishments as many proponents of the death penalty argue. A New York Times survey found that between 1980 and 2000 the homicide rate in states with the death penalty has been 48 percent to 101 percent higher than in states without the death penalty. Minnesota has consistently had one of the lowest homicide rates in the country.

Proponents of the death penalty ignore the compelling evidence that the death penalty is ineffective as a deterrent and completely flawed in its implementation. Minnesota Advocates played a lead role in coordinating witnesses to testify against the death penalty in the Minnesota Legislature this session. We will continue to work to fight a reintroduction of the death penalty in Minnesota. Please help support these efforts by writing to your elected representatives. Please check our website for a sample letter and other information related to death penalty issues.



Robin Phillips
Executive Director

2004 Human Rights Awards Dinner

Mondale to be Honored

Save the date: Minnesota Advocates' annual Human Rights Awards Dinner will be held on June 16, 2004, in The Depot in the historic Mill District in Downtown Minneapolis.

Our Human Rights Award that evening will be presented to Walter F. Mondale, a great Minnesotan who served as the state's Attorney General, a U.S. Senator, Vice President in the Carter Administration, and as the American Ambassador to Japan. Throughout his public life, Walter Mondale has been an early and active supporter of civil rights here at home and human rights around the world.



Walter F. Mondale

"Walter Mondale represents Minnesota's traditions that value social justice issues and back up those principles with action," said Robin Phillips, Minnesota Advocates' Executive Director. "We are honored that he will join us on June 16."

One notable example of Mondale's impact came in the summer of 1979 when Vietnamese refugees were fleeing – and dying –

by the thousands in the South China Sea. The then-Vice President is credited with rallying the world to save these refugees, saying at a UN meeting, "Let us honor the moral principles we inherit. Let us do something meaningful – something profound – to stem the misery. We face a world problem. Let us fashion a world solution. History will not forgive us if we fail. History will not forget us if we succeed."

Minnesota Advocates' Human Rights Awards Dinner is always our largest fundraiser every year, but the event is also important as a forum for the work of Minnesota Advocates – investigating and exposing human rights violations; representing immigrants and refugees in our community who are human rights victims; training and assisting groups that protect human rights; and working through education and advocacy in Minnesota to engage the public, policy makers and children about human rights and cultural understanding.

More about the evening and ticket information is available on our website (www.mnadvocates.org) or by calling 612-341-3302, Ext. 100. Last year's dinner was sold out.

National Security Speaker Series

A balance of human rights and national security

Minnesota Advocates' National Security Speaker Series will continue throughout 2004, contributing to an informed public discussion on the balance between the protections of national security and human rights.

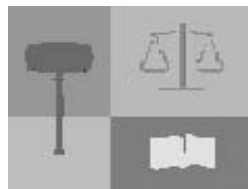
Minnesota Advocates and Fredrikson & Byron launched the series in May 2003, and attendance at the lunchtime event has averaged 70 people each month. Barb Frey launched the 2004 series with her February talk on "U.S. Exceptionalism Regarding Human Rights and Humanitarian Norms."

The next speaker series event, "Suspect Citizens: Immigrant Responses to Post-September 11 Legal Reforms," will be presented on April 15 by Elizabeth Heger Boyle, a Professor of Sociology at the University of Minnesota. Based on her interviews with East Africans of Muslim and Christian descent who arrived in the Twin Cities area as refugees or asylees, this presentation examines how immigrant responses to legal changes vary by gender, age, education, religion, and nationality. Complimentary lunch is provided for those who R.S.V.P. in advance.

Summaries of previous presentations and related resources are available on Minnesota Advocates' website (www.mnadvocates.org). Speakers and topics throughout 2003 included:

Former Congressman Don Fraser's perspective on the role of human rights in U.S. foreign policy; Joe Margulies' report on the detainees imprisoned at Guantanamo Bay; Laura Danielson and Sam Myers' discussion about the war on terrorism on the rights of non-citizens; State Senator Mee Moua's account of the struggle to balance human rights and national security at the state legislature; Manpreet Dhanjal's report on hate crimes post-September 11th; Robin Phillips and Peter Erlinder's discussion about human rights, civil rights, and the USA PATRIOT Act (1 CLE credit); Michele Garnett McKenzie's overview of eliminating bias in the legal profession (1 Elimination of Bias CLE credit); U.S. District Court Judge Michael Davis' description of his role as a judge on the Foreign Intelligence Security Act court (1 CLE credit).

For more information or to R.S.V.P., please contact Rose Park at 612-341-3302 ext. 106 or rpark@mnadvocates.org.



Minnesota Advocates Overseas

The Sankhu School

Giving Children in Nepal a Chance

Rajita Karki is a smiling twelve-year old girl from Katike village, Nepal. Every day, she walks one hour to the village of Sankhu to attend the Sankhu-Palubari Community School, because there is no school in her village. Before she began attending school, she used to help her father work in the field all day and look after the cattle. Now, Rajita enjoys the opportunity to learn and see her friends and teachers. Every day, she wakes up at 6 a.m. to do her homework. Rajita tells her teacher, "I like to study very much because I want to become a doctor."

Rajita's story is not unique in Nepal. It is just one of many compelling success stories of children who attend the Sankhu school, which was started in 1999 by Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights and Nepali partner NGO, Hoste Hainse. In January 2004, Minnesota Advocates staff members Robin Phillips and Megan Powers and board president Aviva Breen visited Nepal to meet with staff of Hoste Hainse, visit the school, and plan next steps to ensure the continued education of the 174 Sankhu school students.

After meeting with local NGOs, government officials, and international human rights organizations in Kathmandu, the Minnesota Advocates team witnessed the severity of the need for free and compulsory education in Nepal. Nearly one-third of the country's elementary age children do not attend school (including in the urban areas). More disheartening is that even a lesser percentage of elementary age Nepali girls are enrolled in school, mainly because of household or other work.

The Sankhu-Palubari Community School, though small, is giving those children a chance at an education, and is in the process of creating new opportunities for the entire village. The school

strongly emphasizes education for girls. In fact, during Minnesota Advocates' most recent visit, one female student sang a song in Nepali for all of the parents, teachers, other students, and local community members about the importance of sending daughters to school and the benefits that literacy will provide for girls' future success.

As follow-up to the January 2004 visit, Minnesota Advocates plans to coordinate professional development training for Sankhu school teachers and additional resources for students, both of which the teachers expressed as an urgent need. The



Community members say the Sankhu School, unlike many in Nepal, provides girls an opportunity for success.

teachers requested training about teaching English and Nepali as foreign languages to young students, since many of the children speak only a local dialect when they first enroll in school. An experienced ESL teacher who volunteers with Minnesota Advocates has already expressed interest in obtaining funding to lead such trainings in Summer 2004.

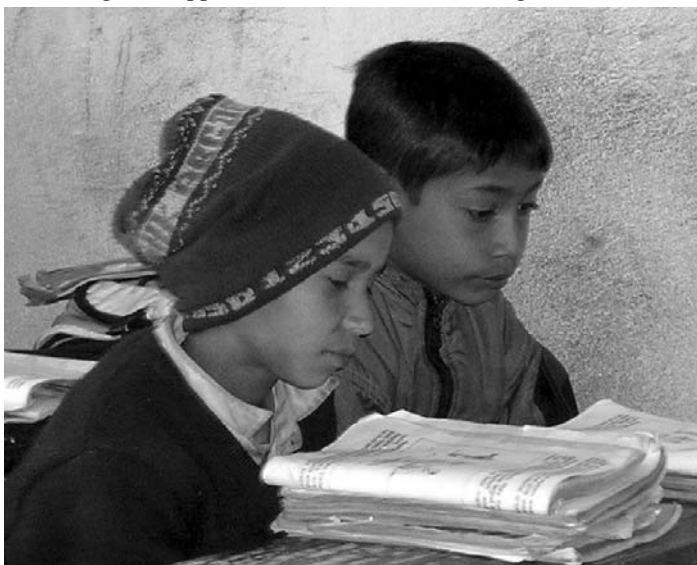
Training in Bulgaria

Supporting Legal Reforms to Fight Domestic Violence

A delegation from Minnesota Advocates' Women's Program traveled to Sofia, Bulgaria, in November to support major reform in the way the country's legal system addresses violence against women.

The trip, at the invitation of long-time partner, the Bulgarian Gender Research Foundation, was the second by Minnesota Advocates in 2003, and one in a series that date back to our original report on domestic violence in Bulgaria in 1996. Drawing on Minnesota's decades of experience and expertise in this area, the team trained Bulgarian judges, police, journalists and lawyers on the complicated dynamics of domestic violence.

The training revealed an urgent interest in new legal remedies for domestic violence victims. As one police officer who is often called to the scene of domestic assaults, said, "We need the power to *do something*."



The poorest children of the community get an education at the Sankhu School.

The proposed law and the training conferences are landmark achievements for Bulgarian women and for women throughout the region, and are an example of a uniquely successful and productive partnership between human rights advocates across borders. In addition to the trainings for police and judges, the delegation met with members of Parliament who are sponsoring the proposed Civil Order for Protection Law, which is expected to pass in the spring of 2004. The team was also interviewed for Bulgarian newspapers and national radio broadcasts.

The proposed law is one of the first of its kind in the Central and Eastern European region, and is modeled after civil order for protection laws in Minnesota and other states and countries. It would allow battered women to seek civil orders from the court that direct abusers to stay away from victims.

As in Minnesota, the Bulgarian law would provide immediate protection to victims of domestic violence without requiring that they pursue criminal remedies against or divorce from their abusers. Minnesota Advocates has worked in partnership with human rights and women's rights advocates in Bulgaria and in 21 other countries in the region to address the urgent problem of violence against women.



Volunteer Loretta Frederick trained Bulgarian police.

The Bulgaria team included Mary Louis Klas, retired judge; Julie Brunzell, Special Agent, Bureau of Criminal Apprehension; Loretta Frederick, Legal Counsel, Battered Women's Justice Project; Cheryl Thomas, Director, Women's Program, Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights; and Robin Phillips, Executive Director, Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights. Minnesota Advocates is grateful to Sandy and Bob Klas, whose generous contribution made our work in Bulgaria possible.



Cheryl Thomas of Minnesota Advocates, third from left, and volunteer Mary Louise Klas, far right, met with Bulgarian legislators and project partners.

Death Penalty Project

The Speaker Series Continues with "compelling current issues"

Minnesota Advocates' bi-monthly lunchtime Death Penalty Project speaker series – hosted with Dorsey & Whitney LLP – continues, with experts addressing current issues and sharing personal experiences on the death penalty.

In one recent talk, "Litigation Before the International Court of Justice: *Mexico v. United States*, lawyer Sandra Babcock described the growing integration of international law and human rights principles into the United States justice system, specifically in death penalty cases. While many attorneys and advocates express skepticism about using international law to argue their cases, Babcock reported that judges are increasingly receptive to these arguments.



Sandra Babcock

Babcock used the example of 54 Mexican nationals who had been sentenced to death in the United States, in apparent violation of the Vienna Convention, which requires that defendants have access to their country's consulate. Babcock, who represents the government of Mexico, brought its case before the International Court of Justice on behalf of Mexico's nationals. Babcock was successful in winning a stay of execution for the three Mexican nationals whose execution dates were imminent, as well as the opportunity to argue the full case before the international court.

At another luncheon, Rep. Keith Ellison's remarks were called, "Breaking with Tradition: The Proposed Death Penalty Legislation in Minnesota." He led an overview of the proposed amendment to Minnesota's constitution that would reintroduce the death penalty in Minnesota. One CLE credit will be applied for.

Minnesota Advocates' Death Penalty Project provides education in our community on death penalty issues, and supports the work of Minnesota attorneys representing death row inmates in other states. Minnesota Advocates' advocacy efforts focus on defeating attempts to reintroduce capital punishment in Minnesota.

For more information on Minnesota Advocates' Death Penalty Project, please contact Rose Park at 612-341-3302 ext. 106 or rpark@mnadvocates.org.

Asylum Interviews

“Important Voices of Contemporary Immigrants in the U.S.”

Minnesota Advocates volunteer Lily C. Lyons, a Macalester College student, recently interviewed several immigrants who were granted asylum with the help of Minnesota Advocates. She wrote, “(T)he stories of these individuals represent important voices that are positioned to educate Americans as to what it means to be a contemporary immigrant in the United States.” Minnesota Advocates currently has almost 900 active asylum cases, each one a person seeking a haven from the persecution, violence and even death in their home countries. The following are some excerpts from Lily’s report, in which she referred to clients by their initials:

TD, from Guinea

According to TD, most Guineans formulate their conception of the U.S. from the media, specifically MTV and the movies. ... What came as the biggest surprise to TD upon his arrival in the U.S. was the warmth with which he was received. Prior to coming, he had assumed that given the capitalist emphasis on individualism, people would naturally be more selfish or at least self-centered. Instead, TD found assistance easy to come by, and cites the acquaintances that supported him and organizations such as Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights, the Center for Victims of Torture, and the Minnesota Church Association as particularly generous.

Before coming to the United States, JB’s hopes included stabilizing himself, finishing his education, and being able to support himself. He still finds it hard to believe that he is “treated better in this country than in his own.”

In Guinea, TD had been enrolled in medical school, and here, he hopes to combine his interests in medicine and computers into a career in medical imaging, relating to X-ray or CAT scan technology. TD is very optimistic with regard to being able to fulfill his aspirations.

TD says that he would describe the ratio of positive to negative experiences in the U.S. as 9:1. In (a) rare negative example, TD recalls how a white man once called him the N-word. At the time, TD did not understand the implications of the word and simply smiled at the man. Five minutes later, the man returned to apologize, and asked TD why he had smiled. TD explained that he was an immigrant and that the term had not offended him. He and the man struck up a friendship, and the two still keep in touch and do things together.

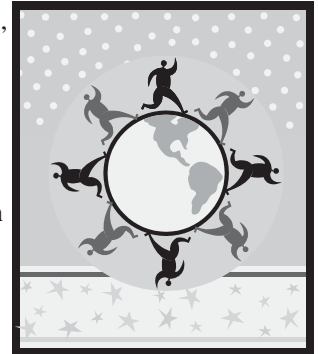
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JB, from Senegal

JB is yet another firm believer in the opportunity for economic mobility in the United States, which he characterizes as “excep-

tional” when it comes to freedom. He believes that as long as a person has a plan, is open minded, and dedicated, he/she can achieve anything in the United States. He draws a definite contrast between the United States and Europe in this regard, because of his knowledge of immigrants in Europe. He says that in Europe, immigrants do not enjoy the same rights as citizens, but that in the United States, they do.

Before coming to the United States, JB’s hopes included stabilizing himself, finishing his education, and being able to support himself. He still finds it hard to believe that he is “treated better in this country than in his own.” The combination of his complete disenchantment with politics as a result of the persecution he suffered and his desire to “give back” to others as a result of the support he received in the U.S. lead to JB’s decision to go into nursing instead of continuing with Political Science and Economics. He noted that he may not be able to help those who helped him, but that he could at least act in turn.



VN, from Cameroon

VN equates the notion of the “American dream” with sheer hard work, and believes that attaining success is contingent on many things. He thinks that it is good to keep the idea of the dream alive, but to remember that it is necessary to “go by the rules,” and to “work really hard.” He sums it up saying that you “cannot expect pennies from heaven,” but that “if you work really hard, you’ll smile at the end of the day.” Clearly, he believes that the American dream is attainable.

VN spoke about what challenges immigrants, in particular Africans, face upon arrival in the United States. He notes that in the U.S., it is up to everyone to fend for himself. He says that maintaining one’s focus and having plans are both integral to be able to fulfill the common dreams, like owning a big house. VN observes that most of the immigrants he knows seem to be on the “right track” to realizing the ‘American dream.’

The M Family, from Colombia – a mother, father and two sons

The family fled political persecution in Colombia; the father arrived in the United States in September 1999, and the rest of the family joined him the following February. For them, it has been far from easy, although now they say they finally feel comfortable and very happy.

Continued on next page

International Women's Day

Continued from page 3

ended with the harmonious voices of the Sakerettes, a Cameroonian women's chorale.

Throughout the day, participants also took advantage of display and information tables set up by 45 co-sponsoring organizations, providing a wealth of resources on a wide range of women's and human rights issues. Nearly 60 volunteers contributed their time and energy to make the event run smoothly.

Our thanks to the restaurants, food co-operatives, and companies that donated food and beverages for Minnesota Advocates International Women's Day celebration:

Acme Deli ♦ Café of the Americas ♦ Davanni's on Riverside ♦ D. Brian's Deli ♦ Franklin Street Bakery Good Earth Restaurant, Roseville ♦ LUNA Bars Midwest Coca-Cola Bottling Company ♦ North Country Co-Op ♦ Peace Coffee ♦ Seward Co-Op ♦ Signature Café ♦ Trotter's Café and Bakery ♦ Turtle Bread Company Wedge Co-Op ♦ Whole Foods Market, St. Paul. Schlotzsky's Deli, Minnetonka, provided discounted sandwich prices.

Minnesota Advocates is also grateful to **Tammy Tucker of Sweet Tea Design** for the outstanding brochure and program design, and to **Jane Evershed** for providing her painting, "Many Voices, One Vision," as the image for this year's event.

Asylum Interviews

Continued from previous page

The older son, who is a junior in high school, comments that he assumed that everyone who came to the United States would find a lifestyle much like those on television and in movies.

However, he says that his family has learned that this is by no means the case. The family agrees that the feeling that they were all alone when they first arrived was the hardest thing about coming to the United States. Due to the nature of their political persecution in Colombia, unlike many new immigrants, they avoided contact with other ex-patriots, with the exception of the one acquaintance they had in Minnesota. The one blessing that resulted from their isolation was how close the family became as a unit, in response to the hardships they faced.

The M.s' better times began when Mrs. M. was finally able to find work and childcare for their younger son. The M.s subse-

The M.s' better times began when Mrs. M. was finally able to find work and childcare for their younger son.

Bonnie Campbell

She Captivated IWD

The keynote address at International Women's Day, delivered by Bonnie Campbell, a dynamic national leader in women's human rights advocacy, combined humor and hope with a realistic picture of the status of women world wide.

Campbell captivated hundreds of conference participants with stories of her work with women around the world while at the helm of the national Violence Against Women Office. She described a historic period of change in perceptions on violence against women when the United States passed the landmark Violence Against Women Act in 1994. Campbell met women's advocates from around the world who looked to the United States with hopes that their own governments might pass similar laws.

IWD conference participants who had the chance to meet and speak with Campbell after the event were impressed by not only her extensive knowledge on women's international human right issues but her warmth and openness.

quently were able to move out of the trailer park where they had live previously into a better apartment complex, where they have made a beautiful and inviting home. Mrs. M. observes that acceptance and camaraderie from her coworkers came with some time, during which all parties learned much from each other. Since the family began attending church, they have also been able to meet more friends, and Mrs. M. volunteer interprets there, which gives her great joy. As for the older son, he says that he has great expectations of the future. He plans to attend college and study computer science. He would also like to develop his interest in music and guitar.

Conclusion

It is from this very unique perspectives that immigrants experience the United States, giving new meaning the notion of the "American dream ... It was heartening to hear the asylees stories, idealized or not, experienced or yet to be experienced.

Minnesota Advocates ... Briefs

“Get involved” at Breck School

Minnesota Advocates’ Education Program works to bring the concepts of international human rights to the region’s classrooms – connecting those sometimes-remote ideas to the lives of students in the Twin Cities region.

One recent example of that dynamic could be found at Breck Upper School, which organized a Martin Luther King Jr. Day Conference. Our staff led a session that day called “Get Involved!” It challenged students to take an active role in shaping the world around them. The session included legal descriptions of human rights, and reports on ways they are ignored or protected around the world. But the students also made direct connections to their lives. For example, one student discovered that she and her friends had worked to restore the human rights of a classmate – they protected an autistic classmate from bullies.

The annual conference – whose workshops ranged from “Electing a Gay Bishop” to “Jewish Partisan Fighters Against the Nazis” – is intended to demonstrate to students and teachers how Dr. King’s dream is being lived out, deferred or ignored, and how related struggles are faring today. Minnesota Advocates staff also led discussions on immigrants and child labor, and several students committed to learn more about how they could work to help stop human rights violations around the world.

Minnesota Advocates Open House



Tovah Flygare, Libby Wyrum, and Stephanie Aiyagari were among the dozens of friends, volunteers, and supporters of Minnesota Advocates who joined us in February for our open house, celebrating our new offices in downtown Minneapolis.

A Birthday That Keeps on Giving

On a cold, blustery January evening, a slice of paradise was found in Minnetonka. Volunteer Immigration Attorney Steve Thal celebrated his 50th birthday in Caribbean style. In lieu of presents, Steve used the special occasion to ask his friends and family to make a donation to two of his favorite charities - Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights and the American Immigration Law Foundation. Guests were treated to a smorgasbord of food from all over the world, as represented by many of Steve’s clients.

East Metro Area Students Use Arts to Confront Bias

Minnesota Advocates staff and interns recently participated in an “Arts and Activism” education day hosted by the Five District Integration Partnership. The goal that day with 90 students was to use art to examine issues related to race, culture, and social justice, and to introduce these students to creative ways to interact and make change through non-violent means.

This event was part of a monthly program for children in grades four through seven in St. Paul and the East Metro. The day-long sessions use “the arts, environment and history to examine issues related to race, culture and social justice.”

Staff and volunteers from Minnesota Advocates led students in a game designed to make students consider how they confront and deal with stereotypes and prejudices in their own lives. Teachers from the Five-District Integration Partnership and staff from Intermedia Arts also helped students throughout the day in creative, fun activities that suggested positive strategies for dealing with bias and prejudice. The artists led students in creative activities in movement, visual arts and drawing, music and poetry, which were designed to draw attention to connections between the arts and human rights.

Participating artists included spoken word poet Desdemona, visual artist Malichansouk Kouanchao, TrueBoy, a musician, and dancer Roxanne Wallace.



“Arts and Activism” students studied under “TrueBoy,” the artist.

Human Rights Day: Celebrating Commitment and Advocacy

December 10 is the day designated by the United Nations each year as International Human Rights Day, and Minnesota Advocates again this year contributed its own celebration.

It is the day we mark the anniversary of the United Nations' adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, representing the first worldwide commitment to human rights awareness and advocacy. Minnesota Advocates uses the event to celebrate our diverse local community and recognize our many generous volunteers and supporters. We invited the community to Hamline University Law School for food and drink – generously donated from numerous local businesses and ethnic restaurants – and entertainment provided by Reid Kruger, Ken Komtangi, and Jesus Pukisaca Ruiz and several enthusiastic dancers. This year also featured a silent auction featuring numerous donated items, from paintings and clay pots to spa gift certificates and Nepalese socks.

As with all of our events and projects, our celebration of International Human Rights Day could not have happened without the help of our volunteers, and we took the opportunity to thank all those people who have helped us and are helping us now, including all of our volunteer lawyers, donors, interns and businesses, who support us and our work year in and year out.



Elizabeth Bukingolts, daughter of Anastasia and Jacob Bukingolts, was among the impromptu celebrants at Human Rights Day, with musicians Reid Kruger, Kenn Komtangi and Jesus Purisaca Ruiz

Women's House Party: A Prelude to International Women's Day

The Women's Program's Spring House Party arrived early this year, scheduled to coincide with our 9th Annual International Women's Day celebration. Guests joined hosts Linda Foreman (of the Women's Program Advisory Committee) and Mel Dickstein at their spacious Lowry Hill home on March 4th for a preview of the upcoming IWD celebration the following Saturday.

IWD workshop presenters Elsa Khwaja, a University of Minnesota student and head of the Muslim Student Human Rights Commission; Tuba Inal, a doctoral student in political science at the U of M; and Melissa Nambangi, Executive Director of MAWA, the Minnesota African Women's Association, spoke briefly and provided a summary of their workshop presentations.

Women's Program staff attorney Christine Tefft brought flowers to help describe the history of International Women's Day, and the many ways it is celebrated around the world. In Italy and other European countries, yellow mimosa flowers – one of the few flowers in bloom in early March – are distributed on IWD as a symbol of solidarity with advocates who struggle for women's rights around the world. Continuing this tradition, the Women's Program provided beautiful acacia flowers (from the mimosa family) for all the guests at the house party.

Minnesota Advocates is grateful to Peter Huxmann of Cowboy X, who donated his time to design the party's invitation.

New Tactics in Human Rights' West Group Workshop

Deputy Director Jennifer Prestholdt in November represented Minnesota Advocates at a regional training workshop sponsored by the Center for Victims of Torture's New Tactics in Human Rights Project.

The workshop, for representatives of American, Canadian and Western European non-governmental organizations, was held in November in Venice, Italy, and included training on such innovative human rights tactics as filing civil suits to hold human rights abusers accountable; engaging businesses to evaluate their human rights responsibilities; using text-messaging technology to stop torture; and using historical sites to address current human rights issues. Jennifer shared Minnesota Advocate's tactic of adapting traditional human rights monitoring strategies to emerging human rights issues such as domestic violence and transitional justice.

The New Tactics in Human Rights project encourages wider exposure of tactical innovation and strategic thinking within the international human rights community. In September, 2004, the New Tactics Project will host an International Symposium in Ankara, Turkey, that will bring together participants of the five regional trainings and hundreds of others engaged in human rights work around the world. For more information about the New Tactics Project, see www.newtactics.org.

Two Exciting Human Rights CLE Opportunities!

Human Rights Law and Policy

(7 CLE credits to be requested)

Friday, June 18, 2004

Dorsey & Whitney, LLP

This human rights training will introduce lawyers to a wide range of laws, procedures, policies and advocacy strategies regarding the promotion and protection of human rights locally, nationally and internationally.

Course sessions will include:

- Introduction to Human Rights Law
- The Rights of Non-citizens
- Emerging Issues in Women's Human Rights
- International Criminal Court
- International Law and the Death Penalty
- Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in Minnesota

18th Annual Asylum Conference

(7 CLE credits to be requested)

Friday, June 4, 2004

Dorsey & Whitney, LLP

Since 1986, Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights has presented the Annual Asylum Conference to recruit and train volunteer asylum attorneys and update immigration law practitioners on current asylum practice. The Asylum Conference has gained a reputation for excellence throughout the region, presenting local and national experts in the area of asylum law and practice. The conference is an essential source of information for volunteer attorneys, immigration attorneys and refugee service providers.

Learn the fundamentals of asylum law and practice, focusing on the particular challenges posed by gender-based asylum claims. Join Stephen Knight of the Hastings College of the Law's Center for Gender & Refugee Studies for an update on current gender-based asylum jurisprudence, together with immigration law experts, judges, and asylum officers to learn how to prepare, file, litigate, and appeal an asylum claim.



Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights June 2004 CLE Registration Form

Name: _____

Firm/Organization/School: _____

Work Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Day Phone: _____

Email: _____

I will attend the following CLE courses:

- Human Rights Law and Policy (7 CLE credits)
 Annual Asylum Conference (7 CLE credits)

Costs:

	<u>Attorneys</u>	<u>Non-Profits</u>	<u>Students</u>
Human Rights Law and Policy	\$100	\$50	\$20
Asylum Conference	\$150	\$75	\$20

Attend both courses for \$200 total (Save \$50)!

Please mail this form to:

I owe \$_____ for the CLE courses I will attend in June.

CLE Registration
 Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights
 650 South Third Ave, Suite #550
 Minneapolis, MN 55402-1940

- Enclosed is my check
 Please charge my credit card:

Please call 612.341.3302 with any questions.

Visa/MC #: _____

Exp. Date: _____

Signature: _____

REFUND/CANCELLATION:

All cancellations will be charged a \$25 administration fee. Paid registrants who do not cancel, yet fail to attend, will receive the written materials.

Events Update

The Exonerated, Starring Brian Dennehy and Lynn Redgrave

April 8, 2004, 7:30 P.M.

The State Theater, in the Hennepin Theater District of Downtown Minneapolis

A powerful new play about six innocent survivors of death row that will rock your view of the world, justice and the American way. The Associated Press calls it, "Riveting! Simple, honest storytelling that demands reflection by the audience." Minnesota Advocates and the Innocence Project of Minnesota have a Special Priority Offer of tickets (\$42, \$62, and \$85), with orders due by April 6, or as long as ticket supplies last. Call 612-341-3302, Ext. 106, for information.

The Children's Theater Company Presents *Snapshot Silhouette*

March 16 - April 17

The Children's Theater Company of Minneapolis presents *Snapshot Silhouette*, a story of the encounter between a Somali girl and an African American girl. Children's Theater Company says "Two very different girls must share a bedroom. One has been here her whole life. The other just got here. They speak differently, dress differently and act differently. But they share having lost something dear to them. What happens when these two girls can't see eye to eye? They surprise each other, finding humor, hope and understanding in common experiences. They forge a friendship no one would have predicted. Especially them." Minnesota Advocates is co-sponsoring this event. For more information, call the Children's Theater Company at (612) 874-0400, or visit their website at www.childrenstheater.org.

Human Rights and National Security Speaker Series

Suspect Citizens: East African Immigrant Responses to Post-9/11 Legal Reforms

Presented by Elizabeth Heger Boyle

Thursday, April 15, 2004, 12:00-1:00 P.M.

Fredrikson & Byron, PA, 4000 Pillsbury Center

Elizabeth Heger Boyle is an Associate Professor of Sociology & Law at the University of Minnesota. She will discuss the findings of in-depth interviews with 85 East Africans of Muslim and Christian descent, who came to Minneapolis and St. Paul as refugees or asylees. The lecture is free and open to the public; lunch is provided for those who pre-register. RSVP by Tuesday, April 13 to Rose Park at (612) 341-3302 ext. 106, or email rpark@mnadvocates.org.

Nepal School Project House Party

Thursday, April 22, 2004

5:30-7:30 P.M.

Hosted by David and Mary Parker

2808 River Parkway West, Minneapolis

Please join us to celebrate our Nepal School Project. Aviva Breen, Robin Phillips, and Megan Powers will share stories and photos from their recent trip to visit the Sankhu-Palubari Community School in Nepal. This school provides a free education and healthy meals to the most disadvantaged children in the area, and works to break the cycle of poverty as well as to combat the problems of child labor and illiteracy. All proceeds from this event go to support the Sankhu school. For more information and directions, please see our website at www.mnadvocates.org, or contact Megan Powers at (612) 341-3302 ext. 112 or mpowers@mnadvocates.org.

Staff and Intern Update

Kathy Seipp has joined our team as Education Program Associate. She is working on updating our BIAS curriculum and organizing human rights education in the schools. She has taught grades 6 – 8 and is a former Minnesota Advocates Rights Sites teacher.

A host of interns assist us in our work at Minnesota Advocates. Thanks to our interns for this winter and spring:

Robyn Linde, Talia Sundby, and Laura Young in the Death Penalty Project; **Margaret Carlson, Nick Dobbins, Megan Elliott, Abbie Larkin, and Megan Swan** in the Education Program; **Adriana Dobrzycka** and **Elizabeth Pappas** in the

Human Rights Monitoring Project; **Bidisha Bhattacharyya, Lindsay Carlson, Vanna Chan, Siv Dobrovolny, Peter Ehresmann, Mary Ellison, John Pagel, Danielle Serie, Margie Sollinger, and Selamawit Yohannes** in the Refugee and Immigrant Program; **Savanah Brihn, Rochelle Diver, Sara Dondelinger, Natalie Elkan, Rachel Evanson, Carole Martin, Annalise Nelson, Lindsay Shaw, Heather Thoren, Oleh Vretsona, Heather Vinge, and Selamawit Yohannes** in the Woman's Program.

Special thanks to Amber Peterson, who designed our holiday card.

Judges in Kosovo

Minnesota Judges Encourage Justice Amidst Ethnic Tensions

Early in 2002, U.S. District Judge John R. Tunheim in Minneapolis was asked by the State Department to assemble a team of American judges to assist the United Nations Mission in Kosovo, which was trying to stabilize the republic's legal system, establish an interim administration and restore peace and justice in the region.

Tunheim chose a group that became known as The Minnesota Four, judges from the state who found themselves on six-month tours of duty in Kosovo from late 2002 through summer 2003, in difficult and rewarding assignments that contributed to the rebuilding of civil societies in the Balkans.

Mabley said he came home with more patience and a more global perspective.

In January, at a Minnesota Advocates-sponsored event at Briggs & Morgan, Tunheim introduced the four Minnesota judges – Judge Robert F. Carolan, Judge Marilyn Justman Kamen, Judge Daniel H. Mabley and Judge Edward Wilson – who shared the challenges and rewards of their experiences in Kosovo, including their renewed appreciation for the U.S. justice system.

Judges Carolan, Justman Kamen, Mabley and Wilson served with Kosovar judges, who are mostly ethnic Albanians, to ensure fairness for both Albanian and Serbian defendants. The Minnesota judges oversaw the most dangerous and politically charged criminal cases involving genocide, organized crime, murder, terrorism, ethnically motivated offenses, and drug and weapons trafficking.

Justman Kamen remembered the broken landscape and ongoing trauma of the war: destroyed homes and families, people without places to live, and the deep-seated underlying ethnic hatred.

The judges lived with strict security, and considerable danger and discomfort. It was one thing to try to be productive with only intermittent electricity and heat. It was something else, the judges said, to live and work amidst endemic ethnic hatred in the region that destabilizes everything, both inside and outside of the courtroom.

Justman Kamen remembered the broken landscape and ongoing trauma of the war: destroyed

homes and families, people without places to live, and the deep-seated underlying ethnic hatred. Justman Kamen was stationed in Peja/Pec, a city in the western part of the province that, because of on-going ethnic tensions, must be referred to by both its Serbian and Albanian names. She was assigned U.N.-

appointed bodyguards after a rocket-propelled grenade was launched (but did not explode) into the building where she worked.

Mabley said he came home with more patience and a more global perspective. When Carolan returned to Dakota County, he had the jarring experience of his first case involving two families quarreling over a broken Play Station computer game. Like most of the other judges, he is grateful for the fresh appreciation of American justice and democracy.

The “Minnesota Four” as their colleagues referred to them, believe that it will take a long time for an effective court system to be established in Kosovo. And they question whether the Kosovar judges will be able to maintain democratic values of justice and rule of law once the U.N. mission departs the country. Nonetheless, a second round of Minnesota judges left for Kosovo in mid-January.

Create a legacy in human rights

Please remember Minnesota Advocates in your estate planning.

Transitional Justice

Minnesota Advocates to Send Team to Sierra Leone

Building on experience monitoring transitional justice in Peru, Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights will send a team of staff and volunteers to the West African nation of Sierra Leone in April. Team members will conduct fact-finding interviews with victims, witnesses, legal advocates, members of that country's Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the United Nations' Special Court for Sierra Leone, as well as other people involved with the transitional justice process there.

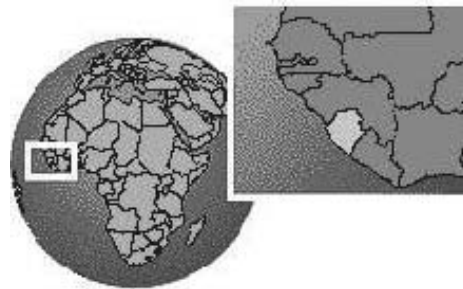
Sierra Leone is emerging from nearly 10 years of violent armed conflict marked by serious human rights abuses, corruption, a struggle for control of diamonds and other natural resources, and cross-border raids by forces from Liberia. An estimated 75,000 people were killed during the conflict, with even larger numbers of victims raped, mutilated, or tortured. The conflict captured international headlines because of the use of child soldiers and the practice of carrying out forced amputations - even on very young children.

The presence of international observers, such as the Minnesota Advocates delegation, contributes to the success of the overall truth and reconciliation process. International observers uphold the integrity of the process by monitoring the hearings and publishing their observations; provide moral and emotional support to the victims who have made the difficult decision to come forward with their testimony; and further legitimize the truth and reconciliation process by bringing it to the attention of the world. In the end, an international observer presence also puts pressure on the Sierra Leone government to comply with the commission's recommendations.

A team of Minnesota Advocates volunteers and staff last year monitored the work of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission in Peru, interviewing officials and victims, and visiting prisons and mass gravesites. At the Peruvian commission's request, the Minnesota Advocates team contributed its findings to the final report.

Sierra Leone's commission was established in the Lomé Peace Agreement of July 1999, between the government of Sierra Leone and the leadership of the main rebel group, the Revolutionary United Front. It mandated that the commission create a detailed, impartial historical record of the human rights abuses that occurred between 1991 and 1999. The commission will also respond to the needs of victims, promote healing and reconciliation, and prevent a repetition of the violations and abuses suffered.

Since last April, the commission has taken more than 8,000



The West African nation of Sierra Leone is emerging from ten years of violence.

statements from victims, witnesses and perpetrators, and an unprecedented number of perpetrators have come forward to testify. An early analysis of the first 1300 statements identified 3,000 victims who had suffered approximately 4,000 human rights violations including abductions, amputations, and torture, as well as 200 cases of rape and other sexual violence and more than 1,000 deaths. Approximately 10 percent of the reported cases involved child perpetrators.

The UN Security Council created the Special Court for Sierra Leone to prosecute "those persons who bear the greatest responsibility for the commission of violations of international humanitarian law." Nine individuals are currently indicted, including former Liberian President Charles Taylor. On January 27, 2004, the SCSL ruled that the accused should be tried jointly in three groups based on their alleged political factions.

Attention Asylum Attorneys:

Don't forget to register with probono.net!

Its resources include an online library, postings of new cases, message boards, interactive pages, and a virtual community of lawyers dedicated to serving clients in need of assistance with their asylum cases.

Volunteer Corner

Bob Vaaler

When Bob Vaaler, a freelance Minneapolis video producer, made an end-of-the-year financial contribution to Minnesota Advocates in December of 2002, he attached a letter that graciously offered his talents and expertise if the organization ever had an interest in a video project.



Bob Vaaler

As it happened, Minnesota Advocates was at that moment *very* interested in a video project – specifically the updating its own 10-year-old organizational video to feature at our 20th anniversary Human Rights Awards Dinner the following June. We contacted Bob, invited him over for a cup of coffee, and “The Video Project,” as it became known, was launched.

Thus did Bob Vaaler become one of Minnesota Advocates’ most enthusiastic recent volunteers. He videotaped interviews with board members; he shot or located extra footage of asylum clients, members of the staff, historical events and graphics; he recruited corporate video editor Brian Forrest to pull the dozens of interviews, photographs and clippings into a final a 12-minute video that told the 20-year story of Minnesota Advocates.

When “Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights: Building on a Tradition of Social Justice” was shown to a capacity crowd at our annual Awards Dinner last June, it was repeatedly interrupted by applause, and continues to be used to introduce the organization to new volunteers, supporters and community groups.

“I like to volunteer to work with groups like Minnesota Advocates because I love to help people tell their stories,” said Vaaler, whose commercial clients include American Express, the Mayo Clinic, Target and Medtronic. “And Minnesota Advocates has a great story to tell.”

Bob is an excellent example of the many generous people who volunteer their time and talents to support the human rights work of Minnesota Advocates. In addition to the hundreds of lawyers who donate time to represent asylum clients, other professionals such as teachers, graphic designers, judges, police officers, artists, restaurateurs, community activists and doctors volunteer with Minnesota Advocates every year.

“I’ve always thought that this – volunteering – was what we do here in Minnesota,” Bob said. “It seems like everyone tries to contribute to make a greater good. That’s the way I see it, anyway.”

“I like to volunteer to work with groups like Minnesota Advocates because I love to help people tell their stories.”

Volunteer Opportunities

Interpreters

The Refugee and Immigrant Program is looking for volunteer interpreters to help asylum seekers in Minnesota. Arabic, Spanish, and Somali language skills are especially valuable. Training will be provided, date to be determined. For more information, please contact Amy Beier at (612) 341-3302 x 118.

Doctors and Therapists

The Refugee and Immigrant Program is looking for volunteer doctors and therapists to help document asylum claims. The work is in partnership with the Center for Victims of Torture and Physicians for Human Rights. Anyone interested in volunteering - as well as any attorney who needs an evaluation of a client in support of an asylum case - should contact Manpreet Dhanjal at (612) 341-3302 x 103.

Staff

Robin Phillips	Executive Director
Brenda Anfinson	Refugee & Immigrant Program Assistant
Ronald L. Barnes	Administrative Director
Amy Beier	Refugee & Immigrant Program Assistant
Tony Brown	Development/Communications Director
Manpreet Dhanjal	Refugee & Immigrant Program Staff Attorney
Michele Garnett McKenzie	Refugee & Immigrant Program Director
Emily Good	Refugee & Immigrant Program Staff Attorney
Mary Hunt	Women's Program Associate
Rosalyn Park	Legal Fellow, Special Projects
Megan Powers	Education Program Director
Jennifer Prestholdt	Deputy Director
Kathy Seipp	Education Program Associate
Christine Tefft	Women's Program Staff Attorney
Cheryl Thomas	Women's Program Director
Beth Varro	Receptionist/Administrative Assistant

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