



NC Justice Center
Opportunity and prosperity for all

A QUARTERLY MAGAZINE FOR NORTH CAROLINA'S GRASSROOTS COMMUNITY

community news *noticias comunitarias*

Summer/Verano 2008

BEYOND THE WALL

Homeless Addicts
Find Hope at
The Healing Place
of Wake County

■ *One-third of inmates re-entering society have a drug or alcohol abuse problem. The Justice Center is working with allies and partners to develop policies and programs that will help ex-offenders turn their lives around.*

inside: The 2008 Defenders of Justice Awards (page 12) | COMMUNITY NEWS is online @ www.ncjustice.org

Community News

Noticias Comunitarias

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Rochelle Williams

TRANSLATIONS/TRADUCCIONES: Luis Olivieri-Robert

DESIGNER/DISEÑO: Phyllis Nunn

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Kate Woomer-Deters - Attorney, ECIR Project

VOLUNTEER:

Polly Williams



North Carolina Justice Center

224 S. Dawson Street

P.O. Box 28068

Raleigh, North Carolina 27611

(919)856-2570 phone

(919)856-2175 fax

contact@ncjustice.org • www.ncjustice.org

Editor's Message Mensaje de la editora

"Incarceration Nation"* (*see page 20)



Dear Friends:

HOPE for a better tomorrow...you see it on the news; you read about it in your daily newspapers; it's your family, your community, or your friend affected by the fact that our nation has the highest incarceration rate in the world. Build more prisons! This fact makes you want to call out, "STOP the MADNESS!"

"Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter."

— Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

We can no longer be silent about the injustices that have plagued our lives because those who have been incarcerated have no re-entry plan into society. We ask for justification. How do we reclaim our communities? Those most affected are low-income minorities. In this issue of Community News, we not only talk about this devastating issue plaguing our communities, but we are calling for policy changes and legislation that will recognize and address the issue of re-entry.

In today's society, one-third of inmates who re-enter into society have a drug/alcohol abuse problem, and they have nowhere to go. Our cover story is an example of a program that is offering HOPE for a better tomorrow. The Healing Place of Wake County is a non-profit rescue, recovery and rehabilitation

homeless shelter for persons with drug and alcohol addiction. The success of this program has been recognized nationally, and it says to us all, making your dreams happen takes endurance. It means using your fears and frustrations as the fuel for transformation. People can change when given the resources, support and tools needed to help them along the way.

All we ask is to live in a society that is fair and just. Let's stand together for what is right, unwilling to compromise when it comes to doing what is necessary to ensure that people of different backgrounds and perspectives are respected and appreciated. By empowering one another through sound advice, and creating solutions to achieve our goal of reducing prison population and creating strategies that emphasize intervention and rehabilitation. The future of our children depends on it!

Debra Tyler-Horton,
Deputy Director

Please mail information for the magazine to the attention of Debra Tyler-Horton, PO Box 28068, Raleigh, NC 27611, or e-mail it directly to debra@ncjustice.org. The Justice Center reserves the right to choose which articles will be published, to edit articles for length and clarity, and to choose which ones will be translated into Spanish.

contents contenido

EDITOR'S MESSAGE	2
FEATURE ARTICLE	
Homeless Addicts Find Hope at The Healing Place	3
POLICY UPDATE	
NC Must Address Prisoner Re-entry Needs If It Wants to be "Smart on Crime"/NC debe examinar necesidades de prisioneros que re-entran si quieren ser 'inteligentes con el crimen'	5
North Carolina's Pesticide Law Overdue for an Update/Ley de pesticidas de Carolina del Norte necesita actualización	6
COMMUNITY FOCUS	
Mental Health Workers Struggle/Lucha de los trabajadores de la salud mental	7
Immunizing North Carolina/Inmunizando a Carolina del Norte	8
School Employees Exception to First Amendment/Excepción de Empleados de escuelas públicas a la Primera Enmienda	9
Prisoner Re-entry in North Carolina	10
When Will We Say 'ENOUGH' to Racial Injustice and Prosecutorial Misconduct?	11
Putting Public Transportation at the Center of Transportation Solutions	14
Superintendents	15
INFORMATION EXCHANGE	
COUNT EVERY VOTE!! Calling for a Grassroots Strategy for Election Protection/QUE SE CUENTE CADA VOTO!! Llamado a estrategia de base para proteger las elecciones	16
NC Legal Aid Client Council Up to the Challenge/Consejo a Clientes de NC Legal Aid acepta el reto	18
Lobby Day Energizes HOPE	19
Incarceration Nation	20
Worker Justice Gets Tough and Local	21
Beaufort County group forms to help transform a troubled high school	23

COVER: Clients of The Healing Place stand behind the sculpture of *The Wall*, located in the center of the facility's courtyard (Thomas Sayre, sculptor). Photo by Phyllis Nunn.

Homeless Addicts Find Hope at The Healing Place of Wake County

By Lisa M. Rousseau, Volunteer Coordinator, The Healing Place of Wake County

"After 35 years of drinking, I thought I could handle anything – until I tried crack cocaine. This drug was the start of total disaster. I lost job after job. I sold everything I owned chasing the high that was forever gone after the first hit."

These were the words of Fast Eddie T at The Healing Place Silver Chip Transition Ceremony. Eddie was completing a major phase of the recovery and rehabilitation program at The Healing Place as he stood in front of more than 100 friends, family members, fellow addicts and the staff of

The Healing Place, including its program director, Chris Budnick.

"At the transition ceremony, everyone has a

"Everyone [here] has a unique story to tell."



The entrance to The Healing Place of Wake County, featuring its logo which conveys a philosophy of care and support.

Anonymous, The Healing Place also uses a 23-session curriculum, known as Recovery Dynamics, that provides additional education on the root causes of the disease of addiction and focuses on tools and behaviors needed to combat it.

Program participants are often heard to say that there is only one thing they have to change to gain sobriety. And

when asked what that one thing is, a client usually smiles and says, "The one thing you have to change.... is everything." In order for the client to achieve these behavioral changes, the program is not designed as a "quick fix" but rather as an eight- to twelve-month journey for anyone who is ready and willing to take the path to recovery.

When a person enters the program, he or she starts with the motivational track. They will trudge in rain, sleet, snow or sunshine to classes off-property in order to show willingness to face their

addiction and work toward their recovery. The Healing Place believes that since they were willing to do whatever it took to get high, they should do whatever it takes to get sober. Once

"The clients are held accountable and, as a nonprofit with a diverse set of funding sources, we hold ourselves extremely accountable as well," says Dennis Parnell, executive director of The Healing Place. "Not only do we hold ourselves accountable for a high level of program success; we also strive to be incredibly cost-effective in the use of our assets."

"Not only do we hold ourselves accountable for a high level of program success; we also strive to be incredibly cost-effective in the use of our assets."

While the program is based on the 12 steps of Alcoholics



Clients attend regular meetings as part of their recovery journey.

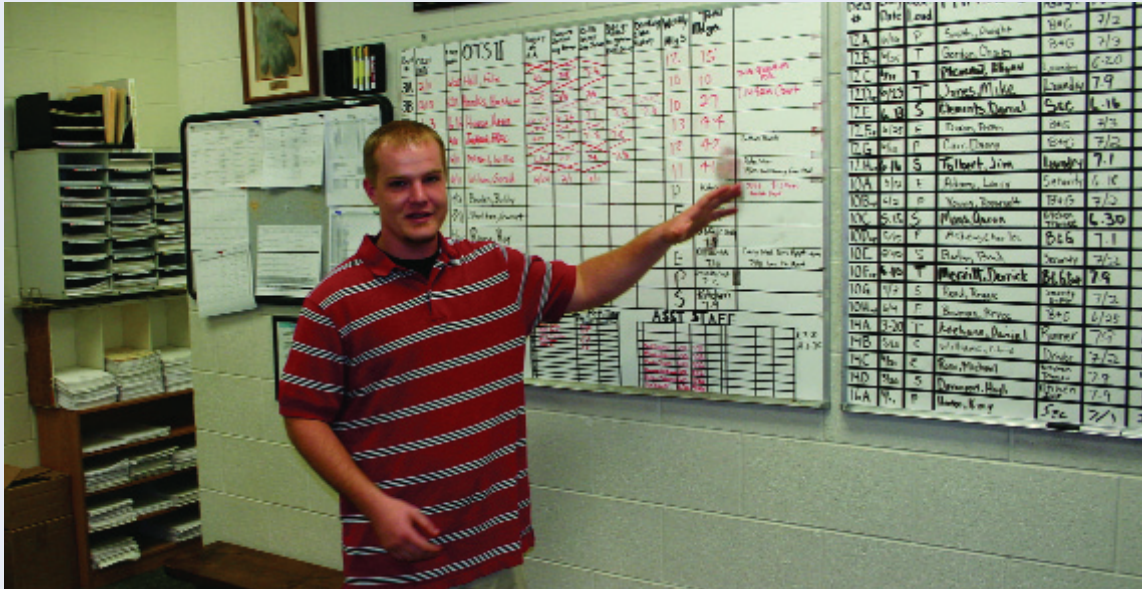
unique story to tell about losing hope and hitting rock bottom," said Budnick. "However, they do have one thing in common: they are celebrating months of hard work in a rehabilitation program specifically designed to give them hope and to change their behavior. The most important characteristic about the program at The Healing Place is that it works."

Eddie is one of the approximately 200 men and women who reside at The Healing Place each night. Opening its doors for men in 2001 and for women in 2006, The Healing Place of Wake County is a 501(c)(3) non-profit rescue, recovery and rehabilitation homeless shelter for persons with drug and alcohol addiction. Its two facilities provide a wide range of services including an overnight shelter, voluntary sobering-up center and an innovative recovery and rehabilitation program.

The Healing Place runs its programs on less than \$30 a day per client, with no cost to the client. The success rate at The Healing Place is extraordinary. Outcome surveys reveal that approximately 70% of program clients continue to be sober one year after graduating. This extremely high percentage is in part attributed to the program's unique peer-to-peer process. At The



Mike is a client and student of the culinary program at The Healing Place.



Left: Josh Jacobs, an employee, explains the scheduling boards, which are the heart of the organization's operations. Several of the employees were previous clients who have graduated from the program.

Above: The Healing Place's byword is displayed for all to see above a staff calendar near the office.

Below: A client rolls a laundry cart along a walkway.

they have proven this, they will petition to Phase I (educational portion), which will allow them to take their classes on The Healing Place property. The program has a motto: The more you give, the more you get. As program participants show their dedication, they

"The most important characteristic about the program at The Healing Place is that it works."

they start applying what they have learned during their tenure. They participate in life skills classes, work on their resumes and brush up on computer and interviewing skills. They are also eligible to complete the GED program and obtain their high school diplomas. Also during Phase II, attorneys who volunteer their time help them to rectify any

dedication, they are given privileges to enhance their well-being.

Phase II, the transitional stage, is where

legal matters or child support issues, if possible. In addition, the program's transitional manager will advocate on their behalf in the workforce and teach them to be financially responsible.

Stepping back into the world can be quite nerve-wrecking if they have been out of touch awhile, so it is imperative to provide the necessary tools and a strong foundation so that an individual is confident to re-enter society and able to be productive and self-sustaining over the long term.

Point-of-time surveys reveal The Healing Place has been instrumental in decreasing homelessness. It also saves officers and EMS staff time because drop-off at the sobering-up center takes less than 10 minutes. Veterans comprise 20% of those served, and since opening in 2001 we have provided more than 400,000 beds of shelter to the homeless community.

The Healing Place's motto is "Helping People Find Their Way Back." Upon program

completion, individuals return back to society as clean, sober, taxpaying and productive human beings with hope in their hearts. And while Eddie

T remembers that his "life was a total disaster" when entering the program, he now "thanks God every day because The Healing Place gave me a new way of life and a new way to live."



Querid@s amigos y amigas:

ESPERANZA por un mañana mejor...lo vemos en las noticias; leemos sobre esto en los periódicos; ¿está su familia, su comunidad, o su amigo afectado por el hecho de que somos la nación con la mayor población

carcelaria en el mundo? ¡Construyamos más prisiones! Este dato le hace decir a toda voz, ¡ALTO A LA MALDAD!

"Nuestras vidas comienzan a terminar cuanto nos quedamos callados ante las cosas que importan." Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

No podemos quedarnos callados ante las injusticias que han plagado nuestras vidas porque los que han sido encarcelados no tienen un plan de reingreso a la sociedad. Pedimos una aclaración. ¿Cómo podemos reclamar nuestras comunidades? Los más afectados son la minorías con ingresos limitados. En este número de Noticias Comunitarias no sólo comentamos sobre este tema que afecta nuestras comunidades, sino que además solicitamos cambios en los reglamentos y legislación que reconozca y

considere el tema del reingreso.

En nuestra sociedad, un tercio de los reclusos que se reintegran a la sociedad tiene problema de uso y abuso de drogas o alcohol, sin tener dónde ir. Nuestra historia de portada es un ejemplo de ESPERANZA por mañana mejor. El Healing Place del Condado Wake es un refugio sin fines de lucro para recuperación y rehabilitación de personas deambulantes adictos a las drogas y/o alcohol. El éxito de este programa ha sido reconocido en toda la nación, y nos deja saber que lograr tus sueños requiere resistencia, utilizando los temores y fracasos como combustible para la transformación. Las personas pueden cambiar cuando se le ofrecen los recursos, apoyo y herramientas necesarias para ayudarlos en el camino.

Todo lo que pedimos es vivir en una sociedad que sea digna y justa. Unámonos por lo que creemos que es correcto, y estemos dispuestos a comprometernos cuando tengamos que hacer lo necesario para asegurar que las personas de diferentes trasfondos y opiniones sean respetadas y apreciadas. Al fortalecernos los unos a los otros con buenos consejos y soluciones creativas, alcanzaremos nuestros objetivos.

De reducir la población penal y enfatizar en estrategias de intervención y rehabilitación. De esto depende el futuro de nuestros hijos.

Debra Tyler-Horton

Debra Tyler-Horton,
Deputy Director

Favor de enviar por correo cualquier información para la revista a la atención de Debra Tyler-Horton, PO Box 28068, Raleigh, NC 27611, o por correo electrónico directo a debra@ncjustice.org. El Centro para la Justicia se reserva el derecho de seleccionar los artículos a publicar, editarlos en tamaño y estilo, y escoger los que serán traducidos al español.

NC Must Address Prisoner Re-entry Needs If It Wants to be “Smart on Crime”

Bill Rowe, Director of Advocacy & General Counsel

A fact that is often overlooked by policymakers when evaluating the criminal justice system, both in North Carolina and across the country, is that almost everyone who is in jail or prison will eventually be released. Some studies put the number at 97%. Those leaving prison face nearly insurmountable barriers to “re-entry,” the process of transition from prison or jail to the community. The current approach in North Carolina is not working and public spending and community safety are being compromised.

North Carolina now has more than 27,000 people leaving prison each year, about 900,000 people in the state with some kind of a criminal record, ever-increasing prison construction at a cost of more than \$80,000 per bed, and a recidivism rate of around 50%. North Carolina’s prison population has grown by more than 100% during the past 23 years and is projected to grow by nearly 15% over the next seven years. Despite tough-on-crime rhetoric, current policy does not mean safer communities when one out of two people leaving prison will end up violating the law again. It is time for North Carolina to commit to being “smart on crime” by ensuring successful prisoner re-entry.

After spending more than \$23,000 a year to imprison someone, North Carolina falls woefully short in ensuring successful integration into the community. Despite good intentions by the Department of Corrections and incredible



commitment and efforts by woefully underfunded and understaffed community and faith-based groups, North Carolina comes nowhere near investing the amount needed in both funding and policies to address the barriers facing ex-offenders.

These men and women deserve a second chance, but instead they return to their communities branded with criminal convictions that often bar them from housing, jobs and education. Many employers

and landlords have blanket policies against hiring or renting to anyone with a criminal record, regardless of what the conviction was for or how long ago it occurred. The “debt” that was supposedly paid by going to jail is never really paid off.

Compounding their never-ending status as a “criminal,” ex-offenders generally find little in the way of accessible and effective services and supports in the community. Faced with serious physical and mental-health problems, no place to stay, lack of education or qualifications to hold a job, and no legitimate source of income, no wonder so many will be rearrested for new crimes within three years of their release.

The 2009 “long” session of the NC General Assembly presents lawmakers with an opportunity to get serious about addressing re-entry barriers for people with criminal records. The development of policies and programs aimed at better outcomes for people released from prison or jail will result in both safer communities and the improved use of tax dollars. A holistic approach that addresses the myriad of needs associated with re-entry is required.

The Justice Center plans to work with many of its allies and partners, including the business community, in the coming months to develop prisoner re-entry legislation that will provide the opportunity for ex-offenders to turn their lives around, support their families, pay taxes, and be self-sufficient. We all win when North Carolina becomes a fairer and safer place to live.

NC debe examinar necesidades de prisioneros que re-entran si quieren ser ‘inteligentes con el crimen’

por Bill Rowe, Director de Advocacy & General Counsel

Un hecho frecuentemente ignorado por los legisladores, y aquellos a cargo del establecimiento de leyes, al evaluar el sistema de justicia criminal, ambos en Carolina del Norte y en el resto del país, es que aquellos que en dicho momento se encuentren en prisión algún día tendrán que salir. Estudios nos dicen que ese es el caso en el 97% de las veces. Al salir de prisión se encuentran con insuperables obstáculos al “re-entrar,” el proceso de transición de prisión o cárcel de regreso a la comunidad. Al momento, el método de Carolina del Norte no demuestra resultados y ambos, los recursos públicos y la seguridad de las comunidades, están siendo comprometidos. Carolina del Norte tiene, al momento, sobre 27,000 individuos saliendo de prisión cada año, 900,000 en el estado con algún tipo de historiado criminal, un promedio de construcción de prisiones constantemente aumentando al precio superior a \$80,000 por cama. La población en prisiones de Carolina del Norte ha crecido a un promedio de más del 100% durante los pasados 23 años, y se cree que crecerá al 15% en los próximos siete años. A pesar de la retorica de “fuerte contra el crimen,” la política presente no significa comunidades más seguras si uno de cada dos individuos saliendo de prisión violaran la ley de nuevo. Es hora que Carolina del Norte se comprometa a ser “lista contra el crimen” asegurando el re-entrar de individuos a la comunidad.

Después de gastar más de \$23,000 al año para encarcelar a alguien, Carolina del Norte falla terriblemente al asegurar integración de nuevo a la comunidad. A pesar de las buenas intenciones del Departamento de Correcciones y el increíble compromiso y esfuerzo de grupos de fe y religiosas, Carolina del Norte no ha invertido la cantidad suficiente en fondos y programas para atacar las barreras que se le presentan a antiguos

criminales. Estos hombres y mujeres merecen una segunda oportunidad, pero envés retornan a sus comunidades con la marca de un record criminal que les impide conseguir vivienda, empleo y hasta educación. Muchos jefes y dueños de propiedades de vivienda se niegan a contratar o alquilarle a alguien con un record criminal, sin tomar en cuenta cuales o cuan viejas sean las convicciones. Le “deuda” que supuestamente fue cumplida al ir a la cárcel, nunca es verdaderamente pagada. Además de sin estatus sin fin de “criminal,” ex-convictos por lo general se les ofrece poco en cuanto a servicios y apoyo accesible y eficiente en la comunidad. Enfrentados con problemas serios de salud física o mental, sin vivienda, falta de educación o cualidades para obtener un empleo y sin una fuente legítima de ingresos, es obvio que muchos serán nuevamente arrestados en los próximos tres años después de su salida de la cárcel.

La Sesión Regular de 2009 le presenta a la Asamblea General de Carolina del Norte una oportunidad para seriamente discutir las barreras de re-entrada para individuos con record criminal. El desarrollo de políticas y programas enfocadas en mejores resultados para gentes que han salido de cárcel o prisión resultarían en comunidades más seguras y un uso más eficiente de fondos públicos. Una medida general que se enfoque en la variedad de necesidades asociadas con re-entrada es requerida. El Centro para la Justicia planea trabajar con muchos de sus aliados y patrocinadores, incluyendo la comunidad empresarial, en los próximos meses para desarrollar legislación de re-entrada de prisioneros que provezca la oportunidad a ex-convictos de cambiar el rumbo de sus vidas, proveer por sus familias, pagar impuestos, y ser autosuficientes. Todos ganaremos cuando Carolina del Norte sea un lugar más justo y seguro para vivir.

North Carolina's Pesticide Law Overdue for an Update

By Carol Brooke, Attorney, Immigrants Legal Assistance Project

The NC Department of Agriculture's case against AgMart Produce, Inc., for pesticide violations has dragged on for three years, and the state is still trying to make fines for the violations stick. This process has uncovered glaring deficiencies in North Carolina's pesticide law.

AgMart, a corporate tomato grower, was cited in 2005 for dozens of violations, including allowing workers to enter recently sprayed fields before it was safe to do so, illegally burning pesticide containers, lack of proper pesticide training for employees, improperly applying certain pesticides, not providing



decontamination facilities, and improperly storing pesticides. After three years of litigation, AgMart continues to fight the fines, which totaled more than \$189,000.

Anyone who applies pesticides for agriculture purposes is exempt from several provisions of the North Carolina Pesticide Law. They may only be fined if they willfully violate the law; simply put, the person must be aware of the law and deliberately violate it anyway. In many instances, AgMart admitted that they did break the law but said it was unintentional. When the state is unable to prove willfulness, no fine may be applied.

Even when the high willfulness standard is reached, the Pesticide Board may only fine agricultural violators \$500 per violation. Every other pesticide violator is subject to a \$2,000 fine.

In addition, the current law shuts out those farmworkers who are willing to speak up about the violations. Pesticide violations are considered to be a matter between the state and the pesticide applicator, so workers are given no place in the process. Though three workers attempted to intervene in the AgMart matter, they were not permitted to do so.

North Carolina's anti-retaliation law provides no protection for workers who report a violation of pesticide laws, and there is no way for the Department of Agriculture to keep a worker's name confidential. The AgMart case came about because of shocking birth defects among the children of the company's employees who say they were sprayed in the fields, but not one worker's testimony has thus far been included in the deliberations.

Earlier this year, a special task force appointed by Governor Easley to study agricultural pesticide exposure issued its recommendations. These recommendations have been incorporated into Senate Bill 847, which has passed the House and Senate and awaits the governor's signature. Though limited in scope, the changes in the bill would have a positive impact by protecting workers from retaliation for making pesticide complaints and would require additional recordkeeping by pesticide applicators.

North Carolina is long overdue for a modernization of its pesticide law, which was passed in 1971. The Farmworker Advocacy Network recommends the following changes, in addition to those included in Senate Bill 847:

- Require employers to record the time workers re-entered the fields after the pesticide application.
- Ensure that the names of workers who complain about pesticide violations are kept confidential, as North Carolina does for other health and safety complaints.
- Require operators of farmworker housing to provide a working telephone and a current list of emergency medical contacts at the housing site.
- Require operators to provide one working shower for every five workers.
- Remove the special provision from the NC Pesticide Law that reduces fines for growers so that all pesticide violations will be subject to the same \$2,000 fine (with discretion to reduce the fine for small growers).

For more information, or to join the campaign to improve pesticide protections for farmworkers, visit <http://ncpesticides.net>.

Ley de pesticidas de Carolina del Norte necesita actualización

Por Carol Brook, Abogada, Proyecto de Ayuda Legal para Inmigrantes

Graves deficiencias en la ley de pesticidas en Carolina del Norte han sido descubiertas por el esfuerzo del Departamento de Agricultura para implementar multas por violaciones en su uso por productor de tomates corporativo AgMart Produce, Inc. AgMart fue demandada en el 2005 por docenas de violaciones, incluyendo el permitir que trabajadores entren campos recientemente después de haber sido llenos de pesticidas, la quema ilegal de contenedores de pesticida, falta de entrenamiento en la aplicación de ellos, por no proveer las facilidades de descontaminación y el guarda impropia de pesticidas. Después de tres años de conflicto legal, AgMart continua peleando las multas, que suman un total de más de \$189,000.

La Ley Pesticida de Carolina del Norte contiene varias excepciones para personas que aplican pesticidas para usos agrícolas. Aplicadores de pesticidas agrícolas sólo pueden ser multados cuando conscientemente violan la ley: simplemente, la persona debe estar al tanto de la ley y violarla como quiere. En muchas ocasiones, AgMart ha admitido que ellos han violado la ley, pero de manera no intencional. Cuando el estado no es capaz de comprobar culpa, ninguna multa puede ser aplicada.

Aun cuando uso conscientemente es comprobado, la Junta de Pesticida solo puede aplicar una multa de \$500 por violación. Cualquier otro violador de la ley es aplicado una multa de \$2,000.

Cuando los trabajadores que fueron expuestos a estas violaciones testifican, ellos son echados fuera del proceso bajo la ley presente. Violaciones de pesticida son consideradas un caso entre el estado y el aplicador del pesticida. Aunque tres trabajadores intentaron intervenir en el caso de AgMart, no se les permitió. La ley de anti-retaliación de Carolina del Norte tampoco provee ninguna protección a los trabajadores que reporten alguna violación de nuestras leyes de pesticida y no hay ninguna manera de que el nombre del trabajador se mantenga en confidencia por el Departamento de Agricultura. Este caso salió a la luz por los defectos natales entre los empleados de AgMart quienes estuvieron en contacto con los químicos en los campos, pero ningún testimonio de los trabajadores ha sido incluido en el caso.

Temprano este año, una junta especial fue creada por el Gobernador Easley para estudiar el efecto de pesticida agrícola en los humanos declaro sus recomendaciones. Estas recomendaciones han sido incorporadas a H847, que ha pasado en la Cámara de Representantes y en el Senado y se espera que se mueva rápido. Aunque limitada en enfoque, los cambios en el proyecto de ley tendrían un impacto positivo al proteger a los trabajadores de retaliación al quejarse del uso de pesticidas y requeriría records adicionales por los aplicadores de pesticidas.

Carolina del Norte gravemente necesita modernizar sus leyes de pesticida, que fueron establecidas en el 1971. La Farmworker Advocacy Network recomienda los siguientes cambios, además de aquellos incluidos en H847:

- Añadir requisito que el empleador guarde el tiempo que los trabajadores re-entraron a los campos después de la aplicación del pesticida;
- Como hacemos con quejas de salud y seguridad, asegurar que los nombres de los trabajadores que se quejen de violaciones de pesticidas sean mantenidos en confidencia.
- Requerir que los operadores de vivienda de trabajadores agrícolas provezcan un teléfono y una lista de contactos médicos de emergencia en el lugar de vivienda;
- Requerir que los operadores provezcan una ducha que sirva por cada cinco trabajadores;
- Remover la provisión especial de la Ley Pesticida de Carolina del Norte que reduce las multas para los productores, para que todas las multas sean las misma multa de \$2000. (con discreción para reducir a pequeños productores).

Para información adicional, visite <http://ncpesticides.net>.

Mental Health Workers Struggle

By Angaza Mayo-Laughinghouse, Justice Center summer intern, 2008

The scheduled closings of John Umstead and Dorothea Dix hospitals in North Carolina are quickly approaching, despite the desires of hospital workers, doctors and community members. Hospital employees and local advocates say they fear that some staff members will lose their jobs and patients will go without adequate care when the two mental hospitals merge into the new Central Regional Hospital in Butner, NC.

The merger comes at a time when workers at Dorothea Dix are fighting against problems with understaffing and mandatory overtime. Because of high patient to staff volumes, some employees of the state's largest mental hospital say they must take care of more patients than they can handle. Other workers report being unable to give necessary attention to more aggressive patients, which can lead to injuries. The understaffing has led to forced overtime for workers who already have full workloads.

Physicians, staff and local residents are pushing to postpone the merging of Dorothea Dix and John Umstead for at least another year to ensure that the Central Regional meets all applicable health and safety standards. About 500 Dix employees, the majority of the hospital's staff, have signed a petition urging for a one-year moratorium on the shutdown of the hospital. They feel that this is the only way to reach the best possible outcome for both patients and staff.

Those supporting the moratorium give a number of reasons as to why the closing should be postponed. One reason is to allow time for the essential training and

orientation of workers. Workers transferring from one established hospital to another are supposed to go through a two-week orientation, equal to ten full days or 80 hours. So far workers have only received an average of four hours of orientation. With the closing of the hospitals only weeks away, there isn't much time for further training. Additional time is also needed to create a realistic staffing plan for the new hospital and develop critical policies regarding emergency evacuation, treatment plans, and medical records.

Many of the hospital workers are members of UE local 150, North Carolina's public service workers union. UE 150 is part of a coalition of groups working on behalf of mental-health employees and patients. The coalition includes various community, non-profit and student groups. There was standing room only at a recent public hearing which included public workers, doctors, residents and legislators. UE 150 members encouraged community supporters to join their weekly rallies at Dix Hospital.

The mental health workers have developed a bill of rights which will be presented to elected officials and administrative officials. Workers say that they are pushing for the rights to be adopted as basic standards. The rights are as follows:

- The right to a safe workplace, including the right to protect oneself from harm and refuse work that poses a danger to one's health.
- The right to adequate staffing levels.
- The right to adequate and updated equipment and

techniques to ensure safe working conditions and quality care for patients.

- The right to family-supporting wages.
- The right to refuse excessive overtime.
- The right to a timely briefing about the behaviors of the patients who workers are assigned to care for.
- The right to be treated with respect and dignity regardless of job classification.
- The right to fair and equal treatment and opportunities regardless of race, gender, age, national origin, immigration, sexual orientation, physical abilities or religion.
- The right to a grievance procedure, which includes the right to grieve all matters that can impact safety, evaluations, raises, transfers and promotions, with representation of one's choice at all levels.
- The right to have input in decisions impacting working conditions in the facilities where one works and at the division and legislative levels.
- The right of workers to evaluate the performance of their supervisor as one of the criteria for their raises and ongoing duties.
- The right to engage in collective bargaining over terms and conditions of work.

Lucha de los trabajadores de la salud mental

Por Angaza Mayo-Laughinghouse, Interina

Los cierres programados de los hospitales John Umstead y Dorothea en Carolina del Norte se aproximan, a pesar de los deseos de los trabajadores, médicos y de los miembros de la comunidad. Los empleados del hospital y activistas locales temen que miembros del personal perderán sus empleos y que los pacientes no recibirán el cuidado necesario cuando ambas facilidades se fusionen para crear el nuevo Central Regional Hospital en Butner, NC.

La misma viene en un momento en el que los trabajadores de Dorothea Dix luchan contra situaciones de falta de personal y tiempo adicional obligatorio. Dado el alto número de pacientes en relación a empleados, miembros del personal del mayor hospital de salud mental del estado, tienen que atender a más pacientes de los que realmente pueden. Otros empleados han informado que no pueden dar la atención necesaria a pacientes más agresivos, lo que puede provocar lesiones. La falta de personal ha forzado a los empleados a trabajar horas adicionales, quienes ya previamente tenían cargas completas.

Médicos, personal y miembros de la comunidad se han organizado para posponer la fusión de los hospitales al menos un año adicional para asegurar que el nuevo Central Regional cumpla con todos los requisitos de salud y seguridad. Unos 500 empleados del Dix, la mayoría personal del hospital, han firmado una petición solicitando una moratoria de un año en el cierre del hospital. Entienden que es la única manera de encontrar una solución favorable tanto a pacientes como personal.

Los que favorecen la moratoria ofrecen varias razones para posponer el cierre. Por un lado, permitiría tiempo adicional para adiestrar y orientar a los trabajadores. Los que trasladados de un hospital a otro necesitan una orientación de dos semanas de duración equivalente a diez días de trabajo u ochenta (80) horas. Al momento solamente han recibido una cuatro (4) horas de orientación. Con el cierre dentro de unas semanas, no hay mucho tiempo para orientación adicional.

Se necesita tiempo adicional para crear un plan real de personal para el Nuevo hospital, un reglamento de medidas para evacuación en caso de emergencia, planes de tratamiento y documentación médica.

Muchos de los trabajadores de los hospitales son miembros de la UE local 150, unió de trabajadores de servicio público de Carolina del Norte. La UE 150 es parte de una coalición de grupos que laboran en favor de los empleados y pacientes de salud mental. La misma incluye grupos de estudiantes, de la comunidad y organizaciones no-lucrativas.

Los trabajadores de salud mental han elaborado una carta de derechos que será presentada a los oficiales electos y a los administrativos. Los trabajadores procuran que los mismos sean establecidos como normas regulares. Leen como sigue:

- El derecho a un lugar seguro de trabajo. Incluyendo el derecho a protegerse de daño y negarse a labores que pongan en peligro la salud personal.
- El derecho a niveles adecuados de provisión de personal.
- El derecho a equipo y técnicas adecuados y vigentes que aseguren condiciones seguras de trabajo y cuidado de calidad para los pacientes.
- El derecho a salarios dignos de sostener a la familia.
- El derecho a negarse a laborar tiempo adicional excesivo.
- El derecho al tiempo necesario para conocer los detalles sobre el comportamiento de los pacientes a su cuidado.
- El derecho a ser tratados con respeto y dignidad sin importar su clasificación laboral.
- El derecho a un trato y oportunidades justo e igual sin importar la raza, género, edad, origen nacional, condición migratoria, orientación sexual, habilidades físicas o religión.
- El derecho a un proceso para agravios que incluya todo lo relacionado con seguridad, evaluaciones, aumentos salariales, traslados y ascensos, con representación de su preferencia en todos los niveles.
- El derecho a opinar en las decisiones que afecten las condiciones de trabajo en las facilidades donde se labora y en los niveles de división y legislativo.
- El derecho de los trabajadores a evaluar la ejecutoria de sus supervisores como uno de los criterios para sus aumentos salariales y responsabilidades.
- El derecho al convenio colectivo en cuanto a los términos y condiciones de trabajo.

Immunizing North Carolina

By Adam Searing, Project Director, Health Access Coalition

Vaccination is a major success story of the last century. When Dr. Edward Jenner created the first viable Western vaccine in 1796, his work became the basis of life and health for, quite literally, billions of people.

Jenner's vaccine protected against smallpox. He had noticed that people who worked in close contact with cattle and who had a mild form of the disease — cowpox — did not get smallpox. That observation allowed him to create a vaccine and eventually led to the eradication of smallpox worldwide by 1980.

However, Jenner's brilliance couldn't have succeeded without concerted government effort to distribute his vaccine to the entire population. That's right — it was a government-run "socialized" health program to immunize as many people as possible.

Happily, North Carolina is a leader in immunization. By the time they enter school, more than 97 % of North Carolina students are fully immunized against numerous childhood diseases. This is among the best immunization rates in the country and is a testament to how well a guaranteed, affordable and universal health initiative can work.

A recent study in the journal of the American Medical Association detailed the effect on disease after a vaccine is put into use in the United States.



For the most serious diseases, hospitalization and death have declined by more than 90%. Even better, smallpox, diphtheria and polio have seen a 100% decline.

North Carolina's Vaccines for Children program, begun with funding from the federal government in 1994, has guaranteed every child access to needed vaccines without cost. While insurance generally covers vaccination — which only makes sense — some cut-rate plans don't cover the full cost. Vaccines for Children steps in to make up the difference.

If a child is uninsured, Vaccines for Children will pay the full cost. Vaccines for Children also buys vaccines in bulk at significant cost savings to the state and private health care providers.

By removing cost as a barrier to delivery of this critical health service, North Carolina has saved money, simplified administration and become a national leader in immunization of children. It's a success story that's not often talked about, and one that should prompt us to finish the job of guaranteeing affordable health coverage to all children.

Of course, families should be responsible. Kids need regular checkups, parents must see exercise and eating right as priorities, and families should pay insurance

premiums they can afford. However, no parent should be prevented from taking his child to the doctor because he can't pay the cost of a visit.

We can't accomplish this goal without the state government leading the way. The Vaccines for Children program provides a great example of the road to success.

For more information contact Immunize North Carolina, Immunization Branch at 919-707-5550 or email them at ImmInfo@ncmail.net.

Inmunizando a Carolina del Norte

Por Adam Searing, Director de proyectos, Health Access Coalition

Las vacunas han sido un gran logro del siglo pasado. Cuando el Dr. Edward Jenner creó la primera vacuna occidental en el 1876, su trabajo se convirtió en la base de vida y salud, para, literalmente, billones de personas.

La vacuna de Jenner protegía contra la viruela. El se dio cuenta que la gente que trabajo con ganado y tenían una versión menos grave de la enfermedad no les surgía la viruela. Esta observación se permitió crear una vacuna y eventualmente llevo a la erradicación de la viruela a nivel mundial para el 1980.

Pero, el brillante Jenner no pudo haber logrado su meta sin el esfuerzo y ayuda del gobierno. Al distribuir el resultado de sus estudios y descubrimientos a toda la población. Correcto—un programa de salud dirigido por el gobierno para inmunizar toda la gente posible. Felizmente, Carolina del Norte es un líder en inmunizaciones.

Para la fecha que entran a la escuela, más del 97 por ciento de los estudiantes de Carolina del Norte son completamente inmunizados contra enfermedades de la niñez. Este es uno de los mejores promedios de inmunizaciones en el país y es testigo de cuán bien un enfoque en una iniciativa en salud universal, garantizada y barata, puede funcionar.

Un reciente estudio en la revista de la American Medical Association (Asociación Médica Americana) describió en detalle en efecto en la enfermedad después de que una vacuna se usa en los Estados Unidos. En casos de las enfermedades más serias, el resultado han sido reducciones en hospitalizaciones y muertes por un 90 por ciento. Aun mejor, la viruela, la difteria y el polio se han reducido por un 100 por ciento.

El programa de Carolina del Norte, Vaccines for Children (Vacunas para Niños), iniciado con fondos del gobierno federal en el 1994, ha

garantizado el acceso de todo niño a vacunas necesarias sin ningún costo. Aunque los seguros normalmente cubren vacunas—algo que tiene sentido—algunos programas de bajo costo no cubren todo los gastos. Vaccines for Children sirve para completar la diferencia.

¿Y si un niño no tiene seguro médico? Vaccines for Children pagará todo los gastos. Vaccines for Children también compra vacunas en masa a costos reducidos que le ahorran a los proveedores de seguro médico estatales y privados.

Al remover el costo como una barrera al llevar este servicio de salud crítico, Carolina del Norte ha ahorrado dinero, simplificado la administración y se ha convertido en un líder nacional en la inmunización de niños y en el mejoramiento de su salud. Este es un logro del cual no se habla mucho y uno que nos debe inspirar a completar el trabajo de garantizar protección médica para todos los niños.

Por supuesto las familias deben ser responsables. Los niños deben ser llevados a chequeos regulares; el ejercicio y una buena nutrición deben ser prioridades para los padres. La familias también deben pagar programas de seguro medico que puedan pagar. Pero ningún padre debe ser impedido de llevar su niño a ver un medico simplemente porque no pueden pagar los costos.

No podemos completar esta meta sin el apoyo del gobierno de nuestro estado dirigiendo el camino. El programa de Vaccines for Children nos provee un gran ejemplo del camino hacia este logro.

Para mas información contacte a: Immunize North Carolina, Immunization Branch al 919-707-5550 o escriba a ImmInfo@ncmail.net.

School Employees Exception to First Amendment

By Beth Jacobs, Outreach Coordinator, Education & Law Project

In February 2008, dozens of Robeson County parents were disturbed to learn about an informal "policy of courtesy" that the District Court extends to public school employees. According to community members, students or parents of students are not permitted to file assault complaints against school

protests in response to the policy. The group feels that the policy excluding school employees from the legal complaint process violates Robeson County students' First Amendment right to access the courts.

Education advocates were alarmed to find that although the courts have consistently enforced this rule, it has never been included as formal local policy. This led the concerned community members to demand a formal written policy statement from District Court Chief Judge James Carmical. In April, an attorney supporting the local group's efforts issued a memorandum of law detailing the concerns with the policy and requesting a response.

According to Mrs. Stackhaus, the judge has yet to provide a formal policy statement, and the rule is still being enforced in Robeson County. Nonetheless, they continue to educate and engage others about protecting the rights of public school students in Robeson County. Bringing About Change has joined NCCARE (North Carolina Community Advocates for Revitalizing Education) and hopes to share the struggles and successes of their activism with other education advocates across the state.



employees. This local exception was disclosed after a student, claiming he was assaulted by his high school principal, was repeatedly told by various magistrates that he could not file a complaint.

Right away, concerned community members began working together to change the policy and contacting statewide education advocates for support. The local group Bringing About Change, led by Rena Stackhaus, organized community meetings and several

Excepción de Empleados de escuelas públicas a la Primera Enmienda

Por Beth Jacobs, de Education & Law Outreach

En febrero de 2008, docenas de padres del Condado de Robeson se sorprendieron al conocer de una "ley de cortesía" informal que la Corte de Distrito extendió a empleados de escuelas públicas. Según miembros de la comunidad, a estudiantes o padres de estudiantes no se les será permitido demandar a empleados escolares. Esta excepción local fue revelada después de que un estudiante, declarando que había sido atacado/asaltado por su principal de escuela superior, fue repetido por varios magistrados que no podía declarar una queja.

Inmediatamente, miembros preocupados de la comunidad empezaron a colaborar para cambiar tal política y contactar apoyo a nivel estatal. El grupo local Bringing About Change ("Trayendo el Cambio"), dirigido por Rena Stackhaus, organizó reuniones de la comunidad y varias protestas en respuesta a la política de la corte. El grupo siente que la política defendiendo a empleados de escuelas públicas del proceso de demanda legal viola el derecho de estudiantes del Condado de Robeson del acceso a las cortes proveído por

la Primera Enmienda.

Defensores de la educación fueron alarmados al conocer que aunque las cortes han constantemente forzado esta ley, esta nunca ha sido formalmente incluida en alguna política formal local. Esto llevó a miembros preocupados de la comunidad a reclamar una declaración formal en escrito del Juez de la Corte de Distrito James Carmical. En abril, el abogado apoyando los esfuerzos del grupo local declaró un memorándum de ley que explicaba a detalle las preocupaciones con la política a demandado una respuesta.

Según la Señora Stackhaus, el juez todavía tiene que declarar la política formal y que la ley todavía está siendo forzado en el Condado de Robeson. Comoquiera, ellos mantienen educando e incluyendo a otros en el tema de defender los derechos de estudiantes de escuela pública en el Condado de Robeson. Bringing About Change se ha unido a NCCARE y espera compartir los retos y logros de su activismo con otros defensores de la educación en el Estado.

UPCOMING EVENTS

→ North Carolina Environmental Justice Network Community Quarterly Meeting

September 20, 2008
9:30am - 3:00pm
Location to be announced

→ North Carolina Environmental Justice Network Community Summit

October 17-18, 2008
Historic Franklinton Center
Edgecombe County
Whitakers, NC

NCEJN - PO Box 61
Tillery, NC 27887
(252) 826-3017

tillery@aol.com or ncejn1@aol.com
www.ncejn.org



Rev. Barber Wins Election to NAACP National Board

Rev. Dr. William J. Barber II, president of the NC NAACP, has been elected to the 64-member national NAACP Board of Trustees. In a three-person contest for the Region 5 board seat, Rev. Barber received 177 of the 329 votes. He was elected over long-time

incumbent Madie Robinson of South Carolina.

Prior to the election, Rev. Barber offered an inspiring, passionate, and visionary speech to the delegates of Region 5, which includes Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Tennessee, South Carolina, North Carolina, and Mississippi. He was nominated for the position by fellow North Carolinian Carolyn Coleman, who already sits on the national board.

Prisoner Re-entry in North Carolina

By Dennis Gaddy, Executive Director, Community Success Initiative

With all of the talk we hear about building more prisons, it is important to realize that 97% of prisoners will eventually come home and reenter society. “Re-entry” describes the process of connecting people released from prison to resources in the community.

Approximately 650,000 people will return to be released from state and federal prisons EACH YEAR for the next ten years. That’s 6.5 million people. This is the result of the “get tough on crime” laws enacted in the late 1980s that gave people longer prison sentences. We are now experiencing the beginning of what I have called a “tsunami,” the mighty wave of people who will hit the beaches of our communities over the next ten years.



Dennis Gaddy

In North Carolina, that will translate into about 25,000 people being released per year for the next decade, or approximately 250,000 people. The re-entry population consists mainly of minority males, although the number of women is increasing. Currently, approximately 50% of people being released go back to prison within three years of release because they either commit a new crime or violate some probation or parole requirement. (The Pew Prison Report, 2008)

In North Carolina, as around the country, most people who need assistance with re-entry live in poverty. Former prisoners confront a range of personal issues that jeopardize their chances of succeeding in the community, and in some instances, make it more likely that they will recidivate and be re-incarcerated. For example:

- 80% have a history of substance abuse
- 16% are diagnosed with a mental illness
- Many already are or will become homeless
- 25% of the US population living with HIV or AIDS was released from prison within the last year
- 70% are high-school dropouts and roughly half are functionally illiterate
- Most are unemployed (nearly 75% were employed prior to incarceration, with half employed full-time)
- Earning potential for ex-inmates drops 10% to 20% compared to what they were earning prior to incarceration
- 55% of males and 65% of females in prison have minor children

Although addressing these issues may not necessarily be the primary responsibility of corrections or law enforcement, it is clear that not providing adequate access to services or treatment jeopardizes the chances of successful re-entry and negatively impacts public safety. Therefore, there is a need to create a systemic infrastructure that can successfully receive formerly incarcerated

persons and insure access to quality social services that are specific to each individual.

The ideal re-entry plan is one that provides personalized, coordinated services for released prisoners to benefit their personal health and financial stability and to improve public safety. The plan would reflect a market-driven strategy with the goal of creating personal and community wealth for formerly incarcerated persons and their neighborhoods. By integrating social services, prospecting and funding employment opportunities and supporting social service agencies, creating a community connector for formerly incarcerated persons is possible.

Community Success Initiative

Community Success Initiative (CSI), www.communitysuccess.org, a grassroots non-profit organization that I have had the good fortune of leading for the last three years, is on the front lines of the re-entry efforts in North Carolina. My passion for this work came out of my own experience of incarceration. Even after graduating from UNC-Chapel Hill and Campbell University School of Law and having a successful sales and marketing career, I made some unwise financial choices in the late '90s and served a five-year, eight-month prison sentence. I was released in June 2005, but even today I report to a probation officer every month until my restitution is complete.

During the summer of 2001, while on a prison community volunteer pass, I met John Parker, executive director of Good Work, a Durham nonprofit organization (www.goodwork.org). After several meetings with me at the prison, John invited me to join Good Work as a leadership coach to entrepreneurs as part of my work-release assignment. CSI was incubated under the guidance of John Parker and the Good Work experience.

Through a network of community partners, we work with former prisoners and their families through our “Resource Center without Walls.” We provide small group trainings and individual mentoring in general life skills, leadership, entrepreneurship, financial literacy, and areas related to transitioning back into family and community life. We focus on the “big four” barriers to successful re-entry: jobs, housing, education and human services.

We also convene gatherings that provide the opportunity for people with experience with the criminal justice and prison systems to network with each other, exchange knowledge and resources, and solve problems. These gatherings usually take the shape of family sessions to strengthen relationships or support and empowerment groups for former prisoners. We also collaboratively convene “Re-entry Resource Roundtables” for people to learn more about the criminal justice and prison systems and organize advocacy efforts around relevant issues.

To date, we have helped to create seven area focus groups and/or roundtable grassroots efforts in the state. We have more than 300 participants in



our network, including statewide agencies, individuals, community and faith-based groups as well as ex-offenders—all who either offer or access the re-entry support.

We are pleased to have the NC Justice Center as one of our statewide partners and to have access to the mentoring we receive from Justice Center Advocacy Director Bill Rowe, especially as it applies to understanding legislative advocacy. I serve as the state liaison for prisoner re-entry for the North Carolina NAACP and am excited about the opportunity to extend our re-entry work as part of the Historic Thousands on Jones Street (HK on J) 14-point agenda (www.lkonj.com).

There is much work to be done in the area of re-entry in North Carolina. We need your support to help those who have been incarcerated to become positive and productive citizens once again. If you would like to support our work financially or as a volunteer, or if you would be interested in bringing a re-entry roundtable to your area, please contact me, Dennis W. Gaddy, at 919-614-2369 or dgaddy1@communitysuccess.org, or go to our website at www.communitysuccess.org.

Articles about Re-entry

- From Prison to Home—Urban Institute—Travis/Solomon
http://www.urban.org/UploadedPDF/from_prison_to_home.pdf
- From Options to Action: A Roadmap for City Leaders to Connect Formerly Incarcerated Individuals to Work
http://www.ppv.org/ppv/publications/assets/235_publication.pdf
- The Pew Prison Study
http://www.pewcenteronthestates.org/uploadedFiles/8015PCTS_Prison08_FINAL_2-1-1_FORWEB.pdf
- Group Provides Hope after Incarceration
<http://www.nbc17.com/midatlantic/ncn/search.apx.-content-articles-NCN-2008-04-01-0003.html>

¹ National Governors Association Center for Best Practices/Melissa Bradley

For more information, see www.communitysuccess.org

When Will We Say ‘ENOUGH’ to Racial Injustice and Prosecutorial Misconduct?

By Rev. Dr. William J. Barber II, President, NC NAACP

When will our government — our governor, Council of State, legislature, criminal justice system, and the courts — face the facts that every thinking person knows are true? Our criminal justice system discriminates against Black men.

Since December 2007, three North Carolina Black men, who were convicted because of gross mistakes and prejudice in our criminal “justice” system, barely escaped execution by our state government. How long will we let these injustices in our name continue? When will we say enough?

Must we expose wrongful convictions, wrongful appellate decisions, wasted decades on death row for Black men every month? Every week? When will we say enough?

The NAACP lawyer who broke the color line on the U.S. Supreme Court only two score years ago, Justice Thurgood Marshall, wrote: “No matter how careful courts are, the possibility of perjured testimony, mistaken honest testimony, and human error remain all too real. We have no way of judging how many innocent persons have been executed, but we can be certain that there were some.”

Justice Marshall was mincing his words. I will not. There is a built-in stereotype in the criminal justice system that works against Black men. Hysterical public opinion, whipped up by the media, dictates that there are some cases in which the state is pressured to find a perpetrator — any perpetrator. In Wilson, in 2004, the state relied upon the perjured testimony of a troubled young man and almost put James Johnson on trial for his life. It held James in jail for 39 months, trying to wear him and his lawyers down to plead guilty to crimes James did not commit. Fortunately James and his family found the strength to hold on until, finally, the state admitted it had been “mistaken.”

Since December, three of the four human beings freed from death rows across the country shortly before they were due to be executed were Black men from North Carolina. Since the death penalty was reinstated nationally in 1976, there have been 129 human beings who, on the eves of their executions in their respective states, have been found not guilty and freed. I don’t believe it is a mere coincidence that three out of the last four — Numbers 126, 128 and 129 in the Death Penalty Information Center’s (DPIC) long list — are victims of the North Carolina criminal justice system. These three children of God are now free, after each spending more than a dozen of their most productive years on death row. Here are summaries of their encounters with North Carolina’s criminal justice system from the DPIC:

126. Jonathon Hoffman The State of North Carolina, acting in our name, convicted Mr. Hoffman in 1995. After 12 years on death row, the state dismissed all charges against Mr. Hoffman on Dec. 11, 2007. He won a new trial in 2004 because information favorable to him had not been disclosed to his lawyers, the judge, or the jury during his trial. The prosecutor made a deal with the main witness against Hoffman that federal charges against him would be dropped if he testified against Hoffman. The witness later recanted his false testimony.

128. Glen Edward Chapman The State of North Carolina, acting in our name, convicted Mr. Chapman in 1994. After 14 years on death row, the State dismissed all charges against Mr. Chapman on

April 2, 2008. Chapman was sentenced to death for the 1992 murders of Betty Jean Ramseur and Tenene Yvette Conley. In 2007, Superior Court Judge Robert C. Ervin granted Chapman a new trial, citing withheld evidence; “lost, misplaced or destroyed” documents; the use of weak, circumstantial evidence; false testimony by the lead investigator; and ineffective assistance of defense counsel. There was new information from a forensic pathologist that raised doubts as to whether Conley’s death was a homicide or caused by an overdose of drugs. Judge Ervin found fault with Chapman’s defense attorneys at the original trial in 1994, one of whom has been disciplined by the North Carolina State Bar. The other lawyer drank 12 shots of alcohol a day during another death penalty trial. His client during that trial, Ronald Frye, was executed in 2001.

129. Levon “Bo” Jones The State of North Carolina, acting in our name, convicted Mr. Jones in 1993. After 15 years on death row, the state dismissed all charges against Mr. Jones on May 2, 2008. Two years ago, the U.S. District Court overturned Jones conviction for robbing and shooting a bootlegger, but the Duplin County prosecutor held him in jail for two more years before releasing him. The District Court found Jones’s lawyers were “constitutionally deficient” in defending him at trial, noting they failed to research the history and credibility of the prosecution’s star witness. The court found: “Given the weakness of the prosecution’s case and its heavy reliance on the testimony of Lovely Lorden, there is a reasonable probability that, but for counsel’s unprofessional errors, the result of the proceeding would have been different.” In April 2008, Jones’s new lawyers filed an affidavit in which Lorden said a detective coached her on what to say, she collected \$4,000 from the governor’s office for offering the clues that led to the arrest of Jones, and that “much of what I testified to was simply not true.” District Attorney Dewey Hudson dropped all charges 10 days before the trial was due to begin in May 2008.

The Criminal Justice Sub-System for Black Men

There are two criminal justice systems in the United States — one for the rich and one for the poor. The one for the poor has a sub-system for the poor Black man because his life is not worth as much as a poor White man’s life to many people in the criminal justice system.

Death Penalty Is Part of a Biased System

I am against the death penalty because I am a Christian. I can find no New Testament license for embracing death. Death is the antithesis to our faith. Jesus—the light and hope and founder of our faith—was killed by capital punishment. How can we embrace the systemic instrument used against Jesus and many of his followers? How can we embrace this system of vengeance and retaliation, when Jesus never sought death as retaliation for what was done to Him?

I did not learn this from ivory towers and philosophical debates. I learned it in the trenches of pastoral work. The first death I presided over was the death of a young college coed in Raleigh. Her parents

were members of a church I presided over in Virginia. They showed me the way. They made the Word we preach about love and forgiveness come alive in flesh. Despite the hurt and hellish nature of what had been done to them, they made it clear they did not want their daughter’s murderer to suffer the penalty of death.

I met this issue again while teaching ethics at Wesleyan College. As my class debated the pros and cons of the death penalty, a young White student testified of her family’s suffering and her family’s witness for life.

When reporters ask me, “Rev. Barber, where is your concern for the victim of a violent murder?” I reply, “My faith does not allow me to care about the victim and not care about the perpetrator. Nor does it allow me to care about the perpetrator and not care about the victim.”

This is the strangeness of Christian love; it does not allow schizophrenic compassion. It is this strange Christian love that African-American people have had for parts of this country for years, in spite of the horrendous violence heaped upon us.

Paul wrote from his prison cells, back to the church, back to the people of faith, while serving a death sentence, declaring that he was praying for them to have all of the strength, endurance, and patience they needed for the long journey of faith.

We Still Need Strength for the Long Journey

We need strength to keep pouring out the undeniable facts that African Americans disproportionately are sentenced with the death penalty, which means it has a racist application, and that poor people in general disproportionately receive the death penalty, which means its application is another form of classism. We need strength to continue to challenge the fear politicians have of the ultra-right wing, which threatens to brand them soft on crime if they take the righteous and moral position that the death penalty should be ended.

Join With Us in this Journey

The NAACP was founded almost 100 years ago to stop the lynching of Black men in the South. The NAACP has always recognized the deeply embedded racial prejudice in the criminal justice system and has worked diligently to bring that fact into the hearts of people of good will throughout the society. In the past three years, the North Carolina State Conference of the NAACP has led a mighty coalition of more than 85 organizations and churches in two Historic Thousands on Jones Street (HK on J) events to put before legislators our People’s Agenda. High on that agenda is the repeal of the death penalty in North Carolina.

If you are not a member of your local NAACP Branch, we welcome you to join. The NAACP, a multi-racial organization, has led the fight to rid our society of racial discrimination and hatred for 99 years. Join now. You can call our state office on its toll free number for more information about your local branch, the People of Color Lobbying Day, and how to persuade your legislator to vote for the Racial Justice Act.

2008

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SPECIAL HONOREE

Thomas W. Ross

*President, Davidson
College*

*Former Director, Z.
Smith Reynolds
Foundation*

TOM ROSS has demonstrated his commitment to justice and expanding opportunity in North Carolina throughout his career - first as a judge and then as executive director of the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation.

As executive director of the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation, Mr. Ross sought to further the foundation's commitment to community building and increase its support of social justice and public policy initiatives. He wanted to help the state's progressive non-profit organizations coalesce into a strong and influential movement, and he did that by promoting, guiding and supporting the work of those organizations, and by urging other North Carolina and national funders to get behind this effort. Thanks to Tom's leadership, progressive organizations across the state have increased their cooperative efforts, thereby making each organization more effective.

Before joining ZSR, Mr. Ross had a prestigious career as a NC Superior Court judge. He earned numerous awards, including the William H. Rehnquist Award for Judicial Excellence, one of the country's top judicial honors. He also served as director of the Administrative Office of the Courts.

Mr. Ross received his bachelor's degree from Davidson College and his law degree from UNC-Chapel Hill. In August 2007, he became the seventeenth president of Davidson College.

El Centro para la Justicia de Carolina del Norte cordialmente le invita a su

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JUVENCIO ROCHA PERALTA, *Presidente AMEXCAN, Greenville Beloved Community Center, Greensboro*

LITIGACIÓN:

JANE PERKINS, *National Health Law Program, Chapel Hill*

ABOGACÍA LEGISLATIVA:

REPRESENTANTE DE LA ASAMBLEA ESTATAL, JENNIFER WEISS, *Raleigh*

INVESTIGACIÓN SOBRE POLÍTICA Y ABOGACÍA:

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LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY

Representative Jennifer Weiss

STATE REPRESENTATIVE JENNIFER WEISS of Cary has used her leadership position in the General Assembly to improve the lives of low-income people by ensuring they are treated fairly by the state and by businesses.

As chairperson of the House Finance Committee, Weiss played a critical role in the creation of the state Earned Income Tax Credit, which will boost the earnings of working families. She is also committed to ensuring that the state is responsible in the awarding of business subsidies and that businesses are held accountable for making the investments and creating the jobs they have promised.

Rep. Weiss is also a strong advocate for North Carolina consumers. She was one of the most determined supporters of the effort to outlaw payday lending in North Carolina, and this year, she helped to pass legislation that stops numerous predatory lending practices and provides assistance for homeowners facing foreclosure. She is also dedicated to improving public education, expanding access to health care, and protecting the elderly and other vulnerable populations.

Rep. Weiss has a bachelor's degree in political science from UNC-Chapel Hill and a law degree from the University of Virginia. She lives in Cary.



POLICY RESEARCH & ADVOCACY

- Ames Alexander
- Kerry Hall
- Franco Ordóñez
- Peter St Onge
- Ted Mellnik

– *The Charlotte Observer*

Charlotte Observer staff members **AMES ALEXANDER, KERRY HALL, FRANCO ORDÓÑEZ, PETER ST. ONGE, AND TED MELLNIK** authored an in-depth series, entitled "The Cruellest Cuts," that revealed serious workplace injuries at poultry plants and the lax oversight that made these abuses possible.

The reporters launched an investigation after hearing from mistreated workers at North Carolina-based poultry processor House of Raeford. They obtained thousands of pages of documents, examined government databases, and poured over the company's injury logs. The series highlighted the problem of infrequent and lax federal regulation and revealed that House of Raeford failed to document serious injuries as required by law.

The reporters interviewed more than 200 current and former poultry workers - many of them undocumented immigrants. They collected the stories of workers who lost fingers at the plant and others who suffered from disfiguring repetitive-work injuries. Staff writers also talked to former plant supervisors who said they were pressured to keep injured employees away from doctors.

The series prompted the governor and General Assembly to provide funding for additional workplace inspectors. US Senator Ted Kennedy called the *Charlotte Observer's* series "an enormous national service."



GRASSROOTS EMPOWERMENT

Juvencio Rocha Peralta

President
AMEXCAN,
Greenville

JUVENCIO ROCHA PERALTA, JR. of AMEXCAN in Greenville is a powerful advocate for Latinos, ensuring that they know their rights and that they have a voice regarding the policies that impact their lives.

Mr. Rocha Peralta has spent more than two decades as a grassroots organizer and advocate for immigrants' rights. He is the founder and president of the Association of Mexicans in North Carolina (AMEXCAN), a nationally recognized grassroots organization, which has five chapters and participates in numerous social justice coalitions.

Under his leadership, AMEXCAN has used innovative grassroots strategies to invigorate its community partnerships and membership. For example, in June, AMEXCAN coordinated the first-ever Mexican and Latino Leadership Summit to draw attention to the importance of Latino immigrants and begin a dialogue on Latino/African-American relations in rural eastern North Carolina. He has been instrumental in connecting the immigrant and Latino community to community education, services, and resources, as well as working on voter education and mobilization campaigns.

Mr. Rocha Peralta is a native of Veracruz, Mexico and has lived in North Carolina since 1980. He has a bachelor's degree from East Carolina University and is the occupational extension coordinator at Lenoir Community College in Kinston.



LITIGATION

Jane Perkins

National Health
Law Program,
Chapel Hill

JANE PERKINS has secured better quality and more accessible health care for millions of the most vulnerable people in the United States.

As legal director for the National Health Law Program, Ms. Perkins has strengthened the guarantee of quality, affordable health care for those most in need in our society, especially low-income children with serious disabilities or illnesses. She focuses her work on Medicaid programs for children and discrimination in the delivery of health care, particularly on ensuring language access in health care settings and has written numerous articles on Medicaid, civil rights and federal court access. She has also fought to prevent states (including North Carolina) from unjustly denying health coverage or benefits to lower-income children, people with disabilities and the elderly.

Ms. Perkins was lead attorney on the case that secured dental care for children from lower-income families who have Medicaid coverage. Earlier this year, she and the National Health Law Program joined three other legal advocacy groups to challenge the Bush administration's attempts to stop states from providing affordable health insurance to children in moderate-income families. In addition, she is currently involved in a case on behalf of patients with mental health issues and developmental disabilities who contend the NC Department of Health and Human Services has unfairly taken away services.

Ms. Perkins has a bachelor's degree from Davidson College, a master's degree in public health from the University of California-Berkeley and a law degree from UNC-Chapel Hill.



GRASSROOTS EMPOWERMENT

Beloved Community Center, Greensboro

The **BELOVED COMMUNITY CENTER** in Greensboro is committed to realizing the dignity and worth of all people and securing policy changes that improve the lives of minorities and low-income people.

Racial healing and unity is a central part of the Center's work. It is the anchor organization of the Greensboro Truth and Community Reconciliation Project, which looked into the Greensboro Massacre of 1979 in order to seek healing for the community. It also has taken the lead in bringing together African-American and Latino residents to find ways they can work together for the betterment of the community.

The Beloved Community Center is involved in an effort to bring together gang members for talks to deter violence. It is also active in local policy, having led the effort to secure a living wage in Greensboro. The Center is also home to other projects, such as the Homeless Hospitality House, which provides food, showers and a telephone for those seeking work, and various internship programs that prepare students at local colleges to become leaders in the progressive movement.

The Beloved Community Center was founded in 1991 and has grown in size and influence under the leadership of Rev. Nelson and Joyce Johnson.

Putting Public Transportation at the Center of Transportation Solutions

By Stephen Jackson, Policy Analyst, NC Budget and Tax Center

As gas prices go beyond \$4 a gallon and start their climb to \$5, more and more North Carolinians are facing a difficult question: How do I find the money to get where I need to go this week?

The transportation basics we take for granted – cheap gas and cheap roads – are fast becoming things of the past, if they are not already. This fundamental change will transform how we live in the next few decades.

Finding affordable housing has long been a matter of how far commuters were willing to drive. Cheap gas meant long commutes were possible. As a result, developments designed for new lower-income homeowners sprang up on the edge of urban areas. Urban communities have sprawled across North Carolina as the state's population has boomed and continues to grow.

But now rising gas prices are making those long commutes less affordable. Families are caught between rising transportation costs and housing affordability. For an increasing number, affordable homes are located too far from work and services. This trend will only worsen in the future.

The price of road construction and maintenance is rising rapidly and has done so for the past decade. From the government's point of view, roads are no longer the cheap transportation option. They're not cheap from the driver's point of view either. Having a new road doesn't address the problem that more and more people can't afford to drive on them. Imagine \$5 per gallon gas. When driving solo to work becomes a luxury, people will realize that more roads are not the key to solving the transportation challenge.

Public transportation provides access to mobility for people from fixed-, low- and middle-income households. Public transportation means low- and middle-income people can continue to be active members of their communities even when gas prices make driving too expensive. Public transportation can help to sustain housing affordability on the edge of cities and towns, and it



can also help steer new development closer to transit routes.

But North Carolina spends very little on public transportation. At the state level, less than 1% of the Department of Transportation's budget goes to public transportation. This is despite the fact that one in fourteen households does not have access to a vehicle. This is despite the fact that our population over the age of 65 will swell to more than two million by 2030. This is despite the fact of \$4 gas.

The problem is not just an urban one. Many communities in rural areas struggle with minimal public transportation services. For older adults, the lack of rural services is an acute problem, robbing them of their independence and making them reliant on the goodwill of others to complete necessary errands such as medical appointments and grocery shopping.

What is required is a firm commitment from the state to spend more on public transportation, along with a change in thinking among many state and local leaders on the role public transportation should play in our communities. For too many, buses and trains are regarded as a sideshow to the main event: cars and roads. As a result, legislation to get more money for public transportation continues to be treated like an afterthought.

One bill that was floating around the legislature this year would have enabled local governments in the most urban counties to ask residents whether they want to add a half-cent or quarter-cent sales tax to pay for new public transportation projects.

The bill has some flaws, but a coalition of public transportation advocates is working to improve the bill and reintroduce it during 2009 legislative session. The general goal is excellent – more money for public transportation – but the means it chooses to get that money, the sales tax, is flawed. Moreover, the bill as currently written would do nothing for people outside the major metropolitan areas.

The bill can be improved by adding better, fairer ways to raise local money for public transportation. Relying solely on sales tax increases would unfairly impact low- and middle-income taxpayers and would tie public transportation revenues to an unreliable funding source.

A better option would be to allow local governments to begin charging vehicle utility fees. These fees are paid by property owners and are based on the average number of vehicle trips different kinds of property generate. For instance, the owners of a single-family home would pay much less than the owners of a drive-in bank because fewer vehicle trips are generated by the family home than the drive-in bank. Another improvement to the legislation would be to make the new local tax options available to all 100 counties, provided that most of the new revenues be used to pay for public transportation investments.

What is needed and what the Justice Center will continue to fight for is a mix of taxation options that fairly distributes the burden of paying for public transportation while generating enough money year after year and for every community in the state. Anything less ignores the profound changes in recent times that have eroded what we have taken for granted.

NAACP receives highest Award

The NC State Conference of the NAACP received the Thalheimer Award in two categories at the 99th Annual NAACP National Convention held in Cincinnati in July. The Thalheimer award is the highest honor given to NAACP branches and state conferences for contributing to the furtherance of the NAACP's mission.

The awards have been given annually since 1944, pursuant to a grant by Dr. Ross Julian Thalheimer. A national committee examines the submissions for various criteria, including substantive work in NAACP's core areas:

membership, civic engagement, political action, legal redress, education, economic development, voter empowerment, etc.

The NC NAACP received first-place awards in the categories of Programs and Publications. Accepting the awards were State Conference President Rev. Dr. William J. Barber, II and Executive Director Amina J. Turner.

In addition, the Statesville, NC branch received second place award in the Programs category for branches without a paid executive director. Mr. William "Woody" Woodard,

accompanied by his wife Dorothy, accepted the award.

The NAACP is the nation's oldest and largest civil rights organization. Its mission is to ensure the political, educational, social and economic equality of rights of all persons and to eliminate racial hatred and racial discrimination.

For more information, call the state office at 866-NC-NAACP or e-mail turner@naacpnc.org.

Superintendents

By Rochelle Williams, Policy Analyst, Education and Law Project

The Superintendent of Public Instruction does not control education policy in North Carolina. The state constitution assigns that power to the State Board of Education.

Still, voters should expect the top administrator over public schools to do more than attend ribbon-cutting ceremonies and broadcast best practices. Successful superintendents should use their influence to sway lawmakers and set the vision for education in the state.

No matter whom voters elect in November, the next superintendent will likely champion a couple of key issues. During recent interviews with the Justice Center, Superintendent of Public Instruction June Atkinson and her opponent, former House Speaker Richard Morgan, both said that if elected superintendent, they will push to raise dismal graduation rates and increase technology training so that more students are qualified for the high-tech jobs that North Carolina needs. But Atkinson, a Democrat, and Morgan, a Republican, have different opinions about what legislators and Board of Education members must do to help schools improve.

For Atkinson, the solution lies in overhauling the entire public school system. She said the state must create new curricula that integrate everything from reading and writing to technology and science to better engage students from diverse backgrounds. She also said schools must focus less on repetition and testing and more on helping young people connect what they learn with real-world situations.

"Every school is requiring every student to learn in the same way instead of offering a variety of opportunities for them to acquire similar skills and get to that diploma," she said.

Atkinson said new technology has made it easier for schools to

engage and inspire both successful and low-performing students. But policymakers must be willing to invest in innovation to reap 21st-century benefits. If re-elected, Atkinson will encourage local and state policymakers to embrace the possibilities that she believes redesigned schools offer.



Superintendent of Public Instruction
June Atkinson



House Speaker Richard Morgan

Her opponent, Richard Morgan, offered few specific suggestions about improving teaching tools or learning environments. The former co-speaker of the state House has little direct experience in the education field. What Morgan does have is political know-how. He was one of the most powerful Republicans in North Carolina until his Republican colleagues conspired to successfully unseat him two years ago.

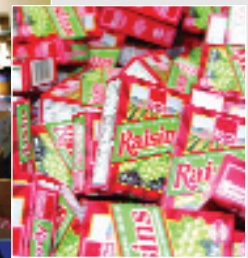
"I know how the legislature works," Morgan said. "I have relationships in the legislature and in my mind that gives me a distinct advantage over the current superintendent and superintendents in the past."

Morgan said he plans to improve the quality of all schools by increasing accountability to tax payers and improving governance standards. He said he wants policymakers to adopt better systems to monitor schools and report annually on how the state is progressing. Morgan also said he would push for legislators to adopt a budget policy that stipulates that the portion of the state budget that goes to education cannot decline from year to year.

Atkinson and Morgan agree about one thing. Both said students who attend low-performing schools in poor communities are at a disadvantage. And both believe their respective proposals would help economically disadvantaged students. But those campaign promises won't amount to much if the next superintendent cannot persuade lawmakers to adopt his or her vision.

Justice Center Staff Volunteers at the Inter-Faith Food Shuttle

The Inter-Faith Food Shuttle is a powerful hunger relief organization providing food for thousands every day. One of its many programs is Backpack Buddies, which delivered 12,487 backpacks



and food for 74,922 meals to children throughout seven counties in 2007. Backpack Buddies serves children who are "food insecure." These kids are identified by school guidance counselors and site coordinators. Via the backpack, each child receives a balanced selection of healthy foods to last him or her through the weekend or holiday - a period when they and their family might otherwise have very little or nothing at all to eat. They return the empty backpacks, which are then refilled for the next weekend's use.

Volunteers are a vital part of the cycle, and pack thousands of backpacks each week. Justice Center staff members participated as volunteer stuffers in May of 2008.



COUNT EVERY VOTE!! *Calling for a Grassroots Strategy for Election Protection*

By Leah Wise, Executive Director, SE Regional Economic Justice Network

Barack Obama's historic run for president as the first black candidate representing a major party is due, in part, to the gifts that young, Southern African Americans gave to this nation during the 1960s. They expanded opportunities for individuals to participate in politics by improving access to the vote.

While the struggle for enfranchisement certainly did not begin in the '60s, it was the direct-action campaigns of that era — the voter-registration drives, the demand for one-person one-vote, the challenge of the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party delegation to unseat the racist Mississippi delegation to the 1964 Democratic convention — that successfully dismantled Jim Crow segregation.

Opening up access to the vote was key to breaking down the major barriers of racial and ethnic exclusion in housing, jobs, schools and services. The heroic sacrifices and courage of countless people demonstrated that law made real through grassroots action is what makes democracy work — for everyone. Indeed all marginalized and historically disenfranchised people across the nation have benefited. They have used the new laws, regulations, strategies and tactics from the civil rights movement to press forward.

But 40 years later, our success in removing racial barriers is more aptly described as having removed them from view. Policies of today appear to be race neutral but continue the structural arrangements that exclude people of color from opportunity.¹ This is especially true of neo-liberal globalization policies, such as free trade, privatization, deregulation, union busting and the unraveling of workplace and environmental protections. They are reflected in the way federal transportation, education and disaster response policies under serve marginalized communities. They also are reflected in the rising incidents of voter suppression, election infractions and irregularities over the past decade. One result is that more African Americans live in poverty today than during the Johnson Administration. Another is evident in the fact that only 29 percent of the voting public elected President Bush. Still another is seen in how many employers, landlords and nativists are allowed to instigate antagonism between African Americans and immigrants.

People for the American Way documented 42,841 election incidents nationally in 2004, most of which took place in the Southwest and Southeast. Such incidents occurred before, during and after elections. Many of them involved barriers to voter registration, voter deception through false or misleading information, suppression of voter turnout efforts, purges of voting lists, voter intimidation, voting machine malfunctions and inadequate numbers of voting machines which discourages voters — especially those with inflexible work schedules — and causes long waits to vote. Other incidents involved

incomplete registration rolls, limited accommodations for disabled and non-English speaking voters and failure to count all eligible votes. North Carolina has had its fair share of incidents. Among the infractions reported in 2004 in North Carolina were lost ballots, votes eaten by a computer, polls opening late or closing early and registration forms from the Department of Motor Vehicles not getting processed. Voter ignorance and confusion has also been a problem, particularly regarding the voting rights of ex-felons and the process of using provisional ballots, which allow voters whose names do not appear on the rolls at polling stations to cast a vote and have their registration status verified later. Some problems are caused by poorly trained poll workers and malfunctioning machines. In Carteret County, 4532 early ballots were permanently lost when the machine used to store electronic ballots ran out of storage space, unbeknownst to county officials who continued to try to store ballots.

The notorious incidents of voter exclusion in Florida in 2000 and Ohio in 2004 led to federal reforms, such as the Help America Vote Act of 2002, which established the U.S. Election Assistance Commission to assist municipalities and states with the administration of federal elections. Still, there are no uniform standards for all elections across the nation. Each state and many counties have their own rules and procedures.

A growing number of national advocacy organizations, such as the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, People for the American Way, and the Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights Under Law set up and began coordinating election protection programs. They provide voter information, assistance and legal help and poll monitors. Several universities, including the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, have gotten involved in major poll monitoring projects. Democracy North Carolina and the NAACP-NC are among the handful of groups in our state that have done some work on election protection. Yet, while attention to election protection is increasing generally, it remains mainly in the purview of lawyers. In local communities, election monitoring is overshadowed by efforts to galvanize voters through voter registration drives and get-out-the-vote mobilizations.

Furthermore, officials tend to dismiss these infractions as administrative errors, despite the fact

that they occur mainly in precincts with historically marginalized voters. Hence, they really amount to a new form of Jim Crow — a systematic process of exclusion. To combat them, advocates need a long-term, proactive grassroots strategy that can reach every community. To accomplish this, justice organizations will have to figure out how to incorporate election protection as an integral part of their ongoing work and collaborate more with one another.

The recent and rapid demographic changes in our state and region, and the extraordinary diversity and greater polarization of wealth that has resulted, are changing the political landscape. They provide new possibilities of influence for people of color, particularly if new and old residents combine their efforts. Obama's campaign has focused on inspiring broader participation in the political process as the key strategy for change. This is not sufficient. Non-partisan grassroots action is needed once again to protect the electoral process by making sure every vote counts in every community. It is needed to make it possible for us to win policies and practices that lift the bottom, while ensuring human rights, food security, permanent peace and a sustaining planet. It is needed to ensure opportunity for fullness of life for all.

Little known to many of us, the international community also has benefited from the sacrifices of Southern civil rights activists. The fair voting and open, impartial election concepts that they popularized have been codified in international agreements that recognize voting rights as human rights and used to promote democracy abroad. The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, adopted by the United Nation, is the primary international law affirming the right to universal and equal suffrage, particularly Articles 25 & 26. So, we now have more than the Constitution to bolster our efforts to ensure fair elections.

Election protection is now an international industry that fields teams of observers to protect the election process in nations across the globe. In the Declaration of Principles for International Election Observation and the Code of Conduct for International Election Observers, nations have agreed on uniform standards for election observation. Though the United States has signed these agreements, it does not implement all the standards they uphold. Among those most relevant to this state's situation are:

- Ensuring standards of impartiality
- Allowing citizens to play a role in





My organization,
the Southeast
Regional

Economic Justice Network, is working with regional collaboration to implement a civic engagement and leadership development strategy in NC and MS. It is called the Southern Training and Research Institute for Voter Education [or STRIVE]/Count Every Vote. We are partnering with the NCCU Institute for Civic Engagement and Social Change to offer a series of trainings aimed at building the skills of young people of color, primarily, to better influence and shape policies that impact them, emphasizing the leadership skills needed to bridge diverse communities, and to involve them and older adults in identifying election infractions and monitoring problem precincts. *For more information contact leah.wise@rejn.org or (919) 403-4310.*

monitoring all stages of the election process, including pre-election, Election Day and post election.

- Not interfering in the voting process
- Monitoring a credible sample
- Not accepting funding from the host government.

The first two are the areas where the state is in least compliance. North Carolina does not allow nonpartisan residents to monitor inside polling stations. And most election officials are chosen by party leadership.

What is most important is that these international monitoring standards offer a legal framework that empowers justice organizations to expand the role of communities to protect the election process in their localities.

¹ For details, contact the Center for Social Inclusion in New York for a copy of the report they submitted to the UN that analyzes US compliance with the International Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination [CERD].

QUE SE CUENTE CADA VOTO!!

Llamado a estrategia de base para proteger las elecciones

Por Leah Wise, Directora Ejecutiva, SE Regional Economic Justice Network

Al postularse Obama para presidente como el primer candidato negro de un partido de mayoría, este año destaca uno de los regalos históricos que las luchas de los afroamericanos, especialmente las que la gente joven en el sur le ha dado a la nación. Es el regalo de ampliar las oportunidades de participar en los procesos políticos- en el proceso de toma de decisiones y distribución de los recursos públicos que determina el curso de nuestras vidas diarias- por medio del voto.

Aunque las luchas no iniciaron en la década de los 1960, fueron las campañas de acción directa de esa- inscripción electoral, un voto-una persona, los retos de la delegación del Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party de aislar a la racist delegación de dicho estado en la convención demócrata de 1964, lo que exitosamente dismanteló el sistema segregacionista Jim Crow.

Obtener el derecho al voto permitió derrumbar otras barreras raciales-étnicas en la vivienda, empleos, escuelas y servicios. El sacrificio heroico y el valor de muchos demostró que la ley que se cumple por las acciones de grupos es lo que permite que la democracia funcione-para todos. Ciertamente todos los marginados en el país se han beneficiado. Han usado nuevas leyes, reglamentos, estrategias y tácticas del movimiento de derechos civiles para adelantar sus luchas.

Pero 40 años después, muchas de las barreras han sido removidas solamente de la vista. Algunas prácticas hoy aparentan ser neutrales pero excluyen a los negro-americanos de oportunidades. Esto es especialmente cierto con las políticas globales neo-liberales como libre comercio, privatización, deregulación, y eliminación de protecciones laborales y ambientales. Se manifiestan en la manera en que las respuestas federales de transporte, educación y manejo de emergencias son de inferior calidad para ciertas comunidades. De igual manera se observan en prácticas de aislamiento electoral durante la pasada década. Un resultado es que más afroamericanos viven en pobreza hoy que durante la administración. Otra es que solamente el 29% de los electores votantes eligió al presidente Bush. Otra es como a muchos empleadores, terratenientes y nativistas se les permite fomentar antagonismo entre negros e inmigrantes.

El grupo People for the American Way documentó 42,841 incidentes electorales nacionales en el 2004, mayormente en el suroeste y sureste, antes, durante y después de las elecciones. Fueron irregularidades de todo tipo para evitar el voto de grupos marginados y en desventaja. Carolina del Norte tuvo su tajada: papeletas perdidas, votos eliminados por las computadoras, centros de votación que abrían tarde o cerraban temprano, formas de inscripción del DMV no procesadas mala administración, así como mucha ignorancia y confusión en el elector, particularmente la del voto a los ex-convictos y las papeletas provisionales- para electores cuyo nombre no aparece en las listas pero

que son verificados posteriormente. Mucho se debe a oficiales electorales con poca orientación. Un ejemplo de máquinas defectuosas ocurrió en Carteret County donde se perdieron 4532 papeletas de voto adelantado. Los incidentes de Florida (2000) y Ohio (2004) revelaron que no hay procesos uniformes alrededor del país.

Grupos como NAACP, People for the American Way, y Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights Under Law han iniciado el establecimiento de programas de protección electoral. Los errores tienden a ser subestimados pero es interesante que suelen ocurrir en precintos de electores históricamente marginalizados. Se ha establecido un proceso, neo-segregacionista, de exclusion. Para combatirlo es necesario el esfuerzo y apoyo de las comunidades.

Los recientes y rápidos cambios demográficos en el estado y la región así como la extraordinaria diversidad y mayor polarización de la riqueza que han resultado, han modificado el escenario político. Sugiere nuevas posibilidades de influencia para los afroamericanos. La campaña de Obama ha procurado inspirar una mayor participación en el proceso político como estrategia clave para el cambio. Ello no es suficiente. Hay que lograr políticas y prácticas que permitan una vida plena para todos: derechos humanos, alimento seguro, paz permanente y un planeta sano.

Las luchas de los activistas del Sur han inspirado otras luchas y logros en el marco internacional, así como declaraciones adoptadas por las Naciones Unidas, lo que permite tener otros recursos además de la propia Constitución de los EEUU.

La protección electoral es ahora una industria internacional que envía equipos de observadores para proteger dichos procesos en países del mundo. Aunque los EEUU han firmado estos acuerdos, no aplica sus postulados en sus propios procesos. Entre los más relevantes se encuentran:

- Criterios de imparcialidad
- Participación ciudadana en los procesos de monitoreo electoral (antes, durante y después)
- No interferir en el proceso electoral
- Monitorear una muestra confiable
- No aceptar dinero del país anfitrión

En los primeros dos estamos muy lejos de cumplirlos. Nuestro estado no reconoce a elementos no-partidistas monitorear dentro de los centros de votación. Los funcionarios electorales son escogidos por el liderazgo partidista. Estas prácticas permiten a las comunidades proteger los procesos electorales.

Para información y posibilidades de apoyo comunicarse con leah.wise@rejn.org o 919 403 4310.

Sarah Davis Is Recipient of 2008 Client Community Service Award

(Raleigh, NC) - The client community of Legal Aid of North Carolina has awarded the 2008 Client Community Service Award to Sarah Davis of Apex. Willis Williams, chairman of the Legal Aid of North Carolina Clients Council, made the presentation during the 2008 North Carolina Legal Services Statewide Conference in Durham in April.

"Mrs. Davis has been involved in the Wake County community for many years and has been responsible for teaching and training individuals in home-health nursing in rural Wake County," said Williams at the service award luncheon.

Davis worked with teenage girls in the Healthy Mom and Healthy Babies program. She is a charter member of Western Wake Community Action Group, which helps the poor get water and sewer in their homes. She was also an outreach worker with Wake Opportunities, bringing healthcare to the Apex community.

Davis has served as president of the Raleigh-Apex chapter of the NAACP, has been a member of the board of directors for Legal Aid of North Carolina (LANC), and has had 43 years of uninterrupted service with the Wake County Board of Elections, serving as a judge, a precinct chair and



Sarah Davis (right) and Willis Williams

now as a precinct worker.

Davis currently serves on the Client Council and on its board of directors as an ex-officio member.

The LANC Clients Council established the Client Community Service Award in 2004 to recognize legal-aid clients or low-income community leaders in North Carolina who has provided extraordinary and dedicated service to the equal justice community and to organizations that promote access to justice for low-income people. Selection criteria for the award include service to the justice community, demonstrated leadership for the advancement of low-income people, and significant volunteer efforts to empower low-income people and remove legal barriers to economic opportunity in North Carolina.

The Clients Council is an LANC advisory committee whose mission is to educate and empower poor and low-income citizens regarding rights, responsibilities and available resources necessary for them to achieve economic, political and social justice. Legal Aid of North Carolina (LANC) is a statewide, nonprofit law firm that provides free legal services in civil matters to low-income people in order to ensure equal access to justice and to remove legal barriers to economic opportunity.

NC Legal Aid Client Council Up to the Challenge

By Mary Hedgepath, Coordinator

In May 2003, Legal Aid of North Carolina Clients Council opened its office in Rocky Mount. Since the opening of the office, we have been more visible in communities across the state. As a result of our visibility and networking with other organizations, we have received more than 14,000 calls in a period of five years. These calls were from people in state and out of state, and the office has made referrals to Legal Aid programs throughout North Carolina. I am elated to see that the office of the Clients Council is being utilized and excited about the increase in awareness that has occurred since the opening of the office.

With the economy as it is today, the Clients Council is up to the challenge of educating people across the state about issues that affect their lives. The Client Council receives calls relating to people being laid off, people who cannot pay medical bills, domestic violence and divorce, foreclosures and mental health assistance. It is good for people to know that when they encounter problems the Client Council is available for information, training, and referrals and as an avenue to express the needs of the community.

The Clients Council is in a good position, with the assistance of Legal Aid attorneys and NC Justice Center staff, to help people understand what they can do when faced with foreclosures, evictions, benefits termination, and senior-citizen issues.

Client Council is in the process of recruiting people to get involved. We have client representatives in different regions of the state – Western, Triad, Triangle, Northeast and Southeast. We are recruiting for all regions.

If you are interested in getting involved or need additional information please get in touch with Mary Hedgepath, coordinator, at 252-972-2100 or MaryH@legalaidnc.org

Consejo a Clientes de NC Legal Aid acepta el reto

Por Mary Hedgepath, Coordinadora

En mayo de 2003 NC Legal Aid Clients Council abrió su oficina en Rocky Mount, NC. Desde entonces ha tenido mayor presencia en las comunidades del estado. Como resultado, ha recibido sobre 14,000 llamadas desde entonces. Las llamadas han sido de dentro y fuera del estado. La oficina ha referido las mismas a programas de asistencia legal en el estado. Me emociona ver que la oficina del consejo de clientes sirve para crear conciencia.

Con la actual realidad de la economía es un reto para el consejo seguir educando a la gente sobre temas que afectan sus vidas. Se reciben llamadas de gente desempleada, que no pueden pagar sus deudas, que sufren violencia y divorcio, casas repositadas y carencia de cuidado de salud mental. Es bueno que sepan que podemos proveer información, adiestramiento, y canales para expresar las necesidades de la comunidad. El consejo de clientes junto a abogados de Asistencia Legal y personal del Centro para la Justicia ayudan a enfrentar estos retos y ofrece apoyo a adultos mayores.

El consejo se encuentra en el proceso de reclutar personas para involucrarse en todas las regiones. Tenemos representantes de clientes en diferentes regiones del estado, el oeste, Triad, Triangulo, Noreste y Sureste.

Si le interesa involucrarse o informarse puede comunicarse con Mary Hedgepath, Coordinadora al 252-972-2100 o escribir a MaryH@legalaidnc.org.

Justice Center Staff in the News



The Wildacres Leadership Initiative has named **Louisa Warren and Alfred Ripley** of the Justice Center as members of its 2008-10

William C. Friday Fellowship for Human Relations. The initiative cultivates a network of leaders who connect across differences in identity and ideas to develop new solutions to challenges facing North Carolina.



Attracta Kelly, the director of the Justice Center's Immigrants Legal Assistance Project, received an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters degree from Siena Heights University in Adrian, Michigan. Sister Kelly is a Dominican nun and is

widely recognized as North Carolina's leading non-profit provider of legal assistance in the field of immigration law.



Left to right: Charles Brandquist – Vice President HR, Credit Suisse; Debra Tyler-Horton; James F. Goodman – President & CEO, Capitol Broadcasting Company.

Debra Tyler-Horton was named a Regional Leadership Triangle Fellow. Leadership Triangle is a non-profit organization established in 1992 to educate and promote regionalism across the separate

communities of the Triangle. It does this through regional and leadership development classes, seminars and awards.

Meet Five Members of the Justice Center's Board of Directors

The members of the Justice Center's board of directors represent the areas in which we work and the communities impacted by our efforts.

Here are five board members who have dedicated their time and talents to the Justice Center's mission of opportunity and prosperity for all.

Rev. Dr. William J. Barber



Rev. Dr. William Barber is president of the North Carolina State Conference of the NAACP.

Since 1993, Dr. Barber has served as the pastor of Greenleaf Christian Church, Disciples of Christ, in Goldsboro. He is the chairman of Rebuilding Broken Places Community Development Corporation, a nonprofit faith-based organization committed to the development of economically distressed urban and rural communities in Goldsboro and Wayne County. Dr. Barber received his bachelor's degree from NC Central University, his Master of Divinity from Duke University, and his PhD from Drew University in Madison, New Jersey.

Jean Cary



Ms. Cary is a professor of law at Campbell University in Buies Creek, NC, with a focus on family law

and trial advocacy. She is currently director of the South East Deposition Program for the National Institute for Trial Advocacy. Ms. Cary received her bachelor's degree from Duke University and her law degree from Georgetown University Law Center.

Rev. George Reed



Mr. Reed is the executive director of the North Carolina Council of Churches. He is a member

of Pullen Memorial Baptist Church in Raleigh. Mr. Reed received his bachelor's degree from Florida State University, his Master of Divinity from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, and his law degree from the University of Virginia Law School.

Stephen Luke Largess



Mr. Largess is an attorney with Ferguson, Stein, Chambers, Gresham & Sumter, P.A. in Charlotte.

He helped start the NC Legal Education Assistance Foundation (NC LEAF), which was the nation's first statewide program designed to encourage lawyers to enter into public-service employment by assisting them with repayment of school debt. NC LEAF has provided more

than \$1 million in assistance to more than 150 attorneys across the state. Mr. Largess serves on the board of NC LEAF and the North Carolina Civil Liberties Union. He received his bachelor's degree from Duke University and his law degree from the UNC School of Law.

Raquel Lynch



Ms. Lynch is the director of information technology, advocacy and special projects for Crisis

Assistance Ministry in Charlotte. This non-profit agency serves the low-income citizens of Mecklenburg County who are facing financial emergencies and are struggling to meet life's basic needs. Ms. Lynch received her bachelor's degree from Hofstra University.

Lobby Day Energizes HOPE

By: Steve Hutton, Hope Publications Committee

The HOPE Coalition (Hear Our Public Employees) enjoyed a successful day lobbying the General Assembly for House Bill 1583, the repeal of the prohibition of public-sector collective bargaining.

On June 11, more than 100 members of HOPE's core and support groups made the rounds of legislative offices to encourage members of the General Assembly to support the bill. More than 60 legislative districts were represented.

That morning, HOPE members and the media filled the press room to capacity. At least twenty supporters had to remain outside looking through the glass wall.

Led by NC AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer MaryBe McMillan, representatives of core groups made the case for repealing the ban. Captain David Anders of Asheville, president of Professional Firefighters and Paramedics of NC, described the hamstrung manner in which

firefighters are required to lobby their city councils and their own supervisors: "Everything we do is kind of piecemeal. It's kind of one issue at a time, one council member at a time. Sometimes we're able to sit down with the fire chief or the city manager, but that's a rare occasion."

Among the several legislators in attendance, the bill's sponsor, Rep. Dan Blue (D-Wake), emphasized that the repeal would give workers a direct line of communication with management to address concerns. Mark Chilton, mayor of Carrboro, expressed his dissatisfaction at being prohibited from meeting with the labor leaders of town employees to negotiate matters of mutual interest.

Repealing the ban has had broad support. More than 2,500 individuals and organizations have signed an open letter to the General Assembly in support of HB 1583. Led by the NC NAACP, the repeal has also been endorsed by more than 60 activist organizations that comprise the Historic Thousands on Jones Street (HK on J) Coalition.

In May 2008, Professor Andrew Perrin of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill issued a press release regarding five public polls

conducted between November 2005 and May 2008. Public support for the repeal ranged from 44.7% support/19.2% don't know (November 2005) and 53.8% support/24.3% don't know (March 2007).

Legislators, the media, numerous associations, and the public at large are taking note of the widespread support for public-sector bargaining and of HOPE's growing influence on labor relations in North Carolina.

HB 1583 did not come up for a vote in the NC House Appropriations Committee this year. The HOPE Coalition intends to build on the growing support in the community and among political leaders. More than 100 new supporting organizations and thousands of individuals have become supporters of the coalition. Hundreds of students have participated in collective bargaining teach-ins this year, and the International Labor Organization (of the United Nations) called for North Carolina to grant collective bargaining rights to its public workers. Two city councils have officially supported repealing the bargaining ban. Organizing work will continue during the summer and fall in preparation for continuing the fight in the 2009 legislative session. www.nchope.org.

PERSONAL PERSPECTIVE

Incarceration Nation

By Erin Byrd, Raleigh, NC

The United States locks people up. There are more than two million inmates in federal, state and private prisons. We incarcerate a half million more people than China, which has a population five times greater than the United States. It may be argued that the prison industrial complex, operating under the law of the land, is the modern-day slave system. Prisoners make very low wages but produce goods that are sold at market rate. In some cases, prisoners earn less than \$1.00 per hour. The prison industrial complex is one of the fastest growing industries in the country, with investors on Wall Street and profits in the billions. Between 1980 and 1994, profits went from \$392 million to \$1.31 billion.

Locked Up Because of Race

Two-thirds of American youth locked up in juvenile detention or corrections facilities are minorities, even though they make up only one-third of the US juvenile population. A report from the US Department of Justice states, “Overrepresentation of African American youth occurs at all stages of the juvenile justice system, and African American youth are overrepresented more than any other minority group.”

We have lost an entire generation to the prison system. I believe that a person should be held responsible for their actions if they break the law, and that violent criminals should not be allowed to roam our communities, but I also understand that Blacks are more likely to be racially profiled, arrested, jailed and given longer sentences. A Black person who kills a white person is three times more likely than a white person to get the death penalty. Where is the justice in that?

Locked Up Because of a Mental Illness

The culture of incarceration runs deep. One in six U.S. prisoners is mentally ill. Many of them suffer from serious illnesses such as schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, and major depression. There are three times as many men and women with mental illness in U.S. prisons as in mental health hospitals. “Prisons have become the nation’s primary mental health facilities,” says Jamie Fellner, director of the U.S. Program of Human Rights Watch. “But for those with serious illnesses, prison can be the worst place to be.” Human Rights Watch recently released a report entitled *United States: Mentally Ill Mistreated in Prisons*, based on more than two years of research and hundreds of interviews with prisoners, corrections officials, mental health experts and attorneys. It describes prisoners who, because of their illnesses, rant and rave, babble incoherently, or huddle silently in their cells. They talk to invisible companions, living in worlds constructed of hallucinations. They lash out without provocation, beat their heads against cell walls, cover themselves with feces, mutilate themselves



until their bodies are riddled with scars, and attempt suicide. The situation calls for increasing access to publicly funded treatment for the mentally ill (www.humanrightswatch.org).

Locked Up Because of Self Defense

Victims of domestic violence are also victims of the prison system. While the most typical convictions resulting in imprisonment for women are property crimes, such as check forgery and illegal credit card use, thousands of women are behind bars for killing their abusive partners. Of the women serving time for violent crimes, the majority were convicted for defending themselves or their children from abuse. Average prison terms are twice as long for killing husbands as for killing wives. Black women are twice as likely as white women to be convicted of killing their abusive husbands. Studies show that the vast majority of women who kill their abusers do so as a last resort in defense of their own lives and/or the lives of their children, and that many have stayed with abusive partners because they have been beaten trying to escape or because they feared an attempt at escape would cause their partners to retaliate with violence. Battered women who defend themselves are being convicted or are accepting pleas at a rate of 75% to 83% nationwide. (<http://www.prisonactivist.org/women>)

Locked Because of Poverty or Homelessness

One third of prison inmates report incomes of less than \$7,000 when arrested. Eighty percent of women in prison report incomes of less than \$2,000 in the year before their arrest, and 92% report incomes under \$10,000. National studies have found some relationship between homelessness and incarceration. The Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) study (Hughes, Wilson, & Beck, 2001) found that, among a nationwide survey of state prisoners expecting to be released in 1999, 12% reported being homeless at the time of their arrest. Another nationwide BJS study (Ditton, 1999) found that in 1998, 9% of state prison inmates reported living on the street or in a shelter in the 12 months prior to arrest. Studies that examine incarceration histories among homeless populations are difficult to compare, but it appears that upwards of 20% of the single-adult homeless population can be assumed to have been incarcerated at some point (Incarceration and Homelessness, Metraux, Roman and Cho, 2007).

North Carolina’s 2008 state budget includes \$67.4 million – most of it borrowed – for 1512 new prison beds. Instead of heavily funding education and rehabilitation programs, public care facilities for the mentally ill, and shelters that protect women and their families, we instead build prisons to house more and more of our population. In North Carolina, it has been stated that one of the factors used to determine the need for future prison-bed space is the test scores of third-grade African-American male students.

Our Incarceration Nation does discriminate depending on who you are. White-collar criminals steal fortunes from working people, but very few spend a significant number of years behind bars. It will be interesting to watch and see whether those responsible for the home mortgage foreclosure crisis will pay for their crimes with prison time. In the meantime, we can only hope and fight for more funding for prevention programs that provide opportunities to people to rebuild their lives, for increased access to care for the mentally ill, and for youth to have alternatives to entering correctional facilities.

It is a question of political will and profit. Just as offenders benefit from rehabilitation, profiteers benefit from building more and more prisons. Some profit from the construction costs and materials, while others profit from incarceration itself (food, phone charges, prison labor). The question for North Carolina is clear. Do we invest in rehabilitation and provide people opportunities on the front end or do we do nothing while profiteers continue to build wealth from incarceration?

Worker Justice Gets Tough and Local

By Miriam Thompson, Secretary, Chapel Hill/Carrboro Branch - NC NAACP

Chapel Hill and Carrboro Community activists are building a strong worker rights movement in our communities following our participation in the HOPE Coalition's strong lobbying effort in the General Assembly on June 11th in support of Collective Bargaining legislation HB 1583.

The bill attempts to redress the human rights violations our public employees endure under the Jim Crow 1959 General Statute 95-98 which denies public employees the right to collectively bargain. Both community town councils have passed resolutions supporting their public workers.

Organized by the Local NAACP branch, 28 community leaders, workers, activists and organizations met with House Speaker Joe Hackney in his Chapel Hill law office on June 27th to press his vigorous support for HB 1583. Although we got no commitment from Speaker Hackney, we came out of the meeting with a strong commitment to continued support for the HOPE Coalition's work, and with a potential model for building HkonJ partnerships and district assemblies with workers' rights as a central organizing issue.

Presenters included UNC Chapel Hill workers, UE 150, faith based leaders, Orange County Democratic Party chair, the Carrboro Mayor and Chapel Hill Assistant to the Mayor, Local NAACP branch leaders, and peace and justice allies. Testimony was passionate: collective bargaining rights would assure a more democratic workplace; provide a step toward ending management's plantation behavior and worker discrimination (especially against workers of color); enable elected officials to more effectively and efficiently govern; assure a more respected, satisfied, stable and productive workforce and

improve public services; end another chapter in the history of Jim Crow and address North Carolina's anti-union activity. Further, passage of the Collective Bargaining legislation would indicate to workers and residents of this state that their elected officials are not controlled by a corporate agenda. We also made it clear that a substantial number of Joe Hackney's constituents are public workers.

Speaker Hackney's response was not unexpected: he can't push the bill alone; he must confer with house leadership; he will share out concerns with colleagues; he doesn't think he has the votes to get the bill out of the Appropriations Committee or the floor of the House.

Partners committed themselves to reach out to public workers and allies in Chatham County (a significant part of Hackney's district constituencies, and pressure elected officials); pursue the NC League of Municipalities to try to broaden local support from mayors and town councils; continue to support public workers struggles at UNC and the public work force in our communities; make worker justice a central issue in our faith based congregations; insist our local state representatives become more outspoken in support of the right of our public workers to Collective Bargaining; organize a media campaign to get our message out to the public.

Finally, we want to thank the H.O.P.E. Coalition for their remarkable work in building the public workers rights campaign. The fact that the bill was at least introduced into the House Appropriations Committee speaks to the coalition's organizing skill, endurance, vision and passion. We are determined to bring Jones Street to Main Street.

2008 Justice Center Summer Interns



Maria Trejo is double majoring in criminal justice and Spanish and working toward a minor in women's studies at New Mexico State University, where she is set to graduate in

May 2009. At the Justice Center, Maria is working with farmworkers, letting them know that they have rights and that the Justice Center is here to help them out with any complaints or questions they may have.



Dennis Vélez is a second-year law student at UNC-Chapel Hill working on migrant farm worker issues this summer. He also is involved in the

weekly outreach trips to migrant labor camps that the Justice Center conducts to speak with workers directly.



Kerstin L. Byrd attends North Carolina Central University's School of Law. This summer while working with the Justice Center's Education and Law

Project, she researched dropout and suspension rates, contributed to the "From the Ground Up" newsletter and attended various state board of education meetings. Kerstin also had the opportunity to participate in the People of Color Legislative Day and Adelante Lobby Day.



Natasha El-Sergany majored in creative writing and minored in Arabic Language and Literature at the University of Florida. Currently, she is a rising second-year

law student at University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and is interested in pursuing a career in immigration law.



Angaza Mayo-Laughinghouse was born in Raleigh, N.C., on March 7, 1987. He was raised around labor and community activists and these influences played a

key role in his development. Both of his parents are union and community leaders, and he aims to follow in their footsteps. Angaza spent many years working with children in a local community center. He has also spent years helping to organize youth and

labor unions. This work has further strengthened his relationship with working-class communities. He is currently attending school at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. His major is sociology with a concentration in social problems in global society, and his minor is African-American studies. As a Justice Center intern, Angaza is working to help end the foreclosure crisis and extend collective bargaining rights to North Carolina workers.



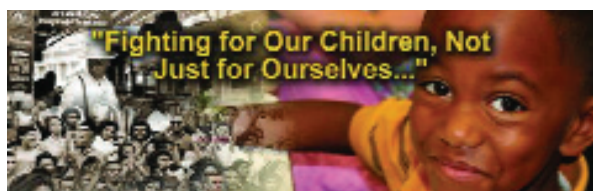
Mercedes Restucha is very excited to be a summer intern with the Immigrants Legal Assistance Project. Mercedes first collaborated with

ILAP while working as an immigration caseworker for Congressman Bob Etheridge. She is about to enter her third year at North Carolina Central University's School of Law. Mercedes graduated from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in 2004 with bachelor's degrees in journalism and political science. This summer, she is working primarily with immigrants who have been victims of criminal activity.



Deven D. Anderson is a 2008 graduate of South Carolina State University, where he received his bachelor's

degree in professional English. The Andrews, S.C., native participated in the 2007 Congressional Black Caucus Foundation Summer Internship program, where he worked in the office of House Majority Whip James E. Clyburn, a Democrat from South Carolina. Deven also was selected to participate in the Congressional Black Caucus Institute's 2007 Political Boot Camp. During his tenure at South Carolina State, he served as president of the Student Government Association, corresponding secretary of the Student Government Association and editor of The Collegian, the university's student newspaper. Currently, he is a 2008 Generation Change Fellow with the Center for Community Change working with Blueprint NC. Over the next six months, Deven will provide strategic support for the Civic Engagement arm of Blueprint NC and its partners.



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“Engaging the Methods of Change: Power, Justice, Freedom and the Vote, Then & Now”

**October 8-11, 2008
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Featuring:

- Freedom golf classic
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 - New national NAACP President and CEO, Mr. Ben Jealous
 - Candidates' Forum & Voter Empowerment Project
 - Actor and activist Danny Glover has been invited as the keynote speaker
- And much, much more!**

For more information, call 1-866-NC NAACP or go to www.naacpn.org



La Fiesta del Pueblo Celebrates its 15th Anniversary!

**YOU ARE CORDIALLY INVITED TO
“La Quinceañera”**

• **SEPTEMBER 6 & 7** •

Saturday 12-8:00 p.m./Sunday 12-6:00 p.m.
(Rain or Shine)

• **SEPTIEMBRE 6 y 7** •

Sabado 12-8:00 p.m./Domingo 12-6:00 p.m.
(Con lluvia o con sol)

NC State Fairgrounds - Raleigh, North Carolina
Exposition Center and Jim Graham Building

Terrenos de la Feria Estatal - Carolina del Norte edificios
Exposition Center y el Jim Graham Building

Foods from Central and South America as well as the Caribbean - such as pupusas, paletas, churros, tortillas, tacos al carbon and empanadas - are available at the Food Court. A lot of people come to Fiesta just to eat! All homemade style!

Join us for food, fun, and culture at La Fiesta del Pueblo!

Justice Center Welcomes New Staff



Lisa Chun is a native North Carolinian. She graduated from the UNC School of Law in 2003. While a law student, she interned with Legal Aid of North Carolina and the Environmental Poverty Law Project. Before coming to the Justice Center, she was a Senior Staff Attorney at North Carolina Prisoner Legal Services where she represented inmates in

challenging unlawful sentences and convictions. She also represented inmates in immigration proceedings. Some cases in which she successfully prevented inmate clients from being deported include a political refugee from Somalia and an HIV positive client from Panama.



Beth Jacobs earned a bachelor's degree from UNC Pembroke in 2004. In 2007, she graduated from the UNC School of Law. In law school, Beth was an active public interest student leader, and she worked on a variety of issues including child welfare, domestic violence, institutional racism and immigration. She also has several

years of experience as an education advocate and community organizer. Prior to joining the Justice Center, Beth worked as a community organizer for Democracy North Carolina. In 2007, she founded,

Brown Babies, Inc., a volunteer grassroots organization that helps young people participate in civic life and influence the policies that affect their future. With Brown Babies, she has helped organize young people in North Carolina around a variety of issues including corporal punishment in schools and hate speech on public airwaves. At the Justice Center, she says she has found her home and is happy to be working on what she feels is the most important issue facing North Carolinians today, the improvement of public education.



Adam Linker worked most recently as a health care and education reporter for Triangle Business Journal. Prior to working at TBJ, he earned a master's degree in African-American history from the University of Massachusetts at Amherst and a master's degree in journalism from the University of

North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Adam grew up in Raleigh and attended UNC as an undergraduate. Between degrees he worked with several advocacy organizations including Clean Up Congress and the San Francisco Central Labor Council.

Rochelle Williams joined the Education and Law Project in June 2008 as a researcher, analyst and public policy advocate. Previously, she wrote about



education and health policy as an editorial writer, columnist and health reporter at the Fayetteville Observer newspaper in Fayetteville, N.C. At the nonprofit Carter Center in Atlanta, Ga., Rochelle wrote reports about the organization's international efforts to advance human rights and alleviate

suffering. For many years, she managed a job-training program for teenagers in the Atlanta metropolitan area.



Rochelle E. Sparko joined the Justice Center in 2008 to work on foreclosures stemming from sub-prime mortgages. Prior to her work at the Justice Center, Rochelle was the supervising attorney of the Public Benefits Unit at the Legal Aid Society of Hawaii in Honolulu. At Legal Aid, she represented people

facing the loss or reduction of financial assistance, medical assistance and food stamp benefits. Rochelle also worked with community members and the state legislature on improving access to benefits for low income people. Rochelle grew up in Western Massachusetts and received a BA from both Barnard College and the Jewish Theological Seminary. She attended law school at Georgetown.

Beaufort County Group Forms to Help Transform a Troubled High School

By Wayland Whitley

It is indeed an honor and a privilege to have this opportunity to present to you the following information concerning the upcoming events that are related to the start of a new school year at Southside High School in Chocowinity, North Carolina.

I am a board member of the Concerned Citizens for the Betterment of Beaufort County Schools, a new organization that is working with the school system to eliminate barriers to the successful education of our children.

As you may well know, last year was not a good year at Southside High School, and the school year ended on a sour note. There were fights and riots at the school that left several students expelled for the year without an alternative education plan.

These shocking events called out to the community to act. Hence the Concern Citizens for the Betterment of Beaufort County Schools was born.

The organization injected itself into the marriage of students and school system. Once the organization filed its paperwork with Secretary of State, we began the process of attempting to meet with the county school board to address the issues that had given birth to the situation at Southside High School. We, as well as many parents from the community, were shunned by the school board without the smallest token of acknowledgment for our concerns. We were never given time on the school board agenda, however; we were able to present our case to the school board through the use of the public comment time allotted on the school board agenda. To date we have not been given time on the school board agenda, nor has the school board responded to the organization's request that it employ a mediation firm to get at the root of problems that exist at our schools and bring resolution to these issues.

The school superintendent, Dr. Jeffrey Moss has been very cordial to us in that he and his assistant have met with us on several occasions to discuss our concerns. Keep in mind that it is the superintendent's job to set the agenda for the school board meetings, and yet he has denied us the opportunity to be placed on the agenda. The school board is a nine-member body elected by the voters of Beaufort County. They each represent a district of the county, and the board receives funding from the county to support the various school services it renders. Yet, board members do not adequately respond to the citizens of the county. Beaufort County, we have a problem.

As a result of parents' inability to obtain needed alternative education from the school system for their suspended children, two lawsuits against the Beaufort County Board of Education were filed and are pending.

The solution to the problems we are having with our school system is not more involvement by our police force, but rather more parental concern and citizen involvement at all levels of school system administration right down to that single child. Those who choose to get involved should not be treated as outcasts by the school board, but should be received

with open arms and ears which will enhance the partnership and give rise to a more effective and efficient school operation.

We are now facing a new school year with many of the issues of last year still unresolved. In an attempt to resolve some of the old issues, we, the Concerned Citizens for the Betterment of Beaufort County Schools, met with the new principal for Southside High School, Mr. Rick Anderson, and laid on the table our concerns for past issues affecting the performance and student conduct at Southside High School, as well as our hopes for the future of the same.

At the conclusion of the meeting we were able to locate common ground. Let me make this clear. Mr.

Anderson did not say yes to all issues that were presented to him by the group, but what he said was very profound and I quote "I am willing to work with you to create that environment conducive to better education of our students." The Good Book tells us that a wise man will seek council. We are aware that nothing will happen on the school campus without the stamp of approval of the principal.

It was put forth by the group and agreed upon by all parties that we should begin this school year with a back-to-school jamboree. The occasion has been tentatively scheduled for Friday Aug. 30., starting at 11 a.m. and ending at 4 p.m. We are asking all parents, students and concerned citizens to come out in support of this event.

If for some reason we are not able to keep this

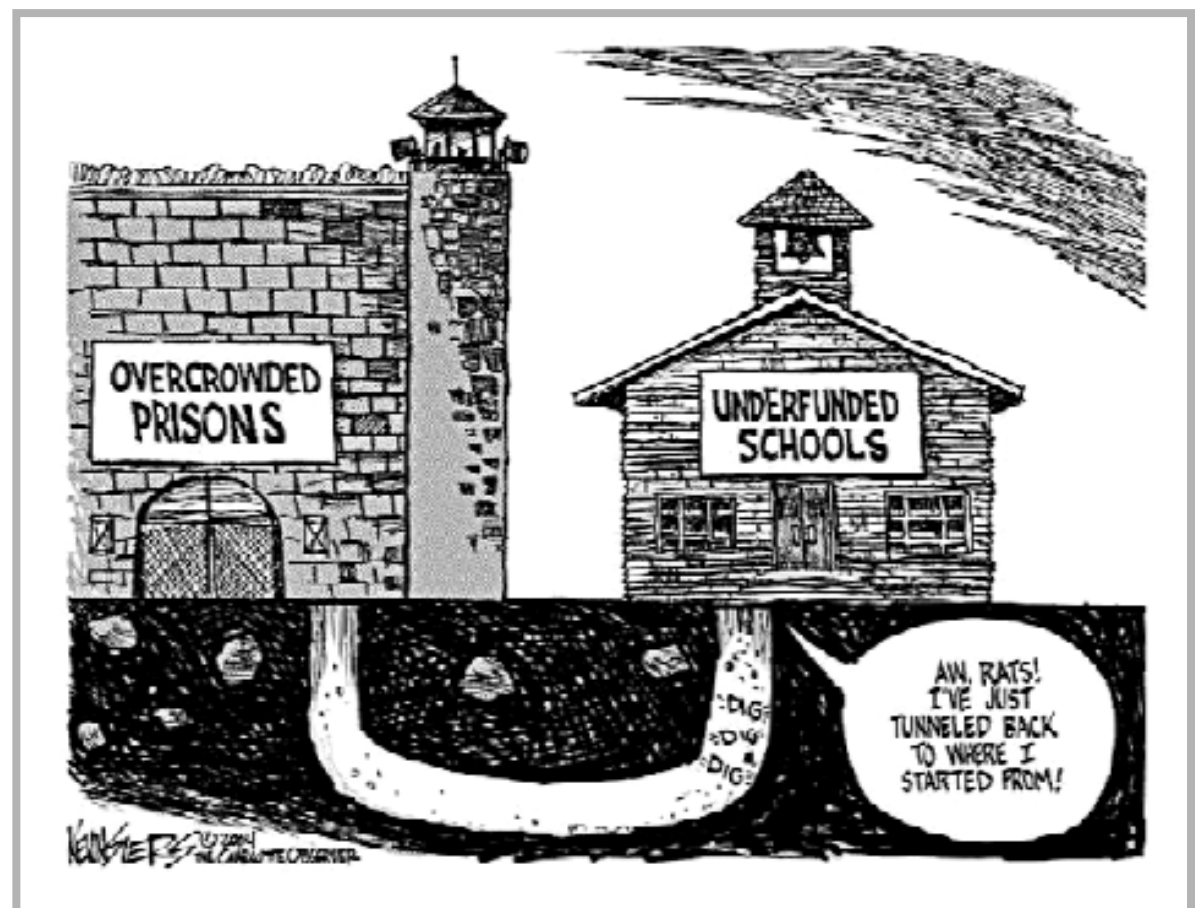
schedule, the event will be rescheduled for a later date in the month of September, and the public will be advised. We are seeking donations of all kind -- money, food, school supplies, merchandise -- to use as prizes and your volunteers from all sectors of the community to help make this event a success.

This year we are hoping to place at each of our schools in the county a group of volunteers who will work with our students assisting them in the areas of time management, reading and math. If you are interested in volunteering, we welcome you and will make every effort to place you at a school in your community. If you would like to volunteer, contact Revondia Barrow at 252-944-1700 or Wayland Whitley at 252 943 1554. God knows we cannot do this without your help.

Why is so much attention being given to Southside High School? At the conclusion of last year Southside High School was the Hot Spot dealing with issues that manifested themselves into the public eye. In order for this to have happened, many of the underlining causes were left unattended for a considerable amount of time until it reached its zenith, then the explosion. It is our hope to work with the principal of Southside High School to stabilize this situation. Once the equilibrium at Southside High School returns to normal, we will be able to provide much needed attention to all the schools in our county.

Once again we are in need of volunteers, and yes, you can make a difference in the life of one child. Collectively we can affect the lives of all of our children.

Wayland Whitley is a Board Member of Concerned Citizens for the Betterment of Beaufort County Schools.





North Carolina Justice Center

*Opportunity and Prosperity
for All*

NC JUSTICE CENTER

P.O. Box 28068
224 S. Dawson Street
Raleigh, NC 27611-8068

(919)856-2570 voice
(919)856-2175 fax

www.ncjustice.org

The North Carolina Justice Center was founded in 1996 through the merger of two former Legal Services organizations. Started with a staff of about a dozen, today the North Carolina Justice Center is more than 40 people strong and includes community educators, communications specialists, researchers, attorneys, policy advocates, and other dedicated professionals.

The Justice Center has been extraordinarily successful in changing policies in North Carolina to improve the lives of working families because of our unique approach to advocacy. We use five interconnected strategies in our work:

1. **Public Policy Advocacy** – Our advocates work with policymakers to secure laws and policies that improve the lives of low- and moderate-income families and to oppose policies that would take the state backward.
2. **Litigation** – Our attorneys take on high-impact cases designed to protect and expand the rights of low-income groups and individuals, including immigrants.
3. **Research** – Our experts analyze policies and challenges that impact low-income North Carolinians, identify strategies for improvement, and publish their findings in an array of well-respected reports and issue briefs.
4. **Community Outreach** – Our educators build relationships with groups and individuals at the community level and pursue a two-way process of education and empowerment.
5. **Communications** – Our writers and media experts generate commentaries and publications designed to shape public opinion.

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