

Community Coalition for Social Justice
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Update: 29 August 2003

I. CCSJ PROJECTS

Next Steering Committee Meeting: Tuesday, September 2, 7 p.m., Public Safety Building Training Room, Spruce Street. Please contact Barb Howe at barbara.howe@mail.wvu.edu if you have issues for the steering committee to consider.

Annual Meeting Set for September 24

The CCSJ annual meeting will be held on **Wednesday, September 24**, at the Senior Monongalians Center on High Street at 7 p.m.. Our guest speaker will be **Rick Wilson, who works with the American Friends Service Committee West Virginia Economic Justice Project**. He will be talking about economic justice issues and some strategies to address the problems in West Virginia.

This will be a joint program with the Monongahela Peace and Justice Coalition and, perhaps, the Economic Justice Coalition, to build on our efforts to create coalitions around issues of common concern.

We will be looking for new steering committee members to be chosen at the annual meeting. If you are interested in helping in this way, please contact Tim Hairston at questz1z@netscape.net

Library Books Project

We hope to have the books we have ordered with City Council funds available at our annual meeting, along with an updated brochure. These books focus on children and disabilities.

Diversity Week Program to be on Slave Narratives - Coming in October!

CCSJ, the Center for Black Culture and Research, and the WVU Division of Social Work are co-sponsoring a program for WVU's Diversity Week on Sunday, October 26. This will be at 3 pm. in the Gluck Theater of the WVU Mountainlair. The program will be focused on slave narratives, *using Unchained Memories: Readings from the Slave Narratives*, a book/HBO documentary. Al Anderson will sing spirituals appropriate to the readings. This year, students in WVU's Orientation 101 classes can get credit for attending our program; they are required to attend one event during Diversity Week, and we appreciate David Stewart's support in getting this listed among the official events for that requirement.

Economic Justice Committee

If you are interested in working on local economic justice issues, please contact David Cormier at DRCormier@mail.wvu.edu.

II. PLEASE SEND YOUR DUES AND IDEAS!

If you have not yet done so, please send your dues so that we have the resources to continue our work. **Dues are \$5 for individuals and \$25 for organizations.** Youth under the age of 18 are free. Please send your checks, payable to CCSJ, to PO Box 160, Morgantown, WV 26507-0160.

Please send your web site suggestions to Mike Attfield at attfield@labyrinth.net.

Please contact any of the steering committee members to volunteer to help and to share your suggestions for our work or e-mail us at ccsjwv@hotmail.com.

Deadline for items to include in next Update will be September 20. Please send items to share with our membership to ccsjwv@hotmail.com.

If we can support your event or your issues in some way, please let us know, especially if you represent a member organization. We want to be a true coalition that unites groups and individuals interested in social justice, so please let us know how we can help and please send us information about your group to publicize to our membership.

III. NEWS OF MEMBERS AND MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS

Nora Sheets has provided the following report of her work in Bosnia - please note the opportunities, at the end of the report, to support this important endeavor!

"The Art of Healing" - USING ART TO REACH OUT TO THE CHILDREN OF WAR

In August I had the honor to accompany the ArtReach Foundation of Atlanta to Bosnia. The ArtReach Foundation addresses the rising generation in regions that have been severely wounded by war by sending teams of professionals to work with teachers and students. Armed with pen and paper, crayon and scissors, glue and paints supplied by area businesses such as Barry's Office Supply, the network of art educators, therapists and professionals from Atlanta, New York, California and West Virginia traveled to Tuzla, Bosnia. Our mission: to help the children of Bosnia.

Research has shown that expressive art is an enormously effective means of helping traumatized children cope with their problems and equip themselves to lead productive lives. Providing art expression in a safe, therapeutic, and educational setting allows children to express residual anger and resentment, work through emotions related to trauma, and discover renewed hope with a strengthened sense of self. ArtReach organizes, develops, and provides resources for programs that offer creative problem solving and expressive art activities for children who have been emotionally traumatized.

The ArtReach team worked with 30 teachers and 30 students from Tuzla. Tuzla is located near Srebrenica, the scene of one of the worst episodes of mass killing and ethnic cleansing in Europe since the Second World War. Many of Tuzla's inhabitants were refugees from Srebrenica. ArtReach's projects allowed both the teachers and the students to express themselves through art and drama. It will also enable the teachers of Bosnia to utilize these methods in their own classrooms.

Each year, thousands of children around the world are the victims of severe trauma brought on by war or natural disaster. They have been robbed of the joy of childhood. Often these children are unable to outwardly express their fear, anger, and insecurity. In spite of this, they must try to make something of their lives. If they cannot deal with the emotional damage experienced during childhood, many of these children may become emotionally dysfunctional adults. The result will be a life of pain and failure for each victim, and potentially even the continuation of the cycle of violence in war torn areas. The consequences of not dealing with this problem are

exponential. Moreover, the communities where these children live will be deprived of the benefit of their creativity and productivity during their adult working years. Since many of the places hit by war where these children live are striving to rebuild their civil liberty, the contribution of every citizen is needed.

In Bosnia alone, tens of thousands of children have been traumatized by war and ethnic cleansing. Although the shooting may have stopped for now, deep emotional wounds remain for these children. ArtReach has taken its missions throughout the Balkans to areas such as Sarajevo, Gorazde and Tuzla. It would like to become an international healing-through-the-arts relief team for children traumatized by war or natural disasters.

"Sixty-five percent of the children in Sarajevo alone witnessed killings and death," says Susan Anderson, the foundation's executive director. "You don't have to scratch the surface very hard to see that you have issues of post-traumatic stress still under there. During the siege, many teachers organized classes in storage units, and it was a saving grace for these kids, an escape from the hell of the bombardment. During sniper fire, they'd go to school, passing bodies in piles with people still breathing in them, and slipping in blood. They even had graduation underground. "The war is over" she continues. "The community has returned to a civil society and is dealing with the wounding of the war. Many of the children in the schools now were conceived, born or lived during the war. It will have a strong effect on how they see the world and deal with conflict resolution. Their experiences could lead to a recycling of violence in the future if someone doesn't deal with their post-traumatic stress."

One of ArtReach's goals in Bosnia is to research and develop a program manual for other art therapy teams to use after disaster strikes anywhere in the world. The symptoms are typical for survivors of emotional, sexual and physical abuse and natural disasters.

UNICEF estimates as many as 10 million children suffer from the "psychological wounds" of war, or post-traumatic stress disorder. A 1994 UNICEF survey in Sarajevo found that 23 percent of children felt that life was not worth living. A similar survey in Mostar, in western Bosnia, found that 53 percent of Muslim children thought that life was not worth living, 71 percent had terrifying dreams and 62 percent has seen dead bodies. The idea of art to help heal the wounds of war is not new. Many refugee camps the world over use the method, and universities and other organizations have undertaken similar programs in the Balkans.

ArtReach learned that some of the children's artworks produced during their mission will be sent to Athens, Greece, where it will be on display for the 2004 Olympics. The theme of their artworks is the spirit of brotherhood and unity that the Olympics embody.

While in Tuzla I took the opportunity to meet with the director of Landmine Survivors Network. As sponsor for Students Against Landmines, I was interested in how this organization helps landmines victims in Bosnia. Our discussions centered on how Students Against Landmines in West Virginia could offer assistance to those in need. While in Sarajevo I also met with de-miner and information officer, Damir Atikovic of Norwegian People's Aid. A new project involves the "Adopting a Mine Dog" program that raises money for the training and upkeep of these special animals, especially important in a country such as Bosnia, which is still littered with landmines. A bus ride to Tuzla from Sarajevo made this obvious when it was noted that in many places both sides of the road had signs warning of mined areas. Children's art works often depicted mined areas and their fear of them. When asked to draw their hopes for the future students drew pictures of landscapes devoid of landmines.

Working with the ArtReach team was the opportunity of a lifetime. I am honored to have been able to work with this team of professionals so devoted to helping the innocent victims of war, children.

For more information: ArtReach: www.artreachfoundation.org

United States Campaign to Ban

Landmines: www.banminesusa.org

International Campaign to Ban Landmines: www.icbl.org

Interested in Students Against Landmines or the West Virginia Campaign To Ban Landmines: contact Nora Sheets at nsheets@access.k12.wv.us

If you would like to share your social justice work with our readers, please send that information to Barb Howe at barbara.howe@mail.wvu.edu.

WVU-ACE/WVEA EVENTS SCHEDULED

WVU-ACE/WVEA is hosting a general meeting on September 16th and an open house on September 24th. For more information, contact WVU-ACE/WVEA at 1`137 Van Voorhis Rd., Suite 6, Morgantown 26505.

CENTER FOR WOMEN'S STUDIES UPDATE

The Center for Women's Studies invites everyone to join us for a **celebration of our new major in women's studies!** We will be hosting a reception in the Vandalia Lounge of the WVU Mountainlair **on Friday, September 12th**, from 4:30 - 6 p.m., with a short program beginning at 5 p.m. Please come help us celebrate this joyous occasion and meet the students who are our first majors!

The Center for Women's Studies is also hosting its first Fireside Chat on **Wednesday, September 17th**. Dennis Wainstock, associate professor of humanities and social sciences at Salem International University, will present **"The Rise of the Women's Liberation Movement: 1967 to 1970."** The program will be held in the Betty Boyd Lounge of E. Moore Hall on the WVU campus from 4-5:30 p.m. Refreshments will be served.

The Fifth Annual Women's Studies Residency in Honor of Judith Gold Stitzel will be October 14th-16th. Dr. Elizabeth Miller, instructor of social medicine and pediatrics at Harvard Medical School and a primary care physician in medicine and pediatrics, will present a public lecture on Wednesday, October 15th, at the WVU Health Sciences Center Auditorium. The title of her lecture is **"Gender Based Violence: Cultural, Political, and Clinical Considerations."** A reception will follow the lecture. There will also be a reception to welcome Dr. Miller to campus on Tuesday, October 14th, from 4 to 6 p.m. in the Betty Boyd Lounge of E. Moore Hall.

For more information about women's studies events, contact Will Karigomba at wkarigomba@geo.wvu.edu or 293-2339 ext. 1153.

IV. OTHER ANNOUNCEMENTS

On Monday, **September 15th**, from 5 - 9:30 p.m., there will be a **public meeting/hearing** at the Health Sciences Center Main Auditorium on the **Longview/GenPower coal-fired power** plant proposed for Monongalia County. For further details, watch the *Dominion Post* or contact Mary Rehmann at rehmannlaw@labyrinth.net.

The League of Women Voters and the Council of Schools are sponsoring a **forum on the school construction bond** that will be up for a vote in October. The forum will be held on Thursday, **September 18th**, at 7 p.m. at South Middle School. Michael Vetere, superintendent of the Monongalia County schools, and school board members Barbara Parsons and Michael Yura will be there to answer your questions.

The **Morgantown chapter of the National Organization for Women (NOW)** is reorganizing! The next meeting will be Sunday, **September 21st**, at 7 pm. in Room 162 of the WVU Law School. This will be a general business meeting, and all are welcome to attend. The October meeting will be Sunday, October 12th, at 7 p.m. in the WVU Mountainlair. For further information, please contact Kelley Gunther at kgunther@mix.wvu.edu.

On Sunday, **October 26th**, at 2 p.m., there will be a one-woman show entitled "Haunted by God" about Dorothy Day, co-founder of the Catholic Worker Movement. Catholic Worker houses exist around the country where people live simply and work for social justice. It will be sponsored by St. John's University Parish at a location to be announced.

CCSJ Steering Committee 2002-2003

Tim Hairston (Monongalia-Preston Labor Council AFL-CIO), Interim President. President. Al Anderson, Vice President. Barbara Howe (WVU Center for Women's Studies), Secretary. Gregory Wagner, Treasurer. Mike Attfield. Judy Cohen. Lourdes Cottingham (Equality for All Americans). Kris Hash. Jacqueline Moseley. Michael Sharley. Deb Strouse (WV Center for Dispute Resolution).