

RICJ

Rhode Island
for Community
& Justice

Building understanding.
Together.

RHODE ISLAND FOR COMMUNITY & JUSTICE

What's Happening at RICJ



You can protect your liberties in this world only by protecting the other man's freedom. You can be free only if I am free. Clarence Darrow

LFAF 2008 Class:

Front row: Cristina Vallejo, Judy Perry, Alexandra Corona, Dwayne Keys, Viviana Knowles, Ruth Fuerte, John Gomes, Yakim Parker. Middle: Esperanza Gomez, Noshina Khalid, Ingrid Medrano, Musu Stewart, Johnny Leyva, Patricia LaSalle, Jonathan Mendelsohn, Elmis Navarro, Harold Leyva, Victor Ofokansi, Jerome Thompson, Farah Naz, John Killoy, Jeshua Zapata. Back row: William Pierce, Rob Jones (facilitator), Robert Desperini, Stan Cameron. Not pictured: Robert Delaney and instructors Nanda Shewmangal, Carolina Bernal, Toby Ayers.

LEADERSHIP FOR A FUTURE

Introducing the 2008 Leadership for A Future Class. Twenty six participants represent community, non-profits, businesses, unions and educational institutions, including the *National Association for Minority Contractors*, *Bryant University*, *CCRI*, *Bank of America*, *English for Action*, *AFL-CIO*, *Pakistan American Association*, *Hope High School* and many more, kicked off the year with a weekend retreat February 8-10 at Camp Canonicus Conference Center in Exeter, RI

RICJ collaborating with the Institute for Labor Studies and Research will provide training to these emerging leaders. Sessions include Leadership, History of RI, Collaboration, Media Communication, Lobbying, Public Speaking, State Government, and RI Economy and Politics. A visit to the Museum of Work and Culture is part of the ten week program culminating with graduation on May 30 at the RI State House.

"The Leadership for a Future Retreat is a weekend that will change your life. You will learn so much about yourself as a future leader of Rhode Island through reflective and team building activities. Most importantly, you will understand the power of making connections with people of diverse backgrounds. You will leave feeling inspired to begin the hard work of changing our communities and state."
Jonathan Mendelsohn,
Hope Arts High School

Congrats to these leaders.
They are RI's future!

More information on
RICJ programs are
on our website:
www.RICJ.org

**RESEARCH FIRM TO PRESENT
JUVENILE JUSTICE STUDY**

RICJ will kick off its Juvenile Justice project with an invite to Connecticut-based Spectrum Associates to meet with Project Advisors from Youth Programs, the Civil Rights Roundtable, Police Chiefs Association and Court staff.

The presentation is part of an RICJ grant from the *RI Juvenile Justice Commission* to build understanding and better relations between juveniles and police through education and dialogue. The research firm will present a new analysis of data, showing Black and Hispanic juveniles more likely to be:

- ◆arrested,
- ◆transferred to adult court,
- ◆placed in pre-trial detention and
- ◆placed in the Training School

National studies show similar overrepresentation. Minority juveniles are about 1/3 of the juvenile population but comprise 62% of juveniles in detention. Disparities are not explained by differences in delinquent behavior, but may relate to lack of cultural understanding and culturally appropriate services. Connecticut has been able to reduce such disparities.

RI's youth, community, police and court Advisors will meet to educate each other on underlying issues and together craft new policy solutions promoting bias-free juvenile justice.

**20TH ANNIVERSARY OF METCALF
AWARDS TO BE HELD MAY15**

RICJ will recognize professional journalists and media outlets for promoting diversity awareness and social justice at the annual Metcalf Diversity in Media Awards on May 15, 8:15 at the Providence Marriott.

This year marks the 20th Anniversary of this premiere award given in RI to recognize professional journalists, media outlets, and internet media for exemplary work.

Established in 1988 to honor the late Michael Metcalf, Providence Journal publisher, the 2008 winners are Stephanie McKenna, *The Providence Journal*; Nancy Kirsch, *Jewish Voice & Herald*; Gail Braccidiferno, *RI Monthly*; Staff Writers of the *Providence Business News*; Matt Jerzyk, *RI Futures Blog*; and Johnny Skye Njie, *RI Department of Education*.

Entries are reviewed by an independent panel of judges with media, public relations and journalism backgrounds.

WJAR TV 10 Reporter, *Michelle Brown* will emcee the ceremony. Current sponsors include: Providence Journal, Belvoir Properties, Washington Trust, Citizens Bank, AAA of Southern NE, Amica Insurance, and Blue Cross Blue Shield of RI. Funds raised benefit all the programs of RICJ. We are halfway to our goal and welcome your support!

For tickets or to sponsor, contact Ann Clanton, RICJ at 467-1717 Ext. 101.

Save The Date

RICJ 2008 Metcalf Diversity in Media Awards

Thursday, May 15, 8:15 a.m.
Marriot Hotel, Orms Street — Providence
Emcee: Michelle Brown, NBC 10

HONORING
Stephanie McKenna, Providence Journal
Nancy Kirsch, Jewish Voice and Herald
Gail Braccidiferno, RI Monthly
Providence Business News
Matt Jerzyk, RI Futures Blog
Johnny Skye Njie, RI Dep't. of Education

For more information or to RSVP, contact Ann Clanton at
401-467-1717, ext. 101, or email: aclanton@etal.uri.edu

RICJ PROJECT RESPECT – YOUTH LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

SPONSORS SOUGHT TO SHIP DONATED BOOKS TO GHANA

Project Respect collected over 1,000 books for the “*Books to Ghana*” project. Books for children and adults were collected by the Youth Action Council from generous individuals state-wide. The task of getting books to Ghana is underway. We seek underwriters to cover costs of shipping books to a Ghanaian refugee camp.

Donors and sponsors to date are PROVIDENCE ALUMNAE CHAPTER OF DELTA SIGMA THETA SORORITY, INC. AND GREENVILLE PUBLIC LIBRARY.

YOUTH ACTION COUNCIL MEETS EVERY 1ST AND 3RD MONDAY OF THE MONTH



Packing *Books to Ghana*: Youth Action Council members Camblin Reyes, Mike Fonseca and Harry Stewart with Nanda Shewmangal.

YOUTH ACTION COUNCIL RECRUITS FOR CAMP RESPECT AT HIGH SCHOOLS

Assistant Director of Programs Nanda Shewmangal and Youth Action Council members are out scouting Rhode Island high schools for youth for Camp RESPECT 2008, to be held June 24 through July 1. In February, recruiting workshops were held at Adelaide High School, School One and Hope High School to promote the week long leadership camp. We seek youth who aspire to “*become the change they would like to see in the world*”.

NEW STATEWIDE POLICE COMPLAINT & COMMENDATION FORM CREATED BY ROUNDTABLE/RIPCA SUBCOMMITTEE

Working with a subcommittee of the RI Civil Rights Roundtable and RI Police Chiefs Association, member **Gloria Hincapie** of the RI-DOT Office of Highway Safety created a much-needed new Statewide form for law enforcement, community groups and individuals to use to document and relay complaints or commendations related to traffic stops.

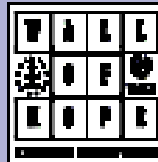
Based on a model used by the Arizona Department of Public Safety, the form is in both English and Spanish. It is both educational and easy-to-use.

A second similar form is being drafted by Toby Ayers based on the earlier form, that will apply generally for any type of commendations or complaints, not only related to traffic stops.

Rhode Island For Community & Justice

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“Be the change you'd like to see in the world!”



Youth Action Council Members Camblin Reyes, Liz Okero and Harry Stewart following a recruiting/diversity workshop at Adelaide High School.

SAVE THE DATE
“To Kill A Mockingbird”
Performance
April 24, URI-Feinstein Campus
PAFF AUDITORIUM
Reception: 5:30pm Play: 6pm
Developed & performed by the RICJ Youth Action Council

SOCIAL VENTURES PARTNERS “WALL OF HOPE DESIGN PROJECT”

HOPEFUL WITH HELP FROM SOME NEW FRIENDS

Social Venture Partners of RI (SVPRI) is working with RI for Community & Justice and the People’s School to use the message of the **RI Wall of Hope** as the basis of a new project for economic empowerment of community residents through the arts.

Team members met with former RI Jewelry Manufacturers Association president, Meredith Curren. A principal in the Pease and Curren Group, she is advising the start – up organization. Ms. Curren suggested the project expand its arts focus from its initial emphasis on residents designing and creating jewelry based on the Wall of Hope, to also include giftware and apparel items.

The Wall of Hope Design Project has recruited community artists to draft samples of potential products for introduction to the market, according to project coordinator Dee Dee Brown. RICJ and its partners are actively fundraising to continue the project now in its infancy stage. Jewelry manufacturers and supporters of the Wall of Hope project are among the targeted sources for funding.

Making Connections, Destiny House, Just A Step Productions -RI and Johnson & Wales University’s Community Service Learning Department are among those groups signed on to the project to provide technical and artistic support. An agreement with the new *Charles Street Community Center* is providing community space for the project’s art and design classes, with the hope that once the Wall of Hope Design Project is completed, the Center can eventually become a satellite campus of the People’s School.

FINAL SCREENINGS OF "TRACES" SCHEDULED BEFORE BROADCAST PREMIERE

Bryant University Screening



(left) Traces Producer Katrina Browne, family members Dain & Constance Perry, Dee Vieira, Bryant University, RICJ Facilitator Rob Jones, Dr. Greg Rubano, Dr. Toby Ayers, Ann Clanton, Lucie Burdick, and a Bryant University student



(right) Dr. Greg Rubano, Coordinator of the RI Big Read, West Bay Collaborative, introduces the Bryant event

FINAL SCREENINGS SCHEDULED BEFORE "TRACES" NATIONAL BROADCAST PREMIER

A sold out screening at the Barrington Public Library in February kicked off the final series of screenings sponsored by RICJ following the announcement that the Sundance Film nominated documentary will make its national television broadcast debut on PBS in June 2008.

The Public Broadcasting Station (PBS) series "Point of View" (POV) has chosen "*Traces of the Trade: A Story of the Deep North*" to be its season premiere on June 24. A viewer guide will be created for the film which will bring wide public attention to the issues of slavery and racial reconciliation. Ebb Pod Productions is in discussion with national and local PBS about following the film with additional programming such as panels that can re-create aspects of the post-film dialogues that RICJ has facilitated in community screenings across Rhode Island.

RICJ held screenings at Bryant University, South Kingstown Public Library, CCRI-Liston Providence Campus, CCRI-Newport Campus, Everett Theater-Providence and the Portsmouth Abbey School-Newport prior to the national distribution. Screenings are also being used as an opportunity to seek audience signatures petitioning the State for a resolution of apology for slavery, with signed petitions to be sent to the General Assembly as the 2009 session begins.

Now that "Traces" has "gone national", RICJ is precluded from doing more community dialogue screenings until after the PBS show airs. But after it does we are seeking support to help RICJ conduct a series of in-depth dialogues that will provide viewers with opportunities to talk about the film they have seen and to work towards better race relations in Rhode Island.

METCALF AWARD WINNERS' WORK BASIS FOR CREATION OF NEW COURSE PROPOSAL

To mark the 20th anniversary of the Metcalf Diversity in Media Awards; RICJ created a proposal to use 20 years of Award winners' work for a new college educational course entitled "*Emulating Excellence: Using Best Practices to Promote Diversity in the Media*".

RICJ applied to New Voices in Journalism for a mini grant and is targeting other specialized funding sources. Initially developed as a pilot program it would eventually be built as a Distance Learning Course for URI. Web-based materials will make the information widely available to journalists, students, community leaders.



2008 Metcalf Award winner Stephanie McKenna with friend and community leader Molly Soum.

CIVIL RIGHTS ROUNDTABLE AND TRACES FILMMAKER CALL FOR RI LEGISLATIVE APOLOGY

The RICJ Board agreed to support the call of the Civil Rights Roundtable and the Traces filmmaker and family members for a RI legislative apology for slavery. RICJ Director Ayers drafted a resolution based on other states' legislation, for review by the Roundtable and key players like Professor James Campbell of Brown University, James DeWolf Perry of Ebb Pod Productions, Phil West, and others.

Reviewers agreed that it was essential that Rhode Island take a different path from other states, where such resolutions have been adopted with little community input. Instead, Rhode Island's will be a grassroots effort.

2008, the bicentennial of the US abolition of the slave trade, and the "Traces" screenings will be used to build community support for an apology. RICJ developed a petition to be circulated at screenings and other events, for the community to sign.

RICJ submitted a proposal to the Rhode Island Foundation for a strategy grant to create a public awareness campaign around the apology for slavery. RICJ will look to the Rhode Island Council on the Humanities (RICH), the Brown University Steering Committee on Slavery and Justice and to others for assistance with the project.



RICJ collecting signatures for Apology for Slavery Legislation following the Bryant University screening.



Rhode Island for Community & Justice
80 Washington Street
Room 225-227
Providence, RI 02903-1803

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MARK YOUR CALENDARS RICJ 2008 Upcoming Activities

- April 17:** Traces of the Trade, 7:00pm
CCRI-Newport, final showing open to the public.
- April 24:** Youth Action Council, *"To Kill a Mockingbird"* Performance, 5:30pm
URI-Feinstein Campus Paff Auditorium
- May 30:** Leadership for a Future 2008 Graduation Ceremony, 7:00pm
Rhode Island State House
- May 15:** Metcalf Diversity in Media Awards Ceremony, 8:15 am
Providence Marriott - Orms Street. Tickets are \$40.
- June 26 - July 1:** Project RESPECT summer youth leadership camp program at Camp Davis.
- Sept 11:** Walk of Unity & Remembrance from the RI Statehouse to the Wall of Hope.
- Oct 16 :** RICJ Community and Justice Awards Fundraiser, 5:30 p.m.
RI Convention Center-Sabin Street Providence. Tickets are \$100.

Ongoing Activities:

- Youth Action Council meetings, first and third Mondays of the month.
- Wall of Hope empowerment project with Social Venture Partners & People School.
- RI Civil Rights Roundtable collaboration meetings, last Monday and Wednesday of the month.
- RI Faiths & Communities Together network promoting interfaith unity.
- Workplace Diversity Trainings.

To volunteer or participate in RICJ activities, please contact 401.467.1717 ext. 100

HELP RICJ CONTINUE OUR WORK!

RICJ is #6268 on your United Way Pledge Sheet

RICJ, 80 Washington St., Rm. 225-227, Providence, RI 02903-1803
Tel 401.467.1717 ❖ Fax 401.467.2707 ❖ Email RICJ@cox.net ❖ Web www.ricj.org