



WINTER 2010

BUILDING BRIDGES

A CHANGE FOR CHILDREN PUBLICATION

COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP OUR CAPACITY TO CHANGE THE WORLD

Back to School in Solidarity • The Power of Community • Indigenous Capacity, Sustainable Community
Real Youth, Real Issues • It Takes Many Hands to Change the World

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IT TAKES MANY HANDS TO CHANGE THE WORLD

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Change for Children Association (CFCA) is an Edmonton-based non-government organization with a thirty-four year history of working for sustainable grassroots community development in Latin America and Africa, and providing a vibrant global education program in Canada.

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BACK TO SCHOOL IN SOLIDARITY

*ALBERTA TEACHERS
TRANSFORM TRAVEL
EXPERIENCES INTO
LOCAL ACTION*

“As educators, we had an amazing opportunity to witness the impact that Change for Children projects, including school construction, water wells, eco-stoves, sustainable farming practices, and fair trade industries, have had on the people, their communities, the environment and their future.”



Last July, 12 Albertan educators traveled with Change for Children to Nicaragua on the 2nd annual Just Teach: Social Justice Tour. Karla Whittaker and Jennifer Johnson, teachers from Cold Lake High School, were deeply affected by their experiences connecting with Nicaraguan teachers, students and community leaders. Now they are leading the way in transforming their global experiences into enriching curriculum and challenging students to take action on poverty, education, and climate change.

CONNECTING TO CURRICULUM

Karla and Jennifer teach science and social studies to high school students in Cold Lake. Just Teach had a profound impact on their areas of curricular expertise. “In Nicaragua, we learned that drastic changes in precipitation have led to

flooding, desertification, and the failure to predict growing cycles for crops. Poverty has pressured the farmers to abandon traditional organic farming practices in favor of livestock over sustainable crops such as shade grown cacao, coffee and bananas. Livestock farming has increased nitrate and phosphate run-off, devastating local aquatic ecosystems. We witnessed this first hand while traveling down the Coco Rio. However; despite these impoverished conditions, we also saw how local entrepreneurs are leading the way in providing innovative solutions. Juan Gutiérrez of Chinandega, Nicaragua uses basic materials to create ‘eco-stoves’ which require one-third the amount of wood as regular stoves. This means less time collecting fire wood, less deforestation, and fewer hours for children away from home or school.”

INSPIRING YOUTH ACTION

Over the weekend of October 1-2, 2010, Karla and Jennifer organized a Global Leadership Conference for 60 high school students from across the Northern Lights School Division. The conference connected students to Change for Children projects in the Global South, while inspiring participants to take action on social injustice. “Sharing our global experiences has expanded our students’ knowledge about social justice issues, and how our everyday choices have a wide-reaching impact. We are working to empower our youth to shape our world with empathy, dignity, and respect – for themselves, other people, and the planet.”

– Karla Whittaker & Jennifer Johnson



THE POWER OF COMMUNITY

**CANADIAN AND UGANDAN
COMMUNITIES SHARE IN
SUPPORTING NUTRITION,
HEALTH & MICRO-CREDIT
PROJECTS IN SOUTH-
WESTERN UGANDA**

By Lorraine Swift



"KIHEFO's work in the region has literally been a "game changer" in the lives of hundreds of villagers facing desperate situations"

This past September, I had the good fortune to visit our agri-innovation and micro-finance project in Uganda. Change for Children Association (CFCA) works in partnership with the Ugandan-based Kigezi Healthcare Foundation (KIHEFO), a small community-based organization that provides basic healthcare, agricultural training, nutrition counseling and micro-finance to small communities in the southwestern corner of the country.

KIHEFO's Executive Director, Dr. Geoffrey Anguyo, visited Canada in June 2010 to speak at the National Rotary Conference in Montreal. He made the trip out to Edmonton to meet in person this "amazing, effective, international development organization called Change for Children" that two Canadians - visiting Uganda on separate occasions - had told him about.

THE POWER OF THE CHANGE FOR CHILDREN COMMUNITY

David Fath, a former member of CFCA's Board of Directors, visited Uganda in 2007 and returned to Alberta raving about an "impressive and effective NGO" he had encountered there. He explained KIHEFO's integrated approach to community development: a holistic, three-pronged effort that provides healthcare, agricultural training and micro credit. He encouraged CFCA to get involved while he and his wife, Annie, set about convincing donors

to contribute to a small pilot project in the region.

The next year, former CFCA President Bill Howe visited Uganda with his family. As part of a 'social-safari' tour, they were introduced to KIHEFO and Dr. Anguyo, who explained their alliance with a Canadian NGO that was interested in funding their programs. Bill was pleasantly surprised to find that the Canadian NGO was CFCA. After this fateful encounter, Bill returned to Canada and helped us to gather the funds necessary to begin the pilot project in Uganda.

Only two years later, these inspiring stories were told at CFCA's Annual Development Dinner in September 2010, and thanks in part to our many community donors, a record breaking amount of funding was received to support this innovative project. Our CFCA community proved that, together, we can change the world.

THE POWER OF THE KIHEFO COMMUNITY

Our alliance with KIHEFO has introduced us to many of their supporters across the world, but more importantly, it has connected us to the incredible power of community that exists in Uganda's southwestern mountains. During my visit, I saw many examples of how KIHEFO's work in the region has literally been a

"game changer" in the lives of hundreds of villagers facing desperate situations.

In one village, I met Florence, the woman who is smiling on the front cover of this newsletter. Florence is HIV positive. When we attended the meeting of her local village group she told us about what she went through when she first became ill. Her face brightened as she spoke about KIHEFO, the organization she credits for her survival. She and her husband were helped through the testing and acceptance process by KIHEFO's counselors, who are HIV+ themselves. But more importantly, as Florence stresses, she and her family were supported and accepted by their community group, whose members have also received counseling from KIHEFO. Following KIHEFO's model, the community group members have been pivotal in supporting Florence through periods of sickness, helping with her agricultural production, employing her in local enterprises, helping her save money, and ensuring that her children are fed. Florence and her husband now volunteer in KIHEFO's HIV counseling program.

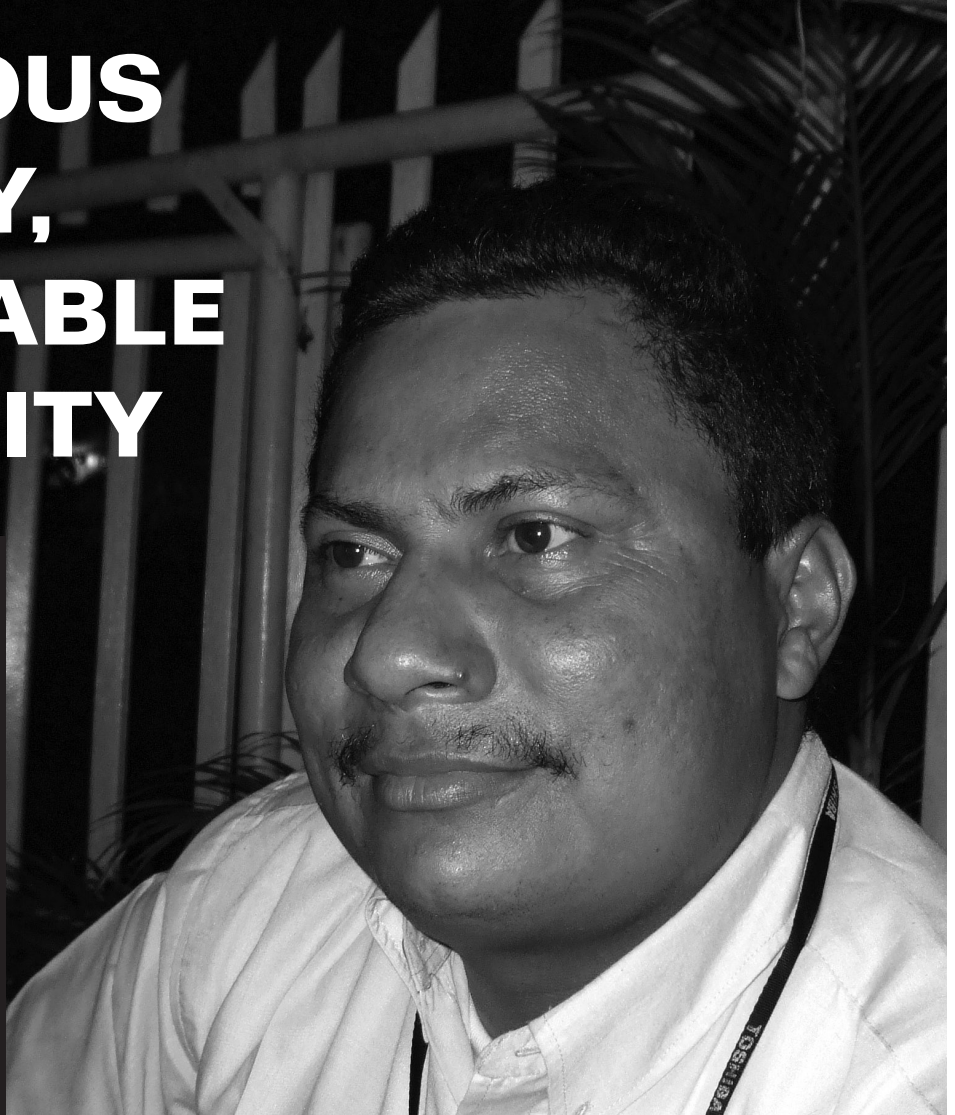
In another village, I met Judith, who is a self-confident and powerful mother of two healthy children. Through KIHEFO's micro enterprise development program, funded by CFCA, Judith received training and took the initiative to organize women

Continued on page 10

INDIGENOUS CAPACITY, SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY

INTERVIEW WITH NICARAGUAN INDIGENOUS LEADER PRIMITIVO CENTENO

“What we are now discovering in our discussions is that the government alone does not have the capacity to effectively manage our lands. As indigenous communities we have lived with the land and, therefore, we have the capacity.”



Primitivo Centeno was born and raised in the Miskito village of Pamkawas, located in the BOSAWAS Biosphere of Nicaragua. Over the last decade, Primitivo has advocated for indigenous territorial rights, while working collaboratively with Change for Children and Centro Humboldt to increase indigenous capacity in the areas of health, education and agriculture. He was recently inaugurated as the President of the Government of Indigenous Territory - a consolidation of the three indigenous territories of Western BOSAWAS. In May 2010, Nick Churchman, co-leader of Project HOPE, traveled into the region and filmed an interview with Primitivo. The following is an excerpt from the interview:

CAN YOU SPEAK TO US ABOUT THE CHALLENGES AND ISSUES YOUR PEOPLE FACE?

As indigenous communities we have faced many challenges. One example is that six years ago we encountered serious problems surrounding [the sovereignty of] our traditional land. There was an invasion of the indigenous territory by mestizos [farmers and logging industry]. This incident increased our commitment to lobby the Nicaraguan government for official land title to our traditional territory¹. As well, we are dealing with a number of social issues such as education, health, and [agricultural] production. Compared with the rest of Nicaragua, the level of [formal] education in indigenous communities is very low. As a result, we have very few professionals in our communities. Despite the fact that there is a lack of educational

infrastructure in the region the Nicaraguan government has not supported us. However, through cooperation with donors² we have built some schools. With respect to health, we have had to rely on natural medicines to treat illnesses. Given these issues we have begun to dialogue with the government to develop our own ministerial branch of government that would handle the management of education, health, agriculture, and security.

IN PURSUING COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT, HOW IMPORTANT IS THE ENVIRONMENT IN YOUR DECISION MAKING?

For us, the environment means development – as families are constantly thinking about working with the

environment to provide food. Historically, the environment has provided us with conditions necessary to life. The forest provided us with wild meat, which is healthier than domesticated livestock. As well, the mountains provided clean water that did not require purification...For us, the environment is our mother – we use it according to our traditional values. Recently, the government has tried to manage these resources. What we are now discovering in our discussions is that the government does not have the capacity to effectively manage our lands. As indigenous communities we have lived with the land and, therefore, we have the capacity.

WHY IS EDUCATION SO IMPORTANT TO THIS COMMUNITY?

Currently we are in the process of implementing bilingual education in the territory. Historically students only received their education in Spanish. In order to preserve [the Miskito] language, we are trying to implement our own education system, where students can learn in their own language. This is very important to our culture...Another important area of education involves agricultural technology. Given recent pressures on our land base, we need to find new sustainable ways to effectively manage the land. The Miskito people know how much the land is important for their own needs, but they do not yet realize its importance to the rest of the world.

HOW IMPORTANT IS CENTRO HUMBOLDT TO MISKITO COMMUNITIES IN THE BOSAWAS?

In 1992 we began working with Centro Humboldt on issues facing our communities...They were very helpful during Hurricane Mitch and Hurricane Felix³. They became another source of support to us other than the government, especially to promote indigenous capacity building. In comparison to other organizations – that finance their own projects and that are not indigenous led – Centro Humboldt works to strengthen indigenous and community capacities, so

that people can support themselves. This is the most important aspect of their work...

It is not always easy working together; there have been difficulties in the past. But, the relationship continues to improve, as do our projects.

¹ In 2005, the Nicaraguan government formally recognized land title held by the indigenous peoples of the BOSAWAS.

² Including Centro Humboldt and Change for Children Association.

³ In 1998, Hurricane Mitch destroyed homes, crops and community infrastructure; in 2007, Hurricane Felix hit the Caribbean coast of Nicaragua, also devastating indigenous communities in the BOSAWAS.



BIOGRAPHY:

Nick Churchman completed his undergraduate degree in Political Science at the University of Alberta. He was the 2009-10 Co-Leader of Project HOPE, and is currently Vice-Chair of Ceiba – an Edmonton-based youth global education program that is evolving from the Project HOPE movement.



**GIVE TO FOOD
SECURITY & CAPACITY
BUILDING PROJECTS IN
BOSAWAS, NICARAGUA**

CREATIVE RESPONSE TO HUMAN RIGHTS CRISIS

The tropical storm Matthew moved through Honduras and Nicaragua on September 24th, spurring sudden rainfall and flash flooding in many communities, including Estelí, Nicaragua - the hometown of FUNARTE (Fundación del Apoyo del Arte Infantil), a human rights organization dedicated to empowering children through art and education. As a result of the rapid rainfall, the Río Estelí breached its banks and flooded the homes of families living alongside the river, forcing hundreds of people into neighbourhood shelters. Immediately following the natural disaster, FUNARTE organized social-support workshops in various shelters for youth affected by the storm.

Facilitators from FUNARTE encouraged children to express their thoughts and emotions about the natural disaster by drawing and painting images relative to their personal experiences. These workshops were held in over 6 community shelters in Estelí, impacting hundreds of children and their families who were displaced from their homes.

REAL YOUTH, REAL ISSUES

RURAL ALBERTA YOUTH WRITE FOR RADIO & ZINES
ON HUMAN RIGHTS ADVOCACY

BY ERINNE SEVIGNY

"these youth proved that they
won't wait around for their
opinions to be asked for"



(REAL: ADJ. 1. EXISTING AS A FACT; ACTUAL; TRUE. 2. AUTHENTIC, GENUINE)

It's often said that the current generation of youth are apathetic – but a statement like that will often come from someone who is too apathetic about youth to ask them their opinion.

Throughout the winter and spring of 2010, I had the pleasure of being a part of a team of passionate youth at Change for Children that ran a program called "Rural Rights:

Youth Action and Media Project." The goal? To educate youth about human rights issues and to show them how they can spread the word through alternative media (radio and zines). We wanted to inspire youths throughout rural communities in Alberta, and going into it I knew I would be inspired too, but I never expected to what extent, and I definitely did not expect to be educated back. Over the weekend-

long workshops, youth chose to focus on human rights issues visible in their own backyards – but not without connecting their local realities to larger global human rights issues.

The debate about the Nuclear Power Plant set to be planted right along the Peace River is one that isn't as largely discussed south of Grand Prairie, but the Peace

River youth knew the science and the politics of the situation. They also knew how their rights to freedom of speech were being violated when a new law was instated so that no signs could be placed along roadways which had been deemed a 'distraction to traffic.' When workers went to remove signs, the only signs that came down were anti-nuclear signs. The thing that struck me most about this group was the satirical nature in which they hit back. Radio stories of nuclear zombies, "advertisements" for nuclear workers (and nuclear fashions) in their zines. They were angry, but real enough to know that sometimes subtlety has a grander impact.

In Airdrie, the issues they decided to focus on were more internal. Like the right to feel good about oneself – is that in the official human rights document? Perhaps not in those words, but while we aim to protect the rights of women and girls throughout the world, should we not be setting the example by empowering the women in our own communities? The bravery of this group was remarkable. Every student, no matter their size, took a snapshot of their stomach (no sucking it in!) to be featured along a border of bellies on an article about what real bodies are all about.

Youth, and not just city youth, have a host of solid, educated opinions about global and local, external and internal issues affecting the teen population and the world around them. That said, these youth proved that they won't wait around for their opinions to be asked for. They will use the resources at their disposal (however meagre they might be) to make sure their voices don't go unheard.

BIOGRAPHY:

Erinne Sevigny is the President of Other Voices Literary Magazine, an Edmonton published literary magazine that creates creative spaces for minority voices. Erinne facilitated zine-writing workshops for youth in Peace River and Airdrie in collaboration with the Rural Rights Youth Action & Media Project.



2011 DENTAL DELEGATIONS TO NICARAGUA

Apply Today - Jan. 22 - Feb. 5, 2011 (BOSAWAS) / Feb. 6-13, 2011 (Esteli)

Participants will visit urban and rural communities in Nicaragua to perform extractions, treat infections, and provide pain relief to people of all ages. These two delegations are open to all dental professionals, but are designed for hearty outdoor travelers. The BOSAWAS delegation will work in remote villages in the BOSAWAS jungle biosphere. The journey will involve lengthy canoe trips, portaging, time spent outside in the rain, intense sunlight, heat and wind. The Esteli delegation will work in the urban centre of Esteli, a city located in northern Nicaragua.

Contact Lorraine Swift before Dec. 1 to apply: lorena@changeformchildren.org



**CONTRIBUTE TO CHILDREN'S RIGHTS PROJECTS THAT
FOCUS ON EDUCATION, HEALTH, VOCATIONAL TRAINING,
AND COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION FOR PROMOTING
BRIGHTER FUTURES FOR ALL CHILDREN**

RURAL RIGHTS: YOUTH & MEDIA PROJECT

In the spring of 2010, Change for Children received generous funding from the Alberta Human Rights and Education Fund to engage rural Alberta youth in dialogue on human rights abuses happening worldwide. Rural Rights trained post-secondary youth to use deliberative dialogue as a community building tool, then connected these mentors with youth living in rural Alberta. At workshops held in Peace River and Airdrie, participants identified a wide range of local and global human rights issues - from the effects of climate change on food security to the effects of media and pop culture on self-esteem and body image. Youth also learned how to use alternative media to promote their perspectives on human rights.

To read and hear what rural youth had to say about human rights, visit: www.changeformchildren.org to download their amazing radio & zine publications.



"Judith believes that community should be a place where people can find support and encouragement, where HIV+ people can live with purpose and dignity. Today, Judith is making that belief a reality."



"When a million little people in a million little places do a million little things – then the whole world changes" – Michael Franti

in her community into a handcraft production group. Today, Judith and her group are producing high quality woven baskets and selling them to tourists. With the profits they are not only improving their own lives, but also providing micro-loans in the form of goats, piglets and chickens to other families. Judith told me of the hard times she experienced when she was first diagnosed with HIV. She was pregnant, but her HIV status caused her to be isolated and rejected by her community. Judith struggled to survive and feed her malnourished daughter. She went to KIHEFO for help where she was enrolled in the anti-retroviral drug program and received nutrition counseling for her daughter. She later gave birth to an HIV negative baby. Since that day Judith has never looked back. She is a true believer in the KIHEFO model for change, forming a KIHEFO community group in her village where she now helps others. Judith believes that community should be a place where people can find support and encouragement, where HIV+ people can live with purpose and dignity. Today, Judith is making that belief a reality.

THE POWER OF A MILLION LITTLE PEOPLE

CFCA's current project in development with KIHEFO will increase the support and training that we are able to provide to these community groups to expand their agricultural production and establish micro-enterprises. It will also enhance KIHEFO's ability to provide medical care in the region by rehabilitating the community hospital.

The connection we have through KIHEFO to these communities, along with the power we all have to make a difference in the world reminds me of a line in one of Michael Franti's new songs, "when a million little people in a million little places do a million little things, then the whole world changes". On behalf of CFCA, thank you for doing your thing to help KIHEFO continue its work in southwestern Uganda. By connecting the power of our community to the power of theirs, we can truly change the world.

BIOGRAPHY:

Lorraine Swift is the Program Manager for International Projects at Change for Children. In September 2010, she spent two weeks visiting KIHEFO's inspiring projects in the southwest region of Uganda.

CELEBRATING A CFCA LEADER

At the 2010 Development Dinner, the CFCA community recognized Fiona Cavanagh, former Program Manager of Education and Public Engagement, for her amazing passion and dedication to the organization over the past six years. Through her work, Fiona has inspired Canadians of all ages to connect to the socioeconomic realities of communities living in the Global South and to contribute towards social justice and solution building. Fiona leaves behind a legacy of promoting civic engagement and grassroots organizing amongst educators, youth, post-secondary institutions, and rural communities. The CFCA community honours Fiona's long-time leadership and wishes her health, success, and fulfillment in her future endeavours.

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NUTRITION, HEALTH
& MICRO-CREDIT
PROJECTS IN UGANDA**



IT TAKES MANY HANDS TO CHANGE THE WORLD

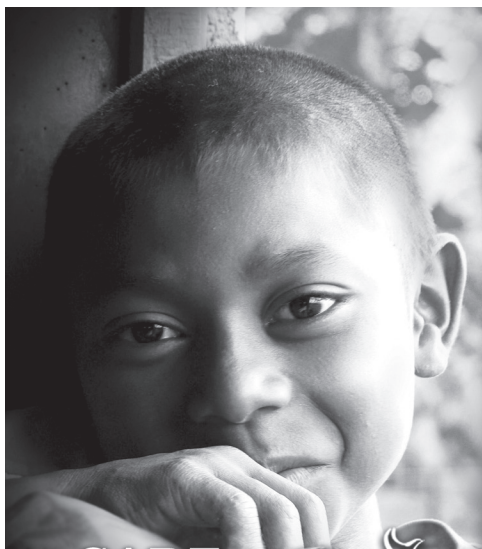
Photo by Tracy O'Camera

"CFCA gratefully acknowledges the generosity and solidarity of all the people who helped to inspire spirit and build momentum at the 2010 Annual Development Dinner."


INSPIRING SPIRIT, BUILDING MOMENTUM AT CFCA ANNUAL DEVELOPMENT DINNER

"Tonight, we come together as a community to create change," exclaimed Mark Scholz, MC of the Annual Development Dinner held on September 24th, 2010, as he passionately addressed a room filled with over two hundred Change for Children guests, partners, donors and volunteers. Scholz's words rang true throughout the evening's program, encouraging people - both 'long time' and 'first time' supporters - to collaboratively connect and contribute to Change for Children's vision of human dignity, healthy community and global justice. People came together to share stories, learn from one another, and enjoy the excitement of the evening. "It is always good to broaden one's horizons," said one first-time guest, "[it] made me remember there is a much bigger picture than just my family and community out there."

During the dinner's Live Auction, the room's energy was charged with community enthusiasm. Hundreds of hands flew into the air, symbolizing their collective support for Change for Children's nutrition and micro-credit projects in Uganda. Hand by hand, individuals and families graciously committed anywhere from \$50 to \$1000 to cover costs of items like eco stoves, seedlings, and materials to reconstruct a community health clinic. These donations were matched by a generous \$20,000 contribution by the Frank Flaman Foundation, proving that when people join together in the spirit of giving, we can make a tremendous difference. CFCA gratefully acknowledges the generosity and solidarity of everyone who helped to inspire spirit and build momentum at the 2010 Annual Development Dinner.



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**TOGETHER WE
CHANGE THE
WORLD.**

**BE PART OF
SOMETHING BIG
THIS HOLIDAY.**



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and all other publications, news and project information
on our new website: www.changeforchildren.org



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SIGN UP FOR OUR E-NEWS LETTER



Thank you to all volunteers, donors and partners who have contributed their time, energy and spirit to Change for Children's vision for human dignity, healthy communities, and global justice. Together, we are stronger.

Change for Children's Annual Open House

Friday, December 10, 2010, 5:00 – 11:00 pm
at the Change for Children office
10808-124 Street, 2nd Floor.
Food and refreshments provided.
Come celebrate with us!

CHANGE FOR CHILDREN GRATEFULLY ACKNOWLEDGES THE SUPPORT OF:



Human Rights
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Multiculturalism
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Culture and Community Spirit