

November 2010

Greetings!

In 2010, notwithstanding a substantial budget shortfall and a smaller staff, the Center for Law and Social Justice continued its quest for racial justice in New York City. Indeed 2010 was an extremely busy and productive year for us. Visit us online at www.clsj.org and on Facebook (www.Facebook.com/CenterforLawandSocialJustice) and Twitter (www.Twitter.com/CLSJ_MEC) to stay abreast of CLSJ's activities. In addition to continuing our existing projects, we launched three new projects: the **2010 Census Outreach and Mobilization Project**, the **Parents Advocates Coming Together (PACT) Program** and the **Faith-Based and Community-Based Organizations Technical Assistance Project**. Each of these new projects was initiated in response to pressing short and long term needs of Brooklyn's large and diverse African descendent communities.

New Projects:

- **PACT** (Parents Advocates Coming Together) was initiated to address the disempowerment of public school parents in Central Brooklyn by providing them with the knowledge and skills to become more effective advocates for a quality education for their children. PACT sponsored fourteen training workshops and program was lauded by funders and participants "as exactly what public school parents need."
- The **2010 Census Outreach and Mobilization Project** focused on outreach to hard-to-count populations in the Central Brooklyn communities of Bedford-Stuyvesant, Fort Green, Crown Heights, East New York, Flatbush, East Flatbush and Ocean Hill-Brownsville. In 2000, these communities had the lowest response rate to the Census in the nation. Our Census project employed an array of outreach strategies – street and door campaigns, billboards, electronic and traditional media -- which touched over one million residents of Central Brooklyn. Early returns indicate a significant increase in response to the 2010 in Central Brooklyn thanks in part to our project.
- The objective of the **Faith-Based and Community-Based Organizations Technical Assistance Project** was to build the capacity of faith-based and community-based organizations in Central Brooklyn to administer social service, economic development, and human development programs, as well as to undertake civic engagement projects. In these difficult economic times with government cutbacks in funding and services, the survival and work of these institutions are critically important.

Continuing Work:

At the same time, we continued our **Voting Rights Project** and **East New York Immigration Program** as well as providing **free legal counseling and referrals** to community residents. The **Voting Rights Project** activities this past year included pre-redistricting research and alliance building, and active participation in the successful **End Prison Gerrymandering Campaign** in New York State which sought to have persons who are incarcerated counted for state and local redistricting purposes in the communities of their home residences, instead of the places where they are incarcerated. This campaigning led to a bill passed and being signed into law this summer. The **East New York Immigration Program** provided legal services to eight-six immigrants in Brooklyn Community District 5.

Looking forward to 2011, the Center is committed to continuing to protect the rights of voters and the integrity of the electoral process through advocacy, especially in the upcoming redistricting battles. We will also advocate for educational equity for students of color in New York City's public schools and provide much needed free legal assistance to immigrants seeking to become naturalized or adjust their status.

Our racial justice work depends on your support! Our end of the year goal for this year CLSJ's annual appeal is \$25,000. Please take a moment to write a check (or use PayPal located on our website) to the Center for Law and Social Justice for \$500, \$100, \$25, \$10 or whatever you can afford.

Thank you in advance for helping CLSJ to stay on freedom and justice in 2011.

Warm regards,

Esmeralda Simmons, Esq.
Executive Director