

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 20, 2008

RECLAIMING FREEDOMS

JFREJ AT 18 ^{י"ח}

| EDUCATION | IMMIGRATION | SEPARATION OF CHURCH AND STATE |

JEWS FOR RACIAL & ECONOMIC JUSTICE'S 12TH ANNUAL RABBI MARSHALL T. MEYER RISK-TAKER AWARDS

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LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

We live in a time of vanishing freedoms.

Congress gives the President the legal authority to tap our phone lines without a warrant, severely impacting our right to privacy. Local law enforcement authorities use fear of terrorism as an excuse to obstruct and limit our legal right to protest. Christian fundamentalists in positions of power have transformed everything from the Armed Forces to the CDC into opportunities to indoctrinate us with right-wing messaging. Immigrants of color are deprived of liberty altogether, deported in mass workplace raids or when they show up for routine appointments with Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

As Jews for Racial and Economic Justice (JFREJ) celebrates our momentous 18th birthday, the Rabbi Marshall T. Meyer Risk-Taker Awards shines a spotlight on individuals and organizations who are leading the struggle to reclaim our freedoms. Historically, Jews have drawn on the number 18—*chai*—as a symbol of life, and our responsibility to life. In a changing political moment locally and nationally, JFREJ will honor the following freedom fighters: Ann Cook, Deborah Meier, Families for Freedom, and Mikey Weinstein.

As many of you know, I will be leaving staff in the coming year but am so proud to have been a part of moving our work forward and creating amazing opportunities to build and strengthen JFREJ and the broader Jewish social justice world in New York. In the past year we have:

- Joined great allies on the Lower East Side in the struggle to preserve the rich and diverse tradition of low-income housing for immigrant families,
- Launched the inaugural year of our Grace Paley Organizing Fellowship, training a dozen members in organizing, anti-oppression and leadership skills.
- Grown and deepened our work with synagogues and Jewish communities across New York City, from partnering on educational events to longer-term campaign organizing partnerships including here at Congregation B'nai Jeshurun.

Being back home at B'nai Jeshurun, both for the Awards tonight and as new partners on our Shalom Bayit: Justice for Domestic Workers Campaign is a double blessing. We are so proud to work with the immigrant justice chevra of BJ to move the important issue of rights, respect and fair compensation for domestic workers forward and to continue to build on the relationship that began 18 years ago in Rabbi Marshall Meyer's living room just a few blocks away.

JFREJ has come of age. From our first public action, serving as the lone Jewish voice of welcome when Nelson Mandela arrived in New York City in 1990, JFREJ's mission has always mandated the support of marginalized voices who are leading the fight against oppression. In this season of rebirth, the Meyer Awards represents an exciting opportunity for Jews to live up to our potential in the war to reclaim our freedoms.

Thank you for joining us,



Dara Silverman, Executive Director



RABBI MARSHALL T. MEYER [1930–1993]

When Rabbi Marshall T. Meyer hosted one of the earliest planning meetings of Jews for Racial & Economic Justice at his home in 1990, he offered more than a space to gather. He lent his energy, his wisdom, his nitty-gritty activism, his powerful sense of urgency, his vision, his colossal sense of commitment, his willingness to put acceptance and safety at risk to fight for what is just.

These qualities radiated from Marshall in all his endeavors. Over some eight years, he turned a moribund New York synagogue — Congregation B'nai Jeshurun on the Upper West Side — into a thriving community where a traditional, joyous, religious practice is infused with the pursuit of social justice. For 25 years before that in Argentina, he not only founded a synagogue and Latin America's first rabbinical seminary, but courageously spoke out against the military dictatorship. (Jacobo Timerman dedicated *Prisoner Without a Name, Cell Without a Number* to him.)

Marshall was a monumental figure, lecturing and receiving humanitarian awards all over the world. Yet he remained a warm, approachable, available rabbi to rely on in the most trying of times. Marshall's mentor had been Abraham Joshua Heschel, the visionary rabbi who marched with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and wrote some of Judaism's most passionate, poetic essays about prayer and spiritual search. Marshall built on Heschel's legacy, despite increasing retreats into tribalism and acrimony by so many of his colleagues.

He fought for Israeli-Palestinian peace, the defeat of racism and homophobia, the eradication of poverty and many other causes, often in the face of vicious rebukes from those who advocated a more insular and chauvinistic idea of Judaism — and America.

Teacher, comrade, friend, rabbi, Marshall was a model and inspiration for JFREJ and for countless others.

JFREJ established the Rabbi Marshall T. Meyer Risk-Taker Award in 1995 to honor those who have taken extraordinary risks in the pursuit of justice.

TIMELINE . . . Over the past eighteen years, since JFREJ was formed, the political and social landscape has shifted, and many of our most prized freedoms have come under attack. Our work has been to respond to these regressions and work to reclaim our freedoms. . . . **1990 . . .** Nelson Mandela is released from prison after 27 years behind bars; JFREJ's inaugural action is the only Jewish reception for Mandela's visit to New York City. . . .

PROGRAM FOR THE EVENING

Hosts: **Amy Goodman** and **Juan Gonzalez**

Performance

Veveritse Brass Band

Welcome

Dara Silverman, JFREJ Executive Director

Jon Moscow & Dana Schneider, JFREJ Board Co-Chairs

Presentation to Ann Cook

Presentation to Families for Freedom

JFREJ in Action

Performance

Veveritse Brass Band

Presentation to Deborah Meier

Presentation to Mikey Weinstein

Onward and Goodnight

Veveritse Brass Band

Amy Goodman and Juan Gonzalez, Hosts



1991 . . . JFREJ organizes a speaking engagement for long-time civil rights activist Julian Bond entitled “Racial Justice, Black-Jewish Relations, and the Meaning of the Civil Rights Struggle in our Time” at Congregation B’nai Jeshurun. . . 1992 . . . Referendum in South Africa supports creation of new

ANN COOK

Ann Cook is co-director of the Urban Academy Laboratory High School, a NYC public school that primarily serves a transfer population. Founded in 1985, the school emphasizes an inquiry-based approach to education and is a model of student-centered education. Over 95 percent of Urban Academy students go on to college. Ann is the co-chair of the New York Performance Standards Consortium, a statewide coalition that has successfully pioneered the use of performance-based assessment for graduation used in lieu of high stakes Regents exams. Ann is also a leader in the fight to save the Julia Richman Education Complex (JREC) from demolition by Hunter College. JREC, formerly a large, failing high school, now houses four small high schools, a pre-K to eighth grade elementary school, and a middle school for children with autism. The Complex also includes an adolescent health center, an infant toddler center for the children of teen parents and a teachers' center.



At the intersection of brilliance, passion and chutzpa, you will find the educational vision of Ann Cook. For her Lady Monster books, her bold victories in implementing performance-based assessment and the magic (and sustainability) of Julia Richman Education Complex (JREC), Ann is an educational legend in NYC, the nation and beyond. With Emma Goldman's radical vision, John Dewey's imagination for practice, Audre Lorde's aesthetic for education as poetry and Sarah Silverman's mouth—Ann Cook has fundamentally reshaped the public imagination for small schools, inquiry based pedagogy and the struggle for authentic assessment methods. — Michelle Fine



constitution for multicultural society and Apartheid is dismantled. . . . **1993**
. . . The passage of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) causing massive job loss in the United States and the transfer of many U.S. factories to Mexico. . . . **1994** . . . JFREJ joins the picket line with Chinese Staff and

DEBORAH W. MEIER

Deborah W. Meier is often considered the founder of the modern small schools movement. In 1974, Meier became the founder and director of the alternative Central Park East school, which embraced progressive ideals in an effort to provide better education for the children of East Harlem. Meier then served as founding principal for two other small public elementary schools in East Harlem, and in 1984, with the support of the Coalition of Essential Schools, Meier founded the Central Park East Secondary School. The success of these schools has been documented in David Bensman's "Central Park East and its Graduates: Learning by Heart" (2000), and in Frederick Wiseman's documentary film, "High School II" (1994). Meier went on to help establish a network of small high schools in New York City based on progressive principles as part of an Annenberg grant and in 1987 received a MacArthur Fellowship for her efforts. In 1996, Meier moved to Boston, where she became the founding principal of a small public K-8 pilot school, Mission Hill. She is currently a senior scholar and adjunct professor at New York University's Steinhardt School of Education, as well as a board member and director of New Ventures at Mission Hill, a director and advisor to Forum for Democracy and Education, and a member of the board of The Coalition of Essential Schools.



At a time when so many teachers seemed to have lost confidence and become mere functionaries in a system, Debbie Meier opened windows for hundreds of us, made us realize there were indeed doors that would open if we came together and found the right keys. She gave us the courage to imagine—to think of things (as Dewey said) “as if they could be otherwise” and urged us into practice that would make them so.

— Maxine Greene

Workers' Association (CSWA) to support their successful efforts to organize at the Silver Palace Restaurant, the first unionized restaurant in Chinatown. . . . 1995 . . . JFREJ holds first Annual Rabbi Marshall T. Meyer Risk-Taker Awards, honoring Henry Schwarzschild. . . . 1996 . . . Bill Clinton signs into law a massive overhaul of the welfare system. JFREJ responds with educational fora on Republican attacks on welfare, affirmative action, and immigrant's

MIKEY WEINSTEIN

Mikey Weinstein is the undisputed leader of the national movement to restore the separation of church and state in the US military. Mikey's family military history stretches back three generations. When his children entered the military, he was appalled to see the influence of Christian evangelicalism that had infiltrated almost every part of the military. In 2006, Mikey left his work in the corporate world to found the Military Religious Freedom Foundation, to directly battle the evangelical, fundamentalist religious right. Mikey is the author of *With God on Our Side: One Man's War Against an Evangelical Coup in America's Military* and is featured prominently in the new documentary James Carroll's "Constantine's Sword," directed by Oscar nominee Oren Jacoby. Mikey was named one of the 50 Most Influential Jews in America by the Forward, one of the nation's preeminent Jewish publications. He also has received the Buzzflash Wings of Justice Award and was recently nominated for JFK's Profile in Courage Award.



Mikey Weinstein's story is that of one man's willingness to stand up for the Constitution of the United States. Arrayed against Mikey are those who would transform the United States military, our most revered institution, into a force of evangelical crusaders, intolerant of the diversity of our society and willfully subversive of our national security interests. The Military Religious Freedom Foundation's mission is an important call to arms for all who love our country and the principles for which it stands.

— Ambassador Joseph C. Wilson IV

rights. . . **1997** . . . United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism issues a statement opposing all forms of organized public prayer and religious exercises in primary and secondary public schools . . . **1998** . . . Wisconsin Supreme Court rules that state-funded vouchers can be used for children to leave public schools and attend religious schools. . . . **1999** . . . Unarmed West African immigrant Amadou Diallo is shot dead by NYC police officers.

FAMILIES FOR FREEDOM

Families for Freedom (FFF), is a New York-based multi-ethnic grassroots organization led by and for immigrants facing and fighting deportation. Founded in 2002, FFF is comprised of current and former immigrant prisoners (detainees), their loved ones, and/or individuals at risk of deportation. FFF is not just an organizing center against deportation but a source of support, education, and action for directly affected families and communities — both locally and nationally. FFF is a leader in the New Sanctuary Movement, a powerful national interfaith network that is changing the public debate on immigration by welcoming immigrant families into religious congregations for sanctuary.



Families for Freedom is an awesome organization because it does what it says it will do. It provides freedom for families. Why do families need freedom? Because an oppressive immigration policy denies the US Constitution, the Human Rights Convention, and basic human decency by separating families so that they cannot have freedom. Families for Freedom restores freedom to families.

— Reverend Dr. Donna Schaper,
Senior Minister at Judson Memorial Church



In response to a broad call for civil disobedience, JFREJ organizes a Jewish contingent leading to the arrest of over 120 Jews, including 15 rabbis. . . **2000** . . . Bob Jones University, a fundamentalist South Carolina private institution, ends its ban on interracial dating. . . **2001** . . . After the attacks on September 11th

TWO MORE MONTHS by Esther Kaplan

It has been a long, hard eight years. So long and so hard that it feels difficult, sometimes, even to recall what came before.

Tonight is an opportunity to celebrate the overdue collapse of the Bush era — an implosion so extreme, a Republican rout so decisive, we can only hope that it also signals the death of many of Bush's ideas. Those ideas, incredibly sold to us as "family values" or as "patriotism," were so toxic that it will take a very long time to purge them from our national system. Wars of aggression, in the name of battling a fantastical "axis of evil." Ferocious deregulation, in the name of unleashing corporate profits. Tax cuts for the wealthiest, as wages for everyone else flat-lined, in a shameless reprise of Reagan's failed trickle-down theory. Disregard for the poor and black so profound that residents of New Orleans were left after Hurricane Katrina to drown or starve. And, particularly pertinent to our honorees tonight: a rigid new schools' testing regime, peddled to us in the name of "higher expectations" and "accountability"; the institutionalization of evangelical Christianity through faith-based programs and government-funded proselytizing; and a response to 9/11 of sowing fear in order to legitimize religious and ethnic profiling, detentions, deportations, and torture.

Each of our honorees tonight resisted this onslaught, and did so with enormous tenacity.

NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND'S high-stakes testing has rewritten classroom instruction across the nation, while here in New York City, under a new system of mayoral control, testing has increased at a staggering rate. Yet this mountain of test results has proved useless at actually identifying either educational excellence or failure. Ann Cook, co-director of the celebrated Urban Academy and co-chair of the New York Performance Standards

Consortium, has been a leader in the movement to challenge this testing dogma. The 38 schools in the consortium have fought successfully to use alternative assessments, rather than state-mandated exams, and these schools send 90 percent of their students on to college; citywide, that rate is a mere 58 percent. Working with such groups as Time Out From Testing, Cook has fought tirelessly to bring real learning back into the public school classroom. "The higher the stakes, the more you impact the curriculum," she said recently. "What we now see is a focus on the tests and an elimination of the arts, music, theatre, class trips, critical thinking — the parts of the curriculum that engage kids' minds and make them excited about learning." Widely known as a risk-taker who acts with integrity, Cook has devoted her career to promoting sound pedagogy that serves all of the city's children.

Education reformer Deborah Meier, too, has challenged the wisdom of educational standardization. Deservedly seen as the founder and standard-bearer of the small schools movement, she has herself created several small public schools in New York City and Boston, all of which primarily serve low-income African-American and Latino children, including the widely respected alternative high school Central Park East. "The continuous focus on which kids fail to live up to our ideals — higher test scores — reinforces an ugly aspect of our ever fiercer competitive culture," she wrote last year in *The Nation*. "The idea that the poor, especially the poor of color, are pulling down our system is repeated over and over. The idea of equal human potential is a new and fragile idea; I wonder what all of this pounding away at the so-called deficiencies of 'those kids' is doing to [it]." A sought-out public speaker and the author or editor of several critical books on what she calls the "era of testing and standardization," Meier's essential work in the



that killed 3000 people, the Bush administration pushes through Congress the U.S.A. Patriot Act, giving broad, unchecked authority to the United States government. The Patriot Act and other policies disproportionately demonize and target immigrants, Arabs, and Muslims in the United States and abroad. JFREJ

classroom has undergirded her powerful intellectual challenge to the conventional wisdom on public education.

THE TERROR ATTACKS on September 11 became the excuse not only for two bloody wars abroad, but for a war of sorts on Arab and Muslim immigrants here at home. Adult male Muslims were required to report for “registration”; students were plucked out of their dorm rooms and deported for overstaying their visas; mainstream Muslim charities were placed on terror watch lists. This anti-immigrant sentiment soon extended to other communities, culminating, in the past year, with large-scale raids at immigrant workplaces and felony charges for the crime of using a borrowed Social Security number simply to work. “We are developing an apartheid regime in America,” Families for Freedom co-founder Aarti Shahani has said, “with legal separation between citizens and noncitizens.” Families for Freedom evolved from small, post-9/11 family gatherings for people facing deportation into an organization that advocates on behalf of deportees, leads educational workshops on immigrant rights, gives voice to citizen children of parents facing deportation, and more. The leaders of Families for Freedom have done their work under tremendous pressure, often while their own family members are being incarcerated and threatened with deportation.

PRESIDENT BUSH FAMOUSLY called the war on terror a “crusade,” and one of his top military advisors, Deputy Undersecretary of Defense Jerry Boykin, spoke of it as a “spiritual battle” in which “the enemy is a guy called Satan.” But Michael Weinstein, along with a few researchers from Yale and People for the American Way, began to report on the goings-on at the US Air Force Academy: evangelizing by faculty members in the classroom; “heathen

flights,” a hazing ritual in which cadets who didn’t attend chapel are publicly shamed; exhortations by military chaplains that anyone not born again “will burn in the fires of hell”; Jewish cadets called “Christ-killers” and told the Holocaust was revenge for the death of Jesus. Made aware of these deprivations by the experiences of his own cadet sons, Weinstein, an Academy graduate and long-time Republican who served in the Reagan White House, emerged as a forceful voice of protest, ultimately filing lawsuits, advocating for curbs on evangelizing by officials, founding the Military Religious Freedom Foundation — and becoming a top public enemy of the Christian Right. “I will not accept my government telling me who are the children of the greater God and who are the children of the lesser God,” he said.

For his troubles, the National Association of Evangelicals has claimed Weinstein is engaged in “an unprecedented attack on religious expression.” One Southern megachurch dubbed him “the Field General of the Godless Armies of Satan.” He has received death threats by email and on his home phone; someone once even left a dead animal on his family’s porch as a warning.

All of tonight’s honorees share an impressive willingness to push forward even in the face of stiff headwinds, winds that have prevailed with force throughout these last, long eight years. The election earlier this month may signal that those winds have finally abated, at least a bit. But as Aarti Shahani once said in relation to immigration reform, “Democrats and Republicans both have bloody hands.”

Risk-takers such as tonight’s honorees are what got us through the Bush years; and they’re the ones who chipped away at the conservative consensus that produced him, the one that finally shattered just a few weeks ago. Their work will be essential in the months and years ahead as we all work to make “change” more than a mantra — but something to achieve.

partners with Arab and Muslim groups across New York City to challenge racism and Islamophobia and calls for retaliation. . . . 2002 . . . No Child Left Behind Act signed into law, undermining the roles of both students and teachers. . . . 2003 . . . JFREJ mobilizes members and contributes to a labor justice victory — Tuv Taam Kosher factory workers win the right to unionize and sign \$1,075,000 settlement for back wages with Tuv Taam Corporation.

PREVIOUS RABBI MARSHALL T. MEYER RISK-TAKER AWARD HONOREES

2007

Debbie Almontaser
Frances Goldin
Adrienne Rich
New York City AIDS Housing
Network (NYCAHN)

2006

Tony Kushner
Grace Paley
The Members of Transport
Workers Union Local 100

2005

Audre Lorde Project
Jessie Cagan & Leslie Cagan
Rev. James Alexander Forbes
Seymour Melman
Michael Ratner

2004

Tami Gold
Juan González
Amy Goodman
Naomi Klein
Richie Pérez
Art Spiegelman

2003

Domestic Workers United
DRUM: Desis Rising Up and
Moving
Adam Shapiro and the Shapiro
Family
Henry Foner
Annette Rubenstein

2002

Dr. Alan Berkman
The Innocence Project
Robert Meeropol
Susan Rosenberg
Laura Whitehorn
Youth Force

2000

Marilyn Kleinberg Neimark
Donna Nevel
Mensches in the Trenches:
Honoring JFREJ's Founders

1999

Dr. Roscoe C. Brown, Jr.
Dr. Sandi Cooper
Edith Everett
Welfare Rights Initiative

1998

Martin S. Needelman
Southside Fair Housing
Committee

1997

Allen Ginsberg
Judith Malina

1996

Sam Wallach and the Teacher's
Union
The Chinese Staff & Workers'
Association

1995

Henry Schwarzschild


... **2004** ... JFREJ coordinates two days of Jewish protest — “Elephants Aren’t Kosher” — at the Republican National Convention with more than 500 participants. ... **2005** ... Over 1,800 are killed, and severe damage is caused along the U.S. Gulf Coast, as Hurricane Katrina strikes. Government neglect of the levee system leads to severe flooding and the displacement of thousands of New Orleans natives. ... **2006** ... Hundreds of thousands



HOSTS

Amy Goodman is the host and executive producer of Democracy Now!, an award-winning, independent, daily, news program airing on over 700 TV and radio stations throughout North America. Goodman is the co-author with her brother, journalist David Goodman, of three *New York Times* bestsellers, most recently, *Standing Up to the Madness: Ordinary Heroes in Extraordinary Times* (2008). She writes a weekly column syndicated by King Features, for which she was recognized in 2007 with the James Aronson Award for Social Justice Reporting. Her daily reporting and groundbreaking work has won numerous awards, including the George Polk Award, the Robert F. Kennedy Prize for International Reporting, and the Alfred I. duPont-Columbia Award. She has also received awards from the Associated Press, United Press International, the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, and Project Censored.

Juan Gonzalez has been a columnist at the *New York Daily News* since 1988. He has won numerous awards for his investigative reporting, including the George Polk Award in 1998, and was recently elected president of the National Association of Hispanic Journalists. Juan's most recent book, *Fallout: The Environmental Consequences of the World Trade Center Collapse*, documents cover-ups by Environmental Protection Agency and other government officials about health hazards at Ground Zero in New York. He is also the author of *Harvest of Empire: The History of Latinos in America*.



of people take to the streets across the country to protest a proposed federal crackdown on immigration. In solidarity, JFREJ launches a petition entitled “This Passover, We Stand for Freedom,” which was signed by over 2,000 individuals in less than two weeks and published in two national Jewish newspapers reaching

PERFORMERS



Veveritse Brass Band, also know as The Squirrels, plays the dramatic, inspiring Romany (Gypsy) brass band music of the Balkans. While staying true to the exquisite precision of these melodies, Veveritse makes room for play. Slippery, they may start off running — almost too fast — only to drop the bottom out; what begins sonorous and jagged straightens up into powerful simplicity. With two trumpets, a saxophone, four mid-horns, a tuba and two drummers, they are ten deep, creating not a wall of sound, but a loud tapestry. Members of the band also play in Romashka, Hungry March Band, Zlatne Uste, The Woes, Ansambl Mastika, and Stagger Back Brass Band. Veveritse has scored two sets of silent films for live performance. The band is available for weddings, private parties, club gigs, festival gigs, afternoon tea, preschool graduations, feline coronations and divorces. Contact them at veveritse@gmail.com.

Members include. . .

Rat-a-Tat: **Emily Geller**, bubanj; **Luke Schneiders**, snare drum

Lows and Mids: **Joe Keady**, tuba; **Erin Bell**, baritone tuba; **Patrick Farrell**, alto horn; **Don Godwin**, baritone tuba; **Quince Marcum**, alto horn

Saksofoni: **Greg Squared**, alto sax

Truba: **Sarah Ferholt**, truba; **JR Hankins**, truba



hundreds of thousands of people. . . **2007** . . . JFREJ stands with Debbie Almontaser, an educator and bridge-builder who was smeared and attacked by right-wingers, forcing her to resign her post as principal of the Khalil Gibran International Academy, an Arabic language and culture school in Brooklyn, the first

SPECIAL THANKS

Katie Barnett

Arlene Brandon,

Congregation B'nai Jeshurun

Rabbi Marcelo R. Bronstein,

Congregation B'nai Jeshurun

Maddy Efenbein

Harold Goldman,

Congregation B'nai Jeshurun

Jenny Levison, Stage Manager

Lorne Lieb , Stage Manager

Rabbi J. Rolando Matalon,

Congregation B'nai Jeshurun

Zach Scholl

Rabbi Felicia L. Sol,

Congregation B'nai Jeshurun

Steve Siegel, Sound

Mark Sorkin

Michael Toolan, Photographer

Roma Serdtse,

Congregation B'nai Jeshurun

Hava Volman, Caterer

Alex Weissman

Quito Ziegler

and all the staff at B'nai Jeshurun

We would also like to extend a special thank you to all of the JFREJ members who volunteered in the office and at the event.

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The Public Welfare Foundation

The Puffin Foundation

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Small Change Fund of Tides Foundation

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of its kind in the nation. . . . **2008** . . . JFREJ celebrates 18 years! . . . GOLES invites JFREJ to join the campaign for mixed-use housing and business development on the Seward Park Renewal Area. . . . JFREJ organizes more than a hundred members and allies to travel up to Albany and lobby for the state-wide Domestic Workers' Bill of Rights with members of Domestic Workers United. . . . JFREJ launches Grace Paley Organizing Fellowship.

WE ARE EXCITED TO RECOGNIZE THE INAUGURAL COHORT OF GRACE PALEY ז"ל ORGANIZING FELLOWS

Ruth Balinsky

Katie Barnett

Amy Blumsack

Rob Browne

Alyse Erman

Sarah Margles

Vered Meir

Avi Rosenthalis

Zachary Wager Scholl

Beth Slutzky

Alex Weissman

David Zisser

The Grace Paley ז"ל Organizing Fellowship, launched in September of 2008, trains JFREJ members to develop organizing skills, deepen political analysis, strengthen knowledge of Jewish culture and history and develop leadership capacity.

Named in honor of Grace Paley ז"ל (1923–2007) a political writer, activist, organizer and teacher whose life-long activism focused on feminist, anti-nuclear, and anti-war efforts. She was a founding member of the Greenwich Village Peace Center, participated in the Women's Pentagon Action and was the first official New York State Author. Paley mentored generations of students, writers and activists through her career as a teacher at Columbia, CUNY and Sarah Lawrence and through her participation in local, national and international organizing and activism. Paley was also a 2006 Rabbi Marshall T. Meyer Risk-taker Awards honoree. The Fellowship is an opportunity for JFREJ to invest deeply in developing the next generation of leaders, young and old, who will grow JFREJ into our next phase.

The Fellowship is comprised of weekend retreats and monthly training sessions that focus on a wide range of topics including concrete organizing skills, from recruitment to leadership development, coalition building and grassroots fundraising, to political analysis including dismantling racism and other forms of oppression, to strengthen knowledge of Jewish culture and history, and to encourage personal exploration and leadership development through mindfulness meditation and *hevruta* (paired) study. Throughout the Fellowship, fellows are working on the Shalom Bayit: Justice for Domestic Workers and Housing Justice campaigns putting their learning from the Fellowship directly into action. Fellows have been matched with mentors who meet with them to reflect on their learning and think through key challenges and questions.



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Democracyinaction.org and Charles Lenchner are proud to be associated with JFREJ and the recipients of this year's Risk Taker Awards. Congratulations!

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Metro NY Religious Campaign Against Torture www.nyrcat.org congratulates JFREJ and 2008 award-winning risk-takers.

Congratulations to you & your risk-takers:
Ann, Deborah, Mikey & Families for Freedom
Network for Peace through Dialogue www.networkforpeace.com

"No noble thing can be done without risks." —de Montaigne
Congratulations JFREJ and honorees for your pioneering work!
From Tenants & Neighbors: the Statewide Center of Power for Tenants

If we honestly confront our tradition, and respond with real faith and courage: our words will become meaningful, full of strength and love; our faith and courage will become contagious and the world will look for paths that will lead to a more just society; our material goods will be redistributed so that nobody suffers hunger; our petty lives will become meaningful.

—Rabbi Marshall T. Meyer, from *You Are My Witness: The Living Words of Rabbi Marshall T. Meyer*

Congratulations to this year's risk-takers!



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MAZEL TOV JFREJ and
Risk Takers
for your brave and inspiring work!
from the Board, Staff, Participants, & Alumni of



AVODAH
THE JEWISH SERVICE CORPS
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Congratulations
to JFREJ
and to all the
honorees!



www.jufj.org

Center for Immigrant Families (CIF)
congratulates our comrades
Ann Cook and Debbie Meier,
fierce fighters for justice in education

Congratulations to all the Awardees!
-And thanks to JFREJ
for 18 years of outstanding
work for justice-



Levy Ratner, P.C.

is pleased to join

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in honoring our good friends

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congratulations to all the honorees



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Jews for Racial and Economic Justice

With love and respect from Rabbi Sharon Kleinbaum, Rabbi Ayelet S. Cohen
and the entire community of Congregation Beth Simchat Torah

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With deep appreciation to Dara for your leadership, dedication, creativity, and commitment to JFREJ's mission and growth over your past five years as our Executive Director.

JFREJ has flourished because of you.

We will miss working so closely with you, but we wish you all good things as you continue on your journey.

— The JFREJ Board



The Shalom Center congratulates
JFREJ and this year's award winners

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We join JFREJ in honoring Deborah's dedication, courage, vision and victories.

The Nation.

*In Memory of Adina Back
1958–2008
Scholar, Activist, Citizen*

*The Working Families Party remembers her with love and respect,
and knows she would share our pride in tonight's honorees.*

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Dan Cantor, Executive Director



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Congratulations to the
Rabbi Marshall T. Meyer
Risk-Taker Awards recipients
Ann Cook, Deborah Meier,
Mikey Weinstein
& Families for Freedom
— and —
a heart-felt **Thank You** to JFREJ
for all that you do to make
our great city greater.

Greetings to JFREJ and
congratulations on your
continuing efforts for peace and
justice in New York City.

Brooklyn For Peace

www.brooklynpeace.org

**THANK YOU JFREJ,
for all you do to support
respect and recognition
for domestic work.**

**CONGRATULATIONS
on your accomplishments!**

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All of us at CAA AV
congratulate JFREJ
for the inspiring work
you do to build the
broader movement for
social justice!

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CONGRATULATIONS

JFREJ on your continued struggle &
this year's distinguished risk-takers:
Ann Cook, Deborah Meier, Mikey Weinstein &
Families for Freedom

Keep up the good fight!
— Vince Warren, Executive Director

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**2008 Award Winning
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Congratulations to this year's
Marshall T. Meyer Risk-Taker Awards honorees.

In loving memory of Adina Back (1958-2008),
JFREJ founding Board member,
scholar, activist and passionate supporter
of all who work to advance
the freedoms celebrated by this year's
distinguished honorees.

Nathan and Toby Ticktin Back
Ephraim Back and Tara Blau, Rebecca and Joshua
Aaron Back, Beth Sandweiss, Tamar and Noam
Linda Gaal, Gabriel and Isaiah
Rachel Back and Yoni Grossman, Daniel, Ariel and Talya
Sara Back

Congratulations

Ann Cook
Deborah Meier
Mikey Weinstein
Families for Freedom

And to our friends at JFREJ!
You all inspire us to righteous action.

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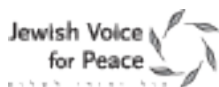
**Every place there is justice,
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*Talmud – Chapter 2,
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“True hope is born when I learn to
scream NO to injustice, to bribery, to
corruption; when I scream that I will
be involved; when I scream that I won't
stay frozen in my ways.”

—Rabbi Marshall T. Meyer

*Rabbi Ellen Lippmann, Hazzan Lisa B. Segal, President Adrienne
Fisher, and the board and community of Kolot Chayeinu/Voices of
Our Lives, say kol ha-kavod to all the risk-taking honorees as they
receive the Meyer Award.*

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We love you, Ann!

and congratulations, Debbie, for your wonderful work, too!

Jane Hirschmann and Donna Nevel

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Dean **Mary Brabeck** and the **NYU Steinhardt community**
congratulate the recipients of the
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Deborah Meier

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Impassioned believer in progressive education
Activist, leader, visionary



NEW YORK UNIVERSITY

The Park Slope Jewish Center
celebrates and supports the
important work of JFREJ

Justice, Justice, shall you pursue.

Congratulations to JFREJ
and to this year's honorees

Ann Cook
Deborah Meier
Mikey Weinstein
&
Families for Freedom

from
Mark Solomon
and the staff of
Philmark Lithographics

**The moment of change is
the only poem.**

- Adrienne Rich

To JFREJ, Ann, Deborah, Mikey
and Families for Freedom:
For bringing poetry to the world.



Betty ☺
Stanley K.
Sheinbaum

CURRENT JFREJ PROGRAMS

Shalom Bayit: Justice for Domestic Workers Campaign — We collaborate with Domestic Workers United (DWU), a grassroots membership organization of domestic workers organizing for fair treatment, to educate and activate synagogue members to become part of the Employers for Justice Network. Members of JFREJ's Employers for Justice Network have improved their personal employment practices and support DWU's work, particularly their lobbying campaign for a statewide Domestic Workers' Bill of Rights to extend employment protections to this group of workers.

Housing Justice — In 2007, JFREJ took on a new campaign to preserve existing low and middle-income housing, fight for the inclusion of low-income housing in new developments, and strengthen the rights of tenants throughout New York City. Our goal in this campaign is to win accountable development, including the construction of low-income housing in the Seward Park Urban Renewal Area, the only undeveloped tract of city-owned land in Manhattan below 96th Street. We will achieve this goal in partnership with local community organizations and by building a strong committee of Jewish residents on the Lower East Side. We will educate ourselves about the threat of gentrification in New York City and participate in actions with city-wide coalitions to preserve low-income housing and strengthen tenant protections.

Solidarity/Rapid Response — In order to build strong foundations for our city-wide partnerships and alliances, JFREJ members participate in a rapid-response network to bring JFREJ contingents to street actions and marches and provide the ongoing support of progressive Jews for issues that fall outside our campaigns. This work contributes to the development of a "synagogue in the streets" that celebrates our multi-faceted Jewish identities and engages our members in ongoing campaign work.

Zil G'mor/Community Education — In support of our campaign work, JFREJ works with our members to develop their skills, political analysis and Jewish cultural knowledge. Through our Intergenerational Study Group, monthly member trainings, and alternative holiday celebrations, our members develop the capacity to take on leadership roles within the organization. Externally, we broadcast a weekly radio show, *Beyond the Pale: The Progressive Jewish Radio Hour*, and we lead trainings and workshops for Jewish and non-Jewish audiences that focus on the intersections between racism, anti-Semitism, and other forms of oppression. This fall we launched the Grace Paley Organizing Fellowship — to train a core group of 12 JFREJ members in advanced skills of grassroots organizing, outreach and leadership development, Jewish history, and personal and campaign development.

Rabbinical Council — Our Rabbinical Council educates the broader Jewish community about our work by bringing JFREJ's campaigns into their congregations, producing and distributing educational materials that link contemporary social justice issues and secular and traditional Jewish teachings, and speaking out in public forums in support of our campaigns.

JEWIS FOR RACIAL & ECONOMIC JUSTICE (JFREJ)

Jews for Racial & Economic Justice (JFREJ) was founded in 1990 to address the racial/ethnic tensions and economic disparities in New York City. Our membership—secular to religious, young to old, queer, transgender and straight—offers its progressive Jewish voice to shape our city's future and activates the Jewish community as a partner in the struggle for justice. Through educational forums, workshops, grassroots political campaigns, press conferences and a weekly radio program, JFREJ is part of revitalizing a Jewish ethic of social justice, cooperation and mutual struggle for human dignity. In coalition with communities of color and labor organizations, JFREJ works to achieve economic equality and an end to all forms of racism by fighting for social programs, fair labor practices, accountable policing and immigrants' rights. JFREJ's educational and activist work makes connections between anti-Semitism and racism and between Jewish and other radical histories and contemporary movements for justice. We welcome your thoughts, your suggestions, your participation, and your support.

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