



Wherever men and women are condemned to live in extreme poverty, human rights are violated.

To come together to ensure that these rights be respected is our solemn duty.

October 17, 1987, Joseph Wresinski (1917-1988), Founder, International Movement ATD Fourth World

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Awareness, Action and Commitment

By Vincent Fanelli

As this is being written, the Group of Eight (G8) summit of major industrialized nations is preparing to meet to discuss, among other things, the persistence of widespread poverty in Africa. Despite years of economic aid, poverty remains rampant there. In the build up to the summit, millions of people in cities across the world attended free concerts designed to both raise public consciousness about the situation in Africa and pressure the G8 governments to act more effectively. Many people involved in aid programs realize that the situation must change; the question is how?

The articles in this issue of the *Fourth World Journal* illustrate a process that is at the heart of the Fourth World Movement's approach to confronting the persistence of poverty. This process can be summarized in three phrases: listen and become aware, act based on this knowledge, and provide the means for a long-term commitment.

Through the *Unleashing Hidden Potential* project, parents living in poverty and teachers are becoming more aware of each other and coming together to ensure the success of all children in education.

The Street Library program in New Orleans brought Anne Monnet into contact with parents and children who are struggling against terrible housing, unsafe neighborhoods and an education system that is too overburdened to help those who need it the most. This experience has led Anne to the next step in her life, to respond by becoming an educator herself.

And in New York, much energy and money has been expended in renovating the Fourth World House. It has been well spent because the result will provide the means to gather families in an ongoing partnership to create projects such as *Unleashing Hidden Potential* or the mural, to welcome and train new volunteers and to introduce others to the Fourth World Movement.

The Movement has re-learned its approach to persistent poverty many times over and in many places by being with and listening to poor families. Hopefully, the G8 summit will have been a time for the international community to make a renewed and serious commitment to do the same: listen and become aware, act based on this knowledge, and provide the means for a long-term commitment.

Discovering a City Through Its Families

The Constant Struggles and the True Human Values at the Core of Their Lives

By Anne Monnet

I have been a member of the Fourth World Movement Volunteer Corps since 1987. My first mission was in my own country, Switzerland, before I went to the International Center of the Fourth World Movement in France. In 1990, I joined the Fourth World Movement team in Port-au-Prince, Haiti for five years and then returned to the International Center for another five years. This was the background I had when I was asked to join the team in New Orleans. At first, I had no idea what I had agreed to! When I thought of New Orleans, the only things that came to mind were images of jazz and blues music, and the question as to whether people really spoke English there since I had heard something about Cajun-speaking people.

So, in 2000, I left France to come to New Orleans, a place that has been my home for the last five years. It was here, in New Orleans, that I discovered a city that, although big, was still small enough to have held on to its most human element: personal contact. I discovered a city where people will stop in the street and say hello to each other, where people will take the time to chat amongst themselves at the bus stop. I found a people who were genuinely open and warm, and the southern atmosphere here often reminded me of Haiti and the Creole culture there. Many times, I could not help but think that the two were not so far apart.

On arriving here, I was lucky enough to be welcomed by the local members of the Fourth World Movement – the supporters, friends and families living in poverty that would surround me for the next five years. Discovering the city through these families living in deep poverty was a great way to come to know, to understand and to love this new culture and country that I found myself in. At times, learning so much in this way was frightening and destabilizing. Being confronted by the difficulties and harsh situations that the very poor have to face hit me hard and often felt like a slap in the face. But in spite of their constant struggles, or maybe because of them, following these very poor families also allowed me to see up close the true human values that are fundamental in their lives: forgiveness, pride, the importance of the family, the solidarity between them and their care and concern for



each other. I found all of these values at the core of the lives of the poor here, values that we sometimes lose sight of as a society. Time and again, whenever I think of what it is that the poorest can contribute to society, I think of these values and the strength that they represent.

New Orleans, like many cities, has its good and bad. Crime and violence are important issues for the city. Every day, the television or the newspapers will have a story about shootings and police intervention. This is sometimes presented like one long list of bad news, but there are so many stories underneath this list that are never heard.

A mother that the team knows once talked to us about one young man. He had been killed during the night, leaving behind three children. She was clearly upset by his passing and spoke of how he was always willing to help out wherever he could, how he had always approached the hardships of life with a sense of humor, and how hard it had been for his mother and family when his grandmother was hospitalized. She also talked of how she regretted not having given him a present on his last birthday, which was close in date to her own. Everything she said gave voice to the impact that this young man's death had had on the neighborhood.

The next day, all that there was in the newspaper were a few lines saying that a twenty-six year old man had been found dead in front of his apartment, that his apartment was filthy and that drug paraphernalia had been found near him. But there was no mention of his family, his friends or his life. Where was the mention of him having left behind people who loved and respected him? For me, something was missing between what the press had to say about him and the picture of him that was painted to us by his community.

It is not easy to live in the middle of such situations, and this is why one of the projects that the team in New Orleans invests in is family

outings. These outings are a chance for the families to find respite from the difficulties of life in poverty and the hectic realities of the city.

Escaping from the summer heat to a day in the countryside with parents and children is made possible by our friends at Caritas in Abita Springs giving us the use of the sizeable property, but organizing these outings is never simple. For one outing, we spent two weeks visiting families to ask them if they would be interested going 'across the lake.' All of the families that we spoke to would have loved to come but, for some of them, it was really difficult to imagine such an outing; it is a big deal for them to leave their house with nobody to watch over it, even for one day. For others, work or family reasons were too great obstacles for them to even think of taking part.

However, one young father, whose daughter was a regular participant in the Street Library, said that he would come with us. We were surprised since he had never before taken part in any of the activities that we had proposed: he would always watch the Street Library from afar but never came over to talk or interact with us. I have to admit that I did not really believe he would come.

And yet, on the day, I was happy to see that he was waiting for us with an older man, a friend of his. At first, the two men looked a little lost in among the trees, the greenery and the surroundings of Caritas House but, little by little, they began to relax and found the time to chat and joke with the other adults. Then, after the lunch, the two men did not take part in the artistic workshops that we had organized but instead lay down on the grass and took a long nap. I was disappointed by this and I worried that they were getting bored but, at the end of the day, both men thanked us with big smiles for giving them the opportunity to experience some peace and quiet outside of the city.

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Months later, the young father was still asking us when the next trip 'across the lake' would be and whether he could invite some of his friends to come with him.

These two stories, of a woman mourning the loss of a friend and of one young father's joy at some peace and quiet, talk a lot about the people I have met here and the lives that they lead. But now that I am getting ready to go back to Switzerland – for a sabbatical time – I realize that the seventeen years I have spent in foreign countries have taught me about the importance of education. I am convinced that education is one of the answers to violence.

The Street Library program has been present in New Orleans now for many years, and links between the Fourth World Movement and some families living in poverty here go back fifteen years. It is being part of this history that has allowed me to see, over the past five years, how important the Street Libraries can be in the lives of these children. The Street Library is a constant for them, coming to share books and activities with them almost every week of their lives.

I have felt this importance many times, not least through one young girl and the pride she takes in saying out loud that she 'grew up in the Street Library.' She once came



running to us, excited, saying that her teacher wanted to meet us. She handed us a note from her teacher asking to hear more about the Street Library project and explained that her teacher knew about the Street Library because she would often talk about it in school. But, still, when we met the teacher, we were astonished to see the classroom decorated with drawings and arts and crafts that this young girl had produced in the Street Library. As she grows older, she comes to the Street Library less and less frequently. This young girl is no longer a regular fixture on the mat that we lay down on the ground but nowadays, when she does come, she always tries to bring younger children with her and will make a point of looking after them and take the time to look at books together with them.

It is in the light of experiences like this that I am looking to enter the field of education on my return to Switzerland. I am excited at the prospect of working alongside new people in the search for a better education for all. It is a new step for me, but the people and the city of New Orleans will be coming with me in my heart.

Drawing on History: The Fourth World House Mural

When the Fourth World House in New York City was officially re-opened with an inauguration ceremony in January, it was an opportunity to celebrate the achievements of the renovation and expansion project and mark the start of a new beginning for the house itself. But it was also an opportunity to encourage local members to get involved in the final piece of this transformation: the designing and painting of a mural to show what the Fourth World Movement means to its members here in New York.



The aim was to share ideas, hold discussions and decide how to best capture the mission and history of the Fourth World Movement in a number of words, phrases and references to projects that could then be turned into images. This challenging process was co-facilitated by Conor McGrady of Groundswell, a Brooklyn-based organization that combines personal expression and community activism, who was enlisted to help brainstorm a design and relay this as accurately as possible onto the wall of the Fourth World House courtyard.

The first preparation meeting was held at the Biko Family Life Center in Brooklyn, near to Fourth World Movement members who participate in the Street Library project, while the following two meetings were held in the Fourth World House. Everyone brought their own ideas to the table and had the chance to begin to experiment with different drawing and color scheme exercises to get in the swing of things. Conor was immediately struck by the way all those at the meetings threw themselves into the project, saying, "I was impressed by the willingness to overcome the reticence about drawing, many participants having had little or no previous experience and which might have proved initially intimidating."



The supportive atmosphere in the meetings had been created so that every member could have their voice heard and offer their opinion. Pauline Donald gave a glimpse at how open the process had been when she said, "... the meetings were an opportunity for those who didn't know the Fourth World Movement very well to meet everyone from

everywhere." Haruko Yamauchi, a supporter and member of the core-team facilitating this project, agreed: "The fact that the process went so smoothly is a testament to the good will of all involved; the desire to cooperate, compromise and create a work of art that would reflect the ideas and values of all of us."

The success of this could be seen as members of the Movement expressed their satisfaction in contributing to the final design. Asia Snow spoke of her joy at putting forward the idea of a globe for the mural and then seeing this idea gradually develop throughout the meetings. "I felt my ideas were used and we were able to share a lot of things together."

Then, for two weeks in June, the doors of the Fourth World House were thrown open for people to come and join members of the Fourth World Movement and the Groundswell team to sketch and paint the final design of the mural onto the courtyard wall. Each day, people came to join groups large and small to paint, meet new people or see familiar friends and spend time with each other over lunch. There was even a webcam conference with members of the Fourth World Movement in Montreal, Canada.

For many, it was a new experience to hold a paintbrush in front of a mural, but the friends from Groundswell were on hand to help



people feel at ease with learning the different techniques for painting the mural. "Such an enthusiastic and interested group of people came by and got stuck in! Members of all ages applied their handiwork, focused and concentrated," said Conor. "And it was great to see some of the teenage members, such as Obie, Remy and Tommy, really connect with JD (interning at Groundswell)."

But what made people want to come and paint? Asia thought it important to be involved, saying, "I came because I wanted to be part of something important in my life." For Obie Donald, it was an opportunity to, "... get to know the Fourth World House and come on my own and participate." And long-time member of the Fourth World Movement Zena Grimes said that she came because she, "... enjoyed us all working together, sharing



thoughts, and asking questions about one another."

The two week process of painting was central to creating the mural, allowing people to come together to work towards a common goal. It was also an ideal opportunity for those who had not yet seen the house to come and discover the new building. Haruko thinks that the finished mural complements the whole renovation process. "The mural serves as the end wall to this common space – radiating warmth and color, and offers enduring reminders of the reasons why we gather together in the first place."



On the last day of painting the mural, several members exclaimed their happiness in seeing the project reach its completion. It was vital for many of them that the words that they associate with the Fourth World Movement – 'dignity', 'community', 'togetherness', 'happiness' and 'respect' – had such prominent placement in the mural itself.

This was just one aspect that helped many members feel that the mural captures the essence of the Fourth World Movement and also that of Fourth World Movement projects. According to Zena, "You see the different nationalities. It shows dignity. The kids are getting along; all the adults are getting along – like they are all part of a big family. You see smiles, people working together, and kids enjoying reading books."



The completion of the mural marks the last stage of the transformation of the Fourth World House. The mural is already an important part of our setting here in New York City and represents, for Obie, "... the story of how the Movement began, branched out, and helped people." It stands tall in the courtyard of the Fourth World House, representing the achievements of the Fourth World Movement and the way in which the Movement moves forward: all together and in dignity.

An Evaluation of the Fourth World House Capital Campaign

By Diana Skelton-Faujour

The Fourth World House Capital Campaign was formally launched in 2003 to raise \$1.3 million for the Fourth World Movement's home in New York City. The Fourth World Movement has owned the building since 1974 but it had been in need of redesign. The renovation and expansion project, now completed, has come in under budget at just \$1.14 million. The money was raised thanks to a great deal of energy, creativity and generosity by members of the Fourth World Movement in the United States, as well as solidarity from the International Movement ATD Fourth World.

Even before the Capital Campaign had been formally launched, members in Westchester County, New York, organized a dinner-dance, a concert and a series of tag sales to raise money for it. A highlight of these efforts were the two benefit concerts, organized by Evelyne Louveaux and held in March 2000, given by renowned concert pianist Miguel Angel Estrella.

Members of the Fourth World Movement Volunteer Corps, along with members of our Board of Directors and Advisory Committee, made personal pledges to the campaign, many of which were spread over three years to increase the amount individuals could donate. A large number of Fourth World Movement members and friends from across the country also contributed by responding to an appeal in our newsletter specifically for this campaign.

Robin Mohr, a former member of the Fourth World Movement Volunteer Corps now living in San Francisco, contacted many other former volunteers



"The Fourth World House brings together people from here and abroad. It is a place where everyone is welcome, if they need a place to sit and talk or just an ear to listen to them." – Rosalyn Bridges on the re-opening of the Fourth World House in January.

and interns to launch a Fourth World Movement Alumni Association and to enlist their support for the campaign. Other alumni helped follow up her letter with phone calls, and they raised over \$30,000. This figure is all the more impressive given that most of these alumni are both young and continuing to work in the non-profit sector.

Several foundations offered grants to support the renovation of the Fourth World House (see our annual report for details), and many local and small business owners helped by donating food to fundraising events, or by selling things. For example, Armelle's Language Studio earmarks the profits from one shelf of the children's books they sell to benefit the Fourth World Movement. A number of schools and religious institutions also raised money for this campaign.

The final push for the campaign came from Fourth World Movement members here in New York City through three more events: a wine-cheese-sushi party, a Tartan Day party with a raffle and silent auction, the fifth annual Artists' Walk organized by Westchester Accueil (westaccueil.org/artists), and a raffle organized with parents involved in our Street Library program.

Although this campaign is now concluded, it is important to remember all these actions and gestures that have raised money for and supported the renovation and expansion of the Fourth World House. These are the efforts that made it possible to re-open and inaugurate the house at a ceremony in January and also lay the groundwork for new projects like the painting of the mural (see opposite). The future for the redesigned Fourth World House starts here.

Thank You

Fourth World Movement/USA is grateful to all those who supported the Fourth World House Capital Campaign over the past two years.

In particular, special thanks go to Elisabeth Ayassamy, Emily Cavanagh, Ron Croudy, Marie-Claire Foss, Kayoko Koyama, Valerie Kennedy, Juliette Laurent, John Murphy, Sara Osten and Matt Rockman for their time, creativity and energy in preparing fundraising events this past winter and spring.

A number of businesses also made donations and offered services for these events and the inauguration of the Fourth World House, including

- Allied Domecq Spirits (adsw.com)
- Brooklyn Brewery (brooklynbrewery.com)
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- D'Artagnan
- DeRobertis Pasticceria and Caffè
- DUB Pies (dubpies.com)
- Frey Vineyards (freywine.com)
- Itochu Corporation and iCrest
- New York Sports Club
- P-Z Express Photo
- Piece: Style With Finish (piecenyc.com)
- St. Andrew's Restaurant
- Stewarts of Kearney, British Foods (stewartsofkearney.com)
- The International PreSchools
- Third Avenue Cheese Shoppe
- Trois Petits Cochons

Six artists donated work for a silent auction:

- Thoreau "T.ro" Bartmann
- Bonnie Courtney
- Ken "Rufus" Glanton
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- Karen Zilly

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Unleashing Hidden Potential: A Role for Parents in Training Teachers

By Anna Fagergren

The *Unleashing Hidden Potential* project reached an important milestone in February when, in partnership with the Discovery Charter School of Newark, New Jersey, the Fourth World Movement held the first of three training workshops for trainee teachers. Made possible by a grant from the New Jersey State Department of Education, the series of workshops aimed to share with the trainee teachers the “best practices” in education from across the state.

The workshops called on knowledge borne from the original *Unleashing Hidden Potential* seminar of November 2000 and used the CD-Rom based on that seminar to highlight the experiences and realities of how partners can come together to work for a positive learning experience for even the most disadvantaged students. The workshops were an opportunity for members of the Fourth World Movement to help more than twenty trainee New Jersey teachers, who are all working toward earning their certification to teach, to find ways to better communicate with parents who lead the most difficult lives.

In preparation for the February workshop, the Fourth World Movement conducted interviews with parents and teachers about how homework relates to a child’s ability to succeed in school. Armed with excerpts from these interviews, Fourth World Movement members from different walks of life and with different histories of involvement in the *Unleashing Hidden Potential* project met to discuss what they thought was most important for the trainee teachers to know about children who come from poverty and to plan how this knowledge could best be shared. Tina Lindsey, who both participated in this preparatory meeting and helped facilitate the training workshop, said, “*Teachers should know... [that we] parents do our best. Whether we’re rich or poor, we do our best. Some of us parents spend three or four hours doing homework with our kids.*”

Due to this careful preparation,



the workshop was able to offer space for the trainee teachers to see how vitally important it is to be sensitive to how a parent’s perspective can be unique and different from their own. For example, through a role-play based on a story that had been selected from the CD-Rom, the workshop was able to provoke people to see a situation in different ways. Divided into two groups, participants had the chance to explore the difference between those factors that can leave a parent feeling ignored and disempowered and those that can leave a parent feeling listened to and respected. One trainee teacher – a member of the group portraying the school in the scenario – said afterwards, “*I didn’t realize what a war, what an ‘us versus them’ situation it can be.*”

As important as the interactive portions of the training were, it was also vital for the trainee teachers to have the opportunity to hear the advice and recommendations of parents who come from situations of poverty. Lenore Cola, one of the facilitators of the training workshop, asked the participants to leave behind their assumptions when dealing with parents. “*Teachers need to know that not everything you learn is in*



a book. You must know who it is you are dealing with so you can use your ‘street sense’ to help open the doors for you. Look at the whole picture before talking about it. Do not pre-judge until you know what’s really going on. Communicate and respect.”

At the end of the February workshop, the trainee teachers shared their appreciation for the course. One shared her hope to be able to, in the future, “*...see the parent’s perspective. I think too often you get so caught up in making your point and convincing a parent of your position that you forget to really be open to what is going on with a parent or in a family’s life.*” Reactions like this illustrate how the *Unleashing Hidden Potential* project continues to offer empowering possibilities for dialogue and training to parents, teachers, school administrators and community workers.

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FOURTH WORLD JOURNAL

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The Fourth World Journal aims to bring together different points of view, especially those of the very poor themselves, on topics related to extreme poverty. We encourage our readers to share with us their reactions and comments.

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INSIDE:
Fighting Poverty
Through Daily Efforts
and Long-Term
Commitment

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