

SWP News and Holiday Meet and Greet 12/15

Dear SWP supporters and allies,

2008 has been a time of great movement and change here at the Sex Workers Project!

Please join us in celebrating the holidays, meet our new Director and Director of Social Services, and learn more about SWP's work over the past year and our visions for the future.

SWP Holiday Meet & Greet
Monday, December 15
5-8 pm
Urban Justice Center
123 William St., 16th floor
[2,3,4,5,J,M,Z, A,C to Fulton St.]

Wine and hors-d'oeuvres
Short program at 6:30 pm

SWP NEWS

Transitions

2008 has been an eventful year for the Sex Workers Project – after seven years, founding Director Juhu Thukral left the project for new horizons, and Andrea Ritchie joined the project as its new Director. We are profoundly grateful for Juhu's vision and hard work in building the Sex Workers Project from a groundbreaking, innovative one-person operation to a thriving and vibrant five-person project providing unique and high quality services, advocacy, and critical interventions and leadership in public policy debates with respect to the distinct needs and experiences of sex workers and trafficked persons. We wish Juhu all the best in the next phase of her career, and look forward to building on her legacy.

Our new director, Andrea Ritchie, joined SWP on November 3rd. Over the past 15 years, she has worked in varied capacities in movements for social justice and human rights in the U.S. and Canada, developing a strong background in policy analysis and advocacy, fundraising, media and communications, along with participatory and traditional research. In the past decade, her litigation, research, advocacy, writing, and organizing work has focused specifically on police brutality and other forms of law enforcement violence experienced by women and LGBT people of color, and therefore has necessarily centered the experiences of sex workers as primary targets of, and organizers against, both structural and interpersonal violence. Among several publications on the subject, she authored *Law Enforcement Violence Against Women of Color* in [The Color of Violence: the INCITE! Anthology](#), and co-authored Amnesty International's 2005 report "Stonewalled: Police Abuse and Misconduct Against Lesbian, Gay and Transgender People in the U.S." Over the past five years, Andrea has been a member of the national steering committee of INCITE! Women of Color Against Violence, which recently released an organizers' toolkit <<http://www.incite-national.org/index.php?s=103>> addressing state and interpersonal violence

against women and trans people of color, which incorporates materials addressing the experiences of sex workers - including both SWP reports, which served as critical resources in the development of the toolkit. Through her work with INCITE!, as well as her recent work as national coordinator of US NGO participation in the review of the U.S. government's compliance with the UN Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, she has built relationships with groups in New York City and across the country working on criminal justice, economic, health, housing, and reproductive justice issues facing women and LGBT people living at the intersections of multiple oppressions. Andrea very much looks forward to meeting and working with SWP's many supporters, allies, constituencies and communities and discussing SWP's current collaborations and future directions!

SWP adds social services!

SWP is proud to announce the integration of a social services component to the Sex Workers Project in the fall of 2008. The program will utilize an eclectic therapeutic model for supportive counseling to trafficked persons and sex workers, and a comprehensive case management model to assist the SWP's clients in obtaining public benefits and other resources they are entitled to, but have traditionally been unable to access. This new facet of the Sex Workers Project's work will begin to address the historic lack of social services available to sex workers and trafficked people from a human rights and harm reduction perspective, and to meet the needs of our clients on a more holistic basis.

We are incredibly lucky and pleased to have been joined by Crystal DeBoise, founder of the New York Association of New Americans' Center for Women and Families/Human Trafficking Services, who will head up this new initiative. Crystal is a licensed social worker with 11 years experience working with survivors of gender violence. She has been active in various social justice projects including the Zapatista movement and the New York City Social Forum.

We look forward to providing high quality, unique and much needed support services, advocacy and counseling to SWP's trafficking clients, and to expanding the program to include similar supports for sex workers who are not trafficked.

Successes and Dreams

Over the past few months SWP staff attorneys Sienna Baskin and Sapna Patel have successfully obtained T-visas for three of our clients, facilitated family reunification for one client just in time for the holidays, and engaged in critical legal representation and policy and legislative advocacy on behalf of trafficked people and sex workers on the local, state, and national levels. Our research consultant and Interim Director Melissa Ditmore recently completed a critical and timely human rights documentation project focusing on the impacts of federal anti-trafficking raids and local law enforcement vice raids on the lives of trafficked persons and sex workers. SWP plans to release a report summarizing the project's findings in early 2009.

In the coming year we look forward to building the leadership development and community organizing aspect of our work, and to supporting and empowering our constituencies to speak out on their own behalf, to act collectively protect and advance their rights, and to demand choices that allow them to maximize their safety, self-sufficiency, and self-determination.

BUT WE CAN'T DO ANY OF IT WITHOUT YOU!

Now, more than ever, the Sex Workers Project needs your continued support to provide critical legal and social services to protect and promote the rights of individuals who by choice, circumstance, or coercion engage in sex work. As is the case for many groups, the current economic climate will make it even more challenging for SWP to resource our work through traditional means. It will also bring increased hardships for our constituents struggling to survive in informal economies in tough times. Individual and community support will be even more essential to maintain our capacity to represent, advocate for, and build power and leadership among our constituencies.

Make an end-of-year contribution to the SWP today! – you can donate:

- online at: <http://www.sexworkersproject.org>
- by mail: Sex Workers Project, Urban Justice Center, 123 William St, 16th Floor, New York, NY 10038, USA
- in person at our Holiday Meet & Greet December 15, 2008 at the Urban Justice Center!

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

The Sex Workers Project

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Remember...and Get on the Bus!

As you may know, December 17 is the International Day to End Violence Against Sex Workers. On this day, communities in over 100 international locations will come together to honor those lives lost in violence committed against people in the sex trade. We are gathering a list of names of our dead, to be read at vigils across the country and the world.

If you know of a sex worker murdered in 2008, please consider sharing their name with us so that we can include them in our ceremony. Help us to show the world that we will not stand silent and attend or host an event in your hometown. To find out more, visit swopusa.org/dec17.

Names may be submitted at http://swopusa.org/dec17/victims/victims_submit.htm or by emailing swank@riseup.net.

NATIONAL MARCH FOR SEX WORKERS RIGHTS: Join the Sex Workers Outreach Project (SWOP-USA) on Dec. 17th as we march on Washington to demand rights for all sex workers! Meet at 12 noon, Franklin Square (14st NW & Eye ST NW) near McPherson Square Station for rally, speeches, and permitted march to the Department of Justice. We are calling for an end to the unjust laws, policing, shaming and stigma that oppress our communities and make us targets for violence - Don't Shame Us To Death! At this vibrant event, we will both honor the lives lost in 2008 and celebrate our vital movement.

For more information about transportation from New York City to DC for this event, please contact SWP. Some housing is available for out-of-towners - consider staying on to attend our big party that weekend. On Dec. 17th, SWOP-USA and its allies in harm reduction and social justice welcome your support as we march for sex workers rights!

This is a permitted event. For more information, or to endorse this event, contact:

877-776-2004 x 1

dec17@swopusa.org

www.swopusa.org/dec17/

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Community support and after-party hosted by Different Avenues, differentavenues.org. For more information, or to endorse this event, contact: 877-776-2004 x 1, dec17@swopusa.org

Celebrate the 60th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights with SWP!

Our new director will be joining the ACLU Human Rights Project and leaders of women's, civil, and human rights organizations across the U.S. for a panel celebrating the 60th anniversary of the UDHR

Wednesday, December 10th,
6 pm to 8 pm
United Nations Church Center
777 United Nations Plaza, 10th floor conference