



Campaign Updates

Updates 2009
Updates 2008
Updates 2007
Updates 2006
Updates 2005
Updates 2004
Updates 2003
Updates 2002

Sweatfree in the News

Media Releases

Sweatshop News Newsletter

Statements

Events

National Summit 2010
Speaking Tour 2010
National Summit 2009
Speaking Tour 2009
National Summit 2008
Speaking Tour 2008
Conf. Report 2007
Conf. Report 2006
Conf. Report 2005
Youth Conf. 2005

February 2006

Newsletter #7

Contents:

- 1) SweatFree Communities International Conference
- 2) Host a Speaker in Your Community
- 3) Support Just Garments
- 4) Campaign Updates
- 5) Report from Wal-Mart Worker Tour

SweatFree Communities International Conference - Register now!

Join us in Minneapolis, Minnesota, April 7-9 for our third annual conference. Learn vital organizing skills, make connections, and build a stronger international movement for worker justice. Register now! Scholarships available. All the information you need is online at www.sweatfree.org/conference

Host a Speaker in Your Community

Representatives of worker advocacy organizations in Central America, the Caribbean, and China will be attending our conference, and may be available to visit your community in the beginning of April. If you are interested to arrange an educational event, contact us soon to find out more.

Support Just Garments

Letter from Kathryn Sharpe, SweatFree Communities volunteer, after her recent visit to El Salvador:

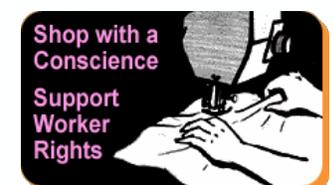
" 'This is a work of love, and a work of hope...' ~Delmy, worker at Just Garments. How many garment factories in the world have workers who would describe their jobs this way? This was the thing that struck me most powerfully during my visit to Just Garments in early January. The factory is the embodiment of a dream, of a vision for how the industry can be better, and the workers live that out daily. Many of them are single mothers who have worked in other factories, so they know what the alternatives are. In spite of the many challenges that have been part of Just Garment's path, they have chosen to stay..."

[Read the rest of Kathryn's letter here.](#)
[4 things you can do to support Just Garments.](#)

Campaign Updates

Public Hearing in Maine

Some 50 people turned out on very short notice to support a bill drafted by the state's Division of Purchases to strengthen the Maine sweatfree procurement law. The Maine Clean Clothes Alliance and the Division of Purchases are calling for a multi-



state consortium for sweatfree procurement and independent monitoring. See testimony from the Director of Purchasing, unions, small business, and others.

Proposed New York Sweatfree Legislation

The New York State Labor-Religion Coalition (NYSLRC), UNITE HERE, and NY State United Teachers are pursuing legislation to expand sweatfree purchasing preferences to local government procurement. From 2001-2003, NYSLRC succeeded in passing three state bills which allow public school districts and public colleges and universities to implement sweatfree purchasing for apparel and sports equipment. The proposed legislation will allow local governments to implement sweatfree purchasing for apparel and sports equipment including uniforms for police, fire and other workers. It would pave the way for implementation of New York City's powerful sweatfree procurement law, earlier struck down in court because of state preemption. Some localities in New York, including Buffalo and Nassau County are already purchasing union-made uniforms. Contact: Mark Looney / 518-213-6000 x6247.

New York Fair Trade School Uniform Committees

The New York State Labor-Religion Coalition has established Fair Trade School Uniform Committees - composed of students, teachers, school staff and community representatives - with its Capitol Region and Long Island chapters to implement and monitor public and parochial school sweatfree purchasing policies. These committees have been meeting with uniform stores in their regions that sell school apparel to mostly parochial schools, and have persuaded some to sell sweatfree apparel. Catholic school superintendents in both areas have offered strong support for sweatfree purchasing. Contact: Mark Looney / 518-213-6000 x6247.

The No Shvitz Pledge: Jewish Communities Purchase Sweatfree

The Progressive Jewish Alliance is asking synagogues, summer camps, and Jewish organizations throughout California to take the "No Shvitz (No Sweat) Pledge" – to commit to purchasing goods produced under fair labor conditions. PJA believes that Jewish institutions have an opportunity to model a commitment to the fair treatment of workers, to use our purchasing power to build the sweatfree movement, and to practice tikkun olam, repairing the world. Signatories include LA's Temple Isaiah, Camp Tawonga, UC Berkeley Hillel, Tehiyah Day School of Oakland, Bible by the Bay, Camps Swig and Newman, Osher Marin Jewish Community Center, Hillel at the Claremont Colleges, and USC Hillel. To help spread the pledge in California or nationwide, contact: Abby Levine, 510-893-1063, or Sarah Church, 323-761-8350.

Catholic School Boards in Canada Make Strides for Sweatfree Procurement: U.S. Catholic Schools Can Join Important New Coalition

After three years of campaigning led by Toronto catholic school students, the Maquila Solidarity Network, and the Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace, the Toronto Catholic District School Board (TCDSB) passed a "Sweatshop-Free Uniform Policy". In addition, the TCDSB voted to join eight other Ontario catholic school boards in a two-year pilot project with the Worker Rights Consortium to verify conditions in supplier factories. Read more about No Sweat efforts in Canada. See the Toronto Star article.

[Insert your campaign here! Please be in touch with us with your latest news.]

Report from Wal-Mart Worker Tour

SweatFree Communities helped organize several events of International Labor Rights Fund's tour of workers producing Wal-Mart goods. In addition to events with community groups and universities, workers met with elected officials in several states helping to make the case for sweatfree procurement. Check out media coverage (Feb 6-8) that reports on the tour and discusses the Maine sweatfree campaign.

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