



December 2009

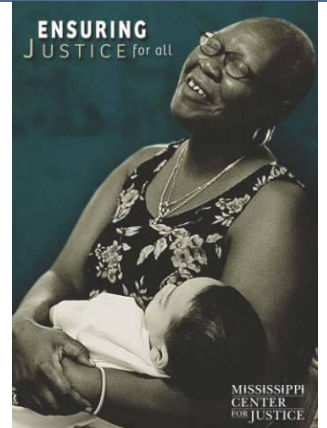
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### Building on success for 2010

Thank you for the many ways you support the Mississippi Center for Justice's efforts to advance racial and economic justice. Although 2009 has been a challenging economic year for everyone, your support made it possible for us to remain steadfast in our goals to seek equity in areas as vast as affordable housing, access to health care, fair lending practices, Hurricane Katrina recovery and much more.

We spent this year building on successes from 2008, and we are pleased to share a [recount of those successes](#), including financial information from 2008.

Our campaigns to reform the state's unemployment insurance system, to seek accountability and transparency in the state's spending of federal recovery monies, to hold landlords accountable for decent housing standards in the Mississippi Delta, to help families keep their homes through our foreclosure prevention initiative, as well as other efforts to improve communities across Mississippi, will continue as we enter 2010. [We hope you will consider a year-end gift to help us jump start the new year.](#)



**Photo:** The Mississippi Center for Justice recently published "Ensuring Justice for All," a recount of our successes, challenges and financial information from 2008.

### Standing up for kids in the national health care debate



Where do children stand in the national debate about health reform? The Mississippi Center for Justice is working to ensure that the needs of children are front and center in decisions that will shape access to health care for generations to come. Along with national advocacy partner First Focus, [we are voicing our opinion in support of preserving the successful Children's Health Insurance Program \(CHIP\)](#) as part of efforts to reform our nation's health care system.

Our efforts to protect children include educating lawmakers about the impact of budget cuts on the health and well being of children. First Focus produced the [Children's Budget 2009](#), which provides an overview of federal spending on kids' issues. The Center will distribute this publication to advocates and legislative leadership during the 2010 session of the Mississippi Legislature. [Read more about the Center's work on access to health care.](#)

**Photo:** The Mississippi Center for Justice is closely monitoring health reform at the national level to ensure that children's access to health care is preserved and expanded.

### Building assets through affordable housing

Affordable housing remains a priority for the Mississippi Center for Justice's work on the post-Katrina Gulf Coast. Ensuring that recovery monies are used to replenish affordable housing, including workforce and rental housing, represents one facet of this ever-evolving work. But there is more to affordable housing recovery than simple bricks and mortar. The Center is also working to help residents develop affordable housing options that serve as a business model for entrepreneurs.

Martha Snelling is a 60-year-old Gulf Coast resident. She owns four shotgun houses on the Mississippi Gulf Coast that anchor two historic African-American communities, Turkey Creek and Soria City. Turkey Creek was founded by freed slaves prior to the establishment of the City of Gulfport. Turkey Creek is currently battling attempts to overrun its neighborhoods, including an ever-expanding airport and the ongoing degradation of the wetlands and Turkey Creek waterway. Soria City is another historic enclave that continues to fight for its existence despite an onslaught of gentrification downtown and along the coastal beachfront.



[Click here to read the full story.](#)

**Photo:** Progress continues on properties owned by coast resident Martha Snelling. When complete, she will own affordable rental units that provide housing for four families, while building assets for herself through smart business decisions.

### Pro Bono spotlight

*Pro bono* literally translates "for good". When it comes to the time and resources donated by *pro bono* partners from across the nation, the amount of good done for Mississippi is immeasurable. The Mississippi Center for Justice relies on a dedicated network of attorneys from a wide range of practice areas to support our legal advocacy work throughout the state. Attorneys who give of their time to advance the social justice environment in Mississippi not only improve the lives and living conditions of people in Mississippi, but they often improve themselves in the process.

The Mississippi Center for Justice leverages *pro bono* service to expand its own capacity for advancing issues that help eliminate poverty and discrimination statewide. The need for *pro bono* services is vast, ranging from traditional legal services and strategy, to infrastructure, operations and communications projects. We invite you to visit our latest [Pro Bono Wish List](#), and contact our *pro bono* counsel, [Crystal Utley](#), to discuss ways that you can get involved during 2010.

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