

ENSURING JUSTICE for all



MISSISSIPPI
CENTER
FOR JUSTICE

imagine Mississippi

Imagine Mississippi where all residents recovering from a disaster receive prompt, fair and adequate help in rebuilding their lives.

Imagine Mississippi where legislative policy promotes equitable and affordable housing for all communities, regardless of race or socioeconomic status.

Imagine Mississippi where predatory financing is outlawed and low-income residents have access to fairly-priced financial services to meet their needs.

Imagine Mississippi where all children receive a quality education, are part of a safe, constructive discipline system and stay in school to graduate.

Imagine Mississippi where children, elderly and disabled people living in poverty have health care coverage to meet their basic needs.

Imagine Mississippi where neighborhood residents work with developers, contractors, business owners and landlords to create vibrant, mixed-income communities for everyone.

Imagine Mississippi where all citizens have equal access to our justice system to resolve their legal problems.

Imagine Mississippi where legal professionals make a sustained commitment to advancing racial and economic justice statewide.

Imagine Mississippi where poverty has been eradicated.

Imagine Mississippi...
the social justice state.





Dear Friends,

We are pleased to present this report containing the highlights of our 2008 campaigns to advance racial and economic justice in Mississippi. We had a great deal to celebrate in 2008. It was our fifth anniversary, and the year this young, home-grown public interest organization firmly established itself as a powerful force in Mississippi's social justice arena.

We continued partnerships with dozens of local, state and national organizations and developed several new ones that added strength to our campaigns and helped leverage our resources. Our *pro bono* program, which grew out of our Katrina recovery efforts, resulted in the donation of 18,000 hours of *pro bono* assistance to hundreds of clients on the Gulf Coast and across the state. This program, one of the most ambitious in the nation, is now a permanent part of our organization's service delivery system.

In five years, we have earned the attention and admiration of clients, community leaders, organizational partners, public officials, the media and the funding community. Since 2003, our budget has increased six-fold. We are winning financial support from progressive donors both in and outside Mississippi. And we have received grants from some of the country's most respected private foundations.

Most importantly, we are providing a voice to Mississippians who lack political power and the means to control the levers of change. As the highlights on the following pages show, we are helping these Mississippians rebuild their lives and their communities, combat abuses of predatory lenders, prevent mortgage foreclosures and improve access to health care.

None of this work would have been possible without your loyal and generous support for which we are deeply grateful.

All best wishes,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Martha Bergmark".

Martha Bergmark
President



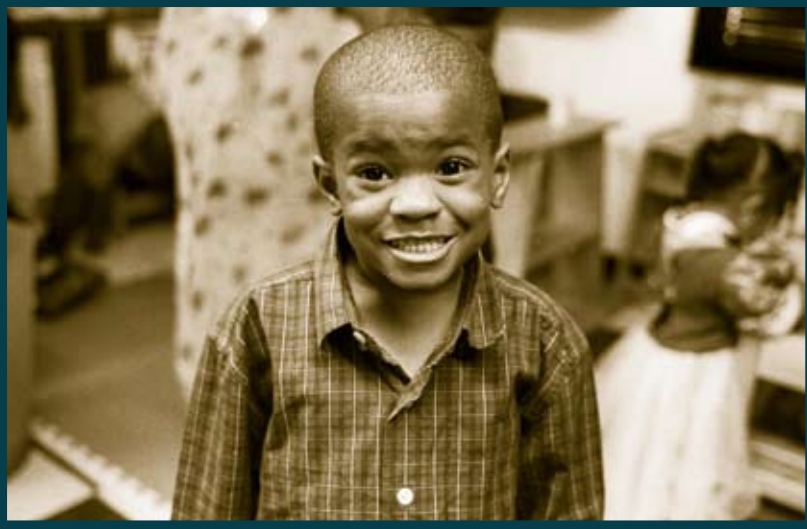
The concept of social justice is a simple one.

It is grounded in American democracy. It is embedded in the values and the constitution of our state.

But ensuring justice for all is not easy.

That's why the Mississippi Center for Justice is here.

We are dedicated to transforming social justice from a concept to a reality.



To us, **social justice means quality public education**, so our youngsters will enter school ready to learn, stay until graduation, and receive the kind of education they need to become **productive members of society after graduation**.

Social justice also means **access to affordable childcare**, so working parents can send their children to safe and nurturing environments that **plant seeds about the excitement of learning**, even before they begin school.



Social justice means **adequate and affordable housing**, a critical component of any family's stability. It means housing for families on the coast who are still displaced by Hurricane Katrina. It means helping homeowners across the state prevent foreclosures. It means protection from predatory lenders.

We are joined in the fight for social justice by attorneys from Mississippi and across the country, and by hundreds of law student volunteers, advocacy organizations and corporate partners.

Here are the highlights of 2008:

We continued our recruitment, training and coordination of volunteer services of lawyers from more than 25 law firms and corporate legal departments, who in 2008 provided 18,000 hours of *pro bono* assistance.

Our battle continues to reverse the State's plan to use almost \$600 million in federal hurricane housing recovery funds to expand the State Port at Gulfport. In December 2008, along with *pro bono* co-counsel Mintz Levin and Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, we filed suit on behalf of the Mississippi NAACP, Gulf Coast Fair Housing Center and a consortium of individual plaintiffs against the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development to stop the diversion.

Along with *pro bono* partner DLA Piper, we preserved homeownership and cultural identity in African-American neighborhoods on the Gulf Coast by clearing property titles so that homeowners could secure grants and loans to rebuild after Hurricane Katrina. As the result of this work, by year's end, property owners had received \$500,000 in home grants.

In partnership with the Lawyers' Committee and the Mississippi Center for Legal Services, we responded to the growing home foreclosure crisis by creating a foreclosure legal assistance project designed to enlist *pro bono* lawyers to help with individual cases and to advocate for policy changes to mitigate the crisis. In December, the Mississippi Bar recruited more than 100 attorneys to participate in this effort.

In partnership with the Mississippi Low-Income Child Care Initiative, we provided legal and policy advocacy to improve the availability and administration of federally-subsidized childcare assistance for working families and co-hosted a January 2008 summit of state leaders to rally support for needed reforms.

In partnership with the New York University Wagner School of Public Service, we published educational materials describing payday lending abuses and their impact on low-income communities. This publication was circulated widely across the State.

In partnership with the Mississippi Health Advocacy Program, the Mississippi Coalition for Citizens with Disabilities, First Focus and others, we fought to remove state administrative obstacles that have caused tens of thousands of qualified children and adults to lose their Medicaid and Children's Health Insurance Program coverage. We also used a "Vote for Me" ad campaign, funded by First Focus, to raise awareness about the importance of children's issues during the 2008 election cycle.

Currently, Mississippi's legal aid programs serve about 10 percent of those in need of civil legal assistance. We provided testimony at the Mississippi Access to Justice Commission's inaugural public hearings designed to raise public awareness about legal needs of low-income Mississippians. The Commission will use the record of these hearings to formulate strategies for increasing resources and revamping delivery systems to improve access to the civil justice system.



The Mississippi Center for Justice is immensely grateful for the generous volunteer services of national, state and local law firms, as well as law students from across the country, without whom our work would not be possible.

2008 Contributions of 1000 hours or more

DLA Piper

Latham & Watkins LLP

Mintz, Levin, Cohn, Ferris, Glousky and Popeo, P. C.

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2008 Contributions up to 1000 hours

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STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES
FOR THE YEARS ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2008 AND 2007

	2008	2007
SUPPORT AND REVENUES		
Contributions	414,896	325,481
In-kind Contributions	6,896,475	5,991,654
Grants	1,207,055	840,808
Interest and Dividends	2,288	3,725
Miscellaneous	9,193	17,324
Contract Services	84,500	48,000
Gain on sale of property and equipment	<u>—</u>	<u>8,165</u>
TOTAL SUPPORT AND REVENUES	8,614,407	7,235,157
EXPENSES		
Program Services	8,321,781	7,312,637
Management and General	166,742	148,085
Fundraising	<u>340,972</u>	<u>155,355</u>
TOTAL EXPENSES	8,829,495	7,616,077
INCREASE (DECREASE) IN NET ASSETS	(215,088)	(380,920)
NET ASSETS AT BEGINNING OF YEAR	992,836	1,373,756
NET ASSETS AT END OF YEAR	777,748	992,836



STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION
FOR THE YEARS ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2008 AND 2007

ASSETS	2008	2007
CURRENT ASSETS		
Cash	149,344	566,683
Receivables	711,133	388,807
Prepaid Expenses	<u>4,404</u>	<u>11,064</u>
	864,881	966,554
PROPERTY AND EQUIPMENT, net	54,225	63,466
 OTHER ASSETS		
Deposits	<u>3,510</u>	<u>3,860</u>
	922,616	1,033,880
 LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Accounts Payable	57,040	5,558
Accrued Expenses	65,993	28,872
Payroll Liabilities	21,835	514
Deferred Revenue	—	5,000
Security Deposit Liability	<u>—</u>	<u>1,100</u>
	144,868	41,044
 NET ASSETS		
Unrestricted	(121,759)	115,620
Temporarily Restricted	<u>899,507</u>	<u>877,216</u>
	<u>777,748</u>	<u>992,836</u>
	922,616	1,033,880



Mississippi Center for Justice

an organization dedicated to advancing
racial and economic justice

MISSISSIPPI
CENTER
FOR JUSTICE

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