



Da DAWG says...

Great Things Happened in 2010

Since DAWG did not put a newsletter out in 2010. We thought this issue should be little highlights of 2010 so all our friends could see what great work we have done this year. ENJOY!!

DAWG Attends US Social Forum



In June 2010, members of DAWG and Teen DAWG along with 20,000 others attended the 2nd US Social Forum held in Detroit.

As part of the weeklong event, over 1,000 workshops were held on diverse topics including Mountain-top Removal, gender identity, songs and chants, movement building, and youth organizing. DAWG developed and presented a workshop on rural organizing entitled *Climbing the Mountain: Rural Organizing in Appalachia*. We also co-presented a workshop on the Poverty Scholars Program.

In addition to workshops, there were concerts, plays, films, dances, art space, People's Movement Assemblies, plenaries, and actions. DAWG presented at the opening and closing People's Movement Assembly -Poverty Summits.

In addition to participating in the Social Forum, while in Detroit, DAWG members visited with local soup kitchens and shelters to find out more about conditions in Detroit and how the economy has affected the community.

In December, 2010, DAWG members traveled to Chicago to meet with other members of the PMA-Poverty Summit to evaluate the Poverty Summit and the Social Forum and to discuss next steps in building a stronger movement to end poverty.

A Few More Highlights of 2010



- ◆ Partnered with WV Free, WV-NASW, WV-ACLU, CAG, WV Coalition Against Domestic Violence, Fairness WV, and WV Environmental Council to provide Citizen Advocacy Trainings throughout the state.
- ◆ Expanded our offices and opened a Teen Center.
- ◆ Co-sponsored the Annual Family Leadership Conference.
- ◆ Our staff continue to serve on numerous boards including the National Center for Law and Economic Justice and Appalachian Community Fund.
- ◆ Teen DAWG met with youth from Iowa as part of their Appalachian Immersion trip.
- ◆ Partnered with Northern WV Center for Independent Living, WV Association of Realtors, Community Living Initiative Corp., and WV Assistive Technology Center to present Fair Housing workshops throughout the state.
- ◆ Working with low income housing residents in Wood and Kanawha Counties to establish resident councils to deal with unfair treatment by management.
- ◆ Youth involved with Teen DAWG wrote a song and performed it at our Halloween Open House.
- ◆ Helped many individuals and families throughout the state with issues related to living in poverty.
- ◆ Held 2 community giveaways.
- ◆ Distributed hundreds of books to families through our Family Bookshelf project and during our early literacy workshops.
- ◆ And much more!



Jean COLMAN'S LEGACY

In 1984, Jean took a job as an organizer for the Welfare Rights Organizing Coalition (WROC) in Washington State. She became executive director in 1987. Jean was a strong dynamic woman who even in the face of her own battle with breast cancer, stood and fought for the rights of welfare mothers. I had the pleasure of meeting and working with Jean while involved with the national Welfare Engine. Jean had a lot to teach me a bout life, about running a welfare rights organization, and about friendship.

Two day before my birthday in 2009, at the age of 59, Jean lost her battle with cancer. I remember the last time we worked together. It was on an article about

funding welfare reform organizations for The Chronicle of Philanthropy. I remember, we were laughing about how welfare wasn't "sexy" anymore to funders.

The story of Jean's friendship did not end with her death. In 2010, we received a \$10,000 donation from Jean's estate. She had remembered DAWG in her will. When I received the letter in the mail, I cried. I had been doing some soul searching about if DAWG was still needed in West Virginia. I knew this donation was a sign from a good friend not to give up the fight. Jean, we are still fighting!!!!



Evelyn Dortch, Chris Hedges, John Hough, and Beth Dortch at Union Theological Seminary in New York.

Chris Hedges in West Virginia

In January 2011, Chris Hedges will be visiting West Virginia. He will be meeting with DAWG and speaking with families who live in McDowell County for a new book he is working on.

We had the pleasure of meeting Chris Hedges in New York and he approached us about this project.

Chris Hedges is a Pulitzer Prize win-

ning journalist and author. He also won the Amnesty Internal Global Award for Human Rights Journalism. He has taught at Columbia University and Princeton. His most recent book is *Death of the Liberal Class*. He also writes a weekly column at www.truthdig.com

My Life Project

- Are you tired of the way people in West Virginia are portrayed on TV?
- Are you tired of everyone thinking we all look like the families on those feed the children commercials?
- Are you tired of the stereotype of the dumb, lazy, hillbilly collecting welfare?

We are tired of it!

The My Life Project, is about telling the real story of our lives in West Virginia. In 2011, DAWG will begin conducting interviews and soliciting essays, poems, etc. that tell your story. The My Life Project will have many ways to tell the story—written, photographs, digital sto-

rytelling, online media, etc.

Later this year renown Philadelphia Social Justice Photographer, Harvey Finkle will be lending his talents to DAWG. He will be visiting with families who are part of this project and taking pictures of their everyday life—work, play, dinner, shopping, church, etc.

We hope to compile some of the stories with these pictures to create a book as part of the My Life Project.

We are very excited about this project!! If you would like to be a part of this then please send us an email to info@wvdawg.org.

Photo by Harvey Finkle



Direct Action Welfare Group's vision is the end of poverty in West Virginia. In order to make this vision a reality, we advocate with low-income families for economic justice.



Direct Action Welfare Group believes....

- *Poor people of West Virginia can stand together as an organized community to fight against discrimination and the suffering of poverty.*
- *No matter how poor you are you have a voice and rights as a human being.*
- *Every individual should be treated fairly regardless of race, creed, nationality, income, sexual orientation, religion, gender, age, or educational level.*
- *Access to services and assistance is a right and not a benefit*
- *Everyone has the right to a good education including post-secondary education, medical, dental, and vision care, a job at a living wage, affordable childcare, decent housing and adequate food and clothing.*
- *Every mother should have the option to choose to stay home and care for her children or work.*



Upcoming events in 2011

- Early Literacy Training
- Teen Dance
- Fair Housing Training
- My Life Interviews
- Teen DAWG Podcast
- Poverty Scholars Leadership School
- Conscious movie night
- Teen workshops
- And lots more

Visit our website often for more details as they become available.

Direct Action Welfare Group Inc.
PO Box 20079
Charleston, WV 25362

On the web at www.wvdawg.org

Email us at info@wvdawg.org

