



UNIVERSITY *of* WASHINGTON

CENTER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

HENRY M. JACKSON SCHOOL OF INTERNATIONAL STUDIES



Massage workers learn about Chinatown-International District working class and organizing history on a neighborhood tour led by Massage Parlor Outreach Project and CID Coalition. Photo credit/ MPOP.

ANNUAL REPORT

2024-2025 ACADEMIC YEAR



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LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

Most readers of this annual report already know it's been a rough year for both higher education and human rights. Our Center for Human Rights sits at the nexus of these two fields, so we've been in the thick of it. While I don't know what our work will look like in the years to come, I do know that what we do is more necessary than ever—and I hope you'll agree after reading about our work this past year.

As you see in these pages, our researchers are working on some of the most enduring challenges in our state, region, and world, many of which were inscribed in the state legislation that founded our center sixteen years ago. While none of these problems have easy answers, I'm inspired by the way our research teams are building new strategies for advancing the work in these times. This spring, as you'll see on page 10, we welcomed a new initiative studying the nature and causes of gaps in the juvenile parole process and ways of mitigating inequities, thus expanding the positive impact of recent resentencing decisions in Washington state.

I'm excited to share an important victory made possible by our long-standing work gathering and analyzing U.S. government records relevant to the pursuit of justice for crimes against humanity committed during the 1980s in El Salvador: in June, for the first time in that country's history, three members of the military high command were sentenced to prison for their role in the killings of civilians during the conflict. I'm honored to have drawn the materials for my testimony in that case from the hard work conducted by multiple generations of UW graduate and undergraduate students who toiled away in our center's windowless FOIA office, always imagining this day could come even when it seemed unlikely. You can read more about that on page 12.

We continue to be blessed with brilliant students, who come to us today in larger numbers and with a greater sense of urgency than ever. I'm so grateful that with your support we were able to disburse \$215,000 in support to students this past year. See page 4 for the details.

Earlier this year, we were informed that the College of Arts and Sciences was withdrawing support it has long provided for our center. (This came in the context of college-wide budget cuts, and was not something specifically targeting us or our work.) It makes the day to day feel a bit more uphill, but no one ever said human rights work was going to be easy. I'm proud of the work we do, and grateful to you, our community, for making it possible.

La lucha continúa,

Angelina



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A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Angelina Snodgrass Godoy".

Angelina Snodgrass Godoy
Helen H. Jackson Chair in Human Rights
Director, Center for Human Rights
Professor of International Studies and
Law, Societies, and Justice

UWCHR STUDENT
RESEARCHERS

Student researchers are an integral part of the UWCHR model, working with faculty and paired with partner organizations outside the university to research human rights issues.



NATASHA ANIS

Natasha Anis is a student at UW School of Law. She is a former labor organizer and is dedicated to using her legal education to empower workers to collectively organize. Her involvement with labor education and action grows out of her organizing with the prison abolition movement. Her research with the Strategies for Massage Parlor Workers' Rights project focuses on Seattle ordinances establishing worker protections and finding new ways to implement industry standards in work that has been historically criminalized. In her free time, Natasha enjoys reading and exploring Seattle's many parks.



ALEX CHUANG

Alex is a community organizer and master's student in the School of Social Work. Since 2020, Alex has organized with the Massage Parlor Outreach Project (MPOP). Their work with the Strategies for Massage Parlor Workers' Rights project focuses on implementing infrastructure for language justice and creating internal political education curriculum for members. In their free time, Alex also builds language justice practices with the International Migrants Alliance, a global alliance of grassroots migrants organizations fighting for migrant self-determination against imperialist plunder, exploitation, and forced migration.



YUECHAN LILY HE

Lily is a master's student in the School of Social Work. As part of the Strategies for Massage Parlor Workers' Rights project, Lily assists focus groups with massage workers, conducts outreach to restaurants and shops in Chinatown-International District, and assists with translating materials. In her free time, Lily enjoys knitting, reading, journaling, and traveling.



PRIYA HENDRY

Priya is majoring in drama with a focus on performance. She joined the UWCHR in spring 2022 working on the Immigrant Rights Observatory project, which monitors compliance with, and efficacy of, the Keep Washington Working Act and the Courts Open to All Act. Outside of research, she enjoys reading, writing poetry, and attempting new recipes.



RACHEL KETOLA

Rachel has supported movements for immigration justice for nearly ten years as a legal advocate, nonprofit program coordinator, organizer, and community member in Seattle. She is currently pursuing a master's of international studies at UW and aims to conduct research alongside asylum seekers in Seattle to build power towards liberation and mutual flourishing. In her free time, Rachel can be found doing pottery and playing with her dog, Santo.



BRENDAN LEE

Brendan Lee is an undergraduate in the Law, Societies, and Justice department, and is a member in the Interdisciplinary Honors Program. His academic interests center on criminal law, with a focus on juvenile justice and the ethics of punishment. He has worked on juvenile parole advocacy and in defense law. Brendan is currently conducting research with the Ready to Release Initiative, examining the limited access to rehabilitative programming for incarcerated individuals serving long-term sentences. Outside of school, Brendan enjoys playing the piano and throwing a baseball around.



GABRIELLE LUNDQUIST

Gabrielle Lundquist is an honors history student at the University of Washington. She is currently in the process of writing her senior thesis on the experiential differences between metropolitan French soldiers and colonial soldiers during WWII, focusing primarily on the disparities in treatment of physical and psychological traumas. Gabrielle joined the UWCHR's Unfinished Sentences project as an archival researcher. Aside from her studies, Gabrielle enjoys cooking, reading, and spending time with her cat.



ANIKA MEHTA

Anika is a double major, studying law, societies, and justice, as well as the comparative history of ideas. As part of the Immigrant Rights Observatory project, she helps monitor compliance with sanctuary laws in Washington state. In her free time, Anika enjoys reading, climbing, and watching Bollywood movies.



CARLOS YAÑEZ NAVARRO

Carlos Alberto is a DACAmented PhD student in the Jackson School of International Studies focusing on domestic migrant rights, the evolving mechanisms of deportation, and the expanding border infrastructure. At UWCHR, Carlos joins the Immigrant Rights team in observing implementation of laws and tracking abuses in immigrant detention. Prior to UWCHR, Carlos was a community organizer involved in immigration advocacy at the local/ federal level and worked with asylum seekers. In his free time, Carlos enjoys going to the gym and practicing the many languages he speaks including Portuguese, French, Persian, and Arabic in conjunction with his native Spanish.



KAYLEY PINGEON

Kayley is pursuing a graduate degree in marine affairs at UW's School of Marine and Environmental Affairs, focusing on environmental justice, sustainability, and biodiversity. Kayley joined the Indigenous Rights and Environmental Sustainability project, bringing her passion for incorporating traditional foods into ecological habitat restoration planning to support tribal and food sovereignty, environmental justice, climate resilience, and sustainable natural resource management.



ANDREW SHAW

Andrew is a student double majoring in computer science and philosophy who is passionate about harnessing technology for justice. He joined the UWCHR in winter 2024 to support data analysis work identifying human rights trends in ICE arrest records. In his free time, he enjoys baking, getting boba, and serving as an editor for the UW undergraduate philosophy journal.



KAYA SURACI

Kaya Suraci is a history and Spanish major at the University of Washington. Her interest in Indigenous history throughout Latin America is rooted in her travels to Mexico, Guatemala, Belize, and Costa Rica. As of June 2024, she joins the UWCHR's Unfinished Sentences project as a student researcher. Outside of classes and research, she spends her time writing, reading, and hanging out with her pets of various species.



ELIJAH TUNCAP

Elijah Tuncap is an undergraduate student in the Law, Societies, and Justice department. His academic focus centers around criminal justice, specifically restorative and rehabilitative approaches as alternatives to Western ideas of punishment. Elijah is currently working with the Ready to Release Initiative, researching factors that limit access to rehabilitative programming for individuals serving long-term sentences for crimes committed as juveniles. He seeks to disrupt the school-to-prison pipeline and help young people avoid the carceral system. In his free time, Elijah enjoys making music, playing basketball, and working out.



LIZA YIFEI XIAO

Liza is a master of social work student specializing in clinical social work. She joined the Massage Parlor Workers' Rights project as a volunteer in 2024, where she helps to develop bilingual communications projects with the group, focusing on advocacy and community building. Outside of community work, Liza enjoys watching movies and working on film and theater sets.



HAO HAZEL ZHU

Hao is a senior in the Journalism and Public Interest Communication program, as well as majoring in cinema and media studies. She joined the Strategies for Massage Parlor Workers' Rights project as a part of the creative team facilitating content creation for the workers and community. In her spare time, Hao enjoys painting, reading, live shows, and going for outdoorsy adventures.



What I took away from my time at the center was the importance of a long-term vision; of how the work you do is like picking up a baton and passing it on. I learned to hold that work with so much care because you have to have this understanding that you are part of a lineage.

Read Sarah's full interview on p. 22 >>>



- SARAH KWAN

Former Unfinished Sentences
student researcher

HUMAN RIGHTS FUNDING FOR UW STUDENTS

Thanks to the generosity of our community of donors, UWCHR has endowed funds to which students can apply for to support projects of their own design.

This year, UWCHR supported seven students, dispensing a total of \$34,400.

- UWCHR has **five funds available** to students across all three UW campuses.
- Over the last 16 years, we have...
 - **funded 92 students** through our endowed funds.
 - **awarded over \$2,036,000 to students** doing human rights research and projects, including our endowed funds recipients.



ALYSON BRADLEY

Alyson received both the **Peter Mack and Jamie Mayerfeld Award** and the **Dr. Lisa Sable Brown Award**. She is a PhD student at the Jackson School of International Studies; her research examines how colonial legacies and racial formations shape legal and bureaucratic approaches to juvenile care in Peru.



JUSTIN HIRSCH

Justin received the **Dr. Lisa Sable Brown Award**. He is a master's student in the School of Marine and Environmental Affairs. His research focuses on labor and environmental policy impacting migrant fishers aboard American fishing vessels.



RACHEL KETOLA

Rachel received the **Jennifer Caldwell Award**. She is a master's student at the Jackson School of International Studies, researching the ways in which the Trump Administration in the U.S. is collaborating with the Bukele Administration in El Salvador, a country currently operating under a "State of Exception" that allows the security forces to criminalize and incarcerate its citizens without due process.



PAUL JASON PEREZ

Paul received the **Peter Mack and Jamie Mayerfeld Award**. He is a PhD student in the Information School, researching the role of archival practices in documenting state violence and ensuring historical accountability, focusing on the archives of the Martial Law era of President Ferdinand Marcos, Sr. in the Philippines.



HANADY SHAQUR

Hanady received the **Abe Osheroff and Gunnel Clark Award**. She is an undergraduate student studying medical anthropology. She is the co-president of Zaytoon UW, where she works to advocate for the rights and educational opportunities of displaced Gazan students.



KAYA SURACI

Kaya received the **Benjamin Linder Justice Award**. She is an undergraduate student majoring in history and Spanish with a focus on Indigenous history throughout Latin America. She began working with the Center for Human Rights in June 2024 as a student researcher for the Unfinished Sentences project where she has helped review and catalogue countless government documents obtained under public records law.



REBECCA ZARAGOZA

Rebecca received the **Dr. Lisa Sable Brown Award**. She is a master's student studying urban design and planning. Her research focuses on the design and policy frameworks of mobile home parks in the Eastern Coachella Valley, Polanco Parks. She examines how these spaces function, their socio-spatial dynamics, and how they might inform more sustainable and equitable housing solutions for migrant and low-income workers.

THE JUVENILE PAROLE HEALING AND READY TO RELEASE INITIATIVE



In the newest project under the Rethinking Punishment Initiative, Law, Societies, and Justice (LSJ) faculty Katherine Beckett and Ann Frost as well as LSJ majors Brendan Lee and Elijah Tuncap are partnering with the Seattle Clemency Project to study the nature and causes of gaps in the juvenile parole process, and ways of mitigating these inequities.

By Katherine Beckett and Ann Frost, UW Faculty Project Leaders

Most crime is committed by young people. A few decades ago, at the height of the war on crime, many of these young people were tried in adult courts and received very long or life sentences. Children as young as 13 were sentenced to life without the possibility of parole on the premise that these children were irredeemable and that this fact could be ascertained by prosecutors and judges.

Thanks to recent reforms, significant change has occurred. The number of children sentenced in adult court in Washington has fallen dramatically. Youth are also now less likely to serve their sentence in an adult prison or receive a life without the possibility of parole sentence. In fact, today, children who plead guilty to very serious crimes in Washington are potentially eligible for parole at the age of 21.

Yet some people who were sentenced at a young age before these reforms were enacted remain behind bars and without hope. The Juvenile Healing and Ready to Release Initiative will assess why this is the case and explore how barriers to prison programming

contribute to it. Ultimately, this project hopes to use its findings to remove barriers to programming that prevent people who were children when they committed their crime from coming home.

This initiative grew out of the Law, Societies, and Justice Department's partnership with the Seattle Clemency Project (SCP). The Seattle Clemency Project is a local nonprofit that seeks to increase access to justice by matching people seeking early release from prison and those facing deportation due to old criminal convictions with free, high-quality legal representation. LSJ and SCP have collaborated on many projects in recent years, and SCP has supported LSJ's Juvenile Parole Project since 2019.

Far too many people are serving excessively long sentences in Washington and across the country. But Washington State courts have created several routes to post-conviction review for people serving long and life sentences. Many of these opportunities pertain to people who were convicted of crimes they committed as a child or young adult, while under the age of 18. In

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Washington, many such individuals have come home from prison, thanks in significant part to the fantastic work of the Seattle Clemency Project. But many others have been left behind. In the Juvenile Parole Project, students work with volunteer attorneys and people who have served many years behind bars for an offense they committed as a child or young adult to ensure that decision-makers fully understand the role of youth in the offense and the maturation that has occurred since that time.

Through our work in the Juvenile Parole Project, it has become clear that many of the individuals petitioning for sentence review or parole release are effectively shut out of prison programming due to their long sentences. This has detrimental consequences for those petitioning for (and possibly gaining) post-conviction relief with minimal, or without any, rehabilitative programming under their belts.

Over the next year, Professors Katherine Beckett and Ann Frost will work with undergraduate research assistants to develop a report that sheds light on these gaps in the juvenile parole process and identifies ways of mitigating these inequities. Katherine has written extensively about the causes and consequences of mass incarceration and has focused in recent years on the problem of long and life sentences. Ann teaches a range of courses related to these topics, including classes on crime, politics, and justice and wrongful conviction.

The project commenced in spring quarter, 2025. To start, LSJ majors Brendan Lee and Elijah Tuncap were brought on the team as researchers. Brendan was enrolled in the Juvenile Parole Project this year, where he excelled in many ways. Elijah participated in Katherine's study abroad course in the winter and will be in the Juvenile Parole Project next year. Both Brendan and Elijah will graduate in spring of 2026, so can remain on the project for its entirety. Both are outstanding students and are deeply committed to this work.

Once our team was formed, we developed and submitted a Public Disclosure Act request to the Washington State Department of Corrections (DOC) for data pertaining to people who were under 18 at the time of their crime and who may become eligible for parole review by the Juvenile Board of the Indeterminate Sentence Review Board (ISRB).

“ULTIMATELY, THIS PROJECT HOPES TO USE ITS FINDINGS TO REMOVE BARRIERS TO PROGRAMMING THAT PREVENT PEOPLE WHO WERE CHILDREN WHEN THEY COMMITTED THEIR CRIME FROM COMING HOME.”

Moving forward, the research will involve varied data sources and diverse methods. The team seeks to identify everyone who has gone through the juvenile parole process and all of those who will be eligible in the next ten years. Much of this information will come from DOC records and other legal documents. Interviews with petitioners who

have been released will shed light on the resources and programs that would have helped them if they had been available to them. Interviews with people in DOC will help the research team understand why those who appear to be eligible for education and other programming sometimes cannot get access to it. Interviews with ISRB members will help clarify what educational and vocational resources they would like petitioners to have access to before they appear for their hearing. The team will also conduct a literature review on the impact of various types of correctional programming for people returning home from prison, including people who were sentenced to prison for crimes committed as a child or emerging adult, and develop a report that synthesizes these findings.

The team plans to use the findings to address and rectify any barriers to programming that prevent people serving long or life sentences for juvenile offenses from coming home, where they can live in freedom with the people they love.

Learn more about the Ready to Release Initiative:
[TINYURL.COM/RETHINKINGPUNISHMENT](https://tinyurl.com/rethinkingpunishment) ■

UWCHR PROVIDES HISTORICAL DOCUMENTATION OF 1982 KILLINGS OF DUTCH JOURNALISTS IN EL SALVADOR

UWCHR Director Angelina Godoy provided expert testimony in a recent court case in El Salvador. The case was the first in the nation's history in which former members of the military high command were held responsible for the killings of civilians, a widespread practice during the war. Professor Godoy's testimony drew on years of work by faculty, staff, and students at the UW Center for Human Rights. In the article below, she reflects on the implications of this historic verdict.

By Angelina Godoy, UWCHR Director

On June 3, 2025, in what might be the sleeper hit of the century, a court in rural El Salvador rendered a historic ruling. In sentencing three members of the former military high command, among them the country's former minister of defense, to die in prison for the 1982 murders of four Dutch journalists, the court pierced the veil of impunity that has long enabled those responsible for the worst violence during the country's armed conflict to walk free. And in doing so, the court also ordered the country's present-day dictator, Nayib Bukele, to publicly apologize on behalf of the state, for delaying the process of justice for 43 years.

Who would have expected this? Though El Salvador's history is run through with political violence, this was the first-ever case of war crimes to go to trial—in part because Bukele himself purged the judiciary a few years ago, just when the case of El Mozote looked poised to enter the trial phase. And in recent months the Bukele government has taken a sharp and brutal turn, locking up human rights attorney Ruth López and other government critics under patently spurious charges. Today, López has been effectively disappeared; she has been declared a prisoner of conscience by Amnesty International, but

her whereabouts and well-being are unknown and the organization she worked for has been forced into exile for the protection of its remaining staff.

El Salvador's extralegal gulags, of course, are the same institutions where Kilmar Abrego García, the Maryland father unlawfully expelled by the Trump administration, as well as hundreds of Venezuelan migrants, were held incommunicado this spring. Bukele has publicly reveled in his role as global jailor, offering his prison up for ghoulish photo-ops by DHS Secretary Kristi Noem and posting "Oopsie... too late" as a social media response to U.S. court orders barring the disappearance of migrants within its walls. In a speech in June, he declared that he didn't care if his actions meant he was considered a dictator, because his actions were in defense of the Salvadoran people.

So in this context, it makes sense that few were focused on the judicial proceedings in a small courtroom in rural Chalatenango—the area where, over 43 years ago, Jan Cornelius Kuiper Joop, Koos Jacobus Andries Koster, Hans Lodewijk ter Laag and Johannes Jan Willemsen were gunned down in an ambush set for them by the U.S.-trained Atonal Battalion. The case was featured prominently in the



4. AS A RESULT OF THEIR INVESTIGATION, REPORTING OFFICERS CONCLUDED THAT THE JOURNALISTS DIED OF MULTIPLE GUNSHOT WOUNDS RECEIVED DURING AN ENCOUNTER WITH SOLDIERS OF THE ATONAL BATTALION WHILE ATTEMPTING TO ENTER GUERRILLA TERRITORY SURREPTITIOUSLY IN THE COMPANY OF GUIDES IDENTIFIED BY SALVADORAN ARMED FORCES AS GUERRILLAS. CIRCUMSTANTIAL EVIDENCE RAISES POSSIBILITY THAT THE JOURNALISTS AND GUERRILLAS DIED IN AN AMBUSH RATHER THAN A CHANCE ENCOUNTER.

The June 2025 trial covered the March 1982 killings of Dutch journalists Koos Koster, Jan Kuiper, Hans ter Laag, and Joop Willemsen, alongside four others presumed to be Salvadoran guerrillas, though their identities remain unknown. The court found that the men were killed in an ambush planned by Colonel Mario Adalberto Reyes Mena with knowledge of other military leaders, and sentenced retired Minister of Defense Colonel José Guillermo García, retired Colonel Francisco Morán, and retired Colonel Mario Adalberto Reyes Mena, to 15 years in prison. The photo above shows the four Dutch journalists with an excerpt from a document received by UWCHR through public records requests.

report of the UN Truth Commission in 1992, but attempts to pursue justice over the years have seen judges flee the country under threat. By anyone's guess, this case, at this time, seemed unlikely to end differently.

And yet, it did.

It's difficult to muster excitement about sending men in their eighties and nineties to die in prison. The three sentenced in this case include former Minister of Defense Guillermo García, who served as de facto president as the country descended into civil war, making it his practice to deny the massacres committed by men under his command; Francisco Morán, the director of the brutal Treasury Police, disbanded as part of the Peace Accords; and Mario Reyes Mena, the commander of the Fourth Brigade,

who was located by a crew of Dutch journalists in 2018, while living out a comfortable retirement in suburban Virginia. Now elderly and infirm, these men are no longer a threat to anyone. But the ideas they represented, and the multinational killing apparatus they erected to promote them despite the cost in lives and liberty, seem a greater threat today than at perhaps any point since the war's end.

The U.S. government, of course, was deeply enmeshed in the Salvadoran armed conflict, providing the rationale and resources for this small Central American country to go all out in seeking to defeat a homegrown guerrilla insurgency from 1980 to 1992. For U.S. President Ronald Reagan, the future of American democracy was at stake in El Salvador. So the U.S. shoveled resources into the Salvadoran war machine, accelerating its campaign of death

and destruction and trotting out a rotating cast of ambassadors to publicly deny the atrocities even as the evidence piled up around them.

In March 1982, the Dutch journalists were murdered as a direct result of efforts by both governments to conceal the obvious. Just months earlier, U.S. journalists Raymond Bonner and Alma Guillermoprieto had broken the news of the horrific massacre of El Mozote, a killing spree that left over 1,000 peasants dead at the hands of the U.S.-trained Atlacatl Battalion in December 1981. Although the Reagan administration was successful in wringing out another package of military aid for El Salvador just days later, both Salvadoran and the American officials drew a chilling conclusion: the press was the problem. On March 12, 1982, the U.S. State Department sent a cable to its embassies around the world, calling attention to “the problem of the circulation of leftist or independently sponsored atrocity charges against the Salvadoran government without benefit of objective analysis.” Its Salvadoran partners took yet bolder action, publishing a list of journalists on March 17, and declaring, “These are the men responsible for the bad reputation of our Armed Forces.” Before the day was done, the four Dutch journalists and their Salvadoran guides lay dead in rural Chalatenango.

Cast against the cold light of history, those efforts by U.S. and Salvadoran officials to hide the truth now seem cowardly and pathetic. But declassified documents from the period reveal that the very men condemned now to infamy once strutted and preened

in ways not so different from Bukele and Trump today. García, for example, dismissed the accounts of atrocities at El Mozote as “a soap opera” and blithely told U.S. Ambassador Deane Hinton, “I’ll deny it and prove it fabricated,” on his way to a Congressional prayer breakfast—the 1982 equivalent of “Oopsie... too late.” U.S. officials privately deemed him “cocky,” but he got away with it. Even Bukele appears to have done his bidding, arbitrarily removing the one judge who had publicly committed to bringing the El Mozote case to trial in 2021.

Today, Bukele and Trump may talk tough about crackdowns on criminals, but the facts are obvious to anyone paying attention. Those sent to rot in secretive jails without due process of law—whether migrants or human rights defenders—are not a threat to democracy; the threat is any government that stoops to state terror as a means to secure support. The masked goons rounding up migrants on American streets, and the death squads who snatched critics off Salvadoran street corners in the 1980s, have something in common. They hide their faces because they know that while they may get away with it for a while, ultimately those who pursue power through violence will be exposed when they least expect it.

That’s what happened in this case, and that’s why it matters.

Learn more about the Unfinished Sentences Project:
[TINYURL.COM/UNFINISHEDSENTENCES](https://tinyurl.com/unfinishedsentences) ■

UNFINISHED SENTENCES

Unfinished Sentences is an initiative of the UWCHR that aims to document and share stories of survivors of crimes against humanity committed in the context of El Salvador’s armed conflict, and to support Salvadoran efforts for truth and accountability.



Food forest planting at the Nisqually Culture Center. Photo credit/ Patrick Christie.

By Patrick Christie, UW Faculty Project Leader

In spring 2025, with additional funding support from the UW EarthLab, the Indigenous Rights and Environmental Sustainability project focused on nurturing future generations of climate leaders by engaging Chief Leschi Schools (CLS) and UW students in the creation of two traditional plant food forests: one on the campus of CLS and one at the Nisqually Culture Center. Food forests are multi-story cultivated areas that use native plants to restore ecological function, promote food sovereignty, address cultural significance, and foster a connection to a place. In contrast to a garden or other typical cultivation spaces, food forests are designed to enhance biodiversity

and mimic the natural structure of a forest, providing a variety of edible products, such as bulbs, berries, fruit, and shoots, but also a variety of cultural products, such as medicine and bark for weaving. The high ecological complexity and biodiversity increase the climate resilience of these areas. Furthermore, these food forests are conceptualized as spaces for education, community gathering, and cultural revitalization, including the transmission of Traditional Ecological Knowledge and the promotion of the Lushootseed language.

“THESE FOOD FORESTS ARE CONCEPTUALIZED AS SPACES FOR EDUCATION, COMMUNITY GATHERING, AND CULTURAL REVITALIZATION, INCLUDING THE TRANSMISSION OF TRADITIONAL ECOLOGICAL KNOWLEDGE AND THE PROMOTION OF THE LUSHOOTSEED LANGUAGE.”

The Chief Leschi Schools food forest was established through a series of planting events involving dozens of students and teachers from CLS and the UW. Its inauguration was marked by a joyful celebration with

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the Puyallup Tribal Council and CLS and UW students and faculty. Together, the two food forests feature approximately 1,000 native plants, supported by an irrigation system to ensure their viability through their first summer.

This year, we're excited to welcome two new UW graduate students, Zoe DeGrande and Will Burnham, to the Indigenous Rights and Environmental Sustainability project. In fall 2025, interviews will be

conducted to reflect on the project, identify impacts on those involved, and explore individual and collective commitments to environmental stewardship and Indigenous rights. Video footage from planting events, the inaugural ceremony, and interviews will form the foundation for a short educational video to be showcased at public events in 2026.

Learn more about this project:

[TINYURL.COM/INDRIGHTSENVSUSTAIN](https://tinyurl.com/indrighsenvsustain) ■



UW and Chief Leschi Schools students and educators come together to plant the two food forest locations with over 1,000 native plants. Photo credit/ Patrick Christie.



RESHAPING NARRATIVES AND BUILDING POWER: MASSAGE PARLOR WORKERS' RIGHTS

Massage workers learn about Chinatown-International District working class and organizing history on a neighborhood tour led by Massage Parlor Outreach Project and CID Coalition. Photo credit/ MPOP.

By JM Wong, Massage Parlor Outreach Project Organizer

This year, the Strategies for Massage Parlor Workers' Rights project, in collaboration with the Massage Parlor Outreach Project (MPOP), continued to examine ways to build worker power and leadership among migrant Asian massage parlor workers, sex workers, and care workers in the greater Seattle area.

In 2024-25, we deepened our ongoing work analyzing and studying the labor dispatch practices that bring massage workers to the Seattle region. Labor dispatch models, where workers from

a temporary employment agency are dispatched for a period of time to an employer, create precarious conditions for workers, often void of any workplace

protections, benefits, or job security. These gig labor systems lead to riskier working conditions, forcing

workers to choose between their safety and survival, leading gig and dispatched workers to organize their own care and safety nets amongst themselves, outside the systems designed to exclude them.

Massage, too, can be considered a form of gendered gig labor. This year we have been able to study the various strategies that other gig workers who do not enjoy the typical benefits of National Labor Relations Act protections

have been able to use to organize—we learned from Strippers Are Workers, a dancer-led organization that fights to empower the dancers of Washington state;

“GIG LABOR SYSTEMS LEAD TO RISKIER WORKING CONDITIONS, FORCING WORKERS TO CHOOSE BETWEEN THEIR SAFETY AND SURVIVAL, LEADING GIG AND DISPATCHED WORKERS TO ORGANIZE THEIR OWN CARE AND SAFETY NETS AMONGST THEMSELVES, OUTSIDE THE SYSTEMS DESIGNED TO EXCLUDE THEM.”

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from Familias Unidos por la Justicia, an independent farm worker union of Indigenous families; and also from Doulas For All, a Queer, Trans, Black, Indigenous and People of Color–led coalition organizing toward Medicaid reimbursements for birth doulas. The creativity of these worker organizers inspires us to develop new ways and strategies for building worker power outside of traditional unionization attempts. These attempts are even more necessary now, given the attacks that immigrant workers face in the current political climate.

UW students and interns have been instrumental in advancing the organizing efforts. Students have

enhanced worker outreach by creating Mandarin-language videos to inform workers about immigration and labor related news. They have also bolstered community engagement through communications that reshape narratives about Asian migrant massage workers, countering mainstream perspectives steeped in stigma and victimization.

By bringing together community-based research and action, this project will continue to build worker power through organizing and leadership development.

To access more information about this project:
[TINYURL.COM/MPOPUWCHR](https://tinyurl.com/mpopuwchr) ■



Massage Parlor Outreach Project members and organizers. Photo credit/ MPOP.



Speakers from partner organizations at a press conference react to UWCHR findings of enforced disappearance and *refoulement* in Washington state. From left to right, Malou Chávez of Northwest Immigrant Rights Project, Josefina Mora-Cheung of La Resistencia, Pia Rivera-Jones of MLK Labor Council, Professor Angélica Cházaro of UW Law, and Professor Angelina Godoy from UWCHR. Photo credit/ Charlie Lapham and UWCHR.

By Phil Neff, UWCHR Research Coordinator

Since our inception, UWCHR has conducted research on topics related to immigrant rights in Washington state, as specified by the state law under which our center was founded. These ongoing efforts are now grouped under our Immigrant Rights Observatory project. Over the years, our reports have documented both serious concern for the rights of migrants in our state, as well as areas of significant progress in protection of immigrant rights. In recent months, however, threats to the rights of immigrant Washingtonians have increased severely, to the point where egregious violations including enforced disappearance and *refoulement* are now taking place in our state. Over the next year, we hope to strengthen both our methodologies and our partnerships with impacted communities and frontline advocates to better document and denounce these mounting abuses.

GROSS HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES AGAINST MIGRANTS IN WASHINGTON STATE

In August this year, we published a report documenting the cases of 14 individuals and two families who have been subjected to enforced disappearance by the U.S. government, including seven Venezuelans illegally expelled to the CECOT megaprison in El Salvador; and six people sent to military detention at Guantánamo Bay, Cuba, prior to their deportations. UWCHR researchers compiled information across multiple sources to document these individuals' ties to Washington state and the circumstances surrounding their disappearance and deportation. In addition to specific cases of enforced disappearance, our research raises concerns of a

much larger universe of deportations occurring daily without real due process, under conditions which may constitute *refoulement*, or the practice of sending a person in government custody to a place where they are likely to face grave danger.

We also documented the role of local institutions in facilitating these deportations: from Boeing Field and Sea-Tac Airport, which provide the infrastructure through which deportations occur daily; to the state Department of Corrections, which collaborates in the detention of Washingtonians completing prison sentences; and the Washington State Investment Board, which invests public funds in businesses that profit from the brutalization of our neighbors. The goal of this research is to make all Washingtonians witness to what is happening on our watch, in the hopes that we might come together in new ways to stop these abuses.

HUMAN RIGHTS CONDITIONS IN IMMIGRATION DETENTION

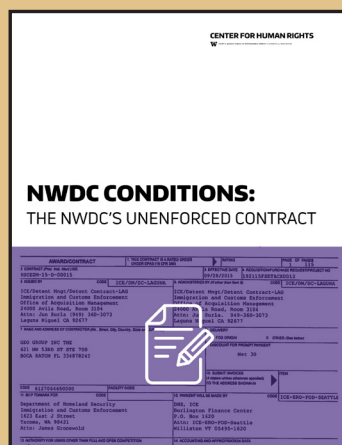
Over the last year, we published two reports as part of our ongoing research regarding human rights conditions at the Northwest Detention Center in Tacoma. The concerns raised by these reports have only deepened as the detained population at the facility has increased in recent months.

The first of these reports, “TPD Doesn’t Respond Here’: Patterns of Neglect in Tacoma Police Department’s Response to Reports of Crimes at the Northwest Detention Center,” reviewed ten years of reports of abuse and assault at the detention facility, documenting systematic failure by local law enforcement in its response to reports of crimes at the facility, especially when detained people were the victims. We presented these findings to Tacoma stakeholders including city and TPD officials upon release of the report. Unfortunately, ongoing research

suggests that, despite assurances, detained people continue to have little recourse to report crimes in Tacoma.

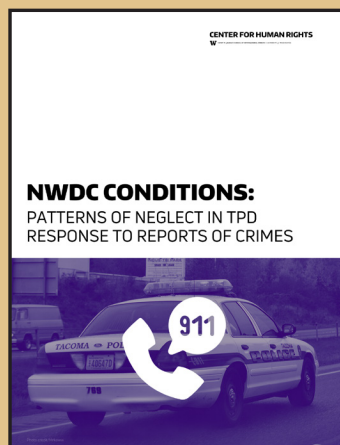
The second report, “Compliance Theater: The NWDC’s Unenforced Contract,” examined the provisions on ICE’s contract with the GEO Group for operation of the detention facility. Our research found no evidence that ICE has ever exercised its authority to sanction GEO Group under the terms of the contract, even in cases of documented failures to uphold contract provisions. In addition, when UWCHR researchers submitted a series of FOIA requests for documentation mandated under the contract, ICE responded in multiple cases that the required documents did not exist, including reports relating to sexual assault and use of force at the facility. These findings are particularly alarming given the fact that the contract between ICE and GEO Group for the facility expired in September 2025 and is likely to be renewed for an extended period.

IMMIGRANT RIGHTS OBSERVATORY: NEW REPORTS



Compliance Theater: The NWDC’s Unenforced Contract

Read the report:
[TINYURL.COM/NWDCCONTRACT](https://tinyurl.com/NWDCCONTRACT)



“TPD Doesn’t Respond Here”: Patterns of Neglect in Tacoma Police Department’s Response to Reports of Crimes at the NWDC

Read the report:
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Gross Human Rights Violations in Washington State: Enforced Disappearance and Refoulement

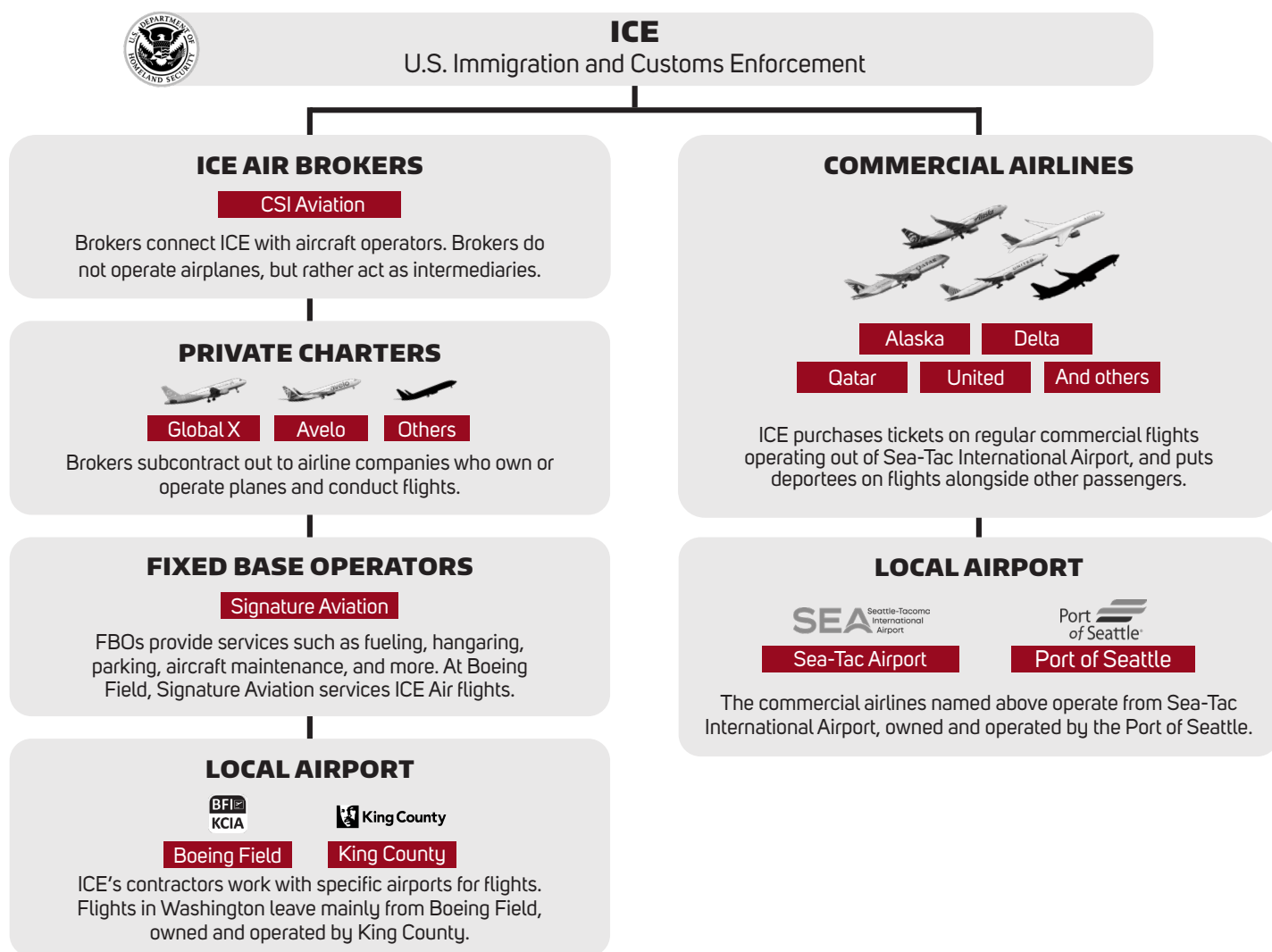
Read the report:
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MONITORING STATE IMMIGRANT RIGHTS LAWS

UWCHR continued to monitor compliance with state immigrant rights laws including the Keep Washington Working Act and Courts Open to All Act, which have come under threat as the federal government pressures local and state governments for collaboration with immigration enforcement. In coalition with a broad array of immigrant rights

organizations, we investigate cases of potentially unlawful local collaboration with federal immigration enforcement activities, and have provided analysis in support of advocacy efforts seeking to protect Washingtonians from federal attempts to access their private data via state institutions like the Department of Licensing.

To access project updates visit:
[TINYURL.COM/IMMIGRIGHTSOBSERVATORY](https://tinyurl.com/immigrighsobservatory) ■



The above figure is an excerpt from the “Gross Human Rights Violations in Washington State: Enforced Disappearance and Refoulement” report, showing how ICE conducts deportations and transfers of detained people via air travel through two main pathways. The majority of ICE’s air travel involves a system of private chartered companies, known as ICE Air, which, in Washington, primarily operates out of King County International Airport (Boeing Field), with FBO services provided by Signature Aviation. However, ICE documents obtained by UWCHR under FOIA also show significant usage of commercial airlines for deportation operations, including at Seattle-Tacoma International Airport, with carriers such as Alaska, Delta, Qatar Airways, United, and others.

AN INTERVIEW WITH FORMER STUDENT RESEARCHER SARAH KWAN

Former student researcher Sarah Kwan, graduating class of 2017, sits down with UWCHR's Andrea Marcos to reflect on her time at the center and how she carries that work forward.

AM: Sarah, thanks so much for talking with us. You worked as a student researcher with the Center for Human Rights around 2017. What did you do during your time at CHR?

SK: I mostly worked on the Unfinished Sentences project, submitting Freedom of Information Act requests in search of

documentation of human rights violations committed during El Salvador's armed conflict.

During my time there I submitted about 55 FOIA requests. I also helped with preparing for litigation against the Department of Defense, for the case that I worked on regarding the killing of the four Dutch journalists in El Salvador. It was a case about free speech suppression, violence against journalists, and crimes against humanity.

I spent a lot of time combing through declassified documents, trying to piece together useful evidence for a case, then identifying what information was still missing and submitting more records requests to try to get that

information. It takes a lot of time to declassify records, so you end up passing on that work to the next cohort of student researchers, creating a lineage of human rights research.

The research we did while I was there helped a number of organizations and outlets. We worked with the Dutch war crimes police and helped documentary filmmakers as well. Using the documents that we compiled, they were able to find one of the military commanders they were looking for in the case who was responsible for war crimes. We were coming off of a lawsuit



Sarah Kwan, worked as a student researcher for the Unfinished Sentences project at the Center for Human Rights. Photo credit/ Sarah Kwan.

“IT TAKES A LOT OF TIME TO DECLASSIFY RECORDS, SO YOU END UP PASSING ON THAT WORK TO THE NEXT COHORT OF STUDENT RESEARCHERS, CREATING A LINEAGE OF HUMAN RIGHTS RESEARCH.”

against the CIA in 2015 and it was very interesting being able to be there for that, seeing the fight for access to information happen through litigation, how that informed our strategy. And since then, the center has sued a few more times.

AM: Can you give us your reaction to the historic court ruling this year in El Salvador, which found, for the first time, high-ranking military officials legally accountable for the killing of civilians during the civil war—in this particular case, for the killing of four Dutch journalists? You worked on that case during your time at CHR. How did it feel to hear about that news?

SK: It was shocking because I had been really loosely following things that were happening in El Salvador—current events, but also the cases that we worked

“THIS COURT RULING FELT LIKE THE WORK THAT WE DID EIGHT YEARS AGO IS STILL MEANINGFUL. IT REAFFIRMED THIS SPIRIT I HAVE, THAT CAN SOMETIMES BE EASY TO LOSE TOUCH WITH, REMINDING ME THAT WE’RE IN IT FOR THE LONG HAUL.”

on—and as far as I knew, they were shut down with the current Salvadoran administration. I wasn’t hopeful anything would come of it. With human rights research work, sometimes you feel a lot of despair, thinking this doesn’t mean anything, it happened so long ago, no one cares. It’s really hard to move the needle and it can be hard to get momentum behind research on human rights violations that happened decades ago. So it kind of took me by surprise to hear there was a positive outcome from it. But it also brought up a lot of questions for me: Why the Dutch journalist case, but not El Mozote or a bunch of other cases we worked on? Why doesn’t a massacre of a thousand Salvadoran peasants get the same justice as the assassination of four Dutch journalists?

But I think this case reaffirmed something for me—oftentimes we struggle with feeling very defeatist or pessimistic about human rights work, which can take so long to have an impact. This court ruling felt like the work that we did eight years ago is still meaningful. It reaffirmed this spirit I have, that can sometimes be easy to lose touch with, reminding me that we’re in it for the long haul, and we might not see results now, but you never know if it’ll be successful or worthwhile later. I remember at the time, when I was working at the center, Angelina would say even if these cases aren’t successful, the fact that we’re pursuing it, the fact that it’s in the historical and collective memory,

“WE WILL NEVER GET TO KNOW THE EXTENT OF THE HORRORS THAT HAPPENED, NOR WILL WE KNOW THE EXTENT OF THE ORGANIZING AND RESISTANCE AGAINST THEM. IT JUST REALLY HAMMERS IN THIS POINT OF WHY ACCESS TO INFORMATION IS A HUMAN RIGHT.”

and that we’re giving survivors a platform to talk about what happened, that we’re showing the world, and survivors, that we care, and we’re going to carry on and see it through, even if no one else cares—that’s important.

I see it in the work I do now. For example, after I graduated, I worked at a women’s shelter as a case manager, and there’s so many cases with high turnover. It was really important to me to make sure each person and their story were cared for. And I feel like I learned that a lot of that from the center—I learned that even when we run up against institutional barriers and capacity issues, it is so important that people feel like we’re all in a community and I’m not just going to drop this because this is inconvenient to me, or I can’t do anything about it.

The Dutch journalist case is also important to me because for the past two years of the barbarous genocide in Gaza against the Palestinian people, we've seen journalists assassinated at an astronomical rate, far more than any conflict in recorded history. There's just so many parallels with this case, with Salvadoran journalists killed because the government didn't want anyone

“IT'S IMPORTANT THAT PEOPLE FEEL LIKE THERE ARE OTHERS THAT CARE ABOUT YOUR RIGHTS AND THEY'RE WILLING TO SPEND TIME THAT THEY ARE NOT OBLIGATED TO SPEND TO BEAR WITNESS TO THE MISTREATMENT YOU EXPERIENCE. THAT'S SOMETHING WE DID AT THE CENTER.”

to report on the atrocities that are happening there. And there is, there was, no justice for that. Not only is it a crime against a free press, but also it leaves us with a world where we have little evidence or stories about what happened on the ground because people trying to tell those stories were assassinated by the state. So I just think about that—I think

about how little we really know about the atrocities happening in Gaza and Palestine in general, how little we know about the atrocities that happened in El Salvador back then and now. Lately, I've been reading about chattel slavery in the U.S., and how, in this case as well, we really don't know that much about these atrocities, but also, how people escaped, organized against it, resisted, and liberated themselves. We know about the Underground Railroad, sure, but that's the tip of the iceberg. These connections keep coming up whenever I read about the Dutch journalist case and about the Palestinian people's resistance to occupation and genocide—and how we are prevented from knowing our history to effectively fight for a better, liberated future for all people.

Something that's so integral to the work of the Unfinished Sentences project is the attempt to shed light on events that happened—these unfinished processes where survivors don't have any closure because there is such limited information, and what little there is is being gatekept by the U.S. and the Salvadoran government. The fact that we don't have a clear avenue towards closure is, on a personal level, heartbreaking. We will never get to know the extent of the horrors that happened, nor will we know the extent of the organizing and resistance against them. It just really hammers in this point of why access to information is a human right, the importance of free press, the importance of places like the UW Center for Human Rights, and the importance of all the different avenues that

people use to share information and stories.

AM: Can you tell us a bit more about what you learned from your time working at the center, about the parallels in your current work?

SK: I think one of the other biggest takeaways I had from my time at the center was the level of internationalism and international solidarity that we had. We would send students to go with Angelina to El Salvador, and that connection is incredibly valuable. The center would send partner organizations, like El Rescate, up to Seattle to meet with all of us. There was this emphasis on in-person building that people can take for granted, and that I really emphasize in the work I do now. We need to meet people and make international connections, learn from people and build networks—and not only personal relationships but also organizational relationships—to really strengthen the work that we do. During my time at the center, it was always explained why we needed to do that: how not only do these connections and relationships inform the work that the center does, but they inform the direction of the center, and they ensure that, by having more of a dialogue between organizations and people, the work that we're doing is actually useful. Sometimes I felt like in academia, it's not a relationship, not a conversation at all, and it was very transactional. However, that wasn't the way that Angelina showed us how the center would do it—I really saw there that you had to take relationships with care and build them long term. It

showed that the center really did care about the work that it was doing, that it actually mattered and was making a material impact.

I see this reflected in my anti-imperialist organizing in the past few years; my experience working at the center serves as a touchstone for how to conduct meetings internationally, how to do that effectively, how to be mindful of my position, and how to have conversations so that the work that we're doing together is actually meaningful.

I think that there's also something with the way that people at the center teach their principles that was huge for me—they're incredibly principled people, I don't know how else to put it. But I think that translates into some of the other work I do now, like, for example, it makes me think of my experience with the National Lawyers Guild. Part of the thinking behind legal observing is that you want to be there to bear witness to what people experienced, in this case how police mistreat people who are participating in their right to protest and to free speech. Even if protesters don't pursue litigation against the police, it's important that people feel like there are others that care about your rights and they're willing to spend time that they are not obligated to spend to bear witness to the mistreatment you experience. That's something we did at the center, and I feel like that translates to so much of the work I do now that is difficult to quantify, but it's a quality thing and your community would rather have you doing this work than not.

The center was very matriarchal which I felt impacted the level of care that was brought to the work and to each other. Having Angelina, Phil, and Emily be people that are very mindful and caring, not just about the work, but also about each other in the center—it was inspiring. I experienced a kind of whiplash after college, working at a women's shelter, then a human trafficking prevention nonprofit, and now a public library. You would think that people, and organizations, have these principles and they would live up to them, but they don't always, and it can be a shock.

Another thing I learned during my time at the center, I learned how to be useful to our movement and community by honing an attention to detail, and I learned how to communicate about those details. The research we were doing was so important, and we had to not make it too academic because the goal was not to keep it in academia, but to have everyone use it.

AM: Can you say more about how your work at CHR changed how you feel about research, access to information, documents, databases, if it has?

SK: I appreciate that the center tries to popularize access to information, that's really important. Part of the reason why I work at a public library is because I don't want to be siloed into an academic sphere, I want to be able to work with everyone. Much of what I do at the library, in addition to my job, is union organizing. I'm always trying to think about how to communicate

things effectively to my coworkers and make information useful, helping people understand our

“IT SHOWED THAT THE CENTER REALLY DID CARE ABOUT THE WORK THAT IT WAS DOING, THAT IT ACTUALLY MATTERED AND WAS MAKING A MATERIAL IMPACT.”

very complicated contracts; how our union and city government work; how decisions get made. Sometimes people even want to file a public records request and I can actually walk them through it. And I think that's what the center really trained me for—being able to be extremely detail oriented, analytical, and to understand really niche government documents and how processes work. Because it's one thing to understand it, but then it's another to figure out how to communicate that to people who don't have that same knowledge background. That's really helpful in the work that I do now: demystifying processes for people so that they can feel empowered to take action. I want people to feel like these systems are not some scary, complicated bureaucracy but rather people understand what strategies we need to take in order to win our next contract or change something at the workplace that's dangerous or unfair.

AM: What's it like to have been part of a CHR model of generations of students working on these long-term projects?

SK: How collective everything is at the center is so important! I was so grateful to have this orientation and training at such a young age, because it sped up

“I WANT PEOPLE TO FEEL LIKE THESE SYSTEMS ARE NOT SOME SCARY, COMPLICATED BUREAUCRACY BUT RATHER PEOPLE UNDERSTAND WHAT STRATEGIES WE NEED TO TAKE IN ORDER TO WIN OUR NEXT CONTRACT OR CHANGE SOMETHING AT THE WORKPLACE THAT’S DANGEROUS OR UNFAIR.”

a lot of the development I had as an organizer. I really feel like working at the Center for Human Rights hammered in this mentality of contributing to a collective. There wasn't much individualism there and very little ego, everyone just pitched in and gave it their all because they were passionate and they actually cared about

making an impact and fighting for justice. And that can be rare to find sometimes, even in movement work. I feel like the generational model helps with that: it's like your time is limited, you're doing the best you can in the short amount of time that you have, and you're just trying to contribute a piece to the puzzle that we're all working towards. This constant movement also keeps the work from getting stale, as fresh eyes bring forward new perspectives and strategies, while a continuity of leadership and vision is maintained.

What I took away from my time at the center was the importance of a long-term vision; of how the work you do is like picking up a baton and passing it on. I learned to hold that work with so much care because you have to have this understanding that you are part of a lineage. I think about this too, in the organizing work I do now: How can I make this better for the generation after me, even if I don't stay in a particular role?

I really like that I have a long-term relationship with the center. It's been eight years since I left! So being able to hear little updates, even if things are slow going, even if the news is “Well, we're still working on it,” it's good to know things are still moving along, and it helps to feel like what you did mattered, what you did contributed to this larger project.

AM: If you had any advice for future CHR students, what would it be?

SK: Working at the center is a lot of academic work and research. In order to combat this feeling of “Why does it all matter?,” I feel it's important to balance all of that out with doing on-the-ground organizing, where you can see an impact. My advice is to make sure that you understand what

“MY ADVICE IS TO MAKE SURE THAT YOU UNDERSTAND WHAT ORGANIZING LOOKS LIKE, AND HOW THE WORK THAT YOU DO AS A RESEARCHER, HOW YOU CAN SHAPE THE DIRECTION IT GOES IN SO THAT IT’S USEFUL TO PEOPLE.”

organizing looks like, and how the work that you do as a researcher, how you can shape the direction it goes in so that it's useful to people. I think it's very important to not always remain only in the research, only in the books, only in the spreadsheets. You need to build relationships with other organizers and organizations doing the work, and to make connections between struggles to build a stronger movement.

■

MANY THANKS!

The UW Center for Human Rights would like to thank the individuals and organizations that made contributions to our center. Your monetary donations and your gifts of time help make our work possible. Thank you! To make a contribution today, please see below for more information.

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