



## Women's Refugee Commission at Work Responding to the Earthquake in Haiti

"The morning I met Nadine\* in her new 'home' in a former park in the middle of the Pétionville neighborhood in Port-au-Prince, it had been raining—the first rain since the earthquake. The ground was muddy and slick, and her shelter did not have a floor, just walls and a roof of bed sheets and plastic sheeting. She and her family



Displaced women and their families were living in rudimentary shelters made of plastic sheeting in the weeks following the earthquake.

slept on cardboard boxes on the dirt. A rudimentary charcoal stove was set up just outside, where a small pot of rice was cooking for the day's meal for her family of five.

"Nadine had received a ration of rice

*\* Not her real name.*

and a cooking pot from two of the humanitarian agencies working in Port-au-Prince. However, she had not received fuel to cook the rice and had to buy charcoal. The cost of charcoal had risen by about 25 percent since the earthquake, putting a huge financial strain on families like Nadine's. Most were also cooking just one meal a day, as they couldn't afford to buy more food or cooking fuel."

Erin Patrick, senior program officer for our Fuel and Firewood Initiative, went to Haiti in February with the World Food Programme (WFP) to conduct an assessment of post-earthquake cooking fuel needs. She interviewed Nadine and many other displaced women, as well as humanitarian workers and families that were hosting displaced people outside of the capital. Nadine's story was typical of the more than 2 million people displaced by the earthquake.

The assessment found that families were spending upwards of 40 percent of their daily income on cooking fuel. Women without any access to cash had resorted to collecting the quickly disappearing scraps of scrub bushes growing on the edges of their tent camps to use as cooking fuel.

Following the assessment, we issued a report urging the humanitarian community to support a long-term switch to a more sustainable, healthier, less costly fuel than charcoal—for example, liquid petroleum gas or waste briquettes made out of materials such as paper, rice husks or even some kinds of garbage. We also recommended that cooking fuel rations be provided for host families outside of Port-au-Prince, and that fuel-efficient stoves be promoted.

### Gaps remain in reproductive health services

Two months later, our reproductive health program staff led an inter-agency team (CARE, International Planned Parenthood Federation, Save the Children) to assess reproductive health services in Port-au-Prince and two settlements outside the capital.

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# Women's Refugee Commission Welcomes Sarah Costa as New Executive Director

We're thrilled to announce that we have a new executive director. Sarah Costa, who will join us in September, brings to the Women's Refugee Commission more than 25 years of experience in the fields of women's rights, reproductive health, gender and youth development, as well as global philanthropy. Sarah succeeds Carolyn Makinson, who led the organization since 2004. Carolyn has moved to London to head the International Rescue Committee UK. The IRC, a global humanitarian agency with operations around the world, is our "parent organization."

Sarah is currently regional director of the Global Fund for Women, an organization with which the Women's Refugee Commission has worked closely. She established the organization's New York office, and over the past three years has represented the organization in programmatic and fundraising activities on the East Coast. She established a Women's Corporate Leadership Council, tapping into women's executive networks and corporate philanthropy.

From 1994 to 2006, Sarah worked as a program officer for the Ford Foundation in Brazil and New York, developing and managing international and national programs on gender, sexuality and reproductive health, women's rights, HIV/AIDS and health policy. She was Professor of Women's Health, Department of Epidemiology and Quantitative Methods in Health, National School of Public Health, Brazil from 1980 to 1994. She holds a D.Phil. in Social Medicine from the University of Oxford.



Sarah Costa  
Executive Director

## Women's Refugee Commission Board Elects New Co-Chairs

At its May meeting, the Women's Refugee Commission board of directors elected Robin Fray Carey and Jocelyn Cunningham as its new co-chairs. They succeed Glenda Burkhardt and Dina Dublon. Robin is CEO and cofounder of Social Media Today. Jocelyn is a partner at Deloitte & Touche in New York and serves as the Markets and Services Portfolio Leader. For a complete list and bios of our board members, see [womensrefugeecommission.org/about/board](http://womensrefugeecommission.org/about/board).

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**The Women's Refugee Commission** advocates vigorously for laws, policies and programs to improve the lives and protect the rights of refugee and internally displaced women, children and young people, including those seeking asylum—bringing about lasting, measurable change.

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**Research. Rethink. Resolve.**

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Sarah Costa, Executive Director  
Robin Fray Carey, Board Co-chair  
Jocelyn Cunningham, Board Co-chair

# Immigration Policy Is Tearing Families Apart

Paloma is a young mother of four. Three of her children are U.S. citizens; the fourth, a teenage son, is severely disabled. Paloma came to the United States in search of better care for him. However, after two years in immigration detention, Paloma was recently deported to Mexico. Her children are split between two foster families in different cities. These children, and thousands like them, are the victims of immigration policies that undermine family unity and deny parents due process.

Arrested in front of her terrified children, Paloma was taken into custody without being given an opportunity to make arrangements for their care. Her children were placed with Arizona Child Protective Services and it took Paloma nine months—and the help of a pro bono lawyer—to learn that the state had filed a motion to terminate her parental rights. We met Paloma at a shelter in Nogales, Mexico, just days after she was deported. She is fighting to reunite with her children, but because she was detained and deported, prospects for reunification are dim.

When the Women's Refugee Commission first started working on parental rights issues we discovered how difficult it is for detained parents to reunify with their children after their immigration case is settled. When parents are apprehended and not allowed to make care arrangements, children can end up in the foster care system. When parents are detained it is difficult for them to participate in custody proceedings and comply with reunification plans. In addition, it is nearly impossible for parents in

detention to obtain travel documents and coordinate travel for their children. Most parents accept that they will be deported and want only to take their children with them when they go.

Our Detention and Asylum team went to Arizona and Mexico in June to interview immigration detainees and observe and monitor detention center conditions. Nearly a year after the Obama administration announced plans to overhaul immigration detention, this mission was an opportunity to assess progress towards reform. Monitoring the status of parental rights was a core component of our visit and provided an opportunity to determine whether informal Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) policies to minimize family separation were working.

While progress towards reform has been positive at the national level, this trip confirmed the need for formal

policies and procedures to protect family unity. Some parents we met with had not spoken with their children since they were apprehended. Others told us that their children were home

**TAKE ACTION TO KEEP IMMIGRANT FAMILIES TOGETHER**  
Support the "Humane Enforcement and Legal Protections for Separated Children Act" or HELP Act  
Go to  
[www.womensrefugeecommission.org/take-action](http://www.womensrefugeecommission.org/take-action)

alone, in foster care or in an abusive situation with their other parent. Although ICE told us that parents can participate in custody proceedings by video-teleconference, few parents were aware of this policy and only one woman had managed to do so. ICE also told us that parents having difficulty participating in custody

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More than 1,000 immigrants are detained at the Eloy Detention Center in Eloy, Arizona, of whom 243 are women.



# Q&A with David Spears

board member and supporter of the Women's Refugee Commission

**As a business person [a founding partner of the law firm Spears & Imes LLP], did you think about your return on investment when you decided to support the Women's Refugee Commission?**

I really don't think about my involvement in terms of investment and return. What motivated me initially, and continues to motivate me, is contributing what I can to the mission—both in my donating and in encouraging my friends and colleagues to support the Women's Refugee Commission.

**Our efforts are largely international in scope. Do you believe more emphasis should be placed on issues here in the U.S.?**

There's a social safety net in the U.S.—we could talk for a long time about whether it's complete. But the greatest need for money and services is clearly outside of the U.S. I don't mean that every dollar should be spent abroad, but the focus needs to be non-U.S. locales.

**What first brought you to the Women's Refugee Commission?**

A board member and a longtime friend and client

introduced me. I went to the annual luncheon many years ago and was very impressed with the honoree presentations, the mission and the people. As a lawyer and litigator and a person who does criminal defense law, the idea of helping the most disadvantaged is a concept that's engrained in me. The people the Women's Refugee Commission works with are exactly in that category: imperiled, sometimes disabled—and that calls out for some kind of contribution.

**Does having 13-year-old twin daughters influence your thinking regarding the issues we tackle?**

Absolutely. From having daughters I realize how vulnerable young girls can be. As a father of girls, I have a heightened sense of the importance of ameliorating the deficiencies and dangers for girls in refugee camps. I think about issues such as education and how in refugee camps, if there are schools at all, they're often for boys only. Education is a universal need and this disparity cuts deep with me. And it's one of the issues that's front and center for the Women's Refugee Commission, which is another reason I'm proud to be a board member and donor.



David Spears, a founding partner of Spears & Imes LLP, concentrates in white collar criminal defense, securities enforcement defense and complex civil litigation.

Here, with his daughters Hannah and Sophie.

## Earthquake in Haiti

Continued from page 1

The team found that while international humanitarian organizations were much more aware of the need for priority reproductive health services than in previous disasters, and had taken concrete steps to provide them, serious gaps remained in addressing critical needs to prevent and respond to sexual violence, which is endemic. In addition, displaced people were unaware of some of the reproductive health services that were available.

The team also found that people were still struggling to get enough food, clean water and shelter. Security was a serious concern everywhere they visited, and many camps did not have official camp management



Although by April many displaced people were living in better shelters, security continued to be a major concern, especially for women and girls.

to coordinate assistance and protection. Women and girls faced daily harassment and threats.

### People with disabilities face special challenges

Before the earthquake, there were approximately 800,000 persons with disabilities in Haiti, including 200,000 children. As many as 250,000 additional

people were injured in the earthquake, many of whom will suffer from long-term disabilities.

In July, the Women's Refugee Commission ran three one-day workshops in Port-au-Prince for service providers to teach them how to promote equal access and inclusion for persons with disabilities in their work areas, including education, health, gender-based violence, food distribution, shelter and economic recovery programs. The trainings focused on implementation of the guidance produced by the Women's Refugee Commission in *Disabilities among Refugees and Conflict-Affected Populations: Resource Kit for Field Workers*.

Visit the Haiti page on our website to read about our activities related to this disaster, and reports based on our missions: [womensrefugeecommission.org/how-you-can-help-haiti](http://womensrefugeecommission.org/how-you-can-help-haiti)

## What Will Your Legacy Be?

One of the simplest ways to support the mission of the Women's Refugee Commission is by leaving a contribution in your will. You may decide to leave a specific amount, a percentage of your assets or the remainder of your estate after you have provided for family members.

You can also name the Women's Refugee Commission as a beneficiary of a charitable trust. Your attorney or financial advisor can advise you on the various types of charitable trusts and assist you in establishing a trust that is tailored to your personal needs.

Please contact our Director of Development at 212.551.0959 to find out more about how you can leave a legacy gift.

# Voices of Courage Luncheon

Gotham Hall, New York City



Deogratias Niyizonkiza of Burundi and Amalia Guzmán Molina, originally from El Salvador, were honored at our May 6<sup>th</sup> Voices of Courage awards luncheon.



Pamela Passman, Corporate Vice President and Deputy General Counsel, Global Corporate Affairs, Microsoft (left), accepted a Voices of Courage award on behalf of Microsoft. Dina Dublon, co-chair (center), presented the award. Sakena Yacoobi, founder of the Afghan Institute of Learning, was a guest at the luncheon.

Read more, including honorees' acceptance speeches, at [womensrefugeecommission.org/about/luncheon](http://womensrefugeecommission.org/about/luncheon).

## SAVE THE DATE

**May 3, 2011**  
***Voices of Courage***  
***Awards Luncheon***  
Cipriani 42nd Street,  
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Honoring refugee  
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Honor someone special with a gift that will make a lasting impact. For any occasion, such as a birthday, anniversary, wedding, or a birth of a child, we have beautiful cards to honor the occasion and we will send them out for you. It's easy to make your gift on line at [womensrefugeecommission.org](http://womensrefugeecommission.org). (Minimum contribution of \$25)



## Immigration Policy

*Continued from page 3*

proceedings can apply for release on humanitarian grounds, but Arizona attorneys told us that none of their petitions for release had been granted.

ICE will release new standards soon, which will become effective at 22 facilities later this year. The standards will require that detained parents have access to custody proceedings. However, this will not be enough because there is no way to penalize detention facilities that do not comply with the standards; and because ICE is self-monitoring.

The most effective way to protect children is to release parents whenever possible, to ensure detained parents can participate in custody proceedings and to allow parents to take their children with them if they so desire. Later this year we will publish a report examining the consequences of immigration enforcement on family unity. We will also debrief ICE on our Arizona findings and continue to work with the agency and with Congress to reduce the adverse consequences of immigration enforcement on family unity.

Read more about our detention and asylum program on our website at [womensrefugeecommission.org/programs/detention](http://womensrefugeecommission.org/programs/detention).



This little girl, whose parents had been detained, attended a briefing on family separation on Capitol Hill. Michelle Brané, director of our detention and asylum program, moderated the briefing.

## See How Your Contribution Makes a Difference!

Your gifts to the Women's Refugee Commission make a substantial difference in the lives of refugees and displaced persons by allowing us to advocate for their needs and make sure they are not forgotten. Here's how:

A gift of:

\$5,000 covers the cost of a two-week research mission to meet with refugees who have returned to Liberia.

\$1,000 disseminates a report on the situation of Burmese refugees in Thailand.

\$500 pays for a refugee youth advisor to attend an advocacy skills training workshop.

\$250 hires an interpreter and vehicle for two days of field research.

\$100 covers the cost of satellite phone service for a research delegation in Darfur.

\$50 pays to translate interviews with refugees in northern Uganda.

**To make a gift**, please fill out the enclosed envelope and check the amount you'd like to send, or go to our website at [womensrefugeecommission.org](http://womensrefugeecommission.org).





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Your monthly gift provides the Women's Refugee Commission with predictable, sustainable income, so we can continue to make positive changes in the lives of refugees. An automatic online donation of a modest amount every month will add up to a substantial gift by year's end. Go to our website, **womensrefugeecommission.org**, click "Donate" and then click on "Become a recurring donor." It's fast, easy and secure. Or you can fill out, sign and mail the form below. Your gift will show up each month on your credit card bill.

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