

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL - NORTH COUNTY CHAPTER 471

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AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL HOSTS "DEFENDING THE DEFENDERS" 21ST ANNUAL CANDLELIGHT WALK FOR HUMAN RIGHTS SUNDAY, OCTOBER 18, 2009

The 21st Annual San Diego Candlelight Walk for Human Rights hosted by the North County Chapter of Amnesty International will be held on Sunday, October 18, 2009 at the outdoor amphitheater and pier in Oceanside at 5:30pm. The event is free to the public. This year's theme, "Defending the Defenders" will give the 700+ participants an opportunity to learn about thousands of human rights activists, many of whom might be lawyers, journalists, bloggers, community leaders who work tirelessly all over the world and suffer from threats, imprisonment, torture or even face death to defend and speak out for victims of human rights abuses.

A brief reception – with refreshments, materials, and live music will be followed by a program of courageous speakers.



For the last 33 years Larry Cox, now Executive Director of Amnesty International, U.S.A., has served as Press Officer, Communications Director, AIUSA delegate on several international investigative missions; In the previous 5 years, he was Deputy Secretary General at Amnesty International's world headquarters in London, England.

At AIUSA Larry plans to advance the organization's critical work of asserting human rights as a basis for peace and security in the post-September 11 era. Larry believes Amnesty International is uniquely positioned to fight the twin challenges of terrorism and torture because of the strength of its committed activists who give a voice to the voiceless and speak truth to power. He plans to lead AIUSA into a new era of human rights advocacy by continuing the legacy of fighting on behalf of individual human beings.



Our focus speaker is Marvyn Perez; arrested in 1982 by the Guatemalan military for protesting violence by the junta against social leaders, Mr. Perez was continually subjected to torture, in the course of 4 months of interrogations. Amnesty International's letter writing campaign on behalf of the disappeared contributed to Mr. Perez' release. Three students arrested with Mr. Perez disappeared forever, along with countless others. Soon after, Mr. Perez and his

family left Guatemala; they were granted Political Amnesty by the United States in 1989. His story will be of great inspiration for the 700+ students attending.

Marvyn is available for interviews at 818 277 1880 or via e-mail marvyn7@yahoo.com



The current Western Regional Director of Amnesty International USA, Ms. Banafsheh Akhlaghi left a Constitutional Law Professorship at John F. Kennedy School of Law in 2001 to start her law firm focusing on immigration and civil rights issues for Middle Eastern, Muslim, and South Asian peoples, culminating in forming the National Legal Sanctuary for Community Advancement. She has worked with the United Nations, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, and testified before Congress regarding women's issues and racial profiling. She has received numerous awards, including the L.A. Daily Journal's "Top 100 Leading Lawyers" in California for 2005 and 2006.



The North County Chapter's 2009 Digna Ochoa Human Rights Defender Award will be presented to Marjorie Cohn. A Professor at Thomas Jefferson School of Law since 1991, Ms. Cohn is the current President of the National Lawyers Guild, and the 2008 Peace Scholar of the Year Award for the Peace and Justice Students Association. She is a legal/news consultant for CBS News, Court TV, BBC, CNN, MSNBC, Fox News, NPR, Air America, and Pacifica Radio. In 2008 she testified before the House Judiciary Committee's Subcommittee on the Constitution, Civil Rights, and Civil Liberties regarding the U.S. governments' torture policy.

Our Speakers' Press Conference will take place on Oct 18th at 4 pm at the amphitheater.

Designed as an evening of hope and inspiration, the event will culminate with the symbolic Candlelight "Freedom Walk" along the Oceanside Pier. Participants will be invited to walk in the names of human rights defenders and take up the cause of individuals who needs a voice and action. For information please call (760) 731-9174 or visit

www.Amnesty471.org. The event is rain or shine - everyone is reminded to dress warmly.