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VOICES Newsletter, v6n1, February 2010

University of Northern Iowa. Center for Multicultural Education.

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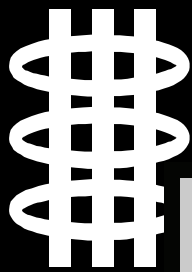
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UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN IOWA

Center for Multicultural Education

February 2010

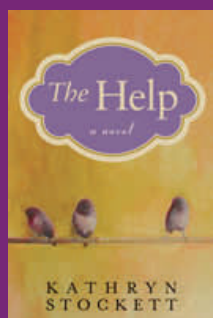
Volume 6, Issue 1

VOICES

Promoting Diversity in the university community and beyond...

CME SEVEN BOOK CLUB

It is not too late to join Dr. Blackwell for his monthly book club discussions. The book club is held once a month in the CME lobby, and features a variety of best-selling authors. There are still three books left in the series.



This month's read is *The Help*, by Kathryn Stockett. Join us Thursday, February 25 for the discussion!

Upcoming Selections:

Asian Americans in the Twenty-First Century by Joann Faung Jean Lee

Jesus, Interrupted: Revealing the Hidden Contradictions in the Bible (and why we don't know about them) by Bart D. Ehrman

CME: The Place to Be!

"As long as people hunger, as long as people thirst, and ignorance and illness and warfare do their worst; As long as there's injustice in any of God's lands, We are our neighbor's keeper, and dare not wash our hands!"

This moving piece of prose has become the motto of the Center for Multicultural Education (CME) over the years. The CME promotes and encourages diversity within the university and the surrounding community. Although the CME does focus on the encouragement of racial and ethnic minority students, the beautiful facility and its many opportunities are open

to all students. In addition to the programs and services offered throughout the year, the Center includes a large multi-purpose room available for any student organization to reserve at no cost. The library and movie collection is also open to students with a valid I.D. The CME hosts various events and brings in speakers to honor different heritage months, and to create awareness for specific topics that are vital in this day and age. These issues are often ignored, and it is up to our generation to strive for justice and make sure that our VOICES are heard. The CME provides the

CME 2009-10 Operation and Reservation Hours

Monday - Thursday
8:00 am - 8:00 pm

Friday
8:00 am - 5:00 pm

Friday Night, Saturday & Sunday
By Request

Call us to reserve a CME facility for your event today!

tools necessary for this to happen. Check us out on the web for more information on everything that the CME has to offer, or visit our facebook page.



Featured Student Organization: MSAB

Kolby Knupp

Graduate Assistant

The goal of the Multicultural Student Advisory Board (MSAB) is to bring together student leaders who represent the full spectrum of students, while educating and enlightening others regarding the need to share and appreciate the diverse

perspectives and cultures of others. With meetings once or twice a month, the group (composed of a representative from each organization) has an opportunity to share upcoming events that their particular student organization is hosting and provide input on events

that the CME is hosting. The main focus is to keep open communication between all organizations to ensure each event is as successful as it can be!

"Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere." Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

A Tribute to Martin Luther King, Jr.

Taryn Parker
Office Assistant

In honor of Martin Luther King, Jr. day, the CME invited a special guest to help us celebrate the important day of service. Dr. Rufus Burrow Jr. paid a visit to Northern Iowa to help commemorate one of the nation's greatest heroes. Burrow, who received his Ph.D. in social ethics from Boston University in 1982, currently serves as Indiana Professor of Christian Thought and Professor of Theological Social Ethics at Christian Theological

Seminary (CTS) in Indianapolis. Upon arrival, the CME was informed of some unfortunate news. Dr. Burrow was very ill after undergoing emergency surgery a few days prior. Despite his absence, the day's events, including a service day and book club meeting featuring one of Dr. Burrows books, were still a great success. The book *Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. for Armchair Theologians* sparked a great conversation while bringing up memories

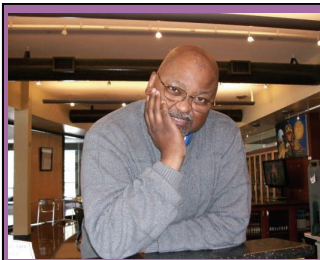
of racism in the past. Later that evening, Dr. Burrow was able to pull through and gave a very informative lecture, entitled *Martin Luther King Jr. and the Children*, at Davis Hall. For those who attended, it was apparent through conversations at the reception following the lecture that his words really impacted the audience members. Dr. Burrow's book, as well as a few of his other written works, are available for checkout at the CME library.



A Word From the Director...

Dr. Michael D. Blackwell
Director

It is a pleasure, once again, to offer a newsletter from the Center for Multicultural Education (CME). With its steadily increasing amount of resources over recent years, the CME is able to redouble its efforts to improve people's cultural competency and intercultural communication. Inviting students to sharpen their unique abilities and perspectives through this forum fosters educational growth and development, which, in turn, enhance the student's marketability when they graduate from the University. The CME not only educates and serves students, but also reaches out to the entire campus and beyond through its multifarious programs and activities.



Michael D. Blackwell
Director

Each new day is a kind of threshold that gives the individual the opportunity to better one's life and the lives of others. What could be more enriching than learning about people whose backgrounds and viewpoints are different from one's own or gaining more knowledge about one's own cultural heritage? The CME is a place where folks can relax and socialize, hold meetings, and engage in fun and interesting events. It is a place that welcomes everyone and challenges all of us to think critically, respect diversity, and forge a more inclusive society. In a manner of speaking, the CME is a place that gives a voice to the voiceless and offers a home for those without a home.

CHECK OUT DR. B'S BLOG!

Dr. Blackwell writes a blog, "Social Ethics," featuring his comments on current events and social issues. Find him online at:

<http://drmdbwell.blogspot.com>

"Service to others is the rent you pay for your room here on earth." Shirley Chisholm

Discrimination: Not Just a Thing From the Past

Taryn Parker
Office Assistant

"We want to show the community that we will not be silent—we will speak up." These were the words spoken by student Carmen Castillo during the recent silent protest at the University of Northern Iowa (UNI) on Nov. 19. This peaceful demonstration lasted for 45 minutes, and drew a crowd of roughly 100 students, staff, and faculty members, who came wearing black and holding signs reading "intolerance = ignorance" and other phrases to that effect. If you were near the Maucker Union fountain that afternoon and you were not participating in the protest, then you were probably standing on the edges looking in, oblivious to the recent hate crimes that have been taking place on campus. As people began to speak about why they were protesting and some of their personal experiences with discrimination at UNI, you could almost physically see the awareness generating.

"The reaction I saw from students was surprise and shock. Friends of mine that did not know of it [the protest] had no idea that there was any discrimination on campus. I think it opened the

eyes of the student body to the idea that there is a problem with racial discrimination on campus," said Selso Casares, a member of the Hispanic Latino Student Union.

For the majority of UNI students, it is hard to imagine getting beaten up at a party for your skin color, having objects thrown at you and hearing racial slurs shouted in your direction, or witnessing offensive symbols and words degrading your religious affiliation or educational background. Unfortunately, these are the types of things that have been happening at the UNI campus. According to a recent article in the *Northern Iowan* on Nov. 9, there has even been a swastika symbol painted on a bench outside of a UNI dining center, containing a tagline reading "F--- the Jews." UNI has a bias response team in effort to help fight these ongoing issues. According to the bias response website, they define a biased incident as "any word or action directed toward an individual or group based upon actual or perceived identity characteristics or background of a group or person that is harmful or hurtful."

Although it is rarely discussed by the masses, and it took a silent protest to generate action for this often overlooked issue, these types of occurrences have been happening since the campus was first established. Dr. Michael D. Blackwell, director of the Center for Multicultural Education (CME) at UNI, reveals that this discrimination has been in existence from the very beginning, when seven African American students were arrested for staging a sit-in at the late President Maucker's home after

being denied a space for the Ethnic Minorities Cultural and Educational Center (EMCEC) back in 1970.

"When I first came to campus at UNI, I would say that racial discrimination was quite clear. The location of what was then called the EMCEC was on the periphery of the campus in a dilapidated house with a marginal status in the Division of Educational and Student Services. The Center had no program budget, but was expected to provide programs and activities of a culturally diverse nature for the campus and wider communities," said Blackwell.

Although the CME has undergone many changes and is now located in a beautiful facility dedicated to helping bridge the gap in the lack of diversity, the racial discrimination present at UNI has not changed. So the question remains: what is being done to help combat this serious issue?

"I believe it is a handful of students who are ignorant of what discrimination is and they are ignorant because they have never known what diversity is or what it is about. I feel that the orientation classes that students have to take should include certain workshops about diversity," said Casares.

In a mass e-mail sent out on Nov. 12 to the UNI student body in response to the recent events, President Allen writes, "I want to be very clear. The university will not tolerate these types of acts. Please contact UNI Police if you have any information about these incidents."

Story continued on page 6



**Nov. 19th
Demonstration**

"If we loose love and self-respect for each other, this is how we finally die." Maya Angelou

"Tr

FEBRUARY EVENTS

Check out our website for details on additional events happening in February, March, and April!

National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Event– Monday, February 8

You are invited to a panel discussion regarding HIV/AIDS awareness and education within the black community. This panel will include community members and individuals from the public health agency. Join us in the Elm Room at 3:30.

Matt Sienkiewicz-Tuesday, February 9-10

Emmy-nominated screen writer and documentarian Matt Sienkiewicz will visit the UNI campus to deliver a lecture at 7:00 p.m. in the Ballroom. He will speak and reflect on South Park and anti-Semitism through is presentation of "What's Under Kyle's Hat? South Park, Anti-Semitism and the Jew Joke in Multicultural America." The CME invites you back to a panel discussion the following night at the Center from noon till 1:00 p.m. Free and open to the public!

Staying Heart Healthy– Wednesday, February 12

Heart Disease is America's "Silent Killer". Therefore, a specialist from Allen Hospital will be visiting UNI to talk about heart disease, risk factors, and preventative strategies. Join us in the CME lobby at 1:30 p.m.

African-American Jeopardy!- Monday, February 22-23

Round up your student organization for a fun-filled night of jeopardy! With questions regarding African-American culture and history. Student teams will be challenged with questions; the games will begin at 8:00 p.m. The top two teams will face off and have the opportunity to win a prize for their organization. A study guide outline over topics will be available the week before the event; start preparing now!

Book Club Discussion– Thursday, February 25

The CME Book Club will review the 5th book in the series, entitled *The Help*, a recent bestseller by Kathryn Stockett. In her debut novel set in Jackson, Mississippi during the Civil Rights Movement, Stockett portrays white society that allowed black maids to raise their children, but mistrusted them with valuables. The story is told by a young, white college graduate, a black maid who has raised 17 children, and her friend, a black maid who keeps losing her jobs by talking back. This story helps us to imagine what it was like to live during this tumultuous era.

Rev. Dr. Obery Hendricks– Thursday, February 25

Dr. Hendricks will visit the UNI Campus to speak on his recent book entitled, *The Politics of Jesus: Rediscovering the True Revolutionary Nature of Jesus' Teachings and How They Have Been Corrupted*. Free and open to the public!

Our Mission

We foster success in racial and ethnic minority students, contribute to the cultural competence of all students, and promote an appreciation of diversity in



...with knows no color; it appeals to intelligence." James Cone

MARCH EVENTS

Soweto Gospel Choir– March 5

Bring the entire family to this show that will fill you with inspiration! Winner of two Grammy Awards, the Soweto Gospel Choir was formed to celebrate the unique and inspirational power of African Gospel music. The 26-person choir, under the direction of David Mulovhedzi and Beverly Bryer, draws on the best talent from the many churches in and around Soweto. Check with the CME for free ticket opportunities!

Barbara J. Berg-Monday, March 8

Dr. Barbara J. Berg will visit the UNI campus on Monday, March 8 and provide a lecture in the evening regarding her research and new book entitled *Sexism in America: Alive, Well, and Ruining our Future*. Free and open to the public.

Spring Break Trip– March 14-18

Travel with the CME on a civil rights tour through Alabama and Tennessee on this 5-day Spring Break Trip! Join us as we travel by charter bus to historical hotspots of the Civil Rights movement. We estimate students costs will be a minimum of \$150 while faculty/staff/ community members will have a minimum fee of \$190 (includes travel, lodging, and entrance/admission for group events. Participants are responsible for meals and additional entertainment). Registration has begun!

An Evening with Dr. Cornel West- Thursday, March 25

The CME has extended an invitation to Dr. Cornel West, world-renowned speaker and scholar to visit the UNI campus. The Public is invited to see "one of America's most provocative public intellectuals!" Save the date for this extraordinary event!

Multicultural Student Leadership Retreat– Saturday, March 27

The CME is hosting a Multicultural Student Leadership Retreat on this day from 10:00 a.m. till roughly 6:00 p.m. Students are invited to participate to further develop and sharpen leadership skills with specific emphasis on inclusiveness to students who identify as part of groups which are generally under-represented in leadership positions. Registration begins Feb. 2010.

APRIL EVENTS

San Jose Taiko-Friday, April 16

San Jose Taiko has mesmerized audiences for three decades with the powerful and propulsive sounds of the taiko drum. Inspired by traditional Japanese drumming, San Jose Taiko performers express the beauty and harmony of the human spirit through the voice of taiko. This event is held at the GBPAC at 7:00 p.m. Check with the CME for free ticket opportunities!

CME Seven Book Club– Monday, April 22

As the CME Book Club reviews the 7th and final book in the series entitled *Jesus Interrupted: Revealing the Hidden Contradictions in the Bible (and Why We Don't Know About Them)*, Dr. Bart D. Ehrman will join the group for discussion from 3:30-5:00 p.m. at the CME. Examining the New Testament with critical eyes, Dr. Ehrman highlights the authors (and supposed authors) of the books, their conflicting points of view, and the dates when various parts of the New Testament were actually written. He will return to campus later that night to provide a lecture on his book.

"Make your life count- and the world will be a better place because you tried." Ellison Onizuka

"Yc

Continued from page 3

President Allen, along with Student Body President Adam Haselhuhn and Vice President Jake Rudy, was among those in attendance at the protest.

Haselhuhn and the rest of the Northern Iowa Student Government (NISG) members are all on board when it comes to fighting back against discrimination.

"NISG is currently organizing a student group- Diversity Coalition- that will inform me of what problems they see on campus and then propose solutions. From that list, I hope to be able to implement some of their ideas," said Haselhuhn. "We acted very quickly upon hearing of the events that occurred. I set up meetings with President Allen, Provost Gibson, Vice President Hogan, and Dean Buse to discuss the matter with them and things that the university could do."

Rudy adds that, "If students know what to do, and that the university does have a means of dealing with such acts, we can work to provide a campus climate that is safe and welcoming for all students."

The first step in solving this problem is to create awareness about what is actually going on. We as a community need to listen to those who are being affected. The people and their stories and experiences may come as a huge shock to the ignorant population, but that could be exactly what this campus needs: a shock. It is time to start fighting this ignorance with information. People need to be informed of what is going on, and realize that this is a prevalent concern on our campus. We must continue to remind ourselves that we are all created equal, and we are all protected under the same laws and have been given the same rights.

It is important to remember that these hate crimes are not isolated events, but instead are general occurrences that happen in the lives of our fellow students daily.

"I am hopeful that people will increasingly expose the various forms of prejudice and discrimination and demand justice. People may disagree how certain incidents should be adjudicated, but I believe the tendency to turn

heads away, make light of, and dismiss these issues will decrease," said Blackwell.

Discrimination has no place on this campus, or anywhere for that matter. It is time that we take a stand and fight for a long overdue victory in this ongoing battle. To quote the words of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., himself, "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere."



An Ordinary Man

Taryn Parker
Office Assistant

Ten years ago, one million Rwandans lost their lives during what is now known as the Rwandan Genocide. Paul Rusesabagina, a hotel manager, was able to survive the massacre and courageously save his family and numerous others. Tuesday, November 3, 2009, was a memorable day for the students, staff, and community members of Cedar Falls. Paul Rusesabagina, author of *An Ordinary Man*, came to visit the UNI campus. He was greeted with a packed Lang Hall auditorium and people lined up outside the hall trying to get a seat to hear the magnificent speaker. His lecture "Hotel Rwanda: A Lesson to be Learned" was

inspirational for all in attendance that night. Preceding the lecture, the CME hosted a reception and book signing. During the course of the reception and the meet and greet the following morning, many were able to get answers to their questions, or to simply marvel at the hero in front of them. Paul's story is not only captured in his book, but also in the Academy Award-nominated film, *Hotel Rwanda*, starring Don Cheadle as Paul. His story is a powerful one and it was great to see such a huge turnout and to know how many more people Paul was able to effect with his lecture. He is definitely a hero and an inspiration. A copy of

Hotel Rwanda and *An Ordinary Man* are both available for checkout at the CME library, as well as a tape of his lecture.



**Paul Rusesabagina, author of
*An Ordinary Man***

"You can't be neutral on a moving train." Howard Zinn

A Tribute to Howard Zinn

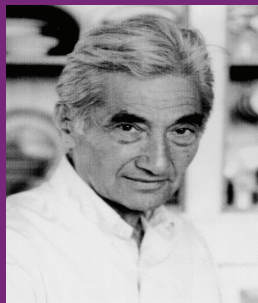
Dr. Michael D. Blackwell

Director

One of my favorite teachers cum mentor and friend was Howard Zinn. While in my doctoral program at Boston University in the spring semester of 1986, I took an elective with him entitled "The Politics of History." Each student had to develop a project that showed how a particular aspect of history occurred, how it was covered during the time, and then how it should have been covered. It was an eye-opening experience! He subtly guided us, but we each felt we were completely free to give our perspectives. I took the course because I knew of his past: that he had taught at Spelman, the historically black college for women in Atlanta; that he had supported young people, teenagers and young adults in the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) as they waged battle against the Jim Crow laws primarily in the South; that he had been an anarchist for a while, but was earnest about the marginalization of American Indians, Latinos, and African Americans historically and contemporaneously; that he had written the vastly popular text, *A People's History of the United States*, just a few years earlier; and that many people did not like him because of his polemics against the reactionary nature of our political system

and the oppression and exploitation endemic to the capitalist system.

During a part of his tenure at B.U., he was denied raises and merit pay as his colleagues because of his candor and his progressivism.



Howard Zinn
(1900-2010)

One of the attributes I liked most about Zinn was his stick-to-itiveness, i.e., his unwavering commitment to and solidarity with those discriminated against by the structures, processes, and policies of our society and by ignorant, xenophobic individuals afraid of true justice, equity, and peace. He was what is called an Infracaninophile: someone who empathizes with the underdog. In creative ways, he maintained this perspective throughout his adult life, writing for the last time in a recent edition of *The Nation* (February 1, 2010) his captious views on

where the Obama administration is headed.

Regardless of where a person is politically or socioeconomically, Howard Zinn is a stellar role model in trying to forge the best possible society and world. As one of the titles of his books declares, "You can't be neutral on a moving train!" Zinn spoke up when others saw unfairness, but had not the will to seek to change it. Sure, he sometimes waxed radical and revolutionary, but he had a bountiful and courageous heart to compel people to beat their swords into plowshares and the spears into pruninghooks and study war no more. Although critical of pacifists, he became increasingly sympathetic to their cause in the face of U.S. involvement in Vietnam and Iraq. In a very real sense, he was a rare prophet in our times--one who would not mince any words that revealed our inhumanity to other human beings. Howard Zinn will be sorely and profoundly missed in our public discourse. But there are many of his proteges who must now take up his mantle and legacy of progressive and compassionate leadership before, I dare say, it is too late!



"It is my deepest belief that only by giving our lives do we find life" Cesar Chaves

Black History Month

February is Black History month. Throughout the month, the CME will host a series of films to be shown over the noon hour. Check with the CME for further details on specific showings!



February 2010

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	HIV/AIDS Awareness 8	Matt Sienkiewicz 9	10	11	Heart Healthy 12	13
♥ 14	JEOPARDY 15	JEOPARDY 16	17	Book Club 18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28						

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Questions or comments? Let us know!

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