



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Headline: Truth Commission to reveal economic human rights violations in Chattanooga

Event: Chattanooga Truth Commission

Saturday December 1, 2007

10AM until 1PM

Location: Partnership for Families, Children, and Adults

1800 McCallie Avenue Chattanooga, TN, 37404

Sponsors: University of Tennessee at Chattanooga (Social Work Department)

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“Human rights violations in the shadow of the Tennessee Aquarium? According to the 1948 Universal Declaration on Human Rights, the answer is yes.” A local group of human rights advocates will hold a “truth commission” on December 1 to document violations of a particular set of human rights—economic human rights—in the Chattanooga area. They hope to launch a grass-roots effort that will explore new ways to correct them.

“When we speak of human rights most people think of torture and political repression,” a group member said. “But when the United Nations General Assembly defined basic human rights, they included such economic provisions as the right to housing, health care, nutrition, and a living wage.” These rights are set forth in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted unanimously by the UN’s member nations on December 10, 1948.

According to human rights advocates, these rights are being violated throughout the United States, and Chattanooga is no exception. According to the city’s Blueprint to End Chronic Homelessness in Chattanooga, more than 4,000 individuals, including almost 1,000 children, experienced homelessness in the Chattanooga in a recent year. Health insurance continues to be a barrier for individuals in desperate need of medical services. An estimated 26,000 uninsured people received health care services through Erlanger Hospital last year. Full-time workers earning the minimum wage cannot support a family of four; according to the US Bureau of Labor Statistics, he or she would need to make more than \$10.00 an hour just to reach the poverty line of \$20,650.

Article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control.

The organizers of the event are a group of social work students at the UT-Chattanooga who affiliated earlier this year with the Poor People’s Economic Human Rights Campaign (PPEHRC), a national organization which has about 100 member groups, most of which are led by poor and homeless people. PPEHRC works to build a multi-racial movement to end poverty.

The Chattanooga Truth Commission will be held on Saturday December 1, from 10 AM until 1 PM at the Partnership for Families, Children, and Adults, 1800 McCallie Avenue.