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"What Now? What Next?": Exploring modern alternatives and related contemporary issues at The Workhouse

*How can a Site of Conscience foster dialogue on issues of poverty, unemployment, and social exclusion? [The Workhouse](#) preserves an example of a once familiar building that loomed on the outskirts of every town, representing both a refuge and a warning to the millions who lived near subsistence level in 19th century Britain. Opened in 1824, The Workhouse was a bold experiment that influenced national policy on the poor. Life inside was intended to be harsher than outside: to encourage self-sufficiency and industry wherever possible. *The Workhouse is determined to use this history to inspire its publics to consider the future of social welfare and their role in shaping it.**

At the conclusion of their tour, visitors explore "What Now, What Next?", a space dedicated to offering visitors a variety of ways to explore connections between the history of social welfare and its contemporary forms, to consider their own attitudes towards people in need, and to share their opinions on addressing poverty in the future. Elements of the "What Now, What Next?" program include:

- **Then and Now:** explores the multitude of institutions today dealing with the issues once tackled under one roof in the workhouse. It also invites visitors to contribute their opinions on daily discussion topics, as well as compare welfare benefits from 19th century to today;
- **Bar scene:** invites visitors to “listen in” on an audio recording of a conversation between two friends at a bar about homeless people, and asks visitors to participate by writing their responses;
- **Temporary exhibition area:** space for projects developed in partnership with agencies involved in social issues;
- **Interactive screens:** allow visitors to “vote” on different policies while hearing opposing views, and surveying visitor definitions of poverty; and
- **Debate and bulletin boards:** visitors can respond to a question of the day by writing their opinion on a blackboard, write general comments on Post-It notes, or read current news featured on the poverty issues bulletin board.

For information on other programs at The Workhouse, see

http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/places/theworkhouse/visitors_see.html

SITES OF CONSCIENCE OPENINGS & ACTIVITIES

Debating Democracy: Remembering Japanese Internment at Manzanar National Historic Site (April 24, 2004)

Over 2,000 people celebrated the grand opening of the new Interpretive Center at [Manzanar National Historic Site](http://www.nps.gov/manz/), in Independence, CA, a former internment camp for Japanese American citizens and Japanese resident aliens during World War II. In addition to preserving Manzanar and its stories, the park’s mission is “to promote a greater understanding of, and dialogue on, civil rights, democracy, and freedom.” In its endeavor to fulfill its mission, Manzanar is currently field-testing an educational program for teachers, and special on-site programming. For more information on the Site, visit <http://www.nps.gov/manz/education.htm>

Building on Brown: Inspiring Youth Literacy at the National Civil Rights Museum

How can sites of conscience use the history of civil rights struggles to inspire youth to achieve their potential? During the month of May, the [National Civil Rights Museum](http://www.civilrights.org/) in Memphis, TN, organized programs to honor the legacy of the Brown v. Board of Education ruling by engaging youth and community members on issues of citizenship, racial segregation and access to education. More than 75 community, corporate and civic volunteers participated in a day-long reading marathon of literature on civil rights activists and events, Brown legislation and opinions, and other historical documents. Locally-elected officials and former students who were the first to desegregate Memphis Public Schools in 1961 joined and hundreds of school children for a brown bag luncheon to learn more about the legacy of educational pursuit and struggle for civil rights. For a list of their activities to date, visit <http://www.civilrightsmuseum.org>

Keep Civil Rights Struggles Alive at Brown v. Board of Education National Historic Site (May 17, 2004)

The 50th anniversary of the United States Supreme Court decision that denied the basis for racial segregation in classrooms in over 20 states and forever changed race relations in America marked the grand opening of the [Brown v. Board of Education National Historic Site](http://www.nps.gov/bvbe/). The Site preserves Monroe

Elementary School, one of the four segregated elementary schools for African American children in Topeka, KS, and the adjacent grounds.

UPCOMING OPPORTUNITIES FOR LEARNING AND EXCHANGE

New Tactics in Human Rights International Symposium, Ankara, Turkey
(September 29 – October 2, 2004)

Human rights practitioners from 85 countries within a wide range of fields and experiences have applied to interact, share tactics and find new ways to collaborate together in the Ankara this fall. The Coalition office, together with [Memoria Abierta](#) and the [District Six Museum](#), will lead a session on making sites of conscience new centers for human rights. Human rights practitioners from around the globe are invited to participate. Learn how to develop and apply networks, strategies and practical tactics in your work. Information is available in English, Spanish, French and Turkish. Applications for registration will continue to be accepted until June 15, 2004, so apply now!

<http://www.newtactics.org/Symposium/Announce-en.html>

Reflections of Community: Grand Rapids, USA
(October 20-22, 2004)

Join the [Association of Midwest Museums](#) and [Michigan Museums Association](#) Joint Annual Conference for a wide variety of presentations and sessions by specialists on how museums can serve as vital resources in their communities. Liz Sevckenko, Director of the International Coalition and Vice President of Interpretation at the Lower East Side Tenement Museum, will be delivering this year's opening keynote speech on making museums centers for civic dialogue. Early-bird registration deadline is August 31, 2004; registration forms and additional information can be found at

<http://www.midwestmuseums.org>

COMING INTO SITE: EMERGING SITE OF THE MONTH

Casas de la Memoria, Peru

In 2001, human rights organizations and civic groups harnessed public support and legislation to convert the National Bank, the site of massive public protest against the re-election of the dictatorial Fujimori regime, into a center which presently houses [Casas de la Memoria](#) (Houses of Memory), a dynamic site which promotes the use of symbolic spaces to feature artistic and cultural expressions reflecting two decades of dictatorship and terror in Peru, as well as to actively promote citizen empowerment.

To help foster collective dialogue on issues of social concern, Casas de la Memoria stages innovative art exhibits, publications, visual displays, events and activities in existing spaces, such as meeting rooms, factories, galleries, libraries and other public recreational settings throughout Peru. Although the heart of the museum is based in Lima, Casas de la Memoria also collaborates with academics and community organizations in other cities around the country, such as Huamanga and Abancay, in order to develop their own symbolic spaces which offer programs that commemorate the stories and actions of victims of political violence, discrimination and exclusion in their respective regions.

Learn more about how this museum strives to “grant a sense to the past, orient the present, and imagine and construct the future”, or join their online forum on creating and developing houses of memory by visiting <http://www.casasdelamemoria.org.pe>

We welcome your feedback! Comments and suggestions regarding this newsletter can be forwarded to hkarst@tenement.org

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