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‘Louisiana Winter’ Students at MLK School in Lower Ninth Ward:
Dr. King’s Advocacy for a Public Works Program Highlighted

Date: Monday, January 15, 2007

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NEW ORLEANS, LA /PRNewswire/ -- Standing in the front of the still-closed down Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Elementary School in New Orleans, the Louisiana Winter students, a group of 130 college students from 25 colleges, gathered to express their frustration and outrage that the MLK school is still shut down sixteen months after Hurricane Katrina.

The event started with Dr. Scott Myers-Lipton, Associate Professor at San José State University, reminding the students, “we have come to the Lower Ninth Ward to dramatize the contradiction that exists between Dr. King’s vision of the beloved community—where all people’s basic needs would be met—and the reality that the school that bears his name is still closed.”

Myers-Lipton stated that the Gulf Coast Civic Works Project, an idea for federal legislation that would hire 100,000 local residents to rebuild their own communities, could rebuild and repair the MLK school, as well as schools that have been destroyed and damaged throughout the region by Katrina.

Kai Stinchcombe of Stanford University, and executive director of the Roosevelt Institution—a student think tank for progressive ideas—commented that FDR’s public works program built or improved 6,000 schools and 2,500 hospitals throughout the nation. He asked, “Why can’t we develop a Gulf Coast Civic Works Project that does the same thing today for New Orleans and the surrounding region?”

Congresswoman Barbara Lee, Democrat, from Oakland, California, wrote a special message to the Louisiana Winter students. In her statement, she commended the students, stating “I am so impressed by your passion and your commitment to re-create the Mississippi Summer Actions of the 60’s Civil Right’s Movement into a modern day Louisiana Winter of our MODERN-DAY Civil Right’s Movement.”

Joseph Recasner, Dean of Students at the MLK Elementary School, thanked the Louisiana Winter students for coming to the Lower Ninth Ward on Dr. King’s birthday. He reminded the students of the social suffering that is occurring in his community, but asked the students to not lose hope. Mr. Recasner told the Louisiana Winter students that, “As we look to the future and I look at your smiling and glowing faces, representing all colors of the rainbow—this is truly what Dr. King meant when he said that we should walk hand and hand, working and believing in a nation that promises freedom and justice.”

For more information, please visit <http://www.solvingpoverty.com>

The Gulf Coast Civic Works Project is the national effort by students to develop federal legislation to create 100,000 jobs to rebuild the region using Gulf Coast residents.

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