

**eliminating racism
empowering women**
ywca

Press Release

Contact: YWCA of Jamestown
401 North Main Street
Jamestown, NY 14701
marisal@ywcaofjamestown.com
(716)488-2237
(716)484-1752

Date:February 11, 2009
For immediate release

The YWCA Takes a Stand Against Racism

The YWCA of Jamestown announced today an exciting new initiative coming to Jamestown area. The “Stand Against Racism” is the program of the YWCA aimed at raising awareness that racism still exists in our communities and that it can no longer be ignored or tolerated.

According to the Southern Poverty Law Center, there are 878 active hate groups in the United States, including 34 in New Jersey, 26 in New York and 6 in Connecticut. Hate groups have beliefs or practices that attack or malign an entire class of people. They promote hate, hostility, and sometimes violence. The Stand Against Racism was created by the YWCA in order to combat the spread of hate and to honor and celebrate the richness of diversity.

Last year, the Stand Against Racism attracted over 60 organizations that took a bold step forward in the battle against racism in Mercer County, New Jersey. Over 5,000 individuals took a Stand Against Racism, sending a strong message against racism and discrimination of any kind and committed themselves to a lifetime of promoting peace, justice, freedom, and dignity for all people in their community and in the world. This powerful, unified, effort helped raised awareness that racism hurts everyone. Participants ranged from school-age children to elected officials, executives of large corporations, church leaders, and others. Racism affects everyone.

Today, the YWCA of Jamestown is calling on all local organizations, corporations, Houses of Worship, government agencies and individuals in the Jamestown area to join with us on Friday, April 3, 2009 to take a Stand Against Racism by becoming a participating site.

Any organization or group of individuals can become a participating site by signing up through our Stand Against Racism Web site: www.StandAgainstRacism.org. A participating site will host their own Stand Against Racism event at their own location (which can be private or open to the public). Participation in the Stand Against Racism is free and becoming a participating site is very simple. The YWCA will provide all the necessary materials and documents, including a *How to Run the Event Template* that can be customized to meet the organization's needs. Organizations are urged to visit www.StandAgainstRacism.org to join this important movement.

The persistence and pervasiveness of racism divides our community and keeps individuals from achieving success in education, economics, employment, and quality of life. Strength comes from numbers.

This year the Stand Against Racism will take place in New Jersey, New York, and Connecticut. For more details, please visit www.StandAgainstRacism.org, or call the YWCA Racial Justice Institute Director, Caroline L. Mitchell, at 609-396-8291 ext. 407 or email info@standagainstracism.org. For local information, please contact Beth Oakes at 716-488-2237 or email betho@ywcaofjamestown.com.

The YWCA's Racial Justice Institute seeks to bring people together across communities, counties and states for one common goal—the elimination of racism—and we ask you to please make your voice heard by joining the Stand Against Racism.

Background:

The Stand Against Racism was initiated by the YWCA's Racial Justice Institute of Trenton and Princeton, New Jersey in 2008. The YWCAs in America and around the world have a rich history of advocating for racial justice. Throughout our history, the YWCA has been in the forefront of most major movements in the United States as a pioneer in race relations, labor union representation, and the empowerment of women. Today, we not only intend to raise awareness of the issues of racism, we intend to affect real change in the lives of our family, friends and co-workers through a process that identifies and eradicates the barriers that divide us and that perpetuate racism and other forms of oppression. As individuals learn what has kept us apart, they will develop new ways of working cooperatively by creating new models of shared resources and perspectives. Our goal is not to pave the way for the future. It is to create the future - a better future for all.