



Weill Cornell Medical College

# The Weill Cornell Center for Human Rights

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## In this Issue

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## Evaluations

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May evaluations: 6  
 Total evaluations to date: 212  
 Total clients: 181

## Upcoming Events

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**Faculty Appreciation Potluck**  
 Lasdon Terrace  
 June 8, 2015 from 7-9 PM

## Announcements

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We'd like to welcome Dr. Thomas Kalman as the newest member of our Executive Board!



*Photo credit: [access-info.org](http://access-info.org)*

## Our Year in Review

As the 2014-2015 academic year comes to a close, we organize events such as the Spring Debrief and the Faculty Appreciation Potluck to reflect on the Center's progress and to thank those who have contributed to our achievements. This year, we welcomed Drs. Joseph Shin and Thomas Kalman as new Medical Directors. With their guidance, we have completed **60** asylum evaluations (**15** medical, **1** gynecological, and **44** psychological) since August 2014. Our fall training, co-hosted with Columbia, was the largest student training to date. **Eighty** students were trained, including **19** students from WCMC. The second annual holiday party, held at BFB Highline, raised **\$1600** from over 100 contributors. At our February and March monthly meetings, we were grateful to have Dr. Ross McDonald, Medical Director of the Bureau of Correctional Health Services for the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, and Dr. David Nissan, a resident psychiatrist at Weill Cornell, speak to us about their respective fields. In March, we hosted the Third Annual New York Asylum Network Luncheon, which focused on "The Changing Landscape for our Most Vulnerable Clients." The event was attended by several important figures in the human rights community. At the Spring Debrief in May, Dr. Susan Ball led a discussion about how we learn and grow from our experiences with clients. We now look forward to the upcoming 2015-2016 school year and the achievements it will bring.

## The Client Fund

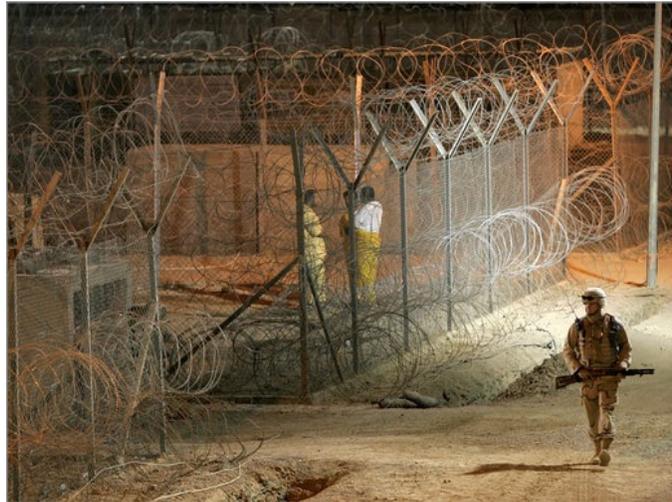
WCCHR recently established a Client Fund to help Continuing Care clients who are in urgent need of financial assistance. We were privileged to use this fund for the first time to assist one of our clients, a mother of three who was granted asylum on the grounds of gender/domestic violence. Fortunately, this client was finally able to secure her children's legal entry to the United States to receive the same level of protection from her former abuser. However, given unstable work conditions, a plight many of our clients face, she found herself without the resources to provide basic supplies for her children, such as beds, linens, cookware, utensils, and clothes. In addition to the generosity of Dr. Patricia Yarberry-Allen of the Weill Cornell Community Clinic, who donated beds to the family, WCCHR was able to provide funding for many of the other basic necessities that will allow this client and her family to make a smoother transition to life in a new country. Though this transition may be challenging, the granting of asylum will hopefully allow for their safety and healing as a family. We are grateful to be able to provide this level of support to clients in great need and hope to provide such assistance to more clients in the future.

## In the News

### The American Psychological Association's Role in CIA Torture Program

—*New York Times*, April 30, 2015

In April 2015, a group of health professionals released a report on the American Psychological Association's (APA) secret involvement in the Bush-era CIA interrogation program, which came under close scrutiny for mistreatment of prisoners captured by the U.S. during the War on Terror. The three lead authors of the report include respected health care professionals and longtime critics of the APA, including Drs. Stephen Soldz, Steven Reisner, and Nathaniel Raymond. According to the report, in June 2004, when the interrogation program was threatened by the release of public images showing the abuse of prisoners, the APA released guidelines for the involvement of its psychologists in the program, thereby providing its support and justification for the existing interrogation methods. Last November, under new scrutiny, the APA board appointed David Hoffman, a Chicago lawyer, to conduct an independent review into its role in the interrogation program. The spokeswoman for the APA has declined to comment on the report while the review is underway.



*Photo credit: John Moore/Getty Images, NYTimes.com*

**Link to article:** [http://mobile.nytimes.com/2015/05/01/us/report-says-american-psychological-association-collaborated-on-torture-justification.html?referrer=&\\_r=0](http://mobile.nytimes.com/2015/05/01/us/report-says-american-psychological-association-collaborated-on-torture-justification.html?referrer=&_r=0)

## Spotlight on...

### Pedro Duran, MS<sub>3</sub>

Pedro Duran is a third year medical student at Weill Cornell Medical College and currently a Senior Student Advisor for WCCHR. Originally from New Jersey and of Dominican descent, he graduated from Columbia University in 2010 with a BA in Biological Sciences. Prior to medical school, he spent two years in Japan as an assistant English language teacher at the elementary and junior high school level. Pedro has been a part of the WCCHR board since his first year at Weill Cornell as the Education Coordinator. He went on to serve as Advocacy and Education Coordinator as a second year and, most recently, as a Senior Student Advisor. He has also participated in several asylum evaluations. His work at WCCHR has cultivated his interests in global health, health and human rights, health disparities, and medical education. WCCHR has also been a unique setting for early exposure to psychiatry in a complex and varied population, and has inspired Pedro's interests in a variety of psychiatric conditions, particularly stress and mood disorders.



### Deborah Ottenheimer, MD

Dr. Deborah Ottenheimer is a valuable member of our faculty evaluators, and we greatly appreciate her initiative and support. Dr. Ottenheimer graduated from the University of Pennsylvania and completed her residency training at St. Lukes/Roosevelt Hospital in Manhattan. She is a human rights activist dedicated to helping adolescents and young adults, particularly those who have undergone gender based violence. In the past, she has spent seven years working with adolescent girls in the South Bronx. She now continues to work as a medical volunteer in Haiti and is an active member of Physicians for Human Rights. She is also a voluntary faculty member at the Ichan School of Medicine Human Rights Clinic, where she focuses on aiding victims of female genital mutilations. We'd like to thank Dr. Ottenheimer for her time and dedication to the Center and hope to continue working with her in the future.

