



Ethical ction Report

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Welcome to the Ethical Action Report 2.0

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Call to Action – ‘The Achievable Minimum Wage Resolution’ of the AEU Assembly 2014, by Vincent Brancato, NYSEC

EDITOR’S NOTE: Thanks to the work of New York Society for Ethical Culture members Sy Amkraut, Daniel Julin and Vincent Brancato, this past May Ethical Culture declared our support for a living wage. The Resolution they drafted was passed at the 2014 Assembly in Skokie, Illinois. Now we have to walk the walk. Given resistance to President Obama’s call for a \$10.10/hour wage, our work is cut out for us. Here’s a proposed plan of action from Vincent.

This is a call to action for the establishment of a legal minimum wage in the United States that allows full-time workers to support themselves and their families without government aide or private charity. Since businesses function thanks to public support for infrastructure (roads, police, fire protection, hospitals, military protection), they should do their fair share by paying a living wage. No business should benefit from public infrastructure while paying their workers so little that government assistance is needed just to survive.

As mid-term elections loom, let's ask candidates about their position on a living wage. All candidates should be asked to declare their positions both before and after the primaries. They should clearly state whether they support the small initial step of the President's \$10.10 per hour proposal, or prefer a full living wage, or something in between.

It might be best if local Societies determine what the appropriate minimum wage should be for each geographic region – state, county, or municipality - given the different costs of living across the nation. This information could facilitate appropriate bills for the 2014-2015 legislative session. A state-by-state narrative of our efforts and careful records could contribute to a coherent national strategy as we move forward. This data will help us determine our short and long term goals that our legislators could support.

Please speak with your elected officials (mayors, governors, and state and federal legislators) and keep some records so that we can hold them accountable for doing the right thing! If you are willing to be a point person in an Ethical Culture-wide effort please contact NYSEC Leader Anne Klaeyen at aklaeyen@nysec.org or 212-874-5210, extension 119.

If you know of state and national coalitions effectively working on this issue, please share it with the Ethical Action Report. For example, what do you think of <http://www.raisetheminimumwage.com>?

Supportive Televisiting Services, by Hugh Taft-Morales, EAR Editor

On a recent visit to the New York Society for Ethical Culture, I had the pleasure of speaking with Dr. Phyllis Harrison-Ross and Dr. Frank Corigliano about an exciting project worthy of duplication around the country. The Social Service Board at NYSEC has helped create an innovative televisiting service that enables children separated from their incarcerated parent to reconnect through video-visits.

For many children, already facing challenging situations, separation from a parent who is incarcerated is traumatic. Face-to-face visits at the jail or prison, with security checks and long-waiting periods, can be very difficult. This NYSEC program, in partnership with the New York and Brooklyn Public Libraries and Sesame Street, offers a chance for children to connect with their parents safely and with more regularity.

Whether a parent is at Rikers Island, the Brooklyn House of Detention, or the Manhattan Detention Complex, staying in touch with their children offers a rare chance to support someone they love despite their incarceration. It seems a small but meaningful alternative to the retributive punishments we seem to rely on, even though they have proven ineffective.

With all the attention Ethical Culturists have given criminal justice reform over the past few years, wouldn't it be appropriate if televisiting programs were initiated by Ethical Societies in other cities? I urge you - consider whether this is a project your Ethical Society might consider. Read the article by NYSEC Board past-president Andra Miller in the current issue of the NYSEC's *Ethical Outlook* at <http://www.nysec.org/ethical-outlook>

In the coming months we intend to share more information about this project. In addition, it is my hope that we will distribute a "how-to" guide for seeding televisiting projects. At the very least, let's begin a conversation as to how, for the sake of the children, our country can do a better job engendering rehabilitation and love in our system of justice. Send your thoughts and reactions to me at hughtm@gmail.com for inclusion in next month's Ethical Action Report.

September 9th – Culture of Peace Forum, Martha Gallahue, NES

National Ethical Service asks that you **Save the Date** of **September 9, 2014** to watch the upcoming High Level Forum on the Culture of Peace on <http://webtv.un.org/>. Convened by the outgoing President of the General Assembly John Ashe and assisted by the civil society consortia Global Movement for the Culture of Peace (in which NES exerts leadership), the program will include a General Debate within the General Assembly on the status of Culture of Peace and an afternoon program focusing on women's leadership and education for global citizenship. The Resolution on The Declaration and Programme of Action (A/53/243) is the key document that mainstreamed into the work of the General Assembly the culture of peace based on right relationship and inter-cooperation.

One final note from the NES: Lucy Schmitz from the Ethical Culture Society of Essex County and FES has taken a summer internship with NES. Lucy's program is geared toward global policy development. She will receive credit through Columbia University for her work. Other FES college students may inquire whether they may receive such credit for this internship as well.

A Note about Food from Essex, Martha Gallahue, ECSEC

Recently Martha Gallahue, Leader of the Ethical Culture Society of Essex County, pointed out to the EAR that the raising and distribution of food may soon become a major driver of both war and peace. With that in mind, Ethical Culturists in Maplewood, NJ are partnering with the northeastern regional branch of *Slow Foods USA*. *Slow Food* is part of a network of over 150,000 members in more than 150 countries.

Through this network they link “the pleasures of the table with a commitment to protect the community, culture, knowledge and environment that make this pleasure possible.” Their mission is good, clean and fair food for all. *Slow Food* believes that food should be affordable for everyone, while respecting the dignity of labor from field to fork. ECSEC is showing educational films and becoming a distribution center for Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) from June- November. The Society now procures produce from an organic farm.

IHEU Statement on the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

The American Ethical Union is a member of the International Humanist and Ethical Union (IHEU). Recently the IHEU issued a statement on the current Israeli-Palestinian conflict. We urge you to consider it and send your considered judgment and comments for possible inclusion in a future Ethical Action Report. You can read the IHEU statement at <http://iheu.org/iheu-statement-on-israel-palestine-conflict/>.

Save the Date! People's Climate March Sept 20-21 in NYC

Leader Anne Klaeyesen represented the AEU at the July 30th press conference in Duffy Square to announce the People's Climate March on Sunday, September 21 in NYC. Members of the NY and Brooklyn Societies were also on hand, crowding on the bleachers behind the statue of Father Duffy to hear speakers from <http://350.org/> the faith community, and indigenous people. What a rousing event to kick off organizing for this historic event!

Let world leaders know during the UN Climate Summit that
We need to take action to prevent climate catastrophe !
For more information on this event, see www.peoplesclimatemarch.org.

Ethical Action Spotlight

With many thanks to Vincent Brancato, Martha Gallahue and Anne Klaeyen for contributing text and ideas to this month's EAR. Let's continue the dialogue in our national movement – submit comments, articles and suggestions for future EAR editions!

Hugh Taft-Morales, Leader, Ethical Humanist Society of Philadelphia and Baltimore Ethical Society.

The Ethical Action Report 2.0

As Ethical Societies around the country continue their 2013-2014 program season, the EAR is evolving to try to be more useful to you and to generate more constructive, engaged dialogue about “deed before creed” throughout the movement. We hope this new format offers stimulating ideas and practical hints that make ethical action more effective and rewarding at your societies and in your lives.

EAR 2.0 hopes to offer:

- More in-depth analysis of particular social justice issues.
- Stories of ethical action projects that worked well at one of our societies and might enliven your home society.
- Discussion of ways to frame Ethical Culture's commitment to Ethical Action
- Excerpts from recent Ethical Culture platform addresses or statements from around the movement about civic, social, or ethical issues.

Join the fun! Offer your thoughts and news items for the September edition.

- Write about an issue with which you are familiar due to your professional life or private interest.
- Share news about an interesting ethical action project at your society, current or from the past.
- Write a “letter to the EAR editor” addressing any articles in this or future issues, or about other issues relating to our commitment to action.
- Do a historical reflection on an Ethical Action moment from Ethical Culture's history.

The pieces can range from 250-1000 words, and if you submit them early, the editorial volunteers can help polish your offering. Feel free to float your idea by me at HughTM@gmail.com or send something to me by the 15th of the month prior to publication. All final copy has to be sent to me no later than the 25th of the month.

Sincerely,
Hugh Taft-Morales - Ethical Culture Leader and Editor, *Ethical Action Report*

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To share your views on national legislation with the Secular Coalition for America (SCA) visit: www.secular.org

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