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United for Human Rights Florida Volunteer Earns Presidential Award

Gracia Bennish, President of United for Human Rights Florida, is an active proponent of human rights education and the care of victims of human trafficking. Her 640 hours of volunteer service last year earned her a President's Volunteer Service Award.

Gracia Bennish received a well-deserved acknowledgement April 24, 2013, for her 640 hours of volunteer service last year—a President's Volunteer Service Award, presented at a National Volunteer Week celebration at the Fort Harrison religious retreat of the Church of Scientology Flag Service Organization.

Bennish, a photojournalist, graphic designer and painter, is president of United for Human Rights Florida, a human rights education program supported by the Church of Scientology.

United for Human Rights provides educational booklets and videos on the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights and teaching curricula for middle school, high school and college students. It makes these materials available free of charge to educators.

"Bullying, human trafficking, domestic violence, child pornography and all other human rights abuses have their root in lack of knowledge and understanding of human rights," says Bennish. "Education in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is the key to bringing about respect for self and for others and promoting

tolerance. This knowledge helps youth gain the courage to speak out against human rights abuses for themselves and for others.”

Bennish introduces the United for Human Rights program to community leaders, legislators and educators.

“We participate in many national and regional education conferences where we have informed thousands of teachers about our materials,” says Bennish. “It is gratifying that so many educators we meet are already using our materials, often passed on to them by another teacher who was inspired by them.”

Bennish is also a member of the Clearwater Human Rights Task Force, and she created United Physicians for Human Rights, an initiative through which medical professionals provide urgently needed medical and dental care to human trafficking survivors.

The President’s Volunteer Service Award was created in 2003 to honor Americans who serve as a model of volunteerism. In his proclamation on National Volunteer Week 2013, President Obama stated: “National Volunteer week is a time to renew that fundamentally American ideal of service and responsibility. It is also a time to recognize the men, women, and children who bring that principle into practice every day by lifting up the people around them.”

Scientists on five continents engage in collaborative efforts with government agencies and nongovernmental organizations to bring about broad-scale awareness and implementation of the 1948 United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the world’s premier human rights document.

The Church of Scientology published *Scientology: How We Help—United for Human Rights, Making Human Rights a Global Reality* to meet requests for more information about the human rights education and awareness initiative the Church supports. To learn more, visit www.Scientology.org/humanrights.

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Scientology Founder L. Ron Hubbard wrote, "Human rights must be made a fact, not an idealistic dream," and the Scientology religion is based on the principles of human rights. The Code of a Scientologist calls on all members of the religion to dedicate themselves "to support true humanitarian endeavors in the fields of human rights."



Gracia Bennish, President of United for Human Rights Florida, at the Florida House of Representative in Tallahassee, where she briefed legislators on human rights education. Bennish received a President's Volunteer Service Award April 24, 2013, for contributing 640 hours of volunteer service last year.