

Saturday, November 3, 2012

Dear Friends,

It is with both a sense of fulfillment and sadness that I will be stepping down as Executive Director of the Program for Torture Victims at the end of December. I am thrilled, however, to continue my relationship with PTV by joining the Board of Directors in January 2013. I am proud to say that, over the past two and a half years, we have strengthened PTV, enabling us to help rebuild more lives and empower and restore the dignity of more survivors. We have dramatically increased PTV's visibility, expanded and diversified our fundraising, developed a three-year strategic plan, added staff and – most importantly – increased vital services to clients.

I am also pleased to announce that we have just secured federal funding for the next three years, and that last month we hired a part-time physician, Dr. Rebecca Trotzky, to work alongside our medical director, Dr. Jose Quiroga. For the first time in PTV's history, we are also establishing a much-needed dental services program for our clients. All of this means that PTV is in a stronger position to carry out our mission of rebuilding the lives of survivors. As many of you know, I have spent most of my career as a labor attorney, and it is that field to which I have decided to return, as a partner in the labor law firm Bush, Gottlieb, Singer, Lopez, Kohanski, Adelstein & Dickinson. Weighing heavily in my decision is the unprecedented assault on workers, immigrants, and labor unions, which jeopardizes the well-being of tens of millions of the most vulnerable members of our society and imperils the very existence of the labor movement.

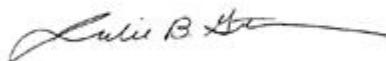
I strongly believe that fighting for the rights of workers and immigrants, and helping to bring justice and healing to torture survivors are both part of the larger struggle for human dignity. In my new role as a PTV Board member, I will continue to advance PTV's essential mission. And as a partner at Bush Gottlieb, I will be in a position to advocate vigorously for working men and women, and to help restore the balance of power between them and their employers. As I prepare to transition from Executive Director to Board member, I do so with tremendous gratitude to PTV's heroic co-founders, Ana Deutsch and Dr. Quiroga, as well as our dedicated board, staff and volunteers. And I am thankful to each one of you for your support of PTV, without which we could never have achieved so much.

My life has been forever changed by the courageous survivors I have had the honor to get to know. Hearing their stories, witnessing their strength, and sharing in their hopes, dreams and fight for dignity has deepened my sense of what it means to be human.

There is so much more to do, and I look forward to working with all of you as PTV continues to expand its reach. To paraphrase Abdoulaye, one of the first survivors I met, together we must nurture the tree PTV has planted – a tree that has given shelter to those who had lost hope, and that will keep bringing hope and healing to future generations.



Warmly,



Julie Gutman  
Executive Director

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Program for Torture Victims

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