

# WOLA annual report 2008



WASHINGTON OFFICE



ON LATIN AMERICA

# *Promoting human rights, democracy and social justice in Latin America*

The Washington Office on Latin America (WOLA) promotes human rights, democracy and social and economic justice in Latin America and the Caribbean. Founded in 1974, WOLA presses for more just US policies toward Latin America through public education, advocacy, and policy reform proposals. WOLA, whose work is based on close relations with Latin American colleagues, has access to top level US officials and has brought hundreds of its regional partners to Washington to dialogue with policymakers.



## **CONTENTS**

- 1 Message from the Chairman of the Board
- 4 What We Do
- 5 Our Areas of Focus
  - ▶ New US Policy Toward Latin America
  - ▶ Human Rights and Rights Defenders
  - ▶ Citizen Security
  - ▶ Rights and Development
  - ▶ Drug Policy
- 9 2008 Publications
- 11 Media Impact
- 14 Supporters, Donors, Friends
- 16 Financial Statements
- 18 Board of Directors and Staff

## *from the Chairman of the Board*

A number of years ago, a biography of the distinguished attorney, Edward Bennett Williams, appeared with the title, *The Man to See in Washington*. This annual report could well be titled, *WOLA: The Place to Visit and the People to See* when concerned about human rights in Latin America.

I have had the privilege of visiting Latin America with WOLA staffers, attending Capitol Hill briefings by them, and most recently, serving as chair of the WOLA board. Each experience has enabled me to see up close and personal the importance of what WOLA does and the quality and effectiveness with which its experienced staffers operate. It is indeed an impressive organization with high quality personnel.

In a town too often characterized by polarizing and ideological debates, WOLA continues to provide fair, insightful and hard hitting analyses of complex issues. Essential to the quality of its work is its ability to link on the ground contacts in Latin America with policy makers of Washington. Every staff member maintains close relationships with colleagues and citizens in Latin America. This results in greater accuracy and realism in WOLA reports.

WOLA continues to influence policy in both the U.S. and Latin America through hearings, briefings and access to policy makers. Its publications also provide timely and authoritative information for journalists, scholars and the general public.

Most recently, I had the opportunity to observe first hand in El Salvador the effective ways in which WOLA staffers work with civil society organizations and human rights advocates to promote dialogue and concerted action.

This annual report covers an impressive range of important issues: new options for U.S. policy toward Latin America; a critical but balanced perspective on Venezuela; advocacy for human rights in Colombia; citizen security as an alternative to crime and violence in Latin America, including youth violence programs; the impact of U.S. economic and trade policy on workers' rights; and the effect of the drug war on human rights and democracy.

WOLA staffers have addressed these issues through both careful analysis and passionate concern for human rights. In doing so, they have won the respect of scholars, practitioners, the media and the general public.

Supporters of WOLA can be confident that they are backing a winner, a most important resource for understanding and dialogue among the Americas and for pursuing human rights for Latin America.

Sincerely,



Charles L. Currie, S.J.



# WOLA: *What We Do*

- ▶ **Connects with partners in Latin America**, monitoring events, trends and challenges in the region, and is prepared to act quickly to ensure that alternative voices are heard.

*WOLA's respected reputation has led human rights defenders, democracy activists and others working for social justice to turn to WOLA with information and on-the-ground perspectives that might otherwise be ignored or suppressed.*

- ▶ **Influences policy in the US and Latin America** by developing key contacts with government officials and multilateral organizations.

*WOLA's testimony before congressional hearings, its briefings on key issues, and access to policymakers help promote dialogue and critical policy perspectives.*

- ▶ **Shapes public debate** through outreach to the media; sponsorship of public events with scholars, officials and grassroots activists; and original research, analysis

and commentary by a staff with decades of cumulative experience in Latin America.

*WOLA's publications, memos and bilingual website, [www.wola.org](http://www.wola.org), are important sources of timely, authoritative information for journalists, scholars, policymakers and the public in the US and Latin America.*

- ▶ **Serves as a key resource for civil society organizations in Latin America** working with colleagues in the region on training, research and advocacy initiatives.

*WOLA's commitment to human rights, democracy and social justice and its collaborative style have helped the organization find common ground for action with allies in Latin America, while also helping our colleagues in the region gain greater understanding of US policy.*

## Our Areas of Focus

WOLA encourages the US government to take an approach to Latin America policy based on cooperation, respect, and mutual aspirations. WOLA urges policymakers to support human rights, development with equity, and citizen security. In addition, WOLA monitors democratic governance in the region, mindful that strong democracies require active citizen participation from all sectors of society. WOLA's core focus areas follow.



### New US Policy Toward Latin America

There is widespread agreement among US-Latin America policy experts that the United States needs to re-engage the region through multilateral efforts to ensure that all citizens live with peace, justice and security.

In 2008, WOLA:

**Worked to re-orient US policy toward Latin America** through the publication and wide circulation of *Forging New Ties: A Fresh Approach to US Policy in the Region.* In the run-up to the US elections, WOLA held a series of public forums in cities around the country, met with advisors to

the presidential campaigns and the President-elect's transition team, and sponsored an event on Capitol Hill. As the transition got underway, we translated the vision of a new, more humane and more progressive approach to Latin America into concrete steps for the Obama Administration and the new Congress to take.

**Provided opportunities for a balanced yet critical perspective on the situation in Venezuela, emphasizing respect for democracy and constitutional principles.** WOLA hosted electoral observers, legal experts, and human rights defenders and arranged events for them in the US. We also traveled to Venezuela in late 2008 to observe pivotal regional elections.

**Published “*Opting for Engagement,*” describing how a number of key European and Latin American governments relate to Cuba—through engagement rather than isolation.** WOLA held a public event around the report’s release with officials from the Mexican and Brazilian embassies in Washington, DC,

which served to remind interested Members of Congress, the media, and foreign policy specialists that the US approach to Cuba is out of sync with the rest of the world.

**Played a key role in highlighting the shifting responsibilities from the Department of State to the Department of Defense.** As part of the Just the Facts project, WOLA, the Center for International Policy (CIP) and the Latin America Working Group (LAWG) published “*Ready, Aim, Foreign Policy: How the Pentagon Takes Over More and More Areas of Foreign Policy.*” This report documents these shifting responsibilities and has been used extensively with policymakers, becoming increasingly important as Congress finally grapples with the more global shift of responsibilities.

## Human Rights and Rights Defenders

While much has changed in Latin America, systematic human rights abuses still occur. WOLA fights to end abuses and the impunity that enables them. WOLA also supports human rights advocates as they demand accountability for past violations.

In 2008, WOLA:

**Helped bring about the most significant purge in the Colombian military in years through human rights advocacy around the Colombia Free Trade Agreement.** This advocacy took place through regular meetings

with the State Department, embassy officials, US policymakers, and public events. WOLA also hosted delegations of Colombian jurists and advocates on the issue of extraditions, paramilitaries and extrajudicial executions. During the fall, WOLA wrote to prosecutors



involved in the trials involving Jorge 40, Salvatore Mancuso and Don Berna and monitored their trials in Washington, DC.

**Increased the visibility of the links between criminal paramilitary networks and palm oil cultivation in Colombia.** This led to the Colombian government's commitment to require the return of stolen land and the US Congress's conditioning aid to palm projects. Reporters from the BBC, *Washington Post* and others wrote extensive articles about this issue and its relevance to US foreign policy toward Colombia.

**Provided a forum for scholars, activists and policymakers to analyze the Fujimori trial and other human rights proceedings underway in the region.** WOLA co-sponsored two conferences on the trial of former Peruvian president, Alberto Fujimori, one in September in Lima and the other in October in Washington. Speakers from Latin America and the US evaluated the efforts of governments, human rights movements and Latin American civil society to promote justice and accountability through the judicial process and the ways in which this process contributes to democratic consolidation.

## Citizen Security

Crime and violence are major problems in Latin America, and governments often respond with repressive, short-term solutions. WOLA promotes strategies focused on human rights, violence prevention, and police and judicial reform.

In 2008, WOLA:

**Held a groundbreaking conference on organized crime and the role of civil society.** The

conference, held in January in Mexico City, brought together prosecutors, investigative

judges, law enforcement, money laundering experts, and civil society representatives from Latin America, Europe and the US to discuss two main issues: the key elements necessary for a comprehensive and effective strategy to combat organized criminal networks in Latin America, and the role that civil society can play in addressing this problem.

**Published a case study on the efforts that led to the creation of the International Commission Against Impunity (CICIG) in Guatemala, “Advocates against Impunity: A Case Study on Human Rights Organizing in Guatemala.”** The case study recounts the advocacy campaign that resulted in the establishment of this pioneering multilateral commission and draws lessons on the “triangulation of advocacy” (Europe/US/Latin America) that can be applied to similar efforts elsewhere. WOLA strongly supported the work of the CICIG throughout the year.

**Undertook advocacy efforts that led to the designation of 35 percent of the Central America Mérida Initiative (the US security aid package) funds for violence prevention efforts.** WOLA testified several times before Congress on the Mérida Initiative,

emphasizing youth violence prevention as part of the regional response to gangs. Specifically, significant support was pledged for local level initiatives involving multi-sectoral actors in preventing youth gang violence.

**Profiled six successful community-based youth violence programs, three in the US and three in Central America, in our report, “Daring to Care: Community-based Responses to Youth Gang Violence in Central America and Central American-Immigrant Communities in the United States.”** In conjunction with the report launch, WOLA hosted Mayor Oscar Ortiz of Santa Tecla, El Salvador, a regional leader on municipal level crime and violence prevention initiatives.

**Educated Mexican organizations on the Mexico Mérida Initiative, focused on the human rights reporting requirements of the agreement, and worked to influence future spending within Mérida.** Throughout discussions on Mérida, WOLA and our partners, such as Tlachinollan Human Rights Center of Mexico, raised concerns about the military’s involvement in counter-drug operations and the need for structural reforms to Mexico’s police system. We also stressed the importance of human rights





language. The final version of the bill contained requirements for consultation with Mexican human rights and civil society groups, reports on progress on

police reform, an end to torture, and civilian court jurisdiction for human rights abusers in the military.

## Rights and Development

WOLA analyzes the impact of US economic and trade policy in Latin America on workers' rights and rural sectors. WOLA aims to move human rights to the center of US development strategies, focusing on reducing poverty and inequality, and promoting sustainable development.

In 2008, WOLA:

**Highlighted the impact of market liberalization on rural economies and small producers.**

WOLA worked with the Tuft's University Global Development and Environment Institute (GDAE) to produce "*The Promise and the Perils of Agricultural Trade Liberalization: Lessons from Latin America.*" This report examines the impact of market liberalization on rural economies and agricultural development in Latin America and makes a series of policy recommendations to the US government and international financial institutions. At the end

of July, WOLA organized three days of meetings and events in Washington around this report.

**Promoted labor rights and the implementation of the White Book recommendations agreed upon by the US government during the debate on the Dominican Republic-Central America Free Trade Agreement.**

WOLA staff spent six weeks in the Dominican Republic and Central America and used a report on our findings to provide comments to the Department of Labor on the implementation of the White Book recommendations on labor rights.



## Drug Policy

The drug war in Latin America has had negative effects on human rights and democracy in the region and has had little impact on US domestic drug consumption. WOLA advocates a new approach, focused more on harm reduction than eradication and interdiction.

In 2008, WOLA:

**Published a report on fumigation in Colombia, entitled *Chemical Reactions – Fumigation: Spreading Coca and Threatening Colombia’s Ecological and Cultural Diversity*.** The report documents the dispersal of coca cultivation in the face of aerial spray operations, showing how coca’s spread to new areas of the country has led to environmental damage and increased the pressures on Afro-Colombian and indigenous communities. Both the English and Spanish versions of the report were released during events in the US, and in Bogotá and Tumaco, the Nariño municipality that has been the chief target of fumigation in the last year. In Tumaco, this was the first time such a report was presented to those deeply affected by fumigation.

**Along with the Transnational Institute, held two drug policy dialogues in Latin America in**

**the lead up to the 2009 UNGASS (United Nations General Assembly Special Session) on drugs.** The third in our series of drug policy dialogues took place in Quito, Ecuador and focused on the March 2008 meeting of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND) in Vienna, and plans for the UNGASS review process. The Quito dialogue influenced the positions taken by some Latin American governments at the Commission and led to the presentation of a resolution linking drug policy to human rights at the CND—a milestone in the UN drug policy debate. The fourth policy dialogue took place in Cochabamba, Bolivia and was significant in consolidating cooperation among a key block of countries –Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Ecuador and Uruguay – on the UNGASS review process.

**Advocated high-level US engagement with Bolivia to**

**put relations on better footing and find common ground on important mutual interests, such as drug control.** Bolivian President Evo Morales made his first visit to Washington in November to speak at the Organization of American States (OAS). WOLA along with

the George Washington University, American University and the Embassy of Bolivia, hosted a public event for President Morales at American University where he made clear his intention to seek better relations with the US.

## Select 2008 Publications

**Advocates Against Impunity:** A Case Study on Human Rights Organizing in Guatemala | December 2008

**Chemical Reactions:** Fumigation: Spreading Cocoa and Threatening Columbia's Ecological Diversity | February 2008

**Ready, Aim, Foreign Policy:** How the Pentagon Takes Over More and More Areas of Foreign Policy | March 2008

**Daring to Care:** Community Based Responses to Youth Gang Violence in Central America and Central American Immigrant Communities in the United States | October 2008

**Opting for Engagement:** International Engagement with Cuba and Lessons for U.S. Policymakers | April 2008

**Central American Gang-Related Asylum:** A Resource Guide | May 2008

**The Promise and the Perils of Agricultural Trade Liberalization:** Lessons from Latin America | June 2008

**The Compass for Colombia Policy** | October 2008

# Media Impact

WOLA's presence in the news media is a critical part of our development as an influential voice on US policy toward Latin America and in Latin America itself. WOLA staff talk almost daily to reporters and editors and are frequent guests on television and radio. Below is a list of just some of the news organizations that cited WOLA's research or quoted our staff members in 2008.

## EUROPE

The Sunday Herald (UK)  
The Economist  
The Guardian  
The Financial Times  
International Herald Tribune  
Reuters  
Inter-Press Service  
EFE  
AFP  
BBC-Mundo

## NORTH AMERICA

Washington Post  
New York Times  
The Los Angeles Times  
The Wall Street Journal  
USA Today  
Time Magazine  
Politico  
Associated Press  
The Nation  
The Chicago Tribune  
The Miami Herald  
The Philadelphia Inquirer  
The Baltimore Sun  
The Houston Chronicle  
The Dallas Morning News  
The Fort Worth Star Telegram  
The San Francisco Chronicle  
The Denver Post  
The Globe and Mail (Canada)  
The National Catholic Reporter

## BROADCAST MEDIA

BBC News  
NPR (including The World,  
The Diane Rehm Show)  
C-Span  
Voice of America  
TV Reuters  
WJLA ABC7 News  
CNN en Español  
Univision  
Televisa  
Canal 22

## LATIN AMERICA

El Universal (Mexico)  
Reforma (Mexico)  
La Jornada (Mexico)  
Siglo XXI (Guatemala)  
Prensa Libre (Guatemala)  
La Prensa Nicaragua  
El Nuevo Diario (Nicaragua)  
La Prensa Grafica (El Salvador)  
El Comercio (Ecuador)  
Semana (Colombia)  
El Tiempo (Colombia)  
El Nacional (Peru)  
El Comercio (Peru)  
Noticias Bolivianas  
Página 12 (Argentina)  
La Nacion (Argentina)  
El Mercurio (Chile)

# Supporters, Donors, Friends

WOLA is a non-profit organization. Our work would not be possible without the generous support of individuals, foundations, and the religious community. We are grateful to them all.

## FOUNDATION SUPPORT

In 2008, foundation support came from:

Atlantic Philanthropies	John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation
Heinrich Boll Foundation	Foundation
Connect US Fund	Moriah Fund
Ford Foundation	Stewart R. Mott Charitable Trust
General Service Foundation	Open Society Institute
Google Grants	Oxfam America
W.K. Kellogg Foundation	Christopher Reynolds Foundation
Levi Strauss Foundation	Tinker Foundation
Lippincott Foundation	Tula Foundation
John Merck Fund	Winky Foundation

## RELIGIOUS DONORS

In 2008, our religious community support of \$500 or more came from:

Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities	Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth
Evangelical Lutheran Church of America	Sisters of Charity of Nazareth
Church World Service	United States Conference of Catholic Bishops
Leonard Neale House	United Methodist Church General Board of Global Ministries
Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns	US Province of Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate
Missionary Society of St. Columban	

## FRIENDS OF LATIN AMERICA

Our individual support comes from the generous gifts of numerous donors, and we appreciate each one. Listed below are our Friends of Latin America (FOLA) members, individuals who gave \$500 or more in 2008.

Michael Barnes	David Conrad and Kaye Brubaker
Marc and Leonor Blum*	Martín Coria
David and Judy Bonior	Gary Cozette
Mike and Iris Buhl	Margaret Crahan*
John and Maritza Bushman	Ben Davis
John and Patricia Coatsworth*	Melinda Delashmutt Altschul and Francisco Altschul

Joseph Eldridge and María Otero\*  
Patricia Weiss Fagen  
Alain and Annie Falkenburger  
Richard Feinberg  
Jan and Cornelia Flora  
Gary Fontana and Denise Silver\*  
Heather Foote  
Earl and Nancy Fyke\*  
Rachel Garst\*  
Carol Gehl  
Kathleen Gille  
John Gitlitz and Patricia Lee  
Robert Goldman\*  
Louis Goodman  
Gordon Hanson  
Priscilla Hayner  
Joyce Hill  
David Holiday\*  
Edgar James and  
Katherine Kinsella\*  
Victor Johnson  
Candace Kattar\*  
Margarita Diaz Kintz and  
Tom Kintz\*  
John Lamperti  
Bill Lankford  
William LeoGrande and  
Martha Langelan\*  
Danuta Lockett  
Janet Lowenthal

John Maher  
Cynthia McClintock  
Ethan Dorr Miller  
Cheryl Morden and  
Reuben Snipper\*  
M. Maureen Murphy  
Mark Murray  
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Michael Nimkoff  
Janice O'Connell\*  
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Diane Palmer  
Morris Panner and Nancy Jardini\*  
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Lars Schoultz  
Andrew Selee and  
Alejandra Vallejo  
Kathryn Sikkink Doug Johnson  
Peter Sollis and Caroline Moser  
Clark and Kay Taylor  
Anonymous  
George Vickers  
Elizabeth Wachs  
Alex Wilde and Anne Pérotin\*  
George Withers  
Anonymous  
A. Lee Zeigler

*\*Also a 2008 gala sponsor.*

## **THE LEGACY SOCIETY**

WOLA has established a Legacy Society. As well as being active donors to WOLA, Legacy Society members have agreed to make a long-term commitment to the organization by including WOLA in their wills, reaffirming the important role that WOLA will continue to play in promoting human rights and social justice in Latin America. Legacy Society members include:

Meg Crahan  
Joe Eldridge  
Ralph Fine and Valerie Miller

Joy and Eric Olson  
Margaret Roggensack  
William Wipfler

# WOLA's 2008 Benefit Gala and Awards Ceremony

On September 17, 2008, WOLA held its second annual benefit gala and human rights award ceremony. Secretary General of the Organization of American States José Miguel Insulza and US Senator Christopher J. Dodd were honored for their roles in forging a new kind of partnership between the US and Latin America. In addition, Francisco Goldman, author of *"The Art of Political Murder,"* won the first annual WOLA-Duke Book Award for Human Rights in Latin America. Nearly 300 people attended the event held at the Organization of American States. Listed below are individuals and organizations who were event sponsors, either giving or helping secure gifts of \$2,500 or more.



*(Please note that some of our gala sponsors are also FOLA members and are listed above instead of here).*

Ambassador of Argentina Héctor  
Timerman  
American University Washington  
College of Law  
Association of Jesuit Colleges  
and Universities  
Cornerstone Government Affairs  
Creative Associates  
Duke Human Rights Center and  
Duke University Libraries

Georgetown Preparatory School  
David Holiday and the Open Society Institute  
International Brotherhood of Teamsters  
NAFSA: Association of International  
Educators  
Oxfam America  
Revolution Partners Investment Bank  
Christopher Reynolds Foundation  
Service Employees International Union



# Financial Statements

WOLA STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES *for the year ending December 31, 2008*

## Revenue

Grants and contracts	\$711,329
Contributions	\$410,490
Other Income	\$ 95,021
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 1,216,840</b>

## Expenses

Program Services	\$1,361,357
Management and General	\$128,131
Fundraising	\$270,247
Total Expenses	\$1,759,735
Change in Net Assets	\$79,276
Net Assets at Beginning of Year	\$1,493,699
Net Assets at End of Year	\$1,572,975





WOLA BALANCE SHEET *for the year ending December 31, 2008*

**Assets**

Cash and Cash Equivalents	\$759,159
Receivables	\$731,485
Prepaid Expenses	\$43,857
Other Assets	\$277,205
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>\$1,811,706</b>

**Liabilities and Net Assets**

Current Liabilities	
Accounts Payable	\$52,127
Deferred Rent	\$16,990
Long-Term Liabilities	
Deferred Rent	\$169,614
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>\$238,731</b>

**Net Assets**

Unrestricted	\$399,428
Temporarily Restricted	\$1,173,547
<b>Total Net Assets</b>	<b>\$1,572,975</b>

<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS</b>	<b>\$1,811,706</b>
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# Board List FOR 2008

*Affiliations are listed for identification purposes only.*

## OFFICERS

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### **Charles Currie, SJ**

*Chair*

Association of Jesuit Colleges  
and Universities

### **Rachel Garst**

*Secretary/Treasurer*

Coon Rapids - Whiterock Great  
Place Committee

### **Mark Murray**

*Vice Chair*

Cornerstone Government Affairs

## DIRECTORS

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### **Leonor Blum**

College of Notre Dame of Maryland

### **Kathy Gille**

Consultant

### **Oscar Chacón**

National Alliance of Latin  
American and Caribbean  
Communities

### **Robert Goldman**

American University  
Washington College of Law

### **John Coatsworth**

School of International  
and Public Affairs  
Columbia University

### **Victor Johnson**

NAFSA: Association of  
International Educators

### **Martín Coria**

Church World Service

### **Margarita Diaz Kintz**

The Kintz Group

### **Margaret Crahan**

St. Edward's University

### **Gabriela Lemus**

Labor Council for Latin American  
Advancement

### **Ben Davis**

AFL-CIO Solidarity Center

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Hogan and Hartson &  
Stonebridge International

### **Joe Eldridge**

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### **Joy Olson**

Washington Office on Latin  
America

### **Cristina Eguizábal**

Latin America and  
Caribbean Center  
Florida International University

### **Morris Panner**

OpenAir

### **Gary Fontana**

Thelen, Reid & Priest

### **Raquel Rodríguez**

Evangelical Lutheran  
Church of America

# Staff List FOR 2008

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**Geoff Thale**

*Program Director*

**Lori Piccolo**

*Development Director*

**Roger Atwood**

*Communications Director*

**Gimena Sánchez-Garzoli**

*Senior Associate*

**Vicki Gass**

*Senior Associate*

**Lainie Reisman**

*Senior Associate*

**John Walsh**

*Senior Associate*

**Adriana Beltrán**

*Associate*

**Maureen Meyer**

*Associate*

**Krystal Wubben**

*Finance and Operations  
Manager*

**Joel Fyke**

*Program Officer*

**Lilia Lopez**

*Program Officer*

**Luke Horner**

*Development Associate*

**Kristina Demain**

*Program Assistant and  
Intern Coordinator*

**Ashley Morse**

*Program Assistant*

**Rachel Robb**

*Program Assistant*

**WOLA FELLOWS****Rachel Neild**

*Senior Fellow*

**George Withers**

*Senior Fellow*

**Coletta Youngers**

*Senior Fellow*

**Laurie Freeman**

*Fellow*

**Connie McGuire**

*Fellow*





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