



Cinthia Pamela Caceres

Teacher Esther Perez-Zemmels **School** Bonnabel, Alfred Magnet Academy High School | Kenner, Louisiana

Issue Our project, "The Desegregation of Jefferson Parish," focused on the 1964 desegregation lawsuit called *Dandridge v. The Jefferson Parish School Board*. The Jefferson Parish Schools were ordered to implement a plan for desegregation of schools by 1971. The schools requested more time and eventually the lawsuit was forgotten and lay dormant for decades before being reopened after Hurricane Katrina.

Project Description We met with key members of the original lawsuit as well as school board and members of the community including Zulu Social Aid and Pleasure Club. The Zulu club gave us access to its archives and its historian was an incredible help. We also met with teachers and staff members of schools impacted by the lawsuit. Many schools in our area are under federal court supervision and monitored to ensure a population of racially mixed students. We met with the Dandridge Task Forces whose responsibility is to make sure that all students in the district are have access to equal education. Many Hispanic students who have arrived in our area after Hurricane Katrina were also being segregated because of their language. They were being forced to attend language centers and not allowed to attend the regular school system. We met with the teachers of Second Language Learners as well as District, community representatives and Congressman Reynolds and learned how to advocate and lobby.

Project Outcome In August of 2014, the federal district court declared the Jefferson Parish Public School System unitary and there is longer be any federal oversight. The school district is still struggling with racial issues and continues to receive complaints of violation of students' rights to access equal education. The language center where many Hispanic students were sent has been closed.

Request As Hispanic girls we see a need for more resources for new students coming into the country with no English. We experience segregation and discrimination due to our race and lack of English so now we understand what African American students experience. We would like to see all kids treated equal and receive a great education.

Project Link <http://423177577526208989.weebly.com>