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Meet a Scientologist—Paola Martinez, Committed to Human Rights

Scientologist Paola Martinez, working to make human rights a fact

Scientologist Paola Martinez, Human Rights Coordinator of the Church of Scientology Tampa, hosted the second annual Colors of the World Fair Trade Fashion Show for Human Rights June 9—one of the many programs she participates in to raise awareness on human right issues and bring an end to abuse in Tampa, Florida, and around the world.

The Colors of the World Fashion Show was organized to coincide with World Day Against Child Labor. The International Labor Organization of the United Nations estimates 215 million are forced into child labor internationally. Fashion models carried signs—"Fair Trade," "Made with No Forced Child Labor," and "Human Right #24—The Right to Play." Two young boys appeared carrying fair trade sports equipment, holding a sign reading "Most of the world's sports balls are made with child labor."

“Human Trafficking is one of the most hidden crimes of our era,” says Martinez. “The most vulnerable victims are the children who are forced into labor, drug trafficking and prostitution, depriving them of education, health and other basic freedoms.”

Martinez took on coordinating the Tampa Church’s human rights initiative because she believes human rights education is vital, not only to end abuse in the developing world but also close to home. She provides workshops and seminars in schools and organizations throughout the Tampa Bay region.

“The National Center for Education Studies estimates 160,000 children stay home from school each day for fear of being bullied. When I go to local schools, teenagers beg to have this campaign implemented,” she says. “They need our help to end bullying and other violations of human rights.”

Martinez also helped organize the Human Rights Festival and Freedom of Expression Dance Contest in St. Petersburg’s South Straub Park in March and the annual International Walk for Human Rights in December.

Born and raised in Colombia, Martinez was studying business administration in Bogotá when she encountered some personal problems in 1999. Her sister Lilia, a Scientologist, suggested the Ups and Downs in Life Course at the local Church of Scientology.

“When I applied what I learned in the course to my life, oh my God I felt so good,” she says. “After that, whenever a friend or family member made less of me I would take it up with them and most of the time they would simply stop. I was amazed. Then I ended a relationship with a man who was constantly putting me down. Not only did I *feel* great, but people kept telling me how much better I looked.”

Although committed to ending human rights abuses, Martinez's life is far from serious. She is a lighthearted, energetic woman who loves being part of the team at the Ideal Church of Scientology of Tampa.

"It is like a big family in Scientology. We help each other and we can count on each other," she says. "I am proud that I have become much more responsible for myself and things around me, and I have the tools to change those things I do not like."

To meet other Scientologists and see how they use Scientology to better their lives and the world around them, visit the [Scientology website](#).

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The popular "Meet a Scientologist" profiles on the Church of Scientology International Video Channel at Scientology.org now total more than 200 broadcast-quality documentary videos featuring Scientologists from diverse locations and walks of life. The personal stories are told by Scientologists who are educators, teenagers, skydivers, a golf instructor, a hip-hop dancer, IT manager, stunt pilot, mothers, fathers, dentists, photographers, actors, musicians, fashion designers, engineers, students, business owners and more.

A digital pioneer and leader in the online religious community, in April 2008 the Church of Scientology became the first major religion to launch its own official YouTube Video Channel, with videos now viewed more than 7 million times.



Scientologist Paola Martinez speaks about the Church of Scientology Tampa's human rights initiative