



The White House News Photographers' Association

NEWS

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WHITE HOUSE NEWS PHOTOGRAPHERS' ASSOCIATION AWARDS \$5,000 PROJECT GRANT

(WASHINGTON, D.C. February 3, 2005) Laura Sikes, a freelance photographer in Washington, D.C., has won the White House News Photographers' Association \$5,000 Project Grant for her story on the migrant poor in Florida, the WHNPA Education Committee announced Monday.

The \$5,000 grant will assist Sikes in continuing her project, *Poor From The Start*, which documents the people of DeSoto County, Florida, as they recover from the severe weather of 2004. "This part of rural central Florida was hit by an unprecedented three hurricanes over a six-week period," said Sikes. "Their way of life may have been changed forever."

Sikes, a native of Jacksonville, Fla., has visited the area, which is home to many low-wage workers and farming families. "With a mix of residential and seasonal migrant workers who come to work during the winter harvests, many workers fear little or no work this season because of the extensive crop damage from Hurricanes Charley, Frances and Jeanne," said Sikes.

"Although Florida newspapers will undoubtedly do a great deal of coverage of the reconstruction, I image it will almost all be local and Laura's approach will offer a look at one small, primarily agricultural region that was slammed by Mother Nature," WHNPA Education Committee Chairman Leighton Mark said. "The grant will not only assist Laura in her project but will provide a national stage showing what these people are going through to put their lives back together."

Sikes said she was overwhelmed that her project was selected. "I guess all of my hard work over the years has paid off," said Sikes. She is anxious to continue her work on this project that is very close to her heart."

"Through our grant program, the WHNPA is able to recognize and help our members pursue their passion for photojournalism," said WHNPA President Susan Walsh. "Our members are the best in the business. We are proud that we can help Laura continue her work so that others will be able to see and understand the world around us."

During Sikes' 20-year career, her photographs have appeared in national and international publications and books, including *Time*, *Life*, and *U.S. News and World Report*. In September, Sikes spent time covering *Catholic Charities'* relief work following the hurricanes.

The WHNPA -- now in its 84th year -- is a highly successful volunteer organization of photojournalists from national and international news organizations. WHNPA members have garnered dozens of Emmy Awards, Pulitzer Prizes, and other prestigious awards. From Ground Zero to the war in Afghanistan, President Bush to Tiger Woods, Capitol Hill to Beverly Hills, images captured by members of the White House News Photographers' Association capture the heart and soul of the United States and beyond.



For half of a dilapidated trailer with windows boarded up and holes in the floor and ceiling, this single mother of four pays \$120 in rent a week.

The WHNPA aims to provide professional and educational outreach to its members and the community through scholarships, programs, and an annual competition. The WHNPA sponsors the annual “Eyes of History” still photography and television contest and honors its winners and the photojournalism industry at the annual “Eyes of History” Gala in each spring.

More information on the White House News Photographers’ Association can be found at <http://www.whnpa.org>,

The White House News Photographers’ Association is generously sponsored by:



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