

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



Rosenberg Fund for Children  
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### **Banned from UMass in 2009, Ray Levasseur returns to the Valley for the first time in 20 years to headline the Rosenberg Fund for Children's 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Gala**

**Easthampton, MA-** In November 2009, Ray Levasseur was scheduled to speak at the UMass Libraries' annual "Colloquium on Social Change." Shortly before the event, police organizations threatened to bring state troopers to picket and media outlets ran stories describing Ray as a "terrorist." In the wake of this attention, UMass officials cancelled Ray's appearance.

Faculty members re-invited Ray, but after more pressure from law enforcement agencies, the Parole Board rescinded Ray's permission to attend the event. Several of Ray's long-time associates substituted for him, and an overflow crowd braved a national media swarm and hundreds of police protesters bussed in from around the region. **But Ray's voice was silenced and he has not returned to the Valley for 20 years. Until now.**

**Ray Levasseur will headline the Rosenberg Fund for Children's 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Gala at the Northampton Center for the Arts on October 17<sup>th</sup>, from 4-7 pm.** *But who is Ray and what connection does he have to the Easthampton-based Rosenberg Fund for Children?*

Twenty years ago, an unfulfilled corporate lawyer with a remarkable personal history, sat up in bed and realized what he wanted to do with his life. That lawyer, the son of Ethel and Julius Rosenberg, was Robert Meeropol. Shortly before that middle-of-the-night realization, Robert had learned about the Ohio 7, a group of activists including Ray Levasseur, who were on trial in Springfield, MA, charged with Seditious Conspiracy.

The three couples in the Ohio 7 had nine children among them. When the adults were arrested, the government seized several of the children, interrogated them and held them incommunicado for weeks. They were not released to relatives until their parents began a hunger strike.

When Robert learned of the plight of these children, his dream of starting a foundation in his parents' name found its focus. **The RFC aids children of targeted, progressive activists suffering the same nightmare Robert endured as a child.** The Fund's first grant helped two of the Ohio 7's children attend summer camp.

At the October 17<sup>th</sup> event, Ray Levasseur will speak as an activist and a parent who endured not only targeting, but decades of separation from his family during his imprisonment. The program also will include **music by Evelyn Harris** who sang for many years with *Sweet Honey in the Rock*, and **brief remarks by Robert and Jenn Meeropol.** **Apollo Grill** will provide **complimentary hors d'oeuvres and a cash bar.**

**WHEN:** Sunday, October 17, 2010, 4-7 pm. (Food and drink from Apollo Grill- 4 pm, Program- 5 pm)

**WHERE:** Northampton Center for the Arts, 17 New South St. (3<sup>rd</sup> Floor), Northampton.

**TICKETS:** By mail, at RFC office, or at door. \$30 General (open seating), \$60 Sponsor (reserved, preferred seating, \$30 tax-deductible contribution). Send check payable to the RFC, to 116 Pleasant St., Suite 348; Easthampton, MA 01027. Indicate number of tickets at each price level, and mailing address to which to send them. For \$60 tickets, print names exactly as they should appear in sponsor list in program. To download a printable ticket-order form visit [www.rfc.org/20thanniversarygala](http://www.rfc.org/20thanniversarygala).

**INFO:** Visit [www.rfc.org/20thanniversarygala](http://www.rfc.org/20thanniversarygala) for event info and ticket order form, or call (413) 529-0063. For interview requests contact Amber Black, [amber@rfc.org](mailto:amber@rfc.org) or (413) 529-0063.

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