

## Editorial

# Densho, for all

The stories collected by Densho, the Japanese American Legacy Project, have special resonance in times like these when actions taken under the guise of national security threaten to undermine civil liberties.

Founded in 1996, the Seattle-based organization is striving to expand its ability to tell the poignant stories of Japanese Americans, especially those occurring during the World War II internment of people of Japanese ancestry. About 120,000, many American citizens, were taken from their homes, forced to give up businesses and professions, and held at camps from 1942-45, only because they shared a heritage with enemies of the United States.

Densho has collected more than 100 interviews with people telling their stories. A multimedia historical narrative, with many clips from the interviews, is available on its Web site, [www.densho.org](http://www.densho.org). The site's learning center offers high-school and college-level curriculum materials, including a Stanford University-developed lesson using the internment to discuss civil liberties.

As part of expanding its reach, Densho recently established partnerships with the U.S. National Parks Service and the Japanese Canadian Cultural Center in Toronto and hopes to announce relationships with two other organizations early next year.

The Parks Service collaboration includes incorporating Densho's materials into its Minidoka Internment National Monument exhibit in Idaho. The Toronto group wants to collaborate with Densho to tell the story of the Canadian internment.

To spread the word, Densho needs help. The nonprofit organization has raised about \$100,000 for expansion of its mission. Executive Director Tom Ikeda hopes to raise about another \$50,000 by the end of this year.

The internment is a dark part of American history, one that the first President George Bush officially apologized for in 1992.

The American soul-searching that culminated in that apology and restitution for those interned should inform our nation's leaders and law-enforcement agencies as they consider the appropriate level of vigilance in a post-9-11 world, especially as the current Bush administration presses for broader authority.

*Contributions may be sent to Densho, 1416 S. Jackson St., Seattle, WA 98144.*