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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Level Playing Field Institute Workplace Programs Team Presenting at  
International Ombudsman Association Annual Conference**

San Francisco, April 6, 2010 – Level Playing Field Institute’s Workplace Programs team is presenting two workshops at the International Ombudsman Association Annual Conference on April 8 in New Orleans to an audience of more than 100 participants representing ombuds, facilitators, lawyers from companies, universities, non-profit and international organizations.

The team will be exploring hidden bias in workplaces and how it can be mitigated to effectively resolve diversity-related conflict. LPFI experts will introduce the science behind hidden bias, present interactive exercises and studies, and debut one of its new Second Life animated videos as a case study.

Workshop description:

**“An Exploration of Hidden Bias in the Workplace and How Managing It Can Reduce Conflicts”**

As companies and organizations strive to recover from the economic downturn, there is no better time to refresh and adopt cutting-edge approaches to reducing conflict in the workplace. The Level Playing Field Institute’s Corporate Leavers Survey found that often the more subtle, hidden forms of bias result in inequitable workplaces, employee disengagement, and eventually lead to unwanted turnover. Ombuds are in a unique position to understand how hidden biases manipulate employee relations at every level and how they can be managed to effectively resolve conflicts.

Dr. Freada Kapor Klein, founder of the Level Playing Field Institute, will:

- Introduce the emerging science of hidden bias and present interactive exercises illustrating how our brains make errors ;
- Provide examples of how hidden biases become hidden barriers in workplaces;
- Offer actions ombuds, employees, managers, and companies can take;
- Present projects that mitigate bias and offer exciting opportunities for participation and collaboration in new research!

The session will debut a brand new series of “machinima”—animated videos shot in the virtual world Second Life using avatars—that will display several workplace related scenarios in which subtle bias and conflict may arise. This is an effective exercise for ombuds and managers to examine what constitutes hidden bias versus hypersensitivity within the context of workplace fairness, while helping to understand the differences and address disputes that may arise in organizations.

The International Ombudsman Association 2010 Annual Conference is intended to help attendees increase awareness, knowledge and skills in order to become more effective catalysts for change within their organizations.

<http://www.ombudsassociation.org/conference/2010/>

### **About LPFI's Workplace Programs**

Given the ineffectiveness of traditional one-size-fits-all diversity programs, LPFI's Workplace Fairness team works to reframe the diversity conversation and understand how hidden biases adversely impact the recruitment, development and retention of diverse and talented employees. LPFI provides companies with tools and resources to combat bias and unfair practices while creating more equitable, inclusive workplaces for all employees. For workplace resources contact Jacqueline Switzer, Workplace Programs Manager: [Jacqueline@lpfi.org](mailto:Jacqueline@lpfi.org)

### **About Level Playing Field Institute**

Level Playing Field Institute ([www.lpfi.org](http://www.lpfi.org)) is a Bay Area-based non-profit organization that works to increase fairness in education and the workplace by administering education programs and conducting workplace research aimed to identify and remove barriers to full participation. LPFI is funded by private donors, foundations and corporate giving.

In addition to its Workplace Programs, LPFI runs two education programs, the Summer Math and Science Honors (SMASH) Academy for high-achieving low-income high school students of color in the Bay Area and the Initiative for Diversity in Education and Leadership (IDEAL) Scholars program for low-income underrepresented students at the University of California at Berkeley. Our vision is that all students, regardless of socio-economic status, have the opportunity to apply to and graduate from top colleges and universities.

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