

BREAKTHROUGH LAUNCHES ICED VIDEOGAME TO CREATE AWARENESS OF UNFAIR POLICIES

New Social Game Explores Complex Immigration Issue

NEW YORK – February 18, 2008 -- Breakthrough (www.breakthrough.tv), an international human rights organization, today launched its compelling video game, [ICED \(I Can End Deportation\)](http://www.icedgame.com), to help reframe the immigration debate in the United States and ensure due process and fairness for all those who live in the country. The game is available for free download at www.icedgame.com.

Designed to spark dialogue and create awareness of unfair U.S. immigration policies, **ICED -- I Can End Deportation** (a play on the Immigration and Customs Enforcement Department), is a free, 3D downloadable game that teaches players about current immigration laws on detention and deportation that affect legal permanent residents, asylum seekers, students and undocumented people by violating human rights and denying due process.

Game players can choose one of five characters to inhabit and live out the day-to-day life of an immigrant youth. The youth are being chased by immigration officers, while making moral decisions and answering myth and fact questions about current immigration policies. If the player chooses or answers incorrectly, he/she increases his/her chances of being thrown into detention. Once in detention, the player endures both physical separation from his/her family and unjust conditions while awaiting -- often for unknown amounts of time -- the random outcome of his/her case.

"Breakthrough believes it's important to engage young people in social issues and encourage civic engagement. Games for change help people to better relate to an issue because they can put themselves into the shoes of a character experiencing injustice," said Breakthrough Executive Director Mallika Dutt. "Close to two million people have been deported and thousands more affected -- many without just cause -- due to unfair immigration policies. When we let the government deny due process and human rights for some people, we're putting all of our freedoms at risk."

ICED was created as a collaborative initiative coordinated by Breakthrough, in partnership with various community-based organizations, high school teachers and more than a hundred students from across high schools and after-school programs in New York City.

ICED will also be featured on Global Kids Island in Teen Second Life, a 3D virtual world, shaped by urban teens, which brings the youth development model to global issues. On February 18 at 8:30PM EST/5:30PM PST, teens can log on to <http://slurl.com/secondlife/Global%20Kids/168/199/22> to take part in a "fireside"



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workshop on immigration issues in the world, which draws from Breakthrough-generated curriculum. Visitors to the island will also be able to meet and greet the five ICED characters, view a demo of the game, engage in an online dialogue session and learn about take-action components where they can affect change.

Built on the Torque Game Builder Engine and 3rd party software with Maya animation software, ICED requires a 74MB(PC)/85MB(MAC) download, and was created and designed for Breakthrough by Heidi Boisvert (now a multimedia manager at Breakthrough) and Natalia Rodriguez, two MFA students at Hunter College in the Integrated Media Arts program and the Performance and Interactive Media Arts Program at Brooklyn College, respectively, in partnership with Breakthrough staff. Many others have been involved with modeling, sound design and website design.

Each character in **ICED** is based on true case studies. All five characters represent different regions of the world and different immigration status situations. Gameplay takes part in two sections: Level 1—The City—where they must navigate the city, answer myth/fact questions, face moral decisions, earn civic points and try to avoid immigration officers. If they are caught, they are sent to Level 2—Detention Center—where they continue to face moral dilemmas, try to avoid being sent to solitary confinement and await any formal proceedings of their outcome...if they are heard at all. There are four ending scenarios to the game (deportation, indefinite detention, voluntary deportation or citizenship), allowing players to take on each character and play through the game multiple times.

Nearly two million people -- both legal and undocumented immigrants -- have been deported without due process since new immigration laws have been in effect. Laws for detention and deportation are mandatory, judges have no discretionary power and immigrants are not always given court hearings.

"ICED was designed to show people in an interactive, first-hand experience what is happening today to thousands of people on a daily basis," said game designer, Heidi Boisvert. "We hope through awareness of these human rights violations, the public will take action and work toward righting this wrong."

The game, targeted toward high school and college students, will be accompanied by curriculum for high schools and community groups to utilize in social studies and civics discussions, and align with New York State and New York City Social Studies and English Language Arts Standards. **!**

[About Breakthrough](#)

Breakthrough is an international human rights organization using innovative, high-impact education, media and popular culture projects and campaigns to transform communities and bring about social change. Using the core values of dignity,



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equality and justice, its media products and education programs have reached millions around the world. Breakthrough's mission centers on several key issues, including: women's rights, sexuality and HIV/AIDS and racial justice and immigrant rights. Breakthrough works through offices in India and the United States--the world's two largest democracies. For more information, visit www.breakthrough.tv.

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