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Hear My Voice

SPIRIT OF GIVING GUIDE
2004-2005

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**THE
COMMUNITY
FOUNDATION**
for the National Capital Region



Every foundation and nonprofit organization has the potential to serve as an engagement vehicle for active citizenship, and many already do. Especially now, when resources are limited, there is great value to creating more connections among organizations working to mobilize individuals and communities on issues of concern.

DIANA AVIV, PRESIDENT & CEO, INDEPENDENT SECTOR

Civic Engagement

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Why do we organize for social change and economic justice? Because laws and systems continue to teach us and our children that we have no power, we have no rights and that we and our communities are broken. Because D.C. is a city without a voice, where its poorest residents have come to believe that all we can and should expect are services to help us inch by. Because we honestly believe that unless we organize around justice values, nothing will change for our families and our children.

MEMBERS OF SHAW EDUCATION FOR ACTION,
A PROGRAM OF MANNA CDC





Welcome Letter

Dear Friends:

One of the greatest pleasures of working at The Community Foundation for the National Capital Region is being reminded on a daily basis of the ways in which individuals and groups are striving to improve our community. Whether in the form of individual acts of kindness or the concerted efforts of many, our region is rich with examples of grassroots ingenuity intent on making this region a better place to live for all residents. This ingenuity has led to the creation of new schools and the improvement of existing ones. It has made countless neighborhoods safer. It has changed government policies and enabled thousands of our community's residents to make their voices heard. In other words, it has moved mountains. "Civic engagement" is at the core of this country's founding and its most positive ideals of community involvement and democracy. In this election year, we have chosen civic engagement as the theme for our third annual Spirit of Giving Guide.

Unlike last year's publication, which offered an in-depth look at one geographic area—East of the Anacostia River in Washington, D.C.—this Guide shines a light on an approach to community change across a variety of issues and neighborhoods. It showcases the extraordinary work of 15 nonprofits that bring together residents, youth and community leaders in creative and inclusive ways to make change happen.

For these groups, civic engagement is not a mere afterthought; it is the very lifeblood of each organization and runs through everything they do. We realize that many groups are worthy of recognition in a publication such as this, but some warrant special attention. An advisory committee of 16 community members, grantmakers, nonprofit leaders and Foundation staff worked hard to identify organizations that produce results and are worthy of your investment. Many are under-the-radar screen but will surely inspire you—as well as other groups and individuals—to emulate their successes.

The Spirit of Giving Guide is intended as a tool for people like you who give dollars, time and support to nonprofits. The generous response to last year's Guide resulted in individual gifts, foundation grants, donations of goods, valuable contacts and greater name recognition for the featured groups. (See page 24 for more information.) We trust this year's Guide will yield similar, if not greater, results.

This year, we encourage you to raise your own level of civic engagement, not only by voting, but also by supporting these nonprofits—whether directly or through The Community Foundation—with your time, your resources and your personal and professional connections. I hope the inspiring stories on the following pages will lead you to emulate their vision and success.

Sincerely,

Terri Lee Freeman
President

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Finding voice and giving voice is at the foundation of civic involvement, for engagement requires—first and foremost—speaking up, speaking out and then acting on behalf of self, family and community.

MARGAUX DELOTTE-BENNET, MEMBER,
SOL & SOUL'S SPOKEN RESISTANCE PROJECT

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Hear My Voice



“Civic engagement” is an age-old concept. From the premise of “inalienable rights” in the Declaration of Independence, to the right to vote embodied in the Constitution and its subsequent amendments extending that right, our founding principles enshrine the ideal that our individual and collective voices should be heard on important matters. While its roots run deep into our past, civic engagement is as important today as it was in 1773 when citizens of Massachusetts Colony dumped tea in the Boston Harbor to protest the crushing taxes imposed by a distant monarch.

This Spirit of Giving Guide celebrates the innovative civic efforts of 15 remarkable organizations in the metropolitan Washington region and calls upon donors and volunteers to support them. Through the Guide, The Community Foundation hopes to deepen your

understanding of the many ways people in our community are making their voices heard and changing lives in the process—including their own.

Civic Engagement: An Overview

The approaches used by the featured nonprofits (and thousands of others in the region and across the country) are known by many different names: community engagement, community organizing, civic participation, social engagement and social action, among others. Whatever it’s called, “we know it when we see it,” said Terri Lee Freeman, president of The Community Foundation.

Informed by three decades of experience and the expertise of an advisory committee convened to develop this Guide, The Community Foundation defines civic engagement as a process that “brings people

together to actively take a role in shaping the issues and/or policies that affect their lives, the lives of their families and the wider community. It allows individuals of all ages and backgrounds to develop new skills and to take an active and empowered role in community decision-making and problem solving. This work builds the capacity and assets of individuals, organizations and community at all levels.”

We recognize civic engagement by its basic ingredients:

- people of great courage, ability, imagination and energy who care deeply about their communities and who are motivated by a desire for change and the belief that their individual and collective power can affect change; and
- sustained efforts to address both emerging and long-standing needs in the region—such as expanding access to health care, preventing teen



pregnancy, providing more affordable housing and improving the quality of public education—and to increase grassroots influence over matters affecting the community.

Mix the two ingredients together and you've got a winning recipe for creating healthy communities and strong neighborhoods. "The greatest need is for people of passion and conviction to come forward and be resolved to solve the issues at hand," said DeMario Green, a senior at Banneker High School who serves on the Youth Leadership Task Force of the DC Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy. "When you give of yourself, you empower others."

The Historical Roots of Civic Engagement

Far from being a new idea, civic engagement is evident throughout history. From the early roots of democracy in Greek city-states, through the development of European parliaments and the founding of the United States, and up to the present day, there has been a steady expansion of the notion that the people most affected by community issues

should have the controlling voice in their resolution. This is perhaps best evidenced by granting the right to vote to all citizens—regardless of race, gender or ethnicity—over more than two centuries of our own national history. While progress in this area has been uneven—witness, for instance, the recent attempts to challenge legal immigrants' right to vote—we continue to aspire to the "more perfect union" described by our founders.

Voting, however, is not the only civic engagement tool. Our history teaches us that many social advancements have been won by collective action outside the voting booth. The courageous work of abolitionists, early labor organizers and civil rights activists all took place outside of—some might say contrary to—the established political and legal order. The movements to institute child labor laws, Head Start programs, public schools and women's rights to work and own property all began as grassroots efforts by voluntary associations. And you need look no further than barn raisings, volunteer fire companies,

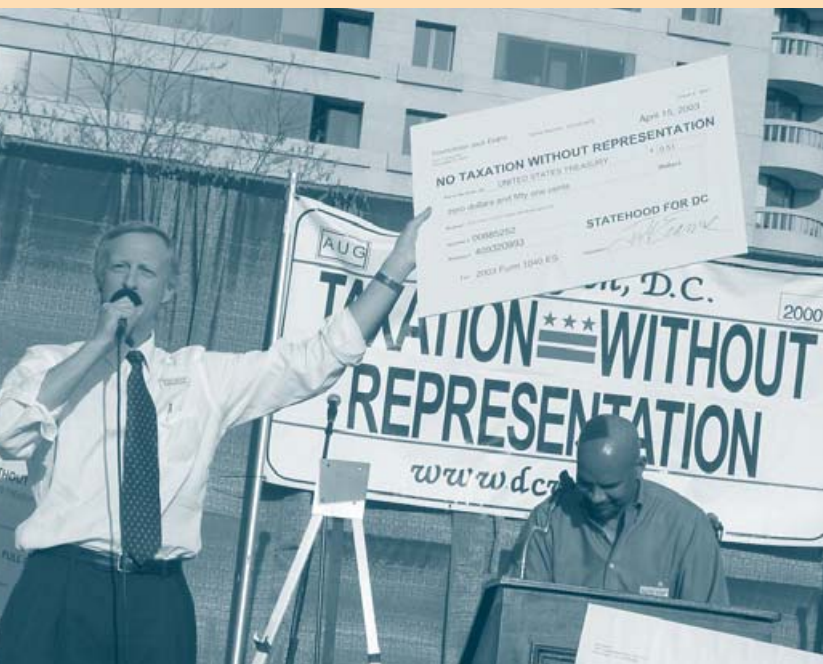
PTAs and neighborhood watch programs to realize that civic engagement is "as American as apple pie."

Home Grown Civic Engagement

While Washington, D.C., has provided a national stage for such momentous events as the 1963 March on Washington, the Million Man March and mass rallies concerning war, the environment and nuclear proliferation, the day-to-day work of civic engagement in the neighborhoods of the national capital region is carried out by countless individuals and organizations focused on local issues and communities.

For more than 200 years, advocates of congressional voting rights and supporters of local autonomy have struggled to give residents of Washington, D.C., who have no voting representation in Congress, a meaningful voice in their own governance. Persistence in the face of long odds yielded incremental changes in the 1960s and 1970s, but advocates say that much more must be done.





“The communities and people of the District of Columbia suffer in literally hundreds of ways because they are denied the right to make the final decisions that affect almost every aspect of their civic life,” said Ilir Zherka, executive director of DC Vote.

Yet community-based nonprofits in and around D.C. are working wonders, even when some of their members—because of immigration status or age—don’t have the right to vote.

For instance, CASA of Maryland—the state’s largest Latino advocacy and service organization—aims to develop

new leaders and assist them in making permanent, positive changes to their communities. “We can provide services until the end of time,” said executive director Gustavo Torres, “and we must provide services. But it is through empowerment, organizing and advocacy that we will create a brighter future for our people.”

Civic engagement in the immigrant community, especially among first and second generation immigrants, presents a special set of challenges which include language and cultural barriers. “Immigrant families come to the United States with many hopes and dreams for their new life and, most importantly, hopes and dreams for educational, social and economic opportunities for their children,” said Lori Kaplan, executive director of the Latin American Youth Center (LAYC). “They quickly discover their new life is much more complicated than they could have imagined.” As these families strive to ensure that their most basic needs are met, they also recognize the importance of active involvement in their neighborhoods and their local schools. Groups like CASA, LAYC and many others cultivate new leaders in immigrant communities and help these often marginalized people gain a strong voice in public affairs.

The region’s youth also face significant hurdles in having their voices heard. They believe policymakers frequently discount their views because they are not adults. But while they are not traditionally seen as such, youth are the leaders of today, and they are the leaders of tomorrow.

For instance, The Young Women’s Project—a leader in youth development for 12 years—has been engaging teen women in issues and processes that affect their lives: group homes, schools, clinics, youth program funding, decision-making and law-making. One of their greatest accomplishments has been passage of a comprehensive sexual harassment policy by the D.C. Public Schools. Not only that, but the school system turned to The Young Women’s Project to provide student and teacher training sessions on the new guidelines.

The Young Women’s Project is one of a number of groups featured in this Guide who are investing in youth leadership training, giving the next generation the decision-making and problem-solving skills they need to become full participants in the civic dialogue. Through its own Greater Washington Youth Philanthropy Initiative, The Community Foundation is also educating teens about the economic and

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It is engraved on us by society that power comes with age. You are led to believe that only until you turn 18 or 21 do you gain power. Our program shows that you can be 13 and handle decisions that a lot of adults can't make—and that you can be responsible for money that a lot of adults will never see in their lives. Many programs teach students how to be leaders but, in youth philanthropy, we are the leaders. The past three years have been a blessing to me. I have helped create something that is worth more than money. You can't put a price on youth empowerment.

JAVIER BERRIOS, THIRD YEAR MEMBER, MONTGOMERY COUNTY YOUTH ADVISORY COUNCIL, GREATER WASHINGTON YOUTH PHILANTHROPY INITIATIVE (A PROGRAM OF THE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION)

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social challenges facing the region and introducing them to civic-minded, youth-led organizations that are facing these challenges head on.

Civic Engagement Continuum

While the goals of the groups featured in this Guide span a broad spectrum, most share common ingredients of success. For instance, Manna CDC's Shaw Education for Action program started with a handful of concerned residents who came together to talk about ways they could tackle issues in their neighborhood. Before long, they were meeting on a regular basis, knocking on doors and creating campaigns to hold developers and local government accountable. The experience, said David Haiman, Manna CDC's senior program manager for community organizing, turned many of them into organizers. Today, these

same residents wouldn't hesitate to approach a stranger on the street and ask them to sign a petition. "It's been great to watch people who, in a few short years, have not only developed their skills as organizers around housing and employment issues, but have developed their analysis of how the political and economic system works," said Haiman.

Sustaining any community improvement effort requires identifying, cultivating and equipping grassroots leaders with the skills and resources they need to be successful. This investment in future capacity is another distinctive feature of groups committed to the civic engagement model. Instead of simply doing something for the community, they are engaged with the community, intent on leaving its natural leaders with new confidence in their ability to tackle the problems of tomorrow.

In measuring the success of any civic engagement effort, the journey is often just as important as the destination. "Our goal is to create change in the public schools," said Ann Caton, lead organizer of the Youth Education Alliance (YEA). "But how we reach that goal is critical—we have to build youth leadership, skills and power along the way." YEA members and organizers were responsible for drafting recommendations for improving bathroom conditions at D.C. public schools. That was a victory in itself, but there are no guarantees that the policies will be enforced. On the other hand, student organizers emerged confident and energized, prepared to wage the next battle: monitoring enforcement of the new policies.

Some see civic engagement as a means of tackling discrete neighborhood issues—such as





beautifying a park or creating an after-school program. Others conceive of it as a vehicle for sweeping social change, such as making the public schools more accountable to parents or expanding voting rights. “Plug in where you can,” urges Alexine Clement Jackson, chair of the Board of Trustees of The Community Foundation. “It doesn’t have to be a big ocean; it can be a small pond. It’s painful for me to watch people sitting on the sidelines. A civil society is everyone’s business,” adds Jackson, who has devoted much of her adult life to civic organizations from the YWCA to the Intercultural Cancer Council.

Stories of Struggle and Success

The profiles that follow represent stories of civic empowerment, struggle and success. The featured groups serve

diverse constituencies. Some—like The Central American Resource Center—engage participants across the region. Others, like the Tenants’ and Workers’ Support Committee and DC Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy, are focused on a single community or issue. From the smallest and newest of the nonprofits to those that are more established—all have compelling stories to tell.

If civic engagement is the principle that unites these groups, it is also the thread that runs through everything at The Community Foundation, from groundbreaking work with day laborers in Northern Virginia to a commitment to support individual artists and small grassroots arts groups, from nurturing youth-based leadership and youth-led philanthropy to celebrating the contributions of unsung heroes. The Community Foundation is also fortunate to

have civically engaged donors working on a wide range of issues, from ensuring that the region is prepared for another tragedy—whether man-made, like the September 11 attacks, or acts of nature, like Hurricane Isabel—to strengthening the capacity of nonprofits by building a volunteer network, to advocating for a smoke-free environment for all D.C. workplaces. Thirty years after the founders of The Community Foundation came together out of a shared desire to improve the quality of life for all citizens in the nation’s capital, The Community Foundation’s mission remains the same: to harness private philanthropy in support of nonprofits (like those featured here) that are making concrete changes in the region’s most disadvantaged communities.

The publication of this Guide coincides with the 2004 presidential election. Voting



The more people become involved in local issues, the more they will realize how important it is who they put into office.

VERNETTA WALKER, DIRECTOR OF ADVOCACY LEADERS PROGRAM AND ASSOCIATE GENERAL COUNSEL, MARYLAND ASSOCIATION OF NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS





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may be the classic act of civic engagement, but many in the region cannot vote. Yet, as Ray Moreno—the 11th child of Ecuadorian immigrants—who grew up in Takoma Park, served in Desert Storm and now runs IMPACT Silver Spring’s Parent Organizing Initiative points out, every resident can help shape the region’s future.

“Every day in every neighborhood, individuals who might not otherwise know each other are coming together to take on common challenges that institutions cannot or will not address,” said Moreno. “This connection among diverse people is the all-important first step toward building trusting relationships. And that’s where successful community change starts...all kinds of people trusting each other and working together on issues they really care about.”



At the age of 18, and a student at Howard University, I made a conscious decision to join America’s struggle to fulfill the promise of equality for all. I decided that I had a responsibility in life to my fellow man, to challenge injustice when injustice exists. In the summer of 1960, we conducted sit-ins at “whites-only” lunch counters in Northern Virginia. Before the summer ended, we were arrested, spat upon and taunted by counter-pickers from the American Nazi Party. Protests in other parts of the region also would help force the desegregation of lunch counters in Northern Virginia, a bowling alley in Prince George’s County, Hi-Boy restaurants in Rockville, and the Hiser Theater and Glen Echo Amusement Park in Bethesda. The court case arising from my Glen Echo arrest, which challenged the park’s segregation policy, became a landmark case. Equally important to me in fulfilling my promise were the 40 days spent in a Mississippi jail for sitting in a “whites-only” train station waiting room in 1961. I was arrested as a Freedom Rider who dared to test practices of segregation. The commitment to social justice has continued to dominate my life. Forty-three years later, as a state senator in Maryland, I still feel the responsibility to make a difference in the lives of others. There is much to do.

GWENDOLYN BRITT, MARYLAND STATE SENATOR

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Community engagement is shorthand for what happens when neighborhood people stop being acted upon and start taking charge. It is the difference between tenants suffering through another winter without heat and hot water or organizing to get repairs, armed with information about what they are entitled to and a game plan for obtaining it.

ANNE PASMANICK, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,
NATIONAL NEIGHBORHOOD COALITION



Selected Organizations



GIVING OPPORTUNITIES

The Central American Resource Center

For many Latino immigrants living in the metropolitan Washington region, The Central American Resource Center (CARECEN) is a bridge to fuller integration into the broader community. For nearly a quarter of a century, the Columbia Heights-based organization has provided legal, immigration, educational, advocacy and other support and empowering services to the Latino community.

CARECEN's current agenda includes preserving affordable housing, promoting Latino youth leaders and providing oversight as the D.C. government implements the Language Access Act—legislation that makes public agencies more accessible to residents with limited English proficiency.

Another priority—citizenship and civic participation—is a timely one given that the 2004 presidential election marked the first time many immigrants voted since coming to this country.

Ana Martinez—a native of El Salvador who arrived in D.C. in 1994—was looking forward to participating in the elections for a long time. A hotel housekeeper, Martinez recently attended CARECEN's 10-week citizenship class, which is offered every Tuesday and Saturday. These classes provide immigrants with a civic foundation and help prepare them for the naturalization interview.

"We make sure students not only study history and

government structure but wind up with an understanding of what it is to be engaged and empowered in the political process," said Ivette Iraheta, CARECEN's citizenship and civic participation program director. "Our hope is that individuals who take our class become strong self advocates in the areas that affect their daily lives: housing, education, civil rights and immigration."

"With each class, I became more confident about myself and what I can accomplish," said Martinez, who cast her first ballot in the D.C. primary. "Now that I have the opportunity, it is my duty to vote, not only for myself, but because it will benefit many others who don't qualify as citizens."

FUNDS: TO HIRE A PART-TIME INSTRUCTOR TO OFFER ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE (ESL) CLASSES AND SUPPORT THE DEVELOPMENT OF A COMMUNITY TECHNOLOGY CENTER AND NEW ADULT GED PROGRAM

TIME: VOLUNTEERS WHO CAN TEACH CITIZENSHIP COURSES, OFFER ESL SUPPORT FOR INDIVIDUALS PREPARING FOR NATURALIZATION INTERVIEWS, HOLD ONE-ON-ONE TUTORING SESSIONS AND ASSIST WITH GENERAL PROJECTS

GOODS: COMPUTERS AND PRINTERS, ESL MATERIALS, FAX MACHINE, COMPUTER PROJECTOR, MICROWAVE AND INDUSTRIAL SIZE COFFEE MAKER

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ANNUAL OPERATING BUDGET \$700,000



When we lobbied Congress in the spring of 2004 about immigration reform, I thought people would be rude, mean and not listen to what we had to say. I was wrong. The people were nice and understanding. I think that we changed a few minds that day.

BRANDON WARREN, JUNIOR AT CESAR CHAVEZ CHARTER SCHOOL FOR PUBLIC POLICY, AND CARECEN YOUTH ADVOCATE

GIVING OPPORTUNITIES

FUNDS: TO INCREASE THE NUMBER OF TEEN TOWN HALL MEETINGS, MENTOR TRAININGS, OUTREACH TO CHURCHES AND ADVOCACY EFFORTS; RESUME PARENT PEER EDUCATION; AND CONDUCT MEDIA CAMPAIGNS ON ISSUES RELATED TO TEEN PREGNANCY PREVENTION

TIME: VOLUNTEERS FOR THE “HAVE FAITH IN YOUTH” INITIATIVE AND TO SERVE AS HOSTS FOR TEEN TOWN HALL MEETINGS AND AS PARENT TRAINERS

GOODS: NONE NEEDED CURRENTLY

CONTACT

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ANNUAL OPERATING BUDGET
\$507,600



Only when people are really engaged in their communities can they begin to make changes. The result of those changes—strong, supportive and nurturing communities—is what ultimately protects kids from teen pregnancy, as well as a host of other troubles.

BRENDA RHODES MILLER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,
DC CAMPAIGN TO PREVENT TEEN PREGNANCY



DC Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy

Established in 1999, the DC Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy’s (DC Campaign) immediate goal is clearly an ambitious one: to cut the D.C. teen pregnancy rate in half by 2005. And they are well on their way to meeting this goal. Encouraging data from the D.C. Department of Health, State Center for Health Statistics, shows that the teen pregnancy rate dropped from a high of 238.7 in 1993 to 74.4 per 1,000 girls, ages 15 to 19, in 2001.

The organization’s approach is grounded in youth development as the most effective teen pregnancy prevention strategy. “Research shows that teen pregnancy is less likely when boys and girls, regardless of income or race, connect to their families, schools and neighborhoods in positive ways; when they get comprehensive teen-friendly health care; when they

experience success in school from an early age; and when they have safe places to spend time with adult supervision and interesting things to do,” said Brenda Rhodes Miller, DC Campaign’s executive director.

The organization’s “Have Faith in Youth” initiative invites area churches to open their doors to neighborhood teens one night a week for tutoring, mentoring and recreational activities. Church volunteers are among the 1,000 men and women who have been trained by the DC Campaign on “How to Talk to Teens about Love, Sex and Relationships.”

“Our volunteers come to realize you don’t need a degree in anatomy to talk to adolescents about sex,” said Miller. “You can always get a book to show them where the fallopian tubes are. Our training focuses instead on how to talk to teens

about their hopes and dreams, and how pregnancy will get in the way of that.”

Mary Freeney, a retired federal government employee who volunteers along with seven others at the “Have Faith in Youth” program at St. Mary’s Baptist Church on Eastern Avenue in D.C., said she gets as much out of the weekly program as the teens.

“If there’s one thing I’ve learned, it’s that teen pregnancy cannot be prevented without the full involvement of many segments of the community,” said Freeney. “People think today’s kids are different than we were. And in many ways they are. But they still need all the same things we did: close relationships with their parents or other adults, interesting things to do in their free time, a good school environment and a sense of belonging.”





GIVING OPPORTUNITIES

FUNDS: FOR EVERY DOLLAR CONTRIBUTED, MORE THAN FIVE DOLLARS GOES DIRECTLY INTO THE POCKETS OF LOW-WAGE WORKERS BY HOLDING PUBLIC OFFICIALS AND EMPLOYERS ACCOUNTABLE

TIME: EXPERIENCED EMPLOYMENT ATTORNEYS ARE NEEDED TO TEACH EMPLOYMENT LAW SEMINARS AND PROVIDE LEGAL SERVICES; VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR SPANISH TRANSLATION, EVENING INTAKE FOR THE WORKERS' RIGHTS CLINIC AND EMAILING OR CALLING ELECTED OFFICIALS

GOODS: OFFICE SUPPLIES AND DESK WITH DRAWERS; MORE ITEMS ARE LISTED UNDER "CONTRIBUTE" ON WEBSITE

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ANNUAL OPERATING BUDGET
\$650,000

D.C. Employment Justice Center

By law, the D.C. government is required to pay wages and medical benefits related to injuries sustained by workers who are hurt on the job. Yet injured workers often have to wait months or years to receive compensation, even when a claim has been approved or the workers received a ruling in their favor.

When you haven't received a paycheck in months, officials stop returning your phone calls and your family is on the verge of eviction, where do you turn?

Brenda Day and many others like her have turned to the D.C. Employment Justice Center (EJC), which promotes workplace justice through community organizing and education, systematic reform, advocacy and pro bono legal services.

"At the D.C. Employment Justice Center, we believe one of the best ways to achieve workplace justice is to organize for power among low-wage workers," said co-director Kerry O'Brien. "D.C.'s workers should not have to depend on lawyers, social workers and policy advocates to define and express their needs. Instead, we encourage workers and their families to develop the know-how to advocate for themselves and create a city that is more responsive to their needs."

Day, who was injured when she slipped on the ice on the walkway to her job, has become an outspoken advocate for herself and others, many of whom work in high-risk jobs repairing school boilers,

painting public housing or breaking up fights at the D.C. Department of Corrections.

For Day, a 30-year veteran of the D.C. government, the low point came when she had to move out of her apartment and in with her mother. The high point has been helping others learn how to navigate the system. "It's a scary thing going up against the government," she said. "People need to know their rights."

Day is a member of EJC's Injured Workers Advocates, a group of 100 men and women who have been failed by the worker's compensation system. EJC also sponsors a committee of Latino workers who have united to bring about better wages and working conditions for immigrant workers.



If I can prevent one family from being displaced, that's worth far more than money to me. I like to say, 'It's not a me thing, it's a we thing, thanks to EJC.'

BRENDA DAY, INJURED WORKERS ADVOCATES' MEMBER, D.C. EMPLOYMENT JUSTICE CENTER



GIVING OPPORTUNITIES

FUNDS: TO INCREASE THE NUMBER OF STAFF TO REACH MORE PARENTS, TEACHERS AND YOUTH

TIME: VOLUNTEERS WHO CAN PARTICIPATE IN SCHOOL VISITS, TESTIMONIES, BRIEFINGS, PUBLIC ACCOUNTABILITY FORUMS, ROUNDTABLES, RADIO, TV AND PRESS FEATURES, SPECIAL PROJECTS AND INITIATIVES AND PROVIDE SPANISH TRANSLATION AND COPYWRITING

GOODS: COMPUTERS AND PRINTERS, VCR/DVD, LCD PANEL, TV, CAMERA THAT CAN COVER LARGE MEETINGS, COPIER AND IN-KIND COPYING/REPRODUCTION

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ANNUAL OPERATING BUDGET
\$500,000-\$550,000



DC VOICE

DC VOICE's dream is for a city where every child is assured a high quality public education. Founded in 1998, the organization is a collaborative of teachers, principals, parents and guardians, youth, policymakers and community activists working together to provide support to public schools in order to strengthen the public's voice in school matters and to hold appropriate agencies, systems and the city accountable for higher achievement by youth.

"Systems need to be in place so that the D.C. Public Schools can carry out their responsibilities to provide high quality teaching to foster student achievement," said Carmella Mazzotta, DC VOICE's executive director. With that in mind, and as part of its ongoing effort to build community involvement and foster greater system and public accountability for school and

student success, the organization recently launched its Ready Schools Project.

This fall, teams of parents and other community members surveyed 40 D.C. elementary, middle and high schools. Through interviews with principals, volunteers determined how hiring went over the past year, what kind of training teachers receive, whether facilities were repaired over the summer and what level of support the school receives from the community and business partners. A final report will be used to raise public awareness, empower residents and build community pressure for change, specifically around quality teaching.

"The public is showing signs of becoming more vocal when it comes to public education," said Erika Landberg, senior associate for community engagement, DC VOICE. "But

until we have a critical mass of people that is both informed and organized, until we come together as a community to demand change, it will be difficult to improve academic achievement for students in D.C. A stronger public can create stronger schools."

Joanne West-Coates wants to be part of the solution. Born and raised in D.C., a product of the D.C. Public Schools and the mother of six grown children who attended public schools in D.C., West-Coates signed up to work on the Ready Schools Project. "It takes more than teachers and principals to fix the D.C. schools," said West-Coates, now a grandmother and resident of Capitol Heights, Maryland. "Even those of us who live in the suburbs have regular dealings with D.C. It's going to take all of us working together to make sure our children are learning."



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Citizens have a right to ask what is going on in their schools. And they have a responsibility to help with solutions.

ERIKA LANDBERG, SENIOR ASSOCIATE FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT, DC VOICE

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GIVING OPPORTUNITIES

FUNDS: TO HIRE MORE STAFF TO SUPPORT AN EXPANSION OF PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES AND TO CONDUCT AN ADVERTISING CAMPAIGN

TIME: VOLUNTEERS TO ASSIST WITH PLANNING, ORGANIZING AND ATTENDING PUBLIC AWARENESS/COMMUNITY EVENTS, SUPPORT STAFF AND EDUCATE YOUTH IN D.C. SCHOOLS

GOODS: 6-8 CONFERENCE CHAIRS AND 2 LOBBY/RECEPTION CHAIRS

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WWW.DCVOTE.ORG
ANNUAL OPERATING BUDGET
\$636,706

Kids across the rest of America have full representation. So what are we? Chopped liver?

GARRETH MCMULLEN, A FOURTH GRADER AT HARRIET TUBMAN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL AND MEMBER OF DC YOUNG SUFFRAGISTS, A PARTNER OF DC VOTE



DC Vote

Citizens of every state in the union can express their views on public policy to their members of Congress and these views become part of the national debate on health care, education or tax and budget policy. But not D.C. residents, who lack full voting rights. The D.C. representative in Congress has no vote and there are no senators. The effects are dramatic. Seeking to right this wrong, DC Vote, founded in 1998 to secure full voting representation in Congress for D.C. residents, considers itself the “campaign manager” of the D.C. voting rights movement.

“Most people don’t realize how profoundly disenfranchisement affects every aspect of life for D.C. residents,” said Ilir Zherka, DC Vote’s executive director.

DC Vote recently partnered with the Consumer Health Foundation (CHF) to study the impacts of citizen disenfranchisement on the quality of

D.C. public health. Interviewees expressed deep dissatisfaction and frustration with their lack of political leverage in Congress and D.C.’s inability to affect local and national public health policy.

Preliminary study findings shows that lack of political power results in the inability to address poorer health outcomes for D.C. residents because of air and water quality that does not meet federal safety standards; the shortage of health care professionals and services in poor areas; the high infant mortality rate; the epidemic levels of HIV/AIDS; the large number of individuals who have substance abuse problems; children who are becoming parents; and other acute social problems which are exacerbated by D.C.’s lack of democracy.

“Public health in D.C. would likely improve with

full political rights,” said Zherka. “D.C. public health officials and advocates would have a greater ability to influence national, regional and local policy debates; have better funding for public health; be empowered to make decisions and implement proven public health policies; and have the ability to establish an independent regulatory authority to protect water and air quality.”

Margaret O’Byron, president and CEO of CHF, predicts that the report will rivet public attention and encourage DC Vote to do this kind of work on other important issues. “By documenting the direct impact of disenfranchisement on public health measures, we hope to engage a much broader segment of the community in the voting rights issue,” she said. “We expect DC Vote will find similar impacts in such areas as housing and employment.”



GIVING OPPORTUNITIES

FUNDS: TO HIRE MORE STAFF TO INCREASE FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICES, COMMUNITY OUT-REACH AND INDIVIDUAL CASE ADVOCACY SERVICES

TIME: VOLUNTEERS FOR SPANISH TRANSLATION, PHONE AND ADMINISTRATIVE WORK, MAILINGS, INTERNET RESEARCH, BOARD DEVELOPMENT AND CONSULTATION AND TO SERVE AS RESPITE PROGRAM PROVIDERS AND FACILITATORS

GOODS: VOUCHERS FOR FOOD AND ENTERTAINMENT FOR RESPITE PROGRAM AND SPACE FOR LARGE MEETINGS

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ANNUAL OPERATING BUDGET
\$401,104



If there's one thing I've learned from being part of this program, it is how important it is to share information with other parents. In other words, 'each one teach one.' To me, that's a powerful concept.

THOMASINE MCFADDEN, FOSTER PARENT AND BOARD MEMBER,
FOSTER & ADOPTIVE PARENT ADVOCACY CENTER



Foster & Adoptive Parent Advocacy Center

"You don't expect, when you sign on to be a foster or adoptive parent, that you'll have to fight the very same system that recruited you. The very same system that promised to support you," said Marilyn Egerton. But that is what happened to Egerton—a foster parent of 25 children over the years and adoptive parent of four—and to countless other parents who imagined their time and energy would be consumed by parenting their children, not by getting caught up in the city's bureaucracy over such basic services as mental health, Medicaid and special education.

The Foster & Adoptive Parent Advocacy Center (FAPAC) was founded in 2000 by foster parents hoping to improve the quality of life of children in the D.C. child welfare system by empowering

foster, kinship and adoptive families and by assuring the inclusion of these families' perspectives at every relevant table. In a short time, their advocacy efforts have resulted in significantly increased opportunities for foster and adoptive parent input into the policies and practices of D.C.'s child welfare system.

"We fervently believe that children from the child welfare system are best served by the inclusion of the people, who love and care for them daily, in the decision-making about their lives," said Margie Chalofsky, FAPAC's director.

The centerpiece of their efforts is a Peer Advocacy training program that teaches parents how to navigate the child welfare system in order to receive better services for the children in their homes. In the past two years, more than

100 peer advocates have been trained. These advocates in turn educate other parents, as well as the professional community.

There are approximately 2,000 foster parents for D.C., each with his or her own story. Thomasine McFadden's foster child's emotional and learning needs were ignored for years by school officials until McFadden—newly empowered after attending a FAPAC training session—pushed to meet with teachers and administrators who agreed to develop a long overdue independent lesson plan for the child.

FAPAC also briefs parents on what to expect in family court, and how important it is that they add their voice to the many others—social workers, lawyers and judges, for instance—that are already part of the process.



GIVING OPPORTUNITIES

IMPACT Silver Spring

At its core, IMPACT Silver Spring (IMPACT) is all about “working together for a strong, multicultural Silver Spring community.” Founded in 1999 by a group of neighborhood leaders concerned that the voices shaping the \$400 million redevelopment were not reflective of the diverse community, the organization focuses on fostering collaborative community action across lines of race, class and culture.

IMPACT’s signature initiative—the Community Empowerment Program (CEP)—has provided leadership development and community action training for nearly 100 existing and emerging community leaders over the past five years.

One CEP graduate, Ray Moreno, is spearheading IMPACT’s new Parent Organizing Initiative, which helps minority and immigrant parents understand the educa-

tion system and gives them tools to become advocates for their children. One of the pilot schools is Moreno’s alma mater: Piney Branch Elementary, a school that is 40 percent African American and 23 percent Latino. As in many public schools, Piney Branch has a dramatic achievement gap between minority and white students.

Having grown up in a family that came to this country from Ecuador four decades ago, Moreno appreciates the challenges immigrant families face. He understands that many parents don’t know how to read a report card, what to ask at a parent-teacher conference or what an SAT is.

“Because Ray comes from this community, parents trust him and he is able to build relationships with them,” said Frankie Blackburn, IMPACT’s executive director.

Not long ago, he struck up a conversation with the parent of two school-age girls. Like Ray, the mother came from Ecuador. And like many new immigrants, she assumed the local school would take care of her daughters’ academic needs. “She trusted the school would do right by her daughters,” said Moreno, yet both girls were relegated year after year to English as a Second Language classes, instead of being promoted to mainstream classes. Today, both children are thriving and their mother, who joined an IMPACT sponsored study circle and attends regular meetings at the school hosted by the principal, has a newfound understanding of her role as a parent advocate.

As for Ray, “by supporting other parents, he is discovering his own strengths,” said Blackburn.

FUNDS: TO EXPAND EXISTING PROGRAMS, DEVELOP A NEW IMMIGRANT PARENT TRAINING INSTITUTE AND YOUTH LEADERSHIP PROGRAM AND SUPPORT NEW OFFICE SPACE

TIME: VOLUNTEERS FOR RESEARCH AND INFORMATION GATHERING AND SUPPORT OF MEETINGS/EVENTS; COMPUTER, OFFICE AND ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT; AND TO PROVIDE SKILLED FACILITATION, TRAINING AND COMMUNITY OUTREACH SERVICES

GOODS: PENTIUM III+ COMPUTERS, DIGITAL AND VIDEO CAMERAS, MEALS, FOOD AND SUPPLIES FOR EVENTS AND TRAINING SESSIONS, FREE OR LOW-COST MEETING SPACE, NEW DISPLAY EASELS AND NEWSPRINT PADS AND TRAVEL VOUCHERS FOR CONFERENCES AND TRAININGS

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ANNUAL OPERATING BUDGET
\$350,000



For someone to seek change in their community, they have to believe in two things: that change is possible, and that they have the power to bring it about. Building relationships with others makes people believe. It’s not easy, since many people feel helpless and don’t trust others. But when we can awaken a sense of mutual hope and possibility, the results—in our schools, neighborhoods and civic institutions—are powerful.

FRANKIE BLACKBURN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, IMPACT SILVER SPRING



GIVING OPPORTUNITIES

FUNDS: TO HIRE A FULL-TIME COMMUNITY ORGANIZER AND PART-TIME YOUTH ORGANIZER, PURCHASE COMPUTERS, COVER FOOD AND TRANSPORTATION COSTS FOR MEETINGS AND ADVOCACY ACTIVITIES AND DESIGN AND PRINT BILINGUAL OUTREACH MATERIALS

TIME: VOLUNTEERS TO JOIN ONE OF THREE WORKING TEAMS—OUTREACH & EDUCATION, POLICY & RESEARCH OR FUNDRAISING & SPECIAL EVENTS—AND ASSIST WITH CLERICAL AND BOOKKEEPING TASKS

GOODS: REAMS OF COLORED AND WHITE COPY PAPER, COPY MACHINE, DESKTOP OR LAPTOP COMPUTER, BUS TOKENS/METRO FARE CARDS, SHORT OR TALL BOOKCASE, WINDOW UNIT AIR CONDITIONER, DESK CHAIR, DESIGN SOFTWARE, FOUR SETS OF MR. SKETCH MARKERS, FLIPCHART PAPER, THREE-RING BINDERS AND HANGING FILE FOLDERS

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ANNUAL OPERATING BUDGET
\$150,000



Justice 4 DC Youth! Coalition

Veronica Alcanara was sitting in a high school politics and citizenship class when she found out the D.C. Council was holding a hearing on juvenile justice. With permission from her parents and her teachers at Cesar Chavez Charter Public High School for Public Policy, Alcanara caught a bus to the Wilson Building, composing testimony on the way.

Alcanara was among the last to speak. “It is unfair to hold a meeting about juvenile justice without letting more kids, who could be affected by it, know ahead of time,” she began. She stated that such hearings should not be held downtown and they should not be held during the day, when youth need to be in school. Finally, she argued, the Council should focus their attention on building more recreation centers, not more prisons.

“I got their attention,” said Alcanara, noting that the next time the Council held hearings, they were in the evening and at an elementary school.

It is not surprising that policymakers are hearing more and more from area youth about everything from proposed legislation to trying more youth as adults to community-based alternatives to incarceration.

For the past four years, the Justice 4 DC Youth! Coalition has played a leading role in ensuring that youth, youth service providers, legal advocates, parents and concerned residents have a voice in D.C.’s public policy debate on juvenile justice. Through grassroots organizing, public education, policy and media advocacy, the Coalition aims to raise public awareness about the needs of youth in the juvenile justice system and the consequences of investing in punishment and incarceration at the expense of education and youth development. One of their primary platforms has been to close Oak Hill Youth Center, the city’s youth detention facility that has been the subject of an 18-year lawsuit due to

deplorable conditions and inadequate services. They are also seeking to increase support and funding for community-based alternatives to incarceration including youth drug treatment as well as youth programs and services that work, and to increase youth and parent engagement in developing and implementing juvenile justice policy and practice in D.C.

“It is important for people to understand how utterly broken the city’s juvenile justice system is and to engage everyone in systematic reform,” said Amoretta Morris, director of the Justice 4 DC Youth! Coalition. To that end, the Coalition engages a variety of stakeholders including young people who have been incarcerated or who have had family members or friends locked up, and mothers, fathers and grandparents who have experienced the barriers that guardians and parents face in supporting loved ones who are behind bars.

“

Four years ago, you’d get laughed at if you said we should close the Oak Hill Youth Center. Now it’s not a matter of whether it will close, but when. That’s a tribute to the work we’ve done.

AMORETTA MORRIS, DIRECTOR, JUSTICE 4 DC YOUTH! COALITION

”



GIVING OPPORTUNITIES

There is a tradition in this country that when poor people and people of color live somewhere that is valuable, we move them somewhere that doesn't have value, just like the way that indigenous people in this country and throughout the world were displaced by colonialism. If we then discover something of value in the places we have moved them to, we repeat the process. Our work rallies residents to take back their voice and their influence and stop this process from repeating itself in Shaw.

DAVID HAIMAN, SENIOR PROGRAM MANAGER FOR COMMUNITY ORGANIZING, MANNA CDC



Manna CDC

At the beginning of the 20th century, Shaw was the social and cultural capital of Black America, home to Duke Ellington and the center of Washington, D.C.'s African-American commercial life. But it fell victim to urban blight and disinvestment following World War II and was badly damaged by the 1968 civil unrest. Its recent resurgence coincides with the opening of Metro's Green Line and of the Washington Convention Center. The latest crop of shops and restaurants and an abundance of nearby theaters have once again made Shaw a destination.

Manna CDC, a community-based organization with a long history of nurturing grassroots leadership and organizing low-income people of color to speak for themselves, understands that gentrification has its price. Shaw's second act

may be attracting newcomers to the U Street corridor, but it is also threatening to displace long-time tenants of federally subsidized housing like Kelsey Gardens.

Plans by Kelsey Garden's landlord to replace the building with market-rate upscale condos were met with mixed reactions by the tenants. Some were ready to sign away their rights, some were prepared to stand their ground and many were indifferent. The tenant association experienced frequent changes in leadership, making it difficult to achieve the kind of solidarity necessary to preserve the complex. Rather than direct the tenants to take action, Manna CDC informed them of their rights and provided support to allow the group's natural leaders—and a consensus on how to proceed—to emerge.

Initially residents Patricia Gaston and Ed Brown were enticed by the landlord's promise of housing vouchers and moving expenses. They had lived through drug wars and gang wars, put up with the Metro construction and nursed their son after he was shot twice. "For all I've been through in this neighborhood, I was ready to move," said Gaston.

But along the way she became involved in Manna CDC's Shaw Education for Action program, and had a change of heart. "Manna CDC taught me to stand up for my rights," she said adding, "To tell the truth, we didn't even know we had rights." Today she is secretary of the Kelsey Gardens Tenant Association, which is negotiating to purchase the building. "I'm not going out without a fight," added Gaston.

FUNDS: TO HIRE AN OFFICE MANAGER TO IMPROVE INTERNAL SYSTEMS AND ADDITIONAL STAFF TO ASSIST WITH ORGANIZING; GAIN CONTROL OF 25,000 SQUARE FEET OF NEW DEVELOPMENT IN SHAW TO GUARANTEE NEW AFFORDABLE HOUSING, LOCAL BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES AND JOBS FOR LOCAL RESIDENTS

TIME: VOLUNTEERS FOR EVENING AND WEEKEND COMMUNITY ORGANIZING AND OUTREACH, SMALL BUSINESS SUPPORT AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND LEGAL SUPPORT FOR TENANTS AND TENANT ASSOCIATIONS

GOODS: NONE NEEDED CURRENTLY

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ANNUAL OPERATING BUDGET
\$700,000



GIVING OPPORTUNITIES

FUNDS: TO SUPPORT THE EXPANSION OF THE CROSSING THE RIVER AND SACRED AUTHORITY CIVIC LEADERSHIP PROGRAMS

TIME: LAW, GRADUATE, MEDIA, ART AND COLLEGE STUDENTS, AS WELL AS QUALIFIED HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS NEEDED TO DEVELOP AND COLLECT RESEARCH, DRAFT AND EDIT PUBLIC EDUCATION AND LEGISLATIVE MATERIALS, WRITE PRESS RELEASES AND ASSIST WITH FUNDRAISING

GOODS: COMPUTERS

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ANNUAL OPERATING BUDGET
\$325,000



“



Whether I'm talking to members of the D.C. Council or Congress, at a large conference or to a small group of women in recovery, I tell it like it is to help them understand what is truly needed to help. I do this because I can't let another addict die.

ROSETTA KELLY, SACRED AUTHORITY, REBECCA PROJECT
FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

”

Rebecca Project for Human Rights

When Imani Walker was in the family substance abuse treatment program at The Center for Mental Health in Southeast Washington, D.C., five years ago, she would look out her window and across the Anacostia River at the Washington Monument. As weeks and months went by, she saw scaffolding go up as workers began to repair the monument. “I watched that restoration and thought a lot about how similar it was to my own healing,” said Walker. “And I couldn’t help but think, ‘This is a powerful city and powerful things can happen here.’”

And they do. One shining example is the establishment of the Rebecca Project for Human Rights (Rebecca Project) in 2000. Malika Saada Saar—then a Georgetown University Law Center student—created with Walker an organization to

give low-income parents in recovery from substance abuse the opportunity to articulate and defend the basic needs of their families.

In only four years, Saar and Walker’s seed of an idea has grown and flourished, just like the many participants of the Rebecca Project’s signature Crossing the River Program—a 12-month workshop that uses the written word to nurture leadership in individuals who are not traditionally seen as leaders. Many of the parents who graduate from Crossing the River join Sacred Authority, the Rebecca Project’s leadership network of low-income mothers in recovery who advocate for sensible and just policy reform—locally and nationally—for families struggling with substance abuse issues. The Sacred Authority mothers, for example, advocate for increased funding for family-

based treatment; changes in Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) regulations to allow parents more time for treatment; and elimination of the federal Drug Felony Ban, which permits states to permanently ban parents with drug felony convictions from receiving TANF or food stamps. Sacred Authority mothers also continue to give back to other mothers, especially mothers behind bars, by offering Crossing the River workshops at the D.C. Women’s Jail.

Rosetta Kelly, a mother who enjoys seven years of recovery, is one of the Sacred Authority leaders. For Kelly, recovery has meant much more than leaving drugs behind. “I have three copyrighted poems and a good job. I serve as a mentor to other women. The flower has bloomed. And it’s still blooming,” she said.



GIVING OPPORTUNITIES

FUNDS: TO HIRE MORE STAFF AND RENT OFFICE, WORKSHOP AND REHEARSAL SPACE TO OFFER MORE CREATIVE WORKSHOPS FOR THE COMMUNITY

TIME: VOLUNTEERS TO JOIN SPOKEN RESISTANCE OR EL BARRIO STREET THEATER AS WRITERS AND PERFORMERS, SERVE ON THE OUTREACH AND PUBLICITY COMMITTEE, ASSIST WITH FUNDRAISING AND DOCUMENTATION, DEVELOP WORKSHOP CURRICULUM AND PROVIDE PRODUCTION SUPPORT

GOODS: COMPUTERS AND LAPTOPS, OFFICE SUPPLIES, COLOR COPYING AND PRINTING, NEW SOFTWARE, GIFT CERTIFICATES TO PIZZA PLACES, PAINT AND FABRIC FOR STREET THEATER AND SOUND EQUIPMENT

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ANNUAL OPERATING BUDGET
\$80,000

Sol & Soul

Peals of laughter ring out of Malcolm X Park where an acting troupe’s performance has clearly struck a chord with the ethnically diverse crowd. In a make-believe courtroom, the presiding immigration judge sentences one immigrant after another to deportation for fictitious crimes such as “having too many names” or threatening homeland security by wearing a scarf in the courtroom. These incidents are clearly exaggerated, but the message is very real. In a region where new immigrants made up nearly half of the overall population growth in the past decade and has witnessed harsh new immigrant laws and policies, a growing number feel at risk of expulsion and discrimination.

Welcome to El Barrio Street Theater, where musicians, computer programmers, construc-

tion workers, activists and others come together to use the performing arts as tools for community change. El Barrio and Spoken Resistance (an ensemble of young artists who express themselves through writing and performance) are the core programs of Sol & Soul, a four-year-old city-wide organization created to nurture established and emerging artistic voices that speak to social issues. Sol & Soul is made up of men and women of diverse races, classes and ethnic groups who frequently collaborate with other community-based organizations to draw attention to critical issues like racism, gentrification and women’s rights. Their ongoing partnership with the D.C. Employment Justice Center’s El Teatro de Los Trabajadores is just one example.

Sheila Mirza, a native of Pakistan, joined El Barrio when

she moved here from New York City last spring. Disheartened by the backlash against South Asians, Arabs and Muslims in this country after September 11, Mirza found El Barrio to be a productive outlet for her frustrations.

“Before I joined Sol & Soul, I didn’t realize poetry, acting and theater could be used for social change,” said the 19-year-old community organizer. When Mirza added to the script her original poem about the U.S. government’s “special registration” program to identify potential terrorists and spies, she stopped at least one passerby in his tracks. “I’ve been there,” remarked a young man biking past the outdoor performance.

“So many people in our community feel isolated,” said Sol & Soul co-founder Quique Aviles. “Our goal is to validate their experiences.”



Nothing is more empowering than helping young people discover their voices and giving them and others who feel silenced, oppressed or intimidated a forum for sharing those newfound voices.

MARGAUX DELOTTE-BENNET, MEMBER, SOL & SOUL’S SPOKEN RESISTANCE PROJECT



GIVING OPPORTUNITIES



FUNDS: TO SUPPORT A \$1.4 MILLION CAPITAL CAMPAIGN FOR THE PURCHASE, RENOVATION AND OUTFITTING OF THE ARLANDRIA COMMUNITY CENTER

TIME: VOLUNTEERS TO PROVIDE MENTORING AND TUTORING FOR LOW-INCOME STUDENTS, TRAINING FOR YOUTH AND ADULTS IN COMPUTER APPLICATIONS, CONSULTING AND LEGAL SERVICES AND FUNDRAISING ASSISTANCE

GOODS: NONE NEEDED CURRENTLY

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ANNUAL OPERATING BUDGET
\$650,000

Tenants' and Workers' Support Committee

It wasn't all that long ago that Silvia Portillo—a native of El Salvador who lives in Fairfax—went from doctor to doctor trying to get a diagnosis and treatment for her two-year-old son's ear infection. Time and again she was met by medical staff who could not speak Spanish or wouldn't treat her child.

Portillo was frustrated and mad, but also resourceful. By asking around, she learned about the Tenants' and Workers' Support Committee (TWSC), an 18-year-old membership organization in Northern Virginia that helps low-income people not only gain access to resources but become agents of change and problem-solvers in their communities.

Within a year, Portillo graduated from volunteer to

full-time paid organizer. As coordinator of TWSC's Healthy Community Program, she oversaw a survey of Latino residents living in Arlandria (an Alexandria neighborhood bordering on Arlington). The survey discovered that of the more than 400 people interviewed—all of whom worked—80 percent didn't have health insurance. And it identified a number of critical problems facing those residents: a near absence of bilingual personnel at Alexandria Inova, the city's only hospital facility; inadequate financial assistance for medical care; a lack of community-based primary care; and crippling hospital debt for low-income patients.

In response to these needs, TWSC launched an uninsured access to health care campaign

in 2001 to reduce the economic hardship medical debt places on low-income uninsured families. At the same time, the campaign sought to expand access to affordable, linguistically appropriate and community-based primary health care for all medically uninsured in Northern Virginia. Since then, Alexandria Inova has added bilingual staff, reviewed its charity policy and eliminated \$400,000 in debts. "It is one thing when professional staff call a meeting with hospital administrators to discuss community problems," said Portillo. "It is another when dozens of people who live and work and are raising their children in the area step forward to tell their stories. That's when the hospital started listening to what we had to say."



Our focus is on building leadership and fighting for a participatory democracy. Whether it's housing, health, or workers' rights, we want the affected person at the middle of the struggle and in the middle of the solution—they're the jelly in the doughnut.

JON LISS, DIRECTOR, TENANTS' AND WORKERS' SUPPORT COMMITTEE





Change is within all of us. But if you want to see change, you have to be a part of it.

KATHY DOE, SENIOR AT WOODROW WILSON HIGH SCHOOL AND YWP MEMBER



The Young Women’s Project

You don’t need to look any further than the Doe sisters—Celue, Tdisho and Kathy—to find powerful evidence of how The Young Women’s Project (YWP) is training teen women to assume leadership roles in D.C. and improve youth-serving institutions. The 12-year-old organization has been the vehicle through which the Doe sisters are reshaping the city.

Celue Doe graduated in 2001 from Woodrow Wilson High School where she was a member of YWP’s Teen Women in Action, an after-school program emphasizing self-advocacy, leadership development and project implementation. She helped draft a D.C. Public Schools (DCPS) sexual harassment policy, and pushed the D.C. Board of Education to adapt and implement it. For Celue and other YWP members, being invited to serve on the DCPS’ Harassment Task Force was

the icing on the cake. They were the only group with youth representation at the table.

Tdisho graduated from Wilson in 2003, following another path to YWP stardom. She helped launch a campaign to improve the lives of the 450 D.C. youth in foster care group homes and independent living programs.

Kathy Doe, 17, has followed in Celue’s footsteps. After watching her sister testify before the D.C. Board of Education about the DCPS sexual harassment policy, Kathy remembers thinking, “That took a lot of courage.”

Kathy’s own courage has been on display during the past year as she trained the entire student body and faculty at Wilson about the new DCPS sexual harassment policy. There were times when she would attend a full day of classes, then turn around and lead a training session for the

faculty, including her own teachers. But it was the students who she thought would present the greatest challenge.

“I was concerned there might be a backlash, that the students would think we were preaching to them,” said Kathy. “But because we came to them as peers, they respected what we had to say.”

YWP seeks to go beyond these specific policy successes to ensure that participants acquire the courage, confidence and commitment to social justice that are required to maintain their roles as leaders in the community.

Energized by the success of the sexual harassment campaign, YWP members have broadened their efforts to reduce violence perpetuated by girl gangs—through a leadership training program—and other school safety issues, including a youth court pilot program.

GIVING OPPORTUNITIES

FUNDS: TO HIRE STAFF TO TRAIN MORE TEEN LEADERS EACH YEAR AND SUPPORT FOR A NEW CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

TIME: VOLUNTEERS TO MENTOR YOUTH STAFF AND PARTICIPANTS AND TO SERVE AS ADVISORS ON THE SCHOOL SAFETY AND FOSTER CARE CAMPAIGNS

GOODS: COMPUTERS AND PRINTERS, CONFERENCE TABLE, CHAIRS, SNACKS FOR WORKSHOPS, OFFICE SUPPLIES, COPIERS, DISHES, KITCHEN SUPPLIES AND GIFTS FOR PARTICIPANTS

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ORG
ANNUAL OPERATING BUDGET
\$375,000



GIVING OPPORTUNITIES

FUNDS: TO HIRE MORE YOUTH STAFF AND A PART-TIME ADMINISTRATIVE/FUNDRAISING STAFF PERSON

TIME: VOLUNTEERS TO TRAIN THE CO-DIRECTORS AND/OR YOUTH STAFF IN WEBSITE AND DATABASE DESIGN AND MAINTENANCE

GOODS: LARGE SCREEN TV, DVD, DIGITAL CAMERA AND MINI-DISC RECORDER

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ANNUAL OPERATING BUDGET \$146,000

“



I hear people say ‘I didn’t accomplish anything in high school.’ That’s not me. I am independent and responsible. If I go to college, I’m not going to let people take advantage of me. That’s because of YARG.

HAWI CHIBESSA, SENIOR AT BELL MULTICULTURAL HIGH SCHOOL AND YARG MEMBER

”

The Youth Action Research Group

“I thought everything had been fixed,” said Hawi Chibessa, thinking back on how naive she was when she first got involved with The Youth Action Research Group (YARG). A native of Ethiopia who attends Bell Multicultural High School, Chibessa said, “I didn’t know racism still existed. I didn’t know that women make less money than men in some jobs. I didn’t know kids get locked up if they get into trouble. And I didn’t know that all young people have a voice and should speak up if they care passionately about something or disagree with something.”

Helping youth discover their voice is at the heart of YARG’s mission. Founded in 1997 to address the lack of civic participation by D.C.’s young people in decision-making processes that affect them and their families, YARG is dedicated to building the capacity of youth, ages 15-22, to critically analyze the problems facing their communities and engage in civic processes—

including education and organizing—around issues that directly affect their lives.

“Improving the lives of D.C.’s poor and working class youth and their families goes beyond improving service delivery,” said YARG co-directors Danielle Kurzweil and Jackie Velez. “The young people most directly affected by the social problems and inequities afflicting D.C. must be involved in working toward solutions. This takes grassroots leadership, organization and the courage to challenge existing power relations.”

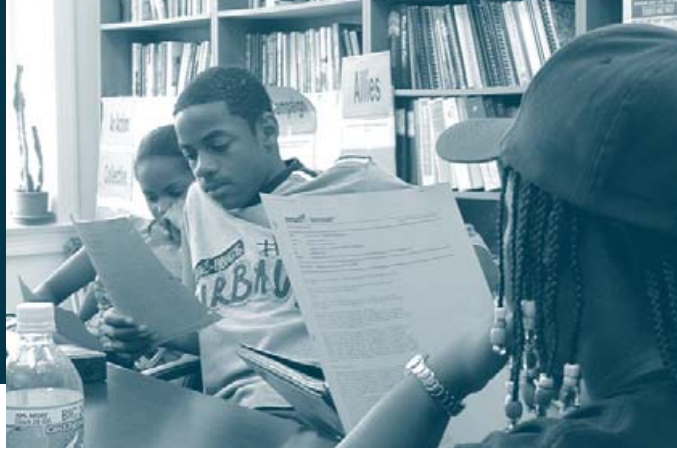
Natalie Avery launched YARG after recognizing that much of the youth work being done in D.C. in the 1990s was focused on high achievers who were being encouraged to seek a better life outside D.C. Avery’s tactic was different: to encourage all youth to stay here to make the community a better place.

Chibessa has worked with YARG for three summers. When she started out, she said, “I didn’t know what a

facilitator was. Now I am a facilitator. I didn’t know what a focus group was. Now I run focus groups.”

YARG, which works closely with students not only from Bell Multicultural but from Cesar Chavez Charter Public High School for Public Policy, Benjamin Banneker Academic High School, and Woodrow Wilson and Cardozo High Schools, has researched and published reports relating to gentrification, public schools and, most recently, youth violence. Chibessa and others conducted interviews with community leaders and residents about the root causes of youth violence and are producing a “reality tour” that documents their findings. One conclusion they reached: young people have been left out of discussions about how to solve the problem of youth violence. Among their recommendations: living wage jobs for parents and youth and more affordable housing to prevent the displacement of communities.





GIVING OPPORTUNITIES

FUNDS: TO HIRE STAFF TO BUILD A LARGER MEMBERSHIP OF PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS, HOLD PUBLIC OFFICIALS ACCOUNTABLE AND PROVIDE A QUALITY EDUCATION FOR THOUSANDS OF YOUTH

TIME: VOLUNTEERS TO PROVIDE TUTORING; GRASSROOTS FUNDRAISING SUPPORT; HIP-HOP, POETRY AND RAP WORKSHOPS; LIFE SKILLS, FINANCIAL AND MEDIA LITERACY TRAINING; COLLEGE PREPARATION, RESUME WRITING AND BUDGETING CLASSES; AND TO HELP OBTAIN PERMISSION FROM LOCAL GO-GO ARTISTS TO USE THEIR MUSIC ON YOUTH-MADE VIDEOS

GOODS: PROFESSIONAL 3-CHIP VIDEO CAMERAS, DVDS AND VIDEOS THAT CAN BE USED FOR POLITICAL EDUCATION, FOLDING CHAIRS, PAINT, REFRIDGERATOR, GIFT CERTIFICATES, WIZARDS TICKETS, COLOR PRINTER, LAPTOPS, A VAN, HEALTHY FOOD FOR MEETINGS AND SCHOOL SUPPLIES

CONTACT

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ANNUAL OPERATING BUDGET
\$128,000

Youth Education Alliance

The Youth Education Alliance (YEA)—founded in 2001 to organize for high-quality education in D.C.—brings together public high school students from across the city to identify problems in their schools and solve them collectively. Its membership includes a wide range of students, from those in the city’s best high schools to those in the most challenged, from straight-A students to those who are struggling academically. “This kind of diversity lends power to our work and broadens the scope of our impact,” said Ann Caton, YEA’s lead organizer.

When YEA members get together, many issues bubble to the surface of their discussions: inadequate maintenance of school facilities, unhealthy school lunches, a lack of

interactive and engaging curriculum and the need for better resources for learning, to name a few.

But one of the most pressing issues they face every day is inadequate bathroom facilities.

“Running around to find toilet paper or a teacher who can let me into a restroom has become a daily routine for me,” said Eastern High School student Jessica Jones.

Site visits to 144 public high school restrooms—where the students took notes and snapped pictures—revealed a widespread problem. They discovered missing toilet paper and stall doors, broken toilets and sinks and generally unsanitary facilities. In some instances, the bathrooms were locked, forcing students to go in search of a toilet or wait

until they got home at the end of the day.

In the spring of 2003, YEA members launched a campaign to improve conditions, collecting petitions from 900 students from around the city, mobilizing their peers to attend a rally outside a D.C. Council hearing and drafting recommendations that they presented to the D.C. Board of Education. The result is the “Clean School Initiative” which requires schools to have at least one bathroom open for both men and women on each floor and calls for regularly scheduled bathroom cleanings.

“At YEA, we are training young people to be at the decision-making table,” said Caton. “They’re learning that there is strength in numbers and that they have the power to demand change in their schools.”



If you don't stand up then people will walk all over you and deny you the stuff that you deserve. You should always go ahead and try to get what you deserve.

JESSICA JONES, JUNIOR AT EASTERN HIGH SCHOOL AND YEA MEMBER





2003–2004 Guide Results

Neighborhoods East of the River



Last year's Spirit of Giving Guide focused on the Washington, D.C. neighborhoods located East of the Anacostia River, showcasing 15 non-profits working directly with children and families to address issues ranging from education to AIDS to youth violence. Donors across the region and beyond responded in a variety of ways, with more than \$300,000 in cash and in-kind contributions raised through the Guide. According to Tyrone Parker, executive director of the Alliance of Concerned Men, "What is even more important to groups like ours is being able to see that people out there care about us and the people who we serve. I have received an envelope with ten individual checks in it, and each check was for \$200.00. It made me feel like we are not really alone and that people do care about others and want to help us provide the necessary services that

benefit the individuals and families that we serve."

With a total budget of only \$25,000 for producing the Guide, the results yielded a 12 to 1 ratio of return for The Community Foundation's investment. But for us as well, the Spirit of Giving Guide is about much more than money. "The Guide is a tool for raising awareness about the needs of our community," said Terri Lee Freeman, president of The Community Foundation. "The lack of giving East of the River has been an issue for this region for decades; our role was to 'shine a light' on the need for greater investment, as well as the community wealth that is in abundance in these neighborhoods."

Among the results from last year's Guide:

- **DC Creative Writing Workshop:** As Nancy Schwalb, executive director, reported, "In just days after the Guide was mailed, we were surprised by a gift of 55 beautiful journals—

“

The lack of giving East of the River has been an issue for this region for decades; our role was to ‘shine a light’ on the need for greater investment, as well as the community wealth that is in abundance in these neighborhoods.

TERRI LEE FREEMAN, COMMUNITY FOUNDATION PRESIDENT

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some leather bound, some with handmade paper—and an equal number of fancy pens that our students gleefully brought home for the holidays. Our kids are happy to write on any scrap of paper they can find, so it’s impossible to describe the joy in their faces as they selected these fine books to fill with their most special writings. One boy held up the pen he had chosen and said, ‘I’m never gonna lose this one!’”

■ **Kids First:** Received more than \$9,000 in direct contributions, including two gifts from Community Foundation donors. In addition, Kids First has been asked to submit a proposal for a grant from a local foundation.

■ **Life Pieces to Masterpieces (LPTM):** More than 70 people contacted LPTM after reading about them in the Guide, many to buy artwork or offer donations. In addition, through its Guide feature and The Community Foundation’s contacts, LPTM was featured on the Today Show as an “Al Roker

Lend a Hand” organization in April 2004. The feature brought LPTM over \$50,000 in merchandise, including computers, video equipment and a new Toyota Highlander.

■ **Reaching Inside for Self Esteem (RISE):** As a guest at The Community Foundation’s 30th anniversary gala in December 2003, Howard Newell, RISE’s president, was seated with representatives from a Washington, D.C foundation. That introduction has led to an invitation to submit a proposal, as well as new contacts with other local funders.

■ **Visitors’ Services Center (VSC):** Received a \$3,000 donation from a donor shortly after the Guide’s publication. Days later, there was a shooting at one of the jails where VSC provides its inmate program, resulting in a lockdown that cancelled all visits from family members over the holiday period. VSC was flooded with requests from inmates for funding to support telephone calls

to families, and through this donation, VSC was able to respond. One inmate used his phone call to propose to his girlfriend and she said “yes!”

The Community Foundation established the East of the River Fund at the recommendation of two of its donors who served on the Advisory Committee. They also provided the initial grant to the fund, which has received close to \$120,000 in contributions. Each of the 15 featured nonprofits received a grant and the rest of the funds are being used to support a two-year capacity building program. The Foundation is also exploring other ways to support these nonprofits and the community. “We are committed to helping these organizations grow stronger and be more sustainable over time,” said Terri Lee Freeman. “The Community Foundation’s commitment to the neighborhoods East of the River will continue and we are proud of what we have been able to do so far.”





Philanthropic support of nonprofits is crucial. Unlike the government, philanthropic money can support organizations that represent dissident voices—organizations involved in community mobilization and public policy work. It can inspire and foster important grassroots conversations that don't typically become part of the policy dialogue. Local philanthropic groups have a special responsibility here as more and more decisions about the welfare of communities are made at the state and local levels. Through Donor Advised Funds, people can use their money to create and sustain small 'd' democracy.

RICK COHEN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, NATIONAL COMMITTEE FOR RESPONSIVE PHILANTHROPY



How to Give

It is easy to make a direct donation of dollars, goods or time to any of the nonprofits featured in this Guide. Here is how:

■ **For tax-deductible donations:** Donations can be made by check or online. To donate by mail, send your check directly to the nonprofit(s) you select, to the attention of the contact listed in this Guide. Make the check payable to the name of the nonprofit(s) you have chosen. If you have any questions, call or email the organization's contact. Or, if you are a current donor of The Community Foundation, simply fill out a donor suggestion form and mail or fax it to us. To make a donation online, visit our website at www.cfncr.org and click on the "Spirit of Giving" link (online giving is provided through TouchDC.org), or visit the websites of the individual nonprofits.

- **For donations of goods:** It is always wise to call first to ensure your donation will be used effectively. Call or email the nonprofit's contact in advance, then package and mail your donation directly to the nonprofit. If the donation is large and/or requires a special delivery, additional arrangements should be made.
- **To volunteer your time:** Call or email the nonprofit's contact in advance to introduce yourself and to arrange an appropriate volunteer placement.

Support the Spirit of Giving Guide Fund

The Community Foundation has established a Spirit of Giving Guide Fund to support the nonprofits highlighted in this Guide. You can leverage your giving by making a contribution directly to this Fund, joining with others to make

larger investments in these dedicated nonprofits. Send your check, made out to the Spirit of Giving Guide Fund, to The Community Foundation at 1201 15th Street, NW, Suite 420, Washington, DC 20005 or if you are a current donor of the Foundation, simply fill out a donor suggestion form and mail or fax it in. You can also give online through our website at www.cfncr.org by clicking on the Spirit of Giving Guide Fund link.

For More Information

If you would like additional information before you make your contribution, or would like to talk with our staff about the groups in this Guide or other giving opportunities in the metropolitan Washington region, contact Miriam Liepold, manager of program and donor engagement, at 202-263-4769 or mliepold@cfncr.org.

The Selection Process

The organizations profiled in this Spirit of Giving Guide were selected by an advisory committee made up of community leaders, representatives of local foundations and nonprofits, and donors of The Community Foundation. A list of committee members is provided on the right.

Applications were invited from hundreds of nonprofits throughout the region. The application process was widely advertised and additional outreach was made through community leaders to promote participation. An open session was held to discuss the process and offer assistance with completing applications.

All applications were reviewed by committee members. Additional information was gained through phone interviews and site visits. Organizations had to meet general and specific eligibility criteria in order to be considered.

The general criteria included:

- annual operating budget of \$2 million or less
- work is conducted in the metropolitan Washington region which includes the District of Columbia; the City of Alexandria; Montgomery and Prince George's Counties in Maryland; and Arlington, Fairfax and Loudoun Counties in Virginia
- services meet pressing/emerging needs and/or issues in the metropolitan Washington region
- strong track record, demonstrated capacity and financial stability
- strong ties/partnerships in the community and with other nonprofits
- strong leadership and community/participant involvement in directing the work of the nonprofit

All nonprofits must be involved in work that falls within The Community Foundation's definition of civic engagement: "A process that brings people together to actively take a role in shaping the issues and/or policies that affect their lives, the lives of their families and the wider community. It allows individuals of all ages and backgrounds to develop new skills and to take an active and empowered role in community decision-making and problem solving. This work builds the capacity and assets of individuals, organizations and community at all levels."

JOY FORD AUSTIN, HUMANITIES COUNCIL OF WASHINGTON, D.C.

BILL BOZMAN, EXECUTIVE SERVICE CORPS OF WASHINGTON, D.C. AND ALLIANCE FOR HOUSING SOLUTIONS

RICK COHEN, NATIONAL COMMITTEE FOR RESPONSIVE PHILANTHROPY

ARTIS HAMPSHIRE COWAN, HOWARD UNIVERSITY

KAREN FITZGERALD, EUGENE & AGNES E. MEYER FOUNDATION

DR. BOWYER FREEMAN, BOWYER & TERRI FREEMAN FAMILY FUND AND HOWARD UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL

WANDA GADDIS, COMMUNITY ACTIVIST

HOPE GLEICHER, TRELIS FUND

SARAH KESTNER, JEFF AND SARAH KESTNER FUND, MONTGOMERY COUNTY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

CAROLYNN MAMBU, MORRIS AND GWENDOLYN CAFRITZ FOUNDATION

HERBERT AND MARCIA MARKS, HMJS MARKS FUND

LEE CHRISTIAN PARKER, BRIDGING DIFFERENCES INITIATIVE, THE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION FOR THE NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION

EDUARDO ROMERO, THE NONPROFIT ROUNDTABLE OF GREATER WASHINGTON

VERNETTA WALKER, MARYLAND ASSOCIATION OF NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

JOE WILSON, PUBLIC WELFARE FOUNDATION

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DESIGN:

PENSARÉ DESIGN GROUP, LTD.

PHOTOS:

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PHOTODISC

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CENTER

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[TOP] COURTESY OF THE LATIN
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PHOTOS BY RICK REINHARD

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BY CAROL M. HIGHSMITH,
COURTESY OF THE ANNIE E.
CASEY FOUNDATION

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As a dancer, choreographer and teacher, I've always been interested in the civic dimensions of art. Just gathering together as an audience can be a kind of civic engagement. But when you make something together, something that matters to everyone involved, then the dialogue really deepens. Then the compromises aren't just theoretical, they are real and sometimes painful. You learn how to live with the gains and the losses that happen when you compromise. That is when change happens.

LIZ LERMAN, FOUNDING ARTISTIC DIRECTOR,
LIZ LERMAN DANCE EXCHANGE

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Sources and Resources

Learn more about funding advocacy efforts and civic engagement and national organizations working on this issue.

ACORN (Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now)
www.acorn.org

Alliance for Justice, “Worry Free Lobbying for Nonprofits”
www.afj.org

The Aspen Institute
www.aspeninstitute.org

The Brookings Institution, “The Promise of National Service: A (Very) Brief History of an Idea,” June 2003, and other research
www.brook.edu

Center for Community Change
www.communitychange.org

Center for American Politics and Citizenship, University of Maryland
www.capc.umd.edu

Common Cause
www.commoncause.org

Council on Foundations
www.cof.org

Independent Sector
www.independentsector.org

National Civic League
www.ncl.org

National Neighborhood Coalition
www.neighborhoodcoalition.org

National Urban League
www.nul.org

PolicyLink
www.policylink.org

More About The Community Foundation

Whether you are a donor or a nonprofit service organization in search of funding, The Community Foundation can assist you. We help donors connect with the people and issues they care about. We provide grants to nonprofits serving the community. We listen carefully to what every stakeholder has to say. And then, working together, we find solutions that build a stronger community and enrich the quality of life for present and future generations.

How to Set Up a Fund

It's simple to establish a charitable grantmaking fund. Our donors get personal satisfaction knowing their gifts are going to work for the community.

While there are many different types of funds at The Community Foundation, most of our funds fall into seven main categories:

- **Donor Advised Fund:** Allows you to enjoy ongoing involvement in the distribution of gifts from your fund because you can bring specific grant requests to the Foundation for consideration.

- **Designated Fund:** Benefits one or more specific organizations and is preferred by donors who want their fund to support specific nonprofit(s).

- **Field of Interest Fund:** Gives donors the opportunity to target an area of need rather than a specific charity. The Foundation will make grants to the nonprofits most effectively serving the people you want to help—such as the homeless or elderly—or broad interest areas like the arts, environment or education.

- **Unrestricted Fund:** Donors enable The Community Foundation to respond to the community's most pressing needs in creative and flexible ways. These funds compose some of the Foundation's most important dollars capable of addressing the ever-changing needs of the community.

- **Scholarship Fund:** May be established to help deserving students pursue educational opportunities or to memorialize a loved one who has passed away.

- **Supporting Organization:** Families or corporations can choose to affiliate with The

Community Foundation as a supporting organization. These organizations retain their own identities and offer full participation in the organizations' operation, investment decisions and grantmaking.

- **Agency Endowment:** Nonprofits can establish an agency endowment to benefit their organization and be free from the administrative and investment burden of their assets.

For additional information, contact Kenny Emson, vice president and chief financial officer, at 202-264-4779 or kemson@cfncr.org.

THE MISSION OF THE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION IS TO FACILITATE INDIVIDUAL, FAMILY AND ORGANIZATIONAL GIVING AT ALL LEVELS TO CREATE A PERMANENT SOURCE OF PHILANTHROPIC CAPITAL TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF LIFE IN THE METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON REGION. WE ACCOMPLISH THIS BY:

- PROVIDING EXPERTISE AND SERVICES TO DONORS ON HOW TO REALIZE THEIR GOALS IN PHILANTHROPY;
- CONNECTING OUR DONORS TO ORGANIZATIONS PROVIDING EFFECTIVE PROGRAMS;
- SERVING AS A CONVENER AND CATALYST ON EMERGING ISSUES; AND
- PROVIDING SOUND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT OF ASSETS.

THE FOUNDATION IS PART OF A NETWORK OF MORE THAN 700 COMMUNITY FOUNDATIONS AROUND THE COUNTRY. EACH IS A TAX-EXEMPT PUBLIC CHARITY MADE UP OF FUNDS THAT ARE ESTABLISHED BY MANY DIFFERENT DONORS, INCLUDING INDIVIDUALS, FAMILIES AND CORPORATIONS. WE PROVIDE THE SERVICE, EXPERTISE AND INNOVATION THAT HELPS THEM REALIZE THEIR CHARITABLE GOALS.

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Our nation's unique tradition of volunteerism and philanthropy—our national practice of supporting charitable organizations by giving our time and our money—is among the most distinctive, and honorable, hallmarks of America's brand of civic engagement.

KAY MAXWELL, PRESIDENT, LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF THE UNITED STATES

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