

## *FEX Impacts US Media*

**L** launched in 2003, with the support of the Ford Foundation, the **Media Justice Fund (MJF) of the Funding Exchange** makes grants to grassroots campaigns that aim to change the structure of US media, build community-controlled media infrastructure and make corporate media more accountable.

This summer, MJF's Community Media Collaboration (CMC) awarded \$109,000 to seven organizations from across the United States. The CMC grants fund activists who focus their organizing on corporate media accountability and force regulators at all levels of government to make Internet, radio, cable TV and other information communications technologies more accessible to marginalized communities.

Projects that prioritized networking and alliance building, and developed diverse leadership received support. Some of these organizations are working on: media justice campaigns to increase accountability from the nation's largest cable provider Comcast; media advocacy campaigns by Vietnamese youth in Washington, DC; a youth-led radio license renewal campaign in Oakland, CA; a delegation to attend the International Conference on the Information Society; and a group from Queens, NY, which promotes media literacy among Afghani immigrant women.

The Fund is also co-sponsoring community meetings with local media organizers to facilitate the creation of new alliances among a range of organizers. On May 10, 2005, in Austin, TX, 21 social justice organizers, and community media and technology advocates came together to discuss the value of media and technology infrastructure for social change, and what is needed for effective organizing to make media and technology serve social justice. A second meeting was held on July 22, 2005 in Washington, DC. Participants met to get a clearer understanding of, and connection with, allies working on local media justice issues in the DC area. Together, they developed specific strategies, solutions and resources for better collaboration and capacity building.

Along with CMC grants, the Fund also provides funding to groups responding to immediate organizing opportunities and the creation of toolkits through which activists can share strategies. More information is available at the Funding Exchange website, [www.fex.org](http://www.fex.org).

## Community Media Collaboration 2005 Grantees

**Vietnamese American Television (VATV)** Falls Church, VA  
[www.vatv.org](http://www.vatv.org) \$24,700

VATV will launch Project VOICE, a national community-wide campaign to form and train youth-led media action teams to offer a more truthful presentation of the Vietnamese American community in mainstream media and advocate for higher journalism ethics and effective media reforms within the Vietnamese American community.

**Third World Majority** Oakland, CA  
[www.cultureisaweapon.org](http://www.cultureisaweapon.org) \$20,300

In alliance with two other organizations, Third World Majority will send an intergenerational delegation to the United Nation's World Summit on the Information Society in Tunisia in November 2005 to pose alternatives to the corporate global communications agenda.

**Chittenden Community Television (CCTV)** Burlington, VT  
[www.cctv.org](http://www.cctv.org) \$20,000

CCTV will develop a multiyear Campaign for Vermont's Telecommunications Independence. The goal of the Campaign is to ensure that Vermont's marginalized voices gain access to the public airwaves and rights-of-way that constitute our media and communications structures and challenge the conglomeration of cable and broadband internet access.

**Youth Media Council** Oakland, CA  
[www.youthmediacouncil.org](http://www.youthmediacouncil.org) \$15,000

The Youth Media Council will join with Media Alliance in building a youth-led campaign to challenge the license renewal of two Bay Area Clear Channel radio stations.

**Media Tank** Philadelphia, PA  
[www.mediatank.org](http://www.mediatank.org) \$15,000

Media Tank will expand its local coalition challenging public policies and corporate policies that shut out local internet and broadcast alternatives and voices in favor of Comcast, the nation's largest cable operator.

**Austin Free-Net** Austin, TX  
[www.austinfreenet.net](http://www.austinfreenet.net) \$7,000

Austin Free-Net will extend collaboration among media, technology and social justice organizations by holding five informal "learn and share" gatherings over the course of a year, and creating a wireless hotspot featuring free and low-cost Open Source resources for activism and media reform.

**Women In Media & News (WIMN)** Brooklyn, NY  
[www.WIMNonline.org](http://www.WIMNonline.org) \$7,000

WIMN'S Afghan Women's Media Organizing Project work with Women for Afghan Women, a Queens-based nonprofit organization, to build the capacity to use media literacy, monitoring, outreach, response and advocacy as a consistent way to advance their mission to empower Afghan women.

# For Hardisty, Progressive Movement Building is a High Priority

By Penny Abeywardena

*Jean Hardisty was one of the original donors who “pulled together” the Crossroads Fund in Chicago. She was closely involved with Crossroads for over eight years and chaired the Board for two of those years. She recently opened the Betty Furdon Donor Advised Fund at the Funding Exchange.*

## FEX In Person

### How and when did you become aware of the Funding Exchange?

I first learned about alternative philanthropy when I heard George Pillsbury in a living room in Chicago in about 1977. He was traveling across the country talking about The Haymarket Fund and the model

it represented. Later FEX emerged as an umbrella for all the funds. I was already hooked on the network by then!

### What’s your history with social change?

I began to be aware of the need for social change in 1957, when my parents moved from Washington, DC to a farm in southern Maryland. I was 12 and saw the rural poverty that Michael Harrington was to write about in *The Other America*. Later, I learned my US politics from the African students at my college, who taught me about imperialism and neocolonialism.

### Why did you open a Donor Advised Fund at the Funding Exchange?

The Betty Furdon Donor Advised Fund was not set up with my money, but rather that of my dear friend Betty Furdon, who died in 2004 of breast cancer. Betty and I had talked at length about her desire to create a fund that would allow her life partner, Mary Leno, and me to distribute the major portion of her estate after her death. *We feel a great responsibility to make good decisions about the distribution of the funds, and are grateful to have the help of FEX with that project.*

### What do you view as the most important issues of our time?

I think it is hard to name one issue. Certainly progressive movement-building is a high priority, as is opposing the Iraq War and so many other of the Right’s initiatives. My personal priority is to oppose the war at home being waged on the poor, immigrants, and people of color by the Bush Administration and its allies.

## CJI Circle Seeks \$60k

The statistics are staggering. You probably know them well. More than 2.1 million people are imprisoned in the United States, which has the highest inmate population in the world. About 1.5 million children have parents who are currently incarcerated. *And one in eight African American men in their twenties and early thirties is in prison.*

For activists and organizers in the criminal justice field, the last few years have not been easy. The criminal justice system continues to incarcerate record numbers of people, fetter political dissent and usher in a new wave of fear, intolerance and brutality.

The Funding Exchange’s Criminal Justice Initiative (CJI) circle of donors and activists believes that there are better alternatives to the government’s flagrant waste of taxpayer resources (\$147 billion per year) and to the barbarism of the prison industrial complex.

*We ask you to consider joining the CJI Circle with a gift of \$5,000 or more.* As a member of the CJI Circle you will play a key role in securing and promoting a progressive, grassroots response to the expanding prison industry. You may choose to participate in grantmaking meetings and conferences, or you may decide to support the important work of this circle of activists and donors with your generous contribution.

The CJI provides grants to social justice organizations throughout the country to resist prison expansion and its disproportionate impact on low-income communities, women, people of color and other disenfranchised populations.

Since 2001, the Funding Exchange has raised \$417,000 for the CJI and awarded 23 grants to organizations throughout the nation. In 2002 and 2005, we brought together our grantees, donors and activist panel members in a cross-race, cross-class dialogue to refine organizing strategies and pinpoint corresponding funding opportunities.

We have funded organizations such as **GirlTalk** in Chicago, Illinois. This group is run for and by formerly incarcerated young women, and brings visibility to the impact of incarceration and prison policies on their lives, families and communities.

At our recent meeting in May 2005, we heard the urgent call by our grantees “to raise more money.” One Funding Exchange donor has stepped up and agreed to pay the administrative overhead for CJI if we are able to raise \$200,000 for grantmaking. Right now, we are approximately \$60,000 away from this goal.

For more information about the CJI Circle, please contact Trinh Duong at (212) 529-5300 ext. 307 or [trinh.duong@fex.org](mailto:trinh.duong@fex.org)

Hello to you all. I hope you have had an enjoyable summer. Things here have been hot - and I don't mean only the temperature!!!

Over the past few years there have been several updates from me about the ongoing strategic directions planning undertaken by the FEX Board and Network. As this work was being fleshed out, and as the political climate continues to bring a new urgency to our work, some new projects began to emerge here at the National Office. We have taken on new projects like the Media Justice Fund, the Criminal Justice Initiative and the Mobilize the Vote Fund. These efforts required more coordination between our departments - between grants and development - between development and administration - and between grants and administration. At the same time of this increase in program work we have also focused on integrating the work of building a strong network of member funds into our daily schedules requiring yet another level of departmental coordination between membership and grants, development, and administration.

In addition to all of the internal developments, the FEX network has become increasingly more visible by participating and providing leadership at several national philanthropic tables. Staff has been representing the Network at NNG, Social Justice Infrastructure Funders, The Rye Collaborative, Resource Generation, Class Matters, the Momentum Conference, and Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in Philanthropy, to name only a few. Over the next several years, the plan is to increase this participation in order to firmly establish FEX's leadership in the philanthropic community.

Underpinning all of this work, the FEX Board of Directors, comprised of representatives from all of the Member Funds, a donor representative, funding panel representatives from OUT, Robeson and Saguaro, and at-large representatives, are close to completing the strategic planning process. This will provide us with a set of priorities and goals for the Network, guiding our work through the next three to five years.

With all of these developments, it became apparent that there needed to be some staffing adjustments here at the National Office.

I am very pleased to announce that **Charlene Allen**, former Director of Grantmaking, has been promoted to the position of Deputy Director. Charlene brings her many talents and her well-honed leadership skills to this newly created position at a moment when the FEX National Office needs the daily presence of a visionary senior staff person who is grounded in the everyday workings of the office, and who is enthusiastic about building a strong network. Charlene is that person.



Likewise, I am happy to announce that **Trinh Duong**, currently Program Officer, will be the new Director of Grantmaking. Trinh brings her enthusiasm and six years grantmaking experience to this position, as well as her creativity and natural talent for fundraising!!



These changes will allow the Executive Director - (that's me!)- to spend more time on strategic leadership projects, such as representing FEX at philanthropic tables; spending more time with the development team working with current donors and expanding our donor base; and raising funds from other foundations. Finally, and most importantly, it will allow me to devote more time to the FEX Network, including: working with local funds, board development and restructuring, and overseeing the implementation of our strategic plan.

Please join us in congratulating Charlene and Trinh, and "roll up your sleeves with us" as we embark on some exciting transitions here at the Funding Exchange.

## Staff News

### *New Baby*

**Aleah Bacquie Vaughn**, Program Officer, gave birth to Jordan Alexander Bacquie Vaughn on May 7th. They are both doing very well. Aleah returns to work in September.

### *Farewell to Linda*

I know that you will join us in saying good bye to **Linda Thurston** who served as membership program

officer, staffed media coordination and maintained the network website and list-serves. This position evolved out of Linda's original temporary assignment as Coordinator of Promotion for the new edition of "Robin Hood was Right," and we were able to support the position for several years thereafter. We will miss Linda's skills, political savvy and the energy and dedication that she brought to her work.

# FFLIC Transforms Youth Prisons to Schools



**F**amilies & Friends of Louisiana's Incarcerated Children New Orleans, LA (FFLIC) is addressing the escalating incarceration of youth and, in doing so, is developing a model of juvenile justice organizing that confronts racism, forges alliances and builds constituency leadership. They are changing the landscape of criminal justice in Louisiana and turning an upside down situation right side up.

A key part of FFLIC's community organizing program is focused on changing media portrayal of convicted teens as "delinquents" and "criminal" youth, and educating the public on the socio-economic sources of their criminal behavior, such as availability of guns, poorly organized school systems and racism.

In the past year, FFLIC used a \$25,000 grant received from the Criminal Justice Initiative of the Funding Exchange for their *Media, Messaging and Audience Development* project. The grant has allowed FFLIC to: strengthen internal capacity; develop leadership; craft effective media messages, define their audience and fight for concrete policy change for young people in Louisiana. They have hired a full time organizer, a

mother whose son was incarcerated at the now closed youth prison in Tallulah.

Through peer-to-peer support and education, and by providing referrals to essential services in the local area, they have engaged and supported over 50 families statewide.

Additionally, they have expanded their organizational capacity, launched a website and created a database for their growing members and contacts.

FFLIC has amplified the voices of their members through their media and advocacy efforts. They conduct community outreach, provide information and bring community members to present their experience at hearings and other forums. FFLIC has taken

their work beyond New Orleans, building membership in the areas of Baton Rouge, Lake Charles and Lafayette.

FFLIC is now educating state and local policymakers about the need to put resources into quality education and community development programs in place of prison spending. FFLIC is supporting the Tallulah Conversion Campaign to convert the former youth prison in Tallulah into a community college that holds the promise of wider community economic revitalization by providing jobs and long term workforce development. FFLIC is also actively organizing to replace three Louisiana youth prisons with facilities offering therapy and child development services. Through FFLIC's efforts, structures of incarceration, punitive to society's children and destructive to our collective future, are being shut down and rebuilt as schools and child services centers. FFLIC members are not only transforming communities and policies, but justice system structures themselves.

For more information on FFLIC, or to get involved, visit their website at [www.fflic.org](http://www.fflic.org)

By Jerry Snee with thanks to Jennifer Shea

You've Helped