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Dear Friends,

There can be no doubt that we are living in interesting times. New agendas are being set on every issue, from health care to environmental safety, to peace and international security. Our country has been given the promise of progressive change, even as a global economic crisis threatens the scant safety net on which many Americans rely. It is a moment in which grassroots organizing is essential, both to raise the voices of vulnerable populations and to assert agendas that are grounded in community needs. As we look forward to the new year, filled with challenge and potential, we invite you to reflect on some of our successes in 2008.

RECLAIM OUR VOTE

FEX's Reclaim Our Vote (ROV) Initiative made 17 grants totaling \$171,000 through three FEX member funds: the Fund for Southern Communities in Georgia, the Three Rivers Community Foundation in Pennsylvania, and the Chinook Fund in Colorado. Started in 2006, ROV supported projects that registered new voters, educated voters on local and national policies that impact their communities, protected the right to vote in fair and accessible elections, and encouraged people to exercise their voting rights.

The attached grants list gives you a glimpse of what your support meant to our grantees. [Click here](#) to read about the amazing coordinating efforts of a core group of organizations led by the Georgia Vote Connection Center, who harnessed decades of discontent and disenfranchisement to register over 400,000 new voters throughout Georgia. In Colorado, organizations such as Compañeros, African American Voter Registration and Information Project, and Rights for All People reached out to disaffected voters to encourage their participation in this year's electoral process. Two motions, Amendment 46—which sought to limit Affirmative Action and Amendment 47—which opposed labor and union organizing, were on Colorado's ballot. If passed, they would have adversely affected the state's residents of color. Both measures were defeated! In western Pennsylvania, the efforts of grantee organizations such as Black Political Empowerment Project, Just Harvest Education Fund, United Cerebral Palsy of Pittsburgh, and

the Welcome Center for Immigrants & Internationals, contributed to over 632,000 Pittsburgh residents casting ballots on Election Day.

On behalf of our grantees, we thank you for making this work possible.

BEYOND PRISONS

In October, Angela Davis, abolition advocate and social justice acolyte participated in a funder briefing sponsored by the Funding Exchange and the Open Society Institute, to discuss FEX's Beyond Prisons Fund. Ms. Davis spoke about the evolution of the prison abolition movement and engaged attendees in a discussion about short and long term solutions for safety and justice. Other panel participants included representatives from organizations that are the recipients of funding from the Beyond Prisons Fund. Mimi Kim from Creative Interventions (www.creative-interventions.org), Kai Barrow from Critical Resistance (www.criticalresistance.org) and Sara Kershnar from generationFIVE (www.generationfive.org), gave attendees first-hand descriptions of the work they do to create safe and healthy communities that do not depend on prisons and punishment.



Back row, l-r: Andrea Ritchie, Beyond Prisons Fund board member; Althea François, Beyond Prisons Fund board member; Angela Davis; Jamie Schweser, founding donor, Beyond Prisons Fund; Sara Kershnar, generationFIVE; Charlene Allen, Deputy Director, Funding Exchange. Kneeling: Kai Barrow, Critical Resistance; Front row, seated l-r: Cassandra Shaylor, Beyond Prisons Fund board member; Rose Braz, Beyond Prisons Fund board member; and Mimi Kim, Creative Interventions.

By supporting the growth and development of the grassroots abolition movements, the Beyond Prisons Fund seeks to bring public awareness of our current system's failure to provide true community safety. The Fund supports organizations that are committed to closing existing institutions, reforming pro-incarceration policing, and promoting alternatives to incarceration. Over the past two years, the Fund provided \$430,000 in support to nine (9) organizations who are committed to prison abolition.

The groundbreaking work of the Beyond Prisons Fund was made possible by the generous contribution of Jamie Schweser, the Fund's founding donor. For more information on Beyond Prisons, please [click here](#).

SAGUARO FUND



Saguaro grantee, Winnemem, are lacking formal tribal status, and they are shut out of the legally required consultation and review process of raising Shasta Dam despite the dire consequences it would cause their lives, culture and traditional homeland.

The largest theme that emerged from this year's Saguaro docket is environmental racism. For the first time that we can recall, fully half of the new Saguaro grantees, (excluding previous multi-year grants recipients) are involved in work to end conditions that threaten the health and/or existence of their communities. The challenges are legion; many hazardous conditions are completely ignored by the governmental agencies charged with environmental protection, and public outcries are consistently met with lies or disinterest by the industrial giants that pollute. The bright spot is that more communities of color are aware of environmental issues than ever before, and are willing to organize and conduct or commission their own scientific studies to challenge these injustices. To learn more about this critical work, [click here](#).

OUT FUND

Over the summer and early fall, OUT Fund consultant Renee Hill conducted a survey of LGBTQ funding sources to help us better define the unique contribution the OUT Fund makes to the field. The results showed that while some of the grantees on OUT's grants list overlapped with those of other funds, OUT supported the highest number of new and emerging groups, the most queer groups of color, and overall, more progressive groups of any fund surveyed.

Youth-led, youth-centered groups were dominant in this year's OUT proposals, with a significant complement of groups working at the intersection of art and social justice organizing. [Click here](#), for the details on this year's groups.



OUT Fund grantee, Obsidian Arts supports the growth of ideas valuing artists, curators, and art historians in the examination of black history and culture.

FUNDING EXCHANGE 2008 ANNUAL SKILLS CONFERENCE

This year's annual SuperSkills conference was called exceptionally timely, and included a plenary session that was dubbed "the best plenary attended in years." The conference theme: the intergenerational transfer of leadership, came at a time when several FEX Member Funds face the challenge of nurturing new and cross-generational leadership, as long-time staff and board members transition out. Kafi Blumenfield of Liberty Hill Foundation, Stephanie Guilloud of Project South, and Robbie Rodriguez of Southwest Organizing Project and the Building Movements Project, were our keynote speakers addressing the multi-dimensional task of allowing for fresh leadership perspectives while honoring the work and wisdom of previous generations, and maintaining political values. In addition to lessons learned from their own experiences, they offered alternative organizational structures to help FEX funds think more broadly about incorporating a new generation of leaders.

The conference also included a full day of workshops and training sessions on leadership development, organizing trends and donor engagement, and technology. For more information on intergenerational leadership transitions, [click here](#).

PROMOTING RACIAL JUSTICE FUNDING WITHIN PHILANTHROPY

After receiving a gift of \$100,000 from the small axe fund, FEX developed and issued an RFP to member foundations within the FEX network to support racial justice work in FEX member fund communities across the country. All member foundations ([click here for list of funds](#)) were eligible to nominate groups that had been fully vetted by their community funding boards or activist grantmaking panels. Each group received a grant from the local member foundation and a small axe Network Racial Justice grant of up to \$6,000.

Below is a partial list of the small axe fund grant recipients. Grantees' work addresses a diversity of issues affecting communities of color from housing and displacement, immigration policy, economic justice, police misconduct/community security, reproductive justice and youth empowerment. Funding promoted leadership and active engagement of low income people, African Americans, East Asians, Latinos/Latinas, Native Americans, South Asians, Women and Youth from East Coast communities all the way to Hawai'i, and supported groups in both urban and rural areas.

The Funding Exchange contributed additional resources to this initiative to pay for the development and design of political education materials that promote the racial justice work advanced by the grantees, as well as the activist grantmaking vehicles advanced by the FEX network.

small axe fund grant recipients:

Camden United, Inc.
Camden, NJ

CAUSA
Salem, OR

Citizens Alert
Chicago, IL

Chicano Youth Leadership Camp
San Diego, CA

Cleghorn Neighborhood Center
Fitchburg, MA

Chinese Staff & Workers' Association - Coalition
to Protect Chinatown and Lower East
New York, NY

Community Economic Development Network of
East Tennessee (CEDnet) - Latino Task Force
Knoxville, TN

Domestic Workers United
New York, NY

El Centro Humanitario
Denver, CO

Georgia Tribe of Eastern Cherokee Indians
Cumming, GA

Intercultural Leadership Initiative - Easing Lac du Flambeau Racial Tensions
Lac du Flambeau, WI

Kentucky Jobs With Justice – Building Coalitions in Eastern Kentucky
Louisville, KY

New Voices Pittsburgh: Women of Color for Reproductive Justice



The small axe fund grantee, Chicana/o Youth Leadership Camp is now in its 14th year. The Camp steering committee plans to expand its services from the summer camp to local high school student organizations through facilitation of workshops during the school year.

Pittsburgh, PA

Organizing Apprenticeship Project
Minneapolis, MN

South Asian Network
Los Angeles, CA

Youth Speaks Hawai'i
Honolulu, HI