



[Send to Friend](#) | [ABOUT US](#) | [CONTACT US](#) |

Network E News - July 2009

## Spring & Summer Highlights -- FEX Network Activities

### In this issue of Network E-News:

- Network Welcomes New Member: Fund for Idaho
- FEX Network Leads the Way in Media Justice
- Media Justice Fund Produces Report on Excessive Prison Phone Rates
- Criminal Justice Initiative Reaches Almost \$1 Million in Grantmaking
- Network Welcomes Two New Member Fund Executive Directors
- This Year's Skills Conference: "Celebrating Our Successes"
- And don't miss: "This is Your Brain on E-Mail"

### Network Welcomes New Member: Fund for Idaho

At its June meeting in Knoxville, TN, the Funding Exchange Board of Directors unanimously voted The Fund for Idaho (FFI) into membership in the FEX Network. Congratulations to FFI and to the FEX Network as we expand our mutual relationships, working for social justice in this important region.



*Fund for Idaho media summit attendees.*

Early this year a site visit team from the FEX network finished their report on their December visit to the Fund for Idaho in response to their request for membership in our network. The team included: Marjory Hamann (McKenzie River Gathering), Neha Mahajan (Chinook Fund), and Hye-Jung Park (network Media Justice Project Coordinator), staffed by Ron Hanft (FEX national office).

At FFI's invitation, the visit coincided with two events that FFI was holding: 1) their annual Fall Forum, an educational event for constituents that featured reports from three recent grantees and honored a long-time donor and former board chair; and 2) a day-long Media Justice Summit, that was partly funded with a grant from the FEX Media Justice Fund. Participation in these events allowed the team to meet a large number of FFI constituents. The FEX team also spent time with the staff and board of FFI. The team's report recommended membership for FFI and the FEX Board happily received this positive report and welcomed FFI into membership.

A Brief Glimpse at FFI's Program: Special mention must be made about FFI's Media Justice Summit. Over 62 people from progressive Idaho nonprofit organizations and individuals concerned about social justice attended the event and actively participated in a day-long event to discuss the media landscape in Idaho, community needs, and next steps. This was a first for Idaho. Speakers included media activists, media professionals, and community activists.

As an outcome, participants created a Media Justice Working Group to continue the dialog on media justice. Since then, people who joined that group and have been meeting every other month. An especially polished report of the Summit, put together by FFI, was widely distributed by the Media Justice Fund through various media justice channels. It has received excellent responses. [Click here](#) to see this report.

## **FEX Network Leads the Way in Media Justice**

Throughout the program year the FEX member funds participating in the Media Justice Network Grantmaking Program, in collaboration with the national office Media Justice Fund, have conducted special workshops to help equip activists and map the state of Media Justice work in our local regions. Each member fund created a unique workshop with common themes coordinated through our national staff for MJF, Hye-Jung Park. Here are some examples of network workshops just from the first few months of 2009:

### **The Foundation for Change (San Diego & Tijuana)**

Over 40 people including former and potential grantees, grant committee and board members participated in two Media Justice workshops, one in Spanish. Active discussion defined the unique Media Justice issues of border communities as well as the connections between progressive immigration policy and systemic change of the communications system.

### **Bread and Roses Community Fund**

In a workshop with three potential grantees, we mapped media justice in the Philadelphia context, reviewed grant criteria, and discussed possible projects. Participants were especially concerned about the Philadelphia budget crisis on their communities. Much discussion focused on new media and the policies that shape it. Groups represented included: The Gold Coast Buccaneers; Girls Rock Philly; and The Op-Ed News Forum.

### **Crossroads Fund**

Crossroads organized a full day Media Justice workshop with former grantees, a group that has provided communications strategy support to grassroots groups, and other local funders. The by-invitation meeting gathered over 20 practitioners of media justice from around Chicago. The workshop format included several presentations and collaborative mapping. Groups included: Beyond Media Education; Chicago Independent Radio Project; Cafe Batey Urbano; Grassroots Collaborative; We the People Media; and Radio/Video Chamba. Participants had a range of perspectives on the best communications strategy to support their work and in turn the systemic changes that would best help them to move forward. This led to lively discussion.

### **Three Rivers Community Foundation**

TRCF organized a public workshop with former and future grantees, board members, grant making committee members and the public. Over 35 people attended. Participating groups included the Black Political Empowerment Project); the Council of American Islamic Relations; Rustbelt Radio, Just Harvest; and PCTV. Much discussion took place around the misrepresentation of specific Pittsburgh neighborhoods and the people who live in them. Participants felt challenged by the task of bringing a social justice shift to our communication systems when the current journalism structure seems to be collapsing.

### **Haymarket Peoples Fund**

Over 20 people came together for a morning workshop including former and potential grantees, members of the Media Justice Giving Circle, and staff for a morning workshop. Participants mapped a broad creative vision for a communications system that supports a global and environmental justice framework. They challenged themselves to connect such systemic change to their current work.

## **Media Justice Fund Produces Report on Excessive Prison Phone Rates**

Last fall the Media Justice Fund at the national office conducted research to better understand what communications policy issues impact social justice activists and the communities they serve. We talked with activists from all over the country who are connected with the FEX network. We identified many common concerns. The high cost of prison phone calls is one issue that topped a number of activists' lists, yet the Media Reform movement and progressive telecommunications community was largely unaware of it.

In April 2009, Media Justice Fund released a report: "Criminal Charges: Excessive Prison Phone Rates Take a Toll on Innocent Families" to bring this issue to the attention of media reform movement. The response has been tremendous. Telecom industry workers, media activists, scholars and reform groups offered praise for bringing an important problem to their attention including the United Church of Christ, the National Hispanic Media Coalition, Prometheus Radio Project, IndyMedia and ComCare. Many pledged to support the issue.

Free Press featured the MJF research in their weekly podcast Media Minutes. The Media and Democracy Coalition featured MJF in a conference call to educate their national network on the issue. Another national group, the Media Action Grassroots

Network (MAGnet), adopted the issue as one of their three campaigns this year. We believe we have successfully introduced an important communication rights issue into the agendas of groups who will take it on and move it forward. [Click here](#) to see this report.

## **Criminal Justice Initiative Reaches Almost \$1 Million in Grantmaking**

In our February newsletter we reviewed all the grantmaking programs based in the national office that had completed their fall grantmaking. The Criminal Justice Initiative (CJI) was still in process then, but we can now share this report on CJI's great work:

The Criminal Justice Initiative, a giving circle of donor/activists and organizers focused on significant criminal justice reform, met in January, 2009. Thirteen organizations were awarded grants by the panel, including grants to organizations that had received CJI seed grants and are now doing critical work in the field.

One such organization is WORTH, a group comprised of formerly incarcerated women, mostly mothers, received a CJI grant to continue work on extending parental rights to incarcerated parents with a demonstrated commitment to their children and to support WORTH's participation in a campaign to outlaw the shackling of incarcerated women during labor.

This recent cycle completed a three-year commitment to an important but rare grantmaking strategy aimed at strengthening the voice and leadership of formerly incarcerated people within the criminal justice movement for change. With the \$165,000 granted in this cycle, CJI came a hair's breath away from a \$1 million grantmaking total since its inception in 2001!

At the most recent Spring meeting of the CJI circle on May 16, 2009 at the home of one of the circle members, the panel praised the donor/activist grantmaking model that brought their divergent experiences together in a cohesive program. They committed themselves to continuing their unique grantmaking focus and the critical work it supports.

## **Network Welcomes Two New Member Fund Executive Directors**

Two member funds have begun a new period of leadership with new Executive Directors during FY09. The Headwaters Foundation for Justice welcomed Trista Harris as their new ED last fall. Trista comes with extensive foundation experience in the Twin Cities, as well as previous experience in non-profit healthcare and education. She is a graduate of Howard University and the University of Minnesota's Humphrey Institute in public policy. Trista is one of the new young leaders in the FEX network who will bring many insights about moving social justice philanthropy forward.

Three Rivers Community Foundation has welcomed Nick Palazzetti as their new Executive Director, beginning just this spring. Nick brings a strong background in

consulting with non-profits in fundraising, specializing in capital campaigns. He is interested in expanding representation in TRCF from the counties surrounding their traditional Pittsburgh base, and in further diversifying TRCF's board. Nick also has ideas for how TRCF can reach out to new funders, both individuals and foundations. Nick will be the new TRCF representative on the FEX board of directors.

## **This Year's Skills Conference: "Celebrating Our Successes"**

The theme of this year's network 'Skills' conference was "Celebrating our Successes: Telling Our Stories & Measuring Our Impact." - June 11-14, '09. Our host fund was the Appalachian Community Fund based in Knoxville, TN. The stellar planning team this year included: Gaye Evans and Darryl Cannady (ACF), Karla Nicholson (Haymarket Peoples Fund), Richard Rodrigues, (Hawaii Peoples Fund), Carole Zoom (McKenzie River Gathering Fdtn), & Becky Rafter (FSC), staffed by Joy Linscheid (FEX national office).

Innovations appeared in many aspects of the conference program. Here are some highlights:

A "Festival of Success Gallery Opening" - exhibits and power point displays opened the conference. Workshops addressed promoting and expanding our successes; a case study in the ever-illusive evaluation process, successful donor programs, and bringing grantees together for stronger movement-building.

A very special event was a day trip to northeastern Tennessee to see the devastating effects of mountaintop removal mining. In contrast to the successful van tours last year in Los Angeles, this was a very different setting for social justice work. Politically significant organizing is going on in the Appalachian region around mountaintop removal, and these efforts are gaining increasing attention nationwide.



*Mountaintop removal equipment. Photo from the Skills Conference attendees' day trip to northeastern Tennessee. Courtesy of Gary Clark, Fund for Santa Barbara.*

A special lunch discussion enabled lots of networking with our pals in the network, specifically around reflections on impacts of the current economy. We also traveled for dinner to the historic Highlander Research and Education Center, a long-time training center for community and labor organizing.

Sunday morning we concluded with spoken word and songs, shared by conference participants, expressing very moving personal experiences and struggles for justice in their own lives. The conference participants loudly cheered the planning team and the Appalachian Community Fund for putting together this great conference.

## ***This is Your Brain on E-Mail***

"Wait, what was I just doing?" University researcher Thomas Jackson found that it takes 64 seconds to recover your train of thought after interruption by email. Since people tend to open an email every time they receive one, most people spend eight hours a week trying to figure out what they were just doing before opening that last email. Source: [drthomasjackson.com](http://drthomasjackson.com)

*This issue of the Funding Exchange Network E-New is provided by: Editor: Ron Hanft, Contributors: Hye-Jung Park, Aleah Bacquie-Vaughn, and Joy Linscheid, Production: Nanda Witharanage.*

If you received this message from a friend, you can sign up at [www.fex.org](http://www.fex.org).

---

Want to unsubscribe? <http://www.fex.org/ondelivery/>  
Visit your subscription management page to modify your email communication preferences or update your personal profile.

---

Funding Exchange  
666 Broadway  
Suite 500  
New York, NY 10012  
USA  
[www.fex.org](http://www.fex.org) | [info@fex.org](mailto:info@fex.org)

---

This email meets Federal CAN SPAM laws. Learn more about CAN SPAM at:  
<http://www.ftc.gov/bcp/edu/pubs/business/e-commerce/bus61.shtm>