

NetworkNews

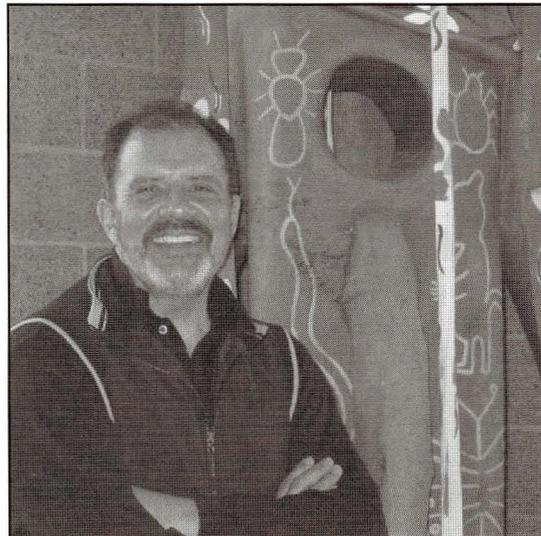
Issue 1 • 2004



From the Learning Curve...

Ron McKinley, NNG Executive Director

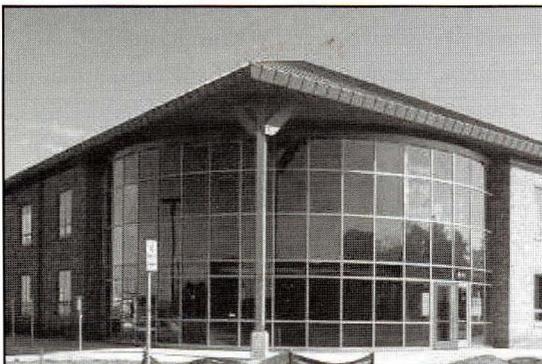
THE RESPONSIBILITY OF WRITING this piece has been somewhat daunting. Even though I have had the opportunity to talk to or e-mail many of you, it is, in a sense, my first formal communication to the entire membership since becoming executive director of NNG. As you can imagine, there is massive attention being given to the fall conference and to the issues with which we and our grantees grapple daily. You will be given an in-depth look at those issues in other parts of this newsletter and in other communications over the next several months. My assignment is to fill in around the edges. There's so much happening right now that I've concluded my best approach is simply to bold some categories, fill in updates, and worry about style and form in future pieces. So...



Ron McKinley

The Move to Minnesota

We are in the process of finalizing relationships with several other progressive grantmaking organizations to create a Center for Progressive Philanthropy. We will share space, office equipment and staff in an effort to stimulate innovation and collaboration while increasing efficiencies in our operations. Currently, the Headwaters Foundation for Justice (longtime supporter of NNG) and the Winds of Peace Foundation (members of NNG and GwoB) are formally committed to the center. Native Americans in Philanthropy (office) and Asian Americans/Pacific Islanders in Philanthropy (project office) are considering joining us,



The Phillips Eco-Enterprise Center

New NNG Address!

2801 21st Ave S, #132
 Minneapolis, MN 55407
 phone: 612.724.0702
 fax: 612.724.0705
 nng@nng.org

Ron McKinley
 Executive Director
 612-724-0703
 ron@nng.org

Mari Bongiovanni
 Program Director
 612-724-00704
 mari@nng.org

Donya Dawson
 Office Manager
 612-724-0702
 donya@nng.org

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and we are pursuing one other partner. We will be housed in The Phillips Eco-Enterprise Center, voted one of the best, most innovative 'green' buildings in the country. Headwaters and NNG have jointly raised the capital necessary to create the center, and we anticipate completion of the build-out in late May. We will be announcing a reception to celebrate the collaboration and the opening of the center on either July 7th or 8th, so pencil it in if you'll be near the Twin Cities on those dates.

Thank you

As many of you already know, NNG staff members Nicole Trombley and Julio Dantas have moved on to new challenges. Julio has returned to graduate school full time, and Nicole left NNG at the end of April to become a licensed bodyworker and massage therapist. Nicole and the new NNG staff have been engaged in an extraordinary exercise of knowledge transfer to minimize negative impact on our support of our members. On behalf of the board and membership of NNG, thank you Nicole and Julio. Your commitment over the past years and your willingness to assist in the transitions of 2004 have given us the momentum necessary to make NNG essential to the health of philanthropy.

New People

There are two new people on staff at NNG. By the end of this year, you'll get to know them by voice, keystroke, and, hopefully, in person.



Mari Bongiovanni joined our staff as Program Director on January 21st, 2004. Mari is responsible for the conference, newsletters, and the con-

tent of regional meetings that NNG sponsors or co-sponsors. Mari brings a lifetime commitment to social justice issues. She has a master's degree in social work with a focus in community organizing. She has 20 years experience in conference and meeting planning, serving as director of the University of Minnesota's Earle Brown Conference Center for over a decade. Just prior to coming to NNG, Mari was the director of Wilder Forest, a 1300 acre youth development and conference center in the Twin Cities that focused its work on multicultural leadership in low income communities. In her volunteer life, Mari is dedicated to sustainable agriculture, inner city leadership and equity for LGBT youth. She can be reached at 612.724.0704 and mari@nng.org.



Donya Dawson joined NNG on March 3rd as our Office Manager. She will be our administrative logistics person, and will be our communications hub with members and among the various NNG committees and working groups. We will share Donya with the Headwaters Foundation for Justice, and as our Center for Progressive Philanthropy develops, she will be responsible for the smooth operation of the entire center. Donya served the Wilder Center for Communities organization development and leadership programs prior to coming to NNG. As a volunteer, Donya has been deeply involved in her community through service to the Urban League, the Aids Awareness Coalition, the Sexual Violence Center and several other community nonprofits. Donya can be reached at 612.724.0702 and donya@nng.org.

Read More at nng.org

Meetings With Members

I have spent much of the first quarter of 2004 talking to members about NNG and the role NNG needs to play in a very complex philanthropic landscape. Rather than organizing formal meetings with agendas and outcomes, I've taken a more informal approach. I've met individually with members in Los Angeles, San Francisco, New York and Boston. In Seattle, Alan and Andrea Rabinowitz, long-time members and supporters of NNG's work, hosted a reception where a dozen NNG members and friends had the opportunity to share their history with NNG and their hopes for the future. In May, I will travel to Atlanta, where Barbara Meyer and Joan Garner will co-host a reception with Martin Lehfeld for NNG members and other grantmakers in the Atlanta area. In New York, I will attend the May retreat of International Funders of Indigenous People (IFIP). I will also travel to meet with members in Washington, D. C. and Chicago before the end of the summer. I am meeting with current, active members, members who are not currently active but maintain their membership and with past members who have left NNG for some reason.

I am hearing common messages wherever I travel. These messages will help us frame our 2004 and 2005 NNG agenda. So, what are you saying? You are of one voice in your support for an annual conference at which members can grapple with the complexity of the social justice issues we face in our field. You continue to emphasize the impor-

tance of continuing our focus on media and electoral politics. The people of color caucus (POCC) is building momentum and currently considering several possibilities of collaborative work that will elevate the visibility of people of color in philanthropy. I am also hearing that NNG needs to broaden its appeal to others in the field that are engaged in progressive work, but have assumed NNG to be inaccessible to them. Through collaborative work with other affinity groups, you suggest that we will be able to strengthen our voice, and as we learned last year, "build power for social justice."

Finally, I am hearing a real interest in continuing our longstanding commitment to national and international issues, but I'm also hearing a call to focus some of our energy on regional forums that will attract participation by grantmakers that support justice work on more local agendas. Keep your eyes open for gatherings in your region that are sponsored or co-sponsored by NNG.

Remember

I am really enjoying the opportunity to get to know NNG members. Whether it's by e-mail, phone, or in person, I welcome your thoughts, your suggestions and your engagement in NNG's work. Let Mari, Donya, or me know about the exciting work you're doing. Ask us the questions you need answered. Use us to explore the possibilities you imagine, and if you're in the Twin Cities, stop by. We'd love to see you. ■

NNG's Grantmakers Directory

NNG has currently stopped distributing the Grantmakers Directory. Thank to all of our members who helped distribute the remaining 600 copies to their grantees this past Winter. We know this document is a critical resource for both our members and community organizers. We will be updating it and will keep you posted as that timeline gets developed.

Long time NNG Member Wins Robert W. Scrivner Award



Congratulations go to NNG Member Chet Tchozewski, winner of the Council on Foundations 2004 Robert W. Scrivner Award for Creative Grantmaking. Chet is recognized as a pioneer in international grantmaking and is the founder and executive director of Global Greengrants Fund. The fund makes small grants (typically \$500 to \$5,000) to grassroots groups working around the world to help people protect the environment, live sustainably, preserve biodiversity and gain a voice in their own future. As their website says, "In a way, we are in the business of hope . . . Who knows where the next great idea or environmental leader will emerge? Who knows what action will have the greatest impact? Like an incubator of positive change, we can be there at the beginning as great things begin to happen."

Initiative Aims to Increase Funding – And Effectiveness – Of Racial Equity Work

Lori Villarosa, Director of the Philanthropic Initiative for Racial Equity

Lori Villarosa was previously the program officer that developed and managed the U.S. Race and Ethnic Relations Program of the C.S. Mott Foundation. In this capacity, she worked with hundreds of nonprofit organizations for more than a decade, identifying and managing more than \$24 million in grants that directly supported work combating institutional racism.

AFTER A RISE IN foundation support for work that explicitly addressed issues of race in the late 1990s, a combination of factors contributed to some significant setbacks in the past few years. Clearly, as in most sectors, there was a rise in the amount of funding and then a serious drop relating to the overall economic downturn in 2001. However, unlike other areas, the drop in funding for work around racism was beginning to stagnate and then decline disproportionate to the overall cuts. In some cases this was due to increasing conservatism on the part of some funders amidst the changing political tone of the nation. In other cases, the expectations of what work on race relations and anti-racist efforts would be achieving in a relatively short amount of time was either unrealistic or simply unclear.

Adding to these issues, the growth that was positively borne of the increase in funding for work on these issues was not always matched with the communications and infrastructure needs of a growing field of work. This began resulting in organizations that often had similar goals having far less shared understanding of one another's work at the same time that competition for limited resources was increasing. As organizations increasingly challenged the efficacy of each other's approach, they were more apt to undermine total support for the field of race relations and racial justice work rather than simply displace any individual organization.

Fortunately, there have now been increased efforts to bridge this nascent area of work on anti-racist organizing, racial justice advocacy, and race relations programs. There have been a number of intermediaries attempting to clarify language within the field and sharpen their understanding of their own and each other's change theories and strategies. At the same time, a number of those in the grantmaking community that remained supportive of this work have become aware of the need to strengthen the infrastructure of the field and do their own internal struggling to clarify what they want to achieve through their grantmaking.

In order to stem the tide of any further reversal of foundation commitment, and more impor-

tantly, strive for greater forward momentum and reach out to new funding sources, the **Leadership Conference on Civil Rights Education Fund (LCCREF)** has launched a three-year initiative intended to increase the amount and effectiveness of resources aimed at combating institutional and structural racism in communities through capacity building, education, and convening of grantmakers and grantseekers. With multiyear support from the **C.S. Mott Foundation**, the **Philanthropic Initiative for Racial Equity (PRE)** seeks to build both financial and programmatic resources to combat racism through the following strategies:

- 1) Increasing grantmakers' understanding** of the strengths and weaknesses of various race relations or anti-racist efforts, and providing opportunities for grantmakers to learn and strategize about cutting edge racial equity issues;
- 2) Engaging in internal assessments** of foundations' institutional needs around racial equity and diversity; and assisting anti-racist training organizations to tailor their programs for use by grantmakers;
- 3) Consulting with nonprofits** that explicitly address issues of institutional and structural racism (or, "lead with race") to strengthen their capacity, including developing and maintaining healthy relationships with funding organizations; and
- 4) Working at the local level** in a variety of settings to assist community leaders and local funders in coordinating the most effective race relations or racial equity programs, including identifying appropriate indicators of success in order to document and advance the level of impact.

An advisory committee of nationally respected experts in racial justice, civil rights and philanthropy, including community-based practitioners, researchers, intermediaries and grantmakers, guides criteria for project selection. The emphasis is on those institutions that have significant resources or the greatest leadership potential to increase philanthropy's comfort level with issues of racism within different realms.

This initiative builds on many lessons learned about effective practices from the organizations that were supported by the Mott Foundation's U.S. Race and Ethnic Relations grantmaking program. It also benefits from many discussions over the past decade with other foundations and other program officers that have either been successful or tried and been challenged in addressing racial equity through a range of grantmaking programs. Through the experiences gained from so many partners, PRE recognizes many of the challenges currently facing both the nonprofit and philanthropic sectors, but operates from the perspective that none of these are insurmountable.

The following are some of the specific projects that PRE and its partners are engaging in to advance understanding and support for work on racism:

1. Youth and Racial Equity Project (YRE)

PRE was engaged by the Ford Foundation to conduct an examination of the ways that racial justice is currently understood and addressed in the fields of youth development and youth organizing, and an exploration of future racial justice concepts and strategies in these areas. With its partner, *mosaic consulting*, PRE has done three regional and one national convening of key practitioners, field leaders, and funders, and will follow up with a funders briefing and final report to be broadly disseminated.

2. Structural Racisms Caucus (SRC)

The Structural Racisms Caucus is comprised of academics, advocates, activists, funders and community-based practitioners that are doing work through an explicit structural racism lens. This collaboration was created to coordinate the work that is being done around structural racism, as well as formulate tools that would engage a larger community around this subject. The Structural Racisms Caucus is co-sponsored by Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity, Applied Research Center, Aspen Institute Roundtable on Community Change, Harvard Civil Rights Project, the Institute on Race & Poverty, and PRE.

3. Civil Rights Communications Project

PRE, in collaboration with the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights, LCCR Education Fund and the USC Annenberg Institute for Justice and Jour-



nalism is conducting a survey for the country's leading civil rights organizations designed to assess the communication strategies and needs of civil rights organizations. This assessment will inform a series of convenings to assist civil rights organizations on the most effective way to construct messages around issues of race and racial justice. PRE's role in the partnership will be specifically geared toward surfacing and then addressing resource barriers, and engaging foundations that are interested in communications to identify challenges and opportunities. Communications Network, an affinity group of grantmakers concerned with communications, is also engaged in this effort and will likely be a formal partner in some of the convenings.

4. Network of Alliances Bridging Race and Ethnicity (NABRE) Project

PRE has partnered with the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies to help key community foundations and community building initiatives at a local level increase the coordination and effectiveness of race relations and anti-racist efforts. Through a series of How-To Forums and Funders Briefings, this partnership will provide a space for community organizations and leaders to discuss the anti-racist work being done in their community, give insight on how to coordinate with others in the same community, and ultimately, increase the amount of local and regional funding aimed at such work. The project is working with local foundations and community organizations in the following four sites: Boston, St. Paul, Santa Barbara, and Knoxville (representing the Appalachian region).

PRE is also in early stages of discussion and planning around several other major projects including: African-American and Latino community coalition-building; linking the capacity-building and anti-racist fields; health and racism; and reproductive health and racism. ■

People of Color Caucus Preconference on October 16, 2004

The Philanthropic Initiative for Racial Equity (PRE) has been engaged by the People of Color Caucus to conduct a skills-building workshop on racial equity grantmaking at a special POCC pre-conference day in Miami in October 2004.

The session will be held on Saturday, Oct. 16, before the annual NNG conference, as part of a full-day POCC event focusing on strengthening relationships among grantmakers of color, enhancing skills and developing an advocacy agenda for grantmaking that incorporates racial equity and awareness throughout the work. Additional details about the session and the agenda will be shared during the coming months.

2004 NNG Conference Planning Committee

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• **Gihan Perera**, Miami Workers
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MacArthur Foundation • **Gepsie
Metullus**, Sant La

DEMOCRACY BOUND:

Moving a Contract for Social Justice

BASED ON ALL OF the energy from the Tucson conference, you will be eager to know that plans for NNG's 2004 conference are well underway. Both the NNG Board and the 2004 Conference Planning Committee intend to use this upcoming conference as an opportunity to build momentum and deepen the conversations and alliance building that began last year.

This year's theme is DEMOCRACY BOUND: Moving a Contract for Social Justice. Mark your calendars for October 16-19, 2004 and plan to explore global social justice issues in the "Northern Caribbean" setting of Miami, Florida.

The Miami conference will convene close to 350

DEMOCRACY BOUND Moving a Contract for Social Justice



fundors in Miami, for a theme-centered program. The conference format will be a mix of member-designed workshops, site visits into Miami and Southern Florida communities, plenary sessions, critical dialogue on our roles as funders, networking opportunities, caucuses & working groups, and local cultures & music.

Registration & Accommodations Details

Registration documents will be mailed out and posted on the web site on August 1, 2004. Membership registration rates will be comparable to last year and guest room rates for the Wyndham Miami Beach Resort are \$119 per night. The hotel expects to "sell out" some of our dates, so please make your reservation as soon as our materials arrive in August.

Conference Theme

These are certainly not the best of times. Whether the reports come from abroad or from within our own neighborhoods, our days and nights are filled with too many stories of hardship, loss, inequity and privation. Beyond the armed conflicts, the struggles for economic

opportunity, civil liberties and social and natural harmony – here and around the world – have made us insecure about our present and the prospects for our tomorrow. The promise of democracy seems at times but a distant dream, bound in chains of disappointment and discontent.

And yet, in these failings come real opportunities for change. In addition to the events of the day, this historical moment is marked by renewed focus and urgency among advocates for social justice. Perhaps to a degree unseen since the Civil Rights Movement, the campaign this season is no longer limited to a particular electoral outcome; it has become a long-term struggle for democracy itself.

As fundors committed to a tomorrow where equity, liberty and opportunity are more

than a distant dream, we have a responsibility to seize the moment today. Alone we are certainly not powerful enough to nurture and sustain social justice. But together, as grant-makers, advocates, and institutions of social influence, our power is real. As in years past, in Miami this October we will consider our responsibilities as fundors. This year, however, we will articulate those responsibilities as a community of fundors: defining a contract to one another and to our shared vision for the future.

2004 is the time to organize our philanthropic partnership and to develop a common framework for change. We can't afford not to. Now more than ever we are: Democracy Bound: Moving a Contract for Social Justice.

Cultivating Democracy NNG Board Co-Chairs

Charlene Allen, Funding Exchange
Joe Wilson, Public Welfare Foundation

IT HAS BEEN SAID that democracy is a fragile plant, even when deeply rooted, and regularly needs to be cultivated. As the daily news of war, corporate dominance, and government secrecy and repression remind us of the fragility of democracy in this country, we are reminded, too, to cultivate that which makes democracy strong: educated and informed citizens whose civil rights and liberties are intact. As grantmakers and members of NNG, we have the opportunity to witness and support the work of building democracy through organizations that analyze, organize, and fight for accountability in spite of all the obstacles.

With such opportunity comes responsibility for continued support. Like the organizations we fund, NNG has overcome challenges over the past few years when the world in general, and particularly the non-profit world, has struggled with a harsh environment and a reduction of resources for justice work. Now, in 2004, NNG is assembling an exciting future. Inspired by the energy and vitality of the membership, the Board of Directors is invigorated, active and strong. And, Ron McKinley,

our new Executive Director, is bringing incredible dynamism to NNG's mission. Building on the successful Tucson conference and the fresh ideas of the caucuses and working groups, NNG's staff and Board have adopted priorities for the coming year that will help grantmakers develop their role in the struggle to strengthen democracy. Our priority areas are: reclaiming the public media; increasing community-based electoral engagement; continued

leadership in philanthropic reform, and supporting the leadership of grantmakers of color in determining agendas to benefit our communities.

Ron is already meeting with long-time and potential new NNG folks around the country to deepen and expand upon this work.

The 2004 conference planning committee has a solid agenda for an important event in the heart of Dade County, Florida, just months prior to the critical presidential election.

We hope that you will join with us to ensure that NNG's work is not only sustained but expanded. While wise minds may differ as to whether democracy is the ultimate form of government, it is undeniable that in times of repression a strong and knowledgeable public is a powerful antidote. ■

As members of NNG, we have the opportunity to support the work of building democracy through organizations that organize, and fight for accountability.

Welcome to Bookda Gheisar! NNG's Newest Board Member

NNG's board has appointed Bookda Gheisar, Executive Director of A Territory Resource Foundation (ATR) in Seattle, WA to serve on NNG's board. Bookda has been an NNG member since 2001, and served on the planning committee for the NNG conference in Tucson last fall. She has been the Executive Director of ATR since mid-May of 2001. She took on this leadership role because she shares ATR's passion and commitment to social justice and meeting the needs of marginalized communities. Bookda has spent the last 20 years working in non-profit organizations with a strong mission, vision, and commitment to working with disenfranchised populations. Her work at ATR follows seven years of experience as the Executive Director of Seattle's Cross-Cultural Health Care Program, which focuses on the health care needs of the immigrant and refugee populations.



Send NNG the Shirt Off Your Back

In an attempt to reduce the sound levels in our two-story warehouse suite cheaply, NNG and the Center for Progressive Philanthropy want t shirts from your organization or from the organizations that you fund. Please mail them and be sure to see them on display when you visit us in Minneapolis.



DEMOCRACY BOUND

Moving a Contract for Social Justice

Network News

Designer
Small World Productions,
San Francisco

NNG Staff

Mari Bongiovanni
Program Director

Donya Dawson
Office Manager

Ron McKinley
Executive Director

We welcome feedback and story ideas. Contact mari@nng.org

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2801 21st Ave S, #132
Minneapolis, MN 55407
www.nng.org



October 16-19, 2004
Miami Florida



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