NATIONAL NETWORK OF GRANTMAKERS

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NNG

INSIDE

A Look Back on our 2004 Miami Conference

Looking Ahead to 2005

NNG ANNUAL CONFERENCE ATTRACTS 270 PARTICIPANTS TO MIAMI

In October, NNG convened over 270 members in Miami to explore **DEMOCRACY BOUND: Moving a Contract for Social Justice**. Dr. Frank Gilliam, UCLA, helped us identify our shared values that form the basis of our social justice philanthropy. We participated in workshops and tours that showcased the collaborations of grassroots organizations, policy groups, researchers, and grantmakers. We examined models of NNG's strategies for social justice including community organizing and base building, policy and advocacy, capacity building, and transforming philanthropy. We interacted with panels on international and southern fundraising challenges. We toured the issues in South Florida and looked at how these situations translate to other regions and issues. Political commentator Arianna Huffington closed our conference with her remarks on the state of the world and the 2004 elections.

Besides the official conference sessions, caucuses and working groups gathered, and twelve open space sessions assembled to consider current topics in philanthropy. With the national election right around the corner, civic engagement was a high priority in many gatherings. Receptions, movies, marketplace demonstrations, dancers and performers, music and food fanned the networking flames. Fifty members of the people of color caucus arrived one day early for a first-ever POCC preconference. Also, eleven NNG'rs stayed on in Miami for two days of grassroots doorknocking with local community based organizations.

NNG BEGINS BUILDING THE CONTRACT

On the final morning of the **DEMOCRACY BOUND** conference, attendees rolled up their sleeves during a highly interactive large and small group work session called "Building the Contract." Facilitated by John Vaughn, Kalpana Krishnamurthy, Mary Manuel and Ari Matusiak, the goal was to move NNG toward developing a long term vision and plan. Dr. Frank Gilliam's framework on "level one" values provided the roadmap for the first steps of this journey.

After brainstorming level one values, small groups identified the following values as essential to NNG: democracy, shared responsibility, justice, community, candor and opportunity. **Justice** and **Community** emerged as two primary values that influence NNG's work.

Small groups then looked at **Justice** and **Community** through the lenses of the four strategies identified at the 2003 conference: **transforming philanthropy**; **organizing/base-building**; **policy and advocacy**; and **capacity building**.

Using these values and strategies as a backdrop, NNG members brainstormed about programs for NNG during 2005 and beyond. The Board will refine this list throughout the upcoming year. Regional gatherings and strategic collaborations with other organizations, associations, identity groups, and affinity groups will serve as venues for these discussions.

BRAINSTORMING THE POSSIBILITIES...

TRANSFORMING PHILANTHROPY

NNG could:

- Train newcomers to philanthropy
- Develop relationships among grantmakers
- Enhance collaborations among associations and affinity groups
- Discuss and debate progressive perspectives
- Promote accountability
- Bring community voices to the table with board, staff, and grantmakers
- Disseminate information on how to shift monies to social justice
- Facilitate discussion of changing patterns of grantmaking

POLICY AND ADVOCACY

NNG could:

- Support think tanks
- Identify policies and programs that promote justice
- Improve public education of social justice
- Develop a greater NNG community
- Train for coalition building
- Provide translation for policy and advocacy to community
- Examine policy advocacy. Where do we want to go and why?
- Help nonprofits and foundations understand that they can do much more

CAPACITY BUILDING

NNG could support:

- Leadership development
- Resource development
- Communication and messaging
- Organizational development
- Welcome Wagon to progressive philanthropy
- Communications and collaborations
- Raising the visibility of social justice funding

RON MCKINLEY

A Review of 2004 and a Preview of 2005

The National Network of Grantmakers (NNG) had an extraordinary year in 2004. There was more change during the year than any organization would typically experience in five years! Our Spring newsletter talked about NNG's new staff, new headquarters in Minnesota, and the Center for Progressive Philanthropy.

The members and leadership of NNG made our 2004 conference, **Democracy Bound: Moving a Contract for Social Justice**, a great success. I want to thank all those involved in planning and supporting the conference. The success of this year's conference has given NNG a new frame for our work, which I'll describe a little later.

NNG looks different today than it did in January of 2004. At the end of 2004 we have 270 members, 60 of whom are new to NNG. These new members joining long–time NNG members have energized the environment. We have expanded the board of directors adding Ron White, Bookda Gheiser, Ari Matusiak and Elsa Vega-Perez. These new members add wonderful new skills and connections to an already great board.

In 2004, NNG moved closer to stabilizing the organization. Our 2005 agenda will be much more focused on programs. Now is the time for us to move to action. Join us...there are exciting times ahead!

The People of Color Caucus (POCC) hit its stride in 2004. I want to thank Kolu Zigbi and Sharon Gary-Smith for their wonderful leadership. The POCC and NNG leadership agree that NNG is a stronger organization, and philanthropy is a stronger field with greater involvement of people of color in positions of influence and power in the field. With this common understanding, NNG will consider engagement of communities of color as essential to success in all its work.

Another exciting development in 2004 was the re-invigoration of NNG working groups and caucuses. We are excited that Grantmakers Without Borders (GWoB), the women's caucus, the queer caucus, the youth caucus and the working group on funders and media have all identified leadership that will work closely with the board and staff to present NNG members and others in philanthropy quality programs in regional sites. They will also advise in the planning of the 2005 conference. New groups are beginning to explore the possibility of forming working groups or caucuses. A group interested in long term strategic thinking convened at the conference to explore possible roles.

In 2005, we will celebrate NNG's twenty-fifth anniversary. During our celebratory year, NNG will pursue funding to upgrade our website to a much more interactive tool for members and others to access information. A major component of this upgrade will be an on-line directory (replacing our old hard copy version) that will be easily updated to assure current information is available to users. We intend to complete this effort as part of our commitment to a second quarter century of serving progressive communities through philanthropy.

In 2005, it is our goal to co-host three regional meetings which will focus on building a stronger voice for independent media, strengthening the voice of NNG members in conventional, mainstream media, and engaging our communities in building civil society and restoring democracy. Partners in this work will include **Media Works**, **Mass Vote**, and **The Alliance for Nonprofit Management**.

Our conference in 2005 will move to Semiahmoo, a resort about three hours north of Seattle that is tribally owned, giving us an opportunity in one track to explore some of the economic, environmental, cultural, spiritual and political issues faced by indigenous people in the United States and Canada as well as other parts of the world. **International Funders for Indigenous People** (IFIP) and **Native Americans in Philanthropy** have agreed to participate fully with us in the planning process.

PEOPLE OF COLOR CAUCUS DRAWS FIFTY ATTENDEES IN ITS FIRST PRECONFERENCE

By Sharon Gary-Smith and Kolu Zigbi, Co-Chairs

During the 2004 NNG Conference in Miami, the People of Color Caucus (POCC) hosted a day-long pre-conference retreat that provided networking and training to 50 members. The day culminated with the creation of an action agenda for the caucus and recommendations for NNG. Following are the People of Color Caucus' recommendations to NNG:

We want to see NNG become a recognized leader in the field of social change grantmaking by promoting ways that philanthropic institutions can support grantmaking that builds racial equity and strengthens groups that challenge structural racism through clear critical analysis and strong change-oriented action-plans.

We recommend that NNG develop a Racial Equity Committee charged with responsibility for identifying racial equity funding practices currently used by members, stimulating dialogue about successes and challenges around these practices, and recommending actions that NNG can take to promote the adoption of best-practices as well as effective ways to track progress in the field.

The POCC believes that NNG's leadership would have impact beyond its current membership and could expand social change leadership within progressive philanthropy by offering:

- A place to start—for foundations that are unsure of racial equity grantmaking and how to come 'aboard';
- A space for sharing models of success as well as challenges to overcome in order to move a racial justice agenda;
- 'Next steps'—for foundations unsure of the order of the work, or unable to document the benefits/results of their efforts;
- A community of 'practice' in which to share lessons learned and provide training opportunities, promote collaborations and initiatives;
- An insightful picture of what practices make NNG's members progressive, and useful definitions and discourse that move social equity and justice grantmaking beyond rhetoric toward practical application.

We recommend that NNG take action prior to the next conference to stimulate, re-energize and connect all the identity groups—queer, youth, women, indigenous people and people of color—so that we can deepen our understanding of our various interests and explore common goals.

The POCC realizes that the systemic institutionalization of oppression has long-lasting effects, including structural racism, sexism, classism and homophobia. These have kept people of color and others isolated and fragmented, weakening the progressive social justice movement and interrupting our efforts to achieve equity, promote our issues and interests, and ensure "a seat at the table" in policy-making arenas – including within the leadership and decision-making of progressive philanthropy.

The People of Color Caucus steering committee is committed to working to realize these goals alongside our NNG colleagues. We invite all of you, regardless of your racial identity, to engage in dialogue with us about the agenda we have set forth and, even better, to roll up your sleeves to work with us. Please email us at digitdeva@yahoo.com to share your views and offer ways to work together. We look forward to your participation and partnership.

ORGANIZING/BASE-BUILDING

NNG could:

- Direct funders to progressive issues
- Increase membership within NNG
- Create space and structure for discussion
- Break down fears and encourage risk taking
- Deal with the time lag in funding
- Deal with format of RFPs
- Support new models
- Be honest when philanthropy makes mistakes
- Move money quickly
- Democratize philanthropy
- Increase community members joining philanthropic movement
- Develop partnerships with other organizations
- Document success
- Find ways to fund outside of 501c3
- Develop progressive think tanks grounded in community
- Develop policy and advocacy agenda
- Organize for accountability of endowments
- Support documentation of injustice
- Fund message development
- Fund democratic community base-building

PEOPLE OF COLOR CAUCUS RECOGNIZES ADISA DOUGLAS

During the People of Color Preconference, a special tribute was given to Adisa Douglas whose commitment to racial equity and mentorship has been a cornerstone of her long tenure in progressive philanthropy. Adisa was honored for founding the POCC 21 years ago and writing and preserving its history. The POCC presented Adisa with a handcrafted writer's journal covered with glass beads in a "rainbow of colors" to represent her colleagues.

Three sessions at the 2004 NNG Conference were selected by student intern Dawn Goldschmitz for further research, elaboration and publication. The following are brief summaries of her work. Complete documents can be downloaded from www.nng.org.

FUNDING THINK TANKS

The Good, the Bad, and the Difficult

In recognition of the need to energize the progressive movement in Colorado, three NNG members, Linda Shoemaker, Wade Buchanan, and Jean Hardisty teamed up in 2000 to create a state-level research and policy center, or think tank. Efforts began with an intensive 'listening campaign' targeted towards local activists and resulted in the formation of a 501© (3) organization, the Bell Policy Center. Today, the Bell has a companion 501© (4) organization, a diverse funding base, and a proven record of advancing social change.

This workshop began with a startling overview of the influential role think tanks have played in the evolution of conservative ideology and U.S. public policy. The presenters concluded that progressive ideas cannot advance to the policy level if foundations will not make long-term, flexible investments in the infrastructure of the progressive movement. Think tanks, on both national and state levels, are an imperative piece of this infrastructure.

"I felt that while "undoing racism" is a clear and important agenda item, that the method of approaching that task is respectful and inclusive."

Conference Participant

Changing public policy requires informed decisions among voters and the general public, elected officials and the courts. Think tanks and policy research groups are critical to creating informed decision-makers. They generate the research and analysis necessary to effectively evaluate current policies, and propose evidence-based policy alternatives to improve public outcomes. Operating independent of government, think tanks provide an alternative voice in the public policy debate.

By pooling resources to support state level think tanks and other key organizations, funders can ensure that there is an effective progressive voice to reinvigorate the debate and offer viable policy alternatives. By working together to support similar organizations in neighboring states and creating a national network, the effect will be amplified. If we are successful, the result will be that the country will have the infrastructure needed to sustain a long-term progressive future.

FROM PROTEST TO POLICY

How the Environmental Justice Movement is Expanding Democracy and Civic Participation in California

This workshop, lead by Torri Estrada, Unitarian Universalist Veatch Program at Shelter Rock; Manual Pastor, Center for Justice, Tolerance and Community; and Paula Forbis, Environmental Health Coalition, analyzed how organizers, policy advocates, researchers, and foundation partners came together to construct a winning strategy to expand democratic participation in environmental decision-making for California's 35 million residents. The workshop proposed ways in which funders can collaborate as true partners in creating a framework for social change, including funding intermediaries, providing technical assistance as a supplement to grants, and committing to long-term, multi-year support of movement-building organizations.

Environmental justice, as a concept, recognizes that people of color, particularly low-income people, are far more likely to live near sources of pollution (such as hazardous waste sites and factories with dangerous emissions), have less access to the public decision-making process, and be subjected to weaker enforcement of environmental laws. The environmental justice movement demands that the health and political concerns of these communities be part of the policy making and regulatory processes.

This workshop offered five lessons for funders and the field of environmental justice based on Building a Regional Voice for Environmental Justice Collaborative:

1. Focus on a frame for change, meaning establishing the broad case that environmental inequity exists, persists and matters in real ways to real people;
2. Build the base to move policy. Funders must be careful to continue to nurture community voice, putting time into leadership and environmental justice training, seed-funding nascent organizations, and mobilizing communities to participate in public action and debate;
3. Keep the community voice central in decision-making;
4. Build relationships slowly around the work, not the funding. Collaboration requires commitment and patience;
5. Make long term investment in change rather than short-term progress which can lead to opportunistic partnerships, incomplete projects and an over-emphasis on grantsmanship.

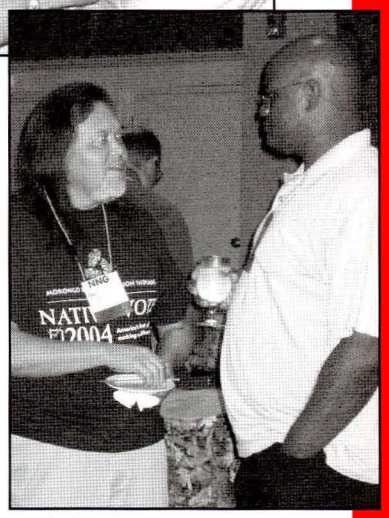
FROM THE MARGINS TO THE MAINSTREAM

Immigrant Worker Centers and Their Role in the Social Justice Movement

The exploitation of immigrant workers in the U.S. is not a new phenomenon. Many of the organizations that once helped to integrate newcomers into society have disappeared or dramatically declined. Worker Centers, created by community-based organizations addressing low-wage work, now operate in over 100 cities across the Country. They are empowering immigrant workers, so often exploited, to attain the economic and social benefits of our democratic society.

The workshop, lead by Victor Quintana, Veatch; Janice Find, Center for Community Change; and Pablo Alvarado, National Day Labor Organizing Network, highlighted a newly released study on worker centers, commissioned by the Neighborhood Funders Group Working Group on Labor and Community. It also informed funders about the day-to-day activities of these new institutions, many of which are moving progressive public policy agendas and working to empower low-wage workers in both the workplace and in the larger community.

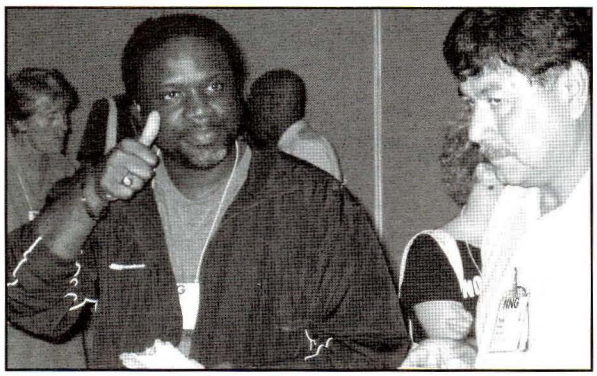
Dr. Fine observed that the US is currently in a state of shock about immigration and the world economy. As more low-wage jobs are out-sourced to workers in other countries, displaced US workers find it more difficult to move up the economic ladder. Middle class blacks and whites are fearful of loosing ground and jobs to immigrants. Good jobs are hard to find. Immigrant workers get the blame, yet they are victims of coercion and exploitation in their search for work.



Within this context, the power of labor unions, at one time a safety net for immigrant workers, has all but evaporated. Immigrant worker centers are now essential players in the labor movement and may someday help to build the strength of the unions. These centers can build community power by mobilizing and rallying diverse community groups behind their organizing efforts. They build political power by establishing strong relationships with elected officials and using the media to influence public opinion. In addition they build economic power by using litigation along with an organizing strategy and by increasing the collective bargaining capacity of day laborers at worker centers. Ultimately, day labor centers can build individual power by enhancing the critical thinking the leadership skills of day labor leaders and by encouraging the participation of day labor leaders in any decision-making processes that will affect their lives.

"As a first-time attendee, I am absolutely wowed by NNG's focus on social justice and racial justice, both as a grantmaking area and as something we need to model within our own organizations."

Conference Participant



SAD NEWS FOR NNG

NNG is saddened to announce the unexpected passing of Ken Jones, founding member of ChangeWork.

Kenneth J. Jones was an organizational development consultant working to strengthen the organizational structure and programs of progressive non-profit and community based organizations. He was the former director of the Exchange Project, the Peace Development Fund's training program. He had been active in the social change movement for 20 years and was a recognized trainer for over 10.

Kenneth provided workshops for groups across the country in organizational development, strategic thinking and planning, community organizing, board and leadership development, fundraising and dismantling racism.

Over the years, many in progressive philanthropy and social change had the benefit of Ken's unceasing commitment to the struggle for social justice and equity. He was known for his zest for life, passion for people and ideas, and his unswerving belief that each of us could be a 'change agent.' Many of us had the pleasure of his presence, his energy and playfulness during our Miami Conference.

NNG YOUTH CAUCUS CALLS FOR INTER-GENERATIONAL LEARNING IN PROGRESSIVE PHILANTHROPY

By Rusty M. Stahl

The 2004 NNG Conference's Youth Caucus brought together sixteen diverse young adults engaged as foundation program and development professionals, donors, and philanthropy organizers. The energetic discussion focused on how those of us in the room (by the pool, if we are going to be honest about it) and others in our generation can build relationships of trust with one another 'for the long haul.' We shared the hope that we can strategize and work together across lifelong social justice careers.

We see how our Baby Boomer colleagues have managed to maintain alliances across decades of varied work, and we hope to sustain one another in parallel ways. Simultaneously, we discussed the need for infrastructure to provide each upcoming cohort with the ideas, skills and networking needed to succeed in progressive philanthropy. The challenge is to take our networks with us, and also put things in place that go beyond one particular cohort.

The Caucus acknowledged the incredible leadership of folks from the 'Greatest Generation', many of whom we are losing daily, and those from the Baby Boom. We hope to learn as much from them as possible, and to share our perspectives with them. There is a window of opportunity in the progressive movement right now to capture the wisdom of 'elders' and to engage with Boomers before massive retirements take place. From my point of view, an important take-away was the urgent need for inter-generational learning within NNG and across the sector. We may make grants, but we cannot take for granted an effective transfer of knowledge and leadership.

Representatives from Resource Generation (resourcegeneration.org) and Emerging Practitioners in Philanthropy (epip.org) co-facilitated the discussion, bringing to NNG two of the key national networks of young progressive donors and foundation professionals.

"It was encouraging and motivational as well. What a great opportunity to be recharged for Justice work."

Conference Participant

ON THE FIELD IN FLORIDA REPORT

By Laura Livoti

The first ever NNG Post Conference Activity took place in Miami following the Democracy Bound conference. "On the Field in Florida" was reported by participants to be an inspiring and moving experience. Fifteen funders joined an evening orientation to c3 voter education on an amendment to raise the Florida's minimum wage and on election protection. Eleven funders braved both torrential rains and beating hot sun to knock on doors in low income African American or Latino neighborhoods.

On the first day in the neighborhood, a team of nine funders plus ACORN organizers contacted 263 voters in the South Kendall area. On the second day they contacted 160 voters with a team of 5 funders plus ACORN organizers. 107 pledges to vote early were collected. ACORN was pleased with the results. A separate team of two Spanish speaking funders went out with Mi Familia Vota to primarily monolingual Spanish speaking neighborhoods with information about your rights as a voter, polling place locations and how to get help should you run into any difficulties.

NNG "On the Field" participants were impressed by the level of commitment displayed by the residents of these communities to partaking in the democratic process. Participants were also overwhelmed by the generous spirit of community members who invited them into their homes out of the drenching rain or offered cold drinks during the hottest part of the day. Every member of the delegation returned home with a deeper understanding of the importance of voter engagement and direct community organizing. All were touched by the experience and by the people with whom they'd connected. KUDOS to our host organizations on the ground: Jobs with Justice, Mi Familia Vota and ACORN for the vital work they do!

ELECTION RESULTS

78% of Miami Dade County voters voted to increase the living wage; 22% opposed the amendment. 75% of Florida voters statewide voted to increase the living wage; 27% opposed the amendment. This in spite of significant late campaign funding by chain restaurants and retailers against the amendment to increase the minimum wage.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE OPEN SPACE

By Christie Balka

One of the stunning achievements of the New Right has been the near-total erasure of poor people from the public life over the past 25 years. Where have they gone? More poor people than ever before are in prison.

Since 1980 the US prison population has quadrupled, disproportionally affecting the African American community, where one out of every eight men in their late 20s is incarcerated, and the Latino community, where the same holds true for one out of every 27. In the face of such immense disruption to these communities, constituent-led organizations—those led by formerly incarcerated people, their friends and families—have challenged the criminal justice system, albeit in isolation.

Until recently, the foundations supporting them were also isolated from one another. But, in Miami, fifteen grantmakers met during an open space session to exchange information about our work. Convened by Bread and Roses Community Fund and the Open Society Institute, we included public and private foundations with grantmaking budgets ranging from tens of thousands to more than ten million dollars a year. Struck by the breadth of existing criminal justice activism, we asked ourselves how grantmakers could foster the development of coordinated strategies that link grassroots organizations to one another and to those working at the policy level. We also discussed the importance of grassroots movements whose work intersects with the criminal justice system (e.g. education reform, workers' and immigrants' rights, anti-violence against women) incorporating criminal justice activism into their agendas.

We discussed the challenges inherent in funding a movement whose leaders lack education and regular employment, and frequently endure racism. We noted the need for capacity-building programs that can stabilize criminal justice groups and for greater involvement by intermediate-sized foundations that can provide a bridge between financial support offered by small and large ones.

If you are interested in helping to organize a gathering, attending it, or joining a list serve of grantmakers for criminal justice reform, contact Christie Balka at Christie@BreadRosesFund.org.

ADJUSTING THE FOCUS ON NNG PROGRAMS

By Ron McKinley

For the past year, the members and board of NNG have been carefully considering the future of NNG and its potential for impact in philanthropy. What should be the program focus? What will be the strategy for moving the agenda? Who will be involved in the work? How do we incorporate the contract for social justice into our organizational work plan? These and other questions were the topics of a day-long discussion at the December board meeting in Atlanta. Grounding ourselves in the history of NNG, we moved to a discussion of the future, sketching a design for our programmatic focus that will engage members, be strategic, and will model a change in the traditional operational structure of affinity groups.

As we enter our twenty-fifth year, we look back at our record of service and recognized our historic ability to achieve our goals. Through research, advocacy, and convening, we have consistently been a valued voice for social change.

The future programs of NNG will be similar to those offered in the past. We will offer an annual conference as our primary convening for the year. We will work with colleagues to offer regional gatherings for NNG members and others interested in moving a social justice agenda. NNG members and staff will continue to present at conferences and gatherings sponsored by others, in an effort to take our messages out to the field.

There will, however, be some changes that will be evident as we move forward. First, research will continue to be a part of NNG's work, but it will only be done in partnership with other organizations that have research as their primary skill. It will be applied research, in the sense that any work we do will directly impact future NNG programs. The National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy (NCRP), The Bell Policy Center, the Applied Research Center and the Wilder Research Center are all organizations that are potential partners.

Training will become one of the program focuses that NNG will adopt. The People of Color Caucus (POCC) has been instrumental in developing a series of program models that will elevate communities of color to greater influence and power in philanthropy. As we develop funding for these initiatives, NNG will implement training around the country in regional and national venues. You will hear more about these specific plans as they are implemented. The board has also approved the creation of a 'Progressive Philanthropy 101' initiative that will become an essential piece of NNG conferences in the future, and will be offered especially for new NNG members.

I think, however that the most significant and exciting change in NNG's future programmatic strategy is the board's commitment to use the annual conference as the centerpiece of NNG programming. Many of you already participated in the 'building a contract' session in Miami. This exercise was a first step—gathering and sharing knowledge from the conference as the agenda for the following year's convenings. In 2005, the topics for the regional meetings that NNG sponsors will be ideas that members explored at the conference and included in the contract. By using the conference as the beginning of our program year, we hope to build continuity in our work and inspire greater depth in the exploration of issues. We also believe that this strategy will position NNG to, over time, build a body of programmatic work that can inform the field and move more resources to progressive action.

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UNION GCIU LABEL
UPPER MIDWEST LOCAL 1M

NEW NNG WEB SITE IN 2005!

During 2005 NNG will be developing a Web site that will be a great interactive resource for our membership, our staff and for those interested in justice issues. The future **www.nng.org** will be an evolving, informative tool dedicated to NNG, social justice philanthropy and the spectrum of justice concerns.

The Web site will expand as funding is received. In addition to showcasing NNG's programmatic priorities online, the Web tool will also market NNG to newcomers in the field and newcomers to progressive thought; offer dialogue space and a virtual work room for caucuses and working groups; produce monthly electronic newsletters; handle memberships transactions and provide a data base from which to service our membership more effectively.

Look for a splash page beginning in January with the basics. More dynamic features will be developed as funding allows.

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