

# Our VOICES

Newsletter Number 37

## BWF 20th Anniversary TAS Honors Local and National Women Leaders

by Jennifer Chin

On Friday, April 30, the Boston Women's Fund celebrated 20 years of progressive philanthropy on behalf of women's and girls' organizing in the Greater Boston area. The annual Take A Stand (TAS) was held in the magnificent Mary Baker Eddy Library. This year's event was truly an elegant, unforgettable evening.

Congresswoman Barbara Lee, activist Winona LaDuke, and journalist and activist Amy Goodman shared powerful words of strength, wisdom, and empowerment as the evening's honorees. The event also recognized the significant work of two local women-activist groups—Adbar Ethiopian Women's Alliance and Survivor's Inc.

A diverse mix of about 200 friends and donors of BWF, activists, and students came out for the evening. People enjoyed great food, conversation, and good energy as the night opened with a very special reception, highlighted by the Gund Kwok Asian Women Lion Dance Troupe's performance, which ushered in good luck and the great lineup that followed.

This being the fifth TAS event that I have attended, I can honestly say that it was without a doubt one of the best. Reflecting on the evening, I can recount what it was about the night that made me feel this way. My connection to the Fund goes back to when I was a member of the Young Sisters for

Justice program in 1999. Being in the company of bright, phenomenal women doing amazing work made me want to stick around, so I have remained connected. Also, through women's storytelling I have been inspired by women's lives and work; their

stories have stayed in my memory and have, in turn, influenced my life and work. Likewise, all the people who are involved with the Fund in a myriad of ways have amazing stories to tell—how they connect to us, why they believe in the work that we do, and why they keep coming back to TAS every year. That night, in celebration, I had the chance to meet and speak with many people. I talked with two individuals who are long-time supporters of BWF. I had the joy of catching up with former staff, board members, and

grantees. Looking back and looking forward at the amazing individuals who are connected with BWF at every level, I felt a strong sense of continuity. This feeling was compounded by the insightful words of our honorees, and by the attendance of local figures such as Boston City Councilor Chuck Turner, Cambridge City Councilor Denise Simmons, and State Representative Gloria Fox, who recognized the national work of our honorees, the local work of our grantees, and the Boston Women's Fund itself with the presentation of city and state citations.

There were many highlights from the powerful honorary speakers of the evening. Winona LaDuke spoke about her work as a



Winona LaDuke



Amy Goodman

native woman activist; at one point she described leadership as “a flock of geese”; what I interpreted as a very deep realization of the nature of leadership as ebbing and flowing along with the changes and needs of the times. In a way she was talking about shared leadership, something to which BWF is fundamentally committed. Another woman who has truly taken a stand in her life and work, Congresswoman Barbara Lee talked about our obligation to challenge and remake economic, social, and political institutions, and her words reminded me of our responsibility to remain true to our values and the people who stand with us and behind us. Activist and journalist Amy Goodman rallied us regarding our fight against being a silenced majority, resonating with Barbara Lee's words. With energy that characterizes the work BWF does and supports, Amy Goodman ended the evening with her fist in the air and a yell: “Democracy Now!”



## Conversations: BWF's Organizing Institute Brings Women Community Organizers Together

by Trinh Nguyen

On Tuesday, April 13, the Boston Women's Fund Organizing Institute (OI) held its quarterly gathering of women organizers. Women from grantee organizations and the community shared best practices and lessons from organizing during these intense political times. The OI brings activists, donors, foundation staff, BWF staff, BWF board members, and grantees together for important dialogue about current issues and trends in the community. It also provides technical training and resources for organizational capacity-building for grantees.

Our guest speakers were Shanna James, lead coordinator of Next Step, and Gladys Vega, associate executive director of Chelsea Human Services Collaborative, Inc., both grantee organizations. They were invited to inform us about their work and to develop resources for improved practices.

Next Step is a leadership-development program for young adolescent girls at the Harbor Point Complex in Dorchester. The program fosters dreams of a better life by organizing high-risk low-income girls to challenge the Harbor Point community to support their issue and empowerment.

The Chelsea Human Services Collaborative provides a mechanism for tenants in public housing to inform authorities of their needs and the needs of the larger community. The Organizing Committee of the Collaborative, which received a BWF grant, is composed of Chelsea public-housing tenants advocating for affordable housing and fair treatment. Women comprise the majority of this committee.

Gladys spoke about the difficulty of organizing on top of budget cuts and with diminishing resources from the community. "The budget cuts are so severe," she said, "and what's scary is that the politicians are going to cut more." The politics intrinsic to these challenges are hard to stop, she explained. "There is this old boys network and they keep resources within the buddy systems. They all watch out for themselves."

Gladys and the Chelsea Collaborative are confronting the racially divided class system that prevents low-income women from fully participating in decisions about affordable-housing standards. Despite the risk of losing their Section 8 housing status, and despite "threats" by the conservatives, women in the collaborative are working to organize better living standards in their housing units, keep affordable housing costs down, and ensure that residents' voices are at the legislative table. They conduct voter registration and

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**The Organizing Institute's purpose is to listen, share, and learn from each other. This wealth of experience helps BWF shape its daily work and inspires us to work harder to carry out the Fund's mission to empower women and girls.**

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mobilize in both English and Spanish. "We are not letting anything stop us. We organize to be at public housing meetings and distribute flyers to recruit volunteers for advocacy," Gladys stated.

Shanna James discussed organizing low-income girls of color in Dorchester and the challenge of finding innovative ways to get young girls involved in social-change work. "Teens are very savvy today, as we live in a fast-paced consumer market," Shanna explained, "but it is not easy to engage them critically. We have to work together and see best ways to include their identity, families, and peers, and make it fun at the same time. This is very difficult to do."

Moved by the work of these organizations, the audience strategized about how the Fund could help get additional resources to our grantees. At this gathering, Kim Simpson, program staffmember of the LW Family Foundation, shared important contacts and



Chelsea Human Services Collaborative

legislation information about housing and youth development. Sabrina Webby from Homes for Families provided legislative materials, facts on budget cuts, and ways to share resources to improve access for the grantees' constituents.

Strategizing together, we built strong alliances around our deep commitment to the work. The Organizing Institute's purpose is to do just that: listen, share, and learn from each other. This wealth of experience helps BWF shape its daily work and inspires us to work harder to carry out the Fund's mission to empower women and girls.

Conversations such as occur in the OI are rare, especially between funders and grantees. After twenty years, we are proud to say that the Fund has always made its grantees' work a priority. Building stronger bridges with all our constituents, both grantees and donors, is what we do best at the BWF. We've done it for twenty years and will continue for many decades to come.

### Our Voices

Writers this issue: Renee Ball-Rodriguez, Jennifer Chin, Trinh Nguyen

Layout: Nummi Nummerdor, Epigraphis

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## BWF features one of our newer grantees

For the past twenty years, the Boston Women's Fund has provided over \$3 million in grants to support women and girls organizing for social justice. Unlike most funders, the BWF does not shy away from innovative projects. Instead, it has been a pioneer in providing seed grants and support for the vision of these new and bold organizations. One such grantees this year is the Crossing Communities Collaborative (CCC).

## Crossing Communities Collaborative

by Renee Ball-Rodriguez



In 1996 a group of women of color community workers established the Collaborative to reclaim their spirituality, identity, and space for reflection and spiritual growth. The group came together around “kitchen table conversations” to answer simple, yet powerful, questions such as, Why do we do the work that we do? Who are we doing this work for? Why should we continue to do community organizing?

With this in mind, the women and girls mainly from Mattapan, Dorchester, and Jamaica Plain, formulated CCC's mission: “The Collaborative's mission and guiding principles are the development of positive community change through education, spiritual development, and collaboration. We work with existing social-change organizations and educational institutions to develop coalitions and cross-cultural exchange both locally and internationally. We strive to organize on issues of social justice and to actively challenge racism in all of its forms. We work towards international solidarity and equality while promoting spiritual awareness in social activism.”

Throughout the years, the Collaborative has been a partner in the education of low-income women of color in the Dorchester/Mattapan area of Boston. It recruited and held English and computer classes in conjunction with the Anthony Perkins Community Center and in partnership with Cooperative Economics for Women, and held classes and provided services for low-income immigrant women of color from the Fields Corner neighborhood of Boston.

During this work we realized the role of racism in preventing the neighborhood women from realizing their goals. Issues surrounding immigration, daycare, employment, and other social and cultural impediments also combine to stifle personal growth. Added to this is the need for personal spiritual

growth, which, if not fulfilled, can undermine the attainment of the other, more earthly, goals. Although we did not abandon those earthly goals, CCC shifted its focus somewhat to the spiritual and personal development of women. This reorientation came about through many conversations around the kitchen table by many women who have “walked the walk.”

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From 1999 to 2002, together with PeaceWatch Ireland of Boston, CCC held various spiritual and developmental workshops for low-income Boston women from the strife-torn areas of Northern Ireland. For most of the women it was the first time that they were able to express their innermost feelings without fear of the state or their own communities. The success of the workshops convinced us to continue in this vein of social activism. In 2003 we began to provide the same opportunity for women of color from the Boston area.

Instead of sending our delegation to Ireland, we sent them to Havana, Cuba. In the Western hemisphere Cuba is the center for true spiritual growth, which is embodied in the Africa-based religion of Santeria. We also chose Cuba for its record in combating racism in all its forms. Although no one country is perfect in its race relations, Cuba has made

the most strides in forming an equal society. The effect of the women's experience was amazing. They returned to Boston energized and committed to fighting racism here at home and fortified in their fight by their self-awareness and access to spiritual growth.

In January 2003 CCC received enough support to coordinate a Boston delegation of women to Havana. The delegation concentrated on A Journey for Spiritual Healing and Self Reflection for Women of Color and Social Activists. That same year we led three other delegations: Learning from Cuba's Community-Based Healthcare System (March), Youth Activism and the International Hip Hop Conference in Havana (August), and Roots of the Afro-Cuban Religion (November).

These exchanges are critical to informing our organizing work. For example, the January delegation, after a week learning about Cubano movements, now has an understanding of tourism's impact on development (this was used to help plan an international development project in Viet Nam); community-based healthcare, socialized medicine, and alternative medicine; and an Indian dance that includes the spirit of Santaria religion, political oppression, and immigrant women.

Since that first trip one of our goals has been to bring to Boston several Cuban women who are leaders within their communities and their religion. We've had many bureaucratic obstacles to face in reaching this goal, the first of which is the need for financial resources. We wish it were as easy as booking a flight from Havana, but the myriad fees from the both the Cuban and United States governments make it more than a challenge. People interested in contributing to this effort or knowing more about it should please contact Renee Ball-Rodriguez at 617-296-3424 or e-mail: [educationcareerscollaborative@yahoo.com](mailto:educationcareerscollaborative@yahoo.com).



## Boston Women's Fund

# Grantmaking REPORT

by Catherine  
Joseph

Fall  
2003

*In the spirit of optimism and renewal*, the Boston Women's Fund ushers into its grantmaking circle 24 organizations whose endeavors have created and will continue to create a space for social change to sprout its wings. *Welcome to you all.*

### **Adbar Ethiopian Women's Alliance** Cambridge, \$12,750

The mission of the Adbar Ethiopian Women's Alliance is to empower and strengthen Ethiopian women and girls by encouraging them to become agents of change. The Alliance works to enhance the status of Ethiopian women through community organizing, advocacy, and service using culturally appropriate strategies. It provides empowerment programs and service linkages to other providers, as well as legislative and legal advocacy to meet the needs of Ethiopian immigrant/refugee women who have been traditionally underserved or neglected. It is strongly committed to helping Ethiopian women and girls achieve economic independence and maintain personal safety as they adjust to a new environment.

### **Asian American Resource Workshop** Boston, \$10,000

Forged in the fires of the grassroots activism of the civil rights movement, AARW emerged as the first pan-Asian organization in the Boston area to address issues of racism against the Asian community. The organization has positioned itself on the cutting edge once again with its new anti-racism education program called "The Sticky Rice Project for Women." This program was developed to fill in the critical pieces missing from the dialogue on racism—a dialogue based largely on a black-white paradigm. Workshops will combine race, class and gender analysis to understand the specific oppressions facing Asian-American women and will facilitate organizing approaches that address their needs and vision.

### **Asian Pacific Islanders Women's Social Justice Project** Boston, \$12,750

The API Women's Social Justice Project is the local response to the recent Ford Foundation report "Asian American Women: Issues, Concerns, and Responsive Human and Civil Rights Advocacy." This groundbreaking report found that Asian and Pacific Islander (API) women are at the bottom of the socioeconomic ladder and suffer human and civil rights abuses on a daily basis. The Project is a diverse, grassroots, community-based, women-led coalition dedicated to developing a constituency-driven, racial, social, health, and economic justice movement for API women in Eastern Massachusetts, particularly the urban areas of Greater Boston, Lowell, Lynn, and Revere.

### **Association of Haitian Women** Dorchester, \$10,000

The Association of Haitian Women equips Haitian women with the necessary tools to improve their social, economic, and political status. BWF funding supports the Battered Women Task Force. Recent changes in welfare and immigration laws have forced many low-income Haitian women to endure battering relationships from fear of INS and police involvement. Haitian women are also frequently denied shelter services in part due to linguistic and cultural barriers. Based on the principle of collectivity, the Association develops workshops for battered women to support each other, increase their personal and political power, and strategize around violence-prevention and economic opportunity. The workshops are an attempt to lessen the acceptance of violence—by women, the Haitian community, and community service providers.

### **Coalition of Asian Pacific American Youth** Boston, \$5,000

Stereotyping and pigeon-holing affect young APA men and women in similar ways—they are stereotyped as silent, high-achieving, and without problems. Many young women, however, have the added cultural pressure at home of being the "good Asian daughter" who does not question male authority and who learns to clean and cook. CAPAY has been in existence since 1994, building the consciousness and leadership skills of APA youth in the Greater Boston area. Youth learn about systems of oppression and to analyze root causes of the injustices and problems in our society. For young APA women, a space like CAPAY where they can take leadership roles and have their strength validated is extremely important. They can build a support network among their peers, both male and female, and find role models among the adults who set examples of leadership and strength.

### **Cooperative Economics for Women** Jamaica Plain, \$12,750

Women in poverty struggle with the multiple burdens of racism, xenophobia, and the overwhelming demonization of the poor in the United States. Cooperative Economics for Women works with low-income women to create constituency-driven, cooperative income-generating projects and to address the punitive effects of welfare and immigration laws and reform. It organizes with low-income immigrant and refugee women of color to address problems they face as they struggle to meet their basic needs. Currently CEW is working with Cambodian, Cape Verdean, Eritrean, and Haitian immigrant

and refugee women and their families in Boston and surrounding communities. Its current programs include worker owned cooperatives, food security, legal advocacy, community organizing training, ESOL classes, and children's programs.

### **Crossing Communities Collaborative** Mattapan, \$4,500

The Collaborative's mission and guiding principles are geared toward the development of positive community change through education, spiritual development, and collaboration. It works with existing social-change organizations and educational institutions to develop coalitions and cross-cultural exchanges both locally and internationally, organizes around issues of social justice, and actively challenges racism in all of its forms. It also works toward international solidarity and equality while promoting spiritual awareness in social activism. The Collaborative intends to bring a group of Cuban women to Boston to share best practices.

### **Eastern Mass Abortion Fund** Cambridge, \$3,000

Abortion has been legal in the United States for over thirty years, but for too many women, it is still inaccessible due to a lack of funding, a shortage of providers, restrictive legislation and anti-choice harassment and violence. While MassHealth gives women in Massachusetts greater access to abortion than women in many other states have, the barriers are still prohibitive for many women, especially uninsured or underinsured women, young women, immigrant women, and women living outside Metro Boston. By providing financial aid in the form of grants to low-income women and girls seeking safe and timely abortions, EMAF empowers women to be guided by their belief systems rather than financial constraints.

### **Fuller Museum of Art** Brockton, \$10,000

The Teen Docent Program at the Fuller Museum of Art empowers young women in Brockton to express themselves visually and verbally through the study and creation of art. Works in the museum are utilized as a springboard for the discussion of issues such as the perception of women, sexuality, multiculturalism, domestic violence, discrimination, and self-esteem. The discussions then fuel ideas for the teen's own creative artwork. Additionally, teen girls utilize these experiences to plan activities and discussion for the fourth- and fifth-grade girls that they mentor one day per week for ten consecutive weeks. Docents also act as guides for the museum's cultural activities.

### **Homes for Families** Boston, \$10,000

Homelessness is a demoralizing experience for families. It interrupts family life, interferes with children's education and development, and often results in the separation of family members. Diminishing wages and welfare benefits, and lack of affordable housing are the primary causes of family homelessness. Homes for Families works with homeless families to advocate for and provide solutions to problems in the areas of housing, education, and jobs. The organization recruits and fully involves the people most affected by the injustice of family homelessness—women and their children. Formerly homeless people serve as active members of the board and are involved in the decision-making process of the organization.

### **The Kitchen Table Conversations Project** Cambridge, \$12,750

The Kitchen Table Conversations Project grew out of an investigation into the situations of Cambridge women who were directly affected by the dramatic changes in federal and state welfare entitlement programs. During 2003, its work has focused on the need for accessible, sensitive health care for two reasons: 1) Poverty has created a great deal of stress in the lives of low-income women as individuals, as providers for their families, and as mothers, 2) the depth of that stress became evident during the past year when two members of the group died of preventable causes. As a result, we have worked hard to save MassHealth by petitioning, holding community meetings, speaking at rallies, and meeting with health-care administrators and providers to increase services and access to low-income women and our families.

### **Low-Income Welfare Organizing Collaborative** Marlboro, \$5,000

LIWOC is a ten-member coalition of groups in Greater Boston area that focuses on organizing low-income people around issues of poverty and injustice. The member groups come to the coalition with a commitment to low-income missions and leadership. Since its inception, LIWOC has been a forum for leaders to work together, identify common issues, sponsor trainings on welfare rules, and develop joint materials. The coordinated systems developed by the groups enable them to increase their individual outreach, leadership development, and organizing capacity. LIWOC has helped each group to significantly expand and educate its constituency of current and former welfare recipients through direct outreach.

### **MassCOSH** Dorchester, \$7,500

Girls, especially immigrants and young women of color, have the fewest resources and the least power both in their communities and in the workplace. The teen leadership development project Teens Lead at Work engages youth in organizing for jobs that are free from sexual harassment, discrimination, and other dangerous working conditions. Youth learn about the roots of the issues of concern to them, train other youth, design strategies for change, and organize for results. Over the next year, peer leaders will campaign for passage of a child-labor reform bill.

### **The Network/La Red** Boston, \$12,750

The Network/La Red, one of the few organizations working specifically to end woman-on-woman battering, collaborates with a wide variety of community organizations to end domestic violence. The organization and its newspaper offer a political analysis of woman-on-woman battering in order to encourage constituencies to act for broad social, political, and economic change rather than single-issue advocacy. Phase II of the Network's visibility campaign is designed to engage the LBT community in taking ownership and responsibility for the issue of domestic violence through community collaborations, strategic planning, media advocacy, advertising, a ribbon campaign, and a "Help Out a Friend" campaign, which includes trainings and materials.

## Peace at Home

Somerville, \$5,000

Peace at Home began as a grassroots effort to increase press coverage and raise awareness of domestic violence and to track the number of women, children, and family members involved in incidents of domestic violence. Its philosophy states that domestic violence is not just a women's issue but a human rights violation. It believes that everyone can help stop domestic violence and reshape the way society thinks about and responds to this emergency. This can build a movement to claim the right to live at home in safety and dignity, free from fear of physical and psychological abuse. The goal of Peace at Home is to provide the general public with the tools and information it needs to prevent domestic violence and provide victims with the resources and support they need. It does this through education, prevention and advocacy, including its Public Information Campaign, which brings its materials and resources to people where they live and work.

## People to People

Framingham, \$12,750

People to People works collaboratively with women who are incarcerated or at risk of being in conflict with the law. It helps them to couple their inherent power with external resources to take control over their lives. The first program in Massachusetts of its kind, People to People challenges the systems of oppression and dismantles the patterns of thought about the abilities and potential of women. Providing a structured, positive opportunity for interaction, women inmates have an opportunity to intervene in the cycle of incarceration and recidivism by helping young women make better choices about their own lives.

## Public Housing Organizing Committee

Chelsea, \$7,000

Developing short-term and long-term campaigns, building community partnerships and relationships through one-on-one interaction, and holding house meetings are all traditional organizing strategies that work well in the dense geography of public housing. The Public Housing Organizing Committee believes that the sustained and meaningful participation by residents in all aspect of housing-agency operations is also an important ingredient. Its mission is to represent public-housing tenants in dealings with the Chelsea Housing Authority and other public entities and to mobilize tenants to protect, improve, and expand public housing in Chelsea. The women who lead the Committee conduct grassroots community organizing, leadership development, and community-building in the face of staunch opposition and intimidation tactics by the Housing Authority administration.

## Sisters Together Ending Poverty

Marlboro, \$10,000

STEP aims to “build a lasting and diverse movement for economic justice run by and for low-income women that will transform society.” Members support individual low-income women by helping them become empowered and engaging them in organizing, public education, and coalition campaigns that strengthen their lives and the local community. STEP works in collaboration with community partners, organizations, and funders, reaching across the lines of class, race, gender, and sexual orientation, to build a mutual power base with a healthy value system of mutual support—to “leave no one behind.”



Sisters Together Ending Poverty

## Southeast Asian Bilingual Advocates, Inc.

Lowell, \$12,750

SABAI was founded in response to the need for strategies and services that address issues of health care access, health status, and cultural and linguistic appropriateness of care for Southeast Asian communities in the Greater Lowell area. Working at the grassroots level in the Lowell area, it is committed to the development of programs that are respectful of cultural, individual, family, and community needs while reducing barriers between Southeast Asian and Western health beliefs and promoting participation in health services and activities. SABAI is especially committed to serving those members of the Southeast Asian community who are most marginalized and isolated by language, poverty, age, or circumstance.

## Survivors, Inc

Mattapan, \$10,000

Survivors, Inc., mobilizes a broad welfare-rights constituency to fight for economic justice. The power of low-income women is increased through leadership development, community organizing, education, and advocacy concerning policy and practice related to low-income women and families. As a result, the women become leaders in their organizations, in their communities, and in the larger movement for economic and social justice. It organizes nationally for the creation of social policy with low-income women at the table. It also organizes locally at Boston welfare offices, in its communities, and at UMass Boston with the belief that the best advocates for low-income women are the women themselves.

## The Theater Offensive

Cambridge, \$12,750

The Theater Offensive presents theatrical works that break down personal isolation, challenge political orthodoxy and help to build a progressive community. DAGGER is its multicultural, multiracial guerrilla theater troupe for queer women and girls. Its performances will concentrate on how issues of class, race, sexuality, sexual orientation and gender play out in women's and girls' real lives, seen from a queer woman's perspective. By using the techniques of guerrilla theater, DAGGER challenges the status quo and works with other grassroots community groups to educate and move toward social

and economic justice for all. DAGGER will collaborate with People to People to sponsor a series of community activities to promote intergenerational networking and mentoring for DAGGER members, with a particular emphasis on women and girls of color.

**United Teen Equality Center**  
Lowell, \$5,000

Educating communities about the root causes of social and economic problems lies at the heart of UTEC's youth peer-led learning projects. The Young Women's Project, which gives young women the ability to be agents of social change in their own communities, focuses on the specific needs of Lowell's young women and helps them become leaders at the Center and in their personal lives. Youth serve as full board members and have their own youth advisory council. UTEC currently produces a quarterly 'zine called Goddess that examines a variety of gender-related issues.

**Women of Action Project**  
Cambridge, \$10,500

Individually, low-income women have little or no power to influence the decisions of major institutions and policymakers. The Women of Action Project is a grassroots, direct-action organization of low-income women, particularly women of color and single mothers, who have joined together to support one another and to wage campaigns demanding social and economic justice. WOA is a means for low-income women to gain power as a group and to obtain the rights and respect they deserve. The campaign being waged this year against the local housing authority will hopefully result in a tenant/housing authority partnership that will incorporate tenant decision-making at every level.

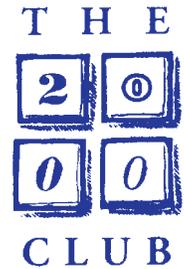
**The Women's Theological Center**  
Boston, \$10,500

The Women's Theological Center is a community-based organization dedicated to addressing the ways in which women can draw on their spiritual strength in their social-change work. Built on leadership tools first developed in the Civil Rights movement that linked personal faith, community belonging, and social action, its mission is to "support and engage the spiritual leadership of women using the power of our deepest values and hopes as a creative force to strengthen communities, bridge differences, and work for justice throughout society." The WTC offers programs using popular education models based in community participation to ground its theory and practices. It consults and produces publications on spiritual leadership for effective social change to its membership, organizations, and the wider community.

The Boston Women's Fund gives money to nonprofit, community-based women's and girls' groups in Greater Boston working for social and economic justice. For more information on grant application, please contact Catherine Joseph, Director of Grants Program.

**Grant Application Deadline:**  
The Boston Women's Fund awards grants once every year. The deadline is October 1.

**Don't Miss Out!**  
**JOIN THE**  
**2000 CLUB**



For the past five years, BWF has been building a permanent endowment to ensure that women and girls in low-income communities throughout Massachusetts will always have support in their work for social and economic justice. This lasting resource, the 2000 Club, will impact thousands of lives.

2000 Club members pledge \$100 a year for five year (in any affordable increment). By signing up, you will be joining a coalition of 2,000 people from diverse backgrounds fighting together for a more equitable community.

Join us! We need only 230 members to complete the 2000 Club campaign, at which point an anonymous donor will match our entire \$1 million raised!

Join today! Call 617-725-0035.

**Boston Women's Fund**  
**Board and Staff**

**Board of Directors**

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## A Message from the Executive Director

Dear friends:

May 17, 2004, marked the 50th anniversary of *Brown vs. Board of Education*, a landmark decision that made the integration of public schools mandatory in the United States. On the same day, the state of Massachusetts legalized same-sex marriage, setting a precedent throughout the country by providing the same protections of health care, life insurance, and asset management to same-sex families as to heterosexual families. These hallmark events are a result of decades of advocacy and coalition building across communities. Although the Boston Women's Fund did not participate directly in these legislative battles, we are at the center of the movement that shares common values of social, racial, and economic justice. In particular, we contribute a women's and girls' agenda for change. In the past twenty years BWF has provided \$3.3 million in grants to organizations advocating for gender equity and toward victories such as the ones on May 17. Your loyalty to the Fund sustains this work.

A powerful movement benefits from refueling to cultivate new ideas and take bold actions. At our recent 8th annual Take A Stand celebration, Congresswoman Barbara Lee, Wynona LaDuke, and Amy Goodman spoke energetically about women's work around the world and how we can fuse this energy with our local work. You can read more about this extraordinary night in the newsletter. As the election draws near, we are even more committed to making women's voices heard across the spectrum.

As a continuation of the Fund's coalition building, I had the honor of planning and moderating the *Colors of Leadership: Women Making a Difference* conference at Simmons College on March 11. This dialogue recognized all women leaders throughout the Greater Boston area. I am convinced that women's voices, united, are being heard.

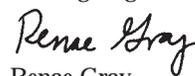
As for BWF's organizational growth, I could not be more excited to be working with committed board members, committees, staff, and volunteers. They have been a huge support to my work here. We have immediate plans for building a stronger infrastructure, developing closer relation-

ships with our supporters, and expanding our fundraising efforts.

The Fund is ending this fiscal year with a fundraising push to meet the budget. To progress with our goals we need your immediate support. Your tax-deductible contribution helps us increase our grantmaking goal by 20% every year and provide technical assistance such as fundraising, strategy building, and public relations to current grantees. It also allows BWF to strategically grow in areas of development and endowment building. In fact, we are very close to completing our 2000 Club Endowment Campaign, with only 230 members left! You can re-join or sign up a family member or friend today!

I hope you will enjoy this newsletter with its updates on BWF's programs and activities. Please feel free to contact me with any questions. I look forward to having a conversation with you.

Please give generously,



Renae Gray  
Executive Director

### Boston Women's Fund

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