



BOSTON WOMEN'S FUND

OurVoices

NEWSLETTER 54 - FALL 2011

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Opportunity to Support Grassroots Grantees

There is a familiar and longstanding saying, "Make new friends but keep the old, one is silver and the other gold." In the vigorous world of philanthropic and nonprofit work, this adage is especially fitting. Many nonprofits link up with other grassroots initiatives to build stronger and more lasting coalitions, and new organizations emerge to address the needs of specific communities or issues. In recognizing this, the Boston Women's Fund strives to support organizations funded in the past, while acknowledging newly evolving grassroots efforts.

This fiscal year, our grantee pool included the work of some newer organizations in line with our core values. The Fund invited seven new projects, welcomed back a grassroots hip-hop group, and maintained its ongoing support for twelve long-standing women's grassroots organizations. With a sum of 20 grantees and total funds of \$350,000, the Fund remains exceptionally proud of its support for women and girls-led efforts which includes new initiatives—all thanks to your involvement and contributions. Within a period of less than thirty years, the Boston Women's Fund awarded 5 million dollars in grants.

This makes us tremendously impressed and humbled by your enduring support.

Scores of remarkable women and girls-led community based organizations work tirelessly to increase the effectiveness of women and girls across the board. Here at the Fund, we work with those organizations to facilitate the gap between individual donor support and grassroots work in action. Project HIP-HOP, for instance, links artful youth expression with political organizing, while the Brazilian Immigrant Center works with their community and collectively acts as a unanimous voice to promote the rights of immigrant workers in the area. Organizations like MassCOSH, The Network/La Red and WILD are among the grassroots or
(continued on page 6)



WILD



¿Oiste?

BWF
launches
NEW
website

www.bostonwomensfund.org

HELP us match \$150,000 in September!



Executive Director's Letter

Dear Friends and Community Members,

Our success within the world of philanthropy hinges on our founders' initial commitment to strengthen the leadership of women's and girls' grassroots organizing and advocacy efforts. Their vision to reach out primarily to women philanthropists for capital as leverage in realizing racial, economic and social justice drives us to be the best in whatever we can achieve. It remains our firm belief that women's struggles for social change historically impacts the whole community: family, friends, neighborhood, and society in general. Our recent grants to twenty community-based women's and girls' organizations sets in motion this belief.

In seeking long term sustainability, our trustees, the Board of Directors at the Boston Women's Fund, recently decided to go forward with the completion of a five-year strategic plan. How do we start



Josefina Vázquez

deciphering best practices at all levels within the Fund in order to qualitatively fulfill our mission? In chronicling our history we may learn: what functioned best or not during various times of our saga within the women's movement? What exactly did we learn? What did we teach? Where are we today? What and how do we expect to achieve tomorrow?

In the midst of developing strategies for a successful future, the recent death of Kip Tiernan, one of the co-founders of the Boston Women's Fund, reminds us of the power of the human spirit. Kip made bold choices to live her life struggling next to those oppressed, whether by race, class or other social injustices.

In honor of Kip we urge you to remember this incredible woman with us at the Old South Church in Copley Square, Boston on Saturday, September 10th, at 11:00 a.m.

As we move forward in our attempt to become the best we can, we need you to be there each step of the way. You make each achievement possible. Your support allows us to be bold in supporting our grantee community. The real changes that we witness in our communities establish the power of progressive philanthropy. This is your opportunity to be bold in supporting us to again meet another challenge by an outstanding woman philanthropist daring us to meet her \$150,000 challenge grant. I urge you to continue your boldness in memory of Kip Tiernan and the many women and girls who today continue the struggle for a better world. Thank you for helping us to be successful.

In struggle,

Josefina Vázquez
Executive Director

“Our success within the world of philanthropy hinges on our founders' initial commitment to strengthen the leadership of women's and girls' grassroots organizing and advocacy efforts.”



Summary of Fiscal Year 2012 Grantees

Boston Tenant Coalition

Boston \$15,000

Works with local grassroots partners and public housing tenant advocacy groups to promote affordable housing in Boston. Trains Latina leaders who may run for and serve on resident/tenant task forces. BTC has been a leading voice in defending, supporting and expanding the rights of tenants and standing with Boston's low-income populations.

Brazilian Immigrant Center

Allston \$20,000

A grassroots organization whose mission focuses on the training, advocacy and organizing of immigrant workers. BIC actively supports current movement building among MA domestic workers—mostly immigrant women of color—to secure legislation and other policy changes necessary to advance and defend labor rights.

Brazilian Women's Group

Allston \$20,000

Promotes political and cultural awareness by contributing to the development of the Brazilian community, providing information, supporting community organizing and advocacy on immigrant rights.



Brazilian Women's Group

Centro Presente

Somerville \$20,000

Fosters the empowerment of the Boston Latina population within their youth organizing program Pintamos Nuestro Mundo/ We Paint Our World. This group offers a

safe, inclusive and democratic space where young Latinas learn how to use analytic tools to explore the root causes of sexism, racism, and classism, and develops the skills necessary for Latina youth to become strong leaders in their community.



Chelsea Collaborative

Chelsea Collaborative

Chelsea \$19,265

Organizes low-income tenants, primarily female, who occupy public housing and who are victims of predatory lending. Chelsea Tenants Association members work to maintain neighborhood stability and to preserve the community.

Gedakina, Inc.

Hull \$15,000

A multi-generational endeavor strengthening the cultural identity and knowledge of Native American youth and families of New England. Returning to traditionally Native American cultural values, Gedakina, Inc. cultivates the health and wellness of Native American women and children through community-based initiatives and regional alliance building.

Homes for Families

Boston \$20,000

Founded on the belief that families and individuals who have experienced extreme poverty or homelessness must play an integral role in the movement to end homelessness. Their Leadership Development Institute educates, empowers and supports homeless mothers in their work to end family homelessness, to overcome poverty, and to promote social justice.

MassCOSH (Mass Coalition for Occupational Safety and Health)

Dorchester \$17,000

Provides young women with the tools and support they need to address the unique issues young women face in the workplace and in other aspects of their lives, such as sexual harassment/violence, self-esteem, and self-worth.

Merrimack Valley Project

Lawrence \$15,000

Fosters the leadership capacity of women by working with local women and men to act together in fighting foreclosures and post-foreclosure evictions in Lawrence, Lowell, and the surrounding areas.



Merrimack Valley Project

Mystic Learning Center

Somerville \$8,000

Supports the endeavors of low-income girls and families living in the Mystic Public Housing Development, where low school achievement permeates, and accounts of drug abuse and reports of domestic violence abound. The MLC works to bring East Somerville residents of all ages together in various programs to foster a healthier and safer community for all.



Homes for Families

Neighbor to Neighbor

Worcester \$20,000

Works to transform the current political system by building the political power of the low-income community. In the upcoming year, N2N will continue to develop the leadership of women activists in Worcester, as well as recruit new leaders, by supporting women in addressing the problems that affect their lives, resulting in self-empowerment.



¿Oíste?

¿Oíste?

Boston \$15,000

Addresses the lack of Latina political representation and civic participation in MA and aims to increase the political, economic and social standings of the Latino population. Operating on a grassroots level through local and statewide advocacy efforts and educational training, ¿Oíste? works to restructure the traditional policy-making apparatus to include a significant and powerful Latina presence.

Project HIP-HOP

Roxbury \$20,000

A youth-led organization bridging artful expression and political organizing. Using hip-hop, the organization teaches youth to use the genre as a powerful tool to educate and motivate their community. This grant supports their work to increase the voices of young women who use hip-hop as a tool to challenge misogyny and all forms of oppression.

South Boston en Acción



Reflect and Strengthen (R&S)

Dorchester \$20,000

A grassroots collective of young working class women from the urban neighborhoods of Boston who take a holistic approach to organizing in order to create personal and social transformation. Their programming focuses on political education, creative expression, community building, and campaign work to end racial disparities in the juvenile justice system.

Refugee and Immigrant Assistance Center

Jamaica Plain \$18,000

Offers a wide variety of services and programs whose mission is to promote self-sufficiency, foster support, and increase successful resettlement. Its Somali Leadership Initiative offers structured training, outreach, and support for young female participants who are organizing or participating in community activities and giving back to the community.

South Boston en Acción

South Boston \$17,697

A member-driven organization empowering Latino families to create change that will lead to personal and community empowerment. Their demographic reflects a culture that responds to the needs and interests of women in South Boston's housing developments.

women learn to address societal issues they are directly affected by, support one another, and develop the skills and training to become Boston's future community educators, organizers, and organizational leaders.



The Genki Spark

The Genki Spark

Jamaica Plain \$10,000

Aims to share the art of Japanese taiko drumming by promoting the voice and visibility of Asian Americans as the first and only Asian women's taiko-based group in the country. Through demonstrations and workshops, The Genki Spark encourages cultural pride and progressive social change, spreading a bold message of empowerment for Asian American women.

The Network/La Red

Boston \$20,000

Seeks to raise awareness of and community responsibility for lesbian/bi/transgender domestic violence. Through a combination of education outreach, solidarity events, community collaborations and media activism, they aim to create a climate of intolerance for domestic violence.

Women's Institute for Leadership Development (WILD)

Boston \$20,000

A multi-racial, multi-cultural women's organization that supports women's empowerment as they become more effective leaders and organizers in their workplaces, communities, and the MA labor movement.

The City School

Dorchester \$20,000

A leadership development program working with court-involved, high need/high risk young women in Greater Boston. These

Connect, Learn and Strengthen

The Boston Women's Fund Organizing Institute arranged a Spring Grantee Gathering for our FY2011 grantees on April 28, 2011. Staff and grantees gathered to receive pointers on Making The Case (MTC) reports, mingle with BWF donors, and learn more about the Massachusetts State Budget.

Ronita Nath, former executive assistant, shared a summary of the gathering: "Not only were we able to reach out to the BWF grantee community and provide them with tips on how to monitor and evaluate their programs effectively, but in turn, grantees provided BWF with feedback on how we could better support them. In addition, grantees and donors were able to connect at this event, strengthening their concept of the BWF family."

The Fund witnessed 100 percent attendance from our grantees at this event and the grantees received invaluable feedback on their Making The Case evaluation reports. Through MTC, grantees and BWF were able to better measure impact, identify accelerators, and capture stories from the outstanding work these women and girls-led organizations do.

In the afternoon, the grantees presented their missions and offered success stories to fellow grantees and a few donors. It was a powerful experience to hear about rallies to forestall home closures, performances by homeless women, and presentations about workforce standards by teen leaders. *Alexia Layne-Lomon, coordinator at Reflect and Strengthen, stated, "the BWF gathering gave us a chance to connect, learn and strengthen our skills with our sisters and comrades in Boston's social movement. This gathering is a shining example of BWF's commitment to a strong, united, women-led organizing community, by providing us with more than just funding, but opportunity as well."

The day concluded with a presentation by Sadaf Knight, policy analyst at MassBudget and a Community Leadership Fellow. The presentation, entitled "The State Budget: Difficult Choices and Our Future," included a deeper look into why everyone should care about the state budget, the causes of the current fiscal crisis, and some possible solutions for balancing funds.



MassBudget, an independent non-profit research organization, provides researched reports, particularly to low- and middle-income populations, on how budget, tax and economic policies in Massachusetts affect residents. The core of their mission is to ensure that everyone has access at no charge to the high-quality information necessary to participate knowledgeably in pertinent policy debates. No one should be left on the sidelines of public debates. MassBudget analysts make similar presentations throughout the year to a range of audiences. To request a presentation, visit www.massbudget.org and click on "request a speaker."

* Alexia Layne-Lomon coordinates Girl's Night Out, Media and Communications, and Finances, at Reflect and Strengthen: a grassroots collective of young working class women from the urban neighborhoods of Boston who take a holistic approach to organizing to create personal and social transformation.



organizations that we have steadily funded over the years, based on their powerful work in the constant pursuit of racial, economic and social justice.

Other FY2012 grantees, such as Gedinka, Inc, the Mystic Learning Center, and the Genki Spark are organizations that received first-time funding. These grassroots initiatives seek social change through time-tested community organizing, workforce development, and educational advocacy. ¿Oíste?, for example, provides civic engagement training and leadership development techniques by and to low-income Latina women interested in taking a role in policy work. These women go through 12-week workshops that address the systemic issues Latina women experience in relation to domestic violence and health disparities. Following the workshops, the women gain fundamental skills to initiate policy work and to develop local social change campaigns around key community-related issues. Through its organizing project, the Brazilian Immigrant Center recognizes the link between domestic work and immigrant women of color, while it organizes around the passage of the Domestic Workers Bill of Rights. These last two organizations stand with our other grantees working around the clock to address the injustices that affect many socially and economically marginalized communities in Massachusetts.

The Fund proudly supports projects that work in unison with women and girls in strengthening the viability of grassroots communities and applying strategic techniques to establish long-term, systemic social change. We welcome you in choosing the opportunity to invest in women's and girls' grassroots work. Ultimately, your investment assures systemic social change in many arenas. Our success, and the success of our grantee organizations, relies on your philanthropy and dedication to assuring all women live with rights and resources that sustain their commitment for realizing racial, economic and social justice for the whole community.

New Staff Members

Ana Rodríguez, Executive Assistant

Ana joined the Boston Women's Fund as Executive Assistant on July 1, 2011. Her career includes over 19 years of experience in healthcare administration and managing the offices of senior executives. Ana completed her studies in Liberal Arts and Business Accounting. She is also actively involved in her community and contributes time as a volunteer. An issue close to her heart is ending violence against women and children. Ana is delighted to be a member of our BWF team and community. She looks forward to applying her skills and contributing to the mission of the Boston Women's Fund.

Berta Hernández, Receptionist

Berta joined the Boston Women's Fund as its Receptionist on June 1, 2011. Berta brings with her 33 years of activism experience working with grassroots groups and an organizing background within the Latino immigrant community of the greater Boston area and throughout other areas of New England. She was an active member of NECARES (New England Central American Refugees); The Cambridge Sister's City Project to San José Las Flores in El Salvador Central America; Casa El Salvador (Boston area). Her experience includes being an assistant teacher within the classroom for elementary school children in the Boston area.

Our Mission

The Boston Women's Fund supports community-based organizations run by women and girls in the Greater Boston Area. We work with low-income women; women of color; women with disabilities; lgbtq community; immigrant women; elder women; and girls who are working to create a society based on racial, economic and social justice. The Boston Women's Fund raises money from a broad base of donors across economic backgrounds to provide grants and develop programs that strengthen the grassroots initiatives and leadership of women and girls.

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Creating Change

Since the 1980s, the idea of “women’s funds” –organizations whose sole purpose is to raise funds that can be awarded to women’s leadership and social justice initiatives –has gained tremendous momentum. In fact, over 160 women’s funding organizations flourish in the US today. The Boston Women’s Fund, now in its 28th year, stands tall among its peers, having awarded more than \$5 million to local grassroots organizations that offer the potential of making a lasting impact in their communities. The Fund continues to partner with community organizations and to invest in programs that help ensure grantee ventures have the resources and skills to be successful. Sadly, the need for investment has never been greater as the weak economy and contentious political debate push more and more people to the margins.

Since inception, the Boston Women’s Fund has sought to create enduring change in the lives of women and girls and the communities in which they live. We believe that women and girls perform vital work as community “change agents” through involvement in grassroots organizations. We further believe that women and girls are uniquely qualified to respond to the pressing needs of their communities. Issues such as poverty, violence, housing and health particularly affect women and girls through their roles as caregivers and (very frequently) as heads of household. Women and girls involved in creating change in their communities empower themselves to challenge social, cultural and political structures that exclude them and their issues.

The Boston Women’s Fund does not grant awards to every woman’s grassroots organization that applies. Rather, we work to identify those organizations and programs that plan to create change...programs that can make a difference in relation to racial, economic and social justice within their communities. We look for initiatives that build leadership skills and strengthen our grantees’ ability to address the very issues that result in racial, economic and social injustice.

However, our goal is to have a greater impact on communities through the advocacy and organizing of women and girls, to be able to respond positively and in a meaningful way to every worthy application for an award. Your generosity makes it possible for us to support the best grassroots efforts within greater Boston. We thank you for your continued support.



Virginia Meany
Co-Chair, Board of Directors

Three New Stars

The Boston Women’s Fund is proud to welcome three new members to our Board of Directors.



Jasmine Lopez

Jasmine Lopez, N2N -MA’s Strategic Communications Organizer, is a Rhode Island native who recently completed a Master’s Degree in Public Health. Jasmine currently leads the strategic communications work for a statewide grassroots organization. Her belief in the power of participation and political action within traditionally disadvantaged populations guides her professional journey; including her decision to join the Boston Women’s Fund Board. She hopes to bring her experience as a Latina from a low-income community to the table.



Diana Hwang

Diana Hwang is the Co-Founder and Executive Director of the Asian-American Women’s Political Initiative, the only political leadership organization for Asian-American women in Massachusetts and nationally. Diana was formerly the Chief of Staff to Boston City Councillor-At Large John Connolly and has been the Executive Director of the Caucus of Women Legislators. She currently serves on the Governor’s Asian-American Commission, on the External Advisory Board of the University of Massachusetts Boston’s Center for Women in Politics and Public Policy, and on the Board of Massachusetts Asian Pacific Islanders (MAP) for Health.



Georgiana Chevy

Georgiana Chevy is a bilingual higher education administrator with experience in strategic and program management as well as experience with counseling diverse populations, advising and teaching. She was previously a volunteer and intern at the Boston Women’s Fund supporting our efforts for internships and volunteer recruitment. She brings her leadership skills and ability to work across multicultural differences to the Fund’s board.



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ourVoices

In our winter edition - spotlight our grantmaking process through the Allocations Committee:

- Highlighting four of our grantees
- More on our strategic planning process
- Preparing for our Men Take A Stand event in February 2012

September 14, 2011

Josefina Vázquez, Executive Director, will appear as a panelist at Boston College Conference, Graduate School of Social Work, connecting issues related to grassroots organizing within the current sphere of social work.

October 2011

Domestic Workers' Bill of Rights will go before the Massachusetts Legislature.



MEMORIAM TO KIP TIERNAN 1926 – 2011

Kip will always be remembered as a rebel, peace activist, social militant and rabble-rouser on behalf of all of those most oppressed by society's greed. She was compassionate and loving and only asked that each of us do with less so that others who have least can have more. Let us always keep her memory alive. At the Boston Women's Fund, we remain humbled for having her among the seven women founding BWF. Kip stands among those who never die. Kip Tiernan, PRESENTE!

HELP us match \$150,000 in September!