

BOSTON WOMEN'S FUND

Our Voices

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NEWSLETTER 53 - SUMMER 2011

Men Take A Stand: Honoring Mel King

On February 23rd, the Boston Women's Fund held its second Men Take A Stand event, recognizing men who promote peace, equality and the leadership of women and girls. This year BWF honored local activist, statesman, MIT adjunct professor and community organizer Mel King. BWF granted him the "Social Justice in Action" award for his many years of dedication to community organizing, youth development, nonviolence and for Taking A Stand in supporting the leadership of women and girls.

For over 55 years, Mel King, the community activist and organizer, worked determinedly for social justice across race, class, gender and age in Boston. After being a State Representative for nearly 10 years, King was the first black mayoral candidate for the city of Boston in 1983. King founded the Community Fellows program at the Massachusetts Institute for Technology where he taught for 25 years and has since established the South End Technology Center to provide youth with access to technology.

The 150 people at the event included members of the BWF family, political figures, and fans and family of Mel King. Political figures

included Governor Deval Patrick, who participated and shared in this memorable evening, State Representative Russell Holmes, District 2 City Council candidate Suzanne Lee, and District 7 City Council candidate, Tito Jackson. Guests enjoyed the many, varied performances and the food provided by Seasoned with Soul caterer Rhonda Persip.

Veronique-Anne Epiter, international performer and long-time friend of the Kings, sang "I want you to sing my song," an original piece

(continued at the bottom of page 5)



Mel King, Josefina Vázquez and Governor Deval Patrick



Veronique-Anne Epiter



Mel and Joyce King



Project Hip Hop - Luis (Life) Guzman

Veronique-Anne Epiter - international performer and long-time friend of the Kings, sang "I want you to sing my song," an original piece written and composed by Mel King.

Mel and Joyce King - "The person who does a lot of the pushing and checking has been Joyce King. I couldn't leave this podium without asking her to come up," said Mel King as he honored his partner for her help and support.

Project Hip Hop - Luis (Life) Guzman - is part of Project Hip Hop's youth group Guys Cypher. He performed a spoken word piece titled "Dedication to Mel King."

HELP US MATCH \$150,000 BY SEPTEMBER!

Executive Director's Letter

Dear Community,

In the current "Our Voices" edition, the Fund's Men Take A Stand, otherwise known as our MTAS initiative, takes center stage. Through MTAS, men like Mel King support the Fund's vision: "nonviolent success within our communities emerges with the leadership of women." Ending the unbearable conditions of oppression and violence faced by many women in their homes across race, class and gender, still remains a primary challenge for



Mel King

all of us, women and men alike. Understanding this imperative helped us last year to arrive at the construct of MTAS. And, this year on February 23, we honored Mel King with our MTAS Social Justice in Action award, because in his lifetime he embodied the principles of nonviolence together with supporting the leadership of women through his actions.

The leadership that we as women bring to the fore broadens the issues at stake in the lives of women. The Fund clearly recognizes the role that the movement of women-led philanthropists plays in determining where to invest their own resources. This role persists as a key factor within the overall community building efforts to end violence. These philanthropists know how

to use their leverage when perceiving their potential to shift the dynamics of power. Whether as activists or philanthropists, we all contribute in one way or another to the historical drive of steering a nonviolent agenda within our communities and country. Each of us holds the reigns of choosing our own level of support for social change. The Boston Women's Fund uses your support wherever it deems most effective among our grantees. Ultimately, the strength of moving forward with an agenda that fulfills our vision depends on the boldness of our philanthropists.

In November 1968, an important gathering of 200 women from 37 states and Canada took place in Chicago to discuss the methods of creating a race and class agenda that embraced women's liberation, while simultaneously questioning the status quo. Soon after, a second topic arose as other women sought a second twist to the women question, that of equality while also maintaining the traditional power structure in place. As more women with either a liberal or conservative consciousness massively joined the feminist movement on the national level (more popularly known as a part of the second wave of feminists); the second platform seeking equal rights and eventually 'to break the glass ceiling,' won out. It became apparent that many women of color in particular found nonexistent

space for themselves among second wave feminists, and created their own 'womanists' movement. By the 1990s some of their daughters identified themselves as a third wave.

Here in the Boston area, thirteen years after the first national meetings, a group of diverse women met to seek ways of butressing their organizing efforts for racial, economic and social justice. So it turned out that here locally the women who founded the Boston Women's Fund chose the first perspective by refusing to accept the status quo. They decided in undergirding: those women's and girls' led organizations and groups politically grounded with the conviction that a radical shift of power must ensue for justice to be realized at all levels within our society.

To this day, we tirelessly use a race, class and gender lens in choosing those grantees ready to tackle the challenges within our communities. It remains no coincidence that I look to your boldness in strengthening women-led philanthropy as we garner the support of progressive men. United we will create a better world. In moving forward, how much better can it get than to embrace the nonviolent principles of MTAS in bonding all of us as progressives? I thank you for helping our work to prevail. At the same time, I audaciously ask you to be bolder than you ever thought possible in your philanthropy.

Yours in struggle,

Josefina Vázquez, Executive Director



Josefina Vázquez

“We all contribute to the historical drive of steering a nonviolent agenda within our communities and country. Each of us holds the reigns of choosing our own level of support for social change.”

The Outstanding Need for Backing Women-Led Philanthropy

By Josefina Vázquez, Executive Director

The Boston Women's Fund grantmaking efforts seek to strike directly at the racial, economic and social disparities that create an immense system of disproportional inequities, particularly for women of color and low-income women. With approximately two or three handfuls of other progressive foundations found throughout the United States, the Boston Women's Fund pursues radical changes to existing societal structures of power and wealth.

As a small women's foundation, this creates its own political ramifications for us. Nevertheless, we insist on promoting the activist voices of women and girls in the struggle against racism, poverty and social discrimination. Thanks to the support of some anonymous women philanthropists and one anonymous foundation as well as the Hyams Foundation and the Women's Funding Network, we now find ourselves entering a five-year strategic planning process to be completed by this December. The Fund anticipates the plan taking-off in the beginning of 2012 and concluding at the end of 2016.

Our plan must consider upholding the principles of women-led philanthropy as the anchor for supporting our grassroots efforts. Currently, we manage to connect with activists on the cutting edge of the progressive movement. We support their ability to impact social change. At the same time, the importance of linking with women leaders in philanthropy as key to our successful grantmaking, provides us an advantage within our fundraising framework. This advantage remains limited for any gender-focused foundation, until we all successfully find the leverage to expand our economic base. Therefore, expanding our outreach by connecting with men who also advocate for the relevant work realized at the community level, provides us with an analytical advantage long needed in our strategy.

In our experience social justice philanthropy remains regrettably the least reinforced by the high-leveled resources of major-philanthropists, whose preference for the traditionally large philanthropic institutions provides these institutions with the leverage of unabashedly maintaining the status quo with their enormous resources. Unfortunately, the charitable paradigm continuously exercised by these large institutions also reinforces their valued political dynamics of social power. It also unmistakably demonstrates that they are not in business to create any shifts in this control model.

We on the other hand as a women's foundation are in the business of questioning those assumptions of power and control, which reinforce the conditions of racial, economic and social injustices found within many communities across the Greater Boston Area, across this State and across this Country. This leads the Fund to strengthen its own tenets in supporting: activist women and girls in the struggle for permanent social change. Their work in turn directly benefits communities with the least resources. Women's foundations like the Boston Women's Fund must seek to enhance their economic base.

This brings us to the crux of our viability. The question for the Boston Women's Fund remains, how to measure the economic basis of its long-term sustainability? Convinced that by upholding the principles of women-led philanthropy as the anchor for supporting its grantmaking goals and objectives, we must achieve a critical mass of supporters to be effective in the long-run. Please stand with us as we move forward to bolster women-led philanthropists who hold the potential of shifting the dynamics of power.

BWF's 5 year Strategic Planning Process

By Tulaine Marshall and Madeline McNeely

In March 2011, BWF board and staff launched a partnership with management consultants Tulaine Marshall and Madeline McNeely to develop a five-year strategic plan that will guide the organization's vision and priorities for 2012-2016.

As a consulting team, Tulaine and Madeline enable mission-driven organizations to address major operational, fiscal and strategic challenges. Tulaine Marshall is an accomplished social entrepreneur, educator, and writer. She has played central leadership roles in the launch and expansion of several social innovations in the public and private sectors both domestically and internationally. Madeline McNeely is a master level coach, consultant, facilitator and trainer with over 20 years of experience. Madeline has coached over 75 individual leaders and leadership teams ranging from youth workers to senior corporate executives.

Now is the perfect time for BWF to conduct a strategic plan. BWF's mission is more relevant than ever as girls and women navigate a troubled economy and increasingly complex community challenges. Ready to reflect on its organizational successes and "lessons learned" to inform its planning process and future direction, we also look to the broader community.

It is our hope that through this process, BWF will have a roadmap to follow as the organization embarks on the next quarter century. As a friend and supporter of BWF, your input and perspective remains critical to the success of this project. If interested in participating at some level in the strategic plan, whether through an online survey or interview, please contact Alanna Kwoka, Administrative Coordinator, via email alanna@bostonwomensfund.org or phone (617)725-0035 ext. 3008, so that we can send you a survey or invite you to a focus group.

Mel King: A Man of All Seasons

Mel King is known as social activist and community organizer in Boston for over fifty-five years, and also adds educator, youth worker, State Representative, author, Adjunct Professor at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and founder of the South End Technology Center to his long list of accomplishments.

And, as an Adjunct Professor at M.I.T., Mel created the Community Fellows Program, bringing together community leaders from around the country to reflect and research on their work. He served as the program's director for 25 years. Today, he directs the South End Technology Center, which he founded in 1997 to serve a diverse community.

Recently, Michael Eric Dyson, the gifted scholar, lecturer and author, at the Haymarket People's Fund 35th Anniversary event mentioned that as a young man in Detroit, he remembers hearing national television broadcast the successes of Mel King, encouraging him and other young men of color to realize their potential. Mel's impact reached beyond Massachusetts and onto the national landscape.

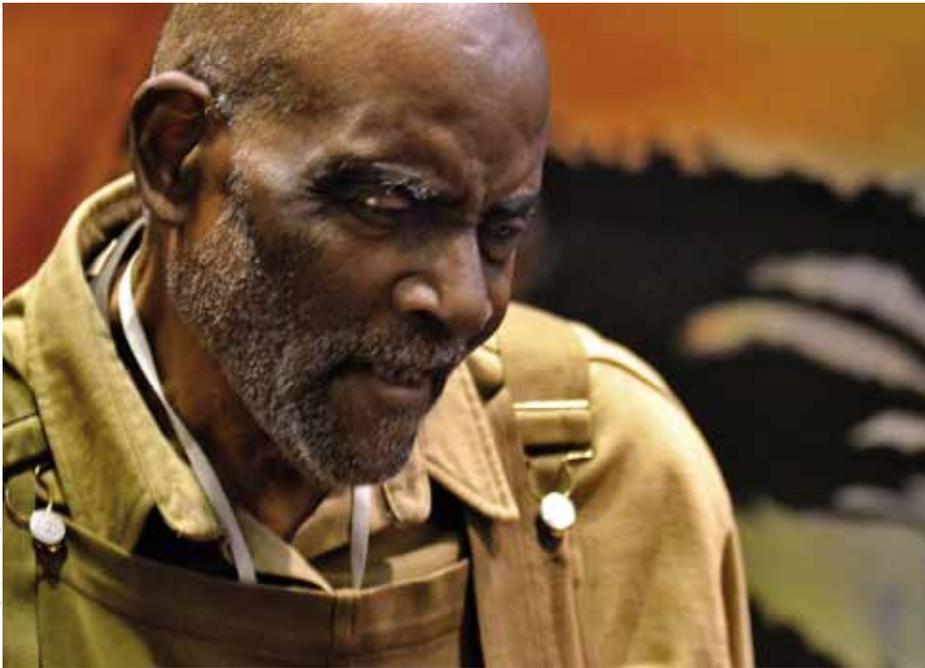
For his many years of dedication to community organizing and youth development, and for Taking A Stand in supporting the leadership of women and girls, the Boston Women's Fund was proud to present Mel King with the Social Justice in Action Award at the second Men Take A Stand event on February 23, 2011 at the USES Harriet Tubman House.

After receiving accolades from Governor Deval Patrick and our award from Josefina Vázquez, Executive Director, we were left with Mel's own historic words for the evening, "We all have to stand up for women. In doing so, we stand up for ourselves. I think that it is an imperative that we understand that while we have come a distance, we have a long, long-way to go. And it will only change, if we make up our minds to change it."

Mel King began his community activism in the 1950s as the youth director at the United South End Settlements focusing on street-corner gangs. He is responsible for organizing the peaceful and festive Tent City mass demonstration against the Boston Redevelopment Agency in 1968.

He was elected to the State House of Representatives in 1973 and served until 1982, laying a stronger foundation for the community development movement in Massachusetts, which maintains its own long history of struggle.

In 1983, Mel King became the first African American to run for Mayor of Boston. This was a historical turning point for the participation of African Americans in politics and urban policy.



Mel King speaking at Men Take A stand

"We all have to stand up for women. In doing so, we stand up for ourselves."

written and composed by Mel King. King’s inspiration for the song came from growing up in diverse South End neighborhood where he learned “a lot about getting along and understanding different people’s cultures.”

Two young men from Project Hip-Hop performed before speeches began. A BWF grantee organization, Project Hip-Hop is a youth-led organization engaging and developing young people as activists and organizers. It was very meaningful to have young men thank Mel King for his work and to participate in Men Take A Stand.

Governor Deval Patrick spoke about the importance of Mel King’s activism and

in meeting Mel King, he jokingly shared how he admired her spunk. She in turn reminded the Governor that he should be accepting of all immigrants in the State of Massachusetts and to prevent any racial profiling, by not signing onto the federal project of “safe communities.”

In his acceptance speech, Mel King talked about the need to “stand up for women and immigrants,” especially in today’s political environment. He believes that there is “no such thing as an illegal person on this planet.” He explained that while social media is useful, “yea, tweet, tweet, tweet,” nothing is more significant than “feet in the street.” King stressed how much there

still needs to be done, but encouraged the audience that change was possible through collaboration and hard work.

The evening ended with a performance by ENVY, a female step team from Tufts University. The young women expressed their appreciation for Mel King through their elegant movement, rhythmic beats, and powerful performance.

Overall, the second Men Take A Stand event was successful thanks to the performers, master of ceremonies, guests and honoree. The event reminded everyone of the importance of Taking A Stand to end violence against women, to support women and girls in leadership, and to create a better world.



The Batucada Belles



ENVY, Tufts all female step team



Master of Ceremonies José Massó



Governor Deval Patrick

achievements. He was grateful to King for being a “first” and for running for Mayor, which paved the way for Patrick’s successful election. Patrick’s statement that “Mel King is a living example of how to be and what to do” resonated with the audience.

Josefina Vázquez, BWF executive director, was joined by Governor Patrick in presenting the “Social Justice in Action” award to Mel King for his many years of dedication to community organizing and youth development, and for Taking A Stand in supporting the leadership of women and girls. Josefina shared with the audience the time when she was an adolescent and

“Mel King’s fifty year legacy of social activism and civic leadership is an inspiration to all of us who strive to be an uplifting force in our communities. We honor his commitment to social progress at the grassroots and his continuing impact on the lives of so many young people across the Commonwealth.”—Governor Deval Patrick

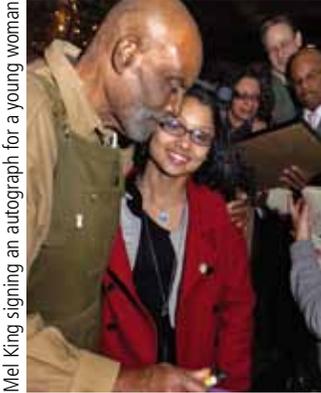
The Batucada Belles are an all women, Brazilian drumming group founded 25 years ago to play at social justice events. They kicked off the evening on a high note.

The evening concluded with a performance by ENVY, a female step team from Tufts University. The young women expressed their appreciation for Mel King through their elegant movement, rhythmic beats, and powerful performance.

Co-Chair Letter

“Walking the Talk”

The Boston Women’s Fund has a proud tradition of honoring members of our community for their significant contributions in promoting racial, economic and social justice for women and for taking a stand against violence toward women. We know that progress has been made and wish to celebrate this progress and those who made it possible, while recognizing that our work continues. We believe in the importance of acknowledging the leadership of men as well as women in this struggle for equality and peace.



Mel King signing an autograph for a young woman

Last year, in our 25th anniversary year, the Boston Women’s Fund recognized a group of eminent men and women, who, through their actions and words had become our active partners toward fulfilling our mission. More recently, we honored former State Rep, former Mayoral candidate and MIT adjunct professor, Mel King at a reception at the USES Harriet Tubman House in Boston’s South End. Mel King, a well known community activist in Boston, has truly understood the issues affecting women, girls and families. He has worked tirelessly and with great courage and conviction on behalf

of families to end poverty and to provide access to adequate housing and quality education. Additionally, he has spoken out passionately against violence in our communities.

As we witness with great dismay the debate in Washington over budgets and deficits, resulting in reduced funding for education and “safety net” programs, we want to spread a message of activism and hope. As members of the Boston Women’s Fund community, we ask that you continue your generous support of our grantees.

With warm regards,

Two handwritten signatures in black ink, one for Rita Lara and one for Virginia M. Meany.

Rita Lara and Virginia Meany
Co-Chairs, Board of Directors

Amy Leung, Program Officer

Amy Leung joined the Fund at the end of March, at the beginning of the Spring 2011 Allocations process. She brings with her over 10 years of grassroots organizing experience in the Chinese immigrant community in New York City and Boston. She was most recently an organizer at the Chinese Progressive Association. She looks forward to being part of the Fund at this exciting time.

Ronita Nath, Executive Assistant

Sadly, Ronita needed to leave the Fund to be with her family in Canada. We are heartbroken to say good-bye to a great colleague and member of the BWF family. We wish her all the best with her future endeavors.

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 that strengthen the grassroots initiatives and leadership of women and girls.

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Volunteer Highlight: Karli Rizzo

Karli Rizzo supported us with communications and marketing with printed media. Her enthusiasm and vitality inspired staff to make Men Take A Stand:

Honoring Mel King a successful event.

Alanna Kwoka, Administrative Coordinator, interviewed Karli concerning her volunteer time at the Boston Women's Fund.



Karli Rizzo

1. As a young adult what helped you connect with the Boston Women's Fund?

Volunteering at the Fund helped me take a look at the inner workings of how a small foundation dedicated to social change functions and facilitates young adults like me to realize the level of organizing within communities. They have a business model there, a strategy for moving forward. When young adults can see a need, and then clear direction and steps to take to make change a reality, it is very empowering. The great thing about working with a progressive foundation is the enormous amount of room for innovation, fresh thinking and creativity which makes volunteering fun and more relatable.

2. What attracted you to the Boston Women's Fund?

The Boston Women's Fund's broad community outreach, both in terms of the diverse people they connect with as well as the resources and services they provide. The grantees at the Fund speak to the scope and magnitude of the BWF's power to assist many different causes.

3. What do you consider was your most important contribution to BWF?

I think my most meaningful contribution to the BWF was my marketing and communications skill-set. Traditionally small institutions don't get the kind of press they deserve. It is so important to educate and inform the public of the profound work being done by the Fund and the successes it achieves. Luckily, marketing today through social media is incredibly inexpensive, and oftentimes free. There exists a lot of room within the broader non-profit industry for compelling and meaningfully captivating marketing campaigns. We are in a new era where the new normal is that we the public are generating as news content and which ends-up redefining "news-worthy."

4. What does Men Take A Stand mean to you? And, why do you think it is important for men to Take A Stand to support women and the Boston Women's Fund?

Personally, Men Take A Stand means bringing members of the community together to empower themselves and to educate on the issues still plaguing neighbors, friends, family or colleagues in order to effectuate real change. MTAS also means uniting for a cause that directly affects us all. If women suffer, men suffer. If men are suffering, then women suffer too. It is an interdependent relationship.

5. Has Mel King impacted your life? If so, in what way?

Mel King's *Path To Change* really spoke to me. It is step-by-step directions to achieve positive change in almost any circumstance, whether in yourself or in society. Mel King encourages the reader to honestly envision their goals for change, to assess their strategy, to be aware of challenges and setbacks and to build upon skills that makes change a reality. I am also deeply inspired by King's courage and determination to devote his life to change people's way of thinking and to challenge societal norms.

6. What are you doing now? Did volunteering at BWF influence your choice at all?

I am currently working on a marketing project in Portland, Oregon called "Moving to the Beat", in which we focus on peace and conflict resolution through hip-hop activism and the significance of women's involvement in rebuilding the Sierra Leone.

My involvement at the BWF granted me new insight and transferable skills to continue the energy for change. Through my work at the BWF I learned how to raise money for great causes and witness how a successful non-profit foundation and business operates. I respect the way the BWF executes its mission of supporting women of all backgrounds the resources necessary to create social change. Josefina Vázquez, Executive Director, taught me that to truly understand a community's struggles, you must immerse yourself in the culture and in the neighborhoods and work elbow to elbow with the people for any real change in people's lives and communities.

7. Who is your favorite social justice champion? Why?

Harriet Tubman. I am in awe of her courage and sheer motivation. Tubman was powerful, clever, smart and determined. Tubman's work demonstrates that sometimes we need to question social order and stand and act upon what we know is the right thing to do. She was a selfless individual and we can all draw inspiration from her.



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ourVoices

Upcoming Announcements –

Annual Report

Did you read our 2010 Annual Report, GRASSROOTS: racial, economic and social justice in action? Send any comments, concerns or requests for the annual report 2010 to alanna@bostonwomensfund.org.

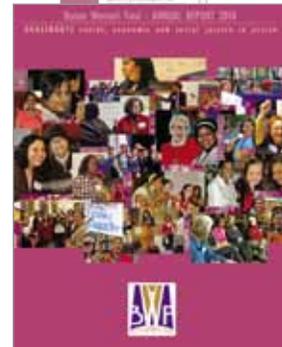
September Newsletter

Look forward to our upcoming September Newsletter which will highlight our grantmaking process and new grantees!

Strategic Planning at the Boston Women's Fund

We launched a strategic planning process, and as friend and supporter of BWF, we look to your input and perspective as critical to the success of this process. If interested in participating at a level convenient for you within the strategic plan, whether through an online survey or interview, please contact Alanna Kwoka, Administrative Coordinator, via email alanna@bostonwomensfund.org or phone (617)725-0035 ext. 3008, so that we can send you a survey or invite you to a focus group.

Coming VERY Soon: Our new, updated WEBSITE:
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