



# NORTH STAR *News*

## FALL 2009

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### ADVANCING MISSION RELATED INVESTING



Lisa Renstrom, a trustee of Renstrom Perkowitz Social Investments chats with Jason Franklin, North Star Fund Board Treasurer after a Confluence Philanthropy leadership luncheon on mission related investing held in North Star Fund's conference room. The luncheon featured presentations by Michael Lent from the Hazen Foundation, Mark Reed from the Contact Fund, and David Wood from the Boston College Institute for Responsible Investment.

#### An innovative program to create opportunity and sustainability

With our successful Beyond Giving workshop series for donors, North Star has become an important educational resource for people with wealth who want to use their invested assets as a tool for social change. Jason Franklin, North Star Fund's new Board Treasurer, puts it succinctly, "If I'm a person with progressive values, I want to see the world be a different place, one that values environmental sustainability, one that looks at economic equity. Of course I give actively as a donor and philanthropist, and I volunteer, and I'm an activist to try to advance those ideals. And then I can also try to achieve those goals through my assets."

That's what socially responsible, or values-based investing is all about. Mission-related investing (MRI) takes it a bold step further, and looks at the assets held by institutions,

like foundations, like North Star Fund. Jason continues, "Generally, individuals don't think of themselves as having missions. Their investing comes from their values. Foundations are different—they do have formal missions."

#### *Global Recession Spurs Change*

In October, North Star Fund hosted a workshop held by Confluence Philanthropy, a new project of Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors to expand mission-related investing among foundations and other non-profit organizations. Dana Lanza, its dynamic director, left her position as Executive Director of the Environmental Grantmakers Association earlier this year to take the reins at Confluence.

An ironic fallout of the global recession is an increased interest in MRI. According to

*...Continued inside*

*There are exciting investment opportunities that weren't there a decade ago—ways to invest proactively in clean energy technology, sustainable agriculture, or in the clean-up of brownfield sites in low-income communities.*

*— Jason Franklin,  
North Star Fund  
Board Treasurer*

#### FIVE WAYS TO USE YOUR ASSETS TO CREATE THE WORLD YOU WANT TO SEE

1. Switch from a corporate bank to one that invests in community development.
2. Apply social screens to your stocks and mutual funds.
3. Invest proactively in projects that bring economic opportunity to low-income neighborhoods.
4. Become a shareholder activist by pooling your proxies with other like-minded investors.
5. Donate online at [www.northstarfund.org](http://www.northstarfund.org)



## KATHY GOLDMAN, BOARD MEMBER: LEADING THE WAY

### HELLUVA COMMITMENT

I'll be leaving the Board of Directors this February, having served since 2002. Almost from its inception in 1979 I've worked with North Star Fund and used it as a resource.

If you're involved with grassroots community organizing and activism in New York, I don't see how you could not know about the North Star Fund. It's just impossible. North Star has maintained its commitment to supporting groups that are doing solid community organizing. And that's a helluva commitment.

There are now a number of foundations that North Star works with that focus on direct community organizing. But for a long time, we were out there alone. North Star set a pattern that people saw made a difference; we led the way.

North Star has also changed. We are more responsive and strongly connected to our grantee groups. Best of all, there's more money given out. All this and more is a tribute to the wonderful staff and its leadership.

As I leave the board this February, I'm proud of our movement building initiatives—of finding ways for groups to work together maximize their impact. That's another example of how North Star Fund is leading the way.

## NORTH STAR NEWS

### GREENING QUEENS

#### *North Star Fund Chosen to Administer \$8 Million Environmental Justice Program*

In the fall of 2009, North Star Fund will launch the "Greening Western Queens Fund," a new \$8 million initiative to invest in energy-efficiency and environmental projects in the Western Queens community affected by a July 2006 electric power outage. This program is supported by funds from the community's settlement with Con Edison. The Public Service Commission of the State of New York selected North Star Fund to administer the project because of our expertise in facilitating community-led grantmaking processes.

We will develop a Greening Western Queens Fund Community Advisory Committee of local stakeholders and environmental experts to distribute grants to local groups for tree planting, energy efficiency, job training and open space enhancement projects. The projects will incorporate conservation education and replicable models that will have an impact beyond the neighborhood.

According to Hugh Hogan, Executive Director of North Star Fund, "These projects will make Western Queens a model for partnerships between the public and private sector, partnerships that will move all of us to a sustainable, just, and innovative economy."

### NEW BOARD MEMBERS

North Star Fund is pleased to announce that Pierre Hauser and Henry Serrano have joined our Board of Directors.

Pierre Hauser has been a longtime philanthropic activist and supporter of North Star Fund. He is a co-founder and vice president of The Daphne Foundation.

Henry Serrano is a senior community organizer with Community Voices Heard and serves as a co-chair of North Star Fund's Community Funding Committee.

Our next newsletter will feature profiles of both Pierre and Henry.

### NEW STAFF MEMBER



#### *Isabelle H. Leighton North Star Fund's New Development Officer*

Isabelle Leighton comes to North Star Fund with a deep personal engagement with its work. According to Isabelle, "As a child, I traveled to Taiwan every few years and connected with my mother's culture and extended family. Since then, I have always been sensitive to and interested in immigrant life away from homeland with a particular interest in language and multicultural understanding. Because of the struggles my family faced as immigrants, I have a strong connection to folks who, because of cultural barriers, experience economic hardship."

Isabelle was born in Modesto, California and grew up in Fresno, in the heart of California's central valley agricultural belt. She graduated with a B. A. from University of California, Davis in English and Chinese. Since moving to the East Coast, Isabelle has held a variety of development and project management positions at New York nonprofits. Most recently, she was development manager at Literacy, Inc. and project coordinator for the H209 Forum of Henry Hudson 400 New York Foundation.

Says Isabelle, "By working at North Star Fund, I feel that I am finally in a position to contribute to the solutions to some of the challenges faced by immigrants and other individuals struggling for economic justice. North Star connects activists working at the grassroots community level with those who can also express their activism through giving resources."

## MISSION RELATED INVESTING

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Dana Lanza, “Getting people to pay attention to MRI used to be an uphill battle. When the economic decline began last year, a lot of foundations looked at their investment strategy and realized that it wasn’t working for them. So they started to rethink the purposes of their investment portfolios. Is a foundation always about increasing its size and make more and more money? Or is it about how those assets are used to fulfill the mission of the foundation?”

Contact Fund is an example of a mission-related investment financial instrument. Founded by Mark Reed, who is a North Star Fund donor, Contact Fund raises investment capital from individual investors and family foundations, and lends it to New York City community development corporations to create better economic opportunities for its residents.

According to Mark Reed, “It’s a tougher economic environment. But there’s a greater desire for people to put their money to work in a way that’s not just giving.”

Young people with wealth are a driving force in this change. Says Mark, “There’s a definite generational shift. More young people are coming into money, and they’re interested in new models of com-

munity-based organizational effectiveness. One of those models might be taking an investor role rather than a donor role.”

### *Changing Philanthropy*

From the beginning, North Star has had a socially-conscious investment strategy. The burgeoning MRI movement has expanded what’s possible to do. According to Jason Franklin, “There are exciting investment opportunities that weren’t there a decade ago—ways to invest proactively in clean energy technology, sustainable agriculture, or in the clean-up of brownfield sites in low-income communities.”

While mission-related investing is focused on institutions, individual people have the power to implement it. As Dana Lanza puts it, “People who come to our workshops are thinking about their personal wealth and giving, and then they’re also thinking about the non-profit or foundation board they sit on.”

For North Star Fund, a large part of the excitement around our becoming a more active mission-related investor will be developing ways to share our lessons and experiences with our donors and other organizational partners. It’s another, crucial dimension to our unique role as an organizer of progressive donors.



## NISHA ATRE RICHARDSON: WHY I GIVE

### HONORED BY TRIBUTE

I came to North Star after years of working in the corporate world. I had been politically active in college and had been looking for a catalyst for getting active again.

North Star fit the bill. I was impressed by the 30 year history of North Star Fund. It was clearly an organization with staying power. I liked the fact that North Star Fund gives grants to groups organizing to improve people’s lives long-term, not just quick fixes. Most of all, I like North Star’s commitment to progressive values.

As the recession wears on, we need to do more to lend a hand to people who are still struggling. The Obama victory proved that grass-roots organizing works. So I asked my friends who have been fortunate enough to do well financially in their careers to please help.

My friends came through. Last year, North Star received five generous gifts in my honor. I was humbled that they would support me; they didn’t know much about the organization, the recession was in full bloom and yet they still were willing to give. It showed me that sometimes all you have to do is ask.



Rinku Sen and Ellis Cose are the winners of the 2009 North Star News Prize. The event was held this year on October 30 at the law offices of Skadden Arps, LLC. The program featured a lively roundtable discussion on media coverage of the global recession. Pictured here: North Star News Prize winners and roundtable participants (from left to right) Deepa Fernandes, Oona Chatterjee, Kai Wright, Katrina vanden Heuvel, Roland Martin, Rinku Sen, Ellis Cose, Farai Chideya. For more pictures and information, visit [northstarfund.org](http://northstarfund.org).

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# GIVE THE GIFT OF GETTING HEARD

North Star Fund provides the resources needed for grassroots community activists to speak up – and get heard. This year-end, honor a friend, a teacher, a family member, or an activist who has inspired you with a tribute gift to North Star Fund.

**DONATE TODAY**

*northstarfund.org*



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