



NORTH STAR *News*

SPRING 2010

IN THIS ISSUE NEW GRANTMAKING VISION 7 NEW BOARD MEMBERS 2 WHY I GIVE 3

FOSTERING ACTIVIST LEADERSHIP



At a stakeholder meeting for grantee groups in May, 2009: from left to right, Sarah Ahn, Nodutdol; Lynn Lewis, Picture the Homeless; Michelle Perez, Community Voices Heard

With 30 Years of Lessons, North Star Fund Launches New Grantmaking Vision and Guidelines

What have we learned from 30 years of funding the most courageous and innovative grassroots leaders and organizers? How do we help more communities to get their voices heard and needs addressed? What do we keep doing? And what do we change?

These were some of the questions that have guided a committee of North Star Fund board members and staff over the last 18 months as they prepare to launch a new grantmaking vision and set of guidelines in the fall of 2010.

North Star Fund has been known as the first funder of many innovative and effective grassroots groups working in New York City's marginalized and disenfranchised communities. For over 30 years, we've supported 1600 groups—through funding, technical assistance, and mentorship. The groups have used the funding to build a membership base and staff, connect a network of supporters, and deepen fundraising and strategic know-how.

In the process, North Star has helped foster a dynamic network in almost every arena of progressive grassroots activism in the New York City metropolitan area. But we know we can do more to build a stronger community-led movement for social change. This is why in the fall, North Star Fund will launch a comprehensive grantmaking strategy that works with groups at every stage of their development, from start-up to seasoned.

Our Vision

Leadership development and helping leaders build trust and work together is a central goal of the new guidelines. According to North Star Executive Director Hugh Hogan, "The new guidelines will focus us more on fostering leadership, both by supporting individual leaders and by finding practical ways for people to work together more effectively. We want to see more grassroots activist groups and their memberships thinking not just about

These new guidelines open up great opportunities for leaders and innovators in the social justice field in New York City to get even more support for their work.

*– Oona Chatterjee,
North Star Fund
Board Chair
and
Co-Director,
Make the Road
New York*

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 pro-actively 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

NEW BOARD MEMBERS



Pierre Hauser
Writer

Pierre is a long-time philanthropic activist. In 1991, he and his spouse, Abigail Disney, founded the Daphne Foundation, which is a private family foundation that works to end poverty in New York City. According to Pierre, “I’ve always been disappointed by the reluctance of fellow foundations to support community organizing. Usually the excuse is that it’s hard to measure the impact of organizing. North Star’s grantees have repeatedly demonstrated the opposite, producing quite tangible results.”

More at northstarfund.org/PierreHauser



Henry Serrano
*Senior Organizer,
Community Voices Heard*

Henry works as Senior Organizer for Community Voices Heard (CVH), an organization of low-income people, predominantly women with experience on welfare, working to build power in New York City and State to improve the lives of their families and communities. “Empowerment at the grassroots level is a value that I share with North Star Fund. North Star provides resources to create and sustain leadership in diverse communities.”

More at northstarfund.org/HenrySerrano

...Continued

their own organizational development, but how they can connect with other grassroots organizations, coalitions and global movements of women, immigrants, labor and the LGBT community. Leaders at the national level know they need a base of people to ensure their movement’s success. To do that, we need more investment at the grassroots.”

Kevin Ryan, North Star’s board vice chair and a program officer at New York Foundation, is excited about the new guidelines. He served on the Strategic Grantmaking Committee that developed them. According to Kevin, “We’ve helped to seed innovative new projects on which other funders will not take the risk. As a result, we have supported a number of groups that have become stronger and more effective base-building community organizing groups. And with these new guidelines, we can support these groups at multiple stages of their development.”

Here’s an overview of the new categories.

Supporting Effective Leaders

Movement Leadership Grants will provide a deeper investment of general support in groups that have demonstrated the potential for, or already have shown, a strong record of success in their community organizing work. Groups with annual budgets of up to \$800,000 are eligible. The leaders and organizations selected under this category will receive a grant of \$50,000 over two years.

In accepting the grant, a group’s leadership team—both staff and members—will commit to participating in peer learning training sessions throughout the year. According to Oona Chatterjee, North Star Fund’s board chair and co-executive director of Make the Road NY, “Frequently, in the organizations doing the best work, leadership goes way beyond a single person. Very often there’s two or three or five visionaries working together to get stuff done.”

In It to Win

Grassroots Strategy Grants will enable grantees to access additional research,

legal, media and policy expertise. It’s technical assistance, but it’s technical assistance to win: for instance, developing the language and strategy for passing a new law to demand accountability from public and private bureaucracies.

According to Henry Serrano, North Star Fund’s Community Funding Committee co-chair and a senior community organizer at Community Voices Heard, “The Grassroots Strategy grants will enable groups to seize a strategic moment to catalyze a campaign, to define it concretely, and get advice from allies who are experts on policy reforms, communicating a platform of demands, or how city hall and the state house operate.”

Bold and Creative Efforts

Innovative Activism Grants will support the most exciting social justice work beyond community organizing. Areas of work eligible for this category include cultural, art and media projects; resources for organizing; and efforts to build alternative institutions, like community managed open spaces and alternatives to the criminal justice system. Priority will go to groups with a direct connection to community organizing campaigns. As an example: a documentary looking at the role that parent organizing has played in informing and motivating neighbors to join a school reform coalition might get support—as might projects that creatively use dance, digital media or theater to support a local organizing effort. Projects that develop skills, build leadership, or raise awareness of social justice issues will also be considered.

While North Star Fund has always supported this kind of work, grantees previously competed with community organizing groups for the same pool of money. Under the new guidelines, these groups will be evaluated against others like them.

According to Hugh, “This is an important part of our work, a part that I hope will grow.”

Holding Steady

Since 2003, North Star’s activist-led grants programs have been geared for

new or small groups with annual budgets less than \$250,000. That component of our grants programs will remain in place, with half of our activist-led grantmaking budget (some \$350,000) devoted to Grassroots Action Grants.

Rapid Response Grants have been popular and effective. Grantees have recognized several wins made possible by the North Star Fund's ability to get resources within one or two days to where they're needed. Because of the tremendous success, the maximum for Rapid Response Grants will grow from \$2,000 to \$5,000.

Says board chair Oona Chatterjee, "The new guidelines sustain North Star Fund's long-standing commitment to supporting small and emerging organizations. They ensure that the grassroots activism that we need in our neighborhoods can continue to be supported by North Star."

Deeper Relationships for Donors

North Star Fund can take this more comprehensive approach because, in recent years, our donor community has stepped it up and grown.

The donors who founded North Star Fund wanted a different kind of relationship to their philanthropy. Many were

community activists themselves, who knew the vital importance of contributing financial support, but also found ways to contribute their time, skills and expertise.

According to Hugh, "Over the years, many donors have asked, 'How can I help beyond my donation?' The people who give to North Star—at whatever amount—have skills and considerable experience in organizing, strategic planning, financial management, communications, teaching, or the law. Through the peer learning component of the new guidelines, North Star will begin a program that connects donors with grassroots leaders and groups to leverage the expertise of our donor community."

The challenge is raising the resources to do it right. That's what we're putting before our donors and the progressive community. We need to create leaders that can work together for a stronger grassroots-led movement for equality, economic justice, and peace.

You can find a more complete overview of the guidelines on our website at northstarfund.org/NewGuidelines.



State Senator Diane Savino hugs Joycelyn Gill-Campbell at a January 2010 event in Albany at which the senator introduced the Domestic Workers' Bill of Rights. Joycelyn is the Organizational Coordinator for Domestic Workers United. Senator Savino introduced the bill. Photo by Brian Palmer



PETER BREST: WHY I GIVE

DONOR SINCE DAY ONE

The one steady stream that has followed me throughout my life is the desire to improve peoples' lives in one way or another. My association with social and economic change goes back to high school and college, when I was active in the movement to end the war in Vietnam.

There are very few places where grassroots organizations that are starting out or still growing can go to for support—whether it's financial support, technical assistance or networking. This is especially true for organizations that are pursuing causes that are controversial or not universally popular. There have been times when I haven't agreed with the policies or positions of some of the organizations that have been funded—but that hasn't changed my commitment to the organization. I feel passionately about North Star Fund and have remained a donor from Day One because North Star is unique.

It is critical for the continuation and growth of progressive politics in the city, the nation, and the world that North Star Fund continues to be able to support grassroots organizations in the many ways that it does.

More at northstarfund.org/PeterBrest

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Elise Boddie
Oona Chatterjee, *Chair*
Lule Demmissie
Jason Franklin, *Treasurer*
Sarah Hansen
Pierre Hauser
Hugh Hogan
Sarah Ludwig
Sheila McDaniel
Jennifer Merschdorf
Nisha Atre
Richardson, *Secretary*
Kevin Ryan, *Vice Chair*
Jonathan Schorr
Henry Serrano
Aarti Shahani

In memoriam:

Betty Kapetanakis,
1952-2002

ADVISORY BOARD

Gene Carroll
Maria Hinojosa
Craig Kaplan
Pamela Koslow
Manning Marable, Ph.D.
Monami Maulik
Iris Morales
Michael Ratner
Arva Rice
John Sayles
Cornel West, Ph.D.
Barbara Winslow

In memoriam:

Grace Paley, 1922-2007
David Hunter, 1916-2000

NORTH STAR FUND STAFF

Hugh Hogan
Executive Director

Diana Correa
*Deputy Director for Programs
& Strategic Initiatives*

cori schmanke parrish
*Deputy Director for Finance &
Operations*

Mark Leger
Communications Manager

Isabelle H. Leighton
Development Officer

Victor Tobar
Administrative Coordinator

Lucia Gajda
Events Associate

Emerson Soto
*Betty Kapetanakis
Memorial Intern*



**GIVE THE
GIFT OF GETTING HEARD**

North Star Fund provides the resources needed for grassroots community activists to speak up – and get heard. 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



520 EIGHTH AVENUE, Suite 2203
NEW YORK, NY 10018-6656

(212) 620-9110
(212) 620-8178 *fax*

**NONPROFIT
ORGANIZATION
US POSTAGE PAID
NEW YORK, NY
PERMIT #03096**