



# NORTH STAR *News* WINTER 2009

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## WHAT WE'VE LEARNED



*Power Together Community Advisors*

*Back row:* Ilana Burger, Families United for Racial and Economic Justice (FUREE); Gonzalo Mercado, El Centro de Hospitalidad; Sondra Youdelman, Community Voices Heard; James Mumm, Northwest Bronx Community and Clergy Coalition; Kate Grantz, North Star Fund consultant; Oona Chatterjee, Make the Road New York and North Star Fund Board Chair; Lynn Lewis, Picture the Homeless; Wanda Salaman, Mothers on the Move. *Front row, l to r:* Taleigh Smith, Mothers on the Move; Ai-Jen Poo, Domestic Workers United; Monami Maulik, Desis Rising Up and Moving (DRUM); Rickke Mananzala, FIERCE; Joo-Hyun Kang, Convening Facilitator.

*“In the ten years that I have been doing organizing in New York City, I’ve seen the number and the sophistication of groups increase—most of them have received support from North Star Fund.”*

*— Oona Chatterjee*

## FIVE WAYS TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE MOVEMENT FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE

1. Take out a donor advised fund through North Star Fund.
2. Make a tribute gift in honor of an inspiring activist.
3. Make a memorial gift in memory of colleague, friend, or family member.
4. Leverage your relationships and organize your peers to become donors to North Star Fund.
5. Donate online at [www.northstarfund.org](http://www.northstarfund.org)

## Reflections on 30 Years of Funding Grassroots Organizing and Activism

**T**urning thirty. It is one of life’s great moments. You’ve got some experience under your belt, but still have youthful energy and the anticipation of possibility. As North Star Fund prepares to celebrate our 30th anniversary in 2009, we’re taking stock of what we’ve done as a grantmaker and an agent of change. We are reflecting back in order to understand how to build on our strength and success as we move forward.

### *Investing in Leadership*

The recent presidential campaign demonstrated the power of investing in grassroots organizing and base-building to create a movement. But the Obama campaign did not step into a vacuum. It tapped into the powerful

network of thousands of neighborhood activists, local unions and community groups all over the country, enlisting their connections, their strategies and their people power.

Despite the turmoil in the economy, this is a critical opportunity to build a stronger movement for progressive social change. According to Oona Chatterjee, North Star Fund’s board chair and founding director of Make the Road New York, “In the ten years that I have been doing organizing in New York City, I’ve seen the number and the sophistication of groups increase—most of them have received support from North Star Fund. I’ve seen people raise the standards for their work. These

*...Continued inside*



## HUGH HOGAN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR: POWER TOGETHER

### BUILDING MOVEMENT

It is official. We are thirty! For three decades, North Star Fund has funded the leadership of people directly affected by injustice to create a different destiny for themselves and their communities.

Now we want to move boldly and ensure sustained leadership and a strong community-led movement for change. North Star Fund has been researching and planning a major movement-building initiative called Power Together, where we will do three key things:

- Establish a shared fund for national funders to pool resources to invest in community leadership.
- Create synergy by enabling established community organizing groups to build on shared agendas, and connecting emerging grassroots groups to the larger effort.
- Develop a new philanthropic approach to funding movements, in which funders and groups make a commitment over time to envision and invest in community leadership and institutions to sustain change.

Power Together will further bridge the strong relationships we have with funders and the grassroots world, forging an innovative partnership to support community-driven change.

## NORTH STAR NEWS

### NEW BOARD MEMBERS



**Lule Demmissie**  
*Executive Director, Morgan Stanley*

Lule Demmissie was born and spent her early years in Ethiopia. She attended Smith College on a scholarship in the early 1990s and went on to earn an MBA from Columbia University. She now works as a professional in the financial services industry.

Lule was moved to take a leadership role at North Star Fund after attending our LGBT diversity brunch in the spring of 2008. “The reason I believe in North Star,” says Lule, “is the breadth of impact that it has. It’s not driven by one particular cause or issue, but by the broader version of change through activism. It empowers communities deprived of healthcare and education. Having lived the immigrant experience, I know how important these resources are to people starting out in a new place.”



**Jennifer Merschorf**  
*Non-profit Management Consultant*

Jennifer Merschorf is a native Northern Californian who has been in New York for three years. She has over 15 years of experience in both for-profit and non-profit media operations, development and communications—with a long stint at the national office of the Sierra Club in San Francisco. Jennifer recently left her

post at New Yorkers for Parks, a greening and open space advocacy group here in New York City, to start her own company dedicated to helping small non-profits run their businesses. Her activism has focused on women’s and environmental issues.

Jennifer is looking forward to working on North Star Fund’s board to further its mission. “I’ve never lived in such a large place with such diversity—the difference between the top and the bottom is alarming. We need the grassroots to have their voice, and, North Star brings people together to make great things happen.”



**Aarti Shahani**  
*Researcher, Justice Strategies*

Aarti Shahani is an accomplished community organizer with a long history of working on immigration rights. She is a co-founder and, until recently, a co-director of Families for Freedom (FFF), a long-time North Star Fund grantee. FFF has provided support to thousands of people facing deportation, trained hundreds of community groups across the country on defending against unjust deportation, and moved members of Congress to introduce legislation to keep families together. Before founding FFF, Aarti was an advocate with the National Immigration Project of the National Lawyers Guild, and a board member of Citizens and Immigrants for Equal Justice. Aarti is also an investigative writer on immigration and policing. She teaches at New York University.

According to Aarti, “Both vision and building institutional power are challenges for progressives. What excites me about North Star Fund is the concrete way that this foundation is influencing that vision through supporting grassroots organizations that impact New York’s communities and public policies.”

## WHAT WE'VE LEARNED

...Continued

organizations have strong leadership. Many of them have racked up meaningful victories. Most importantly, they're connected to a strong base of people. The next step is to strengthen and expand that work."

Moving forward, North Star Fund will deepen our support for leaders to work better together in a movement building framework. We will connect new and emerging kitchen table activists to larger community organizing groups—and leverage more significant resources for both.

### *Connect Netroots to Grassroots*

In the last several years, we've returned to our roots as a donor organizer, by which we mean building a community of support for grassroots activism and movement building. We've seen that the conceptual division between 'donor' and 'activist' doesn't capture how our community is interconnected. Generally, people become donors to North Star Fund through some lived experience of the power of grassroots activism, whether it's the movements for racial justice, feminism, global justice, LGBT liberation, civil rights, or environmentalism.

As the city changes, North Star Fund is finding new ways to expand our reach. Our donor diversification efforts have brought in many new donors of color. Collaborations with groups such as Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors and Resource Generation have connected a new generation of both people with inherited wealth and sig-

nificant earned income to our practice of community-led grantmaking. And our *Beyond Giving* workshops on topics such as socially responsible investing offer donors at all levels with the latest innovations in leveraging investments for social change.

At 30, North Star Fund remains strongly connected to grassroots issues and organizing. We've seen during the campaign that fusing the Internet with community organizing can be powerful. North Star Fund's goal ahead will be to deepen the impact of the netroots by connecting it with the grassroots. Our new website will tell the stories of our grantees and supporters using multiple media, including video, photography, and internet radio. And it will use social media resources like Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube to grow and energize our community.

### *Commitment in a Time of Crisis*

In the face of tough economic times, our agenda is ambitious. But North Star Fund was born in the middle of a fiscal crisis, in response to the planned shrinkage of city services to low income communities. As we move into a period of economic downturn and another fiscal crisis, the firm and sustained support of our donors will be critical.

We thank the leaders and supporters who have stood by us for 30 years, which has enabled the North Star Fund's continuing, unique commitment to funding grassroots activism and the movement for equality, economic justice and peace.

## IRIS MORALES: WHY I GIVE

### TIME AND MONEY

I assumed the role of both a member and the chair of North Star Fund's Board of Directors at an intense moment in the foundation's history. Bette Kapatzenakis, North Star Fund's former Executive Director, had just died, suddenly, in a traffic accident. But one thing that I'm good at is pulling things together.

During the first year we focused on infrastructure and leadership. And we made sure that sure North Star was in good financial shape.

But my proudest accomplishment is making it easier for a small community groups to reach out to North Star Fund for support. During the second year, we focused on stream-lining the grant process. And we started giving bigger grants.

I had long been aware of the work of North Star Fund, and I'm glad that I was able to be there at that critical moment.

I am a life-long activist for social justice. I believe in the work that North Star Fund seeds and supports. I know that some people can give more money than time, and others more time than money—but we all can give *both* time and money, at varying levels.

We need to build a movement that reflects the interests of the working poor and people of color in this country. I have great respect for the organizers that North Star supports—the people who are knocking on doors, who are getting people moving.

History is calling all of us to step forward and to organize. North Star Fund helps make that possible.



A breakout session from the July 2008 Power Together visioning session for community advisors.

#### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Elise Boddie  
Oona Chatterjee, *Chair*  
Lule Demmissie  
Jason Franklin, *Treasurer*  
Kathy Goldman, *Vice-Chair*  
Sarah Hansen  
Hugh Hogan  
Sarah Ludwig  
Tara Mack  
Sheila McDaniel  
Jennifer Merschdorf  
Randall Quan  
Julissa Reynoso  
Arva Rice  
Kevin Ryan, *Secretary*  
Jonathan Schorr  
Aarti Shahani  
Maxim Thorne

#### *In memoriam:*

Betty Kapetanakis,  
1952-2002

#### ADVISORY BOARD

Josely Carvalho  
Barry Commoner  
Craig Kaplan  
Robin Kelley, Ph.D.  
Pamela Koslow  
Manning Marable, Ph.D.  
Monami Maulik  
Iris Morales  
Gail Papp  
Michael Ratner  
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*  
Chandler Bazemore  
*Development Officer*  
Diane Correa  
*Deputy Director for Programs  
& Strategic Initiatives*  
Mark Leger  
*Communications Manager*  
cori schmanke parrish  
*Deputy Director of Finance &  
Administration*  
Rocio Rayo  
*Administrative Coordinator*

# NORTH STAR NEWS PRIZE

[northstarfund.org/news](http://northstarfund.org/news)

For full profiles of the winners, supporting messages,  
event photos, past winners, and more.

## 2008 Winners



### Carol Jenkins

For calling attention to the struggle facing women in media, and committing over 30 years to covering New York's marginalized communities, national politics and international humanitarian crises.



### Deepa Fernandes

For reporting the plight of women and refugees across the globe and immigrants here in the United States, and creating space for young people to empower themselves through media.



### Jeff Chang

For shedding light on culture and race relations, particularly as it affects youth, through the media of music, art and the Internet.



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