

**CHINOOK  
FUND**

# *Winds of Change*

**SPRING  
2006**

◆ **CHANGE, NOT CHARITY** ◆

## *...DIVIDED WE FALL* by Dani Newsum

Colorado's November ballot will contain two ballot issues that have the potential to re-align political allies in the state, at least temporarily. The sponsors of the proposals appear to be aware of this historic possibility, and have selected their public leadership with an eye on image and message to maximize their opportunity to draw support and votes from normally unfriendly quarters.

The irony is sharp: political reactionaries are cynically reaching out to groups that they have dismissed in the past to create a coalition of superior numbers, while progressives, liberals and moderates continue to work in their own spheres.<sup>1</sup> Defeating these vicious measures will not only require money. Beating back these proposals will also require working across those human-made wedges of racism, homophobia and classism that often divide and defeat progressive movements.

It is no coincidence that a black minister and a Latino pastor are heading the effort to put a ban on same-sex marriage into the Colorado Constitution. "Minority pastors to lead fight to ban gay marriage" read a headline earlier this year in the Rocky Mountain News. Bishop Phillip H. Porter, Jr. and Pastor Ruben Mendez are president and vice president, respectively, of Coloradans for Marriage (CFM).

Porter's and Mendez' prominent roles in the anti-same sex marriage movement are clearly an intentional attempt to exploit the homophobia and heterosexism present in Colorado's African American and Latino communities. Yet it would be a mistake to write off the two ministers as mere pawns; clearly they are not. Notwithstanding the voting allegiance of the majority of this state's blacks and Latinos to the Democratic Party, conservative Christian theology also plays an important role in these communities. Many blacks and Latinos are quick to distinguish their civil rights struggles from, and to dismiss the validity of, the civil rights battles waged by lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender Coloradans.

Likewise it is no accident that a prominent Latino is a key player behind the proposed constitutional amendment that would make it illegal in Colorado for state and local governmental agencies to provide non-emergency services to undocumented workers. Waldo Benavidez, a Latino and the director of west Denver's Auraria Community Center, is a co-leader of Defend Colorado Now (DFN).

*Political reactionaries are cynically reaching out to groups that they have dismissed in the past to create a coalition of superior numbers, while progressives, liberals and moderates continue to work in their own spheres.*

DFN is the anti-immigrant group founded by U.S. Rep. Tom Tancredo, who has achieved national prominence with his shrill demand to militarize the United States' southern border, and his constant efforts to penalize undocumented workers and their families. DFN is also the working name of the anti-immigration initiative that more than likely will make it onto November's ballot.

The strategists behind these two reactionary movements recognize the truth and the power in the phrase, "united we stand, divided we fall." They hope to capture the votes of groups that are not part of their natural political constituencies: blacks, Latinos, moderates and some political liberals. To do this they are intentionally seeking the support of prominent individuals with deep ties to the communities of color that have been and remain "traditional" targets of government-sponsored and private discrimination. Furthermore, they are falsely claiming that theirs are hate-free proposals.

Their efforts stand realistic hope of drawing the support of other blacks and Latinos. Unfortunately, the organizations sponsoring these ballot proposals are utilizing a critical cornerstone of progressive movements: they are working across political, racial and ethnic divisions in order to build their numbers.

Two groups are charged with fighting these measures: Keep Colorado Safe opposes the anti-immigration initiative, and Coloradans for Fairness and Equality will battle the constitutional amendment that would ban same-sex marriage. (CFE will also be campaigning for passage of the Colorado Domestic Partnership Benefits and Responsibilities Act, a measure on the November ballot that will guarantee to lesbian and gay couples certain legal rights, benefits and responsibilities). But will these groups recognize and publicly challenge the use of racism, homophobia and classism to build popular support for two anti-democratic ballot measures?

Probably not, because politics is often a cynical endeavor where players, both good and bad, must keep their messaging simple and make appeals to the queasy side of human nature.

But how about other progressive groups and individuals? Will we follow the example of NAACP chairman Julian Bond? Earlier this year Bond, a college history professor and legendary black civil rights activist, refused to attend the funeral service of Coretta Scott King. Bond, like Mrs. King, supports equal marriage

rights for same sex couples. He objected to the service because it was held in the New Birth Missionary Baptist Church, a church whose black pastor had led a march supporting a ban on same-sex marriage two years earlier. Ironically, Berniece King, a pastor at New Birth and a daughter of Martin and Coretta King, also participated in that march against equal rights.

Julian Bond set a national example by using his power as a straight, black man to act as an ally to another group of Americans engaged in their own struggle for equality. In refusing to attend the funeral of a dear friend, who was also an outspoken supporter of equal rights for lesbians and gay men, Bond put at risk his reputation and credibility in the historic black civil rights movement, as well as his chairmanship of the NAACP.

Will progressives in Colorado follow Bond's example? Colorado Clergy for Equality in Marriage (CCEM) is doing so. CCEM is a coalition of clergy who have come together as persons of faith to oppose attempts to deny civil rights to queer people, and to spread the message of equality and fairness to their congregations and faith communities. Sadly, CCEM currently has only one member who is a person of color.

Will other progressives coalesce and publicly challenge the "divide and conquer" tactics being utilized by Coloradans for Marriage and Defend Colorado Now? Will we come together and reject the toxic racism and classism behind Defend Colorado Now's drive to further punish undocumented immigrants, as well as the homophobia that lies at the heart of the move to ban same-sex marriage?

Will we challenge those white liberals who are backing one or both of these proposals? Will we challenge members of historically oppressed groups who are supporting these manifestly unjust measures, including LGBTQ persons backing the anti-immigrant proposal and people of color who are backing one or both of these ballot measures?

The work is hard and the risk is great, but genuine progressives have no other choice. "Opting out" is not an option.



# UNITED WE STAND

By Peg Logan

Chinook Fund grantees are mobilizing to strike down this year's ballot box attempts to limit people's civil rights. A collaborative of community organizations and funders in Colorado is working together to take community-led policy change to the next level.

A million dollar grant from the Ford Foundation was awarded to the collaborative to strengthen community organizing in Colorado over the next three years. The intent of the grant is to build the capacity of community organizing groups working on regional or state-wide policy issues, and to increase local foundation funding to support that work.

The collaborative brought together, for the first time, seven regional or state-wide community organizing groups, all working on similar issues, to focus their energy and support a common agenda. Each group has a different organizing philosophy, a different primary constituency, and different skills and assets. Yet all are focused on overturning unjust policies and changing systems through constituent-led work. Most have received grants from Chinook for their work in the past.

The group includes 9to5 Colorado, Colorado Progressive Coalition, Congregations Building Community, Front Range Economic Strategy Center, Metro Organizations for People, Padres Unidos, and Rights for All People.

Colorado does not have a long or deep tradition of community organizing. This effort, known as the Colorado Community Organizing Collaborative, is breaking new ground by bringing organizations together to address jointly policy issues at the regional level.

As a part of this project, representatives of these organizations meet monthly and have created a common policy agenda for their work together. This agenda is shaped by a focus on combating attacks against immigrants, but it includes other issues such as health care, education reform, and jobs and wages.

The collaborative has agreed that the push-pull factors of an economy based on immigration, the exploitation of immigrant workers, persistent divisions between low-wage citizens and immigrant workers, and a resulting wave of anti-immigrant sentiment necessitate a collaborative approach to organizing.

In order to address these factors, the collaborative has

set the following goals: to promote a human rights framework for understanding issues involving immigrants, to expand the base of members doing this work, to deepen grassroots leadership, to coordinate their work across organizations, to defeat the anti-immigrant ballot initiative, and to develop a proactive vision for immigrant rights beyond the initiative, linking family-supporting jobs to the struggle for dignity for immigrants and immigrant workers.

As a result of their collaborative work, relationships among the organizations are developing and deepening. For the first time, the organizations are bringing their members together for joint actions, shared training, or simply to get to know each other. Organizational experience is shared, as staff from different groups call each other for advice, or act as a sounding board for each other. Strategic decisions are made about how to share resources, access, and opportunities. People with interests in a particular set of issues are linked to other organizations in the collaborative.

At the same time, local funders are working together to increase the resources available for this important work. Constituent-led policy work is a missing link in the areas that foundations traditionally support. Community organizing, which grounds its solutions in the communities which are affected by them by empowering people in those communities to lead the work, is a vastly under-funded strategy for change.

Because of this, the collaborative includes funders who are committed to increasing the pool of money available to Coloradans who are organizing to change unjust policies. The group includes the Bamboo Fund, the Brett Family Foundation, the City and County of Denver's Department of Workforce Development, the Denver Foundation, the Gay and Lesbian Fund for Colorado, the General Services Foundation, HealthOne Alliance, Making Connections-Denver, the Piton Foundation, the Rose Community Foundation, and the Chinook Fund. Each funder has made a financial contribution to fund the work of the collaborative in 2006; grants range from \$5,000 to \$50,000.

The funders are challenging themselves and each other to think differently about their work, and to use their influence in the field of philanthropy to direct resources to this strategy. Their goal is to increase the capacity of community organizations in Colorado, so that they can grow strong enough to take on policy at regional and state levels, and also so that they can work together across issue

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## UNITED WE STAND (continued)

areas to make the connections that will make our struggle for justice more united, and therefore, more successful.

United we stand: thanks to this innovative collaborative, community organizers and funders have begun to break down traditional barriers and to think collectively about how we can reshape our city and region.



## Save the date!

*Chinook's Spring Grantee event is just around the corner...*

*It won't be a celebration without you!*

**Wednesday June 14, 2006  
5:30-7:00 p.m.**

**Lumber Baron Inn & Gardens  
2555 W 37th Ave  
Denver, CO 80211**



FALL 2005 CHINOOK GRANTEE EVENT

## TALKING TRUTH TO POWER

by Dani Newsum

We should never underestimate our individual power to inform and change minds in the struggle to bring people across lines of hatred. At the Chinook Fund, we know that information is a powerful change agent; we believe in the power of words and ideas to transcend institutionalized barriers and transform lives and organizations.

The core of our mission is understanding and challenging the overt and covert ways in which our society confers unearned privileges and imposes unearned burdens on people based on race, color, gender, sexual orientation, economic class, age, and physical ability. We believe that it is crucial to share our understanding of the destructive operation of privilege and oppression in our daily lives through all of our grants and educational programs.

Identifying and articulating the realities that so many have experienced is a critical step in breaking down barriers. At Chinook we share our understanding not only by funding grassroots organizations whose work challenges institutionalized forms of power and oppression, but by offering our own social justice education programs. Our Social Justice Awareness program (SJA) is designed for non-profit organizations and governmental agencies; our Social Justice Institute (SJI) is for social change activists living in lower-income Denver neighborhoods. Both programs empower participants with the language and understanding necessary to begin to challenge institutionalized power and oppression in their lives, workplaces and communities.

Although every Chinook SJA training is individualized to meet the goals, needs and culture of the requesting organization, a common goal of every SJA training is engaging participants in an exploration of the ways in which the concepts of power and oppression are manifested in their workplaces. Through SJA, Chinook has shared our understanding of the root causes of social injustice with nonprofit organizations, and helped participants see how racism, sexism, heterosexism, and classism manifest themselves in their own workplaces. Many participants become so empowered after seeing how the principles of power and oppression operate within their own organizations, that they

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willingly take responsibility for helping to change the organizational policies and culture that foster oppression.

Participants in Chinook's SJI come from four lower-income Denver neighborhoods: Baker, Cole, La Alma-Lincoln Park and Sun Valley. The course helps participants understand the impact of various institutions or systems (economic, political, legal, health care, social and media) on their lives and communities; and how race, gender and class-based oppression and power affect their lives. The SJI curriculum also includes a healthy dose of instruction on community organizing strategies that will help participants to more effectively build collective power to lead grassroots social change in their communities.

While participation in an SJA or SJI workshop offers the opportunity to discuss issues of injustice and identify group solutions, not everyone can attend these programs. There are other ways that we as individuals can counter the toxic messages about undocumented immigrants and LGBTQ persons that are being promoted in two proposals that will more than likely end up on the November ballot this year.

We can inform ourselves by reading newspapers, newsletters and other articles, and by listening to thoughtful radio and TV news and talk programs. We have included a few websites that people with internet access can check for good information:

The Bell Policy Center ([www.thebell.org](http://www.thebell.org)), a Colorado think tank, has conducted a major study of documented and undocumented immigrants that contains a store of useful information. Chinook Fund grantee El Centro Amistad, located in Boulder County, conducts grassroots advocacy and leadership training for immigrants; its website ([www.elcentroamistad.org](http://www.elcentroamistad.org)), includes a list of several interesting immigrants' rights projects, along with descriptions of the goals and work of each organization. You can read about the legal services being offered to day laborers and other low-income workers through another Chinook grantee, El Centro Humanitario de los Trabajadores ([www.centrohumanitario.net](http://www.centrohumanitario.net)). You can also check out the website of Keep Colorado Safe ([www.keepcoloradosafe.com](http://www.keepcoloradosafe.com)), the organization working to defeat the proposal that would make it illegal to provide non-emergency public services to undocumented immigrants.

The Human Rights Campaign website ([www.hrc.org](http://www.hrc.org)) provides excellent information on the people and tactics

involved in the movement to deny equal marriage and other legal rights to LGBTQ Americans. Coloradans for Fairness and Equality ([www.fairnessandequality.org](http://www.fairnessandequality.org)) is the local group working to keep a ban on same-sex marriage out of the Colorado constitution. CFE is also working for passage of a separate ballot issue, the Domestic Partnership Benefits and Responsibilities Act, that would grant same sex couples many of the legal rights that Colorado grants to married couples. Check out the language of the two competing ballot proposals at Western Equality ([www.westernequality.org](http://www.westernequality.org)), another stellar Chinook Fund grantee.

The supporters of the anti-same sex and anti-immigrant ballot measures want to use the law to impose their bigotry and anger on others. Talking with family, friends and acquaintances is a very real way to make sure that the people you care about know and understand the terrible injustice that will follow if these proposals are approved.

We at Chinook don't believe that old childhood saying, "sticks and stones can break my bones, but words can never hurt me." Words can wound and can even kill when they reflect a society's contempt for basic equality, fairness and decency. We are committed to using our voices to help heal the wounds that ignorance and fear inflict, and to help transform our political, legal, economic, health care and other institutions into places where social justice lives. ❖



## ***Information is power.***

Want to arm yourself with more information about the anti-same sex marriage and anti-immigration measures, and the tactics being used by their supporters? Just go to the Chinook Fund website ([www.chinookfund.org](http://www.chinookfund.org)) and click on

***The Library*** (a collection of social justice articles by Chinook Fund staff.)

PHOTOGRAPH: JORDAN GARCIA, CHINOOK BOARD

## Fall 2005 Grant Awards

### 9to5 Colorado \* \$5,000, Denver

9to5 Colorado works to improve the workplace for women and strengthen the ability of low-wage/no-wage women in Colorado to win economic justice. Chinook's general operating grant supports immediate reform to require self-sufficiency wages and pay equity for women and nonstandard workers, an improved unemployment system and affordable leave policies.

### African American Voter Registration and Information Project \* \$3,000, Denver

The *African American Voter Registration and Information Project* works for maximum participation of eligible African-American voters in the political process through a systemic program providing education, identification, registration, and mobilization. Through coalition building, disseminating voter information via radio and print media, and encouraging participation in civic and political activities, the African-American community is actively involved in creating an environment where historically marginalized voices can influence the political arena.

### Colorado ADAPT \* \$7,000, Denver

Colorado ADAPT empowers people with disabilities to participate with full and equal rights in all parts of society. ADAPT develops and supports leaders as they lead community organizing efforts to impact legislation promoting fair and inclusive policy and educate the public about the rights of people with disabilities. This grant supports ADAPT in endeavors to secure Medicaid and community services for people with disabilities in the Denver community.



RICK JAMES AND TERRANCE TURNER, ADAPT

### The Center for Justice, Peace and Environment (CJPE) \* \$7,000, Ft. Collins

The *Center for Justice, Peace and Environment* is a community-based organization for individuals and groups working together to achieve progressive, nonviolent social change in Larimer County. CJPE brings cohesion to community efforts in order to restore a sense of community and power to those who are oppressed. Efforts include the initiation of an ordinance prohibiting local police from collaborating with the Immigration and Naturalization Service to question

immigrant status, and informational actions educating the public on military spending. Chinook funds support a new staff position enabling CJPE to develop actions and programs to unite progressives in northern Colorado.

### Centro Humanitario Para Los Trabajadores (El Centro) \* \$7,000, Denver

*El Centro Humanitario Para Los Trabajadores* advocates the rights and well-being of low-income day laborers in Denver through job skill development and leadership training. El Centro also negotiates fair wages for day laborers to ensure fair treatment and wages.

These funds promote community organizing training so that El Centro's worker leaders can influence policy change, provide workers' rights training, and lead legal clinic peer-education sessions to secure equitable pay and just treatment for all workers.



HUMBERTO SANTISTEBAN AND RAMONA ALEMAN, EL CENTRO HUMANITARIO

### Colorado Antiviolence Program (CAVP) \* 7,000, Denver

*Colorado Antiviolence Program* works to end violence in all its forms within and against lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer communities across Colorado through developing policies, procedures, regulation, understanding and social will that ensure appropriate services for LGBTQ individuals statewide. CAVP's outreach programs include initiatives for policy development, violence prevention and voter registration education to demand fair, safe and equitable treatment for the LGBTQ community.

### Colorado Jobs with Justice (CO JwJ) \* \$2,500, Englewood

*Colorado Jobs with Justice* strives to advance the rights of working people, not just those in unions, and to empower communities to work together for social and economic justice. Currently, CO JwJ is assembling the Worker's Rights Board, a committee which will educate members on how to conduct public hearings, press conferences and direct actions to build community support and power, in order to establish equitable pay and just working conditions for working people.

### Inside/Out Youth Services \* \$7,000, Colorado Springs

*Inside/Out Youth Services* fosters the development of a positive sexual identity for all youth, specifically lesbian, bisexual, transgender,

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gay, intersex and questioning youth in southern Colorado. This grant bolsters Inside/Out as it continues to create safe spaces and support systems for all youth in the community, particularly in schools, in order to reduce drug and alcohol abuse, dropout rates, physical and sexual abuse, and suicide due to violent and unjust treatment.



LAURA REINSCH,  
INSIDE/OUT YOUTH  
SERVICES

**One Nation Enlightened (O-N-E) \* \$7,000, Denver**

*One Nation Enlightened* is a direct action, youth organizing group fighting for racial justice. O-N-E works with low-income young people of color to impact the design and governance of the world around them through two programs. *Students 4 Justice* (S4J) empowers youth to organize to redefine school policies and to find alternatives to the school-to-jail track so that students have access to the greatest opportunities available. *Students United* is a youth organizing program for police accountability and juvenile justice reform, working to stop racial profiling and the increased criminalization of youth. Chinook's support assists O-N-E in establishing equity in school funding to ensure that schools with significant populations of students of color, immigrants and low-income students provide a high quality education for all.

**Sensible Colorado \* \$2,000, Denver**

*Sensible Colorado* seeks to promote an effective drug policy through research, education, and implementation of economically sound, practical regulations and policies. Specifically, Sensible Colorado is focusing on efforts to drive drug policy reform in Colorado to guarantee that individuals suffering from debilitating disease receive medicine, and to pursue effective and humane drug policy.

**Southwest Intertribal Voice \* \$3,000, Cortez**

*Southwest Intertribal Voice* is a new organization working to empower and provide a voice to the off-reservation Native Americans of Cortez and Southwestern Colorado who continue to experience the effects of colonization. By encouraging the involvement in state, county, city and school district affairs of Native people, Southwest Intertribal Voice works to end overt and subtle racial and cultural oppression, resulting in an improved quality of life for all, based on the highest values of the traditions and cultures of the area's Native people.

## 2005 Wolcott Family Foundation (WOLFF) Awards

- Andy Zanca Youth Empowerment \* \$3,000, Carbondale**
- Big Brothers and Big Sisters \* 3,000, Denver**
- Center for Justice, Peace and Environment (CJPE) \* \$7,500, Ft. Collins**
- Colorado ADAPT \* \$7,500, Denver**
- Colorado Antiviolence Program \* \$7,500, Denver**
- Colorado Hip Hop Coalition \* \$4,000, Denver**
- CASA of the Continental Divide \* \$6,000, Dillon**
- Creating Caring Communities \* \$5,000, Denver**
- Denver CASA \* \$7,500, Denver**
- Denver Justice and Peace Committee \* \$3,000, Denver**
- Domestic Violence Initiative \* \$7,500, Denver**
- Deproduction \* \$7,500, Denver**
- EDEN Theatrical Workshop, Inc. \* \$1,000, Denver**
- E.L.K. Environmental Learning for Kids \* \$7,500, Denver**
- Family Voices of Colorado \* \$7,500, Denver**
- Grand Valley Citizens Alliance \* \$7,500, New Castle**
- High Country Citizens Alliance \* \$5,000, Crested Butte**
- Inside-Out Youth Services \* \$4,000, Colorado Springs**
- Interfaith Alliance of Colorado \* \$4,000, Denver**
- Lambda Community Center \* \$3,000, Ft. Collins**
- Legacy of Learning \* \$3,000, Boulder**
- Life Spark \* \$5,000, Lakewood**
- National Alliance for the Mentally Ill (NAMI) Colorado \* \$7500, Denver**
- Net Results Junior Tennis, Inc. \* \$7,500, Denver**
- New Foundations Non Violence Center \* \$7,000, Denver**
- Parents and Friends of Lesbians & Gays \* \$3,000, Denver**
- Project YES \* \$7,500, Lafayette**
- San Juan Citizens Alliance \* \$5,000, Durango**
- Voices for Children CASA \* \$5,000, Montrose**
- We Can! Of Colorado \* \$5,000, Denver**
- Western Slope Community Organization \* \$3,000, Glenwood Springs**
- Western Slope Environmental Resource Council \* \$7,500, Paonia**





# Chinook Fund

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**Winds of Change**

[www.chinookfund.org](http://www.chinookfund.org)

## Mission Statement

The Chinook Fund is committed to the transformation of society into one that promotes social justice and freedom from oppression, including, but not limited to, racism, sexism, classism, heterosexism, ageism, and ableism.

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