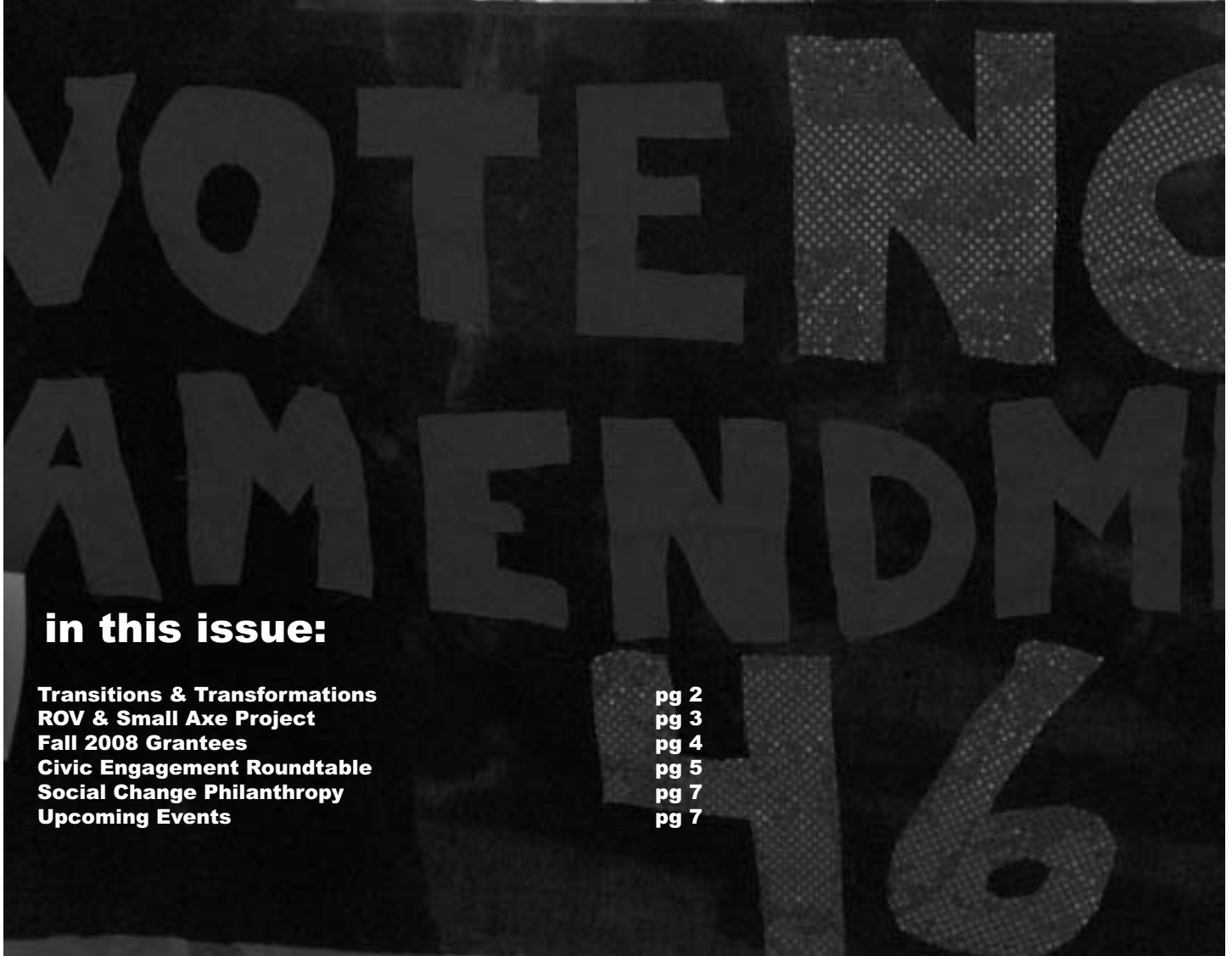


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spring 2009 newsletter



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Transitions & Transformations

As Chinook's fiscal year comes to a close, we have been reflecting on the themes of **transition** and **transformation** that have carried us through the year. Chinook has taken some bold steps towards building organizational sustainability, supporting a new generation of leaders and achieving our vision of social justice.

This year, we transformed our staff structure to a **collective leadership model** that places our values at the center of how we operate. In the coming months, we will have the opportunity to evaluate and strengthen the model, while continuing to educate the community about our new vision of leadership.

Staff, board and volunteers also engaged in a **strategic planning retreat** which outlined a three year plan for increased financial sustainability, new directions in programming, and organization-wide collective leadership.

Chinook continues to evolve its **innovative programming**. We are preparing to evaluate our grantmaking program in order to improve our responsiveness to grantees and to tangibly capture the unique impact of activist-led Chinook funding. We also plan to continue social justice education, focusing on issues of class, wealth and economic justice. We hope to use this lens to look at inequities in the philanthropic sector and engage our funding peers in greater accountability to communities facing oppression.

Our vision for sustainability and growth led the Chinook community to re-examine the organization's assets. The board of directors approved a decision to **sell our current property** to leverage the financial base Chinook needs to have a bigger impact. We will keep you posted on our plans for relocating and reinvesting in Chinook's future.

Finally, we have seen a tremendous amount of fresh energy in **new volunteers and leaders**. Chinook's commitment to internal anti-oppression work has resulted in leadership that is increasingly reflective of the communities we fund. We are so excited to welcome our new volunteers, board members and donors to Chinook! At the same time, we are indebted to our veteran founders and leaders who have offered wisdom, mentorship and a grounded perspective to the changes underway. Their encouragement in allowing a new generation of Chinook leaders to emerge forth has been a priceless gift. **Please join us on June 22 at our annual Grantee Awards Celebration to meet and honor all of our outgoing and incoming leaders!**

We hope you all continue to join us through this exciting time. We invite your input, ideas, creativity, advice and energy to help us create a new chapter in Chinook history!

In Solidarity,

Leadership Team

Victoria Gómez, Director of Business and Finance

Neha Mahajan, Director of Programs and Education

Katie Thiede, Director of Resource Development

Front Cover Picture: Lorena Garcia, 9 to 5

Reclaim Our Vote 2008 Grantees

In partnership with the Funding Exchange, the Chinook Fund channeled national civic engagement dollars to local grassroots organizations in Colorado for this past election season. A special grantmaking committee was convened last summer to distribute \$54,000 to six groups working for voter registration, education, activism and overall engagement in disenfranchised communities.

9 to 5 Colorado (Denver) - \$9,000

9 to 5's Election Connection voter engagement project combined non-partisan voter registration, education and mobilization with leadership development and links for participants in its ongoing organizing campaigns. They brought more low-wage and low-income women into the electoral process, using working women's issues as motivators for low-wage workers to register and vote in the 2008 elections. They focused the attention of candidates, elected officials, the media and the public on real issues facing working women throughout 2008.

African American Voter Registration And Information Project (Denver) - \$9,000

AAVIP harnessed the enthusiasm surrounding the 2008 Presidential Election to enhance the civic engagement of the African-American community. Its vision was to see an African-American population fully engaged in the American electoral process. This group worked towards 1) Voter Registration, 2) Voter Education and 3) Community Outreach including forums in the African-American community around three ballot initiatives: 1) Amendment #46 - Anti-Affirmative Action initiative; 2) Initiative #82 Pro-Affirmative Action Initiative and 3) Amendment #47 Right to Work initiative.

Colorado Acorn (Denver) - \$9,000

Project Youth Vote is a nonpartisan effort of Colorado ACORN to engage minority high school students and other young citizens in the democratic process just as they reach voting age. Project Youth Vote organizers work with public high schools in Denver, Aurora and the surrounding areas to reach African-American, Latino, low-income and other young adult citizens with a voter education message. Project Youth Vote organizers follow up with interested young people to engage these young citizens around key issues they identify. Together, they develop young community leaders who in turn can help build a culture of civic participation in the communities most often left out of our democratic process.

Compañeros (Durango) - \$9,000

Compañeros registered low-income, Latino, Native and LGBTQ voters in six counties in the Western Slope of Colorado. At the same time it reached out to immigrants to become active in civic participation.

Compañeros also helped train six student leaders to become civic organizers for these communities.

Small Axe Project

The Chinook Fund also partnered with the Funding Exchange to award **El Centro Humanitario Para Los Trabajadores** (Denver) a \$6,000 grant in recognition of its work for racial justice. El Centro Humanitario promotes the rights and well-being of day laborers in Colorado through education, job skills and leadership development, united action and advocacy. Their goals are to develop a sense of community and self-sufficiency among workers and to foster worker ownership over El Centro. Whether institutionalized racism in policies that criminalize day laborers, police harassment and brutality, employer exploitation and neglect, or blatant attacks by "Minute-Men" patrolling outside the center with guns, the workers of El Centro have organized against racism despite the risk of being detained, deported and attacked.



Rights For All People (Derechos Para Todos) (Denver) - \$9,000

Rights for All People developed an innovative new civic engagement program, "Friend to Friend." F2F works with non-voting immigrants to mobilize their social networks for social contact and document the effects this has for voter participation. These new non-voter/voter networks are then brought to bear on policy decisions at the local, state and national levels.

We Are America Alliance (Denver) - \$9,000

We are America Alliance organized an immigrant rights march and rally timed to coincide with the Democratic National Convention in Denver. The march promoted the message that immigrant rights are human rights and that comprehensive immigration reform is the right path to immigrant justice. The rally was connected to a voter registration and mobilization project in the Latino and broader immigrant community.

Fall 2008 Grantees

9 to 5 Colorado (Denver) - \$6,500

A grassroots organization created to address the issues of women directly affected by low-wage jobs, welfare, low-income childcare, non-standard work, unemployment and discrimination. 9 to 5 Colorado works to improve the workplace for women and strengthen the ability of low-wage/no-wage women in Colorado to win economic justice. .

Bus 15 & 15L Safety Coalition (Denver) - \$3,000

The Bus 15 & 15L Safety Coalition works to empower individuals, families, schools and businesses to act together to improve safety on the Colfax buses.

Center for Justice, Peace and Environment (Fort Collins) - \$4,400

The Center for Justice, Peace and Environment works to develop programs, strategies, and actions that further economic, social and environmental justice, sustainability, human rights, dignity and peace for all.

Colorado ACORN (Denver) - \$4,400

Colorado Acorn works to organize and empower low- and moderate-income people to address systemic social problems from the roots to the top. Members address issues that directly affect their communities, through building sustainable grassroots neighborhood groups to run projects and campaigns on the city-wide, statewide, and national levels. All work is led by grassroots community leaders.

Colorado Anti-Violence Program (Denver) - \$6,500

CAVP is a grassroots, community-based organization working to end violence in all its forms against lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer communities throughout Colorado. Its primary programming areas are direct victim services, training and education, and community organizing.

Colorado Organization for Latina Opportunity and Reproductive Rights-COLOR (Denver) - \$6,500

COLOR works to organize a sisterhood of Latinas through education and advocacy for reproductive rights and quality health care.



Chinook 2009 Grantmaking Committee hard at work.

Compañeros (Durango) - \$6,500

Compañeros advocates for immigrant and Latino rights in southwest Colorado, establishes networking and collaboration among Latinos, develops a Latino power base by establishing strong relationships with members of the Latino community, and effects policy changes to improve the lives of Latinos and immigrants.

Flobots.org (Denver) - \$2,000

Flobots.org works to empower young people through music and organize music fans for social change.

Higher Education Access Alliance (Denver) - \$6,500

HEAA is committed to ensuring that Colorado's education system provides quality education opportunities for all its students and does not discriminate on the basis of immigrant status for Colorado's large and rapidly growing immigrant community. The alliance is currently working to bring together partners and allies from Colorado institutions of higher education and K-12 education, representatives of the business community, and grassroots constituency groups from key areas of the state.

Inside/Out Youth Services (Colorado Springs) - \$4,400

Inside/Out Youth Services works to educate, empower and advocate for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and questioning youth ages thirteen-twenty-two..

Pikes Peak Gay & Lesbian Community Center (Colorado Springs) - \$4,400

A grassroots organization that works to empower lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people in the Pikes Peak region to achieve civil and social equality.

Prax(us) - Denver, \$2,000

Prax(us) works to end the trafficking of youth and children into prostitution and labor slavery through direct services, community-led prevention work, and social change. It strives for a state where people are free from exploitation.

Rights for All People-Derechos Para Todos (Denver) - \$6,500

RAP works to bring immigrant voices to the struggle to achieve justice, dignity and human rights for everyone in Denver and Colorado.

Save Our Section 8 Coalition (Denver) - \$4,400

Save Our Section 8 is a coalition of low-income Section 8 tenants working together to preserve and expand safe and accessible housing through creative solutions.

Two Spirit Society of Denver (Denver) - \$2,000

Two Spirit Society of Denver strives to restore a traditional role of two spirit persons. In most Native American history, gay, lesbian and/or transgendered individuals were considered holy and treated with the highest respect. Reclaiming this heritage requires the preservation of two spirit history and traditions among the various Native peoples as well as the re-education of contemporary societies, both Native and non-Native alike. This task necessitates a network of support for GLBT Natives, community visibility, and outreach/ educational programs.

Civic Engagement & Progressive Movement Building

Roundtable Participants:

Lorena Garcia, Colorado Lead Organizer, 9 to 5 Colorado
Jacy Montoya, Executive Director, COLOR
Daniel Gonzales, Political & Rep. Justice Advocacy Coordinator, COLOR
Sabrina Karim, Civic Engagement Organizer, RAP
Shannon Masden, Civic Engagement Organizer, Colorado Progressive Coalition

Ben Hanna, Executive Director, Colorado ACORN
Nora Bashir, Front Range Economic Strategy Center
Lisa Duran, Executive Director, Rights for All People (RAP)
Eddie Soto, Coordinator, Companeros
Neha Mahajan, Director of Programs & Education, Chinook

On April 30th, nearly six months after the historic November 2008 election, the Chinook Fund hosted a Roundtable Discussion with current and former grantees, including recipients of Reclaim Our Vote funding, to discuss civic engagement and progressive movement building in Colorado.

These organizers were part of a critical grassroots effort that claimed many successes in November, including registering over 100,000 voters from historically disenfranchised communities, defeating anti-affirmative action Amendment 46 (making Colorado the first state to defeat Ward Connerly at the ballot), and defeating a slew of anti-labor and anti-choice ballot measures that would have set back worker and women's rights in our state. But besides discussing these visible accomplishments, our grantees offered deeper analysis on tying civic engagement to progressive movement building in Colorado. They left us with some key take-away points:

It is critical to redefine who can participate in civic engagement.

Chinook's dollars were targeted towards groups working in historically disenfranchised communities. African-American, Latino/a, low-income, LGBTQ, Native/Indigenous, youth, immigrant and rural constituencies were all included in our funding. Because of their constituent-led organizing work, our grantees were poised to lead the most effective mobilization within these communities.

In addition, our grantees are making the case that civic engagement work is critical even in populations who do not have the ability to vote due to age, citizenship status or criminal record. Besides being deeply affected by election and policy outcomes, these groups have tremendous influence on the people in their families and communities who can vote. Lisa Duran of RAP discussed their innovative research project to document this influence in the immigrant community. She told us, "Elected officials tell us 'don't talk to me, you don't vote.' So we want to show how this constituency is powerful in the electoral system... even if they don't vote."

Eddie Soto of Companeros also stressed the importance of funding work in rural areas, which are often written off by the left and taken for granted by the right. One powerful example was conservative Montezuma County, who voted strongly for McCain, and yet voted against Amendment 46 due to the targeted efforts of Compañeros and other local progressive organizations.

It is highly effective to fund civic engagement work through constituent-led grassroots groups working on community organizing and systemic social change.

Unlike national campaigns and organizations that parachute people in and out, our grantees have deep roots and trusted relationships with their constituencies. This allowed for authentic messaging, education and dialogue with community members about the issues that affected their lives. As Daniel Gonzales of COLOR described: "We do work in communities, and there is a sanctity to that relationship. We don't knock on door for numbers, we knock on doors because we are part of a movement. It's a strategic tactic to build and educate our communities."

Our grantees were able to use their on-the-ground expertise to challenge the conventional wisdom of national pollsters and researchers who stuck to mainstream, single-issue strategies geared towards "traditional" voters. Lorena Garcia of 9 to 5 Colorado, gave an excellent example of this playing out in the grassroots campaign against Amendment 46: "The pollsters said DO NOT TALK ABOUT RACE in Colorado, people do not care about that. Talk only about women and girls. But we were the ones on the ground, we were the ones talking to people, we knew what resonated, and we were going to talk about race, we were going to say 'Latino' and 'Black' and 'African American' and 'Asian American.' We called it for what it was, because if we avoid bringing the issues to light, we are never going to truly advance our progressive agenda."



COLOR - Colorado Organization for Latina Opportunity and Reproductive Rights

Continued on Page 6

The “controversial” topic of race was actually a winning strategy on election day. Donna Davis of AAVIP explained: “Our grassroots effort changed the momentum, especially on 46. Two weeks before the election we were supposedly down 69% yes, 23% no. There was no way it was going to happen. But through our work in the community, we were able to move those percentages and defeat the amendment by a 34,000 vote margin.”

Breaking out of issue silos and working across divisions of race, class, gender and sexuality are key to the success of progressive civic engagement efforts.

Our grantees highlighted the vital importance of collaboration, noting that Colorado’s model of working across organizations and issues in the 2008 election has gained national recognition. However, they also discussed the more challenging task of overcoming wedge issues, tensions and divisions within and among their communities.

Daniel Gonzales described how COLOR was able to discuss reproductive justice, health, equal opportunity and worker’s rights with the Latino/a community while encouraging open discussion of issues such as abortion – conversations that many others have been unable to navigate. Because our grantees see their communities holistically, with multiple layers of identity, they did not separate an issue affecting women from an issue affecting workers from an issue affecting people of color.

This was in stark contrast to national organizations, who focused simply on the presidential election or single-issue campaigns. Mainstream and traditionally white feminist organizations focused only on Amendment 48 (which would have defined a fertilized egg as a legal person) while neglecting affirmative action. Labor organizations canvassed heavily on anti-union measures, but were unwilling to lend their support to defeat amendment 46 or 48. So again, it was our grantees who created the progressive values-frame and innovative messaging that linked all of these issues in a meaningful way for their communities.

However, Donna Davis raised the important point that wedges and tactics used by the conservative opposition work because the progressive movement has not dealt with them internally. Shannon Masden from CPC added, “We need to be real that we also create oppression within the movement all the time, and we are bad at calling each other out on that. There were a lot of examples of that playing out in this election, in terms of who was facilitating meetings, where money was coming from, what organizations were invited to what tables. If we found better ways to address this amongst ourselves, we would be so much better at doing that out in the community.”

In response, organizers at the table discussed some exciting ways they were building solidarity among communities that have had tensions or been pitted against each other. For example, Sabrina Karim described how RAP has instituted an exciting series of programs that educates their immigrant membership on the history and struggles of other communities such as African Americans and LGBTQ people. Lisa Duran went on to say, “I really feel like we are looking for the common ground, finding ways to build community, and promoting proactive, positive work that benefits everybody, as opposed to just being all narrow. This is because we have to lead for the whole society, our whole community, not just our slice of the pie.”

Funders must re-think how they support and define civic engagement.

Roundtable participants also gave Chinook some strong feedback around how civic engagement funders need to shift their thinking as well.

Grantees expressed their frustration at money being pumped in only for even-year or presidential election cycles. Ben Hanna described the disheartening experience of funders supporting CO ACORN to do the job of registering and mobilizing their base to vote – but then dropping funding after the election when they did not need them anymore.

Daniel Gonzales further elaborated how this lack of sustained funding hurts organizing around critical local issues during odd year cycles: “If we don’t have enough resources to fight this year, we will have a bunch of well-funded people running a statewide vehicle impound ballot initiative, we will have another year where we have to focus our energy on a defensive strategy, another year where we will have to reorient all of our plans, reprioritize more ‘high-performing’ voters instead of people in our communities that we want to get engaged. And if the impound bill passes, what a tremendous undermining of all of our work. Funders will show up again for 2012, but will they know how our communities have been set back in the meantime?”

Additionally, our grantees named the importance of funding locally. Jacy Montoya stressed this, saying, “A bad example of funding is using national organizations to filter civic engagement work to the local level. Mainstream feminist organizations and foundations were getting all this money to do work on Amendment 48 in Colorado – but they were not actually doing work in Colorado. There was a huge disconnect, as national organization claimed success in defeating 48, but we did not see or hear of them on the ground at all. I think the model Chinook was able to implement was much better – where national money was distributed through a local fund, where local activists know the nuances of who is actually doing work on the ground, who is authentically working in community. This is a perspective that someone sitting in a New York or D.C. office won’t have.”

Overall, all roundtable participants agreed that year-round, multi-year, local and cross-issue civic engagement efforts are key to moving beyond reactionary campaigns and defense of the status quo. Funding these types of efforts will enhance instead of detract from the community organizing efforts of our grantees, and help them meet their future goals of passing progressive policies and holding elected officials accountable during legislative sessions. NM.

Chinook would like to extend our gratitude to everyone who participated in this roundtable. We continue to be inspired by the organizers, activists and community members who make amazing things happen on the ground!



What is Social Change Philanthropy?

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"Philanthropy is commendable, but it must not cause the philanthropist to overlook the economic injustice that makes philanthropy necessary."
Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Social change philanthropy focuses on the root causes of social, economic and environmental injustices. It strives to include the people who are impacted by those injustices as decision-makers. It also aims to make the field of philanthropy more accessible and diverse. In social change philanthropy, foundations are accountable, transparent and responsive in their grantmaking. Donors and foundations act as allies to social justice movements by contributing not only monetary resources but their time, knowledge, skills and access. Social change philanthropy is also sometimes called social justice philanthropy, social movement philanthropy, and community-based philanthropy.

What does that definition really mean?

1) Social change philanthropy focuses on the root causes of social, economic and environmental injustices.

This means that social change philanthropy supports organizations that are getting to the roots of problems instead of only addressing the symptoms.

An example: In a community with widespread asthma due to air pollution from a nearby bus depot, it's the difference between just funding medical treatment for people with asthma and funding organizing in the community to regulate bus idling and emissions.

2) It strives to include the people who are impacted by those injustices as decision-makers.

In social change philanthropy, the process of giving is as important as where the money goes. Asking those who are directly affected by and working on an issue what to fund is a key part of this process.

An example: This might mean that a foundation or donor interested in addressing the widespread asthma problem would include local residents and organizers in their decisions about where to direct their funding.

3) It also aims to make the field of philanthropy more accessible and diverse.

Because right now this isn't the case. For example, a study done by The Joint Affinity Groups shows that 10% of foundation board members and only 2.2% of family foundation board members are people of color.

4) In social change philanthropy, foundations are accountable, transparent and responsive in their grantmaking.

When funding happens behind closed doors, everyone who applies and relies on that money has no information about what goes on. Organizations get funded, but they don't know why or how they were chosen. Or, organizations don't get funded and they don't know why or whether they should apply again. When foundations and donors are transparent about their process and goals, it can open up the possibility for conversations about whether the grantmaking is responsive, and the ways in which foundations and donors can be accountable to the communities they impact.



5) Donors and foundations act as allies to social justice movements by contributing not only monetary resources but their time, knowledge, skills and access.

There are many concrete ways donors and foundations can be allies to social justice groups, from helping an organization fundraise to sharing your access and powerful connections to hosting an organization's event at the foundation's office. It is also about respecting grantee groups as partners in social change.

An example: One of the board members of the foundation plays golf with the city's Public Transportation Commissioner. When she learns from their grantee group that they have been unable to get a meeting with the Commissioner, she uses her connection to help them set one up.

How much money goes to progressive social change anyway?

One study done by the National Network of Grantmakers shows that less than 3% of funding in the United States goes to progressive social change. How much money is that? They estimated that in 1997, \$336 million went to progressive social change out of a total of \$13.8 billion in giving. This amount includes family foundation, private independent foundation and public foundation giving.

On Chinook's reading list... check out
Resource Generation for more info.

Don't Miss These Upcoming Chinook Dates:

Grantee Awards Event - June 22nd
Grant Application Workshop - July 21st

Fall 09 Grant Application Due - August 21st
Change Not Charity Fundraiser - October 15th

CHINOOK GRANTEE AWARDS CEREMONY JUNE 22, 2009

**Please join us as we honor our
FALL 2008 and SPRING 2009 grantees!**

We will also be giving thanks to our many veteran volunteers and donors for their enduring contributions! This is a great opportunity to come face to face with the incredible people who make up the Chinook community!

**5:30 pm - 7:30 pm
Lumber Baron Inn
2555 W. 37th Avenue, Denver CO 80211**



RSVP: Please email nmahajan@chinookfund.org or call (303) 455-6905 x3

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