

*The*  
**POWER**  
*of* **MANY**

40 YEARS OF THE CENTER FOR COMMUNITY CHANGE





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COMMUNITY CHANGE

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Special thanks to Andy Mott.



CENTER *for*  
**COMMUNITY CHANGE**

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**The mission of the Center for Community Change is to develop the power and capacity of low-income people, especially low-income people of color, to change their communities and public policies for the better.**

## **WHY THIS REPORT?**

Since 1968, the Center for Community Change has created a strong foundation on which to build a hopeful future. We begin our 40th year with a staff that is younger and more diverse than at any time in our history. Our executive director, Deepak Bhargava, was born the same year as the organization.

The Center's family members—staff, grassroots partners, board members and donors—are forging the future. Yet many have scant knowledge of CCC's lively past and legacy of social change. Of the people who could tell this story best, some have already passed from the scene.

We wrote this report in order to share our history and vision with you, the reader, during CCC's 40th anniversary.

*the*  
**1960s**

**YEARS OF FIRE**



In 1968, the Center for Community Change was born into a world of upheaval. Civil rights activists had won historic victories, but they were far from satisfied. The Voting Rights Act had been in effect for three years, and a million African Americans in the South were registered to vote.<sup>1</sup> President Johnson signed a federal law that banned racial discrimination in housing. Shirley Chisholm won a seat in the U.S. Congress, the first African American woman to do so.

## But on a spring evening in Memphis, an assassin killed

Dr. Martin Luther King, unleashing grief throughout the land and violence in scores of cities.

That year, it felt as if the very air was on fire with change. The Poor People's Campaign mobilized tens of thousands from across the South to demand economic justice. Led by thousands of women, the Poor People's March converged on Washington, DC, where demonstrators set up a tent city.<sup>2</sup>

Latino farmworkers, led by Cesar Chavez and Dolores Huerta, organized to wrest unprecedented commitments for better wages and working conditions from powerful agricultural companies. Fed up with centuries of persecution and deceit, Native Americans launched the American Indian Movement. Women broke free from generations of subservience to rage against restrictive social roles and unjust laws. Lesbians and gay men spent the last of their patience on polite requests to reform discriminatory policies. Within a year, a brutal police raid on a bar called Stonewall would spark the gay rights movement.

The Vietnam War was at a boil in 1968, with 500,000 Americans deployed amidst a massive bombing campaign. Anti-war protests filled the streets, and students closed down college campuses across the United States.

President Johnson announced he would not seek re-election. Robert F. Kennedy was assassinated in a Los Angeles hotel kitchen after winning the California presidential primary. During the Democratic National Convention in Chicago, police officers beat protestors and journalists in what would be termed "a police riot." And as the year waned, Richard Nixon was elected President.





L-R: Dolores Huerta, Robert Kennedy, Cesar Chavez

UPI/CORBIS-BETTMANN

**FOR MANY PEOPLE, THE NOTION OF WHO THEY WERE** and where they stood in America—male, female, minority, white, Native American, immigrant, soldier, student—shifted in 1968. From this ferment emerged the Center for Community Change. It grew from a confluence of events and influences, including the death of Robert Kennedy, the vision of the Ford Foundation and the evolution of an organization called the Citizens Crusade Against Poverty.

“At that point, there were very few organizations created, controlled and staffed by poor people... It was almost unheard of.”

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### CITIZENS CRUSADE AGAINST POVERTY

The Citizens Crusade was established in the mid-1960s by **Jack Conway** and **Dick Boone**, two men who were active in President Johnson’s War on Poverty as leaders in the federal Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO).<sup>3</sup> Conway was deputy director of OEO and had worked closely with **Walter Reuther**,<sup>4</sup> president of the United Auto Workers. Boone, who served as the Citizens Crusade’s first director, had also worked at OEO and was a colleague of **Saul Alinsky**, one of the sources of modern community organizing in the United States.

The goals of the Citizens Crusade Against Poverty were to monitor the War on Poverty, call public attention to the concerns of poor families and help develop and support a new kind of organization then called “community unions.” Today they’re called community-based or grassroots organizations, but the definition is similar: an organization started and led by local low-income residents as a vehicle to address the problems facing their communities.

“At that point, there were very few organizations created, controlled and staffed by poor people,” says former CCC executive director **Andy Mott**. “It was almost unheard of.” Andy began his career at the

Citizens Crusade Against Poverty, joining the organization in 1967, fresh from the Peace Corps. (He recalls that staffers answered the phone with a cheery “Crusade!”) He would stay for the next 35 years.

[The Citizens Crusade] decided to create a series of prototypes in several communities that would stand out symbolically,” Andy explains. The organization helped launch two community-based organizations in Los Angeles, which the Center for Community Change would continue to assist for years: *Watts Labor Community Action Committee*, led by **Ted Watkins**, and *The East Los Angeles Community Union*, led by **Esteban Torres**, who later was elected to Congress.

Citizens Crusade Director Dick Boone sent **Ed Brown** and **Charles Bannerman** to Mississippi, where they helped to create *Mississippi Action for Community Education*, known as MACE. Bannerman ended up staying 18 years. CCC and MACE would, among other achievements, secure \$17.5 million in water and sewer services for 11 cities, connecting nearly 7,000 homes to indoor plumbing for the first time.<sup>5</sup>

As the decade progressed, the Citizens Crusade found it increasingly difficult to raise funds. The War on Poverty ended with Johnson’s administration, although it had shrunk the

segment of the U.S. population who lived below the federal poverty threshold from 19 percent in 1964 to a still-shocking 12.8 percent in 1968.<sup>6</sup> The Crusade began to consider building a new kind of national organization to address these new realities.

Then Robert Kennedy was assassinated, and people close to him chose to create a living memorial to his values and vision. The first project of the Robert F. Kennedy Memorial Foundation was to support the creation of the Center for Community Change—a successor organization to the Citizens Crusade Against Poverty.

## CENTER FOR COMMUNITY CHANGE: THE BEGINNING

**F**rom the beginning,” says Andy Mott, “we picked issues which came out of our experience” with low-income communities. One of these was hunger.

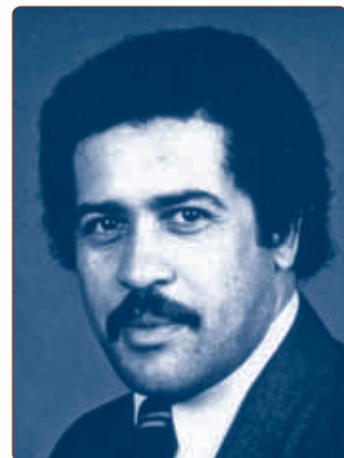
Building on the work of a citizens’ board of inquiry created by the Citizens Crusade Against Poverty, in 1968 the Center published a report called *Hunger USA*. The report revealed chilling facts about the extent and severity of hunger and malnutrition in the U.S. “If you will go look, you will find America a shocking place,” the report claimed. To galvanize the substantial press and public attention generated by *Hunger USA*, the Center sponsored the National Council on Hunger and Malnutrition, led by John Kramer, who later became dean of the Tulane Law School. Andy Mott recalls, “That initiative is credited with leading to the

creation of the federal food stamp program in 1968—a major policy victory.”

In the early years, the Center worked most closely with six community groups, helping them to increase their organizational effectiveness, cultivate leaders, advocate for local residents against entrenched discriminatory practices, connect with partners and resources, and master the technical skills needed to create housing, businesses and services for their communities. These organizations were: *Mississippi Action for Community Education*; the *National Farm Workers Service Center* in California (the organization founded by Cesar Chavez and Dolores Huerta); the *North Jersey Community Union*; *The East Los Angeles Community Union*; the *Watts Labor Community Action Committee*; and *The Woodlawn Organization* in Chicago.<sup>7</sup>

In 1968, the Ford Foundation became the Center’s first funder. “What we wanted was an organization that would become a national beacon for community organizing and community development,” Ford Foundation executive Mitchell Sviridoff said in a 1992 interview. “I think the Center has done that very admirably.”

The *National Journal* wrote in 1969 that Ford’s inaugural funding of the Center was “regarded by many as the foundation’s second most innovative and controversial venture after its support for decentralizing New York City’s schools.” Indeed, the Foundation’s investment in this new organization was



Charles Bannerman helped to create Mississippi Action for Community Education.

## CCC’S FOUNDING BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Julian Bond	Vernon Jordan
Abram Chayes	Frank Mankiewicz
Cleveland Dennard	Burke Marshall
Fred Dutton	Martin Meyerson
Herman Gallegos	Kenneth Neigh

Walter Reuther
Ed Shelley
Paul Ylvisaker

**IN 1968, JACK CONWAY BECAME THE FIRST PRESIDENT** of the Center for Community Change. **Burke Marshall**, who led the Justice Department's civil rights effort during the Kennedy administration, chaired CCC's founding board of directors. Marshall took on this leadership role with CCC, he said, because "it was the principles and agenda and work of Robert Kennedy, anything that was in keeping with his spirit and his political agenda... He spoke for the people who were left behind, the powerless and the poor. The Center was concerned with that part of the American population too. It was trying to bring economic and political power to powerless people."<sup>8</sup>

bold: a grant of \$2 million over two and a half years for general support, plus an additional \$1.5 million for direct support of community organizations CCC assisted.<sup>9</sup>

The additional grant "enabled us to provide seed money to create [or strengthen] organizations out of our budget," explains Andy Mott. The seed money CCC distributed was substantial: The Woodlawn Organization received \$750,000 in 1969,<sup>10</sup> and Andy recalls the Center furnishing \$100,000 to The East Los Angeles Community Union.

But within a year, a change in tax laws stopped CCC and other nonprofits from disbursing such large sums of money. "We

didn't have money to pass through, so we moved to becoming an organization that provided technical assistance to a much larger bunch of groups," says Andy. "That was the first big turning point."

There would be many more. Yet already, in the first forays of this new organization, strong themes emerged that would define the Center for Community Change for decades to come: a commitment to low-income people; a focus on neglected populations and communities nationwide; an investment in grassroots leaders; a belief in the power of ordinary people to solve their own problems; and a vision of a just America in which everyone had a voice.

*the*  
**1970s**

**A DECADE OF FIRSTS**



The writer Natalie Spingarn, in her comprehensive evaluation of CCC written for the Ford Foundation, described the dawn of the 1970s in this way:

**"The [Nixon] administration had launched its retrenchment policy. Shifts in federal funding away from social programming for low-income and minority people had begun, and the emphasis was on do-it-yourself approaches, especially on minority business enterprise.**

**"The CCC staff no longer had its close links to top policymakers through**

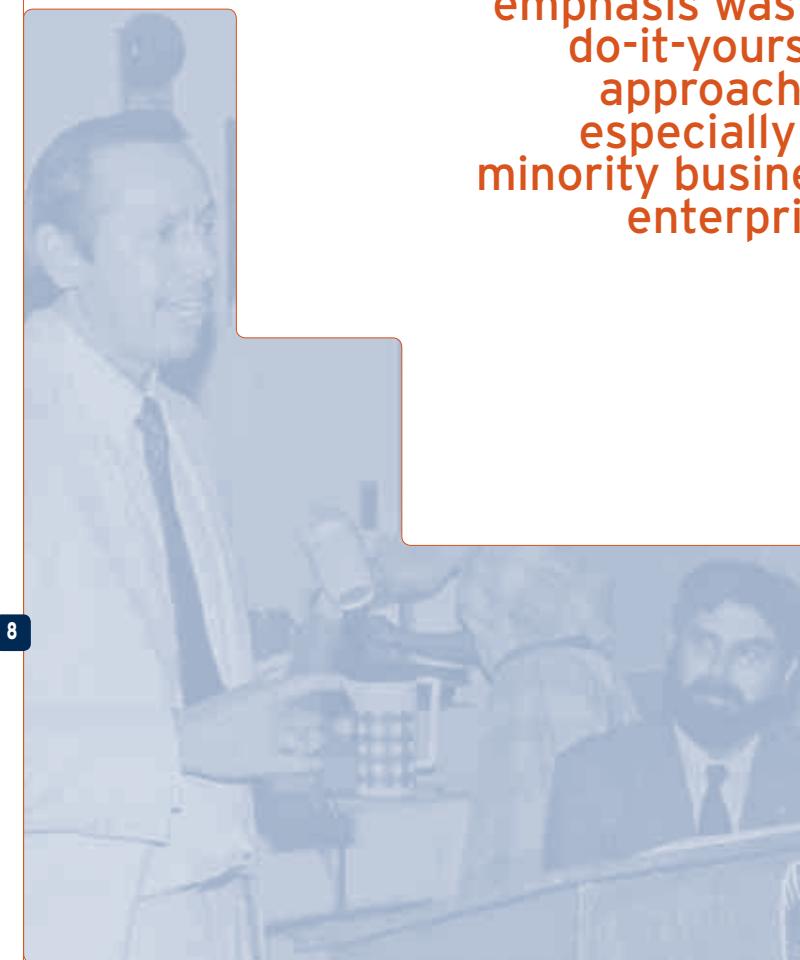
which it could operate as broker on behalf of local community groups... Walter Reuther and Robert Kennedy—two figures prominent in CCC's history and conception—were dead. So was Martin Luther King, and with him much of the passion of the civil rights movement. The sixties had passed."<sup>11</sup>

But the Center for Community Change was just getting started. **Jack Conway**, our first president, left CCC in 1972 to become the founding president of Common Cause. He was succeeded by **David Ramage**, a national church leader and community organizer, who would help the Center find its footing on the unsteady ground of the early 1970s.

The number of community organizations we assisted grew from six in 1968 to 21 groups by 1973. Our staff provided these groups with hands-on help in program areas such as housing, jobs, health care and economic development, as well as organizational development that included planning, internal operations, staff and board development, management and fundraising. We helped groups conduct community organizing—a strategic approach in which people who are affected by injustice act on their own behalf to seek change.

In 1971 alone, the Center assisted community organizations to raise more than \$3 million. As Spingarn wrote, "To watch [CCC] scrounging for funds on behalf of the Indian group *Southwest Indian Development* or the *Guadalupe Organization*, trying first this foundation, then that church group, is to get an idea of the diminishing slice of the economic pie now going to low-income groups."

The Center fought to increase both the private and the public funds going to low-income



**Rev. Arthur Brazier**

communities. At the same time, we met the challenge of the do-it-yourself ethos and raised the stakes by helping to create and advance a sweeping effort to place economic power in the hands of poor people—the community development movement.

## THE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT MOVEMENT

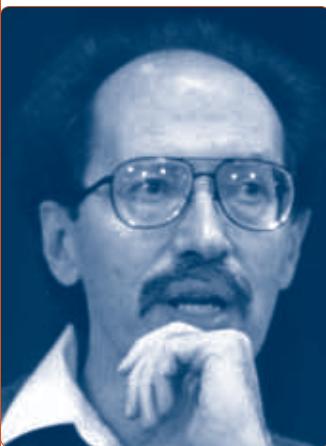
In the late 1960s, a new type of community-based organization emerged that focused on building affordable housing and commercial enterprises by and for low-income communities. These community development corporations, or CDCs, sought to generate jobs, housing, services and revenue in inner-city neighborhoods that had been abandoned by local governments and business interests. The

Ford Foundation played a major role in seeding and supporting these organizations.

The creation of CDCs by grassroots leaders was a creative response to a number of dynamics that painfully affected low-income, particularly minority, communities. One was the “urban renewal” programs (known in African American communities as “Negro removal”) that demolished black neighborhoods or severed them with freeways in order to create new commercial space. Another influence was the riots that flared in Harlem, Watts, Newark, Detroit and elsewhere in the “long hot summers” of 1964 through 1967, as African Americans protested police brutality. A third factor was the withering of federal funds and programs for low-income people as the War on Poverty gave way to the Nixon and Ford administrations.

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TIM SAASTA



Don Elmer



Raul Yzaguirre

"People were trying to come up with positive solutions to some of these problems with race relations and poverty," recalls **William S. White**, president of the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation. "CCC was at the forefront of some of that thinking, and was driving it."

"The Center became known as the group that created and popularized the community development movement in the U.S.," says **Don Elmer**. He was a community organizer in Chicago during the 1970s; in 1987, he would join the Center staff. "CDCs used community development funds to do housing and job training," he continues. "Over time, the Center became the place to go to learn how to do that."

Many of the organizations the Center worked with during the 1970s started out as community organizing groups, mobilizing people to seek change through protest and other means. While retaining their roots in community organizing, several organizations either launched their own CDCs or evolved into CDCs in order to generate economic benefits for their communities. One of these was *The Woodlawn Organization* (TWO) on Chicago's South Side.

TWO was founded in 1960, with the help of **Saul Alinsky**, as an alliance of block clubs, churches and other local groups. Its first president was **Rev. Arthur Brazier**. TWO used confrontational tactics to assert the interests of Woodlawn's African American residents against the institutions that dominated the neighborhood: the University of Chicago and Mayor Daley's city government. The organization soon became synonymous with the black power movement.

But by 1970, social and economic dynamics brought drastic changes to Woodlawn. Almost half the population had left—primarily middle class families who could afford to move to more affluent neighborhoods and finally had the chance to do so, thanks to the spread of housing integration. TWO decided that if

Woodlawn was going to survive, it would have to draw middle class families back to the neighborhood. In 1972 TWO established the Woodlawn Community Development Corporation, a sister organization to conduct real estate development and management, while TWO turned its attention to providing social services.

By this point, **Dr. Leon Finney Jr.** had taken over as TWO's president. Arthur Brazier was working full-time for the Center for Community Change, as one of two vice-presidents. (The other vice-president of CCC was **Raul Yzaguirre**, who went on to lead the National Council of La Raza.) Brazier opened the Center's Chicago office and devoted three days a week to coordinating the complex planning, technical assistance and financial resources needed by TWO and its community development corporation.

"We once calculated that the projects CCC was involved with in Chicago added up to \$24 million worth of development," Brazier recounted in a 1992 interview.<sup>12</sup> "The Center was a catalyst; it taught groups how to put together a package. How to get the financing. How to negotiate with the government or a bank or a contractor." For example, the Center assisted TWO and other groups to build or rehabilitate more than 1,000 units of housing in Chicago. We helped TWO generate \$800,000 to start a health clinic. Today The Woodlawn Organization still engenders controversy, with many people critical of TWO for dropping its organizing work to concentrate on community development, thus diminishing its power to influence city government and other institutions.

Other organizations assisted by CCC lacked the depth of experience and resources needed to become a CDC, but still saw the importance of conducting economic enterprises by and for their own communities. One such group was *Southwest Indian Development*, a fledgling organization with headquarters in Phoenix, Arizona and on the

Navajo reservation at Fort Defiance. In 1972, it turned to the Center for help.

CCC staffers **Eileen Paul**, **Bruce Hanson** and **Lem Ignacio** helped the group raise funds to pursue its vision. **Norm DeWeaver** assessed new approaches to financing Native American economic development efforts, and analyzed job programs that funded projects on Indian reservations. He and **Woody Ginsburg** helped Southwest Indian Development organize 10 groups into a coalition that won \$100,000 in general revenue sharing funds for Phoenix's Native American community.

**John Lewis** was Southwest Indian Development's executive director. He would later lead the *Inter Tribal Council of Arizona* and serve on the Center's board. "The Center helped us further understand how governments affected Native American communities," Lewis said in a 1992 interview. "They helped Native Americans get more involved in government. They lent us credibility."

At Southwest Indian Development, **Syd Beane** was a deputy director and community organizer who focused largely on the concerns of urban Indians, those living off the reservations. (Today they comprise the majority of Native Americans.) Syd would go on to head the *Lincoln* (Nebraska) *Indian Center*, serve on CCC's board, and later join the Center's staff from 1992 through

LINCOLN INDIAN CENTER

**Syd Beane**

2007. He has a fascinating story of his own, and a distinctive point of view about the community development movement.

"Community development and community organizing began to become somewhat separate as movements," says Syd. "Organizers didn't necessarily trust developers, developers didn't necessarily trust organizers. It's been difficult to bring the two back together. Later, even the Center

**THROUGHOUT THE NEXT DECADES**, community development corporations played a leading role in the revitalization of low-income neighborhoods and the creation of jobs and housing. During the 1980s, more than 1,000 CDCs were established;<sup>13</sup> over the past decade, most of the new or rehabilitated housing in inner cities has been created by CDCs.<sup>14</sup> A Ford Foundation report published in 1998 summarized the work of 50 CDCs they had studied: the organizations "had invested more than \$135 million to develop 3.1 million square feet of commercial, industrial and retail property, helped channel more than \$140 million in investments for small businesses, and created or retained 10,719 jobs in the communities they serve."<sup>15</sup> The Center created the first national trade association of CDCs—the *National Congress for Community Economic Development*, which later spun off to become an independent organization.

**“TO ME, YOU HAVE TO DO ORGANIZING in order to do community development; you have to understand organizing principles and methodology.”**

began seeing them as separate pieces. I don't see them as separate. To me, you have to do organizing in order to do community development; you have to understand organizing principles and methodology. The separation of the two is a way of dissipating the power base. You have to combine organizing and community development in order to bring about large-scale change.”

Today several thousand CDCs operate across the country, many of them as multi-million dollar enterprises. The Center for Community Change, which worked to establish so many CDCs and helped this segment of the community-based

economy to soar, no longer assists community development corporations. Since the advent of **Deepak Bhargava** as executive director in 2002, we have sharpened our focus to work primarily with organizations that pursue a multi-issue social justice agenda through community organizing. While many of our partner groups conduct community development, they do so within a broader social change mission.

### THE EVOLUTION OF COMMUNITY ORGANIZING

**C**ommunity organizing was a well-established field by the 1970s. But it

## A DECADE OF FIRSTS

**D**uring the 1970s, the Center for Community Change pursued an agenda that was wide and varied. For us, it was a decade full of “firsts.” Here are a few examples:

**1970** We started and housed the *Agribusiness Accountability Project*, which challenged farm policies that funneled federal subsidies to large agricultural corporations and led to widespread rural poverty and the loss of millions of family farms. The project was led by **Jim Hightower**, who went on to become a nationally-known author, columnist and commentator.

**1971** CCC co-authored, with the National Urban League, the *National Survey of Housing Abandonment*. This pioneering research documented the soaring number of low-income homeowners across the country who were forced to abandon their houses. The report threw a harsh light on the

refusal of financial institutions to lend money in low-income communities.

**1972** The Center supported the first national conference on housing and finance issues, led by legendary organizers **Gale Cincotta**<sup>16</sup> and **Shel Trapp** of Chicago. The conference brought together 1,600 people from 74 cities to discuss the role of the Federal Housing Administration as well as the banking, insurance and real estate industries in driving the deterioration of inner-city neighborhoods. This conference led to the creation of *National People's Action* and the *Housing Training and Information Center* (later called the National Training and Information Center), both in Chicago, which the Center supported in many ways. With CCC's help, these two organizations led the fight for the Home Mortgage Disclosure Act (1975) and the Community Reinvestment Act (1977)—federal policies that require financial institutions to invest and document

was undergoing changes of its own that would affect CCC and its relationships with community groups. Long-time progressive activist and CCC board member **Heather Booth** describes some of them.

"In the mid-70s, other networks of social action started to become viable and effective—ACORN, Citizen Action, Industrial Areas Foundation. Congregation-based organizing was on the rise, with networks such as PICO and DART as well as Gamaliel, who were offshoots of Alinsky folks. IAF became more focused on congregational based organizing. There was a flourishing of the whole field of community organizing, and there started to be other centers of attention that were doing interesting things." In 1973, Heather founded the Midwest Academy, one of the nation's premier training centers for community organizers.

The Center's 1970s agenda was full of "firsts," too many to list. One particularly intriguing example is that the Center held the first weekend retreat of what would become the Congressional Black Caucus. The Caucus had no staff, **Andy Mott** remembers, so CCC lent them a skilled staff person—**Barbara Williams**, who headed the *Coalition on Human Needs and Budget Priorities*. "She set up the original staffing, which greatly increased the power of Black Caucus members," Andy continues. "I don't think anyone in the Congressional Black Caucus other than **John Lewis** even knows that story."<sup>17</sup>

### "TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE"

**B**usy as we were breaking new ground, the Center did not neglect its core work of assisting and strengthening grassroots organizations. One of these was the *North Carolina Hunger Coalition*, which in 1978 was

their investment in low-income communities in the form of mortgages, business loans and credit. By the end of the 1970s alone, banks and savings and loans had agreed to make more than \$7.5 billion in loans to lower-income neighborhoods.

**1974** We helped organize one of the first national conferences on energy. The Citizen's Energy Conference drew 1,000 people from grassroots groups, unions, churches and environmental organizations to discuss the impact of the energy crisis on low-income people and communities. This was in the midst of the "Mideast Oil Crisis," when oil producing nations cut off supplies to Western countries, triggering panic, rising oil prices, and long lines at gas stations.

**1976** CCC convened the *Working Group for Community Development Reform*, which met with the U.S.

Dept. of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and Congressional officials more than 20 times to educate them about the concerns of community groups. The next year, in part because of this pressure, Congress strengthened federal requirements that low-income people be the primary beneficiaries of general revenue sharing funds, and required more citizen participation in deciding how the funds should be spent in local communities.

**1978** The Center helped community groups in Brooklyn and St. Louis to file the first formal complaints against banks that failed to meet their obligations under the new Community Reinvestment Act. The Brooklyn bank committed \$20 million in housing loans for low-income community residents, and the St. Louis bank committed \$1 million in home improvement loans for a low-income neighborhood.

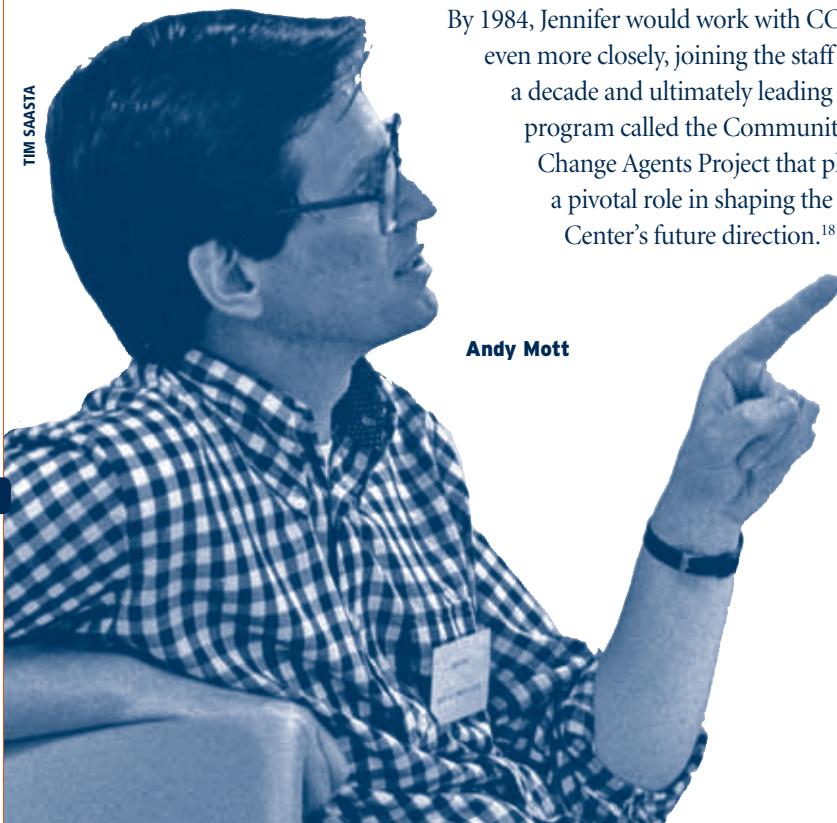
led by **Jennifer Henderson**. The coalition was one of several anti-hunger groups that started up across the country in the wake of Michael Harrington's 1962 book, *The Other America*.

"I heard about the Center from **Frank Adams** of Legal Services," Jennifer recalls. "He said there were these remarkable people who were very talented and very experienced, and would come and help you build your organization and take on tough issues—for free. I thought it was too good to be true. But it was true."

The first Center staffer she met was Andy Mott. "I went to the airport and picked up Andy, and deposited him at my apartment," says Jennifer. "I had no experience with consultants. It never occurred to me to get him a hotel room... I drove him over to my mother's house and he became part of the family that night. I'm sure he had no idea what he was getting into. He got absorbed into my life and the work of the coalition." Andy and others at CCC helped the North Carolina Hunger Coalition build their membership base, cultivate leaders and advance public policy issues at the local and state levels.

By 1984, Jennifer would work with CCC even more closely, joining the staff for a decade and ultimately leading a program called the Community Change Agents Project that played a pivotal role in shaping the Center's future direction.<sup>18</sup>

**Andy Mott**



## PROGRAM CUTS DRAW BLOOD

In 1973, the second Nixon administration began in earnest to demolish the anti-poverty programs of the 1960s. They started by drastically slashing funds for social programs. To fight the proposed cuts, the Center created and staffed the Coalition on Human Needs and Budget Priorities, led by Barbara Williams. The coalition mobilized national and local groups to advocate against the cuts and educate policy makers about the human consequences of such decisions.

The impact of the budget cuts for the Center and our grassroots partner groups was immediate. The federal government halted all commitments to new housing projects. Of the 21 community groups we worked with in 1973, 17 had to suspend at least one of their programs as a result of federal funding cuts.<sup>19</sup>

In Buffalo, a community group we assisted was forced to drop a health program that provided physical and psychological exams to children in inner-city schools. In San Antonio, a job program that CCC had helped start lost its funding and the faith of the 100 participants who had hoped to find jobs there. The Center itself lost a \$227,000 contract with the Department of Labor that funded eight staff positions which were intended to generate 496 new jobs for low-income people.<sup>20</sup>

Another approach to eliminating the vestiges of Johnson's Great Society was called the "New Federalism," in which the government handed control of federal funds and programs to state and local governments, in the form of block grants. In theory, this sounds like a good way to increase local control of public funds. In reality, it has almost always resulted in fewer resources for low-income communities and communities of color, and less accountability for the local governments that now find themselves in charge of managing vast public programs.

One component of the New Federalism was the "General Revenue Sharing Program." The federal government provided funds totaling



Jennifer Henderson (right) provides technical assistance to JONAH, a community organizing group in Tennessee.

\$30.2 billion over four years to state and local governments with virtually no restrictions as to their use. In response, the Center collaborated with the *League of Women Voters* and two other organizations in 1973 to establish the *National Revenue Sharing Project*. The project tracked how local governments were spending their unrestricted funds, and pushed for more citizen involvement in making these decisions.

The project helped more than 30 grassroots groups influence how the money was spent in their communities. As one example, two large coalitions in Los Angeles persuaded the

county to invest a quarter of its revenue sharing money—more than \$22 million per year—in social programs conducted by community groups. At the national level, the Revenue Sharing Project documented the experiences of groups across the country in a series of reports that eventually led to increased public reporting and citizen participation in revenue sharing decisions, and improved enforcement of civil rights laws in the distribution of funds. The Center also published its first citizen action guide, called *General Revenue Sharing: Influencing Local Budgets*, which provided step-by-step instructions for local groups.

**“...THERE WERE THESE REMARKABLE PEOPLE who were very talented and very experienced, and would come and help you build your organization and take on tough issues—for free. I thought it was too good to be true. But it was true.”**

# RAISING FUNDS

## A SURPRISING HISTORY

The Center for Community Change was launched with a grant of \$2 million from the Ford Foundation.<sup>21</sup> Not until 1976 did we receive major core support from a source other than Ford—and it was from a corporation, the Eli Lilly and Company Foundation.

In the late 1970s, the Center began to receive substantial corporate contributions. Corporations such as Aetna Life and Casualty Foundation, ARCO Foundation, Cummins Engine Company, Equitable Insurance, Ford Motor Company, Levi Strauss Company and Travelers Companies Foundation gave to the Center and kept on giving for years.<sup>22</sup>

By 1990 corporate contributions had surpassed all other sources of core support, comprising 32.7% of CCC's revenue that year, compared to 27.5% from foundations. A glance at our 1990 donor list reveals corporate foundations that represent illustrious—and in some cases, nostalgic—names: Alcoa, American Gas Association, Ameritech, AT&T, Bell Atlantic, BP America, Chevron, Chrysler, CIGNA, Cummins Engine, Dayton Hudson, First Boston, General Mills, Honeywell, Metropolitan Life, Pfizer, Philip Morris, Prudential, and U.S. West.

This is astonishing given the fact that today the Center seeks and receives virtually no general support from corporations. (We do solicit corporate donations for specific projects, such as our Housing Trust Fund Project.) So what changed?

In the past, many corporations supported the Center because we assisted grassroots groups in the communities where these corporations had factories or stores, and where their customers and employees lived. Now the notion of corporate citizenship is very different, with global rather than local ties, and cause marketing has supplanted corporate philanthropy. Today the Center is proud to partner with the corporations that support our projects. But for our general support funding, we rely on foundations and individuals.

### FOUNDATION FUNDRAISING: THE CENTER'S BACKBONE

The Center started with a single foundation donor, the Ford Foundation. A funder that would become a key partner, the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, gave its first grant to CCC in 1976, to support our housing development work. The next year, we received a general support grant from the Mott Foundation—the first in a series of substantial core support contributions that continue to this day.

By 1982, we derived 67% of core funding from six major

sources, all of which gave more than \$100,000 that year. Our budget of \$1.4 million was comprised of about 25 grants. By 1988, we had to secure 40 grants to raise the same budget. Thanks to our growing budget and expanding funder base, by 1990 it required 20 times the number of grants to meet CCC's expenses as it had in 1971.

Our first Development Director, hired in 1987, was **Jane Fox** (now Fox-Johnson). "When I first got to CCC," Jane likes to say, "the proposals were typewritten, they were 30 pages long, and they ended with 'Love, Pablo.'"

### THE PABLO EFFECT

It's impossible to consider the Center's fundraising history without examining the dynamo known as **Pablo Eisenberg, Foundation News** called Pablo "one of philanthropy's most successful fundraisers, a man who berates establishment foundations even as he is soliciting grants from them. Nobody is...more eloquent and unwavering in presenting the case for the Americans who generally get crumbs from the foundation table."<sup>23</sup>

Pablo was a pioneer and continues to be a guiding force behind what he calls the consumer movement in philanthropy. “For the first time,” says Pablo, “grantees challenged funders about the way they operate. The trick was to attack foundations and cultivate them at the same time. If CCC got in the door, smaller groups could follow. It happened: we got more money to grassroots organizations.” His list of philanthropies whose doors he pried open in this way includes the James Irvine Foundation, John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, David and Lucile Packard Foundation and the Pew Charitable Trusts.

Here’s how **Jennifer Henderson**, long-time Center staffer, remembers the first time she witnessed Pablo in action. It took place in 1984, only two weeks after Jennifer had left North Carolina to come work for the Center in Washington, DC:

*I was waiting outside Pablo’s office to speak with him, and I heard him cursing up a blue streak. I thought, ‘Boy, someone has really screwed up.’ Only to find out that it was a major foundation on the phone. He was cursing the program officer and some VIP at the foundation! Was he insane?*

*I had given up my apartment in North Carolina, and started wondering if I could get it back again. Because this guy was clearly not going to be able to raise money. He waved me in as he was doing all this cursing and I remember thinking, ‘This is a whole other way of dealing with funders.’*

*Over the years, Pablo really taught me that philanthropy belongs to people. That the definition of philanthropy is to do good to humankind. And that people with money—particularly unearned inherited wealth—have a responsibility to be generous with that money and to invest it wisely.”*

**William S. White**, president of the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, puts it like this. “Pablo was such a pain in the butt that we funded him just to make him go away,” he says with a laugh.

In a more serious mood, Bill White reflects on Pablo’s fundraising approach. “When the Center talks about poverty at the national level, it’s informed by listening to people on the ground... For that reason, they have more of an edge, a greater sense of urgency. That’s why a guy like Pablo would get so mad at all of us in the foundation community. Pablo has always reminded us that we can be

a little arrogant, we can lose touch with reality, we don’t always listen... For some reason or another, Pablo and I have yelled at each other for a long period of time. That’s why I respect him. At the end of the day, I think [CCC] delivered results.”

When Pablo left the Center in 1998, his particular brand of tough love went with him. But we still strive to hold the line. “Sometimes organizations bend a little when they take dollars from foundations,” says **Luz Vega-Marquis**, president and chief executive officer of the Marguerite Casey Foundation. “With the Center, you get the commitment to the issues. For me the Center occupies a big space in that level of dedication to the issues of low-income people.”

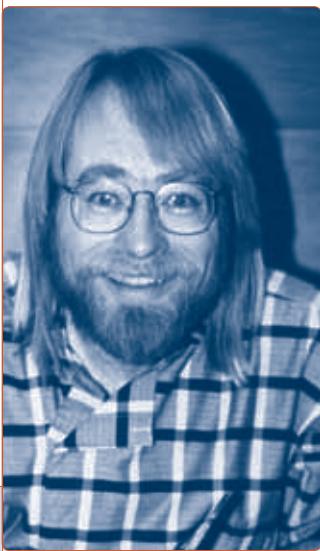
## NEW FUNDERS FOR A NEW ERA

**D**uring the 2000s, new visions and new bodies of work helped to consolidate the Center’s relationships with current funders and introduce us to important new supporters. These include the Akonadi Foundation, Atlantic Philanthropies,<sup>24</sup> Bauman Family Fund, Marguerite Casey Foundation, Educational Foundation of America, Evelyn and Walter Haas, Jr. Fund,

HKH Foundation, Melville Charitable Trust, Moriah Fund, Oak Foundation, Open Society Institute, Panta Rhea Foundation, Starry Night Fund of the Tides Foundation, Stoneman Family Foundation, Wallace Global Fund, Women Donors Network and many others, including some who prefer to remain anonymous. At the same time, long-term funders such as the Annie E. Casey Foundation, Ford Foundation, C.S. Mott Foundation and the Carnegie Corporation of New York have continued to provide crucial support.

The Center first received support from individual donors in 1983. Throughout the years, the vast majority of our donors were able to give only modest amounts.

We cherish the occasional contributions we receive of \$8 and \$10 from low-income people whose lives we have touched. These are true gifts of the heart. But so too are the major contributions we receive from donors who share with us their generosity and their passion for justice. It is these commitments that will ensure the growth and strength of the Center for decades to come.



Ed Gramlich

**The principal beneficiaries of the Community Development Block Grant program were supposed to be poor and moderate-income people. It didn't turn out that way.**

When Gerald Ford ended our long national nightmare in 1974, he did not stop the assault on low-income programs. As far as long-time executive director **Pablo Eisenberg** is concerned, it was a good thing the Center had friends to help us fight back. “The League of Women Voters was a major ally of low-income communities,” he says. “We never would have defeated Ford’s efforts to end all anti-poverty programs without them. The League chaired the National Revenue Sharing Project coalition and brought 500 members to the hearings.”

### CITIZENS MONITORING

**T**he advent of the New Federalism and its penchant for block grants raised fresh challenges that the Center met with innovative tools. One of the most effective was an approach we pioneered called citizens monitoring, in which residents tracked how local governments spent federal funds, and held decision makers accountable.

“The basic idea,” explains Andy Mott, “was to get poor people and their organizations involved in monitoring and researching the impact of a particular federal policy on them. [They] have the wherewithal to research what’s really happening with the program: Is it reaching them? How is it being implemented? What are obstacles to their benefiting from the program?”

“Our goal was to do it in a thorough way with good research methodology, and then present a report and press for reforms. In the process you’re educating people about their rights, how the program is supposed to operate, and then you have the basis for advocacy.”

The Center’s *National Citizens Monitoring Project* involved community groups nationwide in researching and overseeing the implementation of three government programs. The largest was

the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program, created in 1975, which distributed \$4 billion per year to cities and rural areas for neighborhood improvement, housing, economic development, jobs and social services.

The principal beneficiaries of the Community Development Block Grant program were supposed to be poor and moderate-income people. It didn’t turn out that way, says Andy. “Here you have mayors who don’t give a damn about poor people in charge of flexible money—they want to spend it on streets and making downtown more beautiful.”

“We funded and trained people in 80 organizations around the country to do detailed research as to what was happening with this program in their jurisdictions,” he recalls. “They did interviews with public officials administering the program. They took advantage of the Freedom of Information Act to go through files, read the reports, read the proposals. We trained them on what the law required and they built coalitions—they were being educated together about the ways that local government violated the law, how needs were being neglected.”

“In each of the jurisdictions, our groups prepared a report that could be used for local advocacy with city councils and mayors. Then we put together all of the reports at the national level and used it to push for legislative and regulatory changes. This work had a massive impact on the way CDBG money was spent. It still does. In Philadelphia, for instance, the policies about what percentage of funds should be spent on low-income housing still stands.”

“For the Center,” Andy concludes, “the importance was not only how the money and policies were being changed, but that you had grassroots black and Latino people working in the hardware store or wherever who knew more about the program than the mayor did... I’m convinced that this whole approach is

**THE CITIZENS MONITORING PROJECT RESULTED IN BOTTOM-LINE BENEFITS** to dozens of communities across the country—\$1.7 million to build a sewer system in Guadalupe, Arizona; creation of a housing court to deal with slumlords in Cleveland; \$600,000 for a low-income neighborhood in Chattanooga; \$1 million for affordable housing in El Paso, to name just a few. The Project's research reports, which documented how CDBG funds were used and abused in 80 jurisdictions nationwide, sparked advocacy that ultimately led to improvements in the rules that governed the program.

Jennifer Henderson observes, “There had never really been a focus on realigning citizens in their relationship with government until the Center created the Citizens Monitoring Project. What the Center discovered was that you could actually get people to understand the entire city budget if you got them to look at the CDBG program. You had to follow the trail of the money, figuring out where it was budgeted and where it ended up. People who had never finished grammar school were totally proficient in tough city ordinances and city budgets and could figure out all of that.”

really part of how to revive democracy, in a country that doesn't have much left.”

For **Robin Cannon**, a member of *Concerned Citizens of South Central Los Angeles*, the impact was personal. Thanks to the training and support they received from the Center, she and her neighbors were able to convince the city to drop plans to use CDBG funds to build a massive incinerator in their low-income, largely African American neighborhood. “I guess they thought we'd never read the documents,” Cannon said. “But we sat down in the middle of the floor and went through them line by line.”

**Joan Cates** of the *Georgia Housing Coalition* said in a 1992 interview, “The training was a whole eye-opener for people... If the town says you can't do something, the people can point to what they've learned and say, ‘Yes, we can.’” Without local oversight, the state's CDBG program would have turned into “an economic development slush fund,” said Cates. “The program was of much greater benefit [to us] because of the questions we were asking.”

The National Citizens Monitoring Project ended in 1984, but CCC's efforts to influence the CDBG program continued through the end of the century and beyond. We helped to launch, support and house the *Coalition for Low-Income Community Development*, which won policy changes that made CDBG more helpful to poor communities.

And for more than two decades the Center had a secret weapon in the form of **Ed Gramlich**,<sup>25</sup> possibly the world's leading expert in the requirements, mandates and details of the Community Development Block Grant and other federal programs. Grassroots groups that turned to Ed for assistance ended up knowing more about the ins and outs of CDBG than their city council members, more even than the HUD officials who were supposed to administer the program. With CCC's help, they were able to use this knowledge to get what they needed for their communities.

CDBG was not the only block grant program that required vigilance to make sure local governments used it for its intended purpose. The Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA) program had the same tendency to turn into a slush fund for civic leaders. The Center ran a *National CETA Resource Project* through which we equipped 150 grassroots groups across the country to conduct job training and development programs. In 1978 alone, almost 50 of these groups received a total of \$8.4 million in CETA funds to develop 2,800 jobs.

Naturally, we also trained groups to monitor the use of CETA funds in their communities and at the national level. For example, the Center helped a group in Milwaukee discover that \$5 million in CETA funds had been misused. At the national level, we

## FOR MORE THAN TWO DECADES

the Center had a secret weapon in the form of Ed Gramlich, possibly the world's leading expert in the requirements, mandates and details of the Community Development Block Grant and other federal programs.

ATLANTIC RICHFIELD COMPANY

**Pablo Eisenberg**

found that \$21 million slated for job programs for farmworkers and Native Americans had never been spent. The Center successfully advocated to get the money released. Thanks to research on how local jurisdictions used CETA funds, Congress passed a law in 1978 that required CETA to focus more on low-income unemployed workers, and designated a role for community-based groups in distributing and overseeing local CETA funds.

### PRIVATE FUNDS AND PUBLIC IMPACT

**W**hile CCC was busy monitoring the use and distribution of public funds, who was watching how financial institutions dealt with low-income communities? We were, through our *Neighborhood Revitalization Project* (NRP), which was founded in 1976 and directed for its first few years by **Jeff Zinsmeyer**. The project helped grassroots

groups fight redlining and persuade banks, savings and loans and other financial institutions to channel credit and loans into low-income communities. For most of its almost two decades of activity, the Neighborhood Revitalization Project was led by **Allen Fishbein** and **Debby Goldberg**.

The Center helped groups use new laws such as the Community Reinvestment Act and the Home Mortgage Disclosure Act to increase private investment in their communities. We helped groups research and document disinvestment in their neighborhoods, and stand up to banks that tried to intimidate low-income people into silence. Grassroots groups learned the skills from CCC, but they did the work themselves.

One leader of a group in Philadelphia that won a substantial CRA agreement from a local bank described the Center's approach in this way: "They helped us decide when to do it. How to do it. They gave us the tools to do it with. And we did it."

In 1977, CCC's Neighborhood Revitalization Project published a research report that called public attention to the damage created in low-income communities by a virtually unregulated industry—the mortgage banking industry. The report, called *Opportunities for Abuse: Private Profits, Public Losses and the Mortgage Banking Industry*, caused a stir. It offered a lesson that the nation would have to learn again, more painfully, 30 years later.

As the 1970s ended, the Center was instrumental in winning policy and regulatory changes that strengthened CRA requirements and made it easier to examine a bank's lending record. We had helped to create this powerful policy tool, and then to reform it to make financial institutions more accountable to grassroots communities.

### THE PABLO ERA DAWNS

**D**uring the first decade of its existence, the Center for Community Change achieved significant victories in redirecting resources

from both the public and the private sectors to benefit low-income people. Yet there was a third important component of the American economy that had the means—but for the most part, not the inclination—to advance economic justice. This was the philanthropic sector, and in 1974 a CCC consultant named Pablo Eisenberg decided to do something about it.

The previous year, a committee of government, corporate, foundation, clergy and labor leaders, led by **John Filer**, had launched a major study of philanthropy in the United States. Called the Filer Commission on Private Philanthropy

report, it included several recommendations from the Donee Group.

Pablo Eisenberg had gotten to know the Center by working as a consultant on the National Citizens Monitoring Project. He was drawn to CCC, he says, by the quality and integrity of its staff and board, and by his great respect for its president, David Ramage.

In 1975, Pablo succeeded Ramage and became the third president of the Center for Community Change. He promised his wife, Helen Eisenberg, that he would stay no more than five years. He left in 1998.

**Cris Doby**



**"THE CENTER'S SKILL IS IN ITS PEOPLE, ITS STAFF,"** says Cris Doby of the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation. "They've either had a run of good luck or a run of brilliance or both in attracting excellent staff. They know how to network, how to cultivate relationships, and they have a genuine curiosity about people's lives."

and Public Needs, the committee's goal was to research the philanthropic sector and make recommendations as to how to increase its effectiveness.<sup>26</sup>

Pablo thought they were going about it all wrong. He wrote an article pointing out that the Filer Commission's research had ignored charities that represented low-income people, minorities and women, and had instead focused on universities, hospitals and other major institutions. Through CCC, Pablo organized other nonprofits to establish the *Donee Group* as a way to have a voice in the Filer Commission's investigation. The Filer Commission agreed to support the Donee Group as it documented the exclusion of women and minorities from decision-making positions within the philanthropic sector as well as the neglect of these populations by mainstream philanthropies. When the Filer Commission presented its influential final

## PEOPLE ARE THE ASSETS

**P**ablo believes that the most important contribution he made to the Center was the people he hired. "Most nonprofits don't hire good people," he claims. "It's a gut judgment. Do they have the values and a passion for the mission of the organization? Are they multi-talented? I wanted people who could work with community groups, write, do public policy and advocacy, and believed in coalitions. Passion, zeal, commitment to public service."

He offers Jennifer Henderson as one of many examples. "Some people said not to hire her," he confides. "They said she was a star, she had run her own organization, she wouldn't be able to step back and provide technical assistance. Jennifer became one of the great technical assistance providers. She still has star qualities."

**Christine Doby** is a long-time program officer at the Charles Stewart Mott

**"Pablo always said, 'I'll hire good people and I'll figure out later what they need to do.' There was a belief at CCC that people were the biggest assets, not money."**

Foundation, and an astute observer of the nonprofit world. "The Center's skill is in its people, its staff," she says. "They've either had a run of good luck or a run of brilliance or both in attracting excellent staff. They know how to network, how to cultivate relationships, and they have a genuine curiosity about people's lives.

"I think this goes back to Pablo," Cris continues. "He himself is a bright man with a lot of energy, a great deal of direction in his own life and direction that he provides to others. My limited exposure to him showed me that he came to the work without the kind of ego that needed to be stroked. He didn't need people to be subservient. He was excited to have people as smart or smarter around him, pushing the thinking and the ideas—someone to fight with, in the best sense of that word."

Jennifer Henderson recalls, "Pablo always said, 'I'll hire good people and I'll figure out later what they need to do.' There was a belief at CCC that people were the biggest assets, not money."

CCC staff were not the only people valued and cultivated by the Center. Executive director Deepak Bhargava says, "I'm still struck by how many people all over the country I run into who are making important contributions to community organizing and community development and who say that the Center was important to them personally and to their own organizations."

Deepak joined CCC in 1994, so he claims no credit for the Center's first 25 years of developing grassroots leaders and organizers. "One of CCC's legacies is having nurtured an enormous cohort of people who have a deep commitment to social justice," he says, "and building local organizations that make a big difference in people's lives."

### A BEAUTIFUL FRIENDSHIP, SORT OF

**O**ne of the most important relationships the Center developed during the 1970s was our partnership with the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation. At the heart of this relationship was

the friendship between Pablo Eisenberg and Bill White, president of the Foundation.

Cris Doby gives her perspective. "Bill talks about his relationship with Pablo, but these aren't guys who vacation together. They have a public relationship of respect and trust, in the face of disagreement... They are both bright, nimble-minded men who aren't afraid of a good fight. And they don't feel that just because they had a good fight, they now have to break up."

Indeed, Bill White says that his first memory of their relationship is Pablo "yelling and screaming" because the Mott Foundation declined to "kick in about \$10 million—this was the 1970s, so it would be about \$50 million today—into a fund which the community would make decisions over. Pablo wanted us to basically sign over our grantmaking authority to a group, because we obviously didn't know what we were doing... That's how we started out. And it's continued ever since."

Like Eisenberg and White, the Center and the Mott Foundation also have a relationship of respect and trust, Cris Doby believes. "CCC comes to us with projects that we don't fund," she points out. "We can tell them no, and it doesn't injure the core relationship between the two institutions."

The Mott Foundation first gave CCC a grant in 1976. It has funded us generously, both through general purposes grants and project support, ever since. But the partnership between the Center and the Foundation that has had the most direct impact in nurturing grassroots community groups began in 1979 with Mott's Intermediary Support for Organizing (ISO) Program.

### "WE CHANGE THEM, AND THEY CHANGE US"

**B**ill White explains how the Mott ISO program, which was then called Strengthening Citizen Initiative at the Local Level, got started. "At the time, there were various

strong CDCs beginning to emerge,” he says. “As I looked at it, it seemed to me that you had large CDCs in the country, like MACE in Mississippi and some stuff in Chicago and LA and New York. Then you had another layer of smaller groups, like in Fort Wayne [Indiana] and ACORN up in Lowell [Massachusetts]. They were just neighborhood groups trying to emerge.

“My thought was, why not put money into some smaller outfits to bring them along, so that they can emerge into some of these more comprehensive community development corporations? That’s what we started doing way back then. We started out with a vision to work with small outfits and move them up. I thought CCC was the best there was [to help new grassroots groups grow]. Of all of [the support organizations], CCC was central for keeping issues of poverty, grassroots theory—they’d talk with people in Washington and keep the theory, but also keep a grassroots orientation.”

Cris Doby believes the evolution of the ISO program illustrates the dynamic of shared learning that characterizes the relationship between the Mott Foundation and the Center. “We change them, and they change us,” she says. “Those changes are subtle, but at least in one program—the ISO program—the Center’s influence has been significant. What they have taught the Foundation is important.

“This started out as a program to provide technical assistance to neighborhood and other small groups and try to get citizens involved at a very local level,” she explains. “It was the Center that helped the Foundation understand that technical assistance was never going to get us there—that you needed to have a system and methodology by which you could find people who had some energy and leadership and appetite for change, then channel and train that. That’s what morphed into the ISO Program. There were other grantees in that program area, but when we wanted reflection pieces and studies, we turned to Andy Mott.”

Through the Mott ISO program, the Center and other “intermediary support” organizations

provide small grants and technical assistance to young grassroots organizations. While it sounds simple, this kind of support is valuable—and rare. The ISO grants are unrestricted core support, the most difficult kind for unproven organizations to attract. And the close assistance provided by Center staff in organizational development, coalition building, strategy development, leadership coaching and other areas can mean the difference between a young organization failing or thriving.

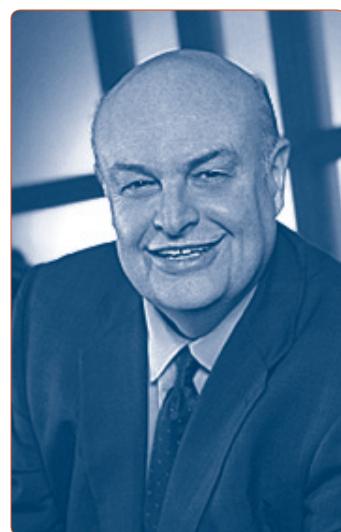
“It’s surprising how much difference a little money can make,” said **Juanita Tate** of *Concerned Citizens of South Central Los Angeles* in a 1992 interview. “The [ISO] grant the Center helped us get allowed us to get basic things like a phone, an answering machine, business cards, stationery, membership cards. It meant we didn’t have to collect five dollars for postage all the time.”

“We gave CCC the money to re-grant,” White says. “That’s what we’ve been doing since 1979.” In 2008, the Center will regrant about a quarter of a million dollars through the Mott ISO program.

## THE GIFT THAT’S STILL GIVING

**F**rom its earliest days to today, the Center has established and sheltered new coalitions and projects, then nurtured them until they were strong enough to thrive on their own. Many of the organizations we helped to create during the 1970s still play active roles in seeking social justice. For example:

- The *National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy* was founded as a special project of CCC in 1976. It is still the leading voice advocating reform of the philanthropic sector, urging philanthropies to be more accountable and to invest more in social change organizations that confront the root causes of injustice. The organization was instrumental in the creation of workplace giving programs dedicated to social change, which provide an alternative to traditional United Way programs. Today, more than 70 of these “alternative” funds channel some \$10 million per year to social justice organizations.<sup>27</sup>



**William S. White**



**Juanita Tate**

- CCC launched the *Rural Coalition* in 1978 by convening more than 40 organizations at a conference designed to bring a low-income perspective to national issues that affected rural communities. Pablo Eisenberg recalls that **Paul Wellstone** (later Senator Wellstone) worked at the Center for a year while writing a book on rural organizing. During this time, the Rural Coalition found itself faltering. Pablo says, “Paul called a meeting, gave a pep talk, and reignited the spark. He got the Coalition to start again.” The Rural Coalition became an independent organization in 1981, and over the years

**BILL WHITE SAYS, “I REMEMBER WALKING INTO A PLACE** in San Francisco years ago—a small neighborhood group, just trying to fix their neighborhood and merge with others. Someone came up to me and said, ‘You guys saved us.’ I said, ‘What did we do?’ ‘You gave us \$500.’ I said, ‘I don’t remember giving you \$500.’ She said, ‘It was through the Center for Community Change. That \$500 enabled us to hire an auditor and figure out where our money was going. We’ve been losing money and we didn’t know why. Now we’ve learned what we ought to do and what we shouldn’t do. That’s why we’re alive today.’”

has helped to shape federal policies pertaining to rural economic development, housing, and water and sewer funding. Today the Coalition involves more than 90 diverse organizations in the U.S. and Mexico working to support sustainable rural development and food production, and fair treatment for farmworkers as well as minority and small farmers.<sup>28</sup>

- In 1972 CCC sponsored the *Voting Rights Litigation Project*, which worked to expand access to voting by people of color and low-income people. Through legal challenges and litigation, the project

sought to overturn barriers to voting and to confront abuses of campaign spending laws. We helped the *Southwest Voter Education and Registration Project*, founded in 1974 by **William Velasquez**, to increase the number of Hispanic voters and elected officials. By 1990, the group had registered nearly 3 million Hispanics and doubled the number of votes cast and Hispanic people elected.

- The *Indian and Native American Employment and Training Coalition* was organized by CCC in 1979 to equip Native Americans to run job training programs and to make federal job training policies more applicable to the unique circumstances on reservations. (At the time, it was called the Indian and Native American CETA Coalition.) In its first few years, the Coalition conducted analyses of federal funding formulas and policies that resulted in securing \$90 million in federal job training funds for Indian groups. For decades, the Coalition has been staffed by CCC’s **Norm DeWeaver**, an economic development expert with enormous expertise, who left the Center to work directly for the Coalition in 2003. Today the Coalition involves more than 200 tribes, tribal consortia and Indian organizations that conduct job training programs. It has had tremendous impact on shaping a wide range of federal policies and programs that affect Native American people and communities.

- *South Shore Bank* in Chicago—the nation’s first community development bank—was originally funded and nurtured as a special project of CCC. Founded in 1973, the bank aimed to bring financial resources and services into areas of Chicago’s South Side that had been devastated by the loss of capital and businesses in a time of “white flight.” Its goals were to revitalize the South Side and increase economic opportunity for its residents—while proving that such principled investments can make a profit.

**Ronald Grzywinski**, one of the bank's co-founders, served for many years on CCC's board of directors. South Shore Bank became a national model for how banks can operate in poor neighborhoods in ways that benefit both the community and the bottom line. Today the bank, now called ShoreBank, is active in seven locations across the country and was the first U.S. bank to incorporate environmental goals into its mission.

Other organizations nurtured by the Center in the 1970s have faded from the scene, but launched leaders who went on to make important contributions. For instance, the *Youth Project* was housed at CCC and led by **Margery Tabankin**. She later headed the VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America) program, now AmeriCorps VISTA, during the Carter administration, and went on to direct the Hollywood Women's Political Committee. Today she is executive director of The Streisand Foundation and Steven Spielberg's Righteous Persons Foundation.

Andy Mott recalls, "The Youth Project was set up to tap into the energies of all the militant activity of the 1960s. Some of our staff people felt that it was really important that the youth groups that were being formed had some support, including financial support and legal help to incorporate. The Youth Project had a staff and board of people under 30, who were committed to building youth organizations. Great organizations came out of this—everything from environmental groups among coal miners of Appalachia, to people organizing reform movements in labor unions, to environmental justice organizations, to black and Latino organizations.

"Some of the people who led the Youth Project became very influential," Andy says. "One example is **Drummond Pike**, who's now head of the Tides Foundation."

CCC board member Heather Booth concurs. "The Center incubated a project, it took



on a life of its own, got wings, started to fly, and magnified its effect in a wonderful way," she says. "The Youth Project is a gift that's still giving. I'm working with the Proteus Fund.<sup>29</sup> Many of those people came out of the Youth Project."

## A GLIMPSE OF THE FUTURE

**T**hroughout the 1970s, the Center for Community Change dedicated itself to "the difficult transference of expertise," as former CCC board chair **Burke Marshall** put it. In the middle of that hectic decade, the Ford Foundation's consultant Natalie Spingarn made a judgment—and a prophecy.

"CCC would be missed in many places if it disappeared—especially by its clients—and that is more than one can say of many organizations," she wrote.<sup>30</sup> "Five or ten years from now, [community-based organizations] may, or may not, have survived as effective community development groups. If they do, CCC is likely to have played a key role in assuring that survival."

## SYD BEANE LEGACY IN ACTION

If Syd Beane hadn't been a high school basketball star, he might not have gone on to become one of CCC's legendary community organizers. Born and raised on a reservation in South Dakota, he was drafted right out of high school. However, the head of the local draft board was impressed by his prowess on the court. So instead of heading for Vietnam, Syd went to college with a basketball scholarship.

There, Syd's observations about the lives of Native Americans sharpened as he studied history and political science. He had seen the struggles of his family and friends on the reservation, where the only jobs were with the Bureau of Indian Affairs and other outside institutions. "I saw the conflict growing between the Indian people and the federal government institutions that were regulating our lives," he says.

He went to graduate school at Arizona State University and studied social work, focusing on community organizing. Syd knew that Native Americans were being relocated off their reservations—lured by the BIA's promises of training and education—and into cities, where the promises evaporated. He realized that someone needed to organize urban Indians and help them maintain their culture and their connection to the reservations.

So he headed for Chicago after graduation and arrived at Saul Alinsky's Industrial Areas



Foundation unannounced. They didn't quite know what to do with him. "The fact that I had gone to grad school was a strike against me," he laughs. "The fact that I was a Native American was another strike against me because Native Americans weren't very visible or actively involved in what the IAF was doing."

IAF told Syd that he needed to find someone to sponsor him for \$1,000 per month to enter their training program. He did, and over the next year he helped build the *Native American Committee* in Chicago. This group became one of the nation's most active in the struggle with the federal government over land that, according to treaty, should have belonged to the Indians.

During his year in Chicago, Syd met **David Ramage**, who asked if he wanted to continue his organizing work as part of CCC. When Syd agreed, Ramage helped him get

a three-year Robert Kennedy Foundation fellowship to develop new models of organizing among Native American communities—the work that had already become Syd's purpose and passion. Syd became the director of organizing for *Southwest Indian Development* in Arizona, which was the first attempt to pull together young Native leaders coming out of college into an organization. This became a catalyst for Indian organizing across the state.

Over the last three decades, Syd has led CCC's work with Native communities in cities and on reservations, tackling everything from housing to economic development to new media training. Native Americans are now a significant part of every coalition CCC builds. Even though the federal government attempted to scatter Native Americans and break their spirit, their ties to each other and their voices are growing stronger—Syd Beane's legacy in action.

*the*  
**1980s**  
**MORNING HITS HARD**



According to the Ronald Reagan administration, the 1980s brought Morning in America. But not if you were poor. The administration immediately set out to gut any social programs that had managed to survive the Nixon era or take hold during the Carter years. In 1981, Congress passed the President's tax legislation, ushering in the largest tax cuts in history. Within five years, the nation had lost \$750 billion in tax revenues.<sup>31</sup>

## The shrunken federal treasury provided excellent cover for

cutting health, welfare, housing and job programs that benefited poor families and the large cities where poverty was concentrated. As Peter Dreier wrote in his rebuke to the effusive elegies that followed Reagan's death, "By the end of Reagan's term in office, federal assistance to local governments was cut 60 percent. Reagan eliminated general revenue sharing to cities, slashed funding for public service jobs and job training, almost dismantled federally funded legal services for the poor, cut the anti-poverty Community Development Block Grant program and reduced funds for public transit."<sup>32</sup>

Morning in America hit hard in low-income communities. The Center for Community Change gathered its strength to hit back. We launched or assisted 10 national coalitions in the early 1980s, primarily focused on the federal budget and its fallout.

**Andy Mott**, long-time CCC staffer and former executive director, explains. "Each time the Republicans took over and hacked at the budget on poverty programs and social programs, we created a national coalition to work on the fight. In each case, CCC called the first meeting, staffed the coalition of 10, 20, 30 groups to fight budget cuts or whatever was anti-poor. One example is the *Coalition on Human Needs*," Andy says.<sup>33</sup> "It was created in 1981 when Reagan took over and is still active, with 110 national organizations as members. The Coalition is still funded through CCC." (The Coalition on Human Needs is a separate organization from the Coalition on Human Needs and Block Grants, which was founded in the 1970s.)

The first director of the Coalition on Human Needs was **John Carr**, who worked with Andy to launch the organization. In 1983, John



would join CCC's board of directors, where he served for years. He brought his zeal for social justice and his sense of humor to the role of board chair.<sup>34</sup>

In the 1980s, the Coalition had about 100 member organizations from labor, minority, civil rights, women's, faith-based and other public interest groups. Together, they worked to document the impact that reduced federal funding had on disadvantaged people, and to anticipate the results of proposed funding cuts. The Coalition on Human Needs also funded local coalitions to examine how block grant programs affected their communities.

groups had no voice in deciding how block grants would be used in their communities, and requirements designed to ensure their participation were ignored.

Federal money that had once strengthened cities now flowed to the suburbs. Funds for public education bought computers for well-equipped schools rather than books or bilingual materials to help disadvantaged students. No federal regulations directed the way local governments could spend block-granted education or health funds. Federally supported health clinics and outreach programs vanished from poor communities.

## THE INCOME GAP BETWEEN THE RICH AND THE POOR soared during the 1980s, with income for wealthiest fifth of Americans growing by 34 percent, while that of the poorest fifth fell by 10 percent.<sup>36</sup> By the end of 1982, more than 11 million people were unemployed—the highest joblessness rate since 1940.<sup>37</sup>

From this dry-sounding mission emerged potent results. **Emily Gantz McKay**,<sup>35</sup> who was vice-chair of the Coalition, shared some of them with the Center's board of directors in 1983. The Coalition had played an important role in preventing \$10 billion worth of cuts in social programs. They had helped to target benefits to low-income and minority groups by preparing model legislation for states to use when they allocated block grant funds.

The Coalition's work had also revealed how swiftly the implementation of Reagan's policies erased civil rights gains. Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which forbids racial discrimination in federally funded programs, was being entirely disregarded, the Coalition found. Minorities and citizen

None of this shocked the Center for Community Change. Through our National Citizens Monitoring Project, we had already documented the fatal flaws of block grants. Between 1980 and 1983, the Project published four reports that examined the shortcomings of the Community Development Block Grant program in damning detail.<sup>38</sup>

As a result of this and other efforts, Congress rejected a proposal to fold 43 more programs—nearly all the federal programs that served human needs—into five massive block grants. They also defeated a plan to eliminate 44 federal programs in nutrition, education, energy assistance and community development.

**Minorities and citizen groups had no voice in deciding how block grants would be used in their communities, and requirements designed to ensure their participation were ignored.**



John Carr

### FAITH-BASED ORGANIZING GETS A BOOST

**D**on Elmer, a seasoned organizer who joined the Center's staff in 1987, recalls how the budget cuts resounded throughout the nonprofit world. "When Reagan came to office, he cut off funding for CETA," he says, referring to the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act program. "It was a job training project so people could work for nonprofits and get half of their wages from the government. Also there was the VISTA program, [Volunteers in Service to America], where young people could be introduced to organizing. It was a good way of getting organizers into the field."

"Reagan dried [most of] this up," Don says. "Huge numbers of organizations began to [wither] because they'd been too dependent on government funding. Organizations died as they went from nine or ten organizers down to one. They didn't know how to change." But they did know where to get help.

"Some of these folks came to us at the Center and said, let's talk about new ways of

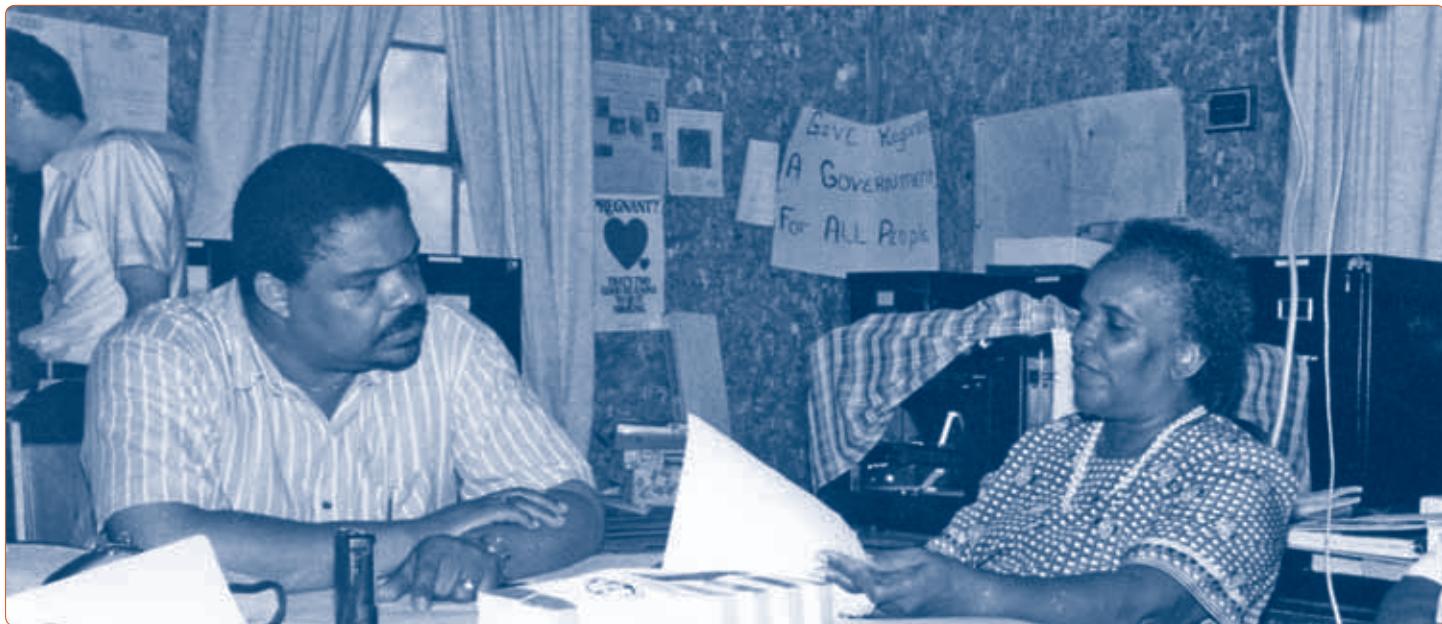
organizing," Don continues. "We started the Project Directors Group—it became a support system for organizers who were creating new congregation-based organizations. The Center helped them establish new organizations all over the country."

This was an innovative approach to organizing: reaching out to members of churches and synagogues, and helping them band together to advance social change. Don Elmer, a minister's son with a deep spiritual streak of his own, was a natural pioneer for this kind of movement building.

"We would pull together a sponsoring committee to explore the possibility of creating a congregation-based organization in the area," he says. "We'd identify the people who would want to be in a new organization, raise money, and find an organizer. I did this at the beginning all by myself. Andy and Pablo helped raise the money. Later I reached out to other people. For instance, I put together three congregation-based organizations in Minnesota with an ally of mine, **John Musick**,<sup>39</sup> who ran Minnesota CoAct at the time."

As these young organizations gained ground, faith-based community organizing networks stepped forward to unite and strengthen them. The Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF), the Pacific Institute for Community Organizations (now called PICO) and the Direct Action and Research Training Center (DART) had all gotten their start in the 1970s. The Gamaliel Foundation was founded in 1968 but changed its mission in 1986 to become a support network for community organizing groups. In the 1980s, these networks gained more maturity, more members and—thanks to the misery created by Reagan's policies—more momentum.

Don Elmer helped faith-based groups find a home with an appropriate organizing network. "For instance, there was a group called *Kansas City Organizing Project* that ended up with PICO," he says. "*Portland Organizing Project* ended up with IAF.



**Garland Yates meets with community leaders in Keysville, GA.**

"By 1993, most of the congregation-based organizing groups were hooked up with networks," says Don. The Center disbanded the Project Directors Group, but continued to provide assistance and support to its members.

### STARTING OVER IN DETROIT

As federal support dwindled for both anti-poverty programs and low-income communities, the grassroots organizations assisted by CCC struggled to survive. Famished for funds, many groups died, leaving their communities voiceless. Other had to cut programs, lay off staff and rely more heavily on volunteer leadership. Boards of directors that had traditionally played governance roles now had to step in and take a hand in the

day-to-day operation of their community groups. More and more often, the Center helped organizations to balance relationships between the board and staff as the ground shifted beneath them. One such group was the *Michigan Avenue Community Organization* (MACO) in Detroit.

In 1980, the Center began to help MACO's staff members develop their skills in economic development and housing. About a year later, we conducted a thorough review of the organization to assess its capability to address the needs of its neighborhood. The audit found that MACO had little impact on local conditions due to some fundamental weaknesses in the organization itself: MACO's board of directors did not reflect its predominantly African

**"PEOPLE WERE FEELING PRETTY DOWN,"** said MACO's Lavelle Williams. "But Garland sat down and explained to us what was happening elsewhere. People got excited. CCC came in with the attitude that change can happen. You're somebody. People were made to feel important. Even though CCC isn't there every day, they bring out people's potential. For me, it's like a church revival. It's refreshing. They have what I call a real understanding of people in need."<sup>40</sup>



**CCC's headquarters building, 1000 Wisconsin Avenue NW, Washington, DC.**

American, low-income community, and the staff and board had different ideas about the organization's objectives.

To its credit, MACO made the painful decision to reorganize itself. The staff and board agreed to establish a base of members in the neighborhood, and to develop leaders from the community to define the direction and goals of the organization.

A team of Center staff members led by **Garland Yates** assisted MACO to pursue those goals. We helped staff members acquire technical skills in housing development, economic development and finance. We coached them in leadership development, both for themselves and for the local residents they were cultivating. We eased the transition to new board members, and

assisted the new board to set goals and hold itself accountable to the community.

By the end of 1983, the revitalized Michigan Avenue Community Organization had helped to meet neighborhood needs by raising \$750,000 in Community Development Block Grant funds to rehabilitate housing. It had launched a commercial revitalization program and had created 300 local jobs through its economic development work.

### A PLACE TO CALL HOME

**R**eagan's budget cuts dealt severe blows to the Center itself. We lost all but one of our federal grants, slicing our budget in half.<sup>41</sup> Amidst the rising calls for help from struggling community groups, we had to find ways to cut

costs. By 1985, we had reduced the number of community groups CCC assisted from 65 to about 50. It seemed doubtful that some of our special projects, such as the *Juvenile Justice Project*, could find the funds to stay afloat another year.

The Center responded to this uncertainty in a surprising way: we purchased the headquarters building that we had been renting for 15 years. It was a bold move, and a prescient one. Owning our building would provide financial stability for CCC in the volatile real estate market of Washington, DC.

In 1983 the Center also opened a West Coast office, in Oakland, California. **Rachel Sierra** left CCC's Washington headquarters to head the office, assisted by **Paul Bloyd**. This would save on travel costs and increase CCC's ability to serve community groups in the western half of the country.

## THE POWER OF MYTH

**W**hile the Center found a home in the 1980s, millions of Americans were not so lucky. At a time of rising joblessness, the government decided to reduce its assistance to affordable housing. In 1981, Reagan cut in half the budget for public and subsidized (Section 8) housing. By 1985 there were 8.9 million low-income families who needed rental housing, but only 5.6 million low-cost apartments.<sup>43</sup> Three years later, 5 million families who earned less than \$10,000 a year were paying more than 60 percent of their income for housing.<sup>44</sup>

By the end of the decade, the government had slashed its low-income housing support by nearly 80 percent.<sup>45</sup> A new term, rarely seen before, began to dominate headlines: the homelessness crisis. In the world's wealthiest nation, 1.2 million people had nowhere to sleep.<sup>46</sup>

Nowhere did the power of myth hold more sway than in the field of public housing. Many people believed that public housing was entirely comprised of decrepit high rises packed

with teenage parents, too many children and hardened criminals. In reality, only a quarter of public housing units were high rises; there were far more garden apartments. And about 80% of public housing buildings were in sound physical condition. As for the residents, elderly people lived in about a third of the nation's public housing. Fewer than a quarter of the parents were less than 25 years old, and the average size of families living in public housing was 2.2 people.<sup>48</sup> Certainly crime and drugs were problems in public housing developments during this era of the burgeoning crack epidemic—but no more so than in other areas of the same communities.

Myths about public housing and its residents influenced the perceptions of the public and the policy makers who determined what kinds of resources would be invested in public housing. Two other dynamics played an even stronger role. First, as metropolitan areas grew, the property on which public housing developments stood became increasingly valuable—more valuable, some city leaders thought, than the people who lived there. Second, public housing residents had almost no voice in the governance

**THE OLD DODGE WAREHOUSE** was one of the oldest buildings in Washington, with a foundation dating from the 1760s. Inside the three-story brick building, rough-hewn wooden columns and cross-beams supported a sharply canted roof. By the time the Center moved into the abandoned building in 1968, it had seen better days. So had its weary industrial neighborhood at the foot of Georgetown, overlooking the Potomac River. But the warehouse had seen worse days too, when it was owned by the slave-holding Dodge family<sup>42</sup> and held cargo from the ships that plied the river, including tobacco and, it was rumored, slaves.

In November 1983, CCC purchased the building for \$850,000. We were able to do so thanks to generous grants and loans from the Aetna, Kresge, ARCO, Mott and Honeywell Foundations and the Needmor Fund. Twenty-one years later, the Center would sell the building for \$3.2 million.

of their own developments. Of the 3,400 Public Housing Authorities across the country that managed local developments, only a handful included any residents on their governance boards, which were dominated by real estate developers and business interests.

The Center for Community Change couldn't let that stand. We established the *Public Housing Initiative* to help tenant groups organize to save their homes. One approach was to equip residents to fight "*de facto* demolition"—the inevitable outcome when housing authorities purposely let the buildings deteriorate to the point where they had to be demolished, thus clearing the land for more lucrative uses. The Public Housing Initiative also mobilized residents to advocate for the

CCC in 2000. "I had been a social activist in the civil rights movement," says Othello. "The Center was an organization in business to effect social change. There was this mesh between the Center and my own heartbeat." Other staff marveled at Othello's commitment and energy. He was often at the office at 4:30 in the morning, and would get on a plane immediately whenever a group faced a crisis or a big opportunity.

Over the decades, Othello held a variety of roles at the Center. He served as CCC's vice-president for administration, handling governance issues. He coordinated our work on employment and training for many years. But he found his calling in the fight to enable public housing residents to shape what would happen in their own communities.

**IT WAS HARD TO KNOW WHERE TO BEGIN** to confront this monstrous problem. What could be more central to the well-being of a family or a community than having a decent place to live? Yet for millions of low-income families, everything seemed to conspire against their ability to reach this basic goal: wage levels, public policies, tax structures, the practices of financial institutions—even the power of stereotype and myth. The President himself had gone on national television to declare that "people who are sleeping on the grates...are homeless, you might say, by choice."<sup>47</sup>

development of a national public housing policy. One of its earliest acts was to bring public housing residents from across the country to Washington, DC, where they testified before Congress. The residents schooled the policy makers about the devastating impact on families and community ties when housing authorities demolish public housing. The Center regularly brought 35 to 50 residents and allies to Washington to keep up the pressure and develop their leadership skills.

The Public Housing Initiative was led by **Othello Pouland**, one of CCC's most committed and passionate staffers. He came to the Center in the early 1970s and retired from

In West Dallas, for example, a 1987 federal court ruled that 2,600 apartments—about a third of all the public housing in Dallas—were to be demolished. "We wanted our units repaired, not torn down," said Tillie Bailey, president of *Concerned Citizens of West Dallas*. If units couldn't be renovated and had to be demolished, Concerned Citizens wanted them to be rebuilt on the same site rather than dispersing residents to the winds. This group of public housing residents did everything right—they demonstrated, lobbied the city council, appealed the court decision, enlisted allies and brought in the media. It wasn't enough. Finally, Othello helped Concerned Citizens arrange two meetings with Jack Kemp,

Secretary of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Kemp ordered the Dallas Housing Authority to stop the demolition plans. HUD instead proposed a new approach in which 2,000 of the units would be renovated, with \$73 million committed by HUD. Local authorities agreed.<sup>50</sup>

In rural Yakima Valley, Washington, a similar scenario was playing out. The local housing authority wanted to demolish badly needed public housing units. “The resident leader there, Thomas Villanueva, went with CCC to the table when the plans were being drawn,” recalls Othello. Their goal was to resist the housing authority’s plan to tear down units and instead get a commitment to preserve these homes. “There was no alternative except public housing,” says Othello. “No privately owned units as you find in the cities. It was public housing or nothing.”

By the late 1980s, almost five million units of affordable housing across the country had been lost—demolished, or converted to market-rate housing by landlords who dropped out of the government’s subsidized rental program. According to the study of housing needs conducted by the National Housing Task Force known as the Rouse Commission, the private market couldn’t meet the nation’s housing needs alone.<sup>51</sup> The federal government had to step in. The Center for Community Change agreed—but we knew that both local governments and private markets could do more.

## FINDING A BETTER WAY

**W**ith the federal government’s retreat from affordable housing, local governments found themselves on their own as they faced the growing desperation of homeless and ill-housed families. Cities, counties and states could allocate funds to create new housing, and many did—but this required a battle over budget appropriations each and every year. Housing advocates had to compete for funds against other interests, some of which served the same low-income families who needed the housing. There had to be a better way.

IN A 1973 INTERVIEW, OTHELLO EXPLAINED why the Center's special brand of technical assistance to community groups—ensconced within a long-term relationship of trust—was so much more effective than that of the standard consultant. “Consultants have demonstrated their limitations over the years,” he said. “They come in, they get the broad strokes, they miss the subtleties, they miss the cross-currents, they get the surface facts, they miss the politics or they don't care. They leave you a piece of paper or, let me be more kind, they might stick around and counsel with you. But the dynamic evolving nature of a developing community organization is so profound and unpredictable that it requires that there be not a crutch, but a more thoughtful kind of general support there. The Center would never just respond to whims and help in such a way that dependency is fostered. A more thoughtful and careful kind of support has got to be there. They've got to feel it.”<sup>49</sup>



In the late 1970s, a few local and state governments tried a new approach. They would bypass the annual legislative fights and instead establish a permanent source of dedicated public revenue to provide housing for those most in need—a housing trust fund. The idea caught on slowly at first. In 1980, there were two housing trust funds in operation; six years later, there were only 16. But over the next four years, 31 new housing trust funds were created. By the end of the decade, these 47 housing trust funds had generated more than \$200 million for affordable housing,<sup>52</sup> and attracted \$8 in private and public funding for every \$1 invested by a trust fund.



Mary Brooks

What could account for such swift growth? Two words: **Mary Brooks**. She founded the Center's *Housing Trust Fund Project* in 1986. Today she continues to lead the project, and remains the nation's foremost expert on the subject as well as the undisputed "mother of the housing trust fund movement."<sup>53</sup>

"It's no secret how to solve the housing problem," says Mary. "We can find the funds if we can find the community will." Finding the community will—through organizing, advocacy, research, coalition building, technical expertise and a tireless willingness to coach community groups—has been Mary's specialty since the project's inception. A case in point is the Washington State Housing Trust Fund, one of the first in the country.

In 1986, **Sharon Lee** was deeply concerned about the shortage of housing for low-income families in Seattle. She worked for a City

Council member on urban redevelopment issues, and knew how dire the need was—and how little funding was available to meet it. As Kim Herman wrote in his December 2005 reflection on the trust fund's 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary, "[Sharon] became aware of a national push—orchestrated by the Center for Community Change and led by Mary Brooks—to set up housing trust funds. The Center had produced a publication describing how to create a housing trust fund. 'I read that,' Sharon describes, 'and I said we need one here.'"<sup>54</sup>

Mary helped Washington housing advocates through every step: creating a coalition, educating the public about the need for the state to get involved in housing production, establishing a model for how the trust fund would work and helping to identify where the revenue would come from. Advocates considered everything from the interest on tenant security deposits to unclaimed lottery winnings. In 1987, the housing trust fund secured its first million dollars from the state's general fund, with the agreement that the trust fund would pay it back later. Over the years, Mary Brooks has continued to assist the Washington state trust fund to increase its dedicated revenue, which now comes from the state's capital budget. As of 2007, the housing trust fund had invested \$240 million in creating 26,500 homes, and had leveraged \$1,660,000 in additional support from the private and public sectors.

Even someone as farsighted as Mary would have been hard pressed in the 1980s to imagine that housing trust funds would become the most successful movement in the affordable housing field. By 1998, housing trust funds across the country generated nearly \$357 million each year and had invested a total of \$1.5 billion in building and preserving almost 200,000 units of housing for low-income families.<sup>55</sup>

Over the past two decades, the Center has committed a total of roughly \$4 million to the Housing Trust Fund Project. By 2007, this investment was reaping \$1.6 billion for affordable housing *each year*. This is

the amount the 600 housing trust funds in operation across the country generate annually from sources that range from real estate transfer taxes to hotel taxes to parking fees. The numbers are impressive, particularly considering that each housing unit represents a family that has a home. As Sheila Crowley, executive director of the National Low Income Housing Coalition put it, the success of this nationwide resource is “[l]argely thanks to Mary Brooks and the Housing Trust Fund Project.”<sup>56</sup>

## THE FINANCIAL WORLD CRUMBLES

**D**eregulation was the mantra of the 1980s. Corporations, industries and institutions were freed to answer the call of the marketplace. Yet the Community Reinvestment Act and the Home Mortgage Disclosure Act survived—in large part as a result of pressure from grassroots organizations concerned about the flow of funds to their communities. The survival of these laws did not, however, ensure that they would fulfill their intended functions. Senate oversight hearings revealed that CRA enforcement was practically nonexistent. Indeed, between 1981 and 1989, only one expansion request by a bank had been denied because the bank had failed to meet its CRA obligations.<sup>57</sup>

Still, the Community Reinvestment Act could be a powerful tool for those who knew how to use it. And teaching grassroots groups how to use the CRA was the role of the Center’s Neighborhood Revitalization Project (NRP), led by **Allen Fishbein** and **Debby Goldberg**.

One example was their work to increase private investment in the Philadelphia neighborhood of Kensington. By the early 1980s, this working class neighborhood had lost 15% of its housing stock as well as several industries that had been the area’s major employers. Banks wouldn’t lend in Kensington; people couldn’t fix up their homes or buy new ones; even the city government stopped investing in upkeep and street repair. Kensington was going under.

Several community groups banded together and came to CCC for help. We assisted them to document the lack of investment capital going into their neighborhood, and then to use that data to demonstrate that one of the city’s largest banks, Fidelity Bank, was not living up to its CRA requirements. With our aid, the groups negotiated with Fidelity for more investment in the Kensington neighborhood. Within three years, Fidelity and other banks had made more than 750 mortgage loans worth more than \$12 million in the area. Banks hired bilingual staff and increased their lending to the growing Latino community, opening up homeownership opportunities for the residents and a new market for the banks.

**John Carpenter**, then director of the New Kensington Community Development Corporation, said in a 1992 interview that the default rate on these new home loans was very low, “because a home is everything many of these people have. They have a working class mentality: you have a mortgage, you make your payments. These are proud people.” The pride spread, from individual homeowners to the neighborhood at large. “It’s meant more than a home for a few families,” he continued. “It’s had a stabilizing effect on the entire community.”<sup>58</sup>

**“A home is everything many of these people have. They have a working class mentality: you have a mortgage, you make your payments. These are proud people.”**



Debby Goldberg

While Kensington residents were gaining the chance to own a home, thousands of struggling families across America were losing theirs. This was partially the result of the recession and the massive job losses of the early 1980s, which were themselves created by policy and fiscal decisions made at the federal level. But other factors were at work too. Research by the Neighborhood Revitalization Project revealed that the Veterans Administration as well as federal and state bank regulatory agencies contributed to the high number of mortgage foreclosures. And as early as 1981, the NRP staff had published a warning about another dangerous dynamic, in their report titled *Runaway Mortgages: A Review of the Early Experiences with Unrestricted Adjustable Rate Mortgages*.

NRP's research revealed a striking level of racial discrimination in mortgage lending. We sent "testers"—matched pairs of white people and people of color with identical financial records—to apply for loans and compare

how they were treated. In 1989 we completed a study of lending records in 14 cities, which found that white neighborhoods were three times more likely to receive loans than minority neighborhoods—regardless of the income level.

The financial structure of the U.S. experienced two profound shocks during the 1980s. One was the stock market crash of 1987. The second was the savings and loan crisis, during which about 1,000 of these financial institutions across the country failed. We were able to use NRP's stark research findings to ensure that low-income people had a voice in reforming the system that had led to the S&L collapse.

By 1989, Congress was struggling to decide who would pay to bail out the savings and loan industry, which was predicted to cost \$80 to \$100 billion dollars. (It ended up costing about \$160 billion, according to the U.S. General Accounting Office in 1996.)

For CCC, the question was how to ensure that savings and loan institutions, which were created to finance housing, channeled funds to the communities where such investments were most needed. Through NRP's research and advocacy—and through CCC's leadership participation in a coalition of housing, labor, faith-based and community groups—grassroots organizations convinced policy makers to include in the savings and loan bailout bill several provisions to promote affordable housing.<sup>59</sup>

- A policy was established to give priority to low- and moderate-income families and to nonprofit housing agencies when disposing of houses and apartment buildings that had been owned by insolvent savings and loan institutions.
- The Community Reinvestment Act was amended to require federal regulators to disclose their evaluations and ratings of institutions covered under the Act, making it possible to identify banks—and evaluators—that were not living up to the CRA's requirements.

- The Home Mortgage Disclosure Act was amended to require mortgage lenders to report data on the number and dollar amount of mortgage applications by gender, race, income and census tract. This provided much more detail than previously required about the mortgage applications that each bank granted and denied, making it easier to spot patterns of discrimination.
- The 12 regional Federal Home Loan Banks were required to invest 5% of their profits in a fund to subsidize low-income mortgages. Member banks could borrow from this revenue to make loans for long-term affordable housing at subsidized rates. By the early 1990s, these funds had generated \$80 million in capital.<sup>60</sup>

These provisions to benefit low-income communities never would have been established without the skilled advocacy of

the Center and our grassroots partners. The policies provided a basis for activism for years to come.

## MAKING HISTORY TOGETHER

By 1987, after almost 20 years in operation and with an annual budget approaching \$1.5 million, it occurred to CCC that perhaps we needed a full-time development office to coordinate our fundraising work. So uncertain was the Center's leadership that a serious fundraising effort was necessary that they decided to establish the development office as an experimental project—for only two years.

CCC hired **Jane Fox** (now Jane Fox-Johnson) as our first development director. Pablo Eisenberg reflects on how she was chosen. "Every guidebook for how to pick a development director would be upset by

Kensington neighborhood group meets.

MARY ANN DOLCEMASCOLO



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**L-R: CCC staff Jane Fox,  
Estella Alexander, Maybelle  
Taylor Bennett**

how we picked her,” he says. “Here’s what I was looking for: You have to know who you are. Have to be comfortable with all the funding sources and milieus and with CCC’s groups. You have to write well. Jane had these qualities—but she was young. Other candidates had more experience and were slicker.”

Pablo chose talent and passion over experience, and his instinct was continually affirmed. Jane systematized our fundraising efforts and began to cultivate individual donors. After she left the Center’s staff in 1993, Jane served for many years on the board. Today she is a hardworking volunteer and a source of expertise and guidance for the Center.

“In the U.S. we don’t have tons of people out on the street with their hands out, like

you see overseas,” says Jane. “So people don’t think there’s real poverty in this country, but there is. So many Americans who aren’t poor don’t see it, don’t touch it—they don’t know about it. They almost don’t want to know about it.

“The Center has a long-term approach to pathways out of poverty,” she continues. “Back in the ’80s we were doing everything from jean factories to trash recycling to industrial parks to small grocery chains—we were very entrepreneurial in looking for ways to bring income and jobs into poor communities. The Center was equally entrepreneurial on the affordable housing side, finding creative ways to get financing done and find private money. There were sometimes social services wrapped around the housing we did—and often, the housing development employed local people in the construction. It was a very savvy way of doing business.”

Jane believes another quality contributed to the Center’s lasting impact. “The deep, respectful relationships we’ve had with community leaders over the years and still have—never looking down on them, instead building a peer relationship—that’s been important,” she says. “We learn from them and they learn from us. That’s been inspirational to many people who know the Center. We feel like we’ve been making history together.”

## THE GENDER OF POVERTY

Lifted by the wave of feminist activism that began in the ’60s, women in the 1980s achieved some exceptional breakthroughs.<sup>61</sup> In 1981, Sandra Day O’Connor was appointed as a Supreme Court justice, the first woman to serve in that role. Geraldine Ferraro became the first female Vice Presidential candidate in 1984—and the last woman who would have a serious chance to head a national ticket for the next 24 years. In 1983, Alice Walker became the first African American woman to win

the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction with *The Color Purple*.<sup>62</sup> That same year, the nation's first female astronaut, Sally Ride, soared into space.

But down at the level of daily life, women struggled. The Equal Rights Amendment—a simple three-sentence declaration that all laws would apply equally to women and men—in 1982 failed to achieve inclusion in the U.S. Constitution after being ratified by only 35 of the required 38 states.<sup>63</sup> While the wage gap between women and men had narrowed significantly since the 1960s and the number of women in the job market skyrocketed, by 1990 women were still being paid only 71.6% of men's wages for similar work.<sup>64</sup> The wage gap for women of color was more dramatic. Even newspaper comics lampooned “the subtle ways the job market concentrates women in low-paying jobs—often confused with sexism by the unsubtle,” as Nicole Hollander noted in her nationally syndicated strip.<sup>65</sup>

The Center for Community Change, with its roots in the macho world of community organizing and its historically male leadership structure, was a creature of the times. In the 1980s CCC found itself pushed, from within and without, to make more space for women. Our board of directors recommended “extra efforts” to increase the number of women and Latinos on CCC’s senior staff. And staff

members urged CCC to pay more attention to the concerns of low-income women, including child care, employment, health and housing issues.

**Eileen Paul** decided to take matters into her own hands. She had been working for CCC since the early 1970s, writing publications and grant proposals and providing technical assistance to groups. In 1982, she started the *Women's Technical Assistance Project* (WTAP) as a special project of CCC, housed in its offices. The project provided hands-on help in organizational development, fundraising and strategy development to women-led community groups, particularly in the Southeast, where poverty among women was widespread, job opportunities were scant and little infrastructure existed to help women change these conditions.

The project worked primarily through local community coalitions of African American, white, Latina and Native American women. These included organizations such as *Southern Rural Women's Network* in Selma, Alabama and *Women and Employment* in Charleston, West Virginia. Eileen Paul and other WTAP staff provided on-site technical assistance to the groups, and convened them to share skills and experiences. Their aim was to reduce the isolation of these women's organizations, introduce them to groups that were addressing

**The Center for Community Change, with its roots in the macho world of community organizing and its historically male leadership structure, was a creature of the times. In the 1980s CCC found itself pushed, from within and without, to make more space for women.**



Watermark Association of Artisans

similar problems, and connect them all to the financial resources and expertise they would need to create change in their communities. By 1987, WTAP had evolved into an independent organization seeking its own 501(c)(3) status.

As one example of the accomplishments women's groups achieved with WTAP's help,

the *Southeast Women's Employment Coalition* was able to generate more than 3,000 mining jobs for women. "We didn't know a lot about lobbying," Leslie Lilly, the organization's director said in a 1992 interview. "CCC provided us information on key legislators and other national contacts who were potential allies. They opened a universe of contacts to an isolated coalition of organizations."

Another organization assisted by the Women's Technical Assistance Project—and a variety of CCC staff members—was the *Watermark Association of Artisans*, founded in 1978. This was a women's arts and crafts cooperative in a part of North Carolina so poor and bereft of jobs that the publisher of the local newspaper called it "North Carolina's Bangladesh." Working with these women had a profound effect on Jane Fox.

By the early 1990s Watermark had trained more than 500 members and marketed their crafts worldwide. Many of the women earned \$20,000 or \$25,000 a year—a good income at the time and far more than they could have hoped to earn through the local economy.<sup>67</sup>

**"I REMEMBER I WAS DRIVING TO ELIZABETH CITY and it was a barren, small city,"** says Jane Fox-Johnson. "All of a sudden, I got a sense of what we were doing—we were going places where there weren't easy answers. Watermark was an organization that taught low-income women who were heads of households how to make arts and crafts, which were sold in a cooperative. The women could work out of their homes without child care or transportation costs. I remember thinking what a smart strategy that was."

"We met with the people running the co-op, their board, which was mostly women," recalls Jane. "These were people who needed inspiration and hope—and by having us take them seriously, you could just see that they were getting the reinforcement they needed. I was so nervous because I was such an urban kid. But everyone was very nice and really passionate about the work. There was an instant connection because it was about helping people, about making a difference in that community. We were in an old building, not beautiful, but I felt so inspired by that experience. That was my first field trip for the Center and I really got it, what we were doing, right then and there."

The Center assisted the women of Watermark to obtain a building of their own, to raise funds, to operate more effectively as an organization and a cultivator of leaders.

Nobody could have stopped those women; the Center was privileged to be able to help them move more swiftly down the path they had chosen. In 1994 the organization's long-time director, Carolyn McKecuen, received a "genius grant" from the MacArthur Foundation. Today the Watermark Association of Artisans is the largest employer in Camden County, NC.

## SLOGGING TOWARD JUSTICE

**T**he decade of the 1980s brought both despair and promise to low-income communities, and the Center worked in many ways to equip grassroots groups to respond. We conducted three national projects to register and educate voters in poor and minority communities. We helped community groups serve and settle some of the 1.4 million immigrants who became authorized Americans thanks to the overhaul of immigration policy of 1986.<sup>69</sup> We assisted local groups to bring running water to more than 20,000 extremely poor families living in rural communities in the Rio Grande Valley of Texas. Across the country we helped community organizations save and create hundreds of thousands of homes and jobs.

By the end of the decade, the Center had sponsored more than 140 special projects that advanced a broad range of issues to improve the lives of low-income people. Many of these projects achieved national impact, such as the *Friends of VISTA* program, launched and housed at CCC, which saved the VISTA program from being ended by Congress. "Without the Center there never would have been a Friends of VISTA," **Mimi Mager**, one of the project's leaders said in 1985. "And without Friends of VISTA, the VISTA program would not be alive today, supporting 2,500 volunteers to fight poverty."<sup>70</sup>

Despite the wide variety of activities CCC engaged in, we really did only one thing: equip low-income people and people of color to choose their own future. "Through

### A 1987 ARTICLE IN FOUNDATION NEWS OFFERED A GLIMPSE OF THE CENTER'S "MIXED BAG OF CLIENTS"

- A low-income housing development corporation in El Paso;
- Los Angeles-based El Rescate, which aids Central American immigrants;
- "Concerned citizen" groups in economically depressed areas of the Northern Rockies;
- West Harlem Community Organization;
- Monongahela Valley Unemployed Committee in McKeesport, Pennsylvania;
- The Task Force on Historic Preservation and the Minority Community in Richmond, Virginia;
- A community action group in Holmes County, Mississippi, the nation's fourth-poorest county;
- A South Bend, Indiana, organization that has established a cultural center in its most depressed downtown neighborhood; and
- Coalitions ranging from home heating to workfare.

the years, the Center has been the only national organization that's serious about building poor people's organizations," says Andy Mott. "It takes a lot of very unglamorous slogging, helping groups raise funds and do strategic planning, sorting out conflicts between board chairs and executive directors, all that stuff. The Center has worked with groups where they are, on what they want to work on, making them healthy and strong. That investment has been really important to neighborhood and public policy campaigns.

"A good many people who have moved into leadership positions and government and foundations who came out of community groups—they wouldn't have emerged without the Center," he continues. "A number of creative approaches to dealing with poverty would not have developed—like citizen monitoring. There's been no other national organization that has concentrated on building independent community groups as a central strategy for social justice."

*the*  
**1990s**  
**SEISMIC SHIFTS**



The decade of the 1990s brought seismic shifts across the world, the nation and within the Center itself. The Cold War ended with the collapse of the Soviet Union. Free trade was established between the U.S., Canada and Mexico. A brief war that would have lasting repercussions flared in the Persian Gulf. Under a Democratic president—the first since 1981—the U.S. economy strengthened and produced federal budget surpluses in the tens and then hundreds of billions of dollars.<sup>71</sup> Congress switched to Republican control for the first time in 40 years.

## Home-grown terrorists struck in Oklahoma City and Atlanta.

In Africa, two U.S. embassies were attacked, and in New York, the World Trade Center was bombed by terrorists connected to an organization called al-Qaeda that few Americans had heard of. In Los Angeles, two shocking court verdicts—for Rodney King and O.J. Simpson—and their dramatic aftermaths riveted the nation's attention to erupting issues of race and class. A stringent new welfare program ended our 60-year commitment to poor families. A virtual network began to connect people worldwide through their computers. And within the Center for Community Change, an iconic leader stepped down and a new one stepped forward.

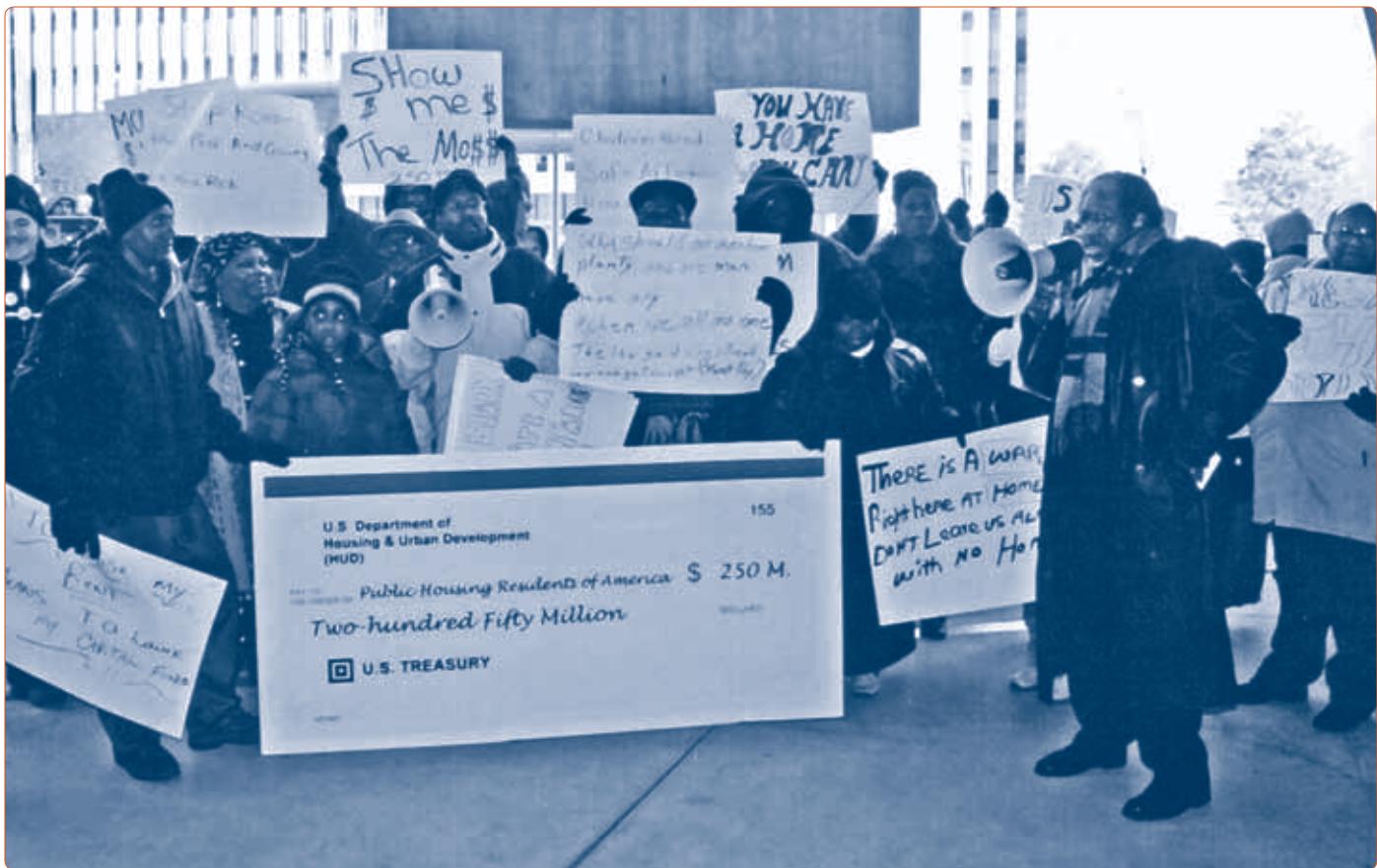
## THE WORLD WE LIVE IN

The dawn of the 1990s brought both good news and bad news for the 3.4 million people who lived in public housing across the country. The good news was that the U.S. had a Secretary of the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Jack Kemp, who cared about public housing residents. The bad news was that Secretary Kemp fervently believed in one solution—home ownership—for the problems of the poor.

**Othello Poulard**, who directed CCC's *Public Housing Initiative*, begged to differ. "In a world where we didn't have a million people on the waiting list [to get into public housing], where we didn't have hundreds of thousands of families on the streets, I'd be the first one to support home ownership for low-income people," he said. "Unfortunately, we don't live in such a world."<sup>72</sup>

Instead we lived in a world in which more than 90,000 apartments in public housing developments lay vacant because a lack of maintenance had made them uninhabitable, public housing nationwide had racked up a backlog





**Public housing residents demonstrate in front of HUD headquarters.**

of \$20 billion in deferred repairs,<sup>73</sup> yet more than \$6 billion in federal funds for modernizing public housing remained unspent.<sup>74</sup> Othello believed these properties were neglected on purpose in order to rid them of tenants and use the land for more profitable purposes.

The Center kept busy helping resident groups participate in the management of their developments—and preserve their homes from local housing authorities who would raze public housing in favor of private profits. By the fall of 1990, CCC's Public Housing Initiative had helped local groups to save 5,200 units that were scheduled to be torn down: 2,000 in Dallas, 1,000 in Houston, 1,000 in Detroit and 1,200 in Newark.<sup>75</sup> In Los Angeles, where residents of Normont Terrace were facing the demolition of 400 units, CCC helped them negotiate for replacement by 800 units of mixed income housing.<sup>76</sup>

Still, Othello Poulard and CCC staffer **Dushaw Hockett** (who had grown up in public housing) were not content with these important but scattered local victories. In 1997 they set out to build a national network of public housing residents who could learn from one another, support one another, and raise a united voice. By 1999, the *Public Housing Residents National Organizing Campaign*<sup>77</sup> had created chapters in 35 states. Twice a year, the Center brought together 40 to 50 resident leaders for training and strategy development.

At the local level, the campaign helped groups fight against demolition and place residents on decision-making boards. In Connecticut, for instance, during 1997-1998 the local chapter of the campaign conducted a voter registration drive that resulted in 91% of public housing residents registering to vote. “As a consequence of their voting,” says Othello, “the city had

**"In Houston, at a public housing development called the Allen Parkway Village, we helped the resident council sit at the table with their housing authority... We prevented the housing authority from proceeding with plans to demolish about 500 units of very sound public housing apartments."**

to provide maintenance and other essential services to them."

At the federal level, the national organizing campaign gained substantial influence with HUD and Congress. "The achievements of this national resident organization," Othello explains, "included the enactment of a national statute called the Waters Amendment which required every public housing authority in America to have at least one resident on its governing board. Before that, there were no more than three or four housing authorities in the entire nation that had residents on their boards. It was a sad and shameful truth."

Othello reflects on how the campaign achieved this major advance in public policy. "We testified before appropriate Senate and House of Representative committees dealing with public housing," he says. "We had face-to-face meetings on the Hill with Congressional staff—who have much more influence than the public thinks. We held demonstrations, wrote policy papers, published newspaper articles, held press conferences and raised public awareness. In time, the decision makers not only heard our position but yielded to the moral rightness of it and found it too inconvenient to continue to ignore or resist.

"The Public Housing Residents National Organizing Campaign was diligent about meeting every year with HUD officials," Othello recalls. "There were intervals when

HUD officials solicited resident input; conversely, it often happened that residents had to bang on the door to make their presence felt." This diligence paid off once again when the campaign persuaded HUD to enact a policy that required housing authorities to include public housing residents in drafting the operational plan that each housing authority had to submit to HUD every year. Othello describes how this policy victory translated into practical improvements in people's lives.

"In Houston, at a public housing development called the Allen Parkway Village, we helped the resident council sit at the table with their housing authority," he says. "We prevented the housing authority from proceeding with plans to demolish about 500 units of very sound public housing apartments. The apartments were very near downtown...so the city fathers wanted to reclaim the land where the development had been built. They were a week away from tearing down those 500 units.

"Because CCC helped the resident organization at Allen Parkway become strong and acquire partners like legal services, ministers, and the local historic preservation society, we prevented this demolition," Othello declares. "This would not have happened if the national organization had not succeeded in getting HUD to establish the policy to include resident groups in drafting the annual plan. It would not have happened if, once the policy was in place, the resident council did

not know how to resist the housing authority, how to call on partners for help, how to get the HUD Secretary to go to Houston to hear the residents' story, how to file a lawsuit against the housing authority."

**Lenwood Johnson**, who led the Allen Parkway Village Residents Council, said in a 1992 interview, "It was a real morale builder just to know that another, especially national, organization was concerned about us. The mere presence of Othello gave me hope and energy. His advice and connections have been valuable. He made others see why it's important to save the Village."<sup>78</sup>

In 1998, Othello created another project that seemed to encapsulate his life's work: the *Public Housing Graduates Initiative*. "Back then," explains Othello, "in low-income neighborhoods in America, six out of every 10 students entering 8th grade dropped out before finishing high school. It's still true today. I went to HUD and prevailed upon Secretary Henry Cisneros to provide the Center with a small grant to test a hypothesis. Almost all of his staff opposed funding this, but he dared to do it because he knew the Center.

"I went to five public housing projects in DC," Othello says, "and we registered 260 students into this initiative—every single student between 8th and 12th grade. We provided these students an array of services and assistance that was equal to surrogate parenting."

Othello and his team involved about 40 local organizations in the program. Volunteers served as "Mighty Moms and Pops" to make sure all the students had adults looking out for them. They created a welcoming space where students could go after school and get help with homework. The project placed a computer in the home of each student and offered training to the children and their parents. Local college students took the high school kids on tours of their campuses and let them sit in on classes so the younger students could see that college was achievable.

Volunteers took the Public Housing Graduate students—many of whom had never left their neighborhoods—to art museums and free concerts at the Kennedy Center.

But it wasn't all treats and trips. The students had daily homework, responsibilities and standards to meet, all under the watchful eyes of the Mighty Moms. "Every child got \$200 a month allowance to be in the program," says Othello. "For every hour of mandatory activity they missed, I took back the equivalent of minimum wage."

It worked. At the end of the three-year demonstration project, says Othello, "Not one of the students dropped out before graduating. Not one was incarcerated, thanks to special arrangements we had with the court system. Thanks to a special relationship we had with Planned Parenthood, not one young lady got pregnant and had to drop out of school. All of the students went either to college or the military or to a trade program. We demonstrated what the public school system could do to reverse the awful trend we see going on in poor communities."

Othello had pioneered the way. All that was needed next was the will. "The DNA of that initiative was as much about replicability than anything else," he says. "Any school board could replicate this."

### "CAN WE ALL GET ALONG?"

In March 1991, four white Los Angeles police officers were videotaped as they tackled an African American man named Rodney King and beat him with batons. On April 29, 1992, a predominantly white jury acquitted the officers, and fury broke loose in Los Angeles. Hundreds of people protested outside the Los Angeles County courthouse and the headquarters of the Los Angeles Police Department. The crowds grew, fueled by years of racist brutality by the LAPD and the frustration of African Americans who felt the city systematically robbed them of everything from jobs to services to any vestige of justice.

**"We demonstrated what the public school system could do to reverse the awful trend we see going on in poor communities."**



**Los Angeles aftermath.**

For the next five days, uproar raged through the largely African American community of South Central Los Angeles. Rioters burned buildings, smashed windows, fought with police, shot at firefighters. The mayor declared a state of emergency, and the governor called in the National Guard and the military to restore order. Meanwhile, the city imposed a dusk-to-dawn curfew, suspended public transportation and cut phone lines in the city's African American neighborhoods, adding to the chaos and desperation. Fifty-three people of all races were killed—in fires, in car accidents, shot by the military or police, beaten to death by attackers.<sup>79</sup> Some 2,000 people were injured and 10,000 were arrested. About 1,000 buildings burned, and the damage to structures and businesses was estimated to exceed \$800 million.<sup>80</sup> Rodney King, whose televised beating had triggered everything, went on TV once again to plead, “Can we all get along?”

The L.A. riots—or uprising, as many called it—left Los Angeles broken and reeling, particularly the neighborhoods where the Center had deep roots. Since its inception CCC had provided technical assistance to organizations such as the *Watts Labor Community Action Committee* and the *East Los Angeles Community Union*. More recently, we had worked with *Concerned Citizens of South Central Los Angeles*, *Drew Economic Development Corporation*, *Esperanza*, *Communities for Accountable Reinvestment* and the *Coalition of Neighborhood Developers*, a recently formed alliance of 33 organizations.

We called these groups to see what kinds of aid they needed. Remarkably, they asked for grant proposal writers. Foundations had reached out with offers of funding, but the L.A. organizations were too busy meeting emergency needs for food and housing to sit down and write a proposal. The Center sent staff members immediately—

**Denise Collazo, Jane Fox, Lynn Jenkins-English, Lynn Kanter, Andy Mott and Victoria Rocha.** The streets were still smoking when they arrived in Los Angeles.

## CELEBRATION AND SORROW WITHIN THE CENTER

**F**rom the beginning, the Center for Community Change had been led by organizational officers—president, vice-presidents, secretary—and those officers had all been men. In 1992, CCC replaced the officer structure with a Management Council composed of senior staff who directed various programs within CCC. This significantly expanded the leadership of the organization and for the first time included women as part of CCC's top management.

But this step toward increased diversity was not enough for **Raul Yzaguirre**, a former vice-president of CCC and long-time board member who would go on to become president of the National Council of La Raza. He resigned from the board in 1993 because CCC had failed to hire enough Latinos, particularly in senior staff positions. Of 34 program staff, only three were Latino. Raul's strong rebuke motivated the Center to create a board/staff committee devoted to increasing the number of Latinos on staff. Today about a third of the people on the Senior Management Team are Latina/o, and Raul Yzaguirre remains a good friend of CCC.

The Center lost another board member in 1993 for a very different reason. **Peter Edelman**, another long-time board leader, resigned in order to accept a position as Counselor at the Department of Health and Human Services in the administration of the new president, Bill Clinton.

The year 1993 also brought CCC an unexpected cause for celebration. Thanks to a generous grant from the Mott Foundation, we were able to pay off the mortgage on our historic headquarters building in Washington, DC. This gift would save CCC an estimated

## DREW ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION,

led by **Carla Dartis**,<sup>81</sup> was one Los Angeles organization that asked for our help. Normally this group built housing and created employment and business opportunities for residents of Watts and Compton. Now they found themselves coordinating emergency services, distributing food and blankets, providing equipment to clean up streets littered with broken glass and charred debris, opening one-stop centers to help families take care of immediate needs.

Carla knew they needed to find money for emergency grants to pay bills for people whose homes or workplaces had been burned out. She was determined that Drew EDC would rise to this crisis not only by patching up wounds, but by bringing new resources and hope to the community. Carla played an instrumental role in organizing a conference that brought together rival gang leaders to forge a truce and unite their efforts toward demanding attention and respect for the community from the city's political leaders. And she led Drew EDC to advance its vision for an economic development agenda that would provide jobs, services and economic opportunity for residents of this scourged community. With CCC's help, they were able to raise hundreds of thousands of dollars to pursue their vision.

\$83,000 in mortgage payments over the next 10 years.

Our staff member **Leonard Lesser** took on the joyous task of burning the mortgage papers. He had drafted the proposal to the Ford Foundation that led to the Center's creation, and had served as CCC's general counsel for 20 years. Countless community-based groups had relied on his legal advice to establish themselves as 501(c)(3) organizations.

Leonard's contributions to the nation went even deeper than that. In the 1950s he had worked for the United Auto Workers and negotiated worker benefits such as health care and pensions. Later, as general counsel of the AFL-CIO's Industrial Unions Department, Leonard played an important, behind-the-scenes role in extending benefits won by unionized workers to all Americans.



**Leonard Lesser burns the mortgage to CCC's building.**



**Peter Edelman**

His work contributed to the passage of Medicare and Medicaid.

In 1994, Leonard Lesser died and the Center lost a guiding light. The board of directors later established the Leonard Lesser Community Awards, which would be given to select community groups and allies in order to commemorate Leonard's contributions to low-income Americans and to honor the work of outstanding grassroots organizations. In 1997 the first awards were presented by **Pablo Eisenberg** and **Susan Lesser Leighton**, Leonard's daughter and a friend to CCC. Recipients were the *Massachusetts Affordable Housing Alliance*, the *St. Paul Ecumenical Alliance of Congregations*, *Initiativa Frontera* in conjunction with the *Texas Low-Income Housing Information Service*, and the Ruth Mott Fund.

### A BIT MUCH, BUT STILL NOT ENOUGH

**B**y the mid-1990s the Center was providing assistance to 200 community-based organizations and coalitions<sup>82</sup> in 48 states. A few examples demonstrate the breadth of this work:

- In Ohio, CCC's **Dave Beckwith**<sup>83</sup> provided strategic and organizational help to the *Association for Children for Enforcement of Support* (ACES), led by **Geraldine Jensen**, which addressed a significant cause of poverty for women and children—the fact that some 20 million children were owed court-ordered child support that was never paid.<sup>84</sup>
- In Union City, CA we played a crucial role in creating and expanding *Tri-Cities Economic Development*. What began as a weekend recycling project to provide jobs for young people in the inner city had grown by mid-decade into a \$1 million a year business that employed more than 20 people and invested its profits in community projects.<sup>85</sup>
- Thanks to a three-year, \$950,000 grant from HUD, we provided technical assistance in housing development and organizational development to grassroots groups in rural and Native communities in Hawaii, Illinois, Michigan, Minnesota, Montana, North Dakota and South Dakota.<sup>86</sup>
- We helped local groups rehabilitate a historic brick warehouse in the skid row section of



Susan Lesser Leighton shares a laugh with Othello Poulard.

Salt Lake City, Utah and turn it into *ArtSpace*, a residential and studio space for artists.<sup>87</sup>

- With support from the Ford Foundation, we helped the *Central American Refugee Center* in Los Angeles and similar organizations in four other cities make the transition from providing social services to refugees to becoming community-based organizations that serve and advocate for settled immigrant communities.<sup>88</sup>
- The *Neighborhood Revitalization Project* created and distributed nationally a software program that for the first time enabled grassroots groups to analyze Home Mortgage Disclosure Act data in order to identify patterns of mortgage lending and denial in their own communities.<sup>89</sup>
- Between 1990 and 1993, 39 new housing trust funds were created with assistance from CCC's *Housing Trust Fund Project*.<sup>90</sup>
- In Connecticut we helped *Hartford Areas Rally Together* (HART) organize residents to push for resources, investment, housing and economic development in the city's crumbling low-income neighborhoods.<sup>91</sup>

- By the mid-1990s, the *Indian and Native American Employment Training Coalition*, staffed by CCC, had expanded Indian job training and employment programs by \$150 million a year.<sup>92</sup>

Many people on the Center's staff and board felt it was all a bit much.

The tension between the growing needs of the country and the importance of narrowing CCC's focus was reflected in the strategic plan CCC completed in 1994. But at the same time, the board identified areas in which the Center was not doing enough. They wanted the organization to increase its capacity to conduct public policy work, and to recruit younger people for CCC's future.

We pursued both goals in 1994 by hiring CCC's first public policy director, **Deepak Bhargava**. Deepak came to the Center from ACORN, where he had served as the legislative director and amassed impressive achievements on issues of community reinvestment and housing finance. Some CCC staff members who knew Deepak only through his dazzling reputation were shocked to meet him in person: this accomplished leader was only 26 years old.



Dave Beckwith

Deepak reflects on how he came to join CCC. “I’d interacted with the Center through the Neighborhood Revitalization Project, and came into contact with **Allen Fishbein** and **Debby Goldberg**. I was very impressed with the quality of their work and their values,” he says. “And I was taken with Pablo Eisenberg, who I thought was a force of nature.”

He was most excited about the prospect of operating inside Washington, DC while being grounded in the work of grassroots organizations. “That combination,” says Deepak, “exists nowhere else in the city—a commitment to building a movement from the ground up combined with the ability to use talented and sophisticated people to make those voices count inside the Beltway. This is the defining feature of the Center for Community Change: it’s a bridge between grassroots community organizations and national public policy and politics.”

### “THE MOST POWERFUL, REWARDING EXPERIENCE”

In 1993 the Center launched a comprehensive four-year program to train and cultivate grassroots leaders. Leadership



HART community meeting

development had always been an intrinsic part of our assistance to groups, and we had supported such programs in the past. One example from CCC’s early years was *Southern Appalachian Leadership Development Training*, a special project of CCC in partnership with the Highlander Center that trained more than 100 leaders.

The new program, largely funded by a \$1.8 million grant from the Kellogg Foundation, would expand and systematize our leadership development efforts to a scale CCC had never before attempted. Two components of the program would have long-lasting impact on the way the Center functioned. One was the use of “training clusters,” in which we repeatedly convened groups from across the country that were working on similar issues so they could share training, strategies, stories and support. This approach proved so successful that the Center still uses it today. The other

component—the crown jewel of our leadership development program—was the *Community Change Agents Project* (CCAP).

The project brought together executive directors and other leaders of grassroots organizations to participate in a year-long series of quarterly training sessions focused on organizational planning, internal management, community organizing, policy analysis and personal and professional development—all of it with a social justice twist. **Jennifer Henderson**, who led the program, explains.

“We took participants through a year of experiencing each other,” she says. “Peer training was the most important part of the whole experience. People were divided into learning clusters of four to five people—each with a learning objective. We met together four times a year, but in between meetings, they’d work with the other four people in their cluster on something they wanted to learn together. They would develop a tool or a training that helped the other clusters.”

These learning tools—and the scores of skill-building exercises and training materials developed by Jennifer and long-time CCC staffer **Sabrina Jones**—were documented and collected in binders. “We called them hernia books,” Jennifer recalls, “because they were so heavy. There was a hernia book for every session, four sessions a year. Every time I’d send the hernia book as part of the report to our program officer at Kellogg—who was also running Kellogg’s own worldwide leadership program—she would use those materials in their program. She thought they were that good.

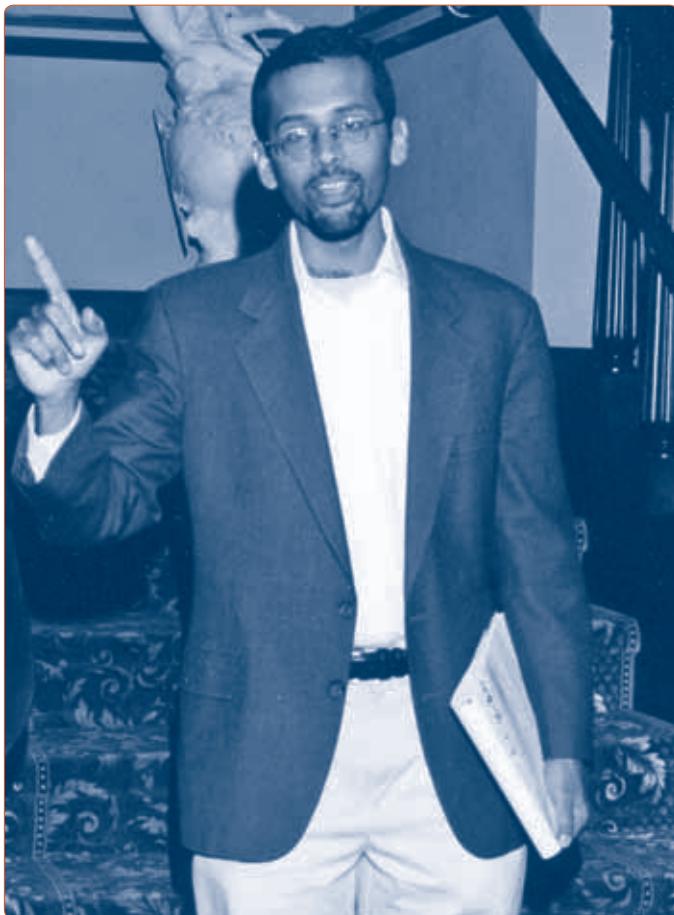
“I think if you talk to any of the change agents today,” says Jennifer, “they’ll tell you they still have their books, still use them. They still have contacts with the people who were in their class. They still make that connection.”

**Anton Gunn** heartily agrees. In 1996 he was 22 years old, an organizer with *South Carolina Fair Share*, and hungry to learn how to be a stronger leader.

“My executive director, **Lenora Bush Reese**,<sup>93</sup> had gone through CCC’s Community Change Agents Project,” Anton says. “She came back to our office with these incredibly thick notebooks of information about how to run an organization—how to do political advocacy, how to do strategic planning, how to organize, how to cut issues, how to manage. I thought the world of my director—today, I still think she’s the greatest leader and organizer I’ve ever met in my life—and if she was connected to this, I wanted to be connected to it.”

A year later, Anton joined the Community Change Agents Project. It was, he says simply, “the most powerful, rewarding, intense experience that I’ve ever had in social change work.” The program gave him “the opportunity to be in a room full of grassroots

LIZ ROLL



**Deepak Bhargava**

**"I FELT PRIVILEGED THAT I GOT TO BE AROUND**

**so many incredible, diverse, well-seasoned community organizers and leaders from around the country,"** Anton says. "I was blown away. It was so enriching, so overwhelming. I became an addict for all I could learn about how to build a movement. It was CCC that put that project together, that gave me the opportunity to participate in that training program, and that opened up a whole new world for me that was global in nature and still sustains me to this day."

Anton explains the circle of learning and leadership that he joined through the Community Change Agents Project. "The program helped build the capacity of our executive director and our organization to begin investing in young people. And I was one of those young people that Lenora invested in."

organizers, leaders and activists that were from all across the country—we all came together because CCC wanted to help all of us to be better. The experience was rich because of the participants, but what really brought the entire process together were the people the Center brought in to train us, like **Omawale Satterwhite**, and staff people like Sabrina Jones, Deepak Bhargava and Jennifer."

The participants were very diverse, Anton recalls. "The oldest person was 65 years old, and the youngest person was me at 23. They came from New York, New Orleans, Los Angeles, Mississippi, Utah—we all were doing different work, had different types of organizations, different membership base, different reasons for doing the work. But we all learned from each other, and we experienced it together."

The quarterly training sessions were intense, he says, each one lasting 12 hours a day for six or seven days. "The first session was in Tuskegee, Alabama, in the deep South," Anton remembers. "Three months later we were in Miami, in little Havana, talking to locals about the work they were doing. Next we were in DC,

talking about public policy and advocacy. Three months later we met in Berkeley, California. We had to get out of our own organizations, out of our own states, get out of our elements and experience social justice work from another standpoint. We bonded and built relationships that still last to this day for many of us."

Today, at 34, Anton Gunn is the executive director of South Carolina Fair Share, and relies on CCC to help strengthen his organization in a number of ways. "CCC has helped us with diversifying our funding base, strategic planning, organizational development from staffing plans to board development plans," he says. "They help us think through strategic, long term stuff. We were multi-issue, but we never would have thought of doing something on immigration or food stamps. Partnering with CCC has allowed us to identify new strands of our membership base and new strands of work that we can build."

"CCC basically serves as a network for organizations like us that are not affiliated with an organizing network," says Anton. "We're able to connect with other organizations across the country and develop alliances and work on projects together. CCC brings us to the table in places where there was never a place at the table because we're from South Carolina."

Anton shares his philosophy about leadership development. "When I think about history, I'm kind of reaching the top of many things that I'm doing. Martin Luther King was 26 when he was at the top of his game and became the pastor of his church in Montgomery, Alabama and began to lead the civil rights movement.

"We can't wait until people are in their 30s and 40s to put them in leadership positions," says Anton. "We have to put them in leadership positions when they're 21 and 22. They're going to make mistakes, but when their mistakes are done they'll be 25 and 27 and they'll be able to carry the torch... When you think that what's important about the work is *you* being there, rather than bringing other people into the work, that's a problem. When too much information,

too much leadership and resources are bottled up in one person, the movement stops. There won't be any movement if we don't develop the next generation of leadership."

Today he puts his philosophy to work by serving on the advisory committee for *Generation Change*, the Center's national program to recruit, train and place the social justice leaders of tomorrow. And he rejects the notion that young people will rise to leadership simply because they have a passion for social change.

"Nothing happens just by happenstance," says Anton. "That's like saying that the civil rights movement happened just because Rosa Parks was tired and she sat down. That was an organized action, planned and developed. People were already prepared to play their own roles by car pooling, taking other people to

work, walking to work instead of taking the bus. [Young people] have a passion, but we have to channel that passion," he declares. "I was passionate my whole life, but my passion and energy didn't get channeled until I met Lenora Reese at South Carolina Fair Share and she introduced me to the Center for Community Change."

## TIME FOR TEN

**I**t was a good thing Rosa Parks sparked the Montgomery, Alabama bus boycott in the 1950s. By the 1990s, she would have been hard pressed even to find a bus. CCC staffer **Rich Stolz** described the situation:

*Used primarily by low-income African Americans, Montgomery's transit system came under a nearly fatal attack in 1998. The mayor abandoned the*

**Manuel Bernal and  
Jennifer Henderson**



TIM SAASTA



**Change Agents with their hernia books.**

*city's fixed route bus system and implemented a new Demand and Response Transit system. Montgomery now has no bus stops, bus shelters or bus routes... These changes took place amid growing racial geographic segregation and tension between white and Black members of the city council. The City described its actions publicly as fiscally necessary, even as Montgomery received large federal transportation subsidies to fund renovation of non-transit improvements.<sup>94</sup>*

And Montgomery was not alone:

- The Gary, Indiana regional planning council debated how to invest \$880 million in federal transportation funds over the next 20 years. They decided to designate less than 1% for buses, the mode of transportation that was essential to low-income people.<sup>95</sup>
- Bus riders in Los Angeles—80% of whom were people of color—received poorer services and



**Anton Gunn with CCC's LaDon James.**

less security than rail riders, the majority of whom were white. Although only 6% of public transit commuters used rail services, the city invested 70% of its transit resources there.<sup>96</sup>

In the summer of 1997, the Center for Community Change took action. Together with community groups from Chicago, Columbus (OH), Hartford (CT), Los Angeles and Philadelphia, we launched the *Transportation Equity Network* (TEN), a national coalition working to effect change in local, regional and national transportation policies and planning practices. The coalition brought to its work a keen eye for racial justice and an expansive vision of transportation programs and policies that served all communities equally.

Staffed by a CCC team led by Rich Stoltz, TEN would grow to include 300 grassroots organizations from 30 states. The Center convened member groups for training and strategizing, conducted regular conference calls, organized national summits, distributed weekly policy updates and produced national research reports.

The problem, as TEN saw it, was that low-income people had almost no voice in shaping

federal transportation policies or determining how federal transportation funds would be used locally. These local decisions were made by committees called Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs), many of which did not include a single person who relied on public transportation. It was difficult for local residents to learn how their MPO had decided to distribute federal funds, or to track where or how the money had been spent.

TEN seized a chance to rectify that. The federal transportation policy was due to be renewed in about a year, giving TEN and its allies in the faith, labor and civil rights communities a brief opportunity to advocate for changes in the policy. Member groups shared their local experiences, developed a policy platform, organized, lobbied, placed letters to the editor and called public attention to the ways in which current transportation policies disregarded low-income communities.

In 1998, four of the coalition's policy proposals were adopted into the federal Transportation Equity Act of the 21st Century—a remarkable level of success. These policy changes included:

- A grants program that would provide local communities with more than \$700 million for new local initiatives that help low-income residents get to jobs.
- A law that required MPOs to consult with public transportation users when developing their plans.
- A law that required public involvement in reviewing the performance of MPOs when the organizations applied for recertification.
- A rule that required MPOs to disclose how they spend federal funds, thus enabling local residents to track these investments and identify patterns of discrimination.

TEN became the national voice of grassroots communities in the public debate over transportation issues. In Chicago during 1998, U.S. Secretary of Transportation **Rodney**

**Slater** committed to work in collaboration with TEN—and made the promise in a public meeting in front of 700 grassroots leaders from 14 states,<sup>97</sup> as well as Senator **Paul Wellstone** and Congressman **Danny Davis**. “Your efforts were crucial to passing a transportation bill which puts people first, which increases opportunity for all Americans,” Secretary Slater declared. “We’re proud of the relationships we forged in passing [the bill], and we want to continue this cooperation as we implement [the Act].”<sup>98</sup>

The local victories were no less important. “The Center helped support our efforts and gave us the tools to fight for this issue,” said **Veena Allen**, a community leader of the Winchester

**THROUGH TEN, THE CENTER FUNNELED**  
national expertise and resources into local communities to help them win transportation victories—and then aided grassroots groups to replicate those victories across the country. In 1998, for example, TEN helped organizations in Los Angeles secure an agreement that jobs and job training for a major transportation construction project—the Alameda Corridor—would be directed to more than 800 residents of nearby low-income communities. Groups in Mississippi and Pennsylvania conducted similar local hiring strategies. Later, TEN won a major new policy that enabled more than \$200 billion of federally aided transportation projects to offer hiring and training opportunities to low-income residents, reversing previous policies that prohibited such local hiring.

Green subsidized housing development outside Richmond, Virginia. The 190 families who lived in Winchester Green and a neighboring development had to hike two and a half miles to the nearest bus stop. Thanks to CCC and TEN, local residents persuaded the county to run passenger vans along major routes, including the Winchester Green neighborhood.



TEN testifies before Congress.



TEN members in DC.



**Senator Wellstone addresses TEN.**

"We could not have gotten as far as we did if we hadn't gotten involved with the Center," Veena said in a 2000 interview.<sup>99</sup> "What I learned from CCC is that everybody has the ability to be an organizer."

### **"GOVERNMENT IS THE ENEMY AND THE POOR ARE THE PROBLEM"**

In 1995, the Center's board of directors invited **Dr. Wendell Primus**, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Human Services in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, to a meeting. They asked him to brief them on what was happening behind the scenes on Capitol Hill regarding the upcoming overhaul of the nation's welfare program.

"The message of the newly elected Republican leadership on welfare reform," Dr. Primus told them, "seems to be that the government is the enemy and the poor are the problem."<sup>100</sup>

Indeed, the welfare reform bill passed by a Republican Congress and signed by a Democratic president in 1996 reflected that theme. The "Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act" fundamentally transformed the federal welfare program

from a safety net for struggling families to a conveyor belt that pushed them away from the government's help, through an indifferent marketplace and onto their own devices. As CCC staffers **Rachel Gragg**<sup>101</sup> and **Margy Waller**<sup>102</sup> would write in the *Boston Globe* on the Act's 10-year anniversary, the welfare reform debate was "a preview of the 'you're-on-your-own' economic philosophy that so profoundly shapes the policies of the current Washington administration."<sup>103</sup>

Welfare had always been an austere meal for hungry families. It was no triumph to reform it into a snack. Peter Edelman found the new law so outrageous that he resigned his post in the Clinton administration in protest.

The new policy did exactly what it was intended to do—reduce the welfare rolls. It did nothing to reduce poverty, however, and what happened to the families after they were purged from the welfare program was not the concern of the policy makers. It was the concern of the Center for Community Change. We were determined that by the time the welfare reform law had to be reauthorized—and potentially rewritten—in September 2002, Congress would listen to the one constituency

We were determined that by the time the welfare reform law had to be reauthorized—and potentially rewritten—in September 2002, Congress would listen to the one constituency that was never consulted when welfare reform was first enacted: poor people themselves.

that was never consulted when welfare reform was first enacted: poor people themselves.

Community-based groups alone could not achieve this. The Center decided to support grassroots organizations and coalitions that could work statewide—and collaborate with national advocacy organizations—in order to influence welfare policies at the state and national levels. For most of these groups, this would call for a major increase in staffing, sophistication, communication and coordination. “We’re going through the biggest transformation of poverty programs in 60 years,” said Deepak Bhargava, “and the organizations trying to deal with this enormous challenge are desperately underfunded.”<sup>104</sup>

Enter **George Soros**, the billionaire philanthropist who had only recently turned his attention from Eastern Europe to the United States. Through his foundation, the Open Society Institute, he provided a \$2 million grant to establish the State Welfare Redesign Grants Pool—the nation’s only funding source dedicated to low-income grassroots organizations working on welfare policy work in their states. The grants pool was the brainchild of CCC, the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, and the Center for Law and Social Policy. It was housed and administered by CCC.

In March 1997, the fund provided 24 groups with a total of \$836,000. In July, they disbursed another 20 grants, bringing the total to more than \$1.7 million. Grantees ranged from *Sacramento Valley Organizing Community* in California, to *Mother to Mother* in Topeka, Kansas, to *Mississippi Coalition on Block Grants*, to *Maine Equal Partners*. Within the next year the fund would allocate more than \$2 million to grassroots groups and coalitions.

Center staff traveled the country, bringing together fund grantees and other organizations to learn from one another and from policy experts about how the new welfare law would play out and what opportunities it would present for organizing and advocacy. **Norm DeWeaver**, long-time staffer for the Indian and Native American Employment Training Coalition, moved from Washington, DC to Alaska to head the *Alaska Welfare Project*, which would help 10 Native development corporations negotiate with the state on the use of welfare funds. The Center published a variety of research reports and action guides to help organizers and advocates find their way through the tricky terrain of this new policy world.

One of the architects of welfare reform was **Ron Haskins**, a Congressional advisor on welfare issues and later a top advisor to the Bush administration.<sup>105</sup> Although “we hardly

agreed on anything,” as he put it, CCC won his grudging respect.

“I liked Deepak right away,” Ron says. “He’s incredibly smart, classy and more or less reasonable. Especially given that the Center is probably the most radical organization that represents welfare mothers. [Some organizations] did things that were just stupid. They offended Republicans a lot. They didn’t like Republicans, period, and they showed that. But Deepak—he may feel that way too, but I’ve never seen it.”

“Starting around welfare reform time—1995 and 1996—Deepak and I would appear together sometimes,” he continues. “He even invited me to one of his national conferences with a lot of welfare moms. I spoke; I don’t think they liked what I had to say, but they were courteous. Whenever I appeared with Deepak, speaking together, we were always very respectful of each other and there was always productive, reasonable exchange.”

In 1998, the Center held a conference that brought together 27 organizations from across the country to discuss the possibility for collaborative work on welfare reform and jobs. The groups represented nearly every national and regional organizing network, and their commitment to work together across network lines was ground-breaking, made possible by their trust in CCC as a neutral convener. The conference focused on large issues: the new welfare program, called Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF); transportation; job creation and training; and wages.<sup>106</sup>

This conference marked the birth of the *National Campaign for Jobs and Income Support*—a major national organizing initiative designed to influence the reauthorization of TANF in 2002. The National Campaign would be officially launched by CCC in 2000, and would involve the national organizing networks, independent organizations, labor, national policy organizations, faith-based groups, women’s organizations and civil rights groups.



**Andy Mott**

To staff, fund and maintain such a national project would require the efforts of CCC staff from every corner of the organization. The goal was nothing less than to create a grassroots movement for economic justice.

## INEVITABLE BUT SHOCKING

In 1998, something happened that was expected, inevitable, yet somehow still shocking. Pablo Eisenberg resigned from the Center for Community Change after 23 years as its leader.

Speeches followed, and some tears. Accolades about Pablo’s leadership, affectionate ribbing about his excesses. Closed-door board meetings and soulful staff discussions in CCC’s hallways. In the philanthropic world, candid conversations with the Center’s funders and, perhaps, a touch of relief from those who had received Pablo’s wrath.<sup>107</sup>

To honor Pablo, the Center hosted its first major fundraising event, an afternoon forum on social justice issues followed by a gala dinner in Washington, DC’s Union Station.

**It would be Andy Mott's mission to steer CCC through its first leadership transition in two and a half decades, through the end of the twentieth century and the start of a new millennium.**

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The two activities drew nearly 450 friends of CCC from across the nation and throughout its history, including Senators Paul Wellstone of Minnesota and **Paul Sarbanes** of Maryland, syndicated columnist **E.J. Dionne**, author and commentator **Jim Hightower**, AFL-CIO Vice President **Linda Chavez**, consumer rights activist **Ralph Nader**, MacArthur Foundation president **Adelle Simmons**, long-time CCC board members **Julian Bond** of the NAACP and **Wade Henderson** of the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights, and many more. **Bill White**, president of the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, delighted the crowd with his surprise announcement of a \$500,000 gift to the Center's endowment fund.

Meanwhile, the Center launched a national search for a new executive director. Ten months later we found one in our own family: Andy Mott, who had served the Center since its earliest days. It would be his mission to steer CCC through its first leadership transition in two and a half decades, through the end of the twentieth century and the start of a new millennium. But first he had to thank an old friend.

**Burke Marshall** had served as the chair of the Center's founding board of directors, in 1968. Thirty-one years later, in 1999, we honored him with a tribute dinner. Burke was honored by **Rep. John Lewis**, the Congressman and civil rights leader who said that when Freedom Riders across the South were being beaten by police and mobs in 1961, Burke Marshall was the man in the Kennedy Justice Department to call for help. **John Seigenthaler**, Robert Kennedy's Assistant Attorney General, and **Kathleen Kennedy Townsend**, then Lt. Governor of Maryland and daughter of Robert and Ethel Kennedy, shared their memories and appreciation of Burke Marshall with the enthusiastic audience.

As the Center headed into a new century, it was easy to wonder where we would have found ourselves thirty years into CCC's journey without the early wisdom and direction of



**Burke Marshall**

Burke Marshall. Pablo Eisenberg said Burke gave CCC "a sense of rootedness. He is a very quiet but compelling person. Burke Marshall brought great respect and dignity to the chair."

As for Burke Marshall, he had—as usual—little to say about himself. Instead he talked about the Center for Community Change and the legacy it was creating. "They've shown that if everything comes from the outside, it doesn't work. It has no lasting impact." But of the low-income grassroots organizations the Center helped create, he said, "They changed people, developed new leaders. They have left an imprint on their communities."

*the*  
**2000s**

**LESS TO LOSE,  
A WORLD TO WIN**



As the new millennium got underway—and everyone heaved a sigh of relief that all the nation's computers hadn't crashed—the Center and other progressives had to confront a grim reality that no amount of New Year confetti could hide. Three decades of painstaking work by radical conservatives had resulted in a nationwide sweep of their ideas and representatives into elected office. By the end of the year, a new president would be elected who was eager to break the bones of the federal government and eradicate many of the gains and safeguards for low-income people that had been won in the last century.

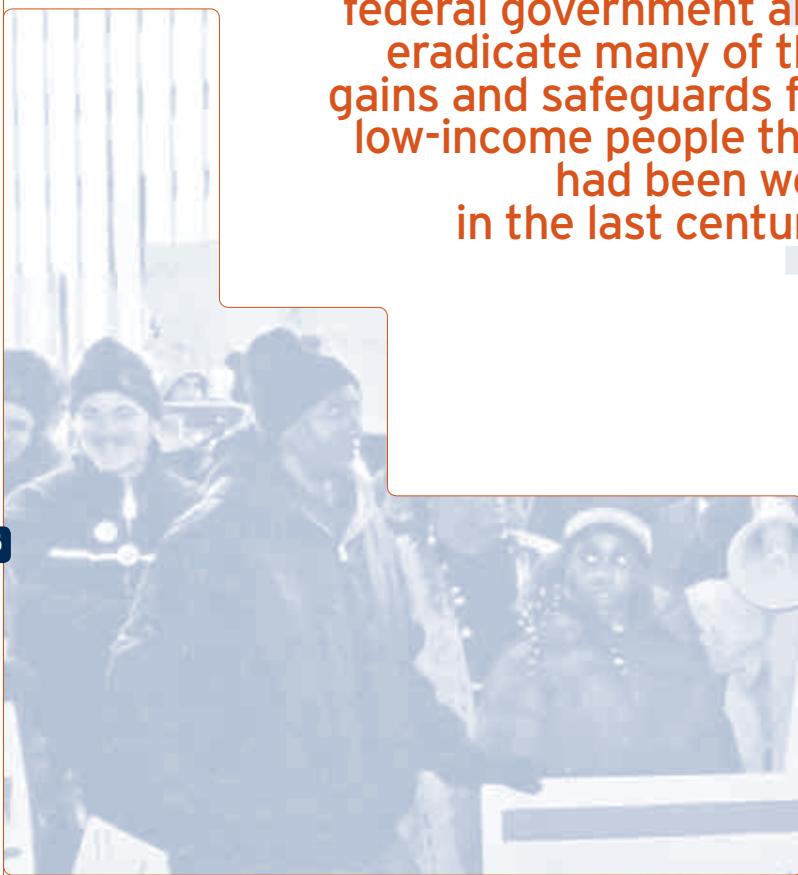
## The Center had invested millions of hours and dollars

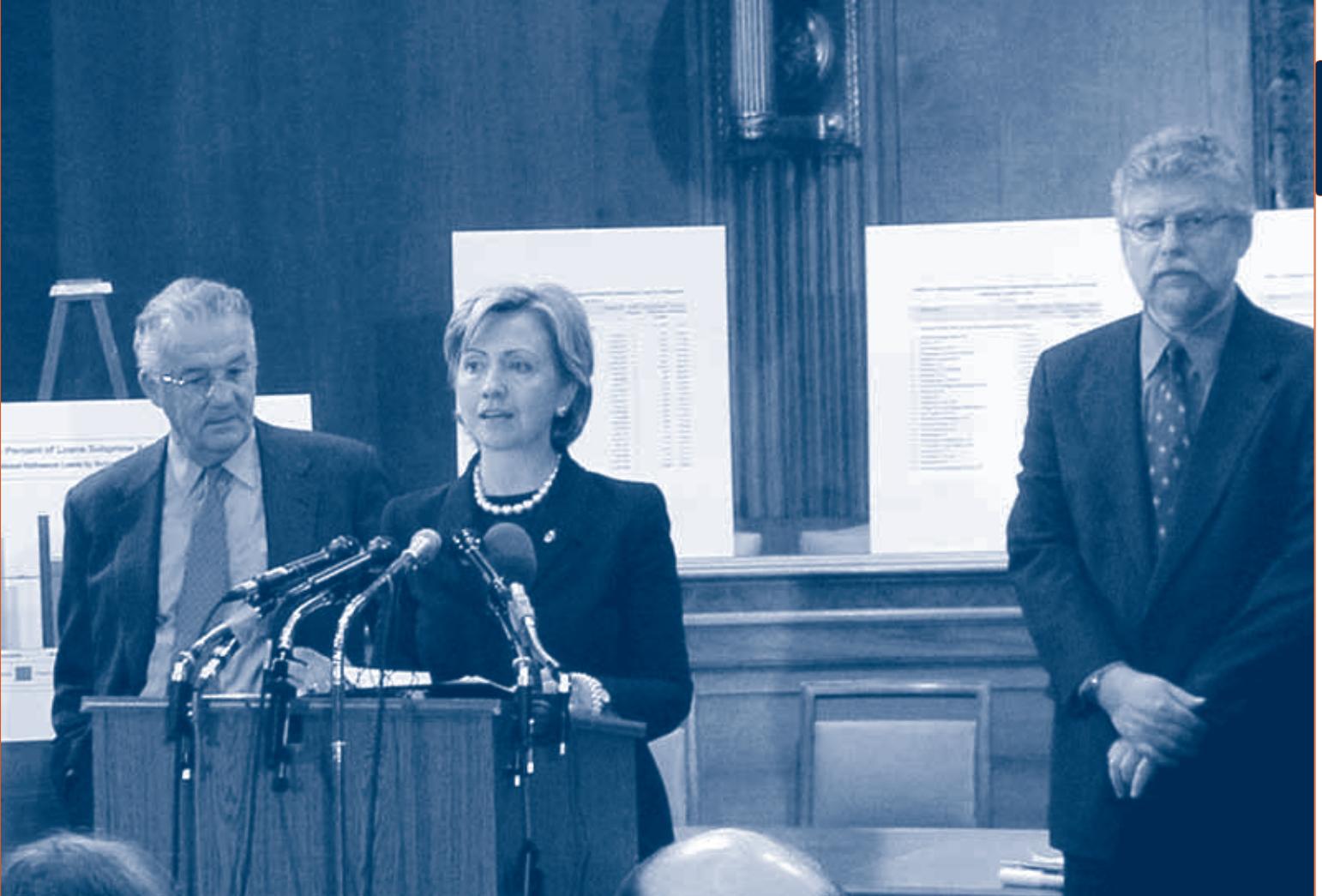
working with low-income people and people of color over the previous three decades, helping them build local organizations, amplify their voices, train leaders and win significant victories. Still, poverty was widespread. Desperation in the lowest-income communities was, if anything, greater than ever. And aside from the Center and a handful of others, no one was talking about it anymore. Poverty had become both unfashionable and invisible. New strategies were needed to bring poverty back into the national discussion and to galvanize poor people themselves.

## UNHEEDED WARNINGS

In the early 2000s, the Center's *Neighborhood Revitalization Project* worked to uncover what then-executive director **Andy Mott** described as "a highly important issue which so far is getting little attention from the press or policy makers." The issue? The subprime mortgage market and the way these often-predatory loans triggered rising rates of foreclosure in communities of color.

Predatory loans, NRP co-director **Allen Fishbein** explained to the Center's board, were given to people the lender knows cannot pay. Targeted to minority communities, these loans often increased the borrower's loss—and the lender's profit—with hidden fees, credit life insurance and other devices that stripped homeowners of equity. The perception that reputable firms would clean up the subprime market was not true, Allen warned in 2001. In fact, reputable lenders were entering the subprime market to exploit its profits. Indeed, about 30% of people who sought the subprime loans so heavily advertised in their neighborhoods qualified for the prime market. Yet lenders did not refer these clients to prime loans that would be more fair to the borrower but less lucrative for themselves.<sup>108</sup>





L-R: Sen. Sarbanes, Sen. Clinton, Allen Fishbein

"Abusive practices in the subprime...mortgage lending market are stripping borrowers of home equity they often have spent a lifetime building," wrote Allen Fishbein and NRP co-director Debby Goldberg in a *Washington Post* op-ed. "Thousands of families end up facing foreclosure, which destabilizes communities."<sup>109</sup>

In May 2002, the Neighborhood Revitalization Project published a report called *Risk or Race?* that threw a harsh light on the concentration of high-cost mortgage and refinancing loans in communities of color. The Center held a press conference to release the report, in conjunction with the introduction of legislation to curb predatory lending by Senator Paul Sarbanes of Maryland. Allies including the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights (headed by former CCC board member Wade Henderson) participated in the event.

But the suffering caused by these risky and abusive loans did not capture the nation's attention, festering as it did in the most vulnerable communities. Most policy leaders failed to notice until the pain had spread throughout the national economy.

The Center's research on public housing issues also sought to influence federal policy and local lives. We helped 10 resident organizations around the country monitor their local housing authorities and uncover that the authorities were defying federal mandates to include residents in developing plans and setting policies for the housing they lived in. Another project examined six cities to see what kind of experience residents were having with "HOPE VI," a federal program to demolish or renovate public housing and create mixed-income developments in its place. We discovered that this program was creating



National Campaign launch event.



Dushaw Hockett

wholesale displacement of vulnerable public housing residents—particularly elderly people and people with disabilities.

**Othello Poulard**, who had led our public housing work for so long, retired in 2000 after 30 years of devotion to CCC. The work was carried on by **Dushaw Hockett**. CCC continued to help public housing residents block the demolition of their homes—300 units in Charleston, WV, and 340 units in rural Maryland.<sup>110</sup> At the federal level, in 2002 we helped our national alliance of public housing residents convince HUD to provide \$30 million in training funds so residents could gain the skills to participate effectively in the management of their housing developments—the first time residents won federal funds of their own.

## THE NATIONAL CAMPAIGN FOR JOBS AND INCOME SUPPORT

The Center had begun to build the *National Campaign for Jobs and Income Support* in 1998. By 2000, the campaign had organizational members in dozens of states and was on its

way to raising \$3 million a year, most of which was regranted to local and state organizing efforts.<sup>111</sup> **Deepak Bhargava**, the Center's Director of Public Policy, was doing double duty as the campaign's director, and the Center had dedicated several other staff members to work full-time on the effort.

The National Campaign started the century with a splash by releasing a damning study revealing that 46 states had stockpiled \$4 billion in federal welfare funds instead of using the money to help people make the tough transition from welfare to work. Some of the states had even been spending the money for non-welfare purposes, including tax breaks. This report exploded into newspaper headlines across the country—in part because of the National Campaign's shrewd tactic of equipping member groups to conduct media campaigns highlighting their own state's performance.

Another report soon followed, showing that eligible families were often denied Medicaid, food stamps and other support due to states' stringent—and sometimes unlawful—barriers



**National Campaign member**

to enrollment. This report, one of the few to document the actual experiences of struggling families rather than the policy implications of welfare reform, prompted the federal government to order states to remedy the problem.

Victories like these added vigor to the campaign, as participating groups saw that their combined energies and talents could have impacts that directly affected the lives of low-income people. They took this energy to the National Campaign's triumphant public launch in Chicago in May 2001, where 1,600 grassroots leaders from 43 states gathered for two days.

They shared stories, participated in training workshops, pressed public officials for commitments on crucial issues, and filled a massive hotel ballroom with their voices and spirit. "A sense of pride and belonging overwhelmed me," said **Ivy Valentine** of Solutions, an organization of welfare mothers based in Knoxville, Tennessee.

The event attracted speakers that included AFL-CIO president **John Sweeney**, Children's



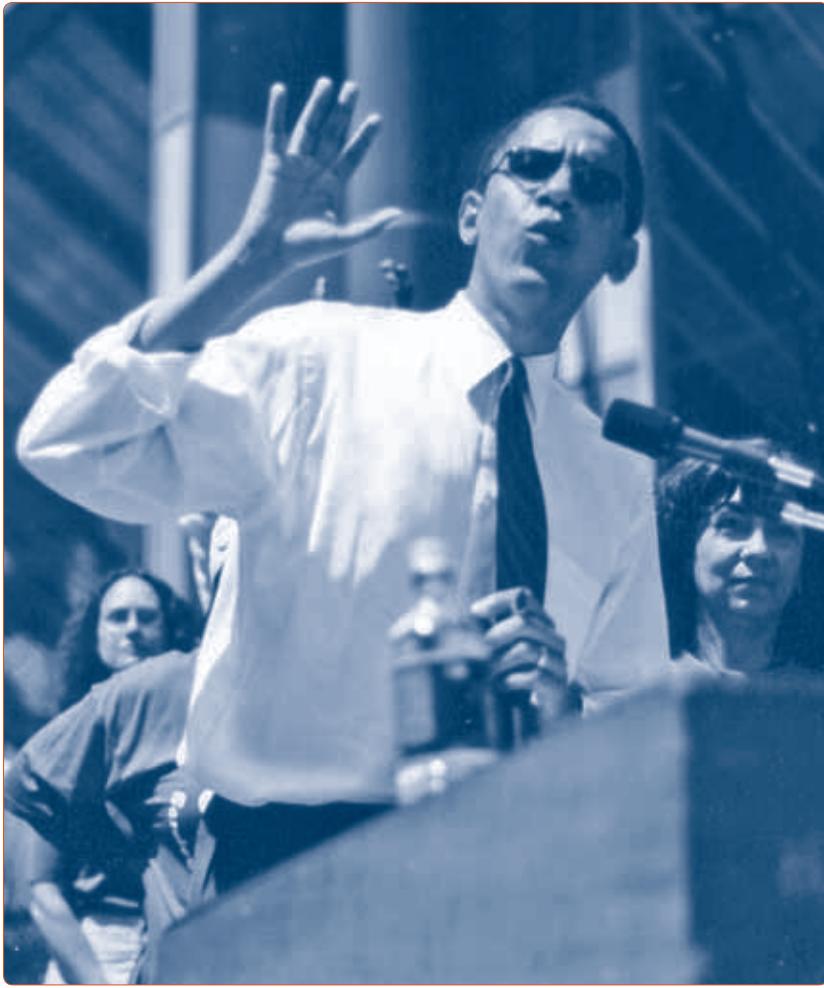
**The National Campaign members marched through downtown Chicago to call for health coverage for all children.**

Defense Fund director **Marian Wright Edelman**, Senator **Paul Wellstone**, Rep. **Luis Gutierrez**, and many low-income leaders.

National Campaign members marched through downtown Chicago to call for health coverage for all children, and drew support from local officials including a fiery Illinois State Senator named **Barack Obama**.

The campaign identified nine issues to rally around: health insurance expansion, living wages and corporate accountability, income support for those who can't work, access to benefits and child care, job training and education, legalization of undocumented immigrants, improved workplace conditions for day laborers and contingent workers, targeted investments in areas of concentrated poverty, and replacing "welfare" with publicly supported jobs.

Pulling together diverse local organizations for a massive national campaign was unprecedented—and difficult, despite the warm glow of the Chicago launch. In essence, the Center was urging these organizations to transcend turf and collaborate across the



**The National Campaign drew support from local officials including a fiery Illinois State Senator named Barack Obama.**



**Preparing to march for health care.**

traditional dividing lines of issue, race, gender, geography, faith and organizational identity. Member groups had to rise above their own roots to find common purpose.

"The National Campaign for Jobs and Income Support had a great deal of potential for lifting community organizing to a new level," says **Cris Doby** of the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation. "It was trying to answer the question that had long been asked: 'How can community organizations participate together and cooperate on a national policy issue?' It was the idea that you could advance change through a democratic process, that people can hold

their elected officials accountable and move a national agenda."

The Mott Foundation gave CCC a total of \$3 million for its work to staff the National Campaign and assist its member organizations—one of the largest program grants in the Foundation's history. "Frankly," says Cris, "there was some ambivalence about supporting this, but the history of our relationship with the Center was so positive... There was a great deal of trust in what they said they were going to achieve and how they were going to do it. This is what comes from philanthropy being in long-term relationships with important organizations."

Cris Doby attended several organizations' meetings in the early days of the campaign. She was moved by the way grassroots leaders worked to lift their groups' sights from local and regional issues to a national agenda. "People are facing their daily problems—that's why they're involved in these organizations," she says. "Maybe they're involved because they want to do something about an intersection where kids have been hit by cars. But people are coming back from these meetings and trying to generate some appetite on issues such as the child tax credit. It was a great privilege to watch how that got worked through."

And in the end, she says of the Foundation's contributions to the National Campaign, "It was absolutely a good investment. Our reaction to the campaign and the results have been universally positive."

A snapshot of the Campaign's work in 2001 alone would reveal national advocacy to increase the minimum wage and to pass a refundable child tax credit, plus dozens of state-level efforts: 12 Medicaid expansion

fights, 10 state living wage initiatives, and several campaigns to expand access to benefits for eligible families. And all of this while preparing for a struggle over reauthorization of the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) program the following year.<sup>112</sup>

September 11, 2001 sent shock waves throughout the nation. The reverberations caused some politicians and organizations to turn their backs on the plight of immigrants—or worse, to blame them for problems in America. Yet, as Deepak Bhargava recalls, "just about no national organization was willing to raise the issue of the millions of undocumented people in the U.S. without legal status." The Center for Community Change had not expected to do so, either—but the members of the National Campaign showed us that we must.

"We were listening very carefully to grassroots groups who told us we can't address poverty without addressing immigration," says Deepak, "that the whole issue of legal status is totally bound up with the way labor markets and economic life are structured in the U.S. I think this



**Cecilia Muñoz**

### CECILIA MUÑOZ OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF LA RAZA

(and now CCC board chair) saw this determination in action when she spoke to a group of largely African American grassroots leaders from the National Campaign. "I thought my job was to explain why they needed to care about immigration," Cecilia says. "But hands went up as soon as I started to talk. They said, 'We know all that—we just want to know how we're going to get this done. How are we going to accomplish legalization for our undocumented sisters and brothers?'

"I've been in this business a long time," Muñoz continues. "To have local African American leaders tell me they get it—that's the result of several years of tough and honest discussions among the constituency that the Center is building. To me, it was incredibly moving."



**Senator Max Baucus addresses the National Campaign.**

is an example of how if you're close to the ground and listening well, you can spot important trends, challenges and opportunities early."

## A LASTING LEGACY

The National Campaign for Jobs and Income Support won allies among other progressive organizations and employed sophisticated media outreach and lobbying. These efforts resulted in some substantial national policy victories, including:

- A partly refundable Child Tax Credit that delivers \$8 billion per year to low-income families and lifts 500,000 children out of poverty—the largest anti-poverty program created in a decade.
- The largest increase in the food stamps program in 20 years, including the restoration of benefits to nearly 400,000 documented immigrants.
- Ultimately, the Senate Finance Committee incorporated 80 percent of the Campaign's policy platform in its bipartisan Work, Opportunity, and Responsibility for Kids (WORK) Act, which was approved in June 2002.

It became clear to Campaign members that in the current political climate, any reauthorization of TANF would result in a program far harsher and less helpful to families than the existing law. Their strategy was to delay reauthorization in order to prevent the adoption of more punitive measures, such as increasing the number of hours that TANF recipients must work or narrowing the allowable work activities. In this analysis, grassroots groups were ahead of many national policy organizations, which wanted the reauthorization effort to proceed.

By 2003, the planned end date for the National Campaign, it had created an infrastructure of constituency organizations in 40 states with strong capacity to act together in 25 states. "We found that because so few organizations bring the voices of ordinary people into national policy debates," Deepak recalls, "the National Campaign was very powerful. The moment that encapsulated this was in 2002 when

**Senator Max Baucus** spoke at a rally of several thousand people on the National Mall. These were very poor people, mostly people of color. Senator Baucus was a conservative Democrat from Montana, the chair of the Senate Finance Committee, and he promised that he wouldn't let a bill go through his committee that would do any harm to low-income families.

"He stuck to it," Deepak says, "and even hired as his key staff for the welfare bill a skilled organizer and advocate who had been a welfare mom and a survivor of domestic violence. In her story, you see how things should work: someone who lived through the welfare experience was helping write the bill."

The National Campaign pioneered a model of how to bring together a wide variety of grassroots groups for national campaigns, unite them with allies, carry progressive ideas into the national conversation and advance changes in public policy. This model would become the bedrock of the Center's ongoing work. The strategy has not only made low-income people's issues and political potential more visible, but

The National Campaign marked a turning point for the Center. It was our first attempt to marshal all our diverse local relationships into a national strategy for public policy change, and the lessons we learned pushed us in new and fruitful ways.

has also strengthened the Center's ability to act on Capitol Hill.

"Twenty-five years ago, I would have said that there is no particular reason for CCC's home office being in DC—that it could have been anywhere," says **Peter Edelman**, policy expert and veteran board member and friend of the Center. "When advocates for low-income people would sit down and strategize here, CCC wouldn't have been present at the table in the past, except in a few areas. They are now. They're much more likely to be asked by members of Congress to brief them on a particular subject."

## TURNING POINTS

**T**he National Campaign marked a turning point for the Center. It was our first attempt to marshal all our diverse local relationships into a national strategy for public policy change, and the lessons we learned pushed us in new and fruitful ways. For example, the campaign's ability to educate Senators from Maine and Montana demonstrated how crucial it was to have a strong grassroots base operating in the home turf of influential policy makers. That prompted the Center to take a more critical look at the national map of grassroots organizing. There were some significant geographic areas where neither CCC nor any other progressive organization was involved with the grassroots—and, not surprisingly, those were the locales where the

political leadership was the most oblivious or hostile to the concerns of low-income people.

"We realized that we needed to make bigger investments in the South and rural parts of the country," says Deepak. "Most liberals and progressives write these areas off, but national public policy doesn't get written solely by members of Congress from New York and California. We need a broad movement that can exercise power in the whole country to effect change."

The National Campaign revealed three other significant gaps, which the Center began to address as the new millennium proceeded. First, we saw that grassroots and progressive organizations around the country were heading toward a leadership crisis. Established leaders were aging out and young people—particularly young people of color from the Center's low-income constituencies—were not being cultivated in sufficient numbers to take their place.

Second, we came to understand that the limited civic participation of low-income people had become an obstacle to their gaining political traction for the issues that mattered to them. Poor people would have to grab the attention of policy makers by voting in larger numbers.

And third, we realized that the progressive movement as a whole was suffering a profound



Women in Hartford, CT.

ideas gap. It was, as Deepak put it, “coasting on the fumes of the New Deal.” Many of the ideas being promoted at the national level didn’t command broad support or generate much excitement among progressives themselves. Bold new ideas would be needed to power a movement for change—ideas that grew from the experience of people living at the bottom of society combined with the loftiest ideals of the progressive sector.

### **“SOME THINGS HAVE TO BE TAKEN APART”**

**A**s our work with the National Campaign was beginning to reveal these fundamental deficits in the social change armamentarium, the Center continued to provide advice and assistance to over 250 community-based groups from Hartford to Honolulu. For example:

- In Los Angeles, we helped *Inquilinos Unidos* create tenant organizing committees. “**Mary Ochs** [CCC’s field organizer] really helped develop a vision of [our] role not just as someone who receives services but as someone

who plays an active role in advocating for fair housing and social services,” said **Enrique Aranda**, the organization’s executive director, in a 2000 interview.<sup>113</sup>

- With support from the Mott Foundation, we helped groups around the country conduct initiatives designed to strengthen sectors of the economy that could offer jobs and economic development opportunities for low-income people. Results included a training school for jobs in the international trade and transportation sector in Los Angeles; a temp and training agency in Milwaukee; jobs and training in the health care sector in Sacramento; and 250 low-income people securing good construction jobs in Hartford, CT. By 2008, *Hartford Areas Rally Together* (HART) had placed more than 1,500 women and people of color in construction jobs, according to its director, Yolanda Rivera.
- For the first time in many years, the Center in 2000 began to work on education issues, bringing community leaders together to strategize about how to use the upcoming

reauthorization of the federal education policy to secure an expanded role for parents in local decision-making.

- By 2001 more than 150 housing trust funds operated across the country, and national organizations began to push for the creation of a national housing trust fund.<sup>114</sup> The *Housing Trust Fund Project* continued to rack up victories, such as the successful conclusion in 2002 of a three-year effort to win a trust fund in Los Angeles that would generate \$100 million a year for affordable housing.
- In New York, we helped *Community Voices Heard* win a statewide job creation program to generate 7,500 jobs in the public and nonprofit sectors for welfare recipients.
- In Missoula, Montana, we strengthened a women-run organization called *homeWORD* that built affordable green housing for low-income families.
- With our help, community groups working in the *colonias* of South Texas produced 200 units of housing each year.

“The Center always had such an enormously diverse program,” says **Heather Booth**, a lifelong progressive leader who joined the Center’s board in 2002. “But in a time of increasing emiseration in the country and challenge by the far-right wing and desperation in low-income communities, there was a need for a sharpening of priorities.

“The limits of community organizing were clear,” she says. “You can’t organize your way to national social change. The problems are created in Washington, on Wall Street, in Switzerland and Hong Kong, and they can’t be solved by the 37th Street Block Club.”

As the Center faced these new challenges, we had two abiding strengths to call upon. One was our connection to the thousands of grassroots groups we’d been supporting over the years. The second was the Center’s own legacy of resilience. “One of the things I’ve always valued

about the Center is that it never becomes stale,” Andy Mott says. “In each era, there’s been an adaptation to circumstances instead of becoming calcified with one approach. We constantly rejuvenate ourselves.”

**Cris Doby** of the Mott Foundation agrees. “You know, some things have to be taken apart,” she says. Over the years, “the Center went through dis-organization and re-organization several times. I think that’s why they’re so healthy now.”

This combination—the Center’s ability to reinvent itself along with a strong grassroots base—led to a new flowering of activity in the 2000s. As with every change, we had to make difficult decisions, resulting in sacrifices that are painful to this day. But from this upheaval came new models of organization and a strong new vision for changing the balance of power in America.

The National Campaign for Jobs and Income Support had shown CCC that it was possible to create the kind of national movement that could give low-income people visibility, a voice and real political power—a movement that could generate a mandate for change that would reinvigorate other progressives. And to build that movement would require all of our organizational energies.

### NEW VISION FROM A NEW LEADER

It fell to Deepak Bhargava to lead the Center for Community Change through this historic transformation. In 2002, Andy Mott stepped down after four years as CCC’s executive director and a total of 35 years with the organization. He had been the Center’s longest-serving staff member, having begun his tenure with CCC’s predecessor organization, the Citizens Crusade Against Poverty.<sup>115</sup>

In October of that year, Deepak became the Center’s executive director, after eight years on staff and at the age of 33. In many ways, he represented the kind of person the Center would draw to its ranks over the coming years—part of

**The National Campaign had shown that it was possible to create the kind of national movement that could give low-income people visibility, a voice and real political power. And to build that movement would require all of our organizational energies.**

LADON HARRIS

**Deepak Bhargava and Pablo Eisenberg.**

a new generation of activists, a person of color, openly gay, and an immigrant. Like previous generations of the Center's staff, he was deeply committed to social justice and to building the power of low-income people. And he was willing to profoundly reshape the Center and steer us toward a new future.

"Nearly every program we care about and basic civil rights and liberties are under systemic attack," Deepak told the board of directors. "And for the most part, our side is losing and losing badly."<sup>116</sup> What was called for, he said, was not just the organizational realignment that typically followed a leadership transition, but a radical rethinking of the Center's role in the world. We would need to reinvent the Center for Community Change with a fresh vision and new strengths—while remaining constant to our mission.

The strategy that emerged incorporated five components that built on the Center's history yet would ultimately take us down untried paths: CCC would strengthen

grassroots organizations and coalitions; launch sophisticated issue campaigns; increase voter participation; cultivate a new generation of organizers and leaders; and generate bold ideas to fuel a movement for social justice. In short, the Center would transform itself from an organization that provided technical assistance to one that galvanized social movements.

Deepak and the board faced wrenching decisions as they considered how to achieve this. The most painful step was to end our work in several program areas, some of which had been the Center's signature issues for decades. These included housing and community development, public housing and community reinvestment issues.

From now on the Center would operate fewer programs that were larger in scale and specifically designed to create a public voice for poor people. No longer would we invest our resources in any grassroots group that asked for assistance. Instead CCC would work with organizations that had a significant membership

base, were committed to community organizing and leadership development, and were willing to work in coalition with other organizations to pursue a multi-issue social justice agenda.

“There’s so little leadership among nonprofits in general that the pull on great leaders is enormous,” says former director **Pablo Eisenberg**. “CCC is now in terrific hands.” And, he points out, Deepak has inherited some invaluable assets.

“First, the quality of staff CCC has,” says Pablo. “Second, that we’ve maintained the mission. No organizations do that over so many years. Third, our willingness to collaborate and embrace a coalition strategy. We had the view that no one organization or constituency is big enough to win by itself. Fourth, a passionate concern about improving the lives of low-income people and those at the margins of society. Fifth, encouragement and support for the grassroots organizations CCC represents, and the potential to gain more power and influence in society.

“That’s a great legacy,” Pablo says. “You don’t need to be trendy to be successful. This mission is for the long haul.”

### **A GREAT SENSE OF POWER**

The Center swiftly began to redeem its new promise through its efforts on immigration. Led by committed staff members such as **Son Ah Yun**, we worked to coalesce the National Campaign’s immigrant organizations into the “Immigrant Organizing Committee” (IOC), a



**Son Ah Yun (R)**

nationwide consortium of two dozen grassroots community organizations and networks. Center staff conducted listening sessions with grassroots immigrant leaders all over the country to learn what principles they felt a new immigration policy in the U.S. would need to reflect in order to be fair, humane and practical.

In 2004, the Immigrant Organizing Committee launched the *Fair Immigration Reform Movement* (FIRM)—the nation’s premier national network of immigrant-led grassroots organizations. FIRM groups united around core principles for immigration reform and conducted organizing, advocacy and public actions to highlight the most critical issues facing immigrant families. The network now includes some 300 grassroots organizations

**ANGELICA SALAS IS THE DIRECTOR** of the *Coalition for Humane Immigrant and Refugee Rights of Los Angeles* (CHIRLA), one of the IOC leadership organizations. “Through our experience with CCC,” she says, “our members have connected with people dealing with the same things in different parts of the country. We’ve connected city people with rural, immigrants with African Americans and Asians and whites. People who are suffering connect with each other, and there’s a great sense of power from that.”



**Immigrant students ponder the future.**



**Senator Orrin Hatch speaks in support of the DREAM Act.**

from all parts of the country, including multi-racial groups with significant African American and white membership.

"I will tell you that this is unique in the progressive movement," says Cecilia Muñoz of the National Council of La Raza. "The rest of the progressive movement has not decided whether or not they like immigrants. But the Center was coming at it from a different direction—they were organizing people, and people were telling them what mattered to them... The Center

said, 'Okay, how can we build a movement that connects people?' That makes CCC the first institution within the progressive movement that wasn't already a leader in the immigration world—that didn't have an ethnic constituency like mine—to adopt the issue of immigration and take it on seriously."

One of FIRM's first public acts was to hold a mock graduation ceremony in front of the U.S. Capitol building in April 2004. Three hundred immigrant students donned caps and gowns; instead of clutching diplomas, they carried signs that said, "Now what?" The ceremony dramatized the plight of young immigrants who are brought to the U.S. as children, graduate from American high schools and then face a bleak future because there is no way for them to gain citizenship. Every year some 65,000 high school graduates find themselves in this predicament. FIRM supports a solution to this dilemma, a bipartisan policy called the DREAM Act, which would help qualified immigrant students gain citizenship and break down the barriers that keep them from college, trade school and jobs.

The graduation generated tremendous news coverage, and demonstrated the vigor and promise of these immigrant youth.

"The leadership coming from these kids is extraordinary," Cecilia Muñoz says. "They will not only be leaders in this movement, but leaders in our country."



**Deepak Bhargava is advised by Germonique Jones.**

**“ANYTHING THAT BRINGS PEOPLE TO THE POLLS IN AN HONEST WAY**  
is essential work,” says **Rubie Coles** of the Moriah Fund. “CVP couples that with the kind of capacity building that it provides for the partner doing that work. This is a really important strategy. I don’t know of other organizations that have approached it quite in that way. When you’re building the capacity of organizations at the same time as you’re building civic participation, that’s a good thing.”

## CCC ENTERS THE MEDIA AGE

In 1974 CCC’s communications director, **Joseph Walsh**, was asked what his role was. “In terms of publicity,” he explained, “my job is to keep it virtually nonexistent.”<sup>117</sup> The Center had always sought to ensure that attention was focused on the grassroots groups we assisted, not on CCC itself. But in the 21st century, the ability to project a message through the media became essential, and the Center retooled to help ourselves—and our grassroots partners—do so.

We built a communications staff, led by the talented **Leila McDowell**. We developed relationships with journalists and media outlets, including the Knight Ridder chain, which partnered with CCC to run periodic columns written by low-income people under the banner “Real Voices.” And in 2003, we ran our first paid TV ad—a 30 second piece that spotlighted a stealthy move by legislators to exclude poor families from the child tax credit.

The ad itself became news, featured on CNN, ABC World News Tonight, MSNBC’s Buchanan & Press, BET Nightly News, CNBC and Fox News Channel. The *New York Times* and the *National Journal* wrote about the ad, and *USA Today* published a still photo. The Center then ran a second ad, in Spanish, highlighting the number of Hispanic families that would not receive a tax credit check. Our message was covered by Spanish- and English-

language media and featured on news stories throughout Texas.<sup>118</sup>

Since then, the Center has been able to generate widespread press coverage for our public actions, our issues and those of our grassroots partners. In 2007, for example, more than 736 media stories mentioned CCC or the Fair Immigration Reform Movement. We have established strong ties with the ethnic press and in 2007 were able to generate hundreds of thousands of calls into Congress by reaching immigrants through these outlets. Today CCC’s media relations director **Germonique Jones** is the first person many journalists call when they want a comment on a wide range of issues—and, more importantly, when they want to be connected to real families who are “living” the issues.

## “TO BE A VOTER IS TO BE INVOLVED”

By 2003, the continued shredding of the social safety net and the slashing of programs that once gave people a chance to rise out of poverty made it clear how invisible low-income communities were to the political establishment. Part of this invisibility stemmed from a decades-long decline in voting by poor people.

The Center launched an effort that would incorporate the insights and gains of the

National Campaign for Jobs and Income Support, and build upon the voting rights work the Center had started in the 1970s. This was the Community Voting Project (CVP), a program to increase civic participation by low-income people—not by flooding their neighborhoods with political operatives shortly before an election, but by equipping local grassroots groups with the skills and resources to educate, register and mobilize voters, and then integrate them into the groups' ongoing social justice organizing.

## The Community Voting Project (CVP) took hold all over the country, including areas where community organizing didn't have deep historic roots.

The Center raised \$2.5 million to launch the Community Voting Project and partnered with 53 organizations in 26 states. Most of the CVP resources were invested in 18 urban and rural areas with large concentrations of poor people who did not often vote. These areas, home to people of color and rural white people, were generally overlooked by national voter participation efforts. But the Center had relationships with grassroots groups based in these communities, and we knew they could bring democracy to life with an infusion of funding, training, technical support, media savvy and sophisticated voter mobilization tools and strategies. We brought these resources to our CVP partners—and challenged them to meet rigorous numeric goals for voter contacts, registration and turnout.

CVP took hold all over the country, including areas where community organizing didn't have deep historic roots. In Montana and the Dakotas, for example, the *Northern*

*Plains Tribal Voter Education Project*—a coalition of tribal colleges and other Indian groups—vowed to mobilize the largest Native American voter turnout in the area's history. CVP funding allowed the group to hire ten organizers, who went on to recruit 100 volunteers. By the end of the campaign, the coalition had a network of new activists, expanded its geographic reach, built partnerships with non-Indian groups—and swept past its original numeric goals.

“Native American people are often the least likely to vote,” said **Janine Pease**, the Montana state coordinator for the Northern Plains coalition. “But important issues for the Indian community are coming to state legislatures now. The administration of federal monies and state matches directly impacts the lives of Indian people... To be a registered voter is to be involved.”<sup>119</sup>

At the conclusion of the Community Voting Project's first wave in 2004, the results were overwhelmingly successful. CVP mobilized 275,684 new and infrequent voters, and inspired thousands of others that their voices and votes mattered. In five federal races, the number of low-income and minority voters we reached exceeded the margin of victory. In the 256 precincts where CVP efforts were concentrated, there was a 6% increase in voter turnout over the 2000 election—and a 7% increase compared to nearby precincts that were not in our program. Moreover, our partner organizations grew larger and stronger, with increased membership and the skills to mobilize more effectively between voting cycles on the issues most important to them.

In Michigan, the statewide Gamaliel organization *Michigan Interfaith Voice* found that candidates for Senate, Congress and Governor were more eager than ever before to participate in the group's events. “The CVP work made them take us more seriously as a power group in the state because we can get out the vote,” said **Laura Barrett**, Gamaliel's CVP director. “We're in a better position now to



**Audience members at CCC's Presidential Dialogue.**

develop more serious relationships with public officials and win more substantial victories.”<sup>120</sup>

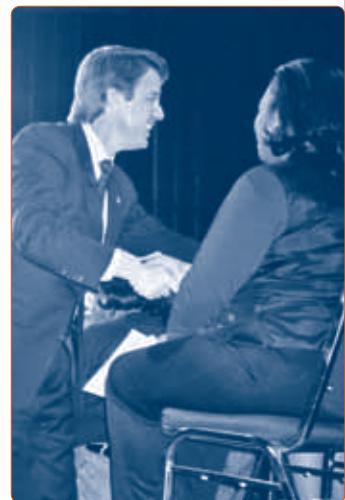
In New Mexico, when the *Human Needs Organizing Council* set out with CCC’s **Mary Brooks** to create a housing trust fund, its campaign was a resounding success—in part because of the organization’s experience with CVP. “Through the CVP training and workshops, we had really been able to expand our capacity,” said **Amber Lopez Lasater**, the group’s co-director. “Our base was bigger with organizations and individuals, and we had more people to call upon.”

## DEMOCRACY AT WORK

**S**outh Carolina held the first presidential primary in the South in 2004, and it felt to **Anton Gunn** as if “the crosshairs of the political

process were going to be on” his state. Yet, said the director of *South Carolina Fair Share*, “Candidates had already started announcing that they were going to run, but none of them were talking to real people about real issues.”

The Center took action to change that. In partnership with South Carolina Fair Share, we held a Presidential Dialogue in Columbia, South Carolina that drew 3,000 low-income people and six of the (then) eight presidential candidates—the only public event of the election season that focused on issues of poverty. The candidates stepped on stage one at a time to hear real-life stories from struggling people, and answer penetrating questions about what they would do as President to address health care, jobs, education and other issues. Three hundred journalists attended the forum, spreading its message across America.



**Sen. John Edwards greets grassroots leaders during CCC's Presidential Dialogue in South Carolina.**

**“IT WAS LIFE CHANGING,”** said **Vanessa Brown**, one of the grassroots leaders who asked questions of the candidates. “The most empowering thing about these events is to realize you’re not alone,” she said. “When you go through so many struggles, you think you’re the only one. That isolation keeps us all silent and hopeless. But when we come together, it gives us the strength to stand up and fight to make our lives better. After the Presidential Dialogue, my whole mission in life is for other people to catch that fire.”

Former Congressman **Ron Dellums** was a CCC board member who had electrified the audience before the Presidential Dialogue with his keynote speech about eradicating poverty in America.<sup>121</sup> “It showed people that if you mobilize and organize, you can get the candidates to respond and take you seriously,” he said. “But elections only determine who, not what. You don’t stop organizing after the election.”

The Center took that admonition to heart in its 2006 Community Voting Project program. We selected 20 grassroots partners—out of the 107 who submitted applications—based in 16 states. This time, the groups were equipped with the kind of sophisticated, high-tech databases and tools that power mainstream political campaigns. Still, the greatest strength of these groups was their passion for their communities and the enthusiasm they unleashed.

For instance, Missouri’s *Grass Roots Organizing* (GRO)—a group representing low-income rural families who are black, white and Latino—created an eager army of volunteers in the course of their CVP work. They succeeded in gathering 95,000 signatures to put a statewide initiative on Medicaid reform on the ballot. They made their community visible to political leaders, who suddenly realized that there were attentive voters there and began paying calls.

“So many people feel their voice doesn’t matter,” says **Robin Acree**, GRO’s director. “But CVP, it’s totally about democracy at work. It’s about the promise that democracy holds.”

## A VOICE FOR NATIVE AMERICANS

In 2000, long-time CCC staffer **Syd Beane** worked with the *Southern California Indian Center*, which serves an area that is home to the largest concentration of Native Americans in the country. With the Center’s help, the group developed a training program to equip Indians to find jobs in the entertainment industry. “Four years ago, Syd did a board training and showed us about economic development,” said executive director **Paula Starr**. “Now we are actually doing it—it’s not just on paper.”

Syd’s vision was broader than the entertainment industry. He recognized that a communications and media revolution was taking place around the world—and it was leaving Native Americans behind. They were missing out on the economic opportunities that this revolution offered as well as the ability to shape and disseminate their own stories. “If you aren’t into media, you don’t exist,” he declares. “If you don’t exist, your power is very limited in terms of creating mass social change. You’re running way behind and you might not catch up.”

With backing from the Marguerite Casey Foundation and others, Syd and the Center launched the *Native Media and Technology Network* (NMTN) in 2006, after a successful pilot in Los Angeles. NMTN is a national network designed to help Indians raise a united public voice on the paramount sovereignty issue of the 21st century—access to communications technology and the jobs it creates. The network has 300 organizational members, including

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tribal groups, urban Indian organizations and national Native American coalitions, and has created communications job training models in Minneapolis, New York, Los Angeles and Phoenix.

This unique national network—which builds unity among Native Americans who vary widely in their geographic area and tribal identity—is providing Native Americans with unprecedented clout in opening up education, training and job opportunities. And NMTN will finally enable Native Americans to tell their own stories to a public that for the most part had known only distorted images of Indian life.

## THE NEXT MOVEMENT

**I**t's a challenge to focus on organizing poor people, when people want to change that identity," says Deepak Bhargava. "It's easier to organize people as workers, parents or immigrants. The next movement, in my view, is not going to be a poor people's movement—it will be cast in one of these social identities."

Over the course of the National Campaign for Jobs and Income Support, the Center built new relationships with many low-wage workers and especially with the worker centers that have emerged to serve them. These community-based organizations resemble the mutual-aid societies and settlement houses of the early 1900s. Typically membership based, they provide a gateway for immigrant workers into local communities and weave them into civic life, as well as providing advocacy and services to the rest of the area's most vulnerable workforce.

In 2005, the Center convened the first-ever national gathering of worker centers, including representatives from three major worker center networks: Enlace, Interfaith Worker Justice, and National Day Laborer Organizing Network. Overall, 36 of the nation's approximately 150 worker centers came to receive joint training and compare strategies on building and solidifying their membership. For many of the groups, this was their first



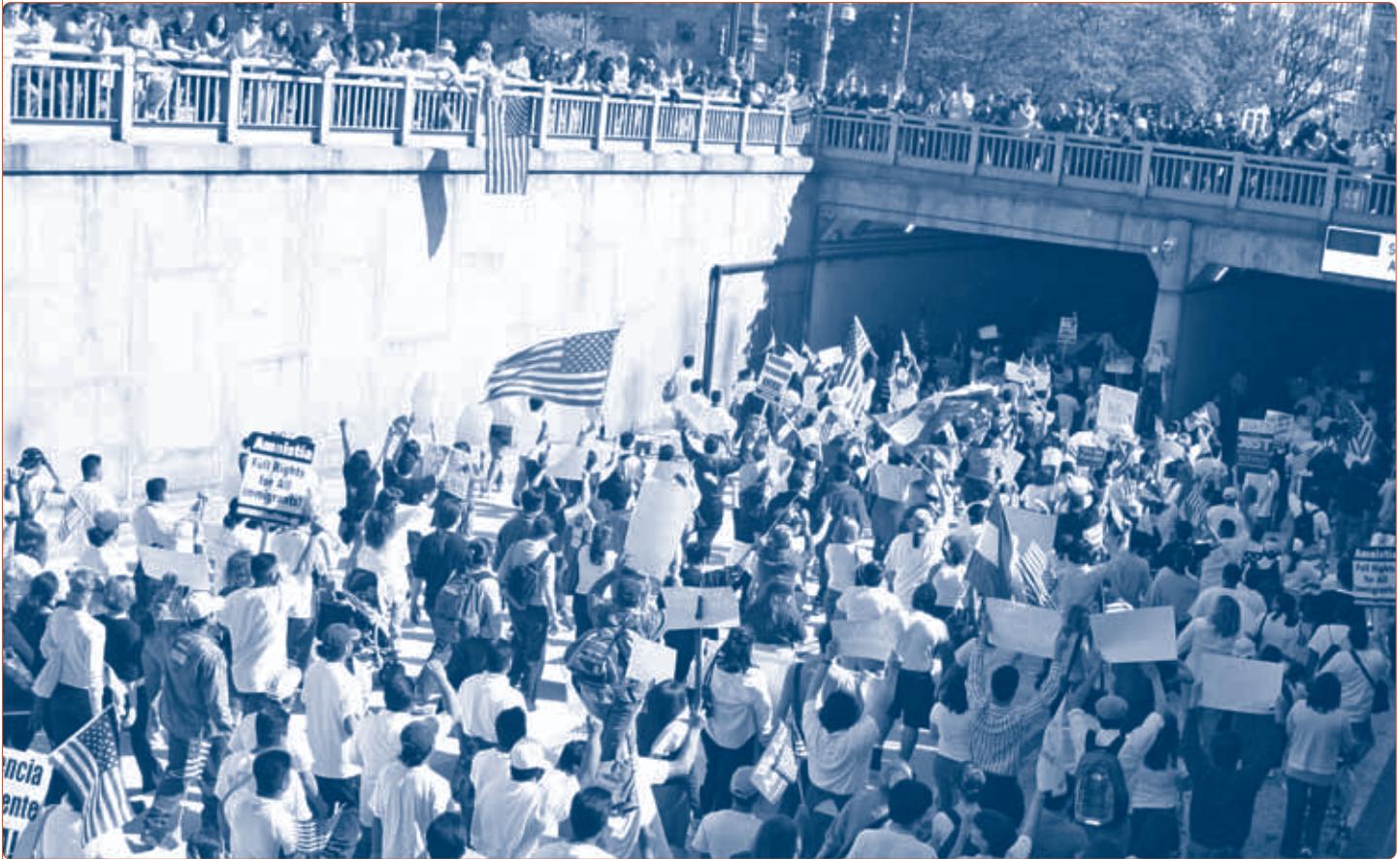
LIZ ROLL

**In 2005, the Center sold its historic Georgetown building and bought a new headquarters building at 1536 U Street, NW in Washington, DC.**

time to meet their peer organizations, and they relished the experience.

One of the ideas that sprang from the conference was a stored value card—a debit card that can be loaded and reloaded with funds—that the worker centers could market to their members in partnership with a financial institution. Such a card would boost the financial stability and sophistication of low-wage workers—especially immigrants—who tend either to be denied bank accounts or fearful of them. The other idea was to enhance the financial footing of the worker centers themselves, as they would earn money from the card transaction fees, and have a way to systematize the collection of dues from members. None of the worker centers had the skills or resources to tackle this on their own, and the Center began to collaborate with them.

"This is infrastructure building," says **Tam Doan**, the Center's manager for the stored-value card project. "The project is helping the worker centers build a more formal membership base, instead of just attracting



Crowds on way to DC immigration march.

LIZ ROLL



**Luz Vega-Marquis**

84

people from campaign to campaign. The worker centers are now doing more thinking about what membership means. That's one of the most valuable parts of this effort."

The stored value card project gave the Center yet another way to gather local low-income groups into larger and more powerful combinations. "Through this, we've gotten involved with FIRM," says **Rich Cunningham**, the director of a large New Jersey worker center called *New Labor*. "We're connected to a broader-based movement of organizations like ours that are trying to do amazing things around immigration reform and low-wage work."

In the spring of 2006, the nation saw the flowering of another social identity as millions of immigrants took to the streets in cities across the country. The massive size of these marches

took everyone by surprise, as did their sunny nature—more like family rallies than angry protests, although they did succeed in dooming a policy proposal that would have criminalized anyone, from doctor to priest, who provided any aid to an undocumented immigrant. The Center for Community Change had strengthened many of the grassroots groups and leaders that played prominent roles in the marches, and helped coordinate some of the rallies.

"You know, we all think that the immigrant marches sprung up overnight," says **Luz Vega-Marquis**, president and chief executive officer of the Marguerite Casey Foundation. "But it doesn't really happen that way. It requires a lot of work and building an infrastructure for change. That is what the Center has been doing for 40 years."

"They've chosen an issue that is very tough in this country," she says, "with Lou Dobbs on national television fanning the anti-immigrant flames all the time. Deepak has thought hard about the role that the Center plays on this debate... I think that's the most impressive thing about the Center, that unrelenting commitment to bringing forth proposals that deal with the issues of the disadvantaged in this country. That takes courage. I know that if I go to CCC I will get exactly that—a commitment to the disadvantaged. They never forget their mission."

The immigrant marches put a human face on the immigration reform debate that had been playing out in debates and headlines. They also sparked a vicious backlash that did not bother to hide its racist underpinnings.

For Deepak Bhargava, Son Ah Yun, Rich Stoltz and other leaders of the Center's immigration efforts, the marches provided a surprising new experience: a flash of what it feels like to be part of a movement. These accomplished activists, all in their 30s, had grown up in a world shaped by the civil rights movement, the women's movement, the anti-war movement—upheavals that had redrawn the social landscape and given rise to the Center itself. But they had never before breathed air that was electric with communion and possibility, the raw ingredients of social

change. It would inspire them and others from their generation.

### **"SCHOOLS OF CHOICE"**

**F**or a few days in August 2005, poverty stopped being invisible. In the wake of Hurricane Katrina, all of America saw poor people on TV: huddled on rooftops surrounded by rising water; crammed into shelters with inadequate food, water, ventilation or sanitation; utterly forsaken by their government.

One of the many casualties of Katrina was the troubled New Orleans public school system. Over half of the city's schools were destroyed by the storm, while tens of thousands of students and teachers fled for safety.

When they returned, they found that the storm's damage to their schools had been exploited by conservative activists from outside the city. Many public schools were being gussied up with federal funds and reopened as highly selective charter schools operated by private entities—with no connection to neighborhoods, no commitment to serve all children and no oversight from the community.

Within a year of the hurricane, 58% of New Orleans' public schools had become charters. Students had to scramble for a slot, often at the

**FOR A FEW DAYS IN AUGUST 2005, poverty stopped being invisible. In the wake of Hurricane Katrina, all of America saw poor people on TV: huddled on rooftops surrounded by rising water; crammed into shelters with inadequate food, water, ventilation or sanitation; utterly forsaken by their government.**

still-public schools that were so underfunded they lacked enough textbooks and teachers. New Orleans now has the largest concentration of free-market charter schools in the country—and, in essence, two different school systems that are vastly separate and unequal.

"These charter schools like to call themselves 'schools of choice,'" says **Leigh Dingerson**, who leads the Center's Education team. "But really, it's the schools that do the choosing."

She quickly moved to call attention to this unheralded takeover of a public school system. Leigh put together a booklet, *Dismantling a Community*, that provided a timeline of the takeover and featured essays from New Orleans students about the loss of their neighborhood schools. The booklet circulated widely among education activists, journalists and policy makers. While education profiteers were holding up New Orleans as a model for the charter school movement nationwide, the Center was exposing the injustice of a school system that subverted public funds for private profits and excluded low-income children from its benefits. We began to incorporate these lessons into our work with community groups around the country engaged in education reform.

In 2007, the Center co-hosted a lively forum, with the Open Society Institute and the Forum for Education and Democracy, on charter schools and their impact on public education. Several white papers prepared for that forum—including "Unlovely," Leigh Dingerson's scathing critique of the New Orleans charter school system—were collected in a book and published by Rethinking Schools in 2008.

## THE RIGHT VISION FOR NEW LEADERS

**"**I f we are going to continue the progress we've made on social, political and economic justice issues in America, we have to invest in the next generation of leaders," says Anton Gunn of South Carolina Fair Share. "There's no more important thing to do right now."

The Center invested deeply in that mission by launching *Generation Change*—our ambitious national program to cultivate a new generation of community organizers and nonprofit professionals for the social change sector. The program provides young people, particularly low-income people of color, with paid learning opportunities to work in

**Generation Change  
interns 2007**



community-based organizations. Generation Change internships introduce young people to the field; fellowships help new organizers develop skills and find full-time positions; and advanced training enables mid-level organizers and nonprofit staff to enhance their skills and broaden their perspectives. The program is led by **Susan Chinn** and **Eddy Morales**.

In 2006 we tested the Generation Change internship program with 10 young people from across the country. The interns, mostly college students and primarily women of color, participated in shared trainings and 10-week paid internships with grassroots community groups that served low-income communities of color.

**Taneesha Routier** of Old Dominion University was set on becoming a corporate attorney—until Generation Change expanded her horizons. “My internship experience at the Center for Community Change has given me a refreshingly new outlook on life and the importance of public service,” she wrote. “The paramount thing I took away was that it is possible to love your job and dedicate your life to meaningful progress in the lives of others.” **Angela Perez** of the City College of New York wrote, “I leave with a passionate enthusiasm to continue working and contributing directly to the changes I want to see happening in my community.”

In 2007 we selected 26 interns—out of 240 applicants—and placed them with CCC partner groups serving communities of color in Maryland, New York, North Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia and Washington, DC. The vast majority of the interns were women and people of color. We convened the interns four times for training on community organizing, public policy analysis and leadership development. At the end of the summer six interns got jobs with their host organizations, and the rest returned to school. The Center also connected six seasoned organizers with newer organizers to serve as mentors.

In 2008, Generation Change will build on these experiences by placing 50 people in summer

internships, setting 20 emerging organizers in paid six-month fellowships with Community Voting Project partner organizations, and providing advanced training for 30 immigrant working organizers. The timing of this initiative couldn’t be more crucial, coming just as the social justice movement is rebuilding and long-time leaders are retiring.

“Young people of color have tremendous pressures on them to succeed—to make a lot of money and help others in the family,” Rubie Coles of the Moriah Fund says. “People have invested in them, sacrificed to help them make it. If we want to attract the best and brightest to the nonprofit sector, we have to do a lot to professionalize the sector, provide career ladders and competitive salaries.”

“It’s my opinion that the Center has the right vision in terms of a new generation of staff and executive directors,” says Cris Doby of the Mott Foundation. “This tells me that this is an organization that is looking forward and has done an analysis of what needs to happen and change and be built for low-income and working class people to have greater advantages. They’ve challenged the field they work in.”

## HEAT AND LIGHT

**J**ust as new leaders are needed to replace aging baby boomers, new ideas, tools and approaches are needed to power today’s social justice movement. The Center started two programs that we believe will bring both heat and light to the progressive movement for years to come: the *Taproots Project*, led by **Seth Borgos**; and the *Movement Vision Lab*, led by **Sally Kohn**.

Taproots’ strategy to is mix grassroots leaders with progressive thought leaders—writers, public intellectuals, scholars and so on—and solicit their combined creative thinking on the biggest questions of the day. The program explores foundational questions, such as what is the role of faith and ethics in social change. Since 2006, Taproots has hosted carefully

**“THEY’RE ON TO SOMETHING,”** says the Moriah Fund’s Rubie Coles. “I don’t know anyone else who’s been so thoughtful about leadership development and is taking it on. A lot of organizations are not serious about grooming new leadership for their own organizations, much less for a movement. The fact that the Center has taken this on as a core part of their work determines what kind of progressive movement we’re going to have in the next few years.”

structured conversations along these lines with hundreds of people.

"Our ambition is to do nothing less than reinvent the progressive social agenda for the U.S." says Deepak Bhargava. "What kind of world do we want to live in, what values undergird our struggle for social justice, what kind of economy do we want, how is it organized, how do we incorporate environmental sustainability into an economic justice and redistribution agenda? I want the Center to be a hearth for community organizations to gather around and build a common vision for a better world."

While such lofty conversations are not unusual for academics, grassroots organizers are accustomed to focusing on immediate issues and tactics. Taproots has unleashed great enthusiasm among our grassroots partners for a dialogue about new ideas. "It has helped to validate our basic premise that there is enormous intellectual capital within the field of community organizing," Deepak says. "The challenge is how to give it expression."

Sally Kohn and her Movement Vision Lab team took on that challenge with glee. "What are you *for*?" she asked hundreds of progressive leaders across the country, who were much more used to articulating what they were against. Based on these interviews and other resources, the Movement Vision Lab created a lively website filled with dynamic tools to help people give creative expression to their most daring progressive visions. Blogs, videos,

essays, interviews, model projects on a host of issues, reflecting a wealth of progressive perspectives—they're all on the website ([www.communitychange.org](http://www.communitychange.org)). It is the place to go for grassroots organizers and social justice advocates to share and debate visionary ideas for the future.

## WE'RE ALL IN THIS TOGETHER

**S**killed trainer and former CCC staffer **Jennifer Henderson** tells a story about the future. "When I moved into my apartment in Washington, DC to work with the Center," she begins, "I painted this room. I'd never painted a room in my life. I painted it and went to lunch with my girlfriends. When I came back, there was no paint on the wall. Why? It had all been absorbed into the wall.

"We have had decades of alienation and isolation," she continues, "and a right-wing government telling us government doesn't matter, government is incompetent, telling us we don't need anybody but ourselves, pull yourself up by your bootstraps. Now there's a whole generation of kids who have never known a progressive government—a government of hope or possibilities. They're like that wall. It's going to take a lot of brushstrokes and paint before it actually shows its color."

The Center thinks now is the time for the progressive movement to show its colors. In 2007 we gathered our grassroots partners to launch our boldest initiative yet. The *Campaign for Community Values* is a three-year national

## FORMER CCC BOARD CHAIR ED BOOTH WROTE ABOUT THE HEARTLAND

**88**

**PRESIDENTIAL FORUM**, "In 40 years, this is the most beautiful and profound public expression of what the Center stands for—and intends to do about it. The Center has always been about a deep passion for justice, but has never before so confidently and eloquently articulated and acted out a definition of community values that also includes love, spirituality (not religiousness) and inclusiveness. And an extreme positive attitude and confidence—not an underdog, defeatist attitude. This is a magic moment for America and for the Center. The values expressed by the community leaders combine to renew a prophetic vision of America. And the Center now enters the next, and most exciting yet, phase of its life."



**L-R: Moderator Cathy Hughes, Sen. Barack Obama and Alexsiana Lewis at Heartland Presidential Forum.**

effort to project the progressive values of interconnectedness and the common good into our political debate—and into public policies adopted by a new Administration and Congress.

We started the Campaign for Community Values with 18 partner organizations that had been involved in the Taproots conversations. By the end of 2007, the Campaign had a coordinating committee of 43 groups and had convened five regional meetings with 150 organizations which committed to using the ethos of community values to frame their work on issues that ranged from immigration to health care to workers rights to housing and more.

On December 1, 2007, the Campaign for Community Values made its public debut with the *Heartland Presidential Forum: Community Values in Action*. The forum was conducted by CCC and our grassroots partner Iowa Citizens for Community Improvement, and moderated by **Cathy Hughes**, founder of Radio One and TV One. Despite a major winter storm, 3,600 people from 32 states packed a hall in Des Moines, Iowa to share their stories, struggles and questions with five presidential hopefuls.

The candidates—Senators Clinton, Obama, Edwards and Dodd, and Representative Kucinich—came to the Forum to speak.<sup>122</sup> They stayed to listen as real people told real stories of their lives, and asked the candidates probing

questions couched in the language of community values. Two extraordinary things happened that day. First, as the *Des Moines Register* put it, “the people got more microphone time than the politicians.” Second, a remarkably diverse group of people united across miles, cultures, classes and generations to rise as one and declare that *we are all in this together*.

Many Americans yearn for a new, more compassionate vision that can repair our broken bonds of community. The Campaign for Community Values serves that yearning. Over the next few years the Center and 300 diverse grassroots partners will project our community values message into the public debate, turn values into votes, and advance a public policy agenda that embodies the common good. We will do it for ourselves and our children and we will do it together, recognizing that our fates are intertwined.

All in all, the Center’s 40th birthday falls during a remarkable time.

“The world is much more interconnected than before,” says Deepak Bhargava, “and the stakes of the decisions we make are enormous. We are facing a choice of nothing less than how we organize our civilization for survival and the prosperity of humankind.

“You often get the most authentic and truthful view of how society is functioning from those who are living at the bottom,” he says, “who face the most oppression and discrimination. Those are precisely the voices that will show us the path out of the situation we’re in.

“While many things are needed to turn this country and world around, I think the Center’s deep commitment to poor people and people of color is essential to building a more just country and world. In the big picture, I think our mission has gotten more important. We’ve got less to lose and a world to win.”



**L-R Cary Martin of Chicago Coalition for the Homeless, Kenya Bradshaw of Concerned Memphians United speak at the Heartland Presidential Forum.**

# FOOTNOTES

## The 1960s

<sup>1</sup> <http://usinfo.state.gov/products/pubs/histryotln/decades.htm>

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.stanford.edu/group/King/about\\_king/encyclopedia/poorpeoples.html](http://www.stanford.edu/group/King/about_king/encyclopedia/poorpeoples.html)

<sup>3</sup> Much of the historical information in this document is drawn from *25 Years of Community Change*, written by Tim Saasta and published by the Center for Community Change in 1992.

<sup>4</sup> Walter Reuther died in 1970. His archives, in the Walter P. Reuther Library of Labor & Urban Affairs at Wayne State University in Detroit, MI, contain 37 storage boxes of materials about the Center for Community Change.

<sup>5</sup> Tim Saasta, "Twenty-Five Years of Community Change," Center for Community Change, 1992.

<sup>6</sup> Statistics from U.S. Census (<http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/poverty/histpov/hstpov2.html>). In 2006, the U.S. poverty rate was 12.3 percent (<http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/poverty/poverty06/pov06hi.html>).

<sup>7</sup> Quote from 1999 interview with CCC's Tim Saasta.

<sup>8</sup> [http://www.reuther.wayne.edu/collections/hefa\\_966.htm](http://www.reuther.wayne.edu/collections/hefa_966.htm)

<sup>9</sup> Natalie Spingarn, "Tightening the Belt and the Agenda: A Re-Assessment of Performance of the Center for Community Change," Ford Foundation, January 1974.

<sup>10</sup> G. William Domhoff, "The Ford Foundation in the Inner City: Forging an Alliance with Neighborhood Activists," University of California at Santa Cruz, 2005.

## The 1970s

<sup>11</sup> Natalie Spingarn, "Tightening the Belt and the Agenda: A Re-Assessment of Performance of the Center for Community Change," Ford Foundation, January 1974. If you have read many organizational evaluation reports, you know they generally make dry reading. This one is riveting, thanks to the skill of the author and investigator. Natalie Spingarn served as a speechwriter for Sargent Shriver and later went on to write two books about her experiences with cancer that were influential in launching the anti-cancer advocacy movement. She died in 2000.

<sup>12</sup> Tim Saasta, "Twenty-Five Years of Community Change," Center for Community Change, 1992.

<sup>13</sup> Based on a report written by Neal Peirce and Carol Steinbach for the Ford Foundation, cited in CCC's "25 Years of Community Change."

<sup>14</sup> G. William Domhoff, "The Ford Foundation in the Inner City: Forging an Alliance with Neighborhood Activists," University of California at Santa Cruz, 2005.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Gale Cincotta later served on CCC's Board of Directors.

<sup>17</sup> Rep. John Lewis, civil rights leader and Congress member, is no relation to John Lewis of the Southwest Indian Project.

<sup>18</sup> Today Jennifer Henderson heads her own international consulting business.

<sup>19</sup> Tim Saasta, "25 Years of Community Change," Center for Community Change, 1992.

<sup>20</sup> Natalie Spingarn, "Tightening the Belt and the Agenda: A Re-Assessment of Performance of the Center for Community Change," Ford Foundation, January 1974.

<sup>21</sup> Natalie Spingarn, "Tightening the Belt and the Agenda: A Re-Assessment of Performance of the Center for Community Change," Ford Foundation, January 1974.

<sup>22</sup> Unless otherwise indicated, all data about CCC's revenue and budget is from the May 1991 overview of CCC's financial history, prepared by Development Director Elaine Jones.

<sup>23</sup> *Foundation News*, "Centering on the Underdog" by Roger M. Williams, Volume 28, Number 5, September/October 1987.

<sup>24</sup> The Atlantic Philanthropies had funded CCC anonymously for years. It was only in the 2000s that their support became public.

<sup>25</sup> Today Ed Gramlich works for the National Low Income Housing Coalition.

<sup>26</sup> The Filer Commission was instituted by John D. Rockefeller, III, House Ways and Means Chairman Wilbur D. Mills, Secretary of the Treasury George P. Shultz, and Under Secretary William E. Simon. <http://www.ulib.iupui.edu/special/philcoll/coll/mss024.html>

<sup>27</sup> "Charitable Fundraising in the Workplace: The Role of Alternative Funds and Federations in Supporting Nonprofit Change," published by National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy, January 2007.

<sup>28</sup> <http://www.ruralco.org>

<sup>29</sup> The Proteus Fund is a public charity that supports progressive organizations and causes.

<sup>30</sup> Natalie Spingarn, "Tightening the Belt and the Agenda: A Re-Assessment of Performance of the Center for Community Change," Ford Foundation, January 1974.

## The 1980s

<sup>31</sup> <http://americasbesthistory.home.att.net/abhtimeline1980.html>

<sup>32</sup> Peter Dreier, "Reagan's Legacy: Homelessness in America," *Shelterforce Online*, May/June 2004.

<sup>33</sup> Despite the similar names, the Coalition on Human Needs was a separate organization from the Coalition on Human Needs and Budget Priorities, founded in the 1970s.

<sup>34</sup> John Carr is now Secretary of the Department of Social Development and World Peace for the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.

<sup>35</sup> Today, Emily Gantz McKay is founder and president of Mosaica, The Center for Nonprofit Development and Pluralism.

<sup>36</sup> Tim Saasta, "Twenty-Five Years of Community Change," Center for Community Change, 1992.

<sup>37</sup> <http://americasbesthistory.home.att.net/abhtimeline1980.html>

- <sup>38</sup> The National Citizens Monitoring Project was phased out in 1986 because CCC lacked the funds to continue it. However, the Center was able to launch a project to monitor whether low-income communities in 10 cities were receiving their fair share of public subsidy funds. This project was underwritten by the American Can Company, now Primerica. (Minutes from CCC board of directors meeting, September 1985.)
- <sup>39</sup> Today, John Musick heads the Michigan Organizing Project, which plays a leadership role in many of CCC's national initiatives.
- <sup>40</sup> Tim Saasta, "Twenty-Five Years of Community Change," Center for Community Change, 1992.
- <sup>41</sup> Roger M. Williams, "Centering on the Underdog," *Foundation News*, September/October 1987.
- <sup>42</sup> CCC's building played a cameo role in Mary Kay Ricks' article, "A Passage to Freedom," published in the *Washington Post Magazine* on February 17, 2002. Ricks' book on the same subject, Escape on the Pearl: The Heroic Bid for Freedom on the Underground Railroad, was published in 2007.
- <sup>43</sup> Peter Dreier, "Reagan's Legacy: Homelessness in America," *Shelterforce Online*, May/June 2004.
- <sup>44</sup> Marilyn Melkonian, then president of Telesis Inc. and former Deputy Assistant Secretary of HUD and a member of the "Rouse Commission" National Housing Task Force, in a presentation to CCC's board of directors in June 1988.
- <sup>45</sup> Tim Saasta, "Twenty-Five Years of Community Change," Center for Community Change, 1992.
- <sup>46</sup> Dreier.
- <sup>47</sup> Dreier, referring to Reagan's 1984 appearance on "Good Morning America."
- <sup>48</sup> Zak Metger and Tim Saasta, "How to Save and Improve Public Housing," an action guide published by CCC in 1994.
- <sup>49</sup> Natalie Spingarn, "Tightening the Belt and the Agenda: A Re-Assessment of Performance of the Center for Community Change," Ford Foundation, January 1974.
- <sup>50</sup> Metger and Saasta.
- <sup>51</sup> Marilyn Melkonian, then president of Telesis Inc. and former Deputy Assistant Secretary of HUD and a member of the "Rouse Commission" National Housing Task Force, in a presentation to CCC's board of directors, June 1988.
- <sup>52</sup> Tim Saasta, "Twenty-Five Years of Community Change," Center for Community Change, 1992.
- <sup>53</sup> This is how Bill Faith, chair of the board of directors of the National Low Income Housing Coalition, described Mary Brooks in his testimony to the U.S. House of Representatives in April, 2002.
- <sup>54</sup> Kim Herman, Executive Director Washington State Housing Finance Commission, "My View," December 2005 newsletter ([www.wshfc.org/Newsletter/Dec2005/index.htm](http://www.wshfc.org/Newsletter/Dec2005/index.htm)). Historical description of the Washington state housing trust fund is based on his article.
- <sup>55</sup> FieldWorks, a newsletter from HUD's Office of Policy Development and Research, January/February 1998.
- <sup>56</sup> Shelterforce Online, Sept/Oct 2000 (<http://www.nhi.org/online/issues/113/newsandviews2.html>).
- <sup>57</sup> Minutes from CCC board meeting January 1989.
- <sup>58</sup> Tim Saasta, "Twenty-Five Years of Community Change," Center for Community Change, 1992.
- <sup>59</sup> Minutes from CCC board meeting, September 1989.
- <sup>60</sup> Tim Saasta, "Twenty-Five Years of Community Change," Center for Community Change, 1992.
- <sup>61</sup> Examples from [http://womenshistory.about.com/od/aframwomentimeline/a/aaw1980\\_time.htm](http://womenshistory.about.com/od/aframwomentimeline/a/aaw1980_time.htm)
- <sup>62</sup> Edith Wharton was the first woman to do so, in 1921. ([www.teachervision.fen.com/womens-history/award-winners/5003.html](http://www.teachervision.fen.com/womens-history/award-winners/5003.html))
- <sup>63</sup> Perhaps not coincidentally, in 1982 only 18.5% of state legislators were women. ([www.caew.rutgers.edu/Facts/StLegHistory/stleghist.pdf](http://www.caew.rutgers.edu/Facts/StLegHistory/stleghist.pdf)) By 2007, the percentage of women in state legislatures had grown to a meager 23.5%. ([www.caew.rutgers.edu/Facts.html#leg](http://www.caew.rutgers.edu/Facts.html#leg))
- <sup>64</sup> [www.iwpr.org/pdf/C353.pdf](http://www.iwpr.org/pdf/C353.pdf)
- <sup>65</sup> Nicole Hollander, *Mercy, It's the Revolution and I'm in my Bathrobe*, 1982.
- <sup>66</sup> Tim Saasta, "Twenty-Five Years of Community Change," Center for Community Change, 1992.
- <sup>67</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>68</sup> <http://www.grass-roots.org/usa/watermark.shtml>
- <sup>69</sup> <http://americasbesthistory.home.att.net/abhtimeline1980.html>

## The 1990s

- <sup>70</sup> Quote from CCC brochure, "The Other America is Growing Again," 1985.
- <sup>71</sup> <http://www.gpoaccess.gov/usbudget/fy02/pdf/guide.pdf>
- <sup>72</sup> Zak Metger and Tim Saasta, "How to Save and Improve Public Housing," an action guide published by CCC in 1994.
- <sup>73</sup> "Community Change" Newsletter, Winter/Spring 1991.
- <sup>74</sup> "Community Change" Newsletter, Summer 1994.
- <sup>75</sup> Minutes from CCC board meeting September 1990.
- <sup>76</sup> Minutes from CCC board meeting June 1992.
- <sup>77</sup> This national organization would later change its name to ENPHRONT: Everywhere and Now, Public Housing Residents Organizing Nationally Together.
- <sup>78</sup> Tim Saasta, "Twenty-Five Years of Community Change," Center for Community Change, 1992.
- <sup>79</sup> Jim Crogan, *LA Weekly News*, April 24, 2002.
- <sup>80</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1992\\_Los\\_Angeles\\_riots](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1992_Los_Angeles_riots)

<sup>81</sup> Today Carla Dartis is Senior Vice President and Managing Director of the Tides Center.

<sup>82</sup> Minutes from CCC board meeting September 1993.

<sup>83</sup> Dave Beckwith now directs the Needmor Fund.

<sup>84</sup> [http://www.familiesonlinemagazine.com/child-support/geraldine\\_jensen.html](http://www.familiesonlinemagazine.com/child-support/geraldine_jensen.html)

<sup>85</sup> Tim Saasta, "Twenty-Five Years of Community Change," Center for Community Change, 1992.

<sup>86</sup> Minutes from CCC board meeting June 1993.

<sup>87</sup> Staff report from Rick Devine 1994.

<sup>88</sup> Minutes from CCC board meeting June 1993.

<sup>89</sup> Minutes from CCC board meeting June 1994.

<sup>90</sup> "Community Change" Newsletter, Summer 1994.

<sup>91</sup> From list of CBOs assisted by CCC in "Comments on New Strategic Plan: Interviews with Selected Organizations," January 1995 by Patricia Kelly.

<sup>92</sup> "Keeping Hope Alive in Poor Communities," CCC brochure.

<sup>93</sup> Today Lenora Bush Reese serves on the board of CCC.

<sup>94</sup> Rich Stolz, "Race, Poverty and Transportation," newsletter of the Poverty and Race Action Research Council, March/April 2000.

<sup>95</sup> Neal Pierce, *Washington Post*, July 23, 2000.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid.

<sup>97</sup> "Advocating for Transit through Partnership: Coalition Stories from Across America" <http://www.odyssey.org/coalition/21.pdf>.

<sup>98</sup> "Center for Community Change" Newsletter, Volume 3, Issue 2, 1998.

<sup>99</sup> CCC annual report 1999-2000.

<sup>100</sup> Minutes from CCC board meeting January 1995.

<sup>101</sup> Today Rachel Gragg is the Federal Policy Director of the Workforce Alliance and a co-founder of Inclusion.

<sup>102</sup> Today Margy Waller is a co-founder of Inclusion and the Director of The Mobility Agenda.

<sup>103</sup> Rachel Gragg and Margy Waller, "Welfare Reform, 10 Years After," *The Boston Globe*, August 22, 2006.

<sup>104</sup> "Center for Community Change" Newsletter, Volume 3, Issue 1, 1997.

<sup>105</sup> Today Ron Haskins is a Senior Fellow, Economic Studies and Co-Director of the Center on Children and Families at the Brookings Institution.

<sup>106</sup> Minutes from CCC board meeting January 1998.

<sup>107</sup> It turned out CCC was not Pablo's only pulpit. To this day he continues to exhort and critique the philanthropic community.

## The 2000s

<sup>108</sup> Minutes from CCC board meeting, June 2001.

<sup>109</sup> *Washington Post*, March 10, 2002.

<sup>110</sup> Minutes from CCC board meeting, June 2001.

<sup>111</sup> Executive Director's report to the Board of Directors, May 2000.

<sup>112</sup> Minutes from CCC board meeting, February 2001.

<sup>113</sup> CCC 1999-2000 annual report.

<sup>114</sup> CCC Executive Director's report, May 2001.

<sup>115</sup> Today Andy Mott leads the Community Learning Project, which he founded.

<sup>116</sup> CCC Executive Director's report, May 2003.

<sup>117</sup> Natalie Spingarn, "Tightening the Belt and the Agenda: A Re-Assessment of Performance of the Center for Community Change," Ford Foundation, January 1974.

<sup>118</sup> CCC News, Winter 2003.

<sup>119</sup> CCC News, Spring 2004.

<sup>120</sup> CCC annual report 2004.

<sup>121</sup> Today Ron Dellums is the Mayor of Oakland, California.

<sup>122</sup> All presidential candidates from both parties were invited. These five were the candidates who confirmed their participation by CCC's stated deadline. Senator Clinton ended up participating by phone, as a storm had closed the Des Moines airport.

## CCC Board Members 2008

**Heather Booth**  
Director of Health Care  
Reform Campaign  
AFL-CIO  
Washington, DC

**Tom Chabolla**  
Assistant to the President  
Service Employees  
International Union  
Washington, DC

**Bill Dempsey**  
Director  
Capital Stewardship Program  
United Food and Commercial  
Workers Union  
Washington, DC

**Patty Dinner**  
Consultant  
San Francisco, CA

**Sara Gould**  
President & CEO  
Ms. Foundation for Women  
New York, NY

**Pronita Gupta**  
Director of Programs  
Women Donors Network  
Oakland, CA

**Jonathan Heller**  
Project Director  
Human Impact Partners  
Berkeley, CA

**Alan Jenkins**  
Executive Director  
The Opportunity Agenda  
New York, NY

**Madeline Lee**  
Consultant  
Madeline Lee  
Consulting Services  
New York, NY

**Paulette Meyer**  
Chair  
Equal Rights Advocates  
San Francisco, CA

**Cecilia Muñoz**  
Vice President  
National Council of La Raza  
Washington, DC

**Manuel Pastor Jr.**  
Professor of Geography and American Studies & Ethnicity  
Director, Program for Environmental  
and Regional Equity  
USC Department of Geography  
Los Angeles, CA

**Lenora Bush Reese**  
Consultant  
Columbia, SC

**Frank Sanchez**  
Senior Program Officer  
The Needmor Fund  
Roswell, NM

**Phil Tom**  
Associate  
Small Church & Community  
Ministry Office  
Presbyterian Church (USA)  
Louisville, KY

**Dorian T. Warren**  
Assistant Professor of International  
& Public Affairs  
Columbia University  
New York, NY

## CCC Board Members Over the Years

This is a partial list of people who have served on the board of the Center for Community Change since 1968.\*

Michael Ansara  
Polly Baca  
Charles Bannerman  
Veronica Barela  
Harriet Barlow  
Msgr. Geno Baroni  
Sydney D. Beane  
Julian Bond  
Richard Boone  
Edwin W. Booth  
Heather Booth  
James M. Boucher  
Arthur Brazier  
John Carr  
Tom Chabolla  
Abram Chayes  
Gordon Chin  
Gale Cincotta  
Mike Clark  
Roger Clay  
Jack Conway  
Michael Cortes  
Chuck Daly  
Amy Dean  
Ron Dellums  
Bill Dempsey  
Cleveland Dennard  
William Moore Dietel  
Patricia Dinner

John Doar  
Rebecca Doggett  
Fred Dutton  
Maria Elena Durazo  
Marian Wright Edelman  
Peter B. Edelman  
Henry J. Fernandez  
Sandra Ferniza  
Irma Flores-Gonzales  
Jane E. Fox-Johnson  
Douglas Fraser  
Herman Gallegos  
Carolyn Farrow Garland  
Peter Goldmark Jr.  
Elinor Gordon  
Sara Gould  
Ron Gryzwinski  
Pronita Gupta  
Jean Hardisty  
LaDonna Harris  
Jonathan Heller  
Wade Henderson  
Andrew Hernandez  
Gracia M. Hillman  
Alan Jenkins  
Wendy S. Johnson  
Vernon Jordan  
Kevin Kelly  
Rory Kennedy

Marie Kirkley-Bey  
Winona LaDuke  
Robert Larson  
Mary M. Lassen  
Madeline Lee  
John R. Lewis  
James Liebig  
Frank Mankiewicz  
Burke Marshall  
Claude Martinez  
Aleyamma Mathew  
Robert McKay  
Margaret McNeill  
Alex Mecure  
Segundo Mercado-Llorens  
Paulette Meyer  
Martin Meyerson  
Denise Mitchell  
Ginny Montes  
R. Susan Motley  
Mary Mountcastle  
Cecilia Muñoz  
Kenneth Neigh  
Louis Nuñez  
Denise Padin-Collazo  
Larry Parks  
Manuel Pastor  
Albert Peña  
Janice Petrovich

Channing Phillips  
Hugh Price  
Phyllis Quan  
David Ramage  
Lenora Bush Reese  
Walter Reuther  
Benson F. Roberts  
Frank Sanchez  
Steve Sands  
Edwin F. Shelley  
Ron Shiffman  
Adele Smith Simmons  
Barbara Wilson Skinner  
Phil Sorensen  
Neil Sullivan  
Phil Tom  
Maria Varela  
William Velasquez  
Lucius Walker  
Betty Wilson  
Robert Woodson  
Linda Reyna Yanez  
Paul Ylvisaker  
Raul Yzaguirre

\*We apologize for any  
errors or omissions.



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