

At The

CROSSROADS

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Alysia Tate, George Pillsbury, Cook County Clerk David Orr and Dorian Warren engage in a dialogue about electoral politics at the fall program, "Make Your Vote Count."

A CASE FOR RENEWED POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

On November 15, 2004 Crossroads Fund convened a public gathering called "Make Your Vote Count." We have since continued the conversation with our board, grantees and community leaders who are interested in social justice and systems change and in exploring the role of electoral politics in the social change arena.

We take some consolation living in a "blue" state where we delivered a huge turnout at the polls and elected Barak Obama to the U.S. Senate. But how content can we be with the reality of municipal elections here in Chicago?

What Happened to "Early and Often"?

Chicago is known historically as a political town rich with civic engagement. In recent years however the turnout for municipal elections has declined sharply. For example, in the period between 1947 and 1989, an average of 63% of registered voters cast ballots. From 1991 through the election of 2003 an average of only 41% of registered voters cast ballots. Mayor Daley was elected in 2003 in an election where only 34% of registered voters participated, and only 25% of registered voters cast a ballot for Daley. Compare that with 88% of registered voters for Barak Obama and 81% for John Kerry in 2004.

Non-voters are easy to blame — after all, if they don't vote, there will be no change in elected officials, right? Too easy. A slew of electoral rules and regulations deter individuals from political participation, and they don't start or stop at the ballot box.

For example, look at Chicago mayoral elections. *The Chicago Tribune* recently reported, "Being mayor of Chicago may be a tough job, but becoming mayor of Chicago is almost tougher." The article reveals that in Chicago, to appear on the ballot for mayor one must collect 25,000 signatures. Compare this to 7,500 for mayor of New York City, 1,000 for mayor of Los Angeles, 5,500 for U.S. Senate and 600 for Congress.

Our Idea of the "City That Works"

Clearly some changes in voting rules and regulations are in order. Cook County Clerk David Orr suggested a list of ten changes that would make elections more accessible (*Chicago Sun-Times* Editorial, Dec. 6, 2004). We also need to do a better job of demanding accountability. The best elected officials admit that without an informed and engaged citizenry — a push from the outside — it is very difficult to make change on the inside.

We are not making a case for a return to the old Chicago adage, "Vote early and often."

Ours is a case for educated and active political participation. There are many examples of progressive changes in city policies. Community activists and advocates designed policy proposals and found the support in the streets and in City Council to win a tenants bill of rights (1986), accessibility on the CTA (1984) and a day labor ordinance (2002). In 1983 Harold Washington was elected mayor with 52% of the vote (82% of registered voters participated) ushering in a brief era of open door policies at City Hall.

The last two presidential elections have caused public furor and debate over the question of how fairly our democracy is run with regard to election practices and campaign finance rules. At Crossroads Fund we are encouraging a discussion about democracy and its application in Chicago. There are a number of paths to take and questions to be addressed on the road to revitalizing participation in Chicago politics. We understand that electoral politics is only one tool in the big toolbox of civic engagement for social change — but it's an important one, and it seems that in Chicago we have opted out. In the months to come, look for programs and special projects about political participation.

It's time to build a new Chicago. Please join us.

CROSSROADS FUND CELEBRATES SEEDS OF CHANGE

ABOUT CROSSROADS FUND

Crossroads Fund supports community organizations working on issues of social and economic justice in the Chicago area. A public foundation, Crossroads Fund pools the resources of individuals, foundations and businesses, building a broad base of support for grassroots organizations working for social change.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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CROSSROADS FUND is a member of the Funding Exchange (FEX), a national network of locally-based community foundations committed to supporting grassroots groups that address critical issues in their regions. For more information, see www.fex.org.

On April 24, 2005, more than 500 supporters gathered at the new McCormick Tribune Campus Center at the Illinois Institute of Technology, to rejoice in our successes and honor the contributions of members of our communities, including Ron Sable Award for Activism winners Illinois Senate President Emil Jones, Jr., Senator Carol Ronen, and Representative Larry McKeon and grantee recipient Beyondmedia Education.



Ron Sable Award for Activism recipients Senator Carol Ronen and Illinois Senate President Emil Jones, Jr.



Kevin Bogart, Kathryn Stell, and board member Gabe Rodriguez enjoy the event.



Lisa Yun Lee, event co-chair.



Beyondmedia Executive Director Salome Chasnoff accepts the Ron Sable Award for Activism on behalf of the organization.

WELCOME NEW BOARD AND STAFF MEMBERS

Welcome New Board Members

Susana Vasquez is Deputy Director of the New Communities Program at LISC/Chicago. She has more than ten years experience working with community based organizations in the areas of organizing, fundraising and organizational development, including with the Metropolitan Tenants Organization and The Resurrection Project.



Martha Wright recently completed yoga instructor training at Kripalu Center for Yoga and Health in Lenox, MA. She previously served as Program Officer for the Mayer & Morris Kaplan Family Foundation and worked for the Elizabeth Morse Charitable Trust. Martha has been involved in Chicago's nonprofit community for ten years.



And New Program Officer Jane Kimondo

Jane comments about her job: "Crossroads Fund is unique in its funding—it takes chances on organizations that are on a path to achieving great things. I'm excited to be a part of such admirable work."

Jane worked in programming at Chicago Foundation for Women for four years. She holds Master's degrees in Organizational Development and Human Resources and a Certificate of Advanced Study in Philanthropy & Nonprofit Sector from Loyola University Chicago and has extensive international and nonprofit experience in both Chicago and her native country, Kenya.



LEAVE A LEGACY FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE AS A CROSSROADS FUND VISIONARY

When you give to Crossroads Fund today, you make an investment in our city and our communities now. If you remember Crossroads Fund as a beneficiary of your estate plan, you extend your investment in social justice into the future and, you become a **CROSSROADS FUND VISIONARY**.

As a grantmaking institution, Crossroads Fund is an ideal choice for a charitable bequest because we respond to changing community

needs. Unlike a gift to a single-service agency, a gift to Crossroads Fund supports a wide spectrum of organizations working to address community issues.

Planning for your future, and the future of our city, is important. **More than 60% of people die without leaving a will**, which means that the state ends up making important decisions about who inherits and where the fruits of a lifetime are spent. The state doesn't care about our progressive ideals, so it is critical to make a plan that reflects your values.

We invite you to envision a new Chicago. If you are interested in learning more about making a planned gift to Crossroads Fund and becoming a **VISIONARY**, please contact Jeanne Kracher, Executive Director at 773.227.7676 or jeanne@crossroadsfund.org.



*"I can't add my name onto the fight when I'm gone.
So I guess I'll have to do it when I'm here"*

PHIL OCHS, When I'm Gone

"Through making Crossroads Fund a beneficiary of our will, we can do it when we're here and when we're gone."

**BILL BARCLAY
& PEG STROBEL**
Crossroads Fund Donors

THANK YOU CROSSROADS FUND VISIONARIES

... for your foresight in naming Crossroads Fund in your will or estate plan, making a difference for social justice in the future!

Bill Barclay & Peg Strobel
Harry Chandler
Ferd Eggan
Neena Hemmady
Barbara Kemmis
Nancy Fleck Myers

CROSSROADS FUND HOLDS SPECIAL WORKSHOP SERIES — BEYOND DEATH & TAXES: PLANNING FOR YOUR FUTURE AND THE FUTURE OF OUR CITY

Workshop #1: *More for You, the Causes You Care About, and Less for the Tax Man* occurred on September 10, 2005.

Financial Planner Drake Zimmerman gave an overview with a goal of assisting participants to manage their money so there is more available to take care of their needs, while increasing the amount available to give to the causes they believe in.

This workshop also included a brief presentation about ShoreBank.

Workshop #2: *Thinking Long-Term: Smart Planning to Provide for What You Care About*

Attorney Mary York of Mulryan & York will explain why everyone should have a will and estate plan, and how to approach making a plan. She will discuss how to provide for the things that you care about — family, loved ones, friends, and the causes important to you. Mary has extensive experience working with many communities, including lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgendered individuals.



Socially Responsible Financial Planner Drake Zimmerman talks with Crossroads Fund friends about how to manage their money in order to have more to give away to the causes they care about.

For more information, call 773.227.7676 or e-mail sheila@crossroadsfund.org

BECOME A PARTNER IN CREATING SOCIAL CHANGE

When you give to Crossroads Fund, your gift is pooled with others and becomes a significant resource to foster social change in Chicago and beyond. Here are some ways you can give to Crossroads Fund:

- 2♥ **ATTEND OUR ANNUAL BENEFIT** – and bring friends!
- 2♥ **WRITE A CHECK** and return it in the enclosed remittance envelope. Find out if your employer matches contributions – that is an easy way to make your gift go much further.
- 2♥ **BECOME A SUSTAINER** and have your contribution deducted from your credit card monthly or quarterly. As a sustainer, you can take pride in knowing that you are one of our most reliable sources of support.
- 2♥ **CONTRIBUTE ONLINE** via our secure service. It's quick, convenient and safe – just log on to www.crossroadsfund.org

- 2♥ **HONOR OR REMEMBER SOMEONE SPECIAL** with a gift in their name.
- 2♥ **CO-HOST A HOUSE PARTY** and help us spread the word about the good work of Crossroads Fund to your colleagues, friends and family.
- 2♥ **REMEMBER CROSSROADS FUND IN YOUR WILL, INSURANCE OR RETIREMENT PLAN** all three are easy ways to have a lasting impact for social justice.
- 2♥ **OPEN A DONOR ADVISED FUND** and have an impact on an issue important to you.
- 2♥ **ESTABLISH A CHARITABLE TRUST** to benefit Crossroads Fund, and reduce your tax burden.



Amalia McCallister, Hyunji Ward, and Hyunwoo Ward planting Seeds of Change at the annual benefit in 2005.

SAVE THE DATE

Friday, March 24, 2006

6:30–9:30 p.m.

SEEDS OF CHANGE

at the Chicago Cultural Center

77 E. Randolph St.

Join other friends and supporters to celebrate the hard work of Crossroads Fund and our grantees and partners. Hope to see you there!

CROSSROADS FUND

change, not charity

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NEW FUNDING DEADLINE

The new grant deadline for Crossroads' Seed Fund is **MARCH 1, 2006**.

See website for more details:
www.crossroadsfund.org