

CROSSROADS FUND

Change, not charity

MEMBER OF THE FUNDING EXCHANGE

www.CrossroadsFund.org

Spring 2001

¡Derechos Humanos Ahora! Immigrants Getting Organized in Chicago

—By Becky Belcore

No es justo," says Carmen Guzmán', sitting in the cramped offices of the Latino Union in the Back of the Yards neighborhood of Chicago. The small but determined woman came to Chicago from Michoacán, México about three years ago. "They always ask for us, the 'illegals.' They need us, but we have no rights"² she says, speaking about her experience as a day laborer in Chicago. Her words reveal a common sentiment in immigrant communities. Even Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan has recognized the importance of immigrants to the U.S. economy. According to Greenspan, "imbalance in the labor markets perhaps may have even more serious implications for inflation pressure. There is an effective limit to new hiring, unless immigration is uncapped."

The National Academy of Sciences (NAS) documented immigrant workers' contributions to the U.S. economy in a 1997 study. According to the study, immigrants and their children add about \$10 billion to the economy each year. Immigrant households pay an estimated \$133 billion in direct taxes to federal, state and local governments. Most immigrants who arrive in the U.S. are over 18, meaning

that the cost of education and upbringing were borne by the native country, not the U.S. The windfall to the U.S. of obtaining this human capital at relatively little expense to American taxpayers is roughly \$1.43 trillion. And of course, the cultural contributions of immigrant communities cannot be measured in dollars and cents.

Yet, despite this tacit recognition of the importance of immigrants to the U.S. economy, the official policies of the U.S. government have been particularly punitive in recent years. The welfare reform laws of 1996 took away access to social benefits even for legal immigrants. The Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act closed opportunities for undocumented immigrants to adjust their status, expanded the grounds for deporting even long-term resident immigrants, and stripped immigrants of many due process rights and access to the courts.

The devastating effects of these federal policies are in our own back yards, seen in the rampant exploitation of immigrant workers in factories in and around Chicago. Immigrant workers, and particularly undocumented immigrants, often find themselves in sweatshop conditions, working with dangerous machines or chemicals without proper

continued on page 6



Marching to demand human rights.

About Crossroads

The Crossroads Fund is a public foundation that raises money to support organizations working on issues of social and economic justice. The Fund distributes money to grassroots groups throughout the Chicago metropolitan area. Crossroads funds broadly, but has identified some priority interests: low-income communities, civil and human rights (e.g., women, lesbian and gay), workers' rights, the environment, multi-racial efforts, and international solidarity work. Grants up to \$7,000 are made during biannual grant cycles to organizations with previous fiscal year expenses under \$150,000. Crossroads' grants provide both early start-up money and sustaining support.

Since awarding its first grants in 1981, Crossroads has been an important link between donors and activists with a shared commitment to a more just society. To insure that our grants have the greatest impact, the Crossroads board consists primarily of community members who are active on a broad range of social issues.

New Guidelines

Crossroads is currently expanding its grants programs and revising grant guidelines. Be on the lookout for new information in July!

For more information, visit our website at www.CrossroadsFund.org or contact the office at (773) 227-7676.



Board & Staff News

Board member **LAWRENCE BENITO** and his wife Betsy had a gorgeous baby girl, Celia Amijan Benito, on January 31. Celia is pictured attending her first Crossroads Fund event—a house party at board member **BARBARA RANSBY'S** featuring author **CHUCK COLLINS** (*Robin Hood Was Right* and *Economic Apartheid in America*).

Barbara and her husband, Peter Sporn, hosted a delicious brunch and great discussion with **CHUCK COLLINS** and about 40 guests. It was a good opportunity for people to talk about the national work of Chuck's organization **UNITED FOR A FAIR ECONOMY**, and to link work at the national level with local efforts that the Crossroads Fund supports.



Lawrence, Betsy and Celia Amijan Benito.

Crossroads Fund Board elections just took place in January. Our new officers are **STEVEN FEUERSTEIN** (President), **LAWRENCE BENITO** (Vice-President), **HARRY CHANDLER** (Treasurer), and **TOM WILSON** (Secretary). We thank **GERARDO MONTEMAYOR** for his important leadership as Board President.

We're very lucky to have him stay on for another board term as co-chair of the Development Committee with **RHODA RAE GUTIERREZ**. The Grantmaking Committee is being led by returning co-chair **NEENA HEMMADY** and new co-chair **PRUDENCE BROWNE**.

Thanks to our community volunteers who participated in the last grant cycle: **DANIEL ASH, MARY SCOTT BORIA, DOROTHY BURGE, BEA BURGOS, LESLIE CORBETT, TAMMY KO ROBINSON, RAHUL SHARMA,** and **AARON SOJOURNER**. We

also thank **BARBARA BEJNA** and **SHIRLEE JENSEN** for volunteering many hours of creative work.

We are delighted to have Urban Studies student, **KAREN KINSLOW** working with us this term. Karen is from Grinnell College in Iowa and will be with us through June. More good news—**CLARE GOLDEN**, our half-time intern from SSA at the University of Chicago, has joined the staff for the other half of her week as Development Associate.

From the Executive Director

Change, Not Charity..we display that phrase prominently on the front of every Crossroads newsletter and on every piece of letterhead we send out. Those three words simply express what the Crossroads Fund and the other members of the national Funding Exchange support.

But what does "Change, Not Charity" mean?

Charity focuses on individual needs. Change funding is focused on institutions, systems and policies. Progressive social change insists on addressing the root causes of problems as opposed to the alleviation of the symptoms.

In 1999 in the U.S., \$175 billion was given to charity. Only 13% went directly to public benefit and human service programs and only 2 to 4% went to support social change efforts. The lion's share went to churches, mainstream arts, elite private colleges and universities, and hospitals.

Over the last twenty years, the Crossroads Fund has given away over \$3 million to hundreds of groups from all over Chicago that are working to create change. Crossroads has created a reliable pool of resources for people in communities who are striving to make our society just, fair, and true to democratic values. That kind of change does not happen overnight. It takes years of commitment and many levels of activity. And it takes a lot of money.

The Crossroads Fund board and staff have spent the last year reflecting on our two decades of work and looking ahead to where we'd like to be when we celebrate our thirtieth anniversary. Our strategic planning process left us more committed than ever



Peter Sporn, Barbara Ransby and Chuck Collins.

to the idea of "Change, Not Charity". We also identified three main objectives for the Crossroads Fund:

- Give away more money to more groups.
- Broaden grantmaking to ensure that multiple paths to change are pursued and developed.
- Help build infrastructure that will sustain coordinated, cross-boundary organizing.

Progressive social change ideas are often initially greeted by the larger society as dangerously radical or outrageously impractical. The forty hour work week—abolition of slavery and child labor—women's suffrage—minimum wage and unemployment insurance—civil rights—all of these and more were the results of many years of struggle in progressive social change movements.

The groups the Crossroads Fund supports are in their own processes of working for change. It's up to us as a progressive funder to ensure that money is available to sustain the long days of work ahead. Crossroads grants are long-term investments for social change. By making a contribution to the Crossroads Fund you are truly investing in "Change, Not Charity".

CROSSROADS FUND NEWSLETTER

Spring 2001

Managing Editor

Clare Golden

Writing

Jeanne Kracher,

Becky Belcore, Clare Golden

Design

Nicole Ferentz

Printing

Salsedo Press

Mailing

Spread the News

CROSSROADS FUND

3411 W. Diversey, Suite 20

Chicago, Illinois 60647-1245

Tel: (773) 227-7676 Fax: (773) 227-7790

email: info@crossroadsfund.org

www.CrossroadsFund.org

Estate Tax Repeal?

The Crossroads Fund was honored to have **CHUCK COLLINS** (co-author of *Robin Hood Was Right* and *Economic Apartheid in America*, and co-director of Boston based **UNITED FOR A FAIR ECONOMY**) visit us here in Chicago for a few days. UFE's most recent campaign organized 650 millionaires to sign onto a petition against the repeal of the estate tax proposed by President George W. Bush. This groundswell of millionaires has temporarily turned back the repeal. The following UFE fact sheet gives a great overview of the issues around the estate tax. Be sure to call your local US Senator to let them know that the estate tax should not be repealed.

WHEN WAS THE ESTATE TAX ENACTED?

The estate tax was enacted in 1916 with broad public approval. Early supporters of estate taxes included Teddy Roosevelt, William Howard Taft and Andrew Carnegie.

WHY DO WE NEED THE ESTATE TAX?

The estate tax raises a significant amount of money from only the wealthiest taxpayers. It encourages charitable giving and promotes America's core economic and democratic values.

WHAT'S WRONG WITH REPEALING THE ESTATE TAX?

The burden of paying for public services will shift to low and middle income taxpayers. States will lose billions in revenue, since many of them get a credit from the estate tax. Giant new loopholes will appear, permitting the very wealthy to avoid capital gains and other taxes they now pay. Overall, repealing the estate tax will further concentrate economic and political power in the hands of the richest 0.1% of American families.

HOW LARGE MUST AN ESTATE BE TO BE TAXED?

The net value of the estate must exceed \$675,000 in 2001 for an individual (the exemption will rise to \$1 million by 2006). Couples can exempt \$1.35 million from the estate tax in 2001 (rising to \$2 million by 2006). With planning, businesses can pass on \$5 million tax-free. For farms, the figure is \$8 million.

WHO PAYS THE ESTATE TAX?

The wealthiest 2% of Americans are the only ones who pay estate taxes. Half of all estate taxes are paid by the top one-tenth of one percent of all Americans.

HOW MUCH DOES THE ESTATE TAX RAISE EVERY YEAR?

In 1999, the estate tax raised \$28 billion. Estimates put the figure at \$30 billion for 2000. Nine cabinet departments—including Veterans' Affairs, Labor, Commerce, Agriculture, and Interior—have budgets smaller than \$30 billion.

IS THE ESTATE TAX A "DEATH TAX?"

No. 98% of Americans who die pass on their estate completely tax-free. Zero estate tax is charged on money left to a spouse or to charity.

I'VE HEARD THE ESTATE TAX TARGETS FAMILY FARMS AND BUSINESSES.

Not true. Only 3% of all estates taxed have farm or business assets totaling more than half of the estate. Is the estate tax killing family businesses? No. The small business sector has never been healthier. Family businesses can already take advantage of special estate tax breaks that are designed to allow businesses to continue operating.

BUT DOESN'T THE ESTATE TAX FORCE SOME BUSINESSES TO CLOSE?

Rarely. Family businesses are sold or closed for a variety of reasons, and the estate tax would rank near the bottom of the list. Often, other family members are not interested in running the business any longer. In any case, the estate tax can be modified to protect small businesses without repealing it entirely.

IS THE ESTATE TAX BREAKING UP FAMILY FARMS?

Again, rarely. Attorney and farm tax expert Neil Harl of Iowa State University has conducted over 1,500 estate tax seminars for farmers over the past 35 years. He says that he has never seen a farm sold because of estate taxes. There are special estate tax breaks for farms, including the ability to value farm land at less than market value. Many "farms" that

continued on page 7

Funding Exchange Member and Affiliate Funds

FUNDING EXCHANGE

666 Broadway, Suite 500
New York, NY 10012
(212) 529-5300

APPALACHIAN COMMUNITY FUND

(West Virginia & the Appalachian counties of Virginia, Kentucky, & Tennessee)
(423) 523-5783

BREAD & ROSES COMMUNITY FUND

(5-county region of greater Philadelphia & Camden, New Jersey)
(215) 731-1107

CHINOOK FUND

(Colorado)
(303) 455-6905

CROSSROADS FUND

(Metropolitan Chicago)
(773) 227-7676

FUND FOR SANTA BARBARA

(Santa Barbara County, California)
(805) 962-9164

FUND FOR SOUTHERN COMMUNITIES

(Georgia, North & South Carolina)
(404) 292-7600

HAYMARKET PEOPLE'S FUND

(New England)
(617) 522-7676

HEADWATERS FUND

(Minneapolis/St. Paul)
(612) 879-0602

LIBERTY HILL FOUNDATION

(Los Angeles County)
(310) 453-3611

MCKENZIE RIVER GATHERING FOUNDATION

(Oregon)
(541) 485-2790

NORTH STAR FUND

(New York City)
(212) 620-9110

THE PEOPLE'S FUND

(Hawaii)
(808) 526-2441

THREE RIVERS COMMUNITY FUND

(Southwestern Pennsylvania 10-county region)
(412) 243-9250

VANGUARD PUBLIC FOUNDATION

(San Francisco Bay area & Northern California)
(415) 487-2111

WISCONSIN COMMUNITY FUND

(Wisconsin)
(414) 225-9965

Visit the Funding Exchange and sister funds at
www.fex.org

Fall 2000 General Fund Grants

In January 2001, Crossroads Fund awarded \$85,000 to 19 Chicago area organizations working toward social, economic, and political justice.

BEYONDMEDIA EDUCATION facilitates media access for women and girls' social change initiatives through the collaborative development of videos, supporting



outreach materials and media workshops. Their Girls! Action! Media! project, an international collaboration of girls' social change initiatives, educates youth about the social conditions of girls and girls' activist solutions. The project includes production of a video, an interactive web site and a study guide.

\$5,000 (773) 973-2280 www.beyondmedia.org



Formed in 1998, the Chicago chapter of the **CAMPAIGN TO END THE DEATH PENALTY** is a group of activists and family members of death row inmates whose coordination of public forums, petitioning campaigns, and informational pickets helped win a moratorium on executions in Illinois. The experiences and stories of death row inmates and their families inform CEDP's outreach, education and activism to create social change.

\$7,000 (773) 489-5867 www.nodeathpenalty.org

CENTRO SIN FRONTERAS was founded 13 years ago by Mexican women in the West Town neighborhood, to promote justice, self-determination and community democracy. They incorporate bilingual education, defense of immigrants, Chiapas and freedom for Puerto Rican political prisoners, into the ongoing work of empowering a community base in West Town. They emphasize building Mexican/Puerto Rican unity in the fight for amnesty and justice for Vieques, and for the creation of a strong base for progressive Latino empowerment both in Chicago and nationally. \$3,000 (773) 772-8383

CENTRO DE DERECHOS HUMANOS "SIMON BOLIVAR" is a new group of Latino immigrants organizing in Elgin and neighboring suburbs to assert their civil and human rights. As well as organizing community forums

and mobilizing local churches and nonprofit groups, they are documenting human rights violations and collecting surveys about the social conditions affecting immigrants. Training community residents as Community Health and Human Rights Promoters, they plan to expand organizing to Dundee, Carpentersville and Hanover Park.

\$3,000 (847) 488-1421

COMITE EXIJIMOS JUSTICIA is an advocacy and investigative organization of families of prisoners that works to expose police misconduct and secure the release of their wrongfully convicted family and community members. They were instrumental in achieving the re-investigation and release of Angel Rodriguez, wrongfully convicted for murder—he had served over three years of a sixty year sentence when released. They are currently working on re-opening other cases of wrongful conviction and police misconduct. \$7,000 (773) 772-9117

COURAJ (COMMUNITY OF UPTOWN RESIDENTS FOR AFFORDABILITY AND JUSTICE) mobilizes residents in the Uptown neighborhood across issues such as gentrification and low cost housing, the police, education and the schools. In an ongoing battle over the use of five acres of vacant CTA property known as Wilson Yards, COURAJ is working to educate and organize large numbers of community residents—the outcome of this struggle will be critical in determining Uptown's future as a place where low and moderate income people can sustain and build community.

\$5,000 (773) 769-2085

HOMELESS ON THE MOVE FOR EQUALITY (H.O.M.E.) is an advocacy organization of people who are or have been homeless, taking action to end homelessness.



H.O.M.E. seeks to have homelessness eliminated as an actuality of poor people's lives, and eliminated as an impetus for maintaining an ongoing welfare industry. H.O.M.E. educates its membership to embellish and use the power they have; works to shatter myths about people who are homeless and educate the public that they can make a difference; and works to effect public policy. \$7,000 (312) 435-0225

ILLINOIS DEATH PENALTY MORATORIUM PROJECT began in 1998 as a coalition of activist, legal, religious and social groups to expose problems in the administration of the death penalty in Illinois and to demand a moratorium on executions while those problems are fully examined. The group celebrated an important victory in the moratorium announced in January 2000. Continuing disclosures of wrongful convictions, police errors and misconduct are fueling their ambitious grassroots educational and organizing campaign to achieve abolition by 2002.

\$7,000 (312) 849-2279

INSIGHT ARTS is a community based expansion arts organization in Rogers Park. Founded in 1991, their purpose is to encourage the creation of art work by



those traditionally shut out of the Chicago art world. Their programs include after school art education, contemporary art presenta-

tion, and resident ensembles. Insight Arts encourages its artists to create art that is anti-racist, anti-sexist, anti-homophobic and that expresses the experiences of their lives in the communities in which they live, go to school, and work.

\$5,000 (773) 973-1521

JANE ADDAMS SENIOR CAUCUS is a multi-issue, community based organization of older adults that identifies areas of concern and develops strategies for improving quality of seniors' lives. Campaigns include affordable housing for low-income seniors, multi-generational residential opportunities, and increasing access to home health care. JASC's planning, financing, and construction in Uptown of the Ruth Schrimm House, an 83-unit building for low-income seniors, reflects this group's dedication and effectiveness. \$7,000 (773) 404-6429

VIDEO MACHETE is a collective of youth, community activists, and community based artists that uses video as a tool for involving youth in an examination of their own lives and the world around them. The group provides video activism workshops and classes to youth in schools and youth-focused organizations as a means for consciousness-raising, popular edu-

cation, and action for social change. They also create, distribute and exhibit radical art and media such as websites, publications, public art projects, exhibitions, and video screenings.

\$4,000 (773) 506-9970 www.videomachete.org

LATINO UNION OF CHICAGO formed in March 2000 in the Back of the Yards area of southwest Chicago to educate and organize low-income and immigrant day/temporary laborers to demand decent pay, benefits and fair treatment. They advocate for public policy changes to stop exploitation of immigrants by day/temporary agencies, for an Amnesty program allowing undocumented workers to apply for legal residency, and for new regulations and enforcement of current laws to improve work conditions.

\$5,000 (773) 523-7350

WOMEN OF FAITH FOR PRISON JUSTICE is a network of women that collect data, disseminate information and address state legislation concerning the largely unmet needs of women incarcerated in Illinois prisons and of their children. Members collect data based on first-hand experiences either as former prisoners or in their ministries within the prison system. Information is compiled and distributed statewide—policy makers then receive recommendations from masses of informed people, forcing them to address issues.

\$4,000 (773) 468-2667

ORGANIZACION DE DERECHOS HUMANOS "LIBERTAD Y SOLIDARIDAD" is a new group of Latino immigrants in Melrose Park organizing around first-hand experiences with human and civil rights violations, particularly involving local police and the workplace. Current activities include distributing surveys and educational materials, organizing trainings and focus groups, and documenting local human and civil rights violations, to raise awareness and promote social and economic justice.

\$3,000 (708) 410-1707

TRANSGENESIS was founded in 1995 to respond to the needs of Chicago's transgendered community, particularly African Americans who comprise a highly under-served and marginalized sector of that community. Activities include education, peer support and referral, and advocacy. The group also addresses the issues of violence, harassment and discrimination against the transgendered community, including issues faced by sex trade workers who are transgendered.

\$3,000 (800) 805-4052 transgenesis@mailcity.com

PATHFINDERS PREVENTION AND EDUCATION FUND provides prevention and leadership training on Chicago's Westside to Black LGBT and questioning youth and



young adults, ages 13 to 35. PPEF works to equip constituencies to resist and fight back against racism and homophobia, while learning about human sex-

uality and safe sex. They are also developing a guild committed to advocacy, self-determination, and education of religious/community leaders, educators, family, and heterosexual counterparts.

\$2,000 (773) 533-5753

QUEER TO THE LEFT is a new group of progressive queers who present a critique of the growing distance between most LGBT organizations, versus the realities and needs of the vast majority of LGBTQ individuals. Working in coalition with community groups across such issues as affordable housing and police brutality, this group examines the role of the LGBT community in a range of social issues, particularly gentrification in Chicago. Funding will support the publication and distribution of a broadside.

\$2,000 (773) 506-1947 queertothelleft@onelist.com

SANKOFA COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND RESTORATION CENTER is a group of mothers of incarcerated individuals, organizing to advocate for changes in the prison and legal system and to provide assistance to families experiencing incarceration. Upcoming goals include development of an 800 number providing updated information about issues affecting families

of incarcerated individuals, purchase of a van, and other efforts to develop an infrastructure to lower the cost and increase communication with incarcerated family members. **\$3,000** (312) 226-5141

TEAMSTERS FOR A DEMOCRATIC UNION: CHICAGO is the local chapter of a national organization working for reforms and more equitable representation for local workers. They focus on outreach and one-to-one organizing of "forgotten" Teamsters, members receiving low-wages and who are mostly people of color and women. Upcoming plans include bi-lingual workshops on workers' rights issues, increasing availability of bi-lingual educational materials, and aggressive outreach, to put control into the hands of workers. **\$3,000** (773) 582-1049

Additional Grants (May 2000 to March 2001)

Donor Advised Grants

Barine Wiwa-Lawani	\$1,700
Nicaragua Solidarity Committee	\$3,000
National Committee to Free Puerto Rican Political Prisoners & POWs	\$3,124
New World Resource Center	\$10,150
Derechos Humanos-Arizona Border Rights Coalition	\$24,000
Chicago Committee to Free Mumia Abu-Jamal	\$1,000
Anonymous.	\$12,000
TOTAL	\$54,974

Technical Assistance Grants

Women in the Director's Chair.	\$1,000
--	---------

Emergency Grants

Campaign to End the Death Penalty.	\$500
Arab American Action Network.	\$500
National Committee to Free Puerto Rican Political Prisoners & POWs	\$500
WWW.47WARD.ORG	\$400
TOTAL	\$1,900

Derechos Humanos

continued from page 1

safety equipment. Many earn minimum wage, if that, and are denied time for lunch or bathroom breaks. Women are forced to tolerate sexual harassment. Complaints are met with threats to call "la migra," or to blacklist the worker.

The problems caused by this harsh and inconsistent reaction to immigration often seem overwhelming. However, several grassroots organizations supported by Crossroads are confronting these issues in their communities, in churches, in schools and, if necessary, in the streets. Each organization serves a unique population and must confront local issues, but they are united by the recognition of the need for a general amnesty, giving undocumented immigrants access to the same rights and protections as other contributing members of our society. On October 14, Crossroads grantees **CENTRO SIN FRONTERAS**, **THE LATINO UNION**, **CENTRO DE DERECHOS HUMANOS 'SIMON BOLIVAR'** and **ORGANIZACION DE DERECHOS HUMANOS 'LIBERTAD Y SOLIDARIDAD'** joined forces with a coalition of other community, church and labor organizations to bring over 10,000 people into the Federal Plaza in downtown Chicago in support of amnesty legislation. The bill, introduced by Congressman Luis Gutierrez, would grant a general amnesty to undocumented immigrants.

As the legislation makes its way through the U.S. Congress, **CENTRO SIN FRONTERAS** continues to mobilize the community on several fronts. Organizers are bringing information about amnesty to churches and schools across Chicago and have even secured a resolution of support from the National Association for Bilingual Education. And on May 1st, organizers at Centro Sin Fronteras plan to form a human chain down Ashland Avenue to draw attention to the struggle for amnesty.

While the larger struggle for a general amnesty moves forward, community organizers are also forced to struggle with the day to day impact of U.S. immigration policy. In the West Town offices of Centro Sin Fronteras, community residents seek help adjusting their immigration status through 245(i) before the deadline this April. Community members are mobilizing to put pressure on a hospital that



Congressman Luis Gutierrez at amnesty rally.

refuses to perform a necessary kidney transplant for a child because his father is undocumented. Members of Centro Sin Fronteras are even pushing for legislation on state and federal levels that would change the standard for minor or old criminal offenses leading to deportation and breakup of families.

At the Back of the Yards office of the **LATINO UNION**, Carmen Guzmán pulls a crumpled paycheck stub from her pocket. The stub reveals abuses common in the day labor industry. She is paid the minimum wage, but deductions of \$6.00 a day for transportation take her below the legal minimum. She is often sent to factories where workers are denied lunches or bathroom breaks and work with dangerous machinery. She has seen her share of crushed or chopped off fingers,

she says. She complains that she had not been paid for all the hours she had worked until the Latino Union stepped in. "That's why they ask for 'the illegals,'" she says. "They think we won't complain. But that's why the Latino Union is so important."

Indeed, the Latino Union is often the only recourse for day laborers in this neighborhood. The organization has worked hard to provide support for The Day Labor Fairness Act, sponsored by State Senator Miguel Del Valle in the Illinois Legislature, which provides for minimal regulation of the day labor industry. But volunteers in the office are busy with more immediate work of finding decent paying, permanent jobs. The Latino Union also serves to refer workers to jobs. The overhead that would typically go to the day labor agency (often as much as 30-40%) goes directly to the workers. Currently, three Chicago-based factories work with the Latino



Organizing for "Libertad y Solidaridad" in the suburbs.



Over 10,000 people gathered at Federal Plaza to support amnesty for all immigrants.

Union rather than day labor agencies. And when workers need additional skills to perform jobs, the Latino Union tries to find ways to provide them.

Latino Union volunteers even find time to collect food and money for the victims of the earthquake in El Salvador. The project is a reflection of the myriad of struggles faced by immigrants in Chicago, many whose immediate families are affected by disasters in their native countries.

The problems facing immigrant workers are not restricted to the city. A recent study by the **FUND FOR IMMIGRANTS AND REFUGEES (FIR)** has shown that many immigrants are moving directly to the suburbs around Chicago because job opportunities exist there. Immigrants are also pushed outward beyond the city limits as increasing gentrification depletes affordable housing formerly available in their inner-city neighborhoods. The result has been an increase in violations of human, civil and labor rights against these newly established immigrant communities, with no local resources to which individuals can turn for support and redress.

In response, Latino immigrants with firsthand experiences with these types of violations in the suburbs are getting organized. Crossroads grantee



Latino Union volunteer collecting donations for El Salvador earthquake victims.

CENTRO DE DERECHOS HUMANOS "SIMON BOLIVAR" was recently formed by Latino immigrants in Elgin to empower immigrants living in surrounding suburbs to assert their human and civil rights. The primary focus of the "Simon Bolivar" Center is to provide training and leadership development to community residents. These leaders then become Human Rights Promoters or Community Health Promoters who help to mobilize the community and community-based institutions in the struggle for social and economic justice.

Another Crossroads grantee, **ORGANIZACION DE DERECHOS HUMANOS "LIBERTAD Y SOLIDARIDAD,"** started up last year with leaders from the growing Latino immigrant community in Melrose Park, to educate community members about their human rights regarding healthcare, the workplace, immigration and education. According to the group's president Benigno Gomez, "People come from all different countries, but they don't know where to go or what to do if they have problems." The group distributes educational materials, holds forums on civil and labor rights, and documents abuses against members of their community. Current campaigns include documenting cases of excessive police force and exploitative working conditions in area factories. Gomez states, "Latinos in the suburbs are constantly told, 'if you don't have papers, you don't have rights. If you don't speak English, you don't have rights.' We say, you have rights, and we'll teach them to you in Spanish."

¹ *Fictional name used for publication.*

² *Italics represent translation from Spanish.*

Estate Tax

continued from page 3

owe estate taxes are actually vacation ranches owned by wealthy city dwellers. The estate tax can be modified to protect farms. Repeal is unnecessary.

DOES THE ESTATE TAX ENCOURAGE CHARITABLE GIVING?

Yes. A study by the Treasury Department found that eliminating the estate tax would reduce charitable bequests by 12% per year.

DO ESTATE TAXES TAKE AWAY HALF THE VALUE OF ALL ESTATES?

Not even close. Remember, 98% of all estates owe zero estate taxes. For the other 2%, a combination of permitted exemptions, deductions, and credits, together with estate planning strategies reduced the average effective tax rate to 17% in 1997.

IS THE ESTATE TAX "DOUBLE TAXATION?"

Not on the portion of estates that have risen in value over the years, such as the appreciated value of a stock portfolio. These capital gains, which make up the vast bulk of the value of the largest estates, have never been taxed.

I'M NOT IN THE TOP 2%, SO WHY SHOULD I CARE WHETHER OR NOT THE ESTATE TAX IS REPEALED?

Repealing the estate tax would transfer \$294 billion to the wealthiest 2% between 2002 and 2011. From 2012 to 2021, the figure is three-quarters of a trillion dollars. That means less funding available to help meet the growing costs of Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid, as well as other priorities such as improving educational opportunities, expanding health insurance coverage, and reducing child poverty. Just as important, the estate tax prevents giant fortunes from building up over generations. Huge family fortunes have been shown to distort our economy and damage our democratic process—this is the main reason the estate tax was enacted in the first place.

I WORKED HARD FOR MY MONEY. THE ESTATE TAX JUST ISN'T FAIR.

The vast majority of Americans work hard, save what they can, and wouldn't mind a tax cut. With families struggling, why prioritize a tax cut that will benefit only 2% of the population at the expense of all the rest?

CROSSROADS FUND

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Ali Abunimah
Dálida María Benfield
Lawrence Benito
Cynthia Bianchi
Prudence Browne
Harry Chandler
Steven Feuerstein
Roberto Gonzales
Rhoda Rae Gutierrez
Neena Hemmady
Gerardo Montemayor
Lisa Marie Pickens*
Barbara Ransby
James Thindwa
Tom Wilson
*on leave

STAFF

Karin Candelaria *Program & Finance Coordinator*
Inhe Choi *Program Director*
Clare Golden *Development Associate*
Karen Kinslow *Intern*
Jeanne Kracher *Executive Director*

What Can You Do To Help Crossroads Today?

There are many ways to support the work of the Crossroads Fund. The most fundamental involve making financial contributions to the Fund. Even here you can be creative! For example:

WRITE A CHECK This is the simplest way to donate.

MAKE A PLEDGE Make a monthly pledge to maximize your contribution or make an annual pledge over several years to help ensure Crossroads' longevity.

TRANSFER STOCK Help Crossroads and still receive a tax deduction by giving stock that has appreciated. You also avoid capital gains tax!

DOES YOUR EMPLOYER MATCH YOUR CHARITABLE GIVING?

If so, your contribution to Crossroads becomes even bigger.

BUILD THE CROSSROADS RESERVE FUND Consider making a donation to our new grantmaking reserve fund. As with other gifts it can be a one-time donation or a pledge over several months or years.

MAKE A BEQUEST Make a lasting gift to Crossroads by leaving the Fund part of your estate. Encourage your family members to do the same.

ESTABLISH A TRUST Certain trust options may reduce your taxes and benefit Crossroads.

DONATE LIFE INSURANCE Donating your policy to Crossroads affords some tax advantage while allowing you to give a larger gift.

ESTABLISH A MEMORIAL Honor someone you love or admire with a gift to the Fund.

GIVE US SOME OF YOUR TIME There are many ways you can help us as a volunteer. Call us!

For further information, please contact Crossroads at 773-227-7676.

CROSSROADS FUND

3411 West Diversey, Suite 20
Chicago, Illinois 60647-1245
www.CrossroadsFund.org
Address Correction Requested

NON-PROFIT
ORGANIZATION
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT # 4070
CHICAGO, IL

Save the Date!

JUNE 8, 2001

Media and Communications
Training with Robert Bray
(SPIN Project)



Call Crossroads for more
information: (773)227-7676.
www.CrossroadsFund.org