

CROSSROADS

We're the Good Crossroads Fund!

Naming an organization is never easy. When our founders got together in 1981, they wanted to start a new kind of foundation: A 501(c)3 public foundation that would support grassroots groups working for racial, social and economic justice in Chicago, where decisions would be made by activists and members of the community, not just people with wealth. Crossroads Fund seemed like a great name. Chicago is the “crossroads” of the nation, we wanted to support progressive “cross-issue” organizing and besides, our sister fund in Boston had already taken the Haymarket Fund. Who knew how controversial the name would become?

Fast-forward to 2010: Republican strategist Karl Rove founded Crossroads Grassroots Policy Strategies (Crossroads GPS), a 501(c)4 group dedicated to repealing environmental regulations, overturning healthcare reform, undermining unions, promoting free trade, lowering taxes on the wealthy and other conservative policies. They soon spun off other organizations under the Crossroads brand, including American Crossroads, a “super PAC” supporting political campaigns, and Crossroads Generation, aimed at young conservatives.

These groups are essentially the opposite of Crossroads Fund. The “bad” Crossroads promotes policies that hurt the poor, the environment, women, LGBTQ people and people of color. **The “good” Crossroads—that’s us!—supports grassroots organizations working for justice, led by the people most affected by the issues they are addressing.** The “bad” Crossroads uses money from wealthy individuals and corporations to influence the political system without publishing the names of their donors or what vested interests they might have. **The “good” Crossroads is transparent and community directed. We publish our donor lists and financial statements regularly.** While Crossroads GPS uses their donations to drown out community voices and influence the political process, we support grassroots groups that empower individuals, and we never support politicians or campaigns. **Our board of directors and grantmaking committees are made up of**



Although Crossroads Fund and Crossroads GPS share a name, that’s just about all they share! Above, Crossroads Fund Executive Director Jeanne Kracher faces off against Crossroads GPS founder Karl Rove.

members of our community. They are donors, former grantees, activists and other grantmakers, and you may have seen them picketing and protesting policies promoted by the “bad” Crossroads and their allies.

It certainly isn’t easy sharing a name with such a notorious group. We get confused calls from donors, colleagues and even family members asking us if we’re “that Crossroads.” One donor to the Occupy Chicago Pooled Fund at Crossroads Fund even wondered if this was some sort of nefarious plot by Karl Rove to undermine Occupy! If sharing a name with a group backed by the Koch Brothers wasn’t hard enough, we also have to compete with confusion around Crossroads Community Church, the Crossroads Anti-Racism Organization and even people showing up with used clothes for Crossroads Trading Company!

Unfortunately, there’s not too much we can do about the confusion. We talked to a lawyer who explained that we would be unlikely to win in a lawsuit against the other “Crossroads” organizations. “From a trademark standpoint you look at whether the organization is going after the same customers. You’re approaching two very different groups of donors. Since the purpose of your fundraising is quite different, and your names are not identical, you wouldn’t have much of a case.”

At least we can take small comfort in the idea that somewhere out there, there is a Crossroads GPS employee trying to explain to their friends and family that they don’t work for a progressive, grassroots community foundation in Chicago. ■

Introducing the 2012 Grantees

About Crossroads Fund

Crossroads Fund supports community organizations working on issues of racial, 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.

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Crossroads Fund grantees are small but mighty. The groups we support are truly grassroots. They don't have big budgets or huge staffs, and they rely on their community for volunteers, individual donations and in kind support.

Despite their small size, our grantees can move mountains. The recent Chicago Teachers' Union strike presents a perfect example of the power and promise of grassroots organizing. Not only did tens of thousands of people take to the streets to demand a fair contract for our teachers, but they succeeded against a powerful mayor and wealthy organizations pushing for school privatization and an end to collective bargaining.

Looking back at the history of this campaign, you can see all of the hallmarks of the kind of organizing Crossroads Fund supports in Chicago. The current leadership of the Chicago Teachers Union came out of the Caucus of Rank and File Organizers, a progressive group within the union that organized for more accountability and a commitment to social justice within the union. They spent years building bridges with other grassroots groups in Chicago, and their efforts showed, not only in the support they received from other community organizations, but also in the issues they raised during the contract negotiations. **The CTU went beyond wage and benefit demands, to push for issues that many Crossroads Fund grantees are organizing around: school facilities funding, including libraries and air conditioning in all schools; an end to school closings and turnarounds; fair use of TIF funds; wraparound health services, including mental health services in all public schools; support for art, music, and recess; and more.** The CTU leadership consistently talked about issues of racial, social and economic justice throughout the negotiation process.

When grassroots groups form coalitions and build movements bigger than any one neighborhood or issue, anything is possible. That is why Crossroads Fund is dedicated to encouraging collaboration between our grantees, supporting cross-issue organizing and fostering the growth of social movements. In 2012, we gave out \$303,846 in grants to 73 groups working for social change across a spectrum of issues. Although they are small, and the issues they are addressing are large, we know they have the potential to make history. ■



Blocks Together staff and members support striking teachers. Photo: Sarah Jane Rhee

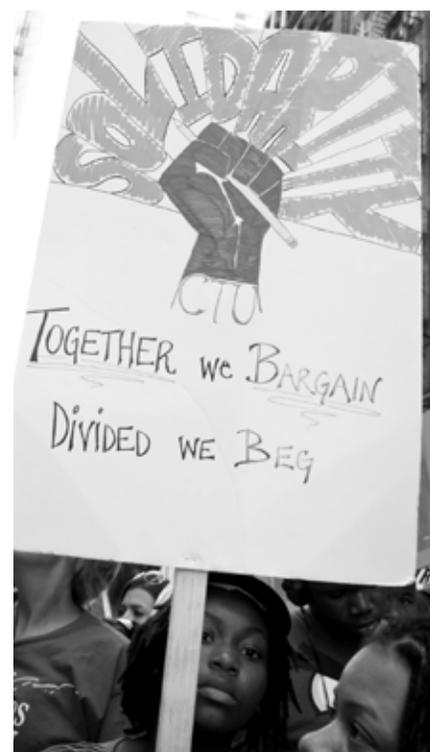


Photo: Sarah Jane Rhee

Measuring a Social Movement

One of the challenges of funding social change work, rather than direct social services, is that it's often hard for our grantees to quantify their impact. Sure, we can point to the big victories like the abolition of the death penalty, or the raising of the minimum wage, but we know change is a long process which takes time and resources, and big victories don't always coincide with grant cycles.

That's why we're so excited about the new Crossroads Fund evaluation tool! The tool is the product of several years of research on existing evaluation processes, collaboration with grantees, academics, evaluation practitioners and Board members, and piloting the tool with 10 Crossroads Fund grantee organizations. This new tool – the Social Movements Development Model – will help our grantees measure their ongoing impact across all aspects of their work, assess their strengths and weaknesses, and think critically about how they are engaging in broader movements for racial, social and economic justice.

Crossroads Fund's 2012 grantees will be the first full cohort to use the tool. With continuous support from Crossroads Fund staff, they will use the tool as a planning document,



Some of the Crossroads Fund grantees who piloted the evaluation tool last spring.

to demonstrate impact and finally to understand how their work is situated in social movements.

As our grantees utilize elements of the tool in their work, we at Crossroads Fund have already begun to integrate the same elements in our own work. As we enter into our 30th year of existence we find a greater need to measure our impact. We look forward to fine tuning this tool and publishing the results we get from it over the coming year! ■

FINANCIAL PLANNING AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

The financial crises of the past five years have left behind a lot of anger and mistrust of our nation's financial institutions. Financial instruments and investments that seemed like sure bets collapsed overnight, and the gap between the rich and poor grows wider every day. With continued volatility in the stock market and an interest rate for savings that is hovering near zero, it can be hard out there for someone who wants to combine fiscal and social responsibility.

Luckily, Crossroads Fund is here to help! **Crossroads Fund, Congregation Or Chadash, Ebenezer Lutheran Church, Access Living and Urban Partnership Bank have teamed up to provide an informative workshop series on financial planning and social justice.**

These lively and engaging workshops will address such questions as: How can you take care of your current obligations and expand your contributions to the causes you care about? What should you include in your will? How can smart planning help you take care of your needs and have an impact on the issues you care about?

October 16, 2012 | 5-7pm | Financial Planning 101: Financial Freedom and Social Justice – How to Achieve Both
Ebenezer Lutheran Church | 1650 W. Foster Ave. Chicago IL 60640

November 11, 2012 | 3-5pm | Estate Planning to Provide for What You Care About
Congregation Or Chadash at Emanuel Congregation | 5959 North Sheridan Road, Chicago, IL 60660

December 3, 2012 | 5:30-7pm | Financial Planning 201: Advanced Tools for Financial Planning and Social Justice
Access Living | 115 West Chicago Avenue, Chicago, IL 60654

For more information on the workshop subjects and how to RSVP see
<http://www.crossroadsfund.org/events/financialplanning> or call Rachel Wallis at 773-227-7676.



BECOME A PARTNER IN CREATING SOCIAL CHANGE

When you give to Crossroads Fund,
your gift is pooled with others and its effect is amplified,
growing justice in Chicago and beyond!

Here are nine easy ways you can support Crossroads Fund:

ATTEND OUR ANNUAL BENEFIT

and bring friends!

MAKE A DONATION

using the enclosed envelope. If your employer offers matching gifts you may be able to increase your donation!

CONTRIBUTE ONLINE

make a quick, secure donation using any major credit card. Just click the donate now button at www.crossroadsfund.org

BECOME A SUSTAINER

and have an automatic monthly or quarterly donation charged to your credit card. You can become a sustainer using the enclosed envelope or online.

OPEN A DONOR ADVISED FUND

and partner with us to have an impact on social justice issues.

HONOR OR REMEMBER

SOMEONE SPECIAL

with a gift in their name.

FOLLOW US ON FACEBOOK

and invite your friends. You can find us at www.facebook.com/crossroadsfund and can even collect donations for Crossroads Fund in honor of your birthday!

CO-HOST A HOUSE PARTY

and help your friends, family and colleagues learn more about how Crossroads Fund is supporting social change in Chicago.

REMEMBER CROSSROADS FUND IN YOUR WILL, INSURANCE OR OTHER ESTATE PLAN

all three are easy ways to have a lasting impact for social justice.

For more information, please contact Sheila O'Donnell, Development Director,
at 773.227.7676 or sheila@crossroadsfund.org.

THANK YOU CROSSROADS FUND VISIONARIES

These dedicated individuals have included Crossroads Fund in their will or estate plan, ensuring the long-term strength & stability of the fund & leaving a legacy of their values & vision.

Anonymous (4)
Bill Barclay & Peg Strobel
Henry T. Chandler, Jr.*
Ferd Eggan*
Ruth & Dale Fast
Maggie Gibbs
Neena Hemmady
Barbara Kemmis
Jeanne Kracher & Laura McAlpine
Susan Nussbaum
Patrica O'Brien
Sheila O'Donnell & Nora Gallagher
Rachel Wallis & Alex Rocklin
Bob Weissbourd
Iris Young*

For more information, please contact
Jeanne Kracher, Executive Director,
at 773.227.7676 or jeanne@crossroadsfund.org

**in memory*

SAVE THE DATE!
Seeds of Change, Crossroads
Fund's annual benefit will be
Friday, April 12, 2013.
Start planning your
party outfit today!

www.crossroadsfund.org

3411 West Diversey Avenue, #20
Chicago, IL 60647-1245

CROSSROADS FUND
change, not charity

**LOOK INSIDE TO LEARN MORE
ABOUT THE
GOOD CROSSROADS FUNDS!**

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