



REACHING SOLID GROUND

A 'katalyst' for change

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SPECIAL RECOGNITION

Brilliance... Kindness... & Persistence...

Here's a project for the ages: 2nd graders from Meridian School teamed with folks from the Wallingford Senior Center to handcraft wonderful gifts for children in our shelter programs... The 36th Fremont Fair was a tremendous success, thanks to over 400 volunteers who helped the whole weekend run on grace... A grateful tip of the tie-died hat to United Way of King County for bringing the 'Unite to End Homelessness' event to the Fair for the second year... And a 21-nail salute to Habitat for Humanity of East King County, Google and the Master Builders Association who joined the crew to help build a house at the Fair as an enduring symbol of our community's commitment to end homelessness... Solid Ground's fabulous finance staff is still adding and subtracting, but it looks like the Fair will net well over \$80,000 this year, thanks in large part to sponsors Adobe, Ameriprise Financial, Clif Bar, Cortiva Institute, Costco, Daylight Masonic Lodge, Energy Exteriors, Fremont Chiropractic, Frontier Bank, Guayaki, Harley Exteriors, Jones Soda, Kashi, Microsoft, Mini Cooper, Music Matters, Naked Juice, Okanogan Highlands Bottling, Penguin Windows, Piccora's New York Pizza, Redhook Ale Brewery, Seattle Times, Sprint... And most special thanks to Awesome Oliver and the entire crew at The Workshop for making the 2007 Fremont Fair positively brilliant!

PROGRAM NEWS

From the Ground Up

A recipient of one of our Working Wheels cars reports back that the affordable, reliable transportation "literally changed my life! Without a good car, I would have lost my job, and then I would have lost my apartment, and I assure you, I would have been homeless. ...My old car was breaking down every week; now I can afford the repairs if there are any, and I don't worry about whether it's going to start in the morning. Getting a decent car for the first time in my life truly saved my whole family."

AmeriCorps partnerships build stronger community. With recruiting season for next year's National Service corps in full swing, our Martin Luther King VISTA program seeks applicants for placement in immigrant and refugee communities and a school-based project supporting first generation college applicants. This past year, through the efforts of formerly incarcerated AmeriCorps members, our JustServe AmeriCorps program partnered with Freedom Church to provide groundbreaking support to formerly incarcerated people and their families. For the latest on current national service openings through Solid Ground, call 206.926.9000.

REACHING SOLID GROUND

A 'katalyst' for change

Kirby Grey uses beats, rhymes and hip hop shows as a catalyst for positive change in her community. A Solid Ground JustServe AmeriCorps member, Kirby serves this year as Prevention Program Coordinator for the Washington Asian Pacific Islander Families Against Substance Abuse (WAPIFASA). She's teamed up with red hot local hip hop artists from the Mass Line label to create the Katalyst Project — training youth in the Hip Hop arts as a meaningful alternative to violence and stagnation through personal expression.

Kirby came to WAPIFASA through Solid Ground's JustServe AmeriCorps program. A recent graduate of Seattle University, she was active in a number of student organizations there. "But I felt like I was really disconnected from the community as a whole," she says. "In the end I didn't see how being connected to the school community could help me in the future. My goal is to be connected to the community that I am a part of and to work in that community."

Kirby learned about WAPIFASA from her college advisor, who served on its board. Well known in the API community since 1990 for their counseling and treatment programs, the agency sought to launch a substance abuse prevention effort as well. They were in the process of applying for a JustServe member to launch the project and found Kirby's skill set, interest in youth and immersion in hip hop culture to be a perfect fit.

"Without Kirby we would not have been able to do a lot of the programs we are doing this year," says Greg Garcia, WAPIFASA's Executive Director. "JustServe has meant everything to help us get this program started."

For most of her AmeriCorps year, Kirby has worked part time while completing her theology degree. She oversees the Youth Lounge/Leadership Council drop-in program as well as the innovative Katalyst Project, funded by a City of Seattle arts grant. "Kirby connected us to Mass Line," Greg says. "She provided a lot of energy to our youth and built good relationships with the Leadership Council. I see our youth being more interested in the community. They used to just hang around, make graffiti. Now they are going to protests, working on videos and getting engaged."



Kirby Grey with WAPIFASA Executive Director Greg Garcia

“The youth use the art form to speak about their personal experience, because they are shut down in the schools; they are shut down by their teachers. If their parents are working overtime, they are not there. They don’t have too many people to listen to them or take them seriously.”

Katalyst offers three hip hop workshops a month focusing on writing, beats, video and other aspects

of the culture. Youth showcase their work at an open mic session at the end of every month. The next open mic is Wednesday, July 25th, starting at 6:30 p.m., at the Theatre Off Jackson (409 7th Avenue South).

“The youth use the art form to speak about their personal experience, because they are shut down in the schools; they are shut down by their teachers,” says Kirby. “If their parents are working overtime, they are not there. They don’t have too many people to listen to them or take them seriously.”

Participants deal with many of the stresses youth commonly face in our culture. “There are drugs and alcohol and violence everywhere,” explains Kirby. “Especially if they are living in targeted areas like the South End and White Center. Everything is easily accessible.”

Additionally, the youth grapple with issues specific to immigrant communities. “A lot of the families immigrated here, so there is a gap between the parents and the children — the whole cultural aspect of what it means to have been raised in your home country and then raising your kids here,” Kirby says. “We find some disconnect with that. It is hard for parents to relate to their kids.”

According to the Seattle Post-Intelligencer, Mass Line artists ‘Blue Scholars’ and ‘Common Market’ “highlight politically conscious, socially aware hip hop...and also help foment social change starting with hip hop listeners.” However, Kirby emphasizes that youth in the Katalyst Project are not forced to produce happy-talk positive art.

“Not all personal experiences are positive. Especially for youth, they are painful, they’ve been through so much. And if they haven’t, that’s fine too. It can be fun, it can be whatever. ...Right now, nothing *doesn’t* affect the youth: teen pregnancy, homelessness, gang violence, *everything*.”

Currently, part of the draw for youth is to work with up and coming stars like the Mass Line artists who give back to the community by participating in Katalyst, as well as other local hip hop artists who work with the Leadership Council.

But Kirby envisions the programs developing into more self-sustaining models. “If at the end of all this Mass Line is no longer teaching, but the youth themselves that came through this program are teaching... if the program can be sustaining in and of itself without any outside help, that would be great.”

“We’re totally inspired by Kirby and this project at WAPIFASA,” says JustServe AmeriCorps Supervisor Tera Oglesby. “They’re addressing violence and poverty at the root level, investing in youth as activists and agents for change.”

COMMUNITY NEWS

Cool / Not Cool

Cool: Solid Ground was awarded the inaugural Ron Chisom Anti-Racism Award by the Seattle Human Services Coalition. Chisom, Executive Director and Co-Founder of the People's Institute for Survival & Beyond, presented the award himself at a June 20th event.

"Many human service agencies don't want to talk about racism," says Chisom. "Solid Ground speaks directly to the issue, takes risks, takes chances. ...And now they have formed a group of non-profits...talking about racism straight up. And to me, that is revolutionary work."

"I am honored that Solid Ground is receiving this award," says Solid Ground Exec. Dir. Cheryl Cobbs, "but I am even more thrilled that this award is being given at all. I think it is time to bring more recognition to the fact that this work needs to be done by nonprofits."

Not Cool: The Port of Seattle plans to demolish 162 units of affordable housing at the Lora Lake Apartments. Rev. Dr. Sanford Brown, Exec. Dir. of the Church Council of Greater Seattle, calls this "the largest single setback our (region's) anti-homelessness effort has encountered."



Ron Chisom (*center*) with Solid Ground anti-racism activists (*l. to r.*) Gillian Burlingham, Cheryl Cobbs, Irene Woo & Cha'ron Stewart-Silvano at the Seattle Human Services Coalition's awards ceremony.

TAKE ACTION

Enough about Us, What about You?

One of the many ways you can support Solid Ground is to include the organization in your estate planning and/or make gifts of appreciated stock. We can suggest simple bequest language (but of course, you should check in with your estate planning advisors before changing your will!). Stock gifts can be easily transferred to Solid Ground's Schwab account. For more information on either of these giving strategies, please contact Zanne Garland at 206.694.6862 or zanneg@solid-ground.org.



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groundviews 1) Down-to-earth perspectives. 2) Real people's stories.
3) Solid Ground's newsletter, published six times a year to highlight our efforts to create a just and caring community, free from poverty, prejudice and neglect.

Reasonable accommodations made on request.

EDITORS

Mike Buchman & Liz Reed

E-MAIL

publications@solid-ground.org

PHONE

206.694.6716

TTY

206.694.6710

WEB

solid-ground.org