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May 19, 2010

*SPIFFY Roundtable: Key Findings from Dynamic Families: How Small Family Foundations Decide to Make Big Changes in Public Policy*

Just as a citizen can organize votes or create a coalition, or media coverage can shift the way policy is made, foundations of any size can be instrumental in influencing policy. By leveraging their wealth and (often) personal connections to those in power, foundations can influence public opinion, change service practice, gain media attention for an issue, or sponsor research that helps to shape how elected officials approach new laws or regulations.

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May 11, 2010

Parent Engagement - the key ingredient

Research and on-the-ground experience have consistently demonstrated that families have a major influence in their children's educational achievements. Parental engagement with their children's schools is positively linked to improved educational outcomes for their children. More specifically, however, research by Karen Mapp and Anne T. Henderson indicates that the following characteristics are key in successful parental engagement efforts:

- Linking family and community to student learning
- Supporting families to guide their children's learning, from preschool to high school
- Developing the capacity of school staff to work with families
- Focusing efforts to engage families on developing trusting and respectful relationships
- Embracing a philosophy of partnership and a willingness to share power with families
- Making sure that parents and school staff understand that the responsibility for children's educational development is a collaborative enterprise.

Speakers:

Michele Brooks, *Assistant Superintendent, Family & Student Engagement, Boston Public Schools*

Karen Mapp, *Ed.D., Lecturer, Harvard Graduate School of Education; Trustee, Hyams Foundation*

Olu Crayton, *Associate Director of Boston Parents Organizing Network (BPON), a BPS parent and former community organizer*

*Graduate Student Paper Competition on Contemporary Themes in Philanthropy*

The Sillerman Center recently chose from an array of entrants the paper that best captured the essence of contemporary thought in philanthropy. The winning paper was entitled "Using Small Grants for Community Change: A Case Study of the Skillman Foundation's Community Connections Small Grants Program." The author will be awarded in the fall.

2009

November 19, 2009

Ford Foundation's Ubinas Talks at the Heller School

Luis Ubinas, President of the Ford Foundation, spoke at the Heller School on "Pathways to Lasting Social Change." He discussed new directions for mobilizing philanthropic resources for and measurement of social change. The Sillerman Center co-sponsored this important event.

Sillerman Prize for Innovations in Philanthropy: Compete to Win

*Why do people give? What would change the awareness and behavior of university students so that their own philanthropy increases?* The purpose of this competition is to identify innovative strategies for advancing philanthropy on university campuses.

The Sillerman Center for the Advancement of Philanthropy will award up to

\$8,000 in prizes to the three student-led teams that can articulate a plan to build a culture of giving on college campuses, increase philanthropy amongst college students and/or create innovative structures in which to accomplish this.

Choose from one of four Info Workshops to learn more about the process and meet with fellow Brandeis students from the undergraduate and graduate schools and Brandeis organizations (the Network) who will all be participating and competing to win!

- [Join a Workshop!](#)
- [FAQs](#)
- [Background, Eligibility and Ideas](#)
- [Submission Form](#)
- [View Hoot article](#)
- Introduce family foundations and philanthropists to the idea of incorporating social justice ideals and practices into their work
- Facilitate better organization and collaboration within the Social Justice Philanthropy Collaborative on how to take the messages of social justice philanthropists to wider audiences
- November 16, 2009  
*Book Discussion: Change Philanthropy*  
In collaboration with Associated Grant Makers, the Sillerman Center's Elenore Garton moderated a discussion of the book *Change Philanthropy: Candid Stories of Foundations Maximizing Results Through Social Justice* by Alicia Epstein Korten. Jeffrey Zinsmeyer, President, Discount Foundation and Cassie Schwerner, Vice President of Programs, Schott Foundation joined the discussion about how foundations can engage in work that advances equity and social justice in civil society. Strategies and tools were discussed to help individuals and foundations leverage their resources, both financial and otherwise, to address the challenges in these economic times.

October 29, 2009

*Criteria for Philanthropy at Its Best*

Aaron Dorfman, Executive Director of the National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy, discussed the committee's *Criteria for Philanthropy at Its Best*. Dr. Susan Ostrander of Tufts University and Henry Allen of the Discount Foundation participated as the academic and philanthropic respondents raising such questions as how philanthropy can advance social justice.

The Zinner Forum, The Heller School

September 30, 2009

*"Ready by 21": For funders interested in children and youth issues*

This discussion, led by Elizabeth Gaines of the Forum for Youth Investment, focused on the role that funders can play in supporting the Massachusetts Ready by 21 Action Plan and how philanthropists can fill in gaps effectively.

The Ready by 21 Action Planning Team recently completed its work to inform a statewide plan for children and youth. Government leaders, United Ways, foundations, program providers and youth have been informed of this plan. It is a comprehensive look at what exists and what is needed for youth in Massachusetts to be successful. The plan lays out strategies and action steps, and as implementation begins it is necessary for all program planners, funders and decision makers to join together to make this plan a reality. This level of collaboration will be an unprecedented example for the rest of the country and has the potential for producing exponential effects on outcomes.

Time was spent discussing such questions as: What are examples of other collaborative efforts occurring in other places? How can funders support the next phase of this groundbreaking work in Massachusetts? What are the challenges to this new way of doing business?

There will be follow-up to this discussion. Information on this is still to come.

September 22-24, 2009

*More Bang for your Buck: Small Foundations Engaging in Social Policy*

The Grantmakers for Children Youth and Family (GCYF) Annual Conference in Minneapolis provided a great venue for the Sillerman Center to present its

work on foundations engaging in public policy work. The interactive session was attended by representatives of all types of foundations, infrastructure groups, consultants and others.

The program began with an engaging presentation by Jason Franklin, consultant to the Sillerman Center, New York University lecturer, NorthStar Fund board member and Assistant Director of the 21st Century School Fund. He spoke about the nuts and bolts of policy engagement and gave a good overview of the mechanics of how foundations can engage in policy work.

The second presenter was Elenore Garton, Senior Researcher at the Sillerman Center and board member of the Marie C. and Joseph C. Wilson Foundation. She presented a case study of her foundation's engagement in policy work around the issue of family and child homelessness.

The final presentation was given by Rebecca Stone, consultant to the Sillerman Center. Rebecca presented findings from research she has been doing for the Center on small family foundation engagement in policy work. She spoke about the characteristics necessary for a foundation to engage in policy work, and highlighted examples from the eight foundations she studied. The audience was particularly interested in the advice she had gathered from her interviews for how to be successful in policy work.

The audience members spent time in small working groups discussing tools and specific strategies that they could employ to move their organizations into doing more successful policy work. Challenges to working in policy, including the difficulty of measuring impact, were discussed. The session brought research and practical applications together in an accessible and useful manner.

- June 12, 2009

*Teaching Philanthropy Workshop*

The Zinner Forum at the Heller School is still reverberating with the enthusiastic philanthropic conversations that took place on June 12th. Bringing together faculty and students of the Sillerman Center, the Campus Compact/Fidelity Charitable Gift Fund's Students4Giving project, and the Sunshine Lady Foundation's Learning by Giving project enabled the group to study the similarities and differences in the curriculum, students and communities where philanthropic courses are being taught. The teaching of philanthropy is becoming a new academic area of study and a "movement" across the country. One thing that emerged from this organizational meeting for college and university faculty and students was the impact that the study of both the theory and practice of philanthropy has on students. It solidifies their civic values and leadership skill that will carry into the future. This forum pooled knowledge and experience in teaching philanthropy which ultimately will improve our programs and expand the field of philanthropic education. Some of the issues addressed were resources, strategies and best practices, funding sources and vision for this growing network.

June 5, 2009

*The Art and Craft of Your Own Philanthropy*

Brandeis Alum joined Andy Hahn, Director of the Sillerman Center and Claudia Jacobs and Elenore Garton at the Alumni College 2009 event.

- May 2-3, 2009

*Emerging Practitioners in Philanthropy: The Next Generation of Grantmakers Workshop: Foundations and Public Policy: Leveraging for Impact*

This workshop, part of the training and retreat for young foundation professionals and other philanthropic leaders, began with presentations from three panelists. The first part of the session was focused on how foundations can (and can't) engage in policy work and the mechanisms at their disposal. The second portion of the workshop provided exemplars of different kinds of foundations engaging in a variety of policy work. The third portion was the interactive session helping workshop participants to understand their own work through the policy lens. Small groups worked on case studies of foundations from which they developed policy engagement strategies.

April 30, 2009

*Health Care Investing for Foundations: Strategies for Filling the Gaps*

Health Care funders were treated to a roundtable breakfast with nationally known health care economist and policy expert, Stuart Altman of the Heller School. Altman, who has advised numerous Presidents during the last five decades, spoke bluntly about how frail the safety net is for many people, exacerbated by the economy and the rise in unemployment leaving many without health care coverage. But he remarked that "even solving the health insurance issue won't completely address the problems that are much deeper and broader."

March 11, 2009

### *Immigration Dinner and Debate*

Foundation Trustees and staff, as well as philanthropists interested in or already funding projects that involve immigration, attended a small private dinner co-sponsored by the Sillerman Center and the Associated Grant Makers (AGM) of Boston. The dinner enabled a discussion with the featured speakers of the Annual Zinner Distinguished Lecture Series event "After the Crossing: Implications of Alternative Policy Responses to Illegal Immigration." Rinku Sen and Steven Camarota were available before the debate, which began at 7:30 pm in the Zinner Forum at the Heller School for Social Policy and Management.

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Images taken at the Teaching Philanthropy Workshop held at the Heller School for Social Policy and Management

February 2009

#### *Pre-conference workshop on social justice philanthropy*

The Sillerman Center for the Advancement of Philanthropy sponsored a workshop on social justice philanthropy at the Council on Foundations' Family Foundations Conference in Indianapolis. The purpose of the workshop was to:

- Introduce family foundations and philanthropists to the idea of incorporating social justice ideals and practices into their work
- Facilitate better organization and collaboration within the Social Justice Philanthropy Collaborative on how to take the messages of social justice philanthropists to wider audiences

The Collaborative is a growing network of national organizations within the field of philanthropy that calls on grantmakers and donors to increase and deepen their commitment to funding social change. The work of the Collaborative involves building the network, identifying activities and events that will broaden the range of organizations in the Collaborative, and building power and influence in the field of philanthropy. Participating organizations support social justice philanthropy explicitly through their mission, values and programming, and show their commitment to the Collaborative through ongoing conversations and thinking as well as contributing the time of their executive leadership and a trustee or board member.

2008

November 20, 2008

#### *Business-Inspired Philanthropy: Hope, Hype and Reality*

The event featured Michael Edwards discussing philanthrocapitalism along with Joanna Jacobson, Andrew Hahn and Dean Lisa Lynch. Edwards' book, *Just Another Emperor? The Myths and Realities of Philanthrocapitalism*, lays bare the myths surrounding philanthropy and shows it to be exactly what it is - an essential part of our capitalist system with all the flaws found elsewhere. Edwards takes a critical look at this new philanthrocapitalism phenomenon and argued that despite its great potential, the movement is oversold in both its proposed means and promised ends.

March 4, 2008

#### The Zinner Distinguished Lecture Series

##### Is U.S. Philanthropy Ignoring Poverty in Its Own Backyard?

A debate about how best to promote social justice, featuring Phil Buchanan, President of the Center for Effective Philanthropy, and Rob Reich, Associate Professor, Stanford University. The event was moderated by Ellen Remmer, president and CEO, The Philanthropic Initiative.

January 29, 2008

#### Sillerman Inaugural Event featuring Joel Fleishman

Philanthropy expert Joel Fleishman inaugurated the opening of the Sillerman Center for the Advancement of Philanthropy at the Heller School with a standing-room-only lecture calling for family foundations to become more transparent and accountable, while also crediting them with nurturing and empowering social change such as the environmental revolution, women's rights, and the civil rights movement.

Fleishman, a former trustee at Brandeis and professor of law and public policy at Duke University, praised the Sillerman Center for targeting family

foundations, helping them become more effective, accountable, and strategic in their philanthropy.

Robert Sillerman '69, and his wife, Laura, established the Sillerman Center to promote activist philanthropy that leads to social, community and policy change. The Sillerman Center will provide research-supported advice on effective grant-making strategies, develop best practices, and help successful ventures reach scale, according to executive director and professor Andrew Hahn.

Sillerman said the inspiration for the center grew out of his Brandeis education during the tumultuous Vietnam era. "We became the generation that responded to things by not saying yes or no, but why," Sillerman. "I don't know if we'll change the world, but if we play a small part in changing the conscience of my generation and the generation behind me, we will have done something."

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