



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
December 11, 2009

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FUND 4 DEMOCRATIC COMMUNITIES MAKES \$60K IN SUSTAINING GRANTS

GREENSBORO, N.C. – The Fund for Democratic Communities (F4DC) has announced \$60,000 in sustaining grants to 13 previously-funded organizations whose efforts are closely aligned with F4DC's mission of nurturing authentic grassroots democracy.

The grants come at a time of transition for the organization, which was founded in 2007 by Greensboro activists Marnie Thompson and Ed Whitfield. As F4DC becomes an all-volunteer operation, the grants will provide continuing support to groups already determined to be fulfilling the mission.

"In the hard economic times we all are facing, we felt it was important to sustain this good work," Thompson said. "Also given the hard times, we're eager to reduce our overhead so that we can move more money into the community. Our expectation is that we'll be granting roughly \$200,000 in 2010, a significant increase over our first two years of grant-making."

The list of most recent grantees comprises the following:

- The Burnsville Land Community, a community land trust in Western North Carolina formed to protect the land on which a community of low-income families keep their mobile homes;
- The Farm Labor Organizing Committee/Campaign for Migrant Worker Justice, which is working to develop and sustain a locally-based worker committee to lead campaigns supporting tobacco harvesters;
- Heirs to a Fighting Tradition, a Triangle-based group that captures and circulates the oral histories of social justice organizers, in order to strengthen and broaden the knowledge base of North Carolina social justice organizers;
- Homekeeping Mortgage Default Counseling Service, which is working to solidify the future of its ongoing housing counseling work;
- Spirit House, which inspires and supports young people and adult educators working to interrupt the school-to-prison pipeline, through its Choosing Sides program;
- Joseph's House, which works to improve the lives of homeless young adults in Guilford County by providing shelter, food, clothing, and other supportive services to help them become self-sufficient;

- The American Friends Service Committee, whose peace and justice work includes the Take Charge of Your Future project, which aims to increase youth awareness about employment alternatives to military service, sharing of resources, and ways to reduce expenses;
- The Greensboro HIVE, a community center in the Glenwood neighborhood that fosters relationship-building, dialog, and resource-sharing among individuals, groups, and communities working to build grassroots democracy and community power in and around Greensboro;
- Just Economics, an Asheville-based organization working to develop leadership among low-wage workers and increase the minimum wage in Western North Carolina;
- Latino Coalition of Randolph County, which has sponsored a county-wide Randolph Reads project among other efforts to spur inclusive community-building and leadership development;
- 100 Leaders/Key Ring Inheritance, an effort to identify, develop, and network young community leaders for more effective and sustainable community involvement and advocacy;
- The Greensboro Health Disparities Collaborative, which is working to increase community knowledge and facilitate discussions about racial disparities in breast cancer care;
- Los Artistas Project of the Center for the Visual Arts, a Latino/a focused program that promotes self-confidence, motivation, and self-expression for Latino/a youth.

The board of directors that led the work of initiating and developing F4DC voted in September to disband itself and move to the streamlined all-volunteer structure. To smooth the transition, a generous severance package was provided for the three-member staff.

“We thank the board and staff for the work that they did,” Whitfield said. “We also look forward to the expanded grant-making we will be able to do next year.”

F4DC focuses on the areas of education, recreation, arts, housing, community health and safety, justice, humans’ relationship with the natural environment, relationships between different communities, and sustainable economic development. The Fund places a special emphasis on developing non-traditional and youth leaders.

F4DC’s next grant cycle will be announced in Spring 2010 after a period of evaluating previous approaches to grant-making to see how improvements might be made to increase effectiveness under the all-volunteer scheme. Details will be posted on the website, www.f4dc.org.

Although F4DC continues to support the HIVE through its grant-making, the transition to an all-volunteer operation will mean closing its office there at the end of December. Prospective grantees and others can still reach the group via the same phone number and email addresses: 336-617-5329; info@f4dc.org and grants@f4dc.org.

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