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The Southern Partners Fund is a public foundation created to serve southern communities and organizations seeking social, economic, and environmental justice by providing them with financial resources, opportunities for technical assistance and training, and access to systems of information and power.

**CHAIRPERSON'S UPDATE**

SPF has gotten off to a great start this year! In the last newsletter, I talked about SPF's growing pains over the past year and the lessons we have learned to nurture an atmosphere of trust and accountability, and deepen our commitment to democratic philanthropy. Building on our momentum, I am pleased to announce that Janine E. Lee has been selected as the new Executive Director of Southern Partners Fund, effective August 1, 2007. She began working as the Interim Executive Director April 17, 2007. With more than 17 years of experience in innovative grantmaking, strategic planning, and community and youth development, Janine has both the vision and the passion we need to drive SPF's mission of supporting community organizing and social justice in Southern rural communities. Most recently, Janine served as a Vice President at the Arthur M. Blank Foundation in Atlanta, Georgia where she led several

educational initiatives, including an initiative called Pathways to Success, which encouraged educational opportunities for low-income youth beyond high school; and the Better Beginnings Initiative aimed at ensuring a healthy, nurturing environment for disadvantaged children from pre-natal through age five. Prior to being recruited by the Blank Family Foundation, Janine served as a Vice President at the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation in Kansas City where she was instrumental in creating the Kauffman Scholars Program, managed the foundation's nationally recognized drug prevention program, and led the community building initiatives for several years. As a testament to Janine's deep commitment for volunteerism, she is an active member and officer of several local and national organizations including a fund that as established for girls and women in Kansas City. According to Janine, "I have a sense of urgency that there are

families and communities that are in desperate need of support and I take that seriously. I get excited when I think about the great potential that this organization has to create rural change and stimulate opportunities for the rural communities it supports." We were blessed to retain Ronald White as our interim Executive Director over the past six-months, who was instrumental in rebuilding our staff, communicating with supporters and donors, and strengthening our organizational capacity. With the recruitment of Janine Lee as the new Executive Director, I am confident that she will take the reigns to lead the talented team of SPF staff, challenge the board to be more engaged, and invigorate our membership to seize the power that is rightly due in the communities that we care about. I know that you will join us in the fight for equality, peace, and justice.

Inside this issue:

Chairperson's Update	1
2007 Grant Cycle	1-3, 6
Thoughts from the Interim Executive Director	2
Meet our New Staff	3
Membership News	4-5
Donor Reception	6
SPF Board & Membership	7

**2007 GRANT CYCLE**

In January 2007, the Southern Partners Fund board of directors approved 74 grants for a total of \$750,400. Our 2007 grantee partners are listed on page 4. This marked the eighth regular grantmaking cycle for SPF. We received 104 grant proposals - the highest amount ever received - to tackle a range of social justice issues across

our 12-state region. To name a few, these efforts included economic justice, education reform, labor rights, youth development, and environmental justice. Since we received a record number of competitive proposals for consideration, our grants panel reviewers had a tough time narrowing down recommendations. However,

after conducting site visits throughout the fall and winter, and meeting for two days in January, we know that our reviewers, all of whom are community organizers, recommended grants to support a mix of emerging and established organizations that are doing the most effective grassroots organizing for social change.

## THOUGHTS FROM THE DEPARTING INTERIM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

## Words from Ronald White

## A VIEW FROM A NEW ORLEANS BAR\*\*\*

Recently, I experienced the mixed blessing of a visit to New Orleans and the Katrina impacted region around Biloxi, Mississippi. Like all of my visits to this region I left instilled with feelings of anger at the many levels of government ineptitude and compassion for the over quarter million evacuees. Many victims of Katrina and Rita are still struggling under mortgages for houses that no longer exist, and bills accumulated during their unemployment while resettling. Far too many returnees are under attack from packs of predators: unscrupulous building contractors, cheating insurance companies and the infa-

mous FEMA agents. During my site visits I met many courageous community groups. Their efforts are bringing a degree of fairness and representation to community and state deliberations about their future. Most of these organizations were made up of returnees seeking support for their right to return and some were representative of the rural industries laid waste by the storm and still waiting for government assistance to get back on their feet. One impressive community effort was made up of youth returnees who, having experienced higher standards of education in other states, have joined together to demand decent conditions in their schools and a better education from

their teachers. More than a few of these groups, I was pleased to observe, were SPF grantees. What was most instructive to me during this visit though, was an unscheduled conversation that took place while I was trying to enjoy the local music scene. I happened to sit next to a gent who had come down to New Orleans to assist the city government with its redevelopment plan. A self proclaimed "liberal from the University of Wisconsin", who was clearly a bit tipsy, heard why I was in the region and proceeded to hold forth on why "nothing could get done" in reviving New Orleans. With almost savage instinct he suggested there were really two obstacles to New Orleans' redevelopment: empowered

community organizations and "reverse racism". In his view, spoken with a passion no doubt fueled by Jim Beam, New Orleans was sorely in need of a "benevolent dictator". With his second concern there was no need to specify his preferential color for this "Caesar". He viewed all community efforts to involve themselves in the determination of their neighborhood's future as "messy" and "disruptive" and ultimately unproductive.

## 2007 Grants Cycle (cont.)

The 2007 grants panel reviewers included **Ann Brown, Brett Bursey, Gwen Camacho-Hughes, Fernando Cuevas Jr., Robyn Davis, Ron Davis, Carolyn Ford, Cynthia Laramore, Peggy Mathews, Tirso Moreno, LaVerne Robinson, Hubert Sapp, Karen Watson, and Gardenia White.** We thank the panelists for their time, insight, and technical assistance they provided to organizations throughout the review process. We are also extremely grateful to the **Bert and Mary Meyer Foundation** for the financial and technical support they provided to make this grant-making cycle possible. In mid-May, we sent out the Request for Proposals (RFP) for the **2008 grant cycle.** The deadline for proposals is July 25, 2007. We will not accept proposals postmarked after this date. If you have any questions regarding the guidelines or application process, please call Nioka Young at 404-541-9091 ext. 16.

## ALABAMA

ADEM Reform Coalition Birmingham, AL	\$5,000
Equity Alabama Birmingham, AL	\$5,000
Grassroots Democracy Selma, AL	\$5,000
National Voting Rights Museum and Institute Selma, AL	\$8,000
South Bay Communities Alliance Codan, AL	\$5,000

## ARKANSAS

Advocates for Community Everton, AR	\$11,000
Arkansas Public Policy Panel Little Rock, AR	\$10,400
Center for Artistic Revolution N. Little Rock	\$7,500

## FLORIDA

Farmworker Association of FL Apopka, FL	10,500
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Farmworker Self-Help, Inc. Dade City, FL	\$25,000
Gulf County United Community Development Corporation Port, St. Joe, FL	\$13,000
Polk Ecumenical Action Council for Empowerment Lakeland, FL	\$10,500

## GEORGIA

Be Present Decatur, GA	\$8,000
Coordinadora de Lideres Comu- nitarios Atlanta, GA	\$8,000
Economic Justice Coalition Athens, GA	\$9,000
Environmental Community Ac- tion, Inc. Atlanta, GA	\$13,000
Georgia Employee Federation Atlanta, GA	\$5,000
Georgia Poultry Justice Alliance Atlanta, GA	\$9,500

Grassroots Empowerment Alli- ance of Rome Rome, GA	\$7,500
Latinos for Education and Jus- tice Organization, Inc. Fairmount, GA	\$7,000
McIntosh Sustainable Environ- mental and Economic Develop- ment Darien, GA	\$10,500
Raksha, Inc. Atlanta, GA	\$7,500
Rochelle Community Revitaliza- tion Partnership, Ltd. Rochelle, GA	\$5,000

Smithville Neighborhood Free- dom Center Smithville, GA	\$9,000
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## KENTUCKY

Community Farm Alliance Frankfort, KY	\$19,000
The Kentucky Coalition London, KY	\$8,000

**MEET NEW SPF STAFF**

**Leland McKeithan**

Leland is a Grants Management Consultant new to the Atlanta area. She is excited to join the Southern Partners team and to help the foundation get the most out of its grants management database. Leland honed her skills with JPMorgan Philanthropic Services in New York, where her team provided grant-making for a number of private foundations. She is a graduate of Sarah Lawrence College where she

learned to ask too many questions and to believe in the possibility of a better world for all. Leland grew up in Winston-Salem, NC, and is enormously pleased to return to Southern culture, fine people and the great weather! She loves all kinds of music and theater. Her passion is singing and she hopes to perform in the Atlanta area soon.

**Latasha Sutherland-Jenkins**

In March, Latasha joined the SPF family as an Administrative Assistant. She has extensive experience in Philanthropy. Prior to joining SPF, she was an Executive Assistant/Grants Administrator for a non-profit organization in Stone Mountain, Georgia, and has worked as a support staff member for both the Ford and Edward Hazen Foundations in New York, NY. Latasha is excited to join the SPF Family, and learning more

about an organization that is led by its membership. Latasha is a dedicated wife and mother of 3 precious daughters and loves spending time with her family and enjoying the wonderful weather Georgia has to offer.

**2007 Grant Cycle (cont.)**

**LOUISIANA**

Families and Friends of Louisiana's Incarcerated Children

New Orleans, LA \$8,000

Louisiana Environmental Justice Community Organizational Coalition

White Caste, LA \$5,000

**MISSISSIPPI**

Action Communication and Education Reform  
Duck Hill, MS \$13,000

Activists with a Purpose  
Grenada, MS \$7,500

Citizens for a Better Greenville  
Greenville, MS \$14,500

Community Culture and Resource Center  
Lexington, MS \$19,000

Concerned Citizens for A Better Tunica County, Inc.  
Tunica, MS \$10,500

Indianola Parent Student Group  
Indianola, MS \$14,500

Mississippi Immigrant Rights Alliance  
Jackson, MS \$13,000

Nollie's Citizens for Quality Education  
Lexington, MS \$15,000

Parents & Youth United for Better Webster County  
Europa, MS \$7,500

2nd Chance Organization  
Lexington, MS \$7,500

Youth Innovation Movement Solutions  
Tupelo, MS \$10,500

**NORTH CAROLINA**

Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League  
Glendale Springs \$15,000

Blue Ridge Women in Agriculture  
Boone, NC \$5,000

Center for Participatory Change  
Asheville, NC \$5,000

Community Wholeness Venture  
Durham, NC \$14,000

Helping Empower Local People  
Charlotte, NC \$5,000

Latino Advocacy Coalition of Henderson County, Inc.  
Hendersonville \$5,000

New Life Women's Leadership Project  
Williamston, NC \$8,000

North Carolina Latino Coalition  
Durham, NC \$14,000

Southeast Regional Economic Justice Network  
Durham, NC 11,500

Southerners for Economic Justice  
Raleigh, NC \$7,500

Southerners on New Ground  
Durham, NC \$9,000

Western North Carolina Workers Center  
Morganton, NC \$15,000

**SOUTH CAROLINA**

Carolina Alliance for Fair Employment  
Greenville, SC \$15,000

Community Organization for Rights and Empowerment  
Holly Hill, SC \$7,000

South Carolina Fair Share Education Fund  
Columbia, SC \$15,000

South Carolina Progressive Network  
Columbia, SC \$7,500

South Carolina Rural Education Grassroots Group  
Estill, SC \$8,000

**TENNESSEE**

Community Economic Development Network  
Knoxville, TN \$7,500

Community Shares  
Knoxville, TN \$7,500

Defense Depot Memphis Tennessee Concerned Citizens Committee  
Memphis, TN \$8,000

Save Our Cumberland Mountain Resource Project  
Lake City, TN \$7,500

## MEMBERSHIP NEWS

In this section, we highlight upcoming events, conferences, convening's, and noteworthy news that members would like to share with other members. Check it out...

### \*\*\*Children 's Healthcare in Florida

The first week of Florida's Legislative session began with a Senate Committee hearing on an insurance bill called KidCare. Our community has realized that there are 250,000 children in Florida without insurance, and the immigrant children, and the children of state employees have been left out! We took two vans full of beautiful children to visit the Florida Legislature. The Senate hearing committee asked them if they wished to speak and they replied that they wished to sing. It was broadcast on Florida Public Radio. They went back the following week, and got to sing again. In 27 years, this is the first time I have seen this happen in a committee hearing, and Senator Dawson the chair of the Senate committee, sang to the children as well. I was so proud to see the children glow, sit in the Senator's chairs, walk up and thank them, and shake hands with them. Then I knew that all these years of working with the children, I was given the privilege of seeing what that all meant. Sometimes it's hard for us to see what we are involved in because we are so close to it, but this time I had a front seat, and God was so good. One of the children remembered that Representative Zapata had told her that she could sit in his chair every time she came to Tallahassee, and she had been there the year before...so... we had to go find him. He was so gracious, and she got to sit in his chair again. These little children, the oldest 11 and the youngest 3, sang without fear. These children represent our future leadership. There is much to do to get our community educated about the rights of their children having equal care, but the kids are going back to their schools and telling their teachers. And now we have a person in our office that will be doing outreach because there are so many people that simply do not know that there is insurance for their children. Last year, we sent 20 million dollars back to Washington because it was not USED. As citizens we cannot let this happen!

You can see pictures of the kids trip to Tallahassee by clicking on the following link:

<http://picasaweb.google.com/jim33523/TalahassePics?authkey=ogtx1EvuGLY>

( as told by Margarita Romo, Executive Director of **Farmworkers Self-Help**)

### \*\*\*Appeal for Support for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Youth Leadership Movement

Our beautiful 21st Century Youth Leadership Movement (21C) campsite was invaded by cowardly racists who vandalized it following the Commemoration of Bloody Sunday and the Voting Rights Movement where presidential candidates Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton's presence may have inspired racists, who still fiercely celebrate the confederacy. 21st Century is one of the sponsors of the Commemoration and a sister organization of the National Voting Rights Museum and Institute. The ripping out of electrical wiring, stealing of the copper, stripping of the air conditioners, ripping out the plumbing, stealing the computers, destroying the printers and copy machines, busting up furniture, ripping out the ceilings, and leaving the walls desecrated with profanity and racial epithets was the result of this attack. Their viciousness and cowardice must be matched by our commitment and courage to rebuild and defend our institutions and leaders. We need your support now!

The 21st Century Youth Leadership Movement was started 22 years ago at the 20th anniversary of Bloody Sunday. We realized that a new generation of community-focused leaders was needed but that we had failed to support and develop that generation. 20 years after the passage of the Civil Rights and Voting Rights Acts, Ronald Reagan was President and the conservatives who lost the Goldwater election in 1964 were victorious in the 1980's and on the attack to turn back the clock on civil rights. We were determined to develop and support a new generation of leaders to meet the challenges of the 21st Century.

Over the last 22 years, children from communities in rural Alabama, high rise public housing in Chicago, NYC, and places in New Orleans with names like Desire, Lower 9, and "crack ally" have come together at 21C for what was for many a life saving and transforming experience. They learned Leadership, Academics, Culture, Economic development and Spirituality (LACES). Many today are living up to our goal of becoming community focused leaders for the 21st century.

Our alumnae have taken up the tasks of community service and leadership in many fields. Some have become mayors, and political leaders. Some are environmental activists; others have become activist seeking alternatives to incarceration for youthful offenders and against the prison industrial complex. Some are active in public health and HIV-AIDS prevention. Many are involved in education reform and education as a human right. One became director of an organization of black men eradicating violence against women. Many have been honored with national recognition for community leadership and service, such as the Reebok Human Rights Award.

Dr. Kyshun Webster a 21C alumnus is an educational leader in New Orleans who reestablished New Orleans summer youth programs on the 21C model when the New Orleans Recreation Department had not yet recovered from Katrina. Florence Wilson became the first in her family to attend college. After achieving a Master's degree, she became an anti-death penalty activist and worked in a post conviction death penalty project. Tarana Burke founded an organization to raise awareness of sexual abuse against women and young girls. These are just a few examples of the young adult leaders who grew up in the 21st Century Youth Leadership Movement. These are the wonderful people that the racist who attacked our campsite had the nerve to call "niggers".

We need to insure the future of this institution by coming to its aid now. It will cost \$100's of thousands of dollars to repair our campsite. We need national support to raise money and to fight the acceptance of racism that empowers and protects racist perpetrators like those who vandalized the campsite.

What is to be done?

1. Offer your carpentry, electrical, or plumbing skills to help repair this gathering place for youth and young adults who believe in social change.
2. Donate building supplies and materials such as air conditioners, plumbing supplies,
3. Send donations to help us rebuild and repair to the care of Carol Zippert, P.O. Box 82, Eutaw, AL, 35462.
4. Spread the word to others and invite them to stand in love with us in the face of hate.

Selma has been a symbol of white resistance to civil rights and democracy in the South. It can become a symbol of modern day resistance to racism and a model of how a community should respond to it. The racist have thrown down a challenge and given Selma an opportunity to redeem itself from a symbol of hate to an example of how the beloved community responds to hate. We should do all we can to help Selma seize this moment and act on it.

At the end of this particular battle against racism and hate we should be able to say, "The haters started a fight and the people of goodwill will finish it!"

(as told by Malika Sanders, Executive Director of **21<sup>st</sup> Century Youth Leadership Movement**)

### \*\*\*The Economic Justice Coalition (EJC)

EJC is located in Athens, Georgia, is very active in Dooly County, Vienna, Georgia. It would like to develop relations with SPF funded groups in other communities around the rural parts of Georgia to form partnerships that can address statewide policy issues. Please let EJC know if your organization can identify with any of the goals of the Economic Justice Coalition: 1) raising wages, 2) health benefits, 3) quality, respectful jobs, 4) rights of workers to organize, and 5) participation in governmental decision making. These issues can be viewed at: <http://www.econjustice.org>. For more information, contact [LL1954@aol.com](mailto:LL1954@aol.com) or [Rmacnair@uga.edu](mailto:Rmacnair@uga.edu) or 706-247-5132.

### \*\*\* Federation of Southern Cooperatives

On Thursday, August 16<sup>th</sup>, the Federation will hold the Estelle Witherspoon Memorial Award Dinner at the Sheraton Civic Center in Birmingham, Alabama. Awardees and Speakers include Tavis Smiley and Congressman James Clyburn and Senator Hank Sanders. Tickets are \$100 per person and sponsor tables are up to \$25,000. For more information, contact John Zippert at 205-652-9676 or [jzippert@aol.com](mailto:jzippert@aol.com)

On Friday and Saturday, August 17<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup>, the Federation's Annual Meeting will be held at the Federation's Rural Training and Research Center in Epes, Alabama. Former President Bill Clinton has been invited as the keynote speaker. For more information, contact John Zippert at 205-652-9676 or [jzippert@aol.com](mailto:jzippert@aol.com)

On Saturday and Sunday, August 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup>, join the Federation at the 32nd annual Black Belt Folk Roots Festival at Courthouse Square in Eutaw, Alabama. This will be a community celebration of culture, music, crafts, and food. Admission is free. For more information, contact Carol Zippert at 205-372-0525.

## DONOR RECEPTION

Southern Partners Fund (SPF) is in the planning process of hosting a donor reception later this fall. Once we have finalized the date and location, an invitation will be sent out. This will be an opportunity for donors to meet SPF Board, staff, and members. During this event, the Board Chair and new Executive Director will share their thoughts about what's on the horizon for SPF. We will keep you posted.

### 2007 Grant Cycle (cont.)

#### VIRGINIA

Virginia Black Lung Association  
Richlands, VA \$5,000

#### WEST VIRGINIA

Appalachian Coal County Water-  
shed Team  
Beckley, WV \$5,000

Coal River Mountain Watch  
Whitesville, WV \$14,000

Fair Shake Network  
Institute, WV \$7,500

Friends of Decker Creek  
Dellslow, WV \$7,500

Ohio Valley Environmental Coa-  
lition  
Huntington, WV \$10,500

South Central Educational De-  
velopment, Inc.  
Bluefield, WV \$7,500

#### MULTI-YEAR AWARDS

##### SECOND YEAR

Newtown Florist Club  
Gainesville, GA \$20,000

Appalachian Women's Alliance  
Floyd, VA \$20,000

##### THIRD YEAR

Federation of Child Care Center  
of Alabama, Inc.  
Montgomery, AL \$15,000

#### JUSTICE FUND FOR KATRINA RENEWAL AND RELIEF FUND GRANTS

Southern Echo  
Jackson, MS \$15,000

The People's Institute for Sur-  
vival and Beyond  
New Orleans, LA \$10,000

Mississippi Immigrant Rights  
Alliance  
Jackson, MS \$15,000

Portersville Revival Group  
Codan, AL \$15,000

United Houma Nation  
Golden Meadow, LA \$15,000

Touglao College Center for  
Civic Engagement  
Jackson, MS \$15,000

Zion Travelers' Cooperative  
Center  
New Orleans, LA \$15,000

Action Communication and  
Education Reform, Inc.  
Duck Hill, MS \$15,000

National Alliance of Vietnamese  
American Service Agencies  
Silver Spring, MD \$15,000

Kids Rethinking New Orleans  
Schools  
New Orleans, LA \$15,000

#### TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE, TRAVEL AND DISCRETIONARY AWARDS

Federation of Southern Coop-  
eratives Land Assistance Fund  
East Point, GA \$3,000

Community Wholeness Venture  
Durham, NC \$3,000

North Florida Educational De-  
velopment Corporation  
Gretna, FL \$6,000

Southeast Regional Economic  
Justice Network  
Durham, NC \$2,965

Grassroots Empowerment Or-  
ganization of Rome  
Rome, GA \$2,075

Rural Development Leadership  
Network  
Holly Springs, NC \$5,000

Community Organization fro  
Rights and Empowerment  
Holly Hill, SC \$1,386.75

2nd Chance Organization  
Lexington, MS \$2,000

Concerned Citizens for Better  
Tunica County, Inc.  
Tunica, MS \$5,000

Greater Birmingham Ministries  
Birmingham, AL \$5,000

Seminole County Training  
School  
Donalsonville, GA \$3,000

Environmental Community Ac-  
tion  
Atlanta, GA \$5,000

Activists with a Purpose  
Grenada, MS \$4,700

Economic Justice Coalition  
Athens, GA \$2,850

Farmworkers Self-Help  
Dade City, FL \$1,000

The Black Freeman's Living  
Historical Farm for Children  
Furman, AL \$2,500

McIntosh Sustainable Environ-  
mental and Economic Develop-  
ment  
Darien, GA \$2,730

Grassroots Empowerment Or-  
ganization of Rome  
Rome, GA \$1,083

Federation of Southern Coop-  
eratives Land Assistance Fund  
EastPoint, GA \$1,000

Farmworkers Association of  
Florida  
Apopka, FL \$3,000

Positive Action Committee  
Sylvania, GA \$3,000



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### SPF Staff

Janine Lee	Interim Executive Director
Fernando Cuevas, Jr.	Leadership Development Coordinator
Randall Oakley	Bookkeeper
Leland McKeithan	Grants Management Consultant
Latasha Sutherland-Jenkins	Administrative Assistant
Nioka Young	Program Officer

### SPF Board & Membership

*Ann Brown, Chair	Brett Bursey	Peggy Mathews
*Leroy Johnson, Treasurer	Araceli Corona	Judy Matsuoka
*Cynthia Laramore, Secretary	Ron Davis	Pam McMichael
*Carolyn Ford	Edna Gulley	Tirso Moreno
*Gardenia White	Cora Lee Johnson	Addie Scott Powell
*Malika Sanders	Ray McNair	Margarita Romo
*Karen Watson	Kamau Marcharia	Ray Santiago

\* Denotes Board Member

### SAVE THE DATE

- The National Center for Black Philanthropy will host its Sixth National Conference on Black Philanthropy, in Washington, DC June 27-29.
- The United States Social Forum will host its annual conference and fundraising event in Atlanta, GA June 27-July 1.
- The SPF Annual Membership Meeting will be held in Atlanta, GA from August 1 –3, 2007. An SPF staff member will contact members during the next few weeks to assist with travel arrangements and accommodations.
- The Council on Foundation will host the first of its kind get-together entitled "Creating the 21st Century Agenda for Philanthropy and Rural America, in Missoula, MT August 7-9.
- Bert and Mary Meyer Foundation will be celebrating its 20th Anniversary September 7-9, in Atlanta, GA.