KLCC Recharged:

Fellows gain inspiration from each other in the ongoing struggle for change back home. Page 3
“Being able to catch up, bounce ideas off each other, and continue to strengthen our network of support was very fulfilling.”

— Cody Buchanan, KLCC adult coach, Mi Casa Resource Center.
Renewal has been one of the enduring themes of KLCC over the years, whether it be community renewal, organizational renewal, leadership renewal, or some combination of these. A recent meeting at Wild Dunes Resort near Charleston, S.C., brought together KLCC fellows and affiliated personnel from grantee sites across the country who participated in Sessions One and Two. The gathering was filled with the spirit of renewal, which was felt by many in attendance.

“Everyone was excited to reconvene. Many, especially those from Session One, expressed that being in that gathering reenergized them,” says communications consultant Cheryl D. Fields, senior vice president, Langhum Mitchell Communications. Some fellows with the longest tenure experienced frustration around what they saw as a typical pattern of involvement on the part of members of the fellowship. It seemed that many fellows came into a project with a high level of enthusiasm and involvement, played a certain role for a while, and then moved along into other endeavors leaving the group and the project behind in an atmosphere of dissolution. Initially, that pattern had come to be viewed as a downside that left some questioning the soundness of investing so heavily in the KLCC process as a way of achieving the community change work.

However, once the group got together, it began to dawn on several members spontaneously that there is a natural ebb and flow to the work, a season of involvement followed by a period of disengagement and reflection. The South Carolina gathering provided the forum for reengagement that is the next natural and logical step where people come together with a lot of experience under their belts and can speak from...
places of deep knowledge. It was a rich demonstration of the value of getting together occasionally, even after the formal sessions have ended, to review the work from a more detached perspective. Of course, all this high-level communication interaction is possible because of the foundational work in trust building that is an integral part of each KLCC experience. “The other thing that was refreshing was how quickly the trust that has been built over time pays off in a situation like this. [Also], the new people get in synch quickly,” Fields says.

Among the traditional exercises such as peacemaking circles and the world café, there was a standout exercise designed to help people consider their own problems from another vantage point. One person at a time, everyone related a particularly vexing problem for which they had been unable to imagine a solution. After they stated the issue, others at the table threw out possible solutions or ways to look at the problem. The person posing the problem had to listen without reacting to the others remarks. At the end of the question session, the person had the opportunity to respond to those that made them think most. Not being allowed to respond immediately forced the listener to hear a number of different ideas and questions before considering which were most useful.

W.K. Kellogg Foundation program directors Chris Kwak and Paula Sammons invited participants to a conversation on the topic of racial equity, a key emphasis of the Foundation’s new mission and strategy. Foundation staff were eager to hear what the fellows thought about issues of racial equity as they relate to the topic of leadership and the Foundation’s future work. The conversation roused passion and key insights from participants based on their many years of doing race, civil rights and social justice organizing. These perspectives were deeply anchored in experience and will be recognized and honored as the Foundation continues to grapple with the issue of racial equity in its future programming.
Networking Across Boundaries

In 2004, the Buffalo office of Citizen Action of New York (CANY) was part of KLCC Session One and used the principles of collective leadership to lobby for educational and school reform in the economically disadvantaged urban community. CANY’s Long Island affiliate, Long Island Progressive Coalition (LIPC), was not actively involved in Session One, but has since modeled its leadership efforts on the Buffalo example. Recently, LIPC’s Maurice Mitchell attended his first KLCC gathering and shares his experiences as a newcomer.

For Maurice Mitchell, it was a logical progression from his role as lead organizer at LIPC to attending the KLCC cross-session gathering in South Carolina in late February. During KLCC Session One, Mitchell’s organization worked closely with CANY KLCC Buffalo’s Ceylane Meyers to develop the model and curriculum for LIPC’s education campaign and leadership development strategies. “It seemed logical for me to go as the staff member with the most knowledge overall of using [the KLCC] model and connecting to the fellows from this point forward. I was able to understand through the Buffalo work,” Mitchell says.

Having previously become aware of the boundary crossing nature of the work, Mitchell eagerly anticipated learning first-hand how different regional applications played out in areas with discrete demographics in their communities. “[The] thing that I think was the most concrete piece was the idea of the network and of doing cross-regional learning,” he says. Mitchell had special praise for Denver’s Mi Casa Resource Center with regard to their success in organizing and incorporating youth programming. “We look at power and organizing and challenging specific entities or politicians or corporations to push our agenda along, although that may be too oppositional for some,” Mitchell says, “but we don’t do enough of the networking and storytelling and deliberation that are central to their work.”

Despite having to sometimes be contentious in his work, Mitchell profoundly appreciated entering into a group that had built meaningful relationships across regions, race, class and age. He was immediately struck with the feeling of being at a reunion of people with a shared desire to create leadership and change through a shared language.

Of special interest to this KLCC-affiliated community organizer was the flat structure of the relationships between youth and adults. He cited generational differences as being a barrier that he often sees in his work, and expressed his desire and intention to create democratizing spaces where youth feel comfortable expressing themselves. He would like to incorporate the model that he observed in action in South Carolina into his own organization. “I would say that overall, [attending the conference] reminded me of the fact that our experience in Long Island is a shared experience. … If I’m struggling with this idea of how to get youth and adults to work together in a democratic way, a group in Colorado has made inroads in that conversation. KLCC creates the opportunity to network across regions.”

Networking Across Boundaries

Networking Across Boundaries
Public Media Engages Communities

In its quest to assess the possibilities for an expansive vision for public media, American University’s Center for Social Media (CSM) acknowledges the central importance of an open, “many-to-many” networked media environment, that which has replaced the top-down dissemination technologies of the past. The ideal of an engaged public is at the heart of the CSM’s perspective on the future of public media, and its assessment of public media considers emerging trends, stakeholders and policies in public media’s assumed mission to educate, inform and mobilize its users.

To this end, CSM each month selects one of its partners in the Global Perspectives in a Digital Age Initiative to highlight. Recently, CSM selected Native American Public Telecommunication’s (NAPT) newly launch Web site to review, and the summary of how NAPT is using new tools to connect Native American media makers could be informative for organizations trying to figure out how to reach out to their existing as well as new communities and to mobilize them to action in pursuit of ongoing and evolving goals.

A key component of the assessment was aligned with CSM’s central observation that “many-to-many” digital technologies are fostering participation at unprecedented levels in term of choice, conversation, curation, creation and collaboration. For example, on February 12, 10,000 people in 200 cities gathered under the banner of Twestival, a gathering organized on the social network Twitter, to have fun and to raise money for clean water efforts in Africa and India. To date, more than $250,000 has been raised that will directly support clean water projects.

The success of this effort clearly illustrates the intersection between social media and social activism, a dynamic topic in today’s digital media climate. NAPT fits well within this climate where it distinguishes itself as a new network created exclusively for Native American media makers. Along with such established features as a database of Native American film and live streaming of Native American radio, NAPT’s new networking facility provides a platform for future collaborative projects. Native American writers, producers and directors can post their latest work, upload their resumes and identify working partners.

In addition to the collaborative opportunities that will arise from NAPT’s interactive features, the organization will continue to make available grant opportunities in Native American media through which Native communities can expand the reach and impact of their messages. The NAPT Public Television Program Fund is currently accepting applications through July 15 for proposals for documentary, performance, cultural and public affairs programming intended for national public television broadcast.

Disenfranchised communities can either be the creators of democratizing content using public or social media, or they can be the beneficiaries of efforts by groups or communities who organize through social media outreach.

More information is available at www.centerforsocialmedia.org; www.nativetelecom.org; and http://tinyurl.com/blo38v.
South Texas Continues Advocacy Work

As was reported in the July 2008 issue of the KLCC Bridge Newsletter (p. 7), collective leadership work by individuals from the KLCC South Texas site, the Llano Grande Center for Research and Development, contributed to the issuance of $133,000,000 in education bonds for schools in the local area. “The work of the bond oversight committee has really contributed to building a new culture of participation,” says Dr. Francisco Guajardo, Llano Grande’s executive director.

In his role as professor of educational leadership at the University of Texas-Pan American, Francisco Guajardo reports:

“My students have become very active in policy advocacy work at the state legislative level. Twenty-six of them testified during the summer of 2008 before the Select Committee on Public School Accountability, a legislative committee, and a number of them have drafted language for legislation. We don’t know if the proposed legislation will make it into law, but that’s not necessarily the point. They have become policy activists and have gotten a taste for how to impact policy. There’s no way to put a dollar amount on the work.”

Over the course of the past month, the Llano Grande Center has received grants in the amount of $110,000 to continue youth service learning work, as well as regional college preparatory work. The efficacy of the work is enhanced through the application of the collective leadership model the Center has incorporated since its cooperation with KLCC began in 2002. ▲

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Public Media Innovation Project Accepting Applications

Public Media Innovation is accepting applications for funding for a small number of education-oriented projects, in amounts from $5,000 to $50,000, which will support public broadcasting’s mission to increase economic and financial literacy. These small grants will help grantees produce new media education tools, applications and content to help youth and adult learners understand and manage the current economic crisis.

Proposals will be accepted until midnight April 17.

In brief, CPB is hoping to select projects that:
- Use new media techniques, strategies, applications or products to foster economic and financial literacy and enhance understanding of the current economic crisis
- Include a broadcast component
- Indicate potential to meet a compelling economic or financial educational need
- Indicate potential to have a positive impact on learning for a targeted audience
- Demonstrate an approach that can be replicated by other stations
- Demonstrate a promising structured educational approach to be tested.

More information and the downloadable Request for Proposals and CPB application are available at www.publicmediainnovation.org.

Leadership Learning Community Creates Space

The Leadership Learning Community (LLC) is a national organization that supports leadership development programs through funding, research and operational avenues. LLC seeks to empower communities and organizations to uphold positive change through competent leadership development practices. To this end, LLC’s annual meeting, Creating Space IX, will tackle issues around achieving and sustaining social justice through individual and collective leadership expressed through transformative conversations in an atmosphere where participants will be invited to:
- Share innovative strategies for supporting social justice leadership within and across programs, organizations and communities
- Learn experientially through creative, multidimensional activities — including addressing emergent interests using Open Space
- Exchange promising practices in the field of leadership development
- Be inspired to increase your own leadership impact
- Renew and recharge body, mind and spirit
- Develop and deepen peer networks and connections.

Creating Space IX will take place in Oakland, Calif., from May 20-22.

More information on the three-day gathering is available at www.leadershiplearning.org/creatingspace9 where you will find information on how to register and how to apply for financial assistance. The Leadership Learning Community is funded in part by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation.

Peacemaking Circle Training

Victor Jose Santana, education coordinator at Roca in Chelsea, Mass., will co-lead a circle training from April 2 through April 4, at Roca’s facility located at 101 Park St., Chelsea, Mass. The peacemaking circle is a process that brings together individuals who want to engage in conflict resolution, healing, support, decision making or other activities in which honest communication, relationship development and community building are core desired outcomes.

Circles offer an alternative to contemporary meeting processes that often rely on hierarchy, win-lose positioning, and victim-rescuer approaches to relationships and problem solving. Derived from native and aboriginal traditions, circles bring people together in a way that creates trust, respect, intimacy, goodwill, belonging, generosity, mutuality and reciprocity.

The process is not about changing others, but rather is an invitation to change oneself and one’s relationship with the community. Circles intentionally create a sacred space that lifts barriers between people, opening fresh possibilities for connection, collaboration and mutual understanding. The process works because it brings people together in a way that allows them to see one another as human beings and to talk about what matters.

—Victor Jose Santana

For more information, contact Barbara Regan at (617) 889-5210 ext. 241 or Barbara_Regan@rocainc.com.
“The world community of women must not allow difficult economic times to distract our global leaders from ending the wars, feeding the people, and stopping the systemic sexual violence and horrific crimes committed against women and girls in every country — whether in a democracy or under another form of rule.”

—Kim Gandy, president, National Organization for Women