

Funds Distribution Report

Recipient Organization:
Real Change Homeless Empowerment Project

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Organization's General Goals:

Real Change produces an award-winning weekly newspaper that provides immediate employment opportunity and takes action for economic, social, and racial justice. We envision a just, caring and inclusive community, where people are no longer marginalized by racism and classism and have the means to live with dignity.

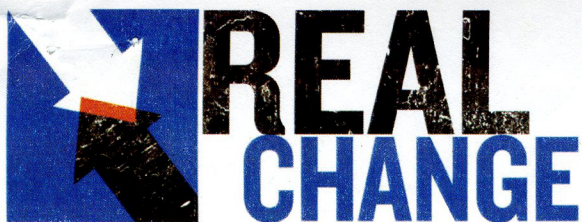
Date of Award:	Level:
2013 Q2	\$2,501 to \$5,000

For more information, please read the attached report from Real Change Homeless Empowerment Project.

8802 27th Ave NE
Tulalip, WA 98271

TulalipCares.org

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Dear Tulalip Tribes Charitable Fund,

As we head into our Twentieth Anniversary year, your strong support has increased the impact of our work across the board, from the employment opportunity we offer to more than 800 homeless and low-income vendors each year, to our award winning community journalism, and the very necessary organizing and advocacy we do that helps build a better city for all of us.

This is the final year of our current strategic plan, which set out to broaden the reach of the Real Change newspaper, expand our cross-class organizing and relational model, and strengthen our long-term financial stability. Here are a few of the strides we made in 2013:

- Opened 2 new satellite distribution offices in Bremerton and Bellevue to create new vendor opportunities and grow the readership of the newspaper.
- Expanded our advocacy and organizing by holding 9 public advocacy events, revitalizing our Homeless Speakers Bureau program, and presenting an economic justice themed independent film series.
- Strengthened our Board of Directors, reached our goal of setting aside two-months of financial reserves, and gave the vendors a raise with the newspaper price increase to \$2.

We will continue to focus on these core goals while we develop Real Change's 2015-2017 strategic plan. Highlights for our work in 2014 include:

- Introduction of a phone app to support cashless sales of the paper.
- Increased focus on the survival concerns of our vendors through the OutsideIN Campaign, which aspires to get 1,000 unsheltered homeless inside by 2015.
- An emphasis upon board development and training, and deepened relationships with our broad base of community supporters.

In addition to Real Change's 2013 Annual Report, I enclose an internal memo that you might find interesting. Last year, we closely reviewed our organization's role in building connections across boundaries of class. I am proud of the direction we have taken, and I hope you will take a look at our recent progress and the vision moving forward.

Thank you again for your remarkable support of our important work.

Warmly,


Tim Harris
Founding Director

REAL CHANGE

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Anti-Classism at Real Change: 2013, 2014 and Beyond

By Alan Preston, Managing Director

February 25, 2014

In February of 2013, Real Change staff and board completed a retreat on class and classism. During the retreat, we explored our assumptions related to socio-economic class and looked at the impact on Real Change. Specifically, we considered four dimensions:

- “Hidden Walls”: a term coined by author/activist Linda Stout to describe barriers that prevent poor or low income people from getting into or advancing within an organization;
- Communications: how the organization communicates internally and to the people it serves;
- Decision-Making: how hierarchical an organization is in its decision making processes; and,
- Equality of Rewards: how fairly benefits (and work) are distributed throughout the organization.

One of the outcomes of the retreat was to form an ad hoc committee that met to develop a series of recommendations about how Real Change could become a more anti-classist organization. This group then met monthly throughout the year to implement the recommendations.

In 2013, the anti-classism committee included Jenn Pearson (Volunteer Manager), Rosette Royale (Assistant Editor), Wes Browning (Vendor Relations Specialist) and Alan Preston (Managing Director.) For part of the year, it also included Anitra Freeman (Board Member). Going forward, Anne O’Meara (Vendor Services Intern) has joined the committee and we hope to engage another board member.

The purpose of this memorandum is to highlight our key accomplishments in the nine months following the retreat, and also present a vision for ongoing work to ensure that we “walk our talk” as an anti-classist organization.

Key Actions in 2013

1. **Created and funded a paid vendor internship program.** We sketched out the framework for a paid vendor internship program in 2014 and ensured that the internships were included in the budget. The idea is that we will have quarterly interns that will focus on peer outreach and engagement. The first internship will be in Vendor Services, focused on helping recruit new vendors in our satellite locations. The second internship will likely be in Advocacy and subsequent internships will be determined based on organizational need and opportunities.
2. **Created a policy to ensure Vendors receive consideration in all hiring decisions.** At the committee’s recommendation, RC has now adopted a policy that all active vendors who submit completed applications for the Board, staff, or volunteer positions are given a minimum of a pre-screening interview.
3. **Improved Communications with Vendors:** Recognizing that some vendors have issues with literacy and/or reading small print, we affirmed our internal commitment to use more graphics

in preparing materials and use larger print and easily legible font sizes. We re-wrote our style guide to emphasize these changes.

4. **Improved Transparency and Communication with Staff.** Beginning in the second half of last year, notes from Senior Management team meetings and from board meetings are now shared with all staff.
5. **Increased Accountability for non-Hierarchical Decision Making:** Real Change is committed to being open and inclusive in its decision making processes. We strive to involve all staff to the extent possible, and for managers to be transparent when they do need to make decisions. To hold ourselves accountable to that commitment, we added this criteria to the performance evaluations of supervisors:
Decision making: Solicits and acts on feedback from supervisees; acts decisively when appropriate, is transparent with staff about decisions and the rationale for making them.
6. **Extending efforts to minimize pay disparity (in process).** One of Real Change's compensation values is to maintain a modest gap between the highest and lowest paid employees. The last two years, we have considered this in the way we have distributed of increases. The anti-classism committee recommended that we reflect that value in the way we subsidize health care premiums. I.e. that rather than all employees contributing the same amount to the plan, they contribute in inverse proportion to their incomes. This proposal will be considered by the Senior Management team and Board of Directors.
7. **Deepening involvement with Vendors throughout Real Change (in process).** The committee proposed that we create more opportunities to foster regular engagement between staff and vendors. We are currently exploring the viability of assigning staff members, on a rotating basis, to help staff the office during and immediately following the truck unload on Wednesday mornings. We are also evaluating opportunities to include vendors on more cross-departmental committees.

Looking ahead to 2014

We made some concrete and important strides in 2013, most of which were at the level of policies and practices. In 2014, there is an opportunity to take our commitment to be an anti-classist organization to the next level. Specifically, it's time to consider how we elevate the importance and voice of vendors throughout our organization – how we create structural and cultural changes that foster broader vendor inclusion.

The paid internships we initiated this year are a great first step, especially if we think about them not just as one time internship opportunities, but as pathways to additional roles in leadership and, eventually, employment at Real Change. Creating more leadership and staff opportunities for vendors and ex-vendors will require substantial investment in resources and training. We will need to learn from existing models of effective peer outreach and engagement. We'll need to think bigger about leadership development, develop or adopt curricula, and make sure that sufficient funds are included in the budget.

It's an exciting vision, but it is not enough. We must be mindful of the fact that leadership development for a few vendors does not necessarily translate into benefit for the vendors as a whole. We need to

engage the question of how we elevate the vendors' voice as a whole in the organization. How do we break down walls and foster inclusion at all levels? How do we convey maximum respect?

As Tim often describes, there are typically two models of homeless empowerment organizations: those that are run by Professional Middle Class (PMC) people on behalf of homeless people and those that are run by homeless people themselves. Neither model has proven particularly effective. The PMC organizations create divisions and end up acting like traditional social service organizations that strive to "help" their clients; the homeless-led organizations often fall apart due to infighting and lack of organizational know-how and technical skills. RC is poised to become an organization that strikes the right balance between the two opposing poles and draws from both models.

We are already part way there. We have made a conscious commitment to ensure that formerly homeless and low income people are represented on our staff and board. We have a history of doing our organizing work across class. We consistently hear that our special events do a great job of putting our vendor's front and center. We have named "living our values as a cross class organization" as one of the top priorities in our strategic plan and have invested considerable time and resources into doing our internal work around socio-economic class and classism. Yet, at the end of the day, our organizational structure and culture is still more similar to the traditional PMC social services model than it is different.

Acknowledging our limitations as a true cross class organization opens up possibilities for re-thinking how we operate. It seems like there are several specific steps we could take in broadening our thinking.

1. Conduct research into other organizations that operate in a cross-class manner;
2. Identify possible tools that would help RC conduct an internal self-assessment around issues of class;
3. Take a critical look, department by department, at how we could more meaningfully elevate the role of our vendors; and,
4. Think outside the box to consider alternate models to organize Real Change, perhaps borrowing from the labor movement and the worker's cooperative movement.

This is the work of the anti-classism committee in 2014 and beyond. The challenges are substantial, but we also have a real opportunity to become a national model of what it means to be a true cross-class organization.