



Taking Diversity and Inclusion to the Next Level

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November 1, 2013

Dear VISIONS Friend,

VISIONS celebrate our 30<sup>th</sup> year in November 2014. What an amazing journey it has been!

This year, in spite of a continued sluggish economy which leads to cuts in services like ours, we brought VISIONS tools for problem-solving and action to over 60 new or returning public and private sector organizations, directly impacting over 4,000 people, and indirectly, up to 30,000. We also completed our signature summer youth leadership development programs -- Legacy Project VI in Boston, MA and Legacy Project II in Fresno, CA. Youth and young adults in both cities are supporting on-going intergenerational engagement in a variety of settings. In the words of one of our Legacy Project Fresno participants:

*I'm slowly learning more and more about who I am, what it means to be myself, and how to always be myself. VISIONS/Legacy Project helped me in that process... I specifically learned that I can feel empowered and happy about my qualities without being obnoxious. In the end, it will make me less obnoxious.*

By sending a generous donation in response to this year's appeal, you help kick off our celebration of this milestone year for VISIONS. Given the continued economic realities for small businesses, we need your help to thrive over the next years. Below I highlight three significant ways to support VISIONS' commitment to change. Please consider donating towards one or more of these to enhance equity work around issues of your passion! Your financial support helps us:

1. Continue development of the next generation of youth equity leaders from both rural and urban communities through our Legacy Projects in Boston, MA; Fresno, CA; and Halifax, NC.
2. Bring VISIONS' evidenced-based tools for problem solving and action to public and private organizations and thousands of individuals seeking to work for social and economic justice.
3. Continue to re-position ourselves for success over the next five years as we increase our reach by such initiatives as supporting an equitable frame in food systems policy, organizational and community development; and a promising joint venture that addresses inequities in health service delivery.

Your generous contribution now is critical. In the wake of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the March on Washington, our country is stirred up about race in a way analogous to what it must have been in the late 1890's, when white resistance to the civil rights act of 1875 was rising and reaching its peak, resulting in the re-institution of "Jim Crow" laws in the U.S. South by the late 1900's until 1964. If this were not enough, in this year we have had the re-emergence and/or escalation of struggles on several interlocking equity issues:

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- gun violence
- birth to prison pipeline
- economic injustice (Farm Bill; food stamps, union busting)
- voting rights/gerrymandering of districts
- women's right to choice
- health care
- immigration

Your support helps VISIONS equip faith based, community based and human services organizations who work on one or more of these issues to see the correlation between each of them and our national unfinished agenda on race. Our work is to help address this unfinished legacy; and with your help, we who believe in equity, can seize the moment to re-energize for change. Thank you in advance for your generous donation.

***Our 30<sup>th</sup> Birthday Celebration is underway!***

- We launched our 30<sup>th</sup> celebration at our Fall board meeting in early October during which VISIONS' board members participated in our first in-person group phonation to share enthusiasm about our work with previous donors and friends. Some of you were called; so thanks again to all who donated, pledged and sent checks since that night. The evening was so much fun that we are going to do it again next Fall. If you were called and have been meaning to respond, please do so right away by mailing a check to our office at 48 Juniper Street, Roxbury, MA 02119; or calling the office, 617-541-4100. Our administrative staff is available to take secure credit card payments by phone.
- We continue celebrating January 23-24, 2014, when VISIONS co-sponsors an exciting two-day event in partnership with the Louis D. Brown Peace Institute, the Children's Hospital Neighborhood Partnership Program, and the Episcopal Divinity School -- "*Being Culturally Responsive in Urban Settings: A Conference for Mental Health Providers.*" Mental Health providers from Boston and across Massachusetts will gather to learn and share the nuances of providing support to children and families in urban communities. Conference details and registration can be found at [bostonchildrens.org/CHCPCConference](http://bostonchildrens.org/CHCPCConference) and on VISIONS' website at [visions-inc.org/what-we-offer/community-partnerships/boston-childrens-hospital/](http://visions-inc.org/what-we-offer/community-partnerships/boston-childrens-hospital/). The centerpiece of these two days will be a special reception honoring pioneers in mental health care to our community and fundraiser to honor VISIONS' 30 years of change work and community partnerships.
- We celebrate more on April 24, 2014, as VISIONS is honored in Rocky Mount, NC by and with the Wright's Center, an adult day care center for frail and disabled elders, our first community development project. The 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of VISIONS is the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Wright's Center. A part of VISIONS' founding commitment to on-the-ground community change was the Center with a portion of our proceeds supporting the Center during its first 15 years of becoming a sustainable model for community elder care in the state of North Carolina. The Center's annual banquet has become one of the most successful multicultural fundraising efforts in the community.

Our work remains critical in this complex cultural environment. Please support our efforts with your contribution now ***and*** at one of our upcoming events in 2014!

Sincerely,



Valerie A. Batts, PhD  
Executive Director