

# President's Report

2006 brought the promise of increasing possibilities for social change, where NCF grantees and partners were at the forefront of facilitating progressive reform. Many NCF projects and activities received real recognition in the media, in Washington D.C. and in the states, for their innovative approaches and impact. In all our work, we have sought to develop new and more effective approaches to change the public policy landscape to better reflect our current social, political, economic and cultural realities. We have vigorously reassessed past strategies and directions and have consequently sought approaches that emphasize broader integrated visions rather than narrow issue silos, possibilities rather than limits and restraints, assets rather than liabilities, empowerment rather than victimhood, and aspirations rather than complaints.

The Health Program strongly focused on state and local communities, funding state advocacy groups working to promote access to quality, affordable healthcare for all. These efforts have been rewarded by recent breakthroughs in Massachusetts, Illinois, Maine, Vermont, and California. The Prescription Litigation Project, which NCF helped start, has worked hard to lower the price of prescription drugs through litigation, resulting in nearly \$4 billion dollars in savings on purchases this year alone. On the national level, the Foundation helped found and support the Herndon Alliance, a coalition of over sixty minority, faith, advocacy, labor and provider organizations, developing strategic policy initiatives to expand access to quality, affordable healthcare nationally for all.

NCF's health grantees and partners are working hard to harness a pervasive and growing sense that our existing health system is broken, directing efforts toward the creation of effective state and local solutions that will lead to a national response. Strategic alliances, creative policy development and long-term institution building all will remain critical to creating an environment in which the successes that are beginning to emerge from the states can be extended more broadly.

The Jewish Life and Values Program has become a key leader in building the fields of Jewish service and social justice. The Foundation's early support of innovative Jewish social justice initiatives has – in a relatively short period of time – changed the landscape for emerging generations of Jews. NCF's work to promote Jewish service garnered particular attention this past year, culminating in a conference that brought together practitioners of Jewish service, funders and community leaders, all seeking to envision how to make Jewish service central to American Jewish Life and to bring it to scale.

NCF has been in the vanguard of promoting Congregation Based Community Organizing (CBCO), a dynamic process of training, reflection, one-on-one conversations, and house meetings, leading congregations to identify issues of social concern and engage in addressing them. Congregations involved in CBCO played a crucial role in Massachusetts's recent health care reform.

For these efforts, the Jewish Life and Values Program Director was recognized again, for the second year in a row, as one of the fifty most influential Jews in the U.S. by *The Jewish Daily Forward*.

In 2006, the Environment program continued its commitment to searching for solutions to the grave issues of the climate crisis and environmental degradation by funding innovative work to address these challenges in a more effective way. One example that has garnered real media and political attention is the Apollo Alliance (an Environment, Health, and Interprogram effort). Senator Clinton recently acknowledged Apollo for its leadership in challenging the nation to become energy independent while addressing climate change and creating millions of well-paying, clean energy jobs.

Environment, Health, and Interprogram have also maintained their ongoing support of the Strategic Values Project, which is continuing its groundbreaking work to quantify the social values of Americans and to use this research to develop strategic initiatives that advance environmental sustainability, community health and social justice perspectives. Their findings are currently being used by organizations such as Earthjustice, the country's largest non-profit litigation firm to broaden the base of public support for environmental sustainability; by the California Alliance, a coalition of twenty-five state social and economic justice organizations working to expand the community benefits movement, to address community health and environmental needs; by the Center for American Progress for its efforts to shape the public agenda on global warming preparedness; and by the Herndon Alliance on national healthcare reform.

Senator Obama has recognized the important work of the NCF grantee, the Center for American Progress and its initiative, "Health Care for Hybrids," which seeks to provide incentives to the auto industry to accelerate efforts to develop more energy-efficient vehicles that will lessen our dependence on oil. Many organizations supported by the Environment program are noted for their willingness to think beyond traditional approaches. Their work seeks to achieve both concrete accomplishments in the short-term and to change the political landscape in the long-term so that we can effectively meet the tremendous challenges we face.

The Contemplative Practice Program is reviewing the past fifteen years of the Foundation's work in this area. This overview will seek to measure contemplative practice's effects on social and environmental justice efforts and whether these practices have fostered any significant breakthrough in thinking, creativity, and program results. It is also hoped that this research will lay out the beginnings of new ways of seeing and doing. At the core of this project is Albert Einstein's insight that "the significant problems we face cannot be solved at the same level of thinking we were at when we created them."

The Arts and Culture Program continued to support cultural organizations that have the ability to educate and advocate for healthy and sustainable communities, and that demand accountability of those who violate the rights and wellbeing of others. 2006 marked the fourth full year that NCF has been making grants in the area of art and social justice and

the field has grown at a steady pace. Universities, theater groups, dance companies and media arts groups are training a new generation of artists, activists, and engaged community members, imparting in them needed skills to combine artistic practice with community organizing, leadership development, and effective story-telling techniques. The Universities that have been supported by the Arts and Culture program have brokered powerful and effective partnerships with their communities. Their efforts have included the work of approximately 1,500 students, 75 partnering institutions and 2,500 community members, all working hard to support their belief that the world needs healing and that the arts can be an instrument for change.

In addition, the Arts program, in collaboration with Interprogram, made several grants in 2006 to help maintain important cultural organizations and communities affected by Hurricane Katrina. Interprogram also worked with the Foundation's other programs to support several efforts in the Gulf Coast region, such as the rebuilding of the devastated community of Moss Point, Mississippi; the strengthening of local community development banks and credit unions; and helping to create innovative policy solutions concerning hurricane preparedness and reconstruction in the wake of Katrina. The Foundation held its 2006 Board retreat in New Orleans in order to assess and experience the situation in person. Several Board members, associates, and staff volunteered to do clean up work while there. The Foundation is committed in the coming years to continuing its support of the long-term sustainable rebuilding effort of the Gulf Coast.

The Foundation encouraged the accountability of corporations through its leadership activities as an engaged shareholder. The Foundation's shareholder activities work consists primarily of actively voting its proxies, filing shareholder resolutions and working with investor coalitions, such as the Investor Network on Climate Risk (INCR) and the United Nations Principles for Responsible Investment (UNPRI), which are backed by trillions of dollars of assets. The Foundation has been increasingly successful in obtaining the support of the proxy voting advisory firms such as Proxy Governance and Institutional Shareholder Services. Since the passage of the Foundation's new Shareholder Activity Guidelines in 2002, NCF has filed over 35 resolutions with more than 20 different companies. These resolutions concern issues of long-term shareholder value and NCF's mission, and have addressed political contributions, healthcare, energy efficiency and climate change. Through these efforts, the Foundation has been influential in shifting corporate approaches to climate change, energy efficiency and greenhouse gas emissions.

This past year the Foundation began its scheduled review of its programmatic guidelines. This process will continue through 2007, and is scheduled for completion in early 2008. The Board of the Nathan Cummings Foundation has begun generational succession as a second member of the Cummings' family's fourth generation was elected as a trustee. In addition, Beatrice Mayer, the daughter of Nathan Cummings and one of the Foundation's founding Board members, was recently recognized by the Board and elected as Trustee Emeritus. Our deepest gratitude goes out to Buddy for her leadership, mentorship, and many years of exceptional and distinguished service to the Foundation and the communities it supports.

All these accomplishments would not be possible without the exceptional efforts of our Board and Associates, our dedicated and innovative staff and our many partners. I thank them for their consistent, high quality efforts and willingness to take real risks. We look forward in the coming years ahead to continuing the Foundation's legacy of serving as a real force for social change.

Lance E. Lindblom  
Trustee,  
President and CEO