COMMUNITY SERVICE GRANT Awardees (2008 – 2014)

Project Vote
Sparlha Swa (RBS 1997) was awarded a grant for Project Vote. The goal of this project was to support the empowerment of young, black residents of Brooklyn to participate in the voting process. CSF funding helped create a powerful work of art (compilation CD) that brought 13 artists together with the goals of educating and mobilizing. Sparlha and her team’s hard work and dedication also enabled the successful planning and implementation of a voter registration event concert to include the artists and political speakers. They printed 2000 flyers, pressed 1000 CD’s and emailed over 10,000 addresses to promote the event. As a result, their voices were heard, the venue was filled, and a new artist’s collective was formed. "The goals of the grant awarded to were to 1) found a Brooklyn-based artist collective called the B Hive, 2) organize a free Voter Registration Concert called "Project Vote" which took place on October 4th, '08 and 3) produce and release a compilation CD of the same title featuring artists from the B Hive. Here is a trailer of the performances at the Voter Registration Concert. Film Credit: Karen Song."

The Cure
May Lugemwa (RBS 2000) and Aaliyah Williams (RBS 1998) were awarded a grant for their project entitled The Cure. The CSF funding produced a national public service announcement style short film to inspire and energize American citizens, communities and leaders to work toward affordable, quality healthcare and financial stability for all Americans. Their film won GRAND PRIZE of the AARP-UCLA Stolen Dreams film competition.

Birthday Party Project
Folake Dosu (RBS 2007) and Jamel Seagraves (RBS 2007) were awarded a grant for their project entitled The Birthday Party Project. CSF funding has been used thus far to organize birthday parties for underprivileged refugee children living in the Chicago area. Folake and Jamel hope that their connections in the Bay area will bring about similar events there. These parties serve to celebrate the human spirit, but also promote awareness of the refugee population and encourage community activism in addressing refugee-related issues.

Project Skill Build
Mike Woodward (RBS 2004) and Neveen Mahmoud (RBS 2007) were awarded a grant for their project entitled Project Skill Build. CSF funding was used in partnership with Habitat for Humanity to send skilled builders and construction workers to New Orleans, Louisiana, to help with rebuilding efforts after the destruction of this area by Hurricane Katrina. They have recently returned from their first trip to New Orleans and report success. They will use their newly secured connections there on the ground to establish a continuing presence in the communities. Their goals have become more long term and include plans for an institute to train local unskilled workers in the construction trade and to offer various workshops to help assist in the return to self-reliance. They are currently in the process of applying for 501(c)3 status. Project Skill Build was a SEMI-FINALIST in this year’s Echoing Green social entrepreneurship fellowship award competition and was also a SEMI-FINALIST in the Dell Social Innovation Competition.
Write Stuff: College Edition
Crystal Venning (RBS 2006) was awarded a grant for her project entitled The Write Stuff: College Edition. CSF funding assisted Crystal in establishing a program to help high school students at the Academy of Mount Saint Ursula in Bronx, New York, with the college application writing process. Crystal has successfully recruited many Yale students to work with high school seniors on their essays, and the College Access Consortium of New York (CACNY) has posted Write Stuff’s website on their website as a resource for the upcoming 2010 college application season.

Mental Health Awareness in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Shirley Delaleu (RBS 1998) was awarded a grant for this project, which sought to raise awareness of mental health and illness in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, and to educate community health workers about dealing with mental health. The project impacted the population served by the Worldwide Orphans Foundation. Shirley was able to implement workshops for teachers and emotional intelligence curriculum in the WWO schools. With assistance from colleagues at the WWO clinic she was also able to train staff in mental health awareness and group therapy enabling local staff to continue the group therapy sessions she started for adults diagnosed with HIV/AIDS. Her work continues even in her absence and the director of the Ethiopia’s WWO program has commended her efforts.

Lorenzo Alexander ACES Foundation—Life Skills and Tutoring/College Bound initiative
Brandon Nicholson (RBS 2001) was awarded a grant for the Lorenzo Alexander ACES Foundation—Life Skills and Tutoring/College Bound initiative. CSF funds will provide Oakland youth (6th -12th grade) in summer school over the course of six weeks, with workshops for academic assistance. The efforts of Brandon and his initiative hope inspire students to pursue higher education, initiate promising careers, maintain strong family units, and give back to their communities.

Black Cornerstone Foundation
Kristian Henderson (RBS 2005) and Mya Thompson (RBS 2007) initially presented the Black Cornerstone Foundation in the business plan competition at the Entrepreneurial Conference in New York this summer. A part of that plan included the Athletic Leadership and Empowerment series designed to directly support minority male college athletes in an effort to increase graduation rates, GPA’s, and levels of employment beyond college. Athletes participating in the leadership series will also receive training to enable them to go into high schools to speak to young athletes about opportunities and education.

Project Words Work!
Maria Velazquez (RBS 2000) is partnering with the Washington, D.C.-based non-profit organization, Bookfruits, and RBS Desiree Montgomery (2008) to deliver literature-based therapy to youth in an emergency domestic violence shelter. Maria will serve as facilitator locally providing writing workshops to child survivors in the shelter and Desiree will provide administrative support via telecommute. The weekly writing workshops will allow children to explore their emotions, family relationships, and other issues directly related to violence.
**Read at Peace**
This project proposed by Damilola Oladeru (RBS 2007) and Folake Dosu (RBS 2007) designed to promote literacy and religious tolerance in Erin-Ijesa, Nigeria. In addition to refurbishing an existing building for use as a library, the project seeks to offer the local population workshops on religious tolerance while also training individuals to lead the workshops to foster sustainability. The work in Nigeria will be linked back to schools in the US that are currently working to procure books for the library as part of school-wide community service projects. Also, a well will be built behind the library to ensure that all children and adults will be encouraged to use the facilities as part of the every day lives.

**Biz Camp**
Jason Young (RBS 2000) was able to teach Ben Franklin Intermediate School middle school students how to start their own business.

**Masue Village Borehole: Access to Clean and Safe Water**
Geraldine Pierre (RBS 2004), Ku McMahan (RBS 1999), Mike Woodward (RBS 2004) and Danielle Lovell-Andrews (RBS 2002)
To finance materials for the building of a borehole which will provide disadvantaged villagers with a reliable source of clean water for the village households.

**Backpacks for Haiti**
Charly Jeune (RBS1999) and Geraldine Pierre (RBS 2004)
To provide backpacks and school supplies for the most disadvantage Haitian children (many of whom lost all of their belongings in the 1/12/2010 earthquake).

**Giving Youth a Valuable Environment (G.Y.V.E.)**
Diana Ofosu (RBS 2008) and Raymond Grissom (RBS 2008)
To cultivate the intellect and spiritual capacity of junior youth by engaging in community service.

**Greater Kids Help-First Aid and Disaster Camp and Adult Basic First Aid Classes**
Joni Stuart (RBS 2000)
To support a children’s first aid and safety camp for inner city youth and a basic first aid course for inner city adults in New Orleans.

**Jefferson Area Food Bank**
The Ron Brown Scholar CSF reached out to the local area food bank in Charlottesville, VA on the first ever Ron Brown Scholar Alumni Day of Service. The Program donated $500 worth of food items and participated in volunteer work in June 2011.

**Access Solar**
Robert Kabera (2007)
Is in the process of starting a non-profit to distribute solar cookers and other such pollution solutions to small villages in Africa. He and his partners are currently working in Kenya, Uganda, Botswana, and South Africa to pilot their project and gather information to fine tune their approach and their equipment. Robert hopes to reach at least 75 villagers on this first trip.
The Bottom Line
Folake Dosu (RBS 2007)
A campaign to increase the number of colorectal screenings and reduce the number of colorectal cancer-related deaths. Through interactive media, we mobilize Gen Y to start a dialogue about colorectal health with their parents and other older loved ones. We welcome people of all ages to get informed and inspired to promote colorectal health and fight colorectal cancer.

Project WHAT! (We’re Here And Talking) - Detroit and Flint, Michigan
Amanda Alexander, RBS 2000
The number of families impacted by the prison system in the U.S. is staggering—more than 2.7 million children have a parent behind bars and 10 million children have experienced parental incarceration at some point in their lives. Put more sharply, one in every 28 children in the U.S. has a parent in prison; for Black children, the rate is more than one in nine. Southeast Michigan has been hit especially hard by incarceration, but young people have not had spaces to talk about their experiences—much less influence policy. Project WHAT! will change that by building the capacity of youth to become leaders in the movement for criminal justice reform.

Launched in 2006 by Community Works West in Oakland, California, Project WHAT! youth have changed policy in California and have delivered nearly 100 trainings on how to serve children with incarcerated parents. Project WHAT! uses the Children of Incarcerated Parents Bill of Rights and other platforms to advocate for criminal justice reform. In the process, the program supports youth to write and speak about their experiences with the prison system, builds their skills as facilitators and advocates, and provides them with part-time paid positions.