



THE DENVER FOUNDATION

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**Ten Metro Nonprofits Receive \$14,000 Inclusiveness Grants
from The Denver Foundation**

DENVER — The recent economic high tide has left many nonprofit organizations struggling to keep their heads above the water, underscoring the fact that those who will best ride the wave are those that apply the most sound business practices. Research from OMNI Institute, a Denver-based evaluation firm, revealed that nonprofit organizations are achieving outstanding results through their efforts to become more inclusive of people from diverse communities. Organizations report that they are able to provide more effective client services and have established more positive work environments. While many nonprofit organizations acknowledge inclusiveness as an optimal practice in accomplishing their missions, many lack the resources, tools and relationships to connect with communities of color beyond providing services to clients.

The Denver Foundation's Inclusiveness Project, with funding from The Ford Foundation, has helped to address the issue of resources by awarding grants to the following 10 Metro Denver nonprofits to build inclusiveness within their organizations: FrontRange Earth Force; Environmental Learning for Kids; The GLBT Center; The Conflict Center; Boulder County AIDS Project; Big Brothers Big Sisters of Colorado; Center for Work Education and Employment; El Centro Su Teatro; Denver Children's Advocacy Center; and Denver Kids, Inc.

Denver Kids Inc. President and CEO Glenna Norvelle said that while their educational and life skills programs has a long history of successfully supporting children and youth, they recognize the important role of inclusiveness in their future success. "Our goal in being part of the Inclusiveness Project is that every child, parent, staff, board member, contributor and volunteer involved with Denver Kids, Inc. will have an experience of contributing their own unique skills and gifts resulting in a rich diversity that will allow us to serve our children and families better," she stated.

Each organization will receive a \$14,000 two-year grant and they must commit to making a \$3,000 annual match. They must articulate their commitment to inclusiveness, partake in inclusiveness/diversity training, complete an organizational assessment, create concrete institutional goals, and develop a specific plan to accomplish those goals. In addition, OMNI Institute will evaluate their ongoing progress. The Foundation has developed a workbook, "Inclusiveness at Work," (available to any interested nonprofit) and will provide technical assistance to guide organizations through its components. All of the elements in the workbook are available at www.nonprofitinclusiveness.org.

"We are delighted to receive the support of The Denver Foundation," stated Tanya Mote, Development Director for El Centro Su Teatro. "Our mission is to create quality performances and make them accessible to our community. But we have come to realize that it is not enough to just be accessible to the Chicano population, we must reach a broader group of

people, including other communities of color. We are excited to combine the tools provided by the Inclusiveness Project with our tried and true community building practices to reach a greater audience.”

This is the second round of grants awarded by the Inclusiveness Project (formerly the Expanding Nonprofit Inclusiveness Project). The first round of grants was awarded in 2006 to 12 Metro Denver organizations to form a learning community. These past grantees found the experience of such value that they have continued to meet, now as the “Inclusiveness Collaborative,” even though the grant period has ended. Many, including Mike Johnson of Project Pave, Lori Cohn of Rocky Mountain Youth, and Nicole Todd of cityWILD, say they are eager to share their lessons learned with the new group.

“It is exciting to have the opportunity to continue to build a cadre of organizations that are learning from each other,” stated Lauren Casteel, Vice President of Philanthropic Partnerships at The Denver Foundation. “The mutual exchange of ideas and experiences helps to strengthen the individual organizations as well as the sector.”

Adrienne Mansanares, the Program Officer of the Foundation’s Inclusiveness Project, spoke to the ways in which the increased effectiveness of the organizations will be measured: “We are excited to expand our research to deepen our understanding of the impact of inclusive practices on nonprofits. This research is unique in the field,” she stated.

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About The Denver Foundation

The Denver Foundation is a community foundation dedicated to improving life in Metro Denver through philanthropy, leadership, and strengthening the community. Last year, the Foundation awarded \$38 million in grants. The Denver Foundation has two roles: stewarding an endowment to invest in meeting current and future needs for the Metro Denver community, and managing over 800 charitable funds on behalf of individuals, families and business. For more information, visit www.denverfoundation.org.

About the Inclusiveness Project

The Inclusiveness Project is a permanent program of The Denver Foundation. Its mission is to engage with Metro Denver nonprofit organizations, including funders, to become more inclusive of people of color. Its goals are to increase the number of people of color involved in the nonprofit sector, and spread the word about the benefits and importance of nonprofits becoming more inclusive.