

E-mailed to USP staff 03.02.2010

Greetings, everyone. As we emerge from another lively U.S. Programs Board meeting and prepare for spring (and spring dockets!), I thought I'd send along a few updates, congratulations, and thanks.

### **Outcomes of U.S. Programs February 23-24 Board Meeting**

We had a particularly engaging U.S. Programs Board Meeting last week. I encourage you to review the Board agenda, my cover memo, and all of the materials, as they are a great snapshot of all of the important work we are doing in U.S. Programs. The Board materials will be posted shortly to our great new USP Central directory on KARL. Here are a few quick summaries from the meeting itself:

- The Board welcomed our newest Board member, **Mallika Dutt**, Executive Director of Breakthrough. (See <http://www.breakthrough.tv/about-us/staff> for her bio.) Mallika jumped right into the discussions, making a number of valuable interventions and observations. **Bill Moyers** has also agreed to re-join the U.S. Programs after he retires from the Bill Moyers Journal this spring; he will join the Board during the May Board meeting. (Bill was on the Board briefly a number of years ago.)
- The Board was very supportive of the **Campaign for Black Male Achievement**, and had a rich conversation with Shawn, Geoff Canada, Sherrilyn Ifill and three of our CBMA grantees about CBMA's strategic plan and the current challenges and opportunities for advancing achievement for African-American men and boys. George Soros recommended "scaling up" CBMA and extending it beyond the original three-year commitment. Congratulations to Shawn, Rashid, Georgia and our EOF colleagues! We will put our heads together internally and with the Board advisors over the next few months to develop a proposal for scaling up CBMA.
- Over dinner at George Soros's home, the Board discussed the prospects for comprehensive immigration reform, and was updated by leaders from the **Reform Immigration for American Campaign** (see <http://reformimmigrationforamerica.org/>), which USP supports. Maria Teresa facilitated the discussion with Deepak Bhargava, Frank Sharry of America's Voice, and Ali Noorani of the National Immigration Forum. The good news is that, despite what we are all reading in the papers, there is a real chance that reform will move forward successfully this spring.
- The Board discussed and approved the new vision and framework for integrating the **Special Fund for Poverty Alleviation** and U.S. Programs. Congratulations to Mimi and the joint SFPA/USP vision team (Wendy, Shelley, Elise, Diana, Solomon, Shawn, Rashid, and Lenny)! We are very excited about working closely with our SFPA colleagues going forward to alleviate poverty and advance our advocacy goals.
- The Board gave the go-ahead for continued grantmaking that seeks to integrate our drug policy work to reform sentencing policies, support harm reduction

strategies, and expand access to treatment. Lenny Noisette, Diana Morris, and Daniel Wolfe are spearheading these efforts with assistance from a number of other staff.

- The USP Board is going high-tech. They agreed to convert to electronic distribution of all Board materials through Kindles, beginning in May.

The Board meetings are a major production, and I am grateful for the many people who help prepare for them. Special thanks are due to Gladys, Orelida and Nancy Youman for their work on the Board books and logistics; to the Events staff for the room set up and for feeding us well; to Joco Gazso for help with technology; and to Kay Murray for her astute legal review. Deep thanks also to the CBMA team, the SFPA/USP vision team, Maria Teresa and many others for your work in preparing such rich materials and discussions for the Board meeting.

### **Deputy Director Search and Hiring Process**

As you know, Nancy Youman will be transitioning later this spring to her new full-time position leading OSI's international efforts on climate change. Let's continue to congratulate Nancy on her new role and to thank her for her invaluable contributions to U.S. Programs. We have now posted the job description for the new Deputy Director (see <http://www.soros.org/about/offices/newyork/dep-dir-20100129>). The deadline for applications is March 12, and I would greatly appreciate your help in spreading the word. Thanks to Nancy, Cristina, Elisabeth, the senior team and others who provided valuable input into the job description. As we have done with other positions, we have put together a hiring committee to work together on recruitment and interviewing. Thanks to Lenny Noisette, Lori McGlinchey, Cristobal Alex, and Diana Morris for joining me on the hiring committee. We expect to conduct the first round of interviews in early April. The hiring committee will select 1-2 finalists, and the finalists will come back for a second round of meetings with Cristina, Elisabeth, the full senior team, and other staff. Since this is a very important position that supports all of U.S. Programs, I want to ensure that there is a lot of input into the selection process and a consensus about the best person for the job. Our hope is to have the new deputy director in place by May.

### **My travels**

Like many of you, I have had a busy travel season this winter. This week, February 28 – March 5, I am attending the second retreat for my year-long Rockwood Leadership Institute program. I am learning so much from the program, and am deeply grateful to those of you who have provided feedback on my leadership along the journey. Week before last, I joined Solomon, Lorraine, Raquiba, Diana and Cristobal at the **Neighborhood Stabilization Initiative** grantees convening. Let me join the chorus of congratulations for a terrific gathering! I learned more than I ever wanted to know about housing policy (smile), and heard firsthand about the tireless work of our grantees to stop the foreclosure crisis and stabilize distressed communities. Before the convening began, we also met with the Alliance for a Fair Florida, one of the eight state coalitions we funded through the Seize the Day Initiative last year to ensure transparency and equity in

the distribution of the federal stimulus dollars. This is the third state coalition I've had the chance to meet (in addition to Wisconsin in December and Texas last month). I've been very impressed with this work across the country, and the Seize the Day team is working to find additional ways to connect and support the coalitions in different states. In early January, Bill, Cristobal and I had a great series of site visits (and tacos!) in Houston and Austin. We met a number of advocates, leaders and elected officials to help inform D&P's state strategy in Texas, and also met with some members of the Texas Transparency & Equity Coalition, and a few of our terrific long-time Criminal Justice Fund grantees. Later this month, Raquiba will join the three of us for another trip to Texas to meet social justice advocates in the Rio Grande Valley and in Dallas.

Though it has been a challenging couple of months for social justice, I am feeling more committed than ever. There are no short cuts to transformative change, and no one person can make it happen alone. Our vision is about empowering people, millions all over the country, to demand a decent, fulfilled life. And because of centuries of disempowerment and injustice, that is going to take a while. But I'm in it for the long haul and I know you all are too.

As always, please feel free to drop me an email or drop by the office if you have any questions.

All best,  
Ann