

CULTURE

CHANGE

WATCH THE SPARKS FLY!



2007-2008 PROGRESS REPORT



GROUNDSPARK
IGNITING CHANGE THROUGH FILM

GROUNDSPARK

IGNITING CHANGE THROUGH FILM


“GroundSpark’s documentaries are so needed here. Hate crimes that have happened here in the South could be lessened starting with your work at the elementary school level. I saw how your film affected young folks and how they looked at others with tolerance. I think your work has even saved lives.”

*Sheila Morgan, a high school teacher and mother of a gay son, at a screening of **It's STILL Elementary** in Birmingham, Alabama.*



WHAT WE CAN'T SEE, WE CAN'T CHANGE

Here's what GroundSpark did this year to make destructive prejudices and bias visible and to stop the hurt and violence that young people experience in our schools every day.





WE PUT CULTURE CHANGE IN THE SPOTLIGHT WITH THE RELEASE OF *IT'S STILL ELEMENTARY*.

From inner cities to heartland towns and the birthplace of the civil rights movement, our latest Respect For All Project (RFAP) film is proving that diversity education really can stop homophobia and other prejudices from ruining lives.

Teachers in Alabama and Tennessee laughed and cried as they watched *It's STILL Elementary*. Most of them had never seen any educational media about homophobia before. The new Alabama safe schools coalition gained fresh momentum, and many folks began to organize for safer schools right at the screenings!

We're grateful that *It's STILL Elementary* is helping us to reach into caring communities of educators who feel isolated by bias and prejudice.



Before and after pictures of Samira Abdul-Karim from *It's Elementary* and *It's STILL Elementary*.



Some of the cities where we have screened *It's STILL Elementary*:

- Arlington • Barcelona, Spain
- Bellingham • Berkeley • Birmingham
- Boston • Budapest, Hungary
- Columbus • Dallas
- Georgetown, Guyana • Las Vegas
- London, England • Los Angeles
- Madrid, Spain • Milwaukee
- Minneapolis • Montgomery • Nashville
- New Delhi, India • New York City
- Olympia • Paris, France • Philadelphia
- Portland • Rochester
- Rosario, Argentina • San Francisco
- Seattle • Toronto • Turin, Italy
- Tuscaloosa • Tuscon
- Vancouver, Canada • Washington DC
- Winston-Salem

It's STILL Elementary tells the story of the making of our 1996 film, ***It's Elementary – Talking About Gay Issues in School***. It features interviews with many of the children who appeared in the original film and documents the continuing influence of the film on educators and students, as well as the backlash against it when it was first released in the United States.

It's STILL Elementary recently won a coveted Golden CINE Award. And our all-new ***It's Elementary*** teaching and organizing guide is being hailed as the most effective and comprehensive resource available today for helping communities come together to create caring, safe and respectful schools.

Now a whole new generation of teachers is getting the opportunity to learn about the deep impact of homophobia on young people and what educators can do to stop it.



Before and after pictures of Chloe Moushey and Raimol Cortado from ***It's Elementary*** and ***It's STILL Elementary***.





WE MOBILIZED THE MEDIA TO HELP COMMUNITIES FIGHT BACKLASH.

This year GroundSpark began ramping up its role as a national media advocate for safe schools.

In Evesham Township, New Jersey, a few vocal members of the religious right protested the inclusion of the RFAP film, ***That's a Family!***, in the township's third-grade diversity curriculum.

GroundSpark mobilized. We spread the word and made sure the national media reported our point of view: that teaching about different family structures, including gay- and lesbian-headed families, helps to create safer schools and a better learning environment for all kids. The controversy over the use of ***That's a Family!*** made headlines with stories featured in the New York Times, MSNBC online, CNN, Fox News, and BBC radio.

In February, when Lawrence King, a gender-non-conforming eighth grader, was killed by another student in front of his first period class in Ventura County California, GroundSpark again went to work. We gave voice in the media to the role schools should be playing to protect LGBT and gender non-conforming students.

We're now creating a rapid response network of civil rights, religious, mental health and education leaders. The network will provide support to school officials who come under attack for taking proactive steps to address homophobia and other forms of bias in their schools.

TUNE IN.

Listen as Debra Chasnoff speaks movingly on National Public Radio about the killing in Oxnard and how critical it is that we all work to stop school violence based on homophobia, no matter how we personally feel about homosexuality. www.npr.org.





IT'S A WRAP! WE FINISHED *STRAIGHTLACED*.

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Mark your calendars for the world premiere of ***Straightlaced***: Wednesday, January 14th, 2009 at the Yerba Buena Center for the Arts in San Francisco. And stay tuned for premieres and screenings across the country.

In the final months of shooting ***Straightlaced***, we filmed a ballet dance class whose students defy conventional ideas about dance when it comes to race and sexual orientation. We also toured a department store with a self-identified “gender queer” high school senior while she unearthed all the gender messages in everything from deodorant to golf balls. We went to prom and danced the night away with a graduating senior who happens to be transgender, and also conducted in depth interviews with six more students.

Straightlaced is the first film ever made about the painful pressure high school students feel to conform to strict gender roles. This film is set to light up a lot of dark places and spark a whole new round of culture change for teenagers.



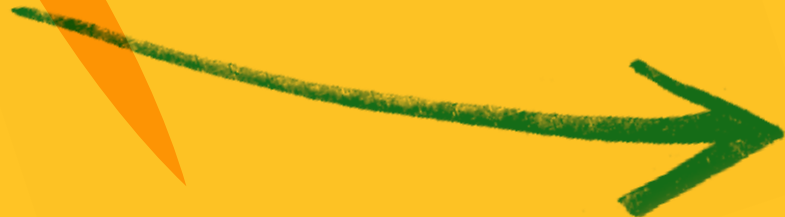
Interviewing students on set and at their ballet class during the production of ***Straightlaced***.





 **WORKING TOGETHER IS PART OF THE SOLUTION**

GroundSpark inspired new partnerships
in all the right places.



"It's very important that children learn in a place that's supportive, safe, and respectful, and this program is beneficial for ALL families and ALL people who work with children. I'm very interested in bringing ideas presented tonight into my teaching and parenting. Thank you for bringing this to us. Thank you, thank you, thank you!"

*An elementary school
teacher at the RFAP's
Salem, North Carolina workshop*



OUR RESPECT FOR ALL PROJECT NATIONAL COALITION JUST CAN'T STOP GROWING!

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Debra Chasnoff leading a classroom discussion about *That's a Family*.

The American School Counselors Association and Girls, Inc. have joined our Respect For All Project National Coalition. The Coalition already includes the National Education Association, the Afterschool Alliance, the Association of Children's Museums, the Child Welfare League of America, and the National Association of School Psychologists. Our National Coalition partners work with us to bring RFAP programming into more rural and conservative areas of the country where the need is greatest.



RESPECT FOR ALL PROJECT CAMPAIGNS ARE COMING OUT ALL OVER.

This year, with the help of a rapidly growing number of school districts, colleges, community organizations, state agencies and safe schools networks, we brought our films and education campaigns to Alabama, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Florida, Iowa, Louisiana, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, Oregon, and Tennessee.

We're making it possible for more educators to talk to students and parents about racism, homophobia, gender and harassment. Growing numbers of people from more conservative communities are watching our films and participating in conversations about the importance of including all people's lives in diversity education so our schools can be safe for everyone.



WE HELPED STRENGTHEN THE NATIONAL SAFE SCHOOLS MOVEMENT.

The National Safe Schools Roundtable is a powerful gathering of 30 national and state-level organizations committed to stopping anti-LGBT bias among young people. As leaders of the Roundtable, this year GroundSpark is spearheading the effort to establish a National Safe Schools Roundtable website with a database that any school or district can use to find safe schools resources and help with implementing safe schools planning and diversity education.



WE SPREAD THE TEACHINGS TO NEA TEACHERS NATIONWIDE.

The Respect for All Project and the National Education Association co-developed an initiative to mentor NEA members across the country about why and how to address homophobia in the classroom. In the summer of 2008, the NEA held the fourth annual training session using RFAP films and materials to show NEA members how to go back home and train their fellow teachers.





GROUNDSPARK

IGNITING CHANGE THROUGH FILM

RESPECT FOR ALL CROSSES ALL BOUNDARIES

GroundSpark is building a movement of caring, inclusive communities.

WE ARE GETTING EVERYONE BEHIND SAFE AND WELCOMING SCHOOLS.

“As the mother of a son who was bullied and a grandson who was bullied, I found this workshop and the dedication of the participants very encouraging. Children are never too young to start bullying and we as adults are never too late to try to prevent it. Thank you for working on this subject.”

*Attendee at our RFAP
Montana workshop*

This year, the Human Rights Campaign invited the RFAP to work with three San Francisco schools that are piloting an anti-bias curriculum guide. The new K-5 Welcoming Schools program uses RFAP films and lesson plans to teach young people about family diversity, gender, bullying and school violence. We're working hard to build strong, collaborative safe schools efforts with parents, teachers, students and administrators at the three pilot schools. Two other Welcoming Schools pilot programs in Massachusetts and Minnesota are using ***That's a Family!*** in their curricula.



WE ARE ORGANIZING CALIFORNIA.

GroundSpark's innovative Community Organizing Institute is helping California communities to build diversity education programs and strengthen safe schools efforts.

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The pilot targets entire California school districts in Northern, Central, and Southern California. We spent this last year conducting statewide research and building local partnerships. Now the RFAP is gearing up to send in trainers who will develop permanent safe schools teams in each district.

We are looking ahead to the Community Organizing Institute becoming a national model for making culture change happen in other states as well.



Students in their classrooms from our films *Let's Get Real* and *It's Elementary*.



GroundSpark's friendly staff.



IS THERE ANYONE WHO DOESN'T KNOW YET?

2007 was the year that Women's Educational Media became GroundSpark! GroundSpark expresses the vibrancy of our organization, our tendency to spark big culture changes with our films and our direct, from the ground approach to getting our messages across.

We love it. You love it. Can we say that GroundSpark is catching on like wildfire?



WE'VE GOT A PLAN.

In 2008 GroundSpark finished its first multi-year strategic plan. At the heart of our new plan is leadership, leadership, leadership.

In the coming year, you'll see us taking more leadership as a national voice for our core issues, more leadership in the safe schools movement and more leadership as the nation's premier creator of culture-changing media and education campaigns.

Check out, *Lighting the Way Forward*, our strategic plan brochure. Available online at: www.groundspark.org/strategic_plan

"The process of creating our strategic plan gave us a precious opportunity to step back and recognize the extraordinary national leadership that this organization has provided over the course of thirty years. GroundSpark, formerly Women's Educational Media, has consistently demonstrated an uncanny ability to articulate what needs to be said and make visible what needs to be seen."

*Doug Paxton, Co-Chair,
GroundSpark board of directors*



2007 FINANCIAL REPORT:

These numbers reflect the 2007 fiscal year. However, staff activities described in this progress report are from September 2007 through August 2008.

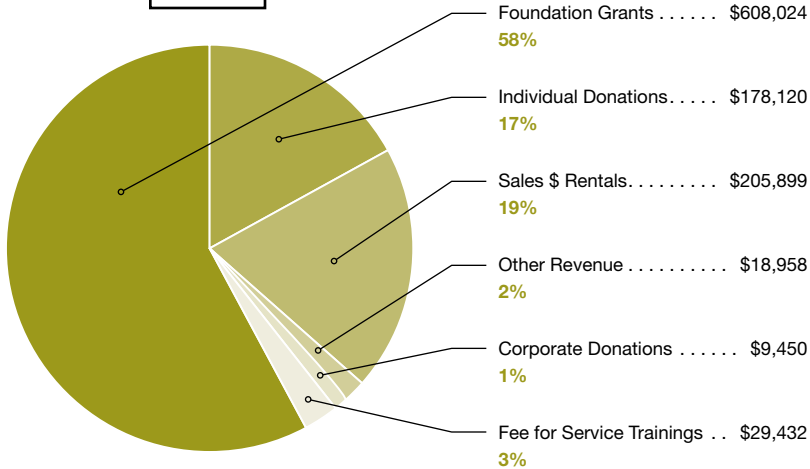
Net Assets, Beginning of Year \$767,940
 Total 2007 Revenues and Support \$1,049,883

SUBTOTAL \$1,817,823

Total 2007 Expenses -\$1,413,699
 Loss on Sale of Investments -\$96

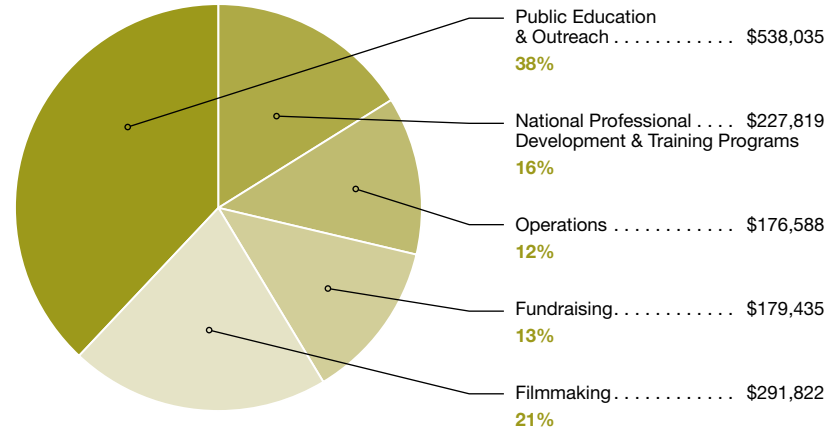
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TOTAL \$1,049,883

EXPENSES



TOTAL \$1,413,699

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This past year, we were thrilled to welcome eight new staff members as GroundSpark continues to grow: Cristy Chung (previously a team member in a different capacity), Jenesha de Rivera, Alana Esquivel, Alicia Harris, Brett Rogstad, Maritza Schäfer, Amy Scharf, and Brittney Shepherd.

We said goodbye with much gratitude to Christy Applegate, Sue Chen (on maternity leave), Abena Darden, Sherezada Kent and Kevin Swanson.

Development and Communications Consultants

Susan Freundlich
Nancy Otto
Shambhavi Sarasvati



THE RESPECT FOR ALL PROJECT

GroundSpark's Respect For All Project facilitates the development of inclusive schools and communities that are free from bias and prejudice by providing media resources, support and training to youth, educators and service providers.

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