MAAP Placement Organizations

1985
FARM LABOR ORGANIZING COMMITTEE, Toledo, OH

1986
ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS FOR REFORM NOW, Brooklyn, NY
FARM LABOR ORGANIZING COMMITTEE, Toledo, OH
FILIPINO IMMIGRANT SERVICES, Oakland CA
OREGON FAIR SHARE, Portland, OR
ST. PETER'S /OLD ST. MARY'S HOUSING COMMITTEE, San Francisco, CA

1987
ARIZONA FARMWORKERS UNION, El Mirage, AR
ASIAN IMMIGRANT WOMEN ADVOCATES, Oakland, CA
ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS FOR REFORM NOW, Brooklyn, NY
CITIZENS CLEARINGHOUSE FOR HAZARDOUS WASTES, Charleston, W.Va.
DETROIT ANTI-HUNGER/YOUTH ADVOCACY CENTER, Detroit, MI
DIRECT ACTION FOR RIGHTS AND EQUALITY, Providence, RI
FARMWORKER ASSOCIATION OF CENTRAL FLORIDA, Apopka, FL
SERVICE EMPLOYEES INTERNATIONAL UNION (SEIU), Washington, DC
SEIU, LOCAL 105, Denver, CO
SOUTHWEST ORGANIZING PROJECT, Albequerque, NM
ST. PETER'S HOUSING COMMITTEE, San Francisco, CA

1988
APPALACHIAN COMMUNITY FUND, Knoxville, TN
COMITE DE DEFENSA LEGAL Y FIANZAS, Sunnyside, WA
DELAWARE COUNTY PROJECT VOTE, Chester, PA
DIRECT ACTION FOR RIGHTS AND EQUALITY, Providence, RI
DUDLEY STREET NEIGHBORHOOD INITIATIVE, Roxbury, MA
FILIPINO SENIOR CITIZENS CENTER, Oakland, CA
NORTHEAST HEALTH CARE EMPLOYEES UNION, LOCAL 1199, Dorchester, MA
SEIU, LOCAL 105, Denver, CO
SEIU, LOCAL 525, Washington, DC
SILICON VALLEY TOXICS COALITION/SCCOSH, San Jose, CA
SOUTHWEST ORGANIZING PROJECT, Albequerque, NM
THE TENANTS UNION, Seattle, WA
WEST COUNTY TOXICS COALITION, Richmond, CA

1989
CAMPAIGN FOR ACCESSIBLE HEALTHCARE, Oakland, CA
CITY LIFE/VIDA URBANA, Jamaica Plain, MA
DIRECT ACTION FOR RIGHTS AND EQUALITY, Providence, RI
GREATER ROXBURY NEIGHBORHOOD AUTHORITY, Roxbury, MA
SEIU, LOCAL 1877, San Jose, CA

Roxbury, Boston, Massachusets

Anti-Displacement and Community Control Campaign

Roxbury is the center of Boston's Black community and home to a growing population of Latinos. It's a largely poor neighborhood that is threatened with gentrification and massive displacement. Scumlords, for-profit developers and other speculator types are oozing out of Boston's suburbs and financial centers to stake their claims in what they've anticipated to be the next lucrative business venture.

Folks in Roxbury know the trend well. Many of their families were among those that were, and continue to be, pushed out of Boston's South End to make way for new investments, like condominiums, and for the people that can afford them.

Where in the South End it's been a clean sweep for outside investment, folks in Roxbury are saying 'HELL NO' to that scenerio! Though Roxury's financial base is in desparate need of some inflow of capital, Roxbury's communities are refusing to give up control over their neighborhood land and over the general direction of development.

The city of Boston's Redevelopment Authority (BRA) went so far as to announce a $750 million re-development plan in the heart of Roxbury. Residents, neighborhood organizations, community development corporations, tenant unions, and local city officials, weary of the BRA's insensitivity to Roxbury's current residence, mobilized and created the Greater Roxbury Neighborhood Authority (GRNA) to confront the BRA's agenda.

Since its formation in 1985, the GRNA has become a successful vehicle in addressing the needs of the poor, people of color, and immigrants in Roxbury. Their most recent campaigns are focused on the issues of displacement and redlining, the discriminatory lending practices of banks.

GRNA's model of organizing is aimed at identifying scumlords, speculators and potentional arsonists by doing research and talking to tenants. The idea is to locate the biggest culprits, those that own the most property and are involved in the highest speculation, and to mobilize the community to demand accountability and to take control.

It's difficult to know when you've chosen the best possible target. Large monied interests hide behind all possible means, from phony trusts to flunkies they've hired, to protect their names. The GRNA model is designed to make connections and to help understand the mechanisms people in power use to confuse and divide our communities.

As interns with the GRNA we identified various potential target buildings and became involved with other tenant-initiated projects. Our campaign has centered around knocking on doors, talking with folks about the problems they're encountering with their landlords and encouraging them to believe in the power of working with their neighbors and other folks in the community to change their situations.

During our first two weeks we spent most of our time doing research on various known scumlords in the area. We finally narrowed in on a target after investigating a building listed on the Arson Prevention Commission's record of arson-prone sites. There had been a fire in the building some weeks before our visit. After witnessing the condition of the building and having talked to the tenants we were convinced that this scumlord wanted these tenants out by any means necessary, even if it meant buring the building down.

Upon our first visit to the building a strong urine smell permeated our sinuses. The banisters leading to the apartments were falling apart and there were holes in the wall where windows once were.

We spoke with the 6 tenants, mostly senior citizens, in the building and they showed us the horrible conditions they've been living in for the past five years; falling ceilings, broken windows, rats, roaches and much more. Generally, folks seemed pretty demoralized, and understandably, not very optimisic about the prospect for change.

After 4 housemeetings tenants, who have lived together for years, had a chance to develop as a cohesive group and formed a tenant organization to demand changes. A lot of hard work together, knocking on many doors and talking to hundreds of people, led to a rally in front of the apartment building, in which 60-65 people turned out. Everyone from neighbors to other tenant groups to city officials turned out to support Tenants Against Sleazy Slumlords, the new tenant group. Most recently, the owner of the building agreed to a meeting with the tenants. The tenants are pressuring the landlord to sell and have looked into the possiblities of getting a Non-profit Community Development Corporation to make an offer on the building.

(Phil) This campaign has not only made me look into myself, but also into other people and what they're thoughts are. In order to organize people you have to know where they're coming from. Although your personal experience may be a unique one, so then is everyone else's. Your job is to help identify that experience. The work has been hard; grueling, taxing and frustrating at many points. having to push others has been hard. It's hard enough to discipline yourself sometimes.

Roxbury is the anchor for communities of color. Once it can be stabilized itself, people of color in the Boston will be able to gain strength from their victories.

(Sandra) The Anti-Displacement campaign was real exciting for me in that the issues that the campaign looks to address are key to the kinds of problems low-income, and communities of color are facing across the country. Roxbury is embarking on an experiment in community control, which I feel will be a catalyst for determining the possibilities of sustaning our communities in the future. Tenants are demanding new, responsible landlords, or are looking into possibilities of cooperative ownership. And control over land-use is in the forefront of most community organizing initiatives here.

This intership experience has made me realize all the more that an organizer's learning experience never ends. An organizer must be sensitve to the past, aware of the present and having a vision for the future.