

GAINING CLOUT

Beyond the Mainstream

If you don't represent a mainstream nonprofit organization and have no friends in high places, how do you attract the resources you need?

A daring community organization has come up with some ways of gaining power.

The Center for Third World Organizing offers an annual conference and a variety of publications, including a magazine called Third Force, which focuses on issues and organizing in communities of color. For more information, contact the Center for Third World Organizing, 1218 East 21st Street, Oakland, California 94606 (510-533-7583).

NONPROFIT WORLD, Vol. 11, No. 4. Published by The Society For Nonprofit Organizations, 6314 Odana Road, Suite 1, Madison, WI 53719.



Interns in CTWO's Minority Activist Apprenticeship Program (MAAP) are trained in the essentials of face-to-face organizing.

When the country catches a cold, goes the old saying, communities of color come down with pneumonia.

You don't have to live in the inner city to know that things are bad for people of color these days. What is less visible is a dramatic resurgence of activism—and victories—in communities of color all across the country.

The Center for Third World Organizing (CTWO) in Oakland, California, is responsible for many of these successes. For over 10 years, CTWO has been committed to building strong organizations and developing capable and sophisticated community and labor organizers.

In one recent victory, a CTWO group (People United for a Better Oakland) managed to pressure the city of Oakland and county of Alameda to adopt one of the most

comprehensive lead-abatement plans in the country, and to test all inner-city children for lead poisoning. Lead poisoning is the major environmental disease in young children in urban areas, with a number of irreversible effects.

"WE WILL FIND A WAY— OR MAKE ONE"

But such achievements did not come easily or quickly. They were the result of years of hard work, of face-to-face organizing, research, fundraising, community meetings, and all-day strategy planning sessions. As lead-abatement organizer Sandra Davis points out, "The wins are sweet, but we are really about building power." Building strong organizations is as important as victories on specific issues.