NYU Reynolds/Youth Venture “Be A Changemaker Challenge “

Examples of 2007-08 Seed Grant Winners

The Consciousness, New York University
Drew Weller, Gallatin
The Consciousness develops and produces multi-media infotainment events which apply an interdisciplinary approach to creative problem solving, conflict resolution, and sustainable community building. It works with high school and college students to promote an extensive understanding of the complexities that make up the rapidly changing world, contextualizing the place of the individual in the larger fabric of society.

As an outlet for action, the group also encourages students to create their own do-it-yourself Conscious Events to foster hands-on experience with democratic participation in their local communities. The Consciousness has three main functions:

1. Programming bi-monthly conferences of students from many high schools and colleges throughout New York City.
2. Providing assembly presentations in high school auditoriums.
3. Providing resources on our website that students can access and use to guide their own event programming.

The Consciousness’s sustainability derives from the premise of passing on a method, a process and a manner of thinking that is useful in confronting new and unexpected situations. We are not producing one-time events, but rather acting as a conduit for a continuing series of exchanges that students have expressed interest in. This attitudinal approach allows for organizational flexibility and a smooth transition of leadership from one generation to the next.

Voice of Reason Records
Jason Fullen, Steinhardt
Voice of Reason Records is a non-profit music group that intends to raise awareness of many local and global social issues through its artists’ music and the release of cause-oriented compilation CDs. The purpose of each compilation CD is to bring various big and small-name artists together to support a specific social cause.
Voice of Reason Records also plans on beginning a live concert movement known as the "Rock for a Reason Movement." These concerts will pair supportive artists with representatives from the organizations they are advocating for, to create a community event which will raise awareness of the presenting social groups, as well as raise funds for the organizations.

Voice of Reason Records began in the fall of 2007, and members of the team have organized several mainstream events, including ones which have benefited Hurricane Katrina victims and Invisible Children. You can learn more at http://www.voiceofreasonrecords.com/.

Baby's First Home ($10,000 Grand Prize Winner)
Jessica Mason, School of Social Work

Baby's First Home (BFH) is a youth-led initiative that will provide housing and supportive services to homeless teen mothers and their children in Queens, NYC. BFH provides a supportive environment for mother-child bonding and the pursuit of educational or vocational training. Our mission is to help mothers build independent lives and stable futures for themselves and their children.

BFH recognizes that there is a distressed population of young mothers who come from a variety of backgrounds. Many of these women have been abandoned by their boyfriends, come from abusive relationships, are no longer welcome by their families, or have aged out of foster care, and they are left to support themselves and provide for their children without the tools to do so. As shelter and food are the priority, these women often drop out of school and work low-income jobs just to survive. They struggle to pay rent and many of these families continuously struggle or get caught in cycles of homelessness. BFH believes in helping these families get the tools they need to build bright futures and to provide for their children.

By offering security, shelter, educational opportunities and services to build independent and stable futures, BFH hopes to reduce homelessness and poverty for a targeted group of women and children. We believe that women should have many options, including the option to bring their children home to a safe and nurturing environment. BFH is currently working to build a safe haven that will be a small intimate community for young families and plans to offer aid in many different capacities, including counseling services, financial assistance, educational assistance, vocational assistance, health education, food and shelter.

Puentes Hacia el exit (Bridges to Success)
Meg Fabiszak, College of Arts and Sciences

Bridges to Success hopes to build connections between microfinancing organizations and the Centro del Muchacho Trabajador (CMT). CMT is an organization in Ecuador focused on supporting young men and their families through a variety of programs. Having volunteered at Centro del Muchacho Trabajador during two previous summers, the members of Bridges to Success wanted to do something more sustainable than only a few weeks of commitment.
The founding members attend Boston College, New York University and Johns Hopkins and strive to ensure that the organization is a diverse, national effort that culminates in international success. “Puentes hacia el éxito – Bridges to Success” intends to build the connections between microfinancing organizations that are already established in Quito, Ecuador and Centro del Muchacho Trabajador. As there is already a sound infrastructure within Centro del Muchacho Trabajador, Bridges to Success will ensure that the center will be able to work in accordance with a microfinancing group to provide the best opportunities possible to the population which it serves, as well as keep the interests of the 2,000 Ecuadorians served by Centro del Muchacho Trabajador as our primary target. After establishing a successful partnership between Centro del Muchacho Trabajador and a microfinancing organization, Bridges to Success can continue to maintain a sustainable and progressive relationship focused on developmental economics, entrepreneurship, and further endeavors.

**WeCycle**

**Emery Goossens, CAS**

WeCycle places WeCycle branded recycling bins in convenient areas of Manhattan to benefit the community environmentally while providing funds for other non-profit or charity organizations that promote community development. WeCycle believes in recycling so strongly that the organization will donate $0.05 to charity for every bottle or can received in WeCycle recycling bins.

Unlike other recycling services, the organization offsets their operational costs by providing advertisement space on their bins for businesses and organizations. WeCycle hopes that businesses will use their environmentally friendly service to promote their own “green” initiatives. You can learn more at [http://www.genv.net/en-us/team/wecycle_inc](http://www.genv.net/en-us/team/wecycle_inc) and [http://planetsave.com/blog/2008/07/30/recycling-at-outdoor-concerts-wecycle-has-a-better-idea/](http://planetsave.com/blog/2008/07/30/recycling-at-outdoor-concerts-wecycle-has-a-better-idea/).

**Human Rights Live**

**Jeongki Lim, Gallatin**

Human Rights Live hosts online video contests that encourage thousands of “netizens” to upload 30 second video clips of their favorite part of the day and relate it to human rights. Human Rights Live transforms the conventional view of human rights as a negative and distant problem into a positive and essential foundation for everyday activities in everyone’s life. The contestants are invited to Human Rights Live’s global networking website where they can upload, view, and share their pictures and videos celebrating the human rights in their daily lives.

We believe we are at a defining moment of our history where humankind has a chance to mend the historic division of ‘us’ versus ‘the others.’ The formation of a new ‘us’ can be realized through the activism of the 21st century where people all across the globe interact through new media and realize their common values and hope for human rights--that is freedom for everyone.