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Contents

- 4**
Public Housing
- 8**
Public Education
- 12**
Affordable Housing
- 16**
Political Reform
- 20**
Financial Information
- 21**
BPI Staff
- 22**
Contributors

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Dear Friends,

BPI's 40th Anniversary in 2009 was cause for celebration of our own rich history and the remarkable public interest achievements of our "40 Who've Made a Difference" honorees. While our grand 40th celebration presented a night for enjoyment and reflection, our true organizational footing is firmly planted not in the accomplishments of BPI's storied past but in pushing forward an aggressive policy agenda dedicated to meeting today's urgent social justice challenges head on.

We invite you to read in these pages the opening chapter of BPI's next forty years. It's a narrative that is actively unfolding every day in each of BPI's four program areas—in our on-the-ground leadership and collaboration building on a range of pressing public interest issues, insightful research and innovative policy development, and our in-depth legal representation.

BPI is well-equipped organizationally to meet the daunting public policy challenges we face. Our dedicated Board of Directors, now 47-strong, is a diverse group of progressive leaders from the Chicago region committed to social justice. The Board elected four new directors over the last year who fit this description squarely: Myles Berman, partner at Foley & Lardner LLP; Daisy Feidt, executive vice president of Access Living; Frances Kao, partner at Skadden Arps Slate Meagher & Flom LLP; and Rami Nashashibi, executive director of IMAN, the Inner-City Muslim Action Network.

As last year's Annual Report went to press, BPI and Chicago lost a lion of a leader—33-year BPI Board member Leon M. Despres, who died on May 6, 2009 at age 101. Although we mentioned his passing in last year's letter, no accounting of 2009 would be complete without reference to Len, especially as BPI takes up the mantle of political reform. We know that Len, who spent a lifetime in the law and public service battling for open and honest government in Chicago, would be happy that BPI is doing so now.

continued on page 2

Other organizational cornerstones are equally in place. BPI's staff, both long-time employees and newer hires, are deeply committed social justice advocates. They form a well respected, highly knowledgeable, collaborative team—both on the ground and in their innovative policy advocacy. Financially, although we have experienced some of the same funding challenges and adverse market outcomes that other organizations are facing, we are happy to report that BPI is on firm financial footing. The philanthropic community continues to actively support BPI's programs with both new and renewal funding. This includes generous Chicago-based foundations and our new national funder, the Ford Foundation.

In addition to effective programs, dedicated Board and staff leadership, and solid philanthropic support, the hallmark of a well working nonprofit is the support of loyal friends and new supporters who embrace the organization's mission and through their support become partners in its work. BPI is especially privileged to receive such support and endorsement from hundreds of individuals who find expression for their commitment to social justice in our work.

BPI is deeply grateful to them—and you. We promise to deploy your investment in BPI to the very best of our collective ability. We are fortunate to have you on board for Chapter One of the story of BPI's next forty years.

Sincerely,



Steven A. Kersten
President



E. Hoy McConnell, II
Executive Director



BPI Programs

- **Public Housing**
- **Public Education**
- **Affordable Housing**
- **Political Reform**

Public Housing

For over forty years, working with Chicago Housing Authority residents, CHA, the City of Chicago, developers, service providers, foundations, civic organizations, and academics, BPI has been deeply involved in Chicago public housing policy. In recent years, in the context of the Plan for Transformation, our work has focused on the Plan's goal of fundamentally revitalizing Chicago's public housing by creating new mixed-income communities that include but are not dominated by public housing. This enormously challenging effort is now at a pivotal moment, when the template for the Plan's remaining years will be set in place, determining the degree to which Chicago can cure one of its most intractable and debilitating social ailments—concentrated public housing poverty.

The Plan for Transformation has been underway for ten years—is it on the road to success?

BPI researched this question deeply, and in late 2009 published *The Third Side: A Mid-Course Report on Chicago's Transformation of Public Housing*, the first comprehensive assessment of the Plan for Transformation.

Our report lauded the Plan's bold vision of converting Chicago's infamous high-rise projects into economically integrated new communities and CHA's vigorous launch of these complex initiatives. We also pointed out that the Plan's bold vision failed to address "traditional" (100 percent public housing) developments that continue to languish in impoverished locations, and that CHA's relocation and social services arrangements had been grossly deficient—though under new CHA management these have been significantly improved. *The Third Side* also emphasized that the Plan is still very much a work in progress—more than half of planned mixed-income units, now encountering the headwinds of today's weak economic climate, remain to be initiated.

Is "mixed-income" working?

The Plan's mixed-income approach has evolved both geographically and conceptually. Geographically, in addition to the ten developments originally slated for mixed-income revitalization, five others are now to be redeveloped as mixed-income communities. BPI participates in Working Groups responsible for planning at all of these locations.

Conceptually, the scope of mixed-income planning has also expanded, now encompassing the view that in addition to bricks-and-mortar considerations, real "community building" is essential to the vitality and sustainability of these emerging communities. Community common space and activities, retail development, school quality, and parks are now important considerations in planning discussions.

In our view, solving the challenge of how to integrate mixed-income developments with their surrounding neighborhoods is essential to the long-term success of the mixed-income vision.

So, is mixed-income working? Yes, so far—but it remains very much a work in progress, with its ultimate success dependent on how well this new focus on comprehensive planning—real, long-term community building—is implemented.

What are the challenges ahead for mixed-income communities?

The economic recession's impact on the real estate market makes planning for remaining mixed-income development particularly challenging. Market rate for-sale housing remains stalled, and some once promising possibilities are now off the table (for example, the inclusion of public housing units in condominium buildings). As rental development continues, BPI has worked to create court-approved agreements with CHA and developers that address good management practices, social services, security, and efforts to develop for-sale housing agreements that preserve long-term mixed-income potential while maintaining quality of life for current residents. These agreements include commitments to work on schools, economic development and issues that benefit both the developments and the surrounding community.

New opportunities to “get it right” lie in both the fresh approach to holistic community building and the emergence of new federal housing and community development programs (for example, the Choice Communities and Promise Neighborhood programs to be piloted this year). The prospective infusion of federal funding offers promising new options that call for innovative responses.

What about schools in Transformation Plan communities?

The important role of schools in community development is well documented. In describing schools in Transformation Plan communities, *The Third Side* found that while all stakeholders agree that good schools are essential, coordinated planning between CHA and CPS has not taken place to the degree necessary. And, in many neighborhoods with public housing developments, low-performing schools and school safety

are urgent concerns. In response, BPI's public housing and public education programs have created a new joint project designed to improve and/or create strong schools in targeted mixed-income and traditional public housing communities. Our efforts will be directed to encouraging the creation of high quality educational opportunities for families in Transformation Plan communities, empowering parents to make well-informed decisions about their children's education, and leveraging the use of schools as a community-building asset.

What about the developments destined to remain 100 percent public housing?

In *The Third Side*, BPI urged that the long-term goal for many rehabilitated traditional (100 percent public housing) developments should be their conversion to mixed-income housing. Now, we and CHA are engaged in considering the future agendas for these communities. Discussions have already begun with respect to the Cabrini Green Rowhouses, the reconstitution of the 100 percent public housing portion of the first phase of West Haven, and quality of life issues at Altgeld Gardens, now CHA's largest and most isolated traditional development.

What is BPI's role now that the Court has terminated the Gautreaux Receivership?

The end of the Gautreaux Receivership (by court order effective June 1, 2010), places The Habitat Company in a new role as Gautreaux Development Manager (phasing out over three years). BPI attorneys will continue to serve as counsel for Gautreaux plaintiffs. The Gautreaux case continues, and the termination of the Receivership, in fact, places additional responsibilities on BPI.

We expect that BPI's "watchdog" role in the Plan for Transformation will grow, particularly with respect to planning mixed-income communities (the five new ones and new phases of initiated ones). We look forward to this important role in the context of a positive and constructive relationship with CHA. In addition to our shared efforts in the planning of mixed-income developments and discussions on the long-term future of traditional developments, BPI staff continues to work with CHA on relocation, wait list, and social services issues, and most recently, on a new program to offer more housing choices in "opportunity" neighborhoods.

Public Education

BPI's Partnership for Instructional Leadership, poised to enter its third year, helps Chicago public schools—especially low-performing schools—forge a whole-school change process that is already starting to show results. In addition, our public education work has ventured from the classroom to the courtroom, as BPI filed a school funding lawsuit with the potential to change Illinois' inequitable education funding system for the better.

Now that the Partnership for Instructional Leadership has been in place for two years, are there tangible results to report?

First, let's recap what the Partnership is: A network of six CPS Area 4 elementary schools (comprising largely Latino students), the Partnership strives to increase student achievement by building individual school capacity for rigorous professional collaboration and whole-school change. Each school organizes its own Instructional Leadership Team, sets student achievement goals, and identifies powerful instructional practices to focus on schoolwide. BPI provides leadership, project management and coaching support to the schools, while Targeted Leadership Consulting, Inc., a widely respected national education consultant, conducts training and development sessions for the schools throughout the year. Our ultimate goals are to help individual schools introduce an approach to whole-school change that increases student learning, strengthens internal leadership capacity, and is self-sustaining over time.

And, yes, the Partnership has tangible results to report. The Partnership is fully implemented in each school, and about to enter the third year of participation. All schools are committed to their self-designated targeted area of learning, implementing meaningful student assessments, and conducting multiple cycles of learning for students at each grade level throughout the school year. Schools are now analyzing results of the last round of internal student assessments and 2009–2010 ISAT results.

A further indication of the Partnership's progress is CPS's recent endorsement of BPI's effort and its corollary decision to authorize the Partnership's expansion to a second cohort of Area 4 schools for the 2010-2011 school year. With this, we're hopeful that the Partnership's effective framework for improving teaching and learning will become available to many more CPS schools that will have the opportunity to benefit from its proven approach to whole-school change.

How will BPI's legacy of school reform activity impact the Schools in Transformation Plan Communities initiative?

Our public education experience will contribute to this work in a number of ways. BPI's long established relationships with CPS schools and personnel will inform our fact-finding and strategic analysis, as will our deep experience in both pedagogy and policy. We believe our school-level organizing and capacity building over the last few years will be especially helpful as we connect with teachers, administrators and parents in the Transformation Plan communities. And, at schools where whole-school change is appropriate, our Partnership for Instructional Leadership experience will provide a valuable model.

Why has BPI sued the state over its school funding system?

To BPI, Illinois' deeply flawed school funding system is a matter of utmost importance to the public interest.

After intensive research, BPI lawyers and pro bono co-counsel Sidley Austin concluded that Illinois courts should reconsider the constitutionality of the state's education funding system. Together we filed a lawsuit on behalf of two Illinois taxpayers, alleging that the state's system of funding public schools discriminates against them based on the communities in which they live. The plaintiffs, homeowners from Chicago Heights and Cairo, claim that the state's school funding policy violates the equal protection clause of the Illinois Constitution by effectively forcing residents in economically struggling communities such as theirs to pay higher property tax rates for local schools than owners of similarly valued homes in more affluent towns. Current laws require many to pay higher property tax rates than others to reach the state-mandated "foundation level" of funding—even though the value of their homes is identical.

As a constitutionally based school funding lawsuit, this litigation is distinct from a pending Chicago Urban League action filed in 2008 that challenges the state's school funding system as racially discriminatory against African-American and Latino students and in violation of the Illinois State Civil Rights Act.

Haven't previous attempts at challenging state education funding been rebuffed by the courts as matters of "local control"?

BPI believes that circumstances have changed dramatically since those earlier rulings. Illinois schools no longer operate primarily within the discretion of local school districts. The State now dictates content of the curricula and standards for educational performance at the local level, and schools are compelled to comply. The "local control" rationale for inequality in school taxation has been turned on its ear since the last time the Illinois Supreme Court looked at this matter. Also, the Court has never considered the inequality of taxpayer treatment that is central to this lawsuit.

What does BPI want if it wins?

We're asking the Court to declare the current school funding system unconstitutional, anticipating that the Court will direct the Governor and state legislature to come up with a new approach—one that is fair to taxpayers and addresses the inequities of the current system.

Affordable Housing

BPI's comprehensive approach strives to build community acceptance, increase political will and remove marketplace barriers that limit the development and preservation of affordable housing.

We're helping municipalities, counties and community organizations create affordable housing programs, build coalitions and educate decision makers and the general public on the benefits of affordable housing. We're also developing and helping implement state laws and policies that support affordable housing expansion and preservation, as we work on multiple fronts to assist homeowners at risk of foreclosure and to stabilize and revitalize neighborhoods seriously impacted by the foreclosure crisis.

How has the collapse of the housing market impacted BPI's affordable housing work?

You might think that falling home prices would be a good thing for working families who need affordable housing. But the reality is more complicated. In the Chicago region, the foreclosure crisis has dramatically reduced the supply of affordable housing. In 2009, more than 6,500 rental buildings with over 20,000 apartments were hit with foreclosure filings. And while affordable housing units are being lost to foreclosure, unemployment and falling wages mean that the demand for affordable housing is going up. As a result, more and more families are spending much more than they can afford on housing—especially in neighborhoods with good jobs and good schools, near grocery stores, shops and parks. In the face of this great and growing crisis, BPI is developing creative solutions to help people stay in their homes, to stabilize communities hit hard by foreclosure, and to preserve at-risk affordable housing.

What is BPI doing to help people stay in their homes?

In the face of federal programs that have largely failed to help, BPI, together with a broad coalition of community groups, fought for a local program that could do better. The result is the Cook County Foreclosure Mediation Program. If it's as successful as similar programs elsewhere around the country, it will help tens of thousands of families save their homes from foreclosure. What these programs have shown is that when a court requires homeowners in foreclosure and lenders to meet face-to-face, when homeowners get free help from a housing counselor or attorney, and when they engage together in a good-faith effort to find alternatives to foreclosure, they often succeed.

Influenced by BPI and our partners' advocacy, the County Board has allocated \$3.5 million to establish and run the Cook County Foreclosure Mediation Program for a year. BPI helped design the program, which officially kicked off in Spring 2010. BPI is closely watching the program's progress to ensure that it lives up to its promise. And, we're now working to bring foreclosure mediation to other Illinois communities as well.

What is BPI doing to help municipalities deal with the spike in foreclosures and abandoned properties?

The foreclosure crisis isn't devastating for just individual homeowners. It is destroying whole communities. As the number of foreclosures in a community grows, block upon block is dotted with vacant and abandoned properties that can sit empty for months or years. As weeds grow, garbage piles up, and broken windows go unrepaired, home values fall and the tax base weakens. And as vacant buildings attract scavengers, squatters and gangs, they breed crime. A cluster of vacant properties can destabilize a block. A cluster of troubled blocks can doom an entire neighborhood to a cycle of disinvestment, abandonment and decay. BPI is working with local governments to develop programs to help preserve these precarious neighborhoods. We scoured the country to find the best programs for dealing with these problems, and we published a manual that describes the nine tools that have proven most effective. Now, we're working with local governments, including the City of Chicago, to help them put these tools to good use.

Is BPI doing anything to stem the loss of affordable housing in more affluent communities?

Affordable housing isn't just being lost in big cities like Chicago. Existing affordable housing is at great risk in more affluent communities, like Lake County. Lots of new jobs have been created in Lake County, including lower-wage service-sector jobs. But very little new affordable housing has been built. So we helped launch the Lake County Preservation Initiative to preserve the dwindling supply of affordable housing in this opportunity-rich community. It won't be easy. Much of the affordable housing in Lake County is single-family and unsubsidized, and there are few preservation tools designed to address this challenge. If we are able to develop strategies that work in Lake County, they will serve as helpful models for other strong communities in the region and around the country.

Looking ahead, what's on the horizon in BPI's affordable housing work?

For decades, federal housing and transportation policies have promoted sprawl and increased racial and economic isolation and concentrated poverty. These trends have made it harder for low-income people to achieve economic security and harder for the affected communities to compete in the global economy. Reversing these trends requires bold regional action with strong federal support.

The Obama administration is exploring ways to change federal policy to reverse these trends. BPI will help. We're building a coalition of organizations within the Chicago region to support federal policies and programs that confront sprawl, segregation and concentrated poverty—and in so doing, expand access to opportunity for those segments of the population traditionally left behind. This coalition will educate congressional leaders on specific ways to advance the metropolitan opportunity agenda through new and existing federal programs, and will collaborate with groups around the country engaged in similar efforts.

Political Reform

Troubled by the culture of corruption that taints Illinois government, BPI's Board of Directors began to explore how BPI—as a law and policy center—could help foster more open, honest and accountable government in Illinois. This led us to launch BPI's new political reform initiative with three key items on the agenda:

- Legal representation of Chicago's Inspector General in a potentially groundbreaking lawsuit against the City's Corporation Counsel
- Efforts to strengthen the role of inspectors general in Illinois
- Leadership participation in **CHANGE Illinois!**

BPI is representing the Chicago Inspector General in a lawsuit against the City. What's the significance of this case?

As pro bono counsel for the Inspector General of the City of Chicago, BPI is trying to help our client access the information necessary to do its job properly, in this case investigating possible misconduct in the award of a no-bid contract to a former city employee. The City's Law Department has withheld production of several unredacted documents, asserting that they're protected by attorney-client privilege and the work product doctrine. The plaintiff's lawsuit asks the Court to require the City's Corporation Counsel to comply with a subpoena that seeks production of this confidential information.

The case has potentially far-reaching legal implications, pitting two formidable legal principles in opposition: the public's right to know (the City Inspector General) versus the sanctity of attorney-client privilege (City Corporation Counsel). The underlying issue is whether, in the context of an official investigation of possible government misconduct, government lawyers may properly refuse to disclose relevant information, in effect preventing the Inspector General from performing his official responsibility to combat governmental corruption. The case is currently on appeal in the Circuit Court of Cook County.

Why is BPI exploring the role of inspectors general in Illinois government?

The office of inspector general—in any branch of government—is responsible for rooting out corruption, fraud and waste.

BPI sees great value in strengthening the role of inspectors general throughout Illinois government. We're in the process now of analyzing the structure and effectiveness of IG offices in the City of Chicago, Cook County and State of Illinois, as well as identifying best practices in other jurisdictions.

In 2010, we'll publish a comprehensive report on Illinois IG offices that will include recommendations on strengthening them and increasing their effectiveness. These recommendations will provide the basis for new policy and legislative initiatives to bring more open and honest government to Illinois—at all levels.

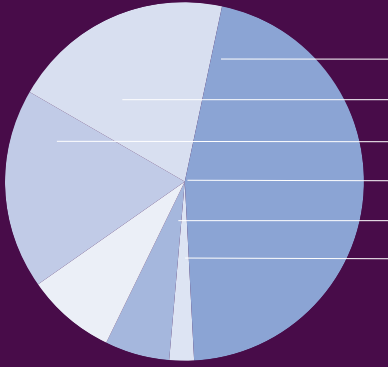
What are CHANGE Illinois! and BPI doing to reform Illinois government?

Tired of Illinois' pay-to-play politics and business-as-usual culture of corruption, a group of Illinois civic, business, non-profit and philanthropic leaders in early 2009 created a powerful new collective voice for political reform—CHANGE Illinois!. BPI played an active part in the formation of the coalition and remains involved in its leadership today. BPI Board Vice President Deborah Harrington is a co-chair of the coalition, and directors Frank Beal, Hoy McConnell and Dawn Clark Netsch are members of the Steering Committee.

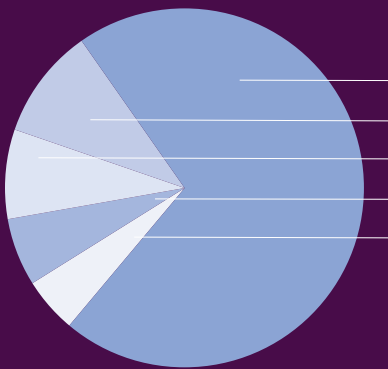
Attacking the corrupting influence of money in Illinois politics was agenda item number one for CHANGE Illinois!. Quickly marshalling forces around the state, the CHANGE coalition waged a successful campaign to enact the first-ever campaign contribution limits law in Illinois. Effective in 2011, the new law is an important step in changing Illinois' notorious pay-to-play political culture.

CHANGE Illinois! will remain active, identifying critical policy issues and continuing to fight vigorously for reform—more needed than ever as Illinois is forced to face a deepening fiscal crisis and disquieting loss of voter confidence.

2009 Financials*



2009 Sources of Funds	\$	%
Foundations	\$757,000	46%
Fellowships	327,000	20%
Individuals	300,000	18%
From Operating Reserves	132,000	8%
From BPI Endowment	100,000	6%
Tenant / Other	39,000	2%
	\$1,655,000	100%



2009 Uses of Funds	\$	%
Personnel	\$1,176,000	71%
Occupancy	164,000	10%
Communications/Fundraising	135,000	8%
Office Expenses	94,000	6%
Program Support	86,000	5%
	\$1,655,000	100%

Financial Highlights

Nearly two-thirds of BPI operating funds are provided by foundations and individuals.

Fellowships and the BPI Endowment supplied over a quarter of funds.

Personnel and direct program support accounted for about three-quarters of BPI expenditures.

*Unaudited

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