



ABFE

A Philanthropic Partnership for Black Communities

Black Social Change Funders Network Gathering Freedom for All: Utilizing the Case for Funding Black-led Social Change



June 19-21, 2017

**Hosted by: Bader Philanthropies
Milwaukee, Wisconsin**

**Local Host: Jerry Roberts, Bader Philanthropies
Meeting Co-Design & Facilitation: E. Bomani Johnson of Emergent Pathways for ABFE**



Gathering Summary:

Approximately 50 practitioners, advocates and supporters of Black-led social change participated in this first Gathering of the [Black Social Change Funders Network](#) for 2017. The meeting objectives were as follows:

- hear first-hand accounts of the current work of key Black social change leaders and organizations in Milwaukee;
- share strategies used by colleagues in the field to make the case for, and to implement investment strategies to build Black-led infrastructure for social change;
- gather early ideas to design a campaign to increase funding for Black-led infrastructure for social change by the country's largest foundations;
- learn about specific investment strategies by funders to support Black-led organizing and opportunities for broadening this work; and,
- hear an update on ABFE's efforts to coordinate emerging investment strategies by funders to support Black-led infrastructure to build Black economic power.

In many ways, the event mirrored happenings in the Black community in the U.S. and abroad. The Gathering was bookended by two significant historical events. Immediately prior to the opening, participants were encouraged to attend the city's 46th Annual Juneteenth Celebration and Parade. Milwaukee proudly hosts the largest and longest running Juneteenth celebration in the country, and it is fantastic. About 12 city blocks of a major thoroughfare in the Black community are reserved for the thousands of Black women, men and children that attend the event each year – no matter what day of the week Juneteenth occurs. Just the thought of that many people coming together to celebrate Black Freedom is inspiring - to witness the sea of folks peacefully and joyfully gathered to mark the end of the most horrific era in the history of humankind is nothing short of majestic. On the tail end of the Gathering, we were reminded about the urgency of our work to further Black-led social change as another “not guilty” verdict was reached in the slaying of a Black person by a member of law enforcement. This time, the life of 23-year-old Sylville Smith was deemed insignificant.

Monday, June 19, 2017

Several Freedom for All participants joined the Juneteenth Celebration, which was a great kick-off activity to the work that lay ahead. Our host, Jerry Roberts (CLFP 2016), Program Officer, Bader Philanthropies, shared some strong remarks during the opening ceremony for the Celebration and mentioned Freedom for All as an example of Bader Philanthropies' commitment to be more responsive to the Black community in Milwaukee.

That evening, Freedom for All officially commenced with the Opening Dinner at Chic Underground Lounge - one of few Black-owned establishments in downtown Milwaukee. The program for the evening was designed to give the local context of Black-led social change efforts in Milwaukee. Mayor Tom Barrett and Bader Philanthropies President & CEO, Daniel Bader welcomed the group of local leaders, joined by philanthropists, representing foundations from New York City to Oakland, California, with presentations highlighting the City's and Bader's history of work in the Black community.

Mayor Barrett noted that while the city is experiencing unprecedented levels of economic development in its downtown area - with the building of a new professional sports facility, several corporate and residential developments underway - he and his administration are working make the growth “more accessible to all the people, and especially low-income people.” Bader reflected on the history of philanthropy in the city, noting how the sector is slowly moving towards a “philosophy of community humility.” He highlighted Bader's moving of its headquarters from downtown to the Harambee Community in Milwaukee as a major step for the organization and the local sector.



ABFE President & CEO, Susan Taylor Batten shared remarks about the formation of ABFE and what the Black Social Change Funders Network (BSCFN) hopes to accomplish. Batten mentioned that in addition to getting ideas on how to shape the 25% Campaign for increased philanthropic funding for Black-led social change and how foundations can best work to get new and increased funding for Black-led organization and Black-led economic development, that we will greatly benefit from learning about Black-led social change work is happening in Milwaukee. Following these remarks, Clayborn Benson, founder and President of the Wisconsin Black Historical Society, presented the history of Black-led social change efforts in Milwaukee. Mr. Benson shared a perspective, which began in 1846 with the fight for adding language to the state's constitution, stating that "every man had the right to vote regardless of race". He discussed local stories; from Black activists from Milwaukee and Chicago spearheading the labor advocacy that led to the 40-hour work week, to the work happening following the most recent uprising in the summer of 2016 following the murder of Sylville Smith. Mr. Benson also shared a clip from the video, *The Making of Milwaukee*, which chronicled Black-led social change efforts for safe and affordable housing and desegregated education.

Following a short question and answer period, and closing remarks from Jerry Roberts, the evening concluded with music and food as the participants prepared for the day of work ahead.

Tuesday, June 21, 2017

After a hearty breakfast provided by the team at Bader Philanthropies, E. Bomani Johnson of Emergent Pathways - ABFE consultant for the BSCFN, opened the work for the day by asking funders and practitioners present to reflect for a few moments on the person or people that inspire them to do their work. This exercise was used to center our work on the people for whom we work - including ourselves. While not originally scheduled to present, Bader President & CEO, Dan Bader, was so inspired by the Gathering, that he asked for a few minutes to present a slide presentation, which provided greater details of Bader's work in the Black community and the current project to relocate the headquarters to the Harambee Community. Susan Batten then shared an [overview](#) of the Black Social Change Funders Network. Following Susan's presentation, the World Café began. Four of Milwaukee's Black-led organizations that are leading several efforts to build the political, social and/or economic power of the Black community were represented:

[Youth Justice Milwaukee](#) - Jeff Roman and Sharlen Moore presented information on this youth-led campaign advocating for community-based, family-centered, restorative programs as an alternative to incarceration for Milwaukee youth. More than 20 community-based organizations, public offices and agencies, and dozens of individual members comprise this body that is working to not only create alternative spaces for justice involved young people, but also advocating to change laws that target and criminalize the behavior of Black young people in the city.

Jeff Roman, Derute Consulting Cooperative

[Running Rebels Community Organization](#), represented by co-Executive Directors, Victor Barnett (founder) Dawn Barnett, is a multi-service organization that has been serving the children and families of Milwaukee for more than 35 years. Running Rebels serves as both a hub for national initiatives that operate in the city, like the Campaign for Black Male Achievement, and provides entrepreneurship and work force development opportunities, athletics, academic, social and emotional support for young people.

Dawn Barnett, Running Rebels Community Organization

Victor Barnett, Running Rebels Community Organization

[Cream City Conservation & Consulting](#) was represented by founder, August Ball. Cream City is not only a leader in the green jobs industry for young people in Milwaukee, but it also provides an array of capacity



building services as a consulting firm for various entities throughout the city. August Ball, Cream City Conservation Corp

[We Got This](#) started as a weekly neighborhood beautification project created by founder, Andre Lee Ellis, who supported young people in cleaning up a vacant lot and planting a community garden in the Harambee Community of Milwaukee. From 9:00am - Noon on Saturday mornings, Ellis would provide tools, materials, lunch and a small stipend for young people to clean up a specified area in the community. As word began to spread, not only did the work attract more young people, but it also attracted numerous donors and volunteers, who began to donate money, provide meals, and connect the young people to jobs and other opportunities.

Andre Lee Ellis, We Got Us

The State of Funding Social Change and BSCFN's 25% Campaign Input

During the lunch portion of the day, Lori Villarosa, Executive Director of the Philanthropic Initiative for Racial Equity shared research on the stagnant levels of giving for people of color in the last 10 years of available data. She noted that support for people of color never exceeded 8.5% of total giving dollars despite the growth in the population of people of color nationally, and the increasing focus on racial equity by the philanthropic sector. Her research also showed that giving to African American fell from a high of 21.8% of total giving to people of color, to 17.5% in 2014 and to a ten-year low of 16% in 2009. While Lori's research does not detail giving to "social change", it does note that there was an uptick in giving to groups using racial justice language. However, the overall level of funding continued to stagnate or decline. This research further justified the call for NEW and INCREASED funding for Black-led social change from foundations.

Lori's presentation was the perfect segue to the 25% Campaign discussion led by ABFE's Vice President of Membership, Development & Communications, Seitu Jemel Hart. The purpose of the conversation was to gather additional ideas on the shape and focus of the campaign to increase philanthropic giving to Black-led social change by at least 25% that is a recommendation in *The Case for Funding Black-led Social Change*. Seitu shared feedback from a group of advisors to the BSCFN who gave their input on four questions about the Campaign:

1. Why are we targeting "top foundations in the U.S.?"
2. What would be our criteria for how to define top foundations in the U.S.?
3. How might we approach this campaign? And,
4. What are the best ways to organize funds?

Gathering participants shared the following:

In response to whom we should target for increased giving, it was suggested that we take advantage of several funder networks that have formed/are forming with a focus on Black people as well as various aspects of racial and gender justice. Another participant suggested that we look at individual Black donors for support in growing the levels of giving.

Later in the discussion, a recommendation to use Black donors to speak with other Black donors, as well as educating Black donors about how to give to social change was made.

It was recommended that we look to small donors via online giving campaigns, and echoed including individual donors and corporate foundations in the ecosystem of "top funders". We also need to be clear on which organizations (types and specific groups) are targets for investments. This participant also emphasized that 501 (c) (4) organizations and politically focused groups should be included in the mix.



Other comments included the following:

- We must expand our reach beyond the “choir” of funders, and that we develop tools to reach borderline foundations/donors - we need to know which organizations and donors fit into this group, and how they fit with the values of the BSCFN as potential partners, as well as ways to solicit investments from those who will not be official partners (as we work to define that distinction).
- We also need to use the Campaign, and the broader work of the BSCFN to dismantle myths about funding to Black-led groups - i.e. \$100 million given to the Movement for Black Lives.
- We should look at community foundations - using their donors to lift-up Black social change language; and tell stories about how Black funders have been organizing their resources (i.e. how Jerry Roberts brought discussions on racial equity to the funding community in Milwaukee).
- We should push funders to more clearly and accurately define giving to Black-led organizations; dismantle the notion that giving to issues means that you’re giving to Black people and/or Black communities.
- We should also connect dots that lift-up strengths and reduce deficits in black-led social change work. The South has infrastructure to move social justice and racial justice forward - BSCFN should lift up this work.
- We should be clear on what our “non-negotiables” are regarding making asks for increased funding, and how we define the work that will be highlighted and supported. Black-**Led** is the critical aspect of this work. We should be clear about stating that funding Black-led will lead to advancement for the broader progressive movement.
- We must clearly articulate the value-add this work is bringing to foundations including corporations. Shifting language and understanding from “philanthropy” to “investment.” We must be able to answer, “What is the value proposition to the funders we are targeting?”

Investing in Black-led Organizing

Following the lunch and discussion, we focused on how to support of colleagues in their efforts to advocate for NEW and INCREASED FUNDING for Black-led organizing work happening throughout the country. This session included both a panel and small group discussions - learning of the Black-led movement funding work of Borealis Philanthropy, Solidaire Network, and Woods Fund of Chicago. And then translating the learning into language that can be used to solicit funds for Black-led organizing, reaching out to additional funders, and how we increase the number of Black-led organizing groups on the philanthropic sector’s radar. The panel included presentations from: Julia Beatty, Program Officer, Black-led Movement Fund, Borealis Philanthropy; Lara Peng, Director of Strategy and Operations, Solidaire Network; and, Caronina Grimble, Program Officer, Woods Fund Chicago. Each of the presenters’ slides/notes are available on the [BSCFN website](#). After sharing about how each of their respective organizations funds and supports Black-led organizing groups, Bomani asked each to share some “Do’s and Don’ts” that funders should heed when looking to support Black-led organizing. Points included the following:

Do:

- provide multi-year funding;
- provide capacity building and general operating support;
- be flexible with giving - allow the organizers space to pivot as needed given the complexity and shifting that occurs in their work;
- ask grantees what they need;
- have grantees involved in the direction (shaping of the grants) of the funding as much as possible;
- build strong relationships (partnerships, collaborations, etc.) with grantee organizations;
- get other funders involved in the work; and,



- promote the work of your grantees as much as possible.

Don't:

- assume that you know what is needed without asking;
- burden organizations with tons of application and reporting requirements;
- "...expect the work of Harriet Tubman for \$50,000!";
- Structure grants with tons of limitations.

The small groups were asked to discuss major points when advocating for New and Increased Funding for Black-led organizing. Responses included the following (notes from flip charts):

- Get board "on board" (Educate them on context/community)
- Give historical construct on racism to new allies
- Use tools like the Solidaire platform to vet grantees
- Grantee representation at decision making tables coming up with funding criteria
- Case studies and strategies from peers and field
- [Explain] Why fighting anti-Black racism helps other communities
- Internal and External messengers matter – who – credibility with community
- Leverage relationships in your network for; also, staging and engagement of different stakeholders is key
- Increase commitment to places with organizing and power building
- Understand that (conservative) opposition is highlighting/supporting Black led organizations
- Do your research (Boards need that)

Ideas for increasing the number of Black-led organizing groups supported by philanthropy (notes from flip charts):

- Convene them/learning opportunities
- Encourage collaboration and cooperation
- Connect with other funding networks
- Learn about funders who are meeting in similar ways
- Data desegregated (No LIP Service)
- Inventory of organizations
- Understand barriers to funding specific types of organizations (c3 v c4)
- How to get money to non – C3 entities; be creative – how to get dollars to activists
 - Institutions and leaders/activists (individuals) and activist collectives; we need multiple strategies; different level of scrutiny's
- Find ways to support C4's and PAC's, help then protect and manage that legal/risk issues and cybersecurity
- Identify organizations so you know who you are targeting
- Understand place and ecosystem of funders and organizations
- Willing to support service organizations in their organizing efforts
- Get work in front of peer funders (grantees)
- Rapid response funds often find new groups, sit down with intermediaries to discover new groups
- Continuous education about communities for funders (history)
- Sometimes we [funders] need to collaborate better instead of create/fund new organizations take assessment of what is already being done
- Leverage individual donors and non-traditional model (e.g. MacArthur Foundation), research models
- Honest conversation on what is organizing, definition and approach



- Help them understand reporting guidelines (right TA) – or eliminate

What other funders need to be at the table? (Notes from flip charts):

- Giving circles
- Corporate foundations (CSR) (Headquarters in your town)
- Northwest Mutual
- Johnson Control
- Rubbermaid (sis-led) Atlanta
- Black Funds
- Community Foundations
- Banks
- CFC/Matching Funds
- Celebrity giving
- Sports
- Coke
- Auto makers
- Kresge Foundation
- Other funders – Expand who funders are; fundraising dollars and resources (co-creators)
- Faith community
- Family Foundations
- Individual donors
- Donor Advised Funds Private
- LLCs
- Regional funder networks
- Black professional groups
- Younger funders
- Double edge sword, need political education (ABFE to offer)
- Funding collaboratives (Solidaire resource)

Investing in Black-led Economic Development/ Power Building

The last activity of the day was a panel highlighting models of funders investing in Black-led economic development. Susan Taylor Batten moderated the panel which featured Jerry Roberts of Bader Philanthropies, Deborah Bennett of the Polk Bros. Foundation, Cynthia Muller of the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, and Cliff Barber of the Chicago Mezzanine Fund. Each shared how their respective organizations are using financial resources and/or political leverage to support Black-led economic development. Bader Philanthropies initially invested in the built environment in Milwaukee, but Jerry made workforce development the primary focus of the foundation's economic development portfolio. This modified portfolio includes support for entrepreneurship, managing \$15 million capital fund for businesses, and a separate minority entrepreneurship fund. The board's decision to move the headquarters to the Harambee Community also included selecting Black construction companies and contractors to remodel the building. Bader is the only funder providing Program Related Investments in Milwaukee, and they hope that the new headquarters will spark additional new business development. A question was asked about how are they making sure that Bader is not the vanguard of gentrification in that neighborhood. The response was there has been a lot of community engagement, and the Alderperson is working to increase Black businesses and Black home ownership in the neighborhoods close to the new headquarters.



Deborah Bennett shared Polk Bros. Foundation's mission is to mitigate the impact of poverty in Chicago, and that their work focuses on supporting the Chicagoland Workforce Funders Alliance, which collaborates with employers to increase employment, earnings and racial equity for underprepared workers; the Raise the Floor Alliance, a collaborative of eight workers' centers increasing job quality and access for Black workers; and Chicago Anchors for a Strong Economy which acts as a catalyst for economic growth. Since 2014, CASE has generated \$50.6 million in new business revenue, and created 180 new jobs. [See presentation here.](#)

Cynthia Muller shared that Kellogg's work throughout Michigan, and in the Gulf States has had the largest impact on Black workers and economic development. As an anti-racism funder, Kellogg has been focused on increasing the positive impact of economic development and lessening/eliminating the displacement of low-income Black and other residents of color in its service areas. Kellogg's work also includes underwriting student loans, building/supporting entrepreneur training and seed capital for small businesses; investing in Black techies; creating a pipeline of new engineers for returning citizens and working to upend the municipal bond market by including education funding as part of the rating system.

Cliff Barber shared a couple resources, including the report, [Creating Viral Impact in Black Communities through Small Business Expansion](#). The report focuses on the potential that Black-led CDFI's have for generating wealth creation in Black communities. Cliff also shared greater details about the Expanding Black Business Credit Initiative, of which the report is a resource. The goal of the EBBC is to dramatically increase lending to Black-owned businesses across the nation. Currently, support to Black-owned businesses from the Small Business Administration is less than 3% of its total giving. [See presentation here.](#)

The group outlined the following as elements of the Black Economic Infrastructure in the country

- Black Banks
- Black Chambers of Commerce
- Black CDFI's
- Black Worker Centers
- Black Businesses
- Black Churches
- Black Credit Unions

After a day of heavy and rich presentations and sharing by the full group, Bomani asked everyone to prepare for the closing by identifying something (or somethings) that wanted to celebrate from the work of the day and to be prepared to share that information at the start of the third day.

Wednesday, June 21, 2017

The day began with a hearty breakfast provided by the team at Bader Philanthropies. Given the emotional weight of the previous days, and the number of attendees for the final day of the Gathering, the planners modified the agenda and plan for the day to reflect a more personalized approach for the group present. Bomani started the session by asking Faith Bynoe of MARGA, Inc., and Dr. Angela Rose Black of Mindfulness for the People to explain how essential oils can be used during the day, and why it is necessary for us to have a very intentional focus on self-care, healing, building and maintaining increased levels of good health in this work. Immediately following this discussion, Bomani asked everyone to share what they would like to celebrate from our time together. The attendees shared information that included praise for the work of the organizations and some of the people in the room, as well as renewed feelings of hope, strength and camaraderie due to participating in the Gathering.



Bomani explained that we often make commitments to others in this work, and rarely do we make commitments to ourselves. Going along with the idea that we are also parts of the communities that we are working to heal, each person was asked to take a few minutes and write down at least one commitment to themselves that they will make based on what we did in Milwaukee; one commitment they will make to others; and what they will need to fulfill these commitments. Afterwards each person shared their commitments and needs, and others volunteered to support.

Following this exercise, the Gathering was officially closed.

Freedom for All Gathering Attendees (Alphabetical by organization)

1. Seitu Hart, ABFE
2. Edward Jones, ABFE
3. Tekecha Morgan, ABFE
4. Susan Taylor Batten, ABFE
5. Ossie Kendrix, African American Chamber of Commerce of Wisconsin
6. Tammy Belton-Davis, Athena Communications
7. Daniel Bader, Bader Philanthropies
8. Merilou Gonzalez, Bader Philanthropies
9. Tamara Jefferson, Bader Philanthropies
10. Maria Lopez Vento, Bader Philanthropies
11. Mary Osmundsen, Bader Philanthropies
12. Brian Repinski, Bader Philanthropies
13. Jerry Roberts, Bader Philanthropies
14. Jeff Rosen, Bader Philanthropies
15. Duane Poe, Bay Area Black United Fund
16. Julia Beatty, Borealis Philanthropy
17. Anne Summers, Brico Fund
18. Christopher Rutherford, Campaign for Black Male Achievement
19. Myra Edwards, City of Milwaukee
20. Cliff Barber, Chicago Mezzanine Fund
21. August Ball, Cream City Conservation Corp
22. Jeff Roman, Derute Consulting Cooperative
23. E. Bomani Johnson, Emergent Pathways
24. Earl Buford, Employ Milwaukee
25. Evan Reed, Greater Milwaukee Foundation
26. Darlene Russell, Greater Milwaukee Foundation
27. Nat Williams, Hill-Snowdon Foundation
28. Timothy Mahone, MaryLou & Arthur F. Mahone Fund
29. Faith Bynoe, Marga, Inc.
30. Timothy McMurtry, Milwaukee Area Workforce Funding Alliance
31. Angela Rose Black, Mindfulness for the People
32. Ann Terrell, MPS Foundation
33. Tynesha McHarris, Novo Foundation
34. Lori Villarosa, Philanthropic Initiative on Racial Equity
35. Deborah Bennett, Polk Bros. Foundation
36. Dawn Barnett, Running Rebels Community
37. Victor Barnett, Running Rebels Community Organization
38. Iara Peng, Solidaire Network
39. Tamieka Mosley, Southern Partners Fund
40. Romilda Justilien, Tides Foundation
41. Otis Zanders, Ujamaa Place

42. Shannon Reed, United Way of Greater Milwaukee
43. Sharlen Moore, Urban Underground/Youth Justice Milwaukee -
44. Kalan Haywood, Vanguard Development Group
45. Cynthia Muller, W.K. Kellogg Foundation
46. William Cordery, Wellspring Advisors
47. Andre Lee Ellis, We Got Us
48. Clayborn Benson, Wisconsin Black Historical Society
49. Jamila Benson, Wisconsin Black Historical Society
50. Caronina Grimble, Woods Fund Chicago