

Moving Forward

By Katherine Acey, Executive Director

***K**nowing that I'm in constant search of inspiration and a little humor, a dear friend and an Astraea supporter, sent me a recent piece by Doris Haddock. She is the 93-year-old activist who walked across the U.S. in 2000 to call attention to the corruption of big money in our political system. Doris says, "The man in the White House is the best political organizer we have ever had. He generated the largest protest demonstrations the earth has ever seen. He has us organizing on the peace front, the civil liberties front, the environmental front, the domestic budget front—everywhere people are waking up from a long sleep."*

I believe, however, that many of us have not so much been sleeping as we have been preparing and grappling with new ways to address complex problems. Lifting our collective voice in street protests is one of a multitude of strategies we need for lasting change to be sustained. And, like many other progressive foundations, nonprofits and activist organizations, Astraea continues to explore ways to best identify, support and sustain movement—building efforts that promote justice.



Peace activist in Union Square, New York City



Protestors on First Avenue at the February 15th Anti-War Demonstration in New York City

PHOTOS: JENN EINHORN

This past year, Astraea's board and staff carved out time to reflect, in order to build on our strengths and deepen our work. This strategic planning process has been informed by and enriched with participation from grantees, donor members, volunteers and other colleagues. In July, the Astraea board and staff will meet to finalize our "Strategic Directions," and by this fall, we will be prepared to share the details with the Astraea community. In the meantime, here's a preview of things to come.

While we have no intention of straying from our mission, Astraea will look different heading into the future. We have altered our name and will eventually be known as the Astraea Lesbian Foundation for Justice—with a tagline of "Funding Change and Strengthening Communities Around the World." We will have a new logo, and our redesigned website will better serve our constituents and more accurately reflect our work.

No Foundation program, activity or model of operation has gone unexamined during this period. Programmatically, Astraea will undergo subtle and in some cases dramatic changes. We hope to lead and partner with others as we move forward with revamped grants programs and new grants program related activities. The same is true for our development, philanthropic education and advocacy programs.

Now more than ever, it is important for Astraea and others who share our values to invest our people and financial resources strategically. The process we have undertaken to reach this goal will remain a dynamic one. In the coming months we will create opportunities to share our vision and plans. As always, your continued involvement and support is highly valued and we look forward to your feedback.

Katherine

Astraea Announces Latest U.S. Grantees

In April, 2003, Astraea's U.S. Grants Panel met to review 116 applications from every corner of the country. Representing 15 states and the District of Columbia, 40 groups were awarded a total of \$220,000. We are pleased to present you with this list of extraordinary organizations and projects. Unless otherwise noted, grants are for general support.

Aeromestiza Project (San Francisco, CA) runs *The Size of Her Rage*, an arts-based community education program focusing on lesbian domestic violence. Grant will fund performances at the 6th Annual National Queer Arts Festival in San Francisco, in June 2003. **\$6,000**

Affinity Community Services (Chicago, IL) promotes visibility, empowerment and community-building by offering support groups, social justice forums, informal discussions and poetry nights by and for Black LBT women and youth. **\$7,000**

African Ancestral Lesbians United For Societal Change (New York, NY) uses open discussion workshops to address spirituality, as well as political and social change. They provide resources and referrals, and allow for cultural and social interaction of African Ancestral women. **\$7,000**

Appalachian Women's Alliance (Floyd, VA) is a grassroots coalition of low-income and working women in regional "circles" tackling economic injustice, violence against women, racism and homophobia. Grant is for their lesbian-led Willisburg Circle and regional organizing work. **\$5,000**

Arise for Social Justice (Springfield, MA) is a low-income-led membership organization helping poor people reclaim their rights by educating, organizing, and uniting poor people, people of color, LGBTQ communities and people with disabilities. Grant will support their campaign to decriminalize prostitution. **\$10,000**

Austin Latino/a Lesbian and Gay Organization (Austin, TX) is a women-led community-based organization which conducts wellness programs, advocates for social change, and promotes queer latino/a culture and art. **\$7,000**

Beyond Media (Chicago, IL) creates media that empower lesbian, bisexual and questioning young women to tell their own stories and organize for community change. Their video and study guide project, which features voices of LGBTQ youth chronicling sexuality-based discrimination and anti-gay violence in Illinois schools, advocates for change in school policies and environments. **\$7,000**

Center for Lesbian and Gay Studies in Religion and Ministry (Berkeley, CA) is collaborating with PANAAWTM (Pacific, Asian, and North American Asian Women in Theology and Ministry) to produce the first conference focusing on issues related to lesbian identity among Asian/Pacific Islander women of faith in North America. **\$3,000**

Astraea's purpose is to fund and support organizations and individuals focused on addressing the needs of lesbians. We have a commitment to funding organizations and projects that are feminist, that have the capacity to address interrelated forms of oppression and that not only serve lesbians but are committed to social change. Priority funding is given to lesbians of color, multi-racial lesbian organizations, or progressive, women's or LGBT organizations that have lesbians in leadership roles and include lesbian issues as an integral part of their work.

The Astraea Lesbian Action Foundation administers six grant programs:

- U.S. Grants Program
- International Fund for Sexual Minorities
- Lesbian Writers Fund
- Margot Karle Scholarship
- Astraea Visual Artists Fund
- Donor-Advised Funds Program
- The U.S. Program, International Fund, Astraea Visual Artists Fund, and Writers Fund utilize community-based funding panels to review proposals and to make decisions.

Charis Circle (Atlanta, GA) offers events and programs at Charis Books and More that empower women, men and children to work for a world where racism, sexism, homophobia, classism and all other oppressions do not exist. Grant is for their Capacity Building project. **\$3,000**

DOIA/Disabled Queers In Action (Atlanta, GA) is a multi-queer, multi-gender, multi-ethnic, multi-cultural, multi-racial, multi-disability and multi-generational coalition of U.S. and international partners, predominantly led by lesbians with disabilities. Grant is for the Queer and Disability 2 Conference in Atlanta in 2004. The conference will be an opportunity to explore the complexities within queer/disabled cultures and communities and learn about anti-oppression/anti-racism/anti-sexism strategies. **\$10,000**

Highways (Santa Monica, CA) develops and presents contemporary performance, dance and visual art with significant emphasis on leadership from the LGBT community. Grant is for LIP (Lesbians in Power) Service, which will create leadership opportunities and build collaboration between local lesbian of color organizations. **\$6,000**

Liquid Fire Productions (San Francisco, CA) promotes the development of emerging lesbian artists of color and supports the creation and staging of their new work. Grant is for Skin Hot/Bone Deep, a lesbian of color production of twelve individual and ensemble performance vignettes that celebrate erotic power through spoken word, poetry, music and dance. **\$5,000**

Literary Exchange (Chicago, IL) addresses racism, sexism, and other forms of oppression through a variety of literary, social, and health related programs and events for girls, lesbians of color and other women. **\$5,000**

LVA/Lesbians in the Visual Arts (San Francisco, CA) is dedicated to building a network of lesbians working in the visual arts and to promoting their work through exhibitions, panels, conferences, a journal and a website. Grant is for general support and organizational development. **\$3,000**

MACHA Theatre Co. (Valley Village, CA) will produce the play, "The Nun and the Countess." The play is based on Alicia Gaspar de Alba's novel, *Sor Juana's Second Dream*, about a 17th Century love affair between Sor Juana Inez de la Cruz—a lesbian poet trapped in a nun's habit—and the Countess Maria Luisa de Paredes. Macha will also conduct its second master class in playwriting, facilitated by award-winning Chicago playwright, Cherrie Moraga. **\$5,000**

Milwaukee LGBT Community Center (Milwaukee, WI) improves the quality of life for LGBT people in the region by providing office/meeting space, as well as educational and cultural programs. Grant is for the Young Women's Leadership and Skills Building Initiative. **\$7,000**

National Center for Human Rights Education (Atlanta, GA) targets resource materials, provides human rights workshops, and trains community leaders and student activists to apply human rights standards to issues of injustice. Grant is for Training of Trainers Program, designed to prepare LGBT activists to conduct human rights education. **\$6,500**

North Carolina Lambda Youth Network (Durham, NC) helps young people develop as leaders and community organizers. NCLYN provides space and affirmation for youth of different sexualities, genders, abilities, class backgrounds and races. Grant is for the Rainbow Youth Coalition, a group of youth, educators and community members striving to make schools and communities safe. **\$4,000**

Northwest Network of Bisexual, Trans, Lesbian and Gay Survivors of Abuse (Seattle, WA) supports the self-determination and safety of LGBT survivors of abuse through popular education, organizing and advocacy. They work within a broad liberation movement dedicated to social and economic justice. Grant is for F.A.R. OUT, a project that addresses the consequences of domestic violence and creates safety plans for friends and family of survivors. **\$3,000**

off our backs (Washington, DC) is the longest-surviving feminist publication in the U.S. It sponsors internships, hosts listserves, holds monthly salons and publishes a monthly newsjournal. Grant will support publication staffing. **\$3,000**

Out Now, Inc (Springfield, MA) is a youth organization dedicated to the support, safety, understanding, acceptance, equality and liberation of the LGBT community at home, in schools, and throughout society. Grant is for a part-time youth organizer to oversee the Project on Queer Youth and the Prison Industrial Complex. **\$4,000**

Pat Graney Company (Seattle, WA) provides multi-disciplinary arts-based residency workshops to incarcerated women. Grant is for Keeping the Faith National Model project. **\$3,000**

Project 100, Inc. of The Hartford Community Center (Hartford, CT) creates a safe place for all LGBT people by providing space for cultural, social, political and educational events, 12-step groups, and support groups. Grant is for Executive Director salary. **\$3,000**

Purple Moon Dance Project (San Francisco, CA) encourages social change, peace and healing through the medium of dance, and provides artistic and community-based programs to increase the visibility of lesbians and women of color. **\$5,000**

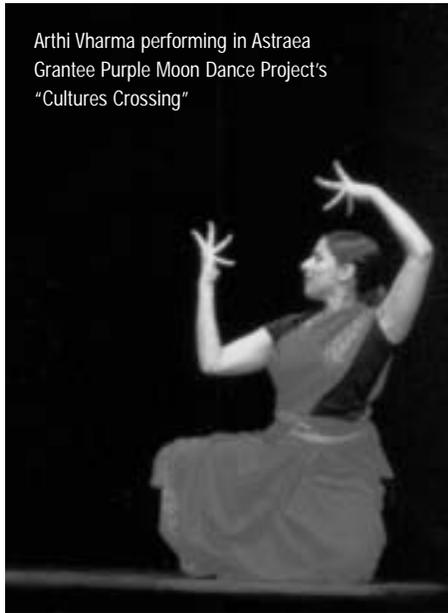
Queer Women of Color Media Arts Program (San Francisco, CA) organizes programs enabling emerging queer women of color media artists to complete their work and to reach their intended audiences. **\$5,000**

Rainbow Place: Nevada's Gay and Lesbian Community Center (Reno, NV) increases the local lesbian community's visibility and organizing capacity by hosting discussion groups, youth meetings, wellness projects, and maintaining a herstory archive. Grant is for the Lesbian Outreach Project. **\$3,000**

Sister Outsider (Brooklyn, NY) works to end poverty and increase political, educational, and spiritual opportunities for young LBT women of color by providing programming and conducting outreach. **\$6,000**

Arthi Vharma performing in Astraea Grantee Purple Moon Dance Project's "Cultures Crossing"

PHOTO: THERESA C. THADANI



Southerners on New Ground (Durham, NC) helps build the progressive movement by integrating work against racism, sexism and economic justice into LGBT organizing, and integrating the struggle against homophobia into the broader freedom struggles in the South. **\$5,000**

The Network/La Red (Boston, MA) addresses domestic violence in relationships between women by educating communities about LBT battering and by providing services for battered LBT women. Grant will support their visibility campaign. **\$3,000**

Theater Offensive (Cambridge, MA) presents theater and art that breaks through personal isolation and political orthodoxy to help build honest, progressive queer community. Grant is for Plays At Work, featuring the work of lesbian of color playwrights. **\$6,000**

Third World Majority (Oakland, CA) creates digital storytelling workshops (short digital video production) with women of color survivors of violence who identify as LBT. Grant is for *Silence Speaks*, a community screening event held to mobilize involvement in anti-violence/anti-homophobia organizing. **\$5,000**

Tongues (Los Angeles, CA) produces a magazine (published on-and offline) that positively reflects Queer womyn of color realities. The publications inspire dialogue and educate about issues of race, class and gender. **\$6,000**

United Gays and Lesbians of Wyoming (Cheyenne, WY) uses education, organizing, coalition building and leadership development to support out and questioning youth and adults in Wind River Country. Grant is for Wind River Country Initiative for Youth. **\$8,000**

United Lesbians of African Heritage (Los Angeles, CA) empowers Black lesbians by providing seminars, workshops, conferences and informational materials rooted in African American heritage and culture. **\$8,000**

Untitled by Christine Ibarra (New York, NY) is a film that follows 18-year-old Maria and her developing sexual identity as she—a first-generation Chicana and first-generation college student—returns to El Paso, Texas, a city that she must re-learn to accept as her home. **\$6,000**

Video Machete (Chicago, IL) runs MAGIK (Media Activism for queer Girls and Genderqueer in the Know), an ongoing project that provides LBT young women (ages 15–21) with access to professional skills training such as research, writing, organizing, and multi-media projects that address positive sexuality, transgendered violence, and homophobia. **\$5,000**

Women Food and Agriculture Network (Atlantic, IA) cosponsors conferences, leadership training and rallies that bring women's voices to issues of food systems, economic justice, globalization, trade, sustainable communities and environmental integrity. Grant is for the Lesbian Farmers Outreach Project, which includes a website to market the products by lesbian constituents, a photograph book featuring lesbian farmers, and networking gatherings. **\$5,000**

Women's Project (Little Rock, AR) uses community organizing and coalition-building techniques to work against homophobic public policies, disparities in health information to communities of color, domestic violence, hate crimes, and incarceration of women with addictions. Grant will help organize formerly incarcerated women and the families of inmates to work for alternatives to incarceration. **\$6,500**

Zami (Decatur, GA) empowers and affirms the lives of lesbians of African descent by providing scholarship funds, leadership development, discussion groups, social activities, outreach and education. **\$8,000**

Zuna Institute (Oakland, CA) is a national advocacy organization for Black lesbians which addresses areas of health, public policy, economic development and education. **\$7,000**

Jean Quarles (l) and Edith Biggers (r) at an event entitled "Lesbians Aging in All Colors," hosted by Astraea Grantee Charis Circle

PHOTO: LINDA BRYANT



PHOTO: SHIKIRA WASHINGTON



ASTRAEA House Parties

- 1) Guests enjoying themselves at the January House Party hosted by Astraea Board Member Denise Liggett of Hyattsville, MD
- 2) Astraea's April Aphrodisiac House Party Hosts Sonya Shields (l) and Lisa Jones (r) with event sponsor Carmen Guar

ASTRAEA Travels

PHOTO: KAREN ZELERMYER



- 3) Attendees at the Third International Network of Women's Fund Conference, held in Accra, Ghana, in February and attended by Deputy Director Karen Zelermyer, (l) to (r) Olena Suslova, Board Member of the Ukrainian Women's Fund, Emilienne de Leon, Executive Director of Semillas, in Mexico, and Abigail Burgesson, Program Officer at the African Women's Development Fund



PHOTO: KATHERINE ACEY

- 4) Demonstrators at the March Against Violence Against Women rally in India during Executive Director Katherine Acey's trip in December hosted by Astraea Grantee Creating Resources for Empowerment in Action

Upcoming Events

Sunday, June 8, 2003, 2-5pm, NYC, NY **Lesbian Lives As Works-In-Progress**
Janis Astor del Valle and Shock of Grey will present their work and seek feedback. In her play "Trans Plantations," Astor del Valle combines monologues, poetry and storytelling to explore her cultural and sexual identity. Shock of Grey's "Smoke and Mirrors" looks at five decades of struggle to define ourselves authentically as lesbians.

Co-Sponsored with The Crystal Quilt, \$12/\$6 limited income
The Center, 208 West 13th Street, Room 301 (7th/8th Ave.) NY, NY- wheelchair accessible.
For more information see: www.astraea.org

Saturday, June 21, 2003, 4-7pm, Watermill, NY **11th Annual Astraea Long Island Event**
For more information about this event or about hosting an Astraea House Party, contact Heather D. Artemis, Development Associate, at heather@astraea.org or call 212-529-8021 ext. 14

HOST A HOUSE PARTY FOR ASTRAEA!

House Parties are one of Astraea's *primary* vehicles for increasing our visibility and membership, and we'd like to come back soon to your neighborhood to greet new friends and update old ones on our recent activities. However, we can't do that without members like you. Is this something you might consider?

For more information about Astraea's House Parties, contact Heather D. Artemis, Development Associate, at heather@astraea.org or call 212-529-8021 ext. 14

Astraea Bulletin Spring 2003

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You may obtain the latest financial audit from Astraea or the Office of Charities Registration, Department of State, Albany, NY 12231

Our Mission

Astraea Lesbian Action Foundation is a feminist public charity whose purpose is to advance the economic, political, educational and cultural well-being of lesbians, their families and allies working for social justice. Our mission is enacted through a variety of programs including grantmaking, training and technical assistance, philanthropic advocacy and education, and fundraising.

Who is Astraea?

Astraea or "Starry One" was the Roman title of the