

Astraea LESBIAN FOUNDATION FOR JUSTICE

# threads



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## letter from the executive director & board chair



Every movement has its organizers, its artists, its donors, and its strategists. Building movements requires that we enhance the political and leadership capacity of each individual and organization within them. Astraea believes that one of the mandates of leadership is to provide the connective thread between various constituencies and issues. We believe in the power of telling stories about the successes and challenges of those doing the daily work of our movement(s). And, we believe in the transformative potential of bringing people together to learn, plan, celebrate and inspire one another.

This issue of *threads* highlights several organizations and lists many others that are making change throughout the world. Still others — individuals with vision and commitment — inspire us with their personal and collective efforts to link community building events with their activism and giving.

Astraea’s constituencies include donor and grantee partners, activists, and philanthropic colleagues. When these various constituencies come together they create something very powerful. In 2004, Astraea inaugurated its Giving and Activism Retreat series - which does exactly that. **We are pleased to announce that the second Retreat in the series, Funding Change and Strengthening Communities Around the World, will be held November 2- 5 in Dallas, Texas, and promises to be an unforgettable experience.**

The upcoming Retreat invites women and trans people who are committed to providing ongoing financial support to social justice LGBTI and feminist organizations to come together for four days. During that time we will strategize with some of Astraea’s grantee partners — extraordinary thinkers and organizers including Wang Ping of the Gender/Sexuality Rights Association in Taiwan and Chris Smith of Affinity Community Services in Chicago (who you will read about on pages 4 and 5), Alejandra Sardá of the International Gay & Lesbian Human Rights Commission in Argentina, and Fadzai Muparatsa of Gays and Lesbians of Zimbabwe, among many others. For a complete list of plenary and session topics, please visit our website.

Our hope is that all participants will come away from the Retreat having learned, been heard, and feeling fully engaged in a global human rights movement that leaves no one behind. We witnessed during the first Retreat that when people come together to reflect and strategize, they are often able to turn those thoughts into action whether it be in their giving, their activism, or both. One example of this is the Strategic Giving Circle, profiled on page 9.

The Giving and Activism Retreat series is an important component of Astraea’s strategic directions for movement building, leadership enhancement, and strengthening political and financial capacity. Our commitment to providing larger, multi-year grants to ensure that key changemakers in the field have the resources necessary to succeed in their social change work is one manifestation of that direction. We truly hope that you will join us in Dallas as we analyze global political and cultural trends; explore successful organizing initiatives; examine innovative grantmaking strategies; and strengthen the efforts of Astraea and its partners to make change.

In peace,

Katherine T. Acey

Brenda Funches

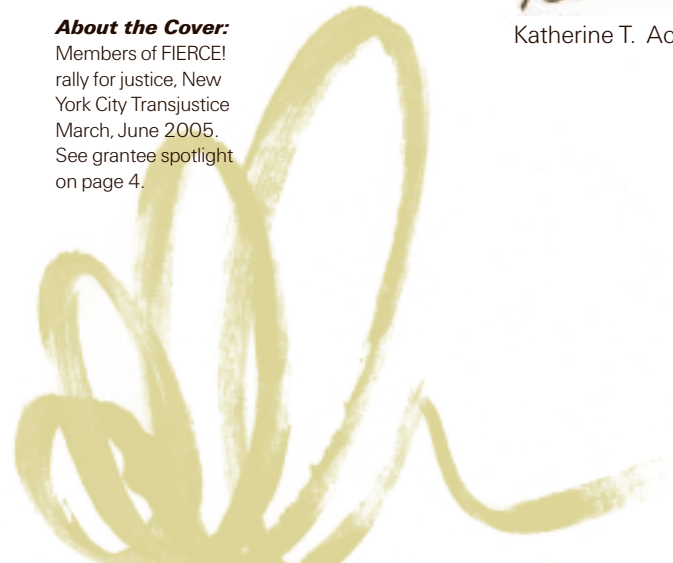
**About the Cover:**

Members of FIERCE! rally for justice, New York City Transjustice March, June 2005. See grantee spotlight on page 4.

### funding change & strengthening communities around the world

*The second in a series of Giving and Activism Retreats*  
November 2-5, 2006 · Dallas, Texas

For more information go to  
[www.astraeafoundation.org/PHP/Retreat2006](http://www.astraeafoundation.org/PHP/Retreat2006),  
or contact Shaya Mercer at 212.529.8021 ext. 13  
or [shaya@astraeafoundation.org](mailto:shaya@astraeafoundation.org).





## Chin and Olson Electrify Lynn Campbell Event ■ November 18, 2005



Emcee Samiya Bashir is the author of *Where the Apple Falls: poems* and a former Astraea Lesbian Writers Fund award winner.



Poets Staceyann Chin & Alix Olson



Mary and Warren Campbell, pictured here with Katherine Acey, traveled to New York from California for the 18th annual event honoring their daughter, Lynn.

It was an electrifying night as performance poets Staceyann Chin and Alix Olson rocked the stage of Lighthouse International. Headlining Astraea's 18th Annual Lynn Campbell Memorial Fund Benefit, both women delivered a night of powerful poetry and provocative performances. Astraea caught up with the artists afterwards and here is a glimpse of what we learned.

**Alix Olson is "a red-hot, fire-bellied, feminism-spewin' volcano. Plus she rhymes."** - Allison Bechdel. Igniting audiences around the world, Alix Olson is an internationally touring folk poet and progressive queer artist-activist. One part peace vigil, one part protest rally, and one part joyful raucous concert, she has twice headlined HBO's Def Poetry Jam. The recently released and heralded documentary *Left Lane* chronicles her life on the road.

**Astraea: How do you describe your work and its purpose?**

Olson: Language - both in its sober and laughing forms - is my weapon of choice. I choose to contribute my words to the sea of voices fighting for joyous retaliation against the powers that strip our world of its organic color and natural dignity.

**Astraea: What stands out for you about the work of Astraea?**

Olson: Astraea is powerfully pro-womyn, pro-lesbian, pro-lesbians of color, pro-poor womyn, pro-artist, and pro-all and any of those combinations in the pursuit of reclaiming power. That strikes me as a unique support system in our current political climate. Thanks Astraea!

**Astraea: What other organizations or causes do you feel passionately about?**

Olson: I am particularly passionate about the need to simultaneously get people locally involved, signed up to vote, and provide them with people worth voting for. And I am particularly pissed about the treatment of immigrants and this new absurd move of the Right to push for "defending the border." This oligarchy seems hell-bent on getting all of the have-nots to battle over moral issues, while they rake in all of the dough.

**Staceyann Chin "gives off enough electric current to keep Manhattan in air conditioning for a century of summers."** - *New York Times*. Staceyann Chin has been an out poet and political activist since 1998. A co-writer and performer in the Tony-nominated Def Poetry Jam on Broadway, she has been featured on 60 Minutes and has won countless slam poetry titles around the country.

**Astraea: Some may argue a distinction between poetry and spoken word. How do you describe your artistic process?**

Chin: My process is simple. I write the words down first. Some may never be spoken; the ones that become performance favorites are in constant workshop to increase rapid comprehension. My work intends to document a history of a particular identity, i.e. Black, female, queer, immigrant, Asian - a life lived in resistance of an unjust social, racial, political, and economic construct. I write to find the strain that connects our entities as human, but erases none of what makes us unique.

**Astraea: What is your favorite aspect of performing?**

Chin: I get to make controversial, and politically risqué statements and have even the people who disagree with me laugh out loud.

**Astraea: What is your favorite part of *Border/Clash*, your new one-woman off Broadway show?**

Chin: Speaking out about the physical altercation with the boys in the bathroom, because voicing resistance against a process of victimization is always remarkably freeing. It makes me feel like I am fighting the real "terrorists" that live in the nightmares of women who have survived.

**Astraea: What has been your experience as a performer visiting LGBTI communities in places where it may be more difficult to be "out"?**

Chin: Difficult, almost impossible, but it reminds me that much of the work that seems a tad unnecessary in the more urban communities (like New York) is vital in places like Altoona (PA) or Marietta (GA).

To read the full text of these interviews, learn more about Lynn Campbell, and view a photo gallery of last year's event, please visit: [www.astraeafoundation.org/PHP/Events/LynnCampbell.php4](http://www.astraeafoundation.org/PHP/Events/LynnCampbell.php4)



### Become a Partner for Justice!

Join ranks with our generous members and supporting businesses—including Babeland, Christopher Street Financial, *GoNYC Magazine*, Pernod-Ricard U.S.A., West Broadway Chiropractic, and the lesbian party, Cirrah Fridays—by becoming a Partner for Justice sponsor for the 2006 Lynn Campbell Memorial Fund Benefit!

For a complete list of 2005 Lynn Campbell Partners for Justice, visit [www.astraeafoundation.org](http://www.astraeafoundation.org).



## Who Makes Change? *Astraea Grantee Partners*

Before change becomes something we can tangibly see, it is something we must be able to imagine. Hearts and minds change, people speak truth to power, and others join them. The process is not linear and rarely happens overnight. Although it can be slow, movement building and social change are continuously propelled forward by brave activists who imagine another world. Astraea’s grantmaking programs nurture and help to sustain organizations whose cutting edge work continues to make an indelible mark on social, racial, economic, and gender rights globally.

At first glance, Astraea grantee partners may appear to be worlds apart. Languages, cultures, oceans, and political climates separate them. They employ different strategies and tackle different challenges, but upon closer inspection, their goals are one and the same: ensuring justice, safety, and freedom for all. Facing ever-present resource, political, and physical challenges, activists persevere — transforming communities and changing people’s lives. There are hundreds of stories that reflect the accomplishments of organizations that Astraea has supported over time. Here is a snapshot of just a few of the remarkable changes that have unfolded this past year.



Helem at the April 13, 2005 Run for Unity commemorating the 30th Anniversary of the Lebanese Civil War.

### **Hemaya Lebnaneya Lil Milthayeen (Helem) - Beirut, Lebanon**

2005 marked a milestone for Helem, which stands for ‘Lebanese Protection for Lesbians, Gays, Bisexuals, and Transgenders’. Founded in 2004, Helem recently launched the first-ever above ground LGBT community center in Lebanon — and in all of the Arab world. **Barra, Helem’s LGBT magazine** — available online in Arabic and English — is another first for the region. And, their comprehensive website enables users to connect with one another without fear of reprisal from relatives or the state.

Helem’s work extends beyond the new walls of their center however, addressing the sources of oppression directly.

In Lebanon, article 534 of the penal code targets the LGBT community by violating the privacy of its members and by denying them their basic human rights. Equipped with only one staff person, but over fifty local, active members, Helem is organizing to overturn this archaic code through documentation and human rights advocacy. We have no doubt that they will be successful.

### **Helem recently launched the first-ever above ground LGBT community center in Lebanon**

With Astraea as their first institutional funder, Helem has established itself as a vital touchstone and networking vehicle for the entire region. Sexual and gender rights work in many places, including the Middle East, can often be isolating. Helem benefits from support chapters established in Australia, Canada, France, and the United States, as well as within the region. To read more about Helem’s groundbreaking initiatives, visit: [www.helem.net](http://www.helem.net).

### **Fabulous, Independent, Educated, Radicals for Community Empowerment (FIERCE!) - New York, USA**

A national model for organizing and empowerment among queer youth, FIERCE! is on the move. Thanks to their efforts, the City of New York is on the move as well — taking notice and starting to rethink policies to make life safer for transgender, lesbian, gay, bisexual, two spirit, queer, and questioning (TLGBTSQQ) youth of color in New York City.

For many years, tri-state area transgender and queer youth (many of whom are homeless) have found safety and community congregating on the Pier waterfront in New York City’s West Village. But, due to recent gentrification, they have faced consistent police harassment and been pressured to leave the West Village.



In response, FIERCE! launched the Save Our Space campaign, which mobilized hundreds of transgender and queer youth, service providers, and allies to attend community board meetings and demand an extension to the early curfews imposed on the Pier. The **FIERCE! documentary *Fenced Out*** details the early days of this campaign. Through its multifaceted youth-led organizing, “FIERCE! has been able to change the terms of the public debate about quality of life and public safety in the West Village so that the voices of merchants, residents, politicians, and police are not the only ones that are heard.”

For more information about the ongoing **Save Our Space campaign**, visit: [www.fiercenyc.org](http://www.fiercenyc.org).

### Gender/Sexuality Rights Association of Taiwan (G/SRAT) - Taipei, Taiwan

Informally known as “Queers ‘n Class,” G/SRAT maintains that sexual and gender rights are human rights and that all marginalized communities — not merely a select few — are entitled to equality. Founded in 1999, and operating with minimal staff, G/SRAT has consistently worked to dismantle oppression and discrimination in Taiwanese society.

This past summer, G/SRAT organized the first-ever Asian lesbian film festival in Taiwan. Featuring workshops and films, it also served as an informal conference, with close to 1,000 women attending from eight different countries. After the Taiwanese government pulled its financial support due to what they deemed as the controversial nature of the films, Astraea made an emergency grant to help offset festival costs. The event was such a success that organizers in Thailand and Hong Kong are using it as a model to launch their own festivals.

G/SRAT’s Secretary General, Wang Ping, has worked for more than two decades to keep LGBT issues in the public debate, and is one of the world’s most highly regarded human rights defenders. In the fall of ‘04, she was elected to the Taipei human rights commission. Within the year she had issued a recommendation to Taiwan’s Department of Education to overhaul a high school policy profiling students’ genders and convinced the police department of the need for sexual and human rights trainings within their forces. For updates on G/SRAT’s work, go to: [www.gsrat.net/en/](http://www.gsrat.net/en/).

### Affinity Community Services - Chicago, USA

When Affinity opened its doors in 1994, it took two years before women started showing up on a regular basis. They could hardly believe there was a place where lesbian and bisexual African American women could be themselves — a place where they could find a welcoming community. Affinity has since become an active and strategic community organization that brings people together to demand and fight for their rights.

At their 2005 annual convening of lesbians of color in Chicago, Affinity prioritized the issue of universal healthcare. Towards that end, the organization is in the process of lobbying city and state governments to integrate lesbian/bisexual women’s health concerns within the African American and broader public’s health agendas. With an array of program areas including economic development, networking, and advocacy, Affinity’s main goals are to promote leadership, community wellness, and social justice for Black lesbians and bisexual women.

As part of their **Justice in Health Initiative**, Affinity, community leaders, and healthcare providers formed a coalition to focus on improving health for African American lesbians and bisexual women. Together the coalition assesses barriers to better healthcare, creates provider referral lists, issues legislative updates on emerging issues that impact the lives of their constituents, and mobilizes community members to respond. To download Affinity’s **“Take Charge Health Report,”** a groundbreaking study conducted in partnership with Dr. Alicia Matthews and the University of Chicago, please visit their website: [www.affinity95.org](http://www.affinity95.org).

### G/SRAT organized the first-ever Asian lesbian film festival in Taiwan



Ding Naifei and Chen Yu-Rong of G/SRAT at Astraea grantee partner convening in Thailand.



Chris Smith (Affinity), Katherine Acey (Astraea), Jeanne Kracher and Inhe Choi (Crossroads Fund), and Mary Morten (Affinity) at Affinity’s 10th Anniversary Celebration.



## U.S. & International Grants Announcements

Astraea’s grantmaking is guided by our understanding of how social change and movements for social justice develop. Our theory and practice are based on the following concepts:

- Social change results from the powerful collective action of groups of people working together.
- Organizations that understand the interconnections between various oppressions, and build their work around values of anti-oppression and justice, are most likely to help build transformative movements for change.
- People that are most affected by various issues should identify the priorities and strategies for effective action within their communities.
- Social justice funding institutions should see themselves as accountable to, and seek to partner with, grantees, donor members, other institutions, and broader communities.

One of the ways that Astraea maintains accountability is by ensuring that community members are involved in grantmaking decisions. Both the U.S. and International Funds include panels of activists who make funding decisions for panel grants. In addition, Astraea’s International Fund Advisory Board and colleague funding institutions provide feedback and regional context regarding applicant organizations.

During the 04-05 fiscal year Astraea made over 170 grants totaling \$835,000. 100 of these grants were distributed to U.S.-based groups in 23 different states and Puerto Rico. Another 70 went to support organizations in 35 other countries around the world. This year, through the generosity of our donor members — individuals and institutions — we plan to distribute approximately \$1.3 million dollars in grants. Below is a partial list of grants made this past year. Please visit [www.astraeafoundation.org](http://www.astraeafoundation.org) for a complete 04-05 grants list.

<p><b>International Fund for Sexual Minorities</b></p> <p><b>Africa</b></p> <p><b>Gays and Lesbians of Zimbabwe (GALZ)</b> Harare, Zimbabwe <b>\$5,000</b></p> <p><b>Tanzania Lesbian Association (TALESA)</b> Dar es Salaam, Tanzania <b>\$9,000</b></p> <p><b>Asia</b></p> <p><b>Alyansa ng Progresibong Lesbian sa Pilipinas (PROLESB)</b> Quezon City, Philippines <b>\$5,000</b></p> <p><b>Asia Pacific Rainbow Support Center</b> Quezon City, Philippines <b>\$5,000</b></p> <p><b>Gender/Sexuality Rights Association of Taiwan (G/SRAT)</b> Taipei, Taiwan <b>\$7,000</b></p> <p><b>Vikalp Women’s Group</b> Vadodara, India <b>\$4,000</b></p> <p><b>Eastern Europe/Commonwealth of Independent States</b></p> <p><b>Alterra</b> Bratislava, Slovak Republic <b>\$5,000</b></p>	<p><b>Lesbian Organization Rijeka (LORI)</b> Rijeka, Croatia <b>\$5,000</b></p> <p><b>Lezbijaska Grupa KONTRA</b> Zagreb, Croatia <b>\$8,000</b></p> <p><b>Podisea</b> Kosice, Slovak Republic <b>\$3,000</b></p> <p><b>Latin America</b></p> <p><b>Amazonas Mujeres de Venezuela</b> Caracas, Venezuela <b>\$4,000</b></p> <p><b>Colectivo Diversiless</b> Guadalajara, Mexico <b>\$2,000</b></p> <p><b>Comunidad Gay Sampedrana (CGS)</b> San Pedro Sula, Honduras <b>\$2,000</b></p> <p><b>Denosotras.org</b> San Jose, Costa Rica <b>\$5,000</b></p> <p><b>DIVAS - Instituto em Defesa da Diversidade Afetivo-Sexual</b> Recife, Brazil <b>\$5,000</b></p> <p><b>Grupo de Mujeres de la Argentina</b> Buenos Aires, Argentina <b>\$4,000</b></p> <p><b>Grupo Lésbico Safo</b> Managua, Nicaragua <b>\$2,000</b></p> <p><b>Grupo Palavra de Mulher</b> Salvador, Brazil <b>\$2,000</b></p>
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**Instituto Runa de Desarrollo y Estudios sobre Género**  
Lima, Peru **\$4,000**

**Prensa Editorial LeS VOZ**  
Mexico City, Mexico **\$4,000**

### **Social Change Opportunity Fund**

*Multi-year grants promoting institutional change*

**ACCEPT Bucharest Acceptance Group**  
Bucharest, Romania **\$10,000**

**Asociación Lucha por la Identidad Travesti y Transexual (ALITT)**  
Buenos Aires, Argentina **\$50,000**  
over 2 years

**Blue Diamond Society**  
Kathmandu, Nepal **\$25,000**  
over 2 years

**Equality Now!**  
Kisumu City, Kenya **\$35,000**  
over 3 years

**Gays and Lesbians of Zimbabwe (GALZ)**  
Harare, Zimbabwe **\$50,000**  
over 3 years

**Hemaya Lebnaneya Lil Milthayeen (Helem)**  
Beirut, Lebanon **\$50,000**  
over 3 years

### **US Fund Panel Grants**

#### **Hawaii/Alaska**

**Hula Girl Productions for The Glades Project\***  
Honolulu, HI **\$5,000**

#### **Midwest**

**Affinity Community Services Lynn Campbell Memorial Fund Grant**  
Chicago, IL **\$7,000**

**Beyondmedia Education**  
Chicago, IL **\$10,000**

**Sankofa Way Spiritual Services for Spirituality & Sexual Ethics\***  
Chicago, IL **\$5,000**

**THE VOICE of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and allied youth of Iowa**  
Waterloo, IA **\$5,000**

#### **Northeast**

**Al-Fatiha**  
Washington, DC **\$7,000**

**Bronx Lesbian & Gay Health Resource Consortium**  
Bronx, NY **\$7,000**

**Chica Luna Productions for Outside the Wall\***  
New York, NY **\$5,000**

**Documenting Irene\***  
Brooklyn, NY **\$4,000**

**FIERCE! Organizing TLGBTSQQ Youth of Color**  
New York, NY **\$10,000**

**Gay Reunion In Our Time (GRIOT) Circle**  
Brooklyn, NY **\$7,000**

**Himaphiliac CineLabs for And I Do Survive\***  
New York, NY **\$5,000**

**Outright Vermont**  
Burlington, VT **\$4,000**

**Queers for Economic Justice (QEJ)**  
New York, NY **\$9,000**

**Sylvia Rivera Law Project (SRLP)**  
New York, NY **\$9,000**

**The Theater Offensive**  
Cambridge, MA **\$6,000**

**Wapinduzi Productions for Sunshine Boutique\***  
New York, NY **\$4,000**

**WOW Cafe Theater**  
New York, NY **\$4,000**

#### **South**

**ALSO for Gay Youth**  
Sarasota, FL **\$2,000**

**Appalachian Women's Alliance (AWA)**  
Floyd, VA **\$5,000**

#### **Southwest**

**Austin Latino/Latina Lesbian and Gay Organization (ALLGO)**  
Austin, TX **\$7,000**

**Center for Artistic Revolution**  
Little Rock, AR **\$10,000**

**Esperanza Peace and Justice Center**  
San Antonio, TX **\$10,000**

**Old Lesbians Organizing for Change (OLOC)**  
Athens, OH **\$4,000**

#### **US Territories**

**Taller Lésbico Creativo**  
San Juan, PR **\$7,000**

#### **West**

**The Aeromestiza Project**  
San Francisco, CA **\$5,000**

**INCITE! Women of Color Against Violence**  
Oakland, CA **\$5,000**

**liquidFIRE Productions**  
San Francisco, CA **\$5,000**

**MACHA Theatre Company**  
Valley Village, CA **\$5,000**

**Purple Moon Dance Project**  
San Francisco, CA **\$4,000**

**Queer Women of Color Media Arts Project (QWOCMAP)**  
San Francisco, CA **\$5,000**

**The SorJuana Project NEWMR Fund for the Promotion of Women's Music & Culture Grant**  
San Francisco, CA **\$8,000**

**TGI Justice Project**  
Oakland, CA **\$10,000**

**United Lesbians of African Heritage (ULOAH)**  
Los Angeles, CA **\$10,000**

**Zuna Institute**  
Sacramento, CA **\$5,000**

\* indicates film/video project



## 2005 Lesbian Writers Fund & Lesbian Visual Arts Fund Grants

Launched in 1991, the Lesbian Writers Fund (LWF) has awarded over a half-million dollars to emerging lesbian poets and fiction writers across the U.S. This year, grants were determined by judges Alicia Gaspar de Alba, EJ Graff, and Mariana Romo-Carmona.



Mi Ok Song Bruining

### Mi Ok Song Bruining • LWF Award in Poetry (\$10,000)

Mi Ok Song Bruining lives in Cambridge, Massachusetts, where she practices social work. She has published several poems and essays in various journals and anthologies, and has conducted over 80 speaking engagements on the issue of international adoptions. Born in South Korea, Mi Ok was adopted into a white family at age 5 and after 36 years of estrangement, found her birth family. She will use this award to obtain an editor to assist her in publishing a poetry manuscript, a children's book, and her memoirs.



Kirsten Dinnall Hoyte

### Kirsten Dinnall Hoyte • LWF Award in Fiction (\$10,000)

Kirsten Dinnall Hoyte's fiction, essays, and poetry have appeared in *The Harvard Review*, *The Minnesota Review*, *Room of One's Own*, *Sojourner*, and *The Hoot and Holler of the Owls: An Anthology of New Black Writers*. She won Astraea's Claire of the Moon Award in 2002 and received an honorable mention in fiction in 2000. Kirsten earned a BS from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and an MFA from the University of Iowa. Currently a doctoral candidate at Harvard University, she lives and works in Concord, Massachusetts. *Black Marks*, to be published by Akashic Books in 2006, will be her first novel.

### Other LWF Grants & Honorable Mentions:

In the poetry category, Maggie Jochild of Austin, TX, Aimee Walker of New York, NY, and Lenelle Moïse of Northampton, MA received Loving Lesbians poetry grants of \$ 1,500 each; and Leah Hannah-Rive Atchu and Maiana Minahal, both of Oakland, CA, received certificates of recognition. Monica Transandes of Los Angeles, CA received a Loving Lesbians fiction grant of \$ 1,500, while Noadiah Shanti Eckman of Oakland, CA received the \$ 1,500 Claire of the Moon award. Amanda Gable of Decatur, GA, Patti Frazee of Minneapolis, MN, and Claudia Rodriguez of Compton, CA all received certificates of recognition for fiction.



Sara Gordon

**Astraea's Lesbian Visual Arts Fund (LVA) recognizes the work of exceptional contemporary lesbian artists whose work reflects a commitment to Astraea's mission. Grants are awarded to artists working in an array of media including sculpture, painting, prints, mixed media, and works on paper. This year's selection panel was composed of Lula Mae Blockton, Tania Kravath, Loretta Mears, Amanda Pelham, and Linda Stein.**

### Sara Gordon • LVA Award (\$2,500)

Sara Gordon lives in Mill Valley, California. She has exhibited her work in numerous galleries throughout the region and on the East Coast including the San Jose Institute of Contemporary Art, the Marin Art & Garden Center, and the Ceres Gallery in New York City. Her work was also published in the *Fiberarts Design Book 7* (Spring 2004).



Sally Packard

### Sally Packard • LVA Award (\$2,500)

Sally Packard has lived and worked in Denton, Texas since 1999 where she is currently an associate professor at the School of Visual Arts at the University of North Texas. Her sculpture and installations have been exhibited throughout the United States as well as in England, Poland, and Sweden.

### Honorable Mentions:

Certificates of recognition were awarded to Callie Danae Hirsch of Brooklyn, NY and Sydnéi Smith Jordan of Gardena, CA.

**To read excerpts from LWF awardees and view images from LVA awardees, please visit: [www.astraeafoundation.org/PHP/Grants/Main.php4](http://www.astraeafoundation.org/PHP/Grants/Main.php4)**



## Strategic Giving Circle: Philanthropy In Action

**“This Circle was an opportunity to come together with like-minded women to share our thoughts about giving — what we had been supporting and why — and to explore options for sharpening and deepening the impact of our contributions.” - Strategic Giving Circle member**

The Lesbian Strategic Giving Circle emerged from Astraea’s *Women & LGBTI Philanthropy: Exploring the Issues and Supporting the Movement Retreat* in 2004. The Retreat was the first in a series of gatherings designed to encourage women to explore issues and strategize about money, philanthropy, and ways to better support the work of LGBTI activists both globally and in the U.S.

“It was the activist in me that was drawn to Astraea’s *Retreat*,” said one member, “because the idea to pull together as progressive organizations with lesbian and women of color leadership is so important.” Another member spoke of being inspired by the shared desire among participants to be more proactive about giving — especially in states with strong anti-gay movements.

Since then, the Giving Circle has maintained an ongoing conversation on these issues through periodic conference calls hosted by Astraea. The members — Katherine Acey, Carol Alpert, Chela Blitt, Tucker Farley, Mai Kiang, Kathleen Russell, and Karen Zelermyer — bring varied class and racial backgrounds, as well as different experiences with philanthropy to the Circle. More than one member talked about her initial discomfort with identifying as a donor or philanthropist. The trust-building and mutual support gained by creating the Strategic Giving Circle has encouraged members to explore their relationships to money and class, as well as the value of donor activism.

Before making a joint gift, each Circle member took the time to deeply examine her own giving. What groups had she been supporting? Why was she drawn to them and how did their work fit into her overall vision for social justice? In sharing their philanthropic visions with one another, a common theme emerged: in order to strengthen our movement for social justice, we must learn from and share our experiences with activists from other parts of the world. Through their ongoing discussion, the members of the Giving Circle decided to manifest this ideal by bringing a global perspective to domestic activists at the next *Astraea Giving & Activism Retreat*. The *Retreat* will be held in Dallas, Texas from November 2-5, 2006. Thanks, in part, to the Strategic Giving Circle, ‘framers’ from across the globe will attend as featured speakers.

As one Circle member put it, “Our decision to fund lesbian activists from outside the U.S. to attend the next *Astraea Retreat* is **a statement of our solidarity with the global LGBT and women’s rights movements, our belief in the value of network building, and our commitment to Astraea, which embodies our deepest-held values and visions of justice.**”

The Strategic Giving Circle is a fresh and unique opportunity for women to harness their collective power and direct it towards the realization of shared goals. “It has flavor!” concluded another member. As the Circle itself evolves, each member continues to explore her own thinking around philanthropy and global justice. Together, the members of the Strategic Giving Circle are making a powerful, positive impact on our movement by putting their philanthropy into action!



Carol Alpert



Mai Kiang



Tucker Farley



Kathleen Russell



Chela Blitt



Karen Zelermyer



## Leaving A Legacy: Skip's Sappho Fund

Born in the early 1920's, Arminta P. Neal's life is the stuff novels are made of, and according to those who knew and loved her, she truly was a character. Dubbed 'Skip' by her Sergeant in the Women's Army Corps during WWII, the name stuck. "Skip was not wealthy, but gave

generous donations to other women's causes she supported," noted one friend. "She believed very much in the encouragement of women in their endeavors... and mentored many young women in their careers."

For over three decades, Skip enjoyed a successful and influential career in museum exhibition. She served as the exhibit designer and administrator of the Denver Museum of Natural History for 32 years and was instrumental in the founding of their Native American Advisory Council — one of the first in the nation. She authored and illustrated two volumes on museum exhibition and served as an elected member of various national and international museum councils.

In 1981, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) sponsored Skip to teach museum theory and exhibition to colleagues in Nigeria, after which she became a Fulbright Professor in Peru. An avid outdoorswoman still full of wanderlust into her eighties, Skip retraced Lewis and Clark's trail across the United States just months before her passing on September 22, 2003.

At the heart of it all, Skip Neal was a lesbian artist. Throughout her life, Skip delighted those around her with exquisite travel drawings, plein aire paintings, watercolors, musical compositions, and even vocals. Skip's commitment to the creative process extended far beyond her own personal projects, the classes that she taught, and the works that she funded throughout her lifetime. She made an endowment bequest of \$250,000 to Astraea, establishing Skip's Sappho Fund. Her friends and colleagues have also contributed to the Fund in her memory. Each year, awards are made from Astraea's Lesbian Visual Artists Fund and Lesbian Writers Fund in Skip's honor. Through Skip's Sappho Fund, she continues to enable others to follow their dreams and create their masterpieces.

## Gifts In Honor & In Memory Of

### Gifts In Honor Of

Katherine Acey  
Juanita Deans  
& Sandy Robinson  
Jyoti DeVernie  
& Mary Myers  
Dr. Rachel Efron  
Caroline Garcia  
Saracristina Garcia  
& Rhonda Livingston  
Jill & Forrester Langdon  
Ruth Levine  
Alisa Mays  
Marla & Anita  
Meislin-Dietrich  
Sandy Morris  
Sue Roche  
Stephanie Roth  
Janie Spahr  
Eleanor "Ellie" Thomas

### Gifts In Memory Of

Gordon Brown  
Lynn Campbell  
Cherry & Kathryn  
Diane DeMarco  
Belle Baron Dominian  
Madeline Goulard, DC  
Jill Harker  
Bertha Harris  
Craig Harris  
Shirley Hekimian  
Joan Heller  
Karen Khan  
Audre Lorde  
Cindy Marano  
Cherry Lynn Morton  
Elke Mueller  
Marilyn Murphy  
Edith Rosenthal  
Albert Soto

To give a gift **IN HONOR OF** or **IN MEMORY OF** someone—or to join the **WOMEN WILL CIRCLE**—please contact Shaya Mercer, Philanthropic Partnership Officer, at 212.529.8021, ext. 13 or shaya@astraeafoundation.org.

# women will circle

THE WOMEN WILL CIRCLE recognizes and thanks people who have designated Astraea as a beneficiary of their estate and involves them more intimately in the Foundation's

work during their lifetime. Please contact the office for more information on planned giving or to notify us of a bequest.

### WOMEN WILL CIRCLE MEMBERS

<i>Circle Chair</i>	Elizabeth Bremner	H. Nona Hungate	Joni Ross*
Kimberly Aceves	B. Jean Brown*	Sheryl Kaplan	Stephanie Roth
& Chris Lymbertos	Denslow Brown	Donna Korones	Claire Selkurt
Katherine Acey	Pam Calvert	Jennifer Krauel	Dixie Sheridan
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Carol Alpert	Chiqui Cartagena	Karen London	Cindy Sterling
& Sarina Scialabba	& Jen Knight	Genevra Kay Loveland	Catherine Tinker
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Sara Berger	Judith Clarke	Leonard Manheimer*	Alida Walsh
Diane Bernard	Jennifer Dryfoos	Jed Mattes*	Joan Watts
& Joan Heller*	Rosalind Dutton	Shaya Mercer	Jessica Weissman
Gail Bernstein	Tucker Pamela Farley	Arminta 'Skip' Neal*	Remsen Wolff
Melanie Berzon	Jan Felshin & Edrie Ferdun	Jane Oakes	Mark Wyn
Sylva Billue	Lois Fink & Phyllis Steiner	Kate O'Hanlan	Karen Zelermyer
Evelyn Blackwood	Sheila Gershen	& Léonie Walker	Jan Zobel
Stephanie Blackwood	Sue Goldwoman	Barbara Raab	
Elissa Breitbart	Debra Hirshberg	Nusrat Rabbee	

\*Deceased



## new faces at astraea



**Dulce Reyes** (Program Officer) is a Dominican immigrant whose social justice work with LGBT youth and adults, low-income people of color, and immigrants spans over 13 years. The first director of the New York Immigration Coalition's successful Community Action Program, she also worked at the Medgar Evers College Women's Center and taught ESL as a NYC Teaching Fellow. Dulce has served on the Community Funding Panel of the North Star Fund, the Steering Committee/Board of Las Buenas Amigas and the Latino Workers Center, and the Working Group on Women's Organizing at the Audre Lorde Project. She holds a master's degree in sociology from Brooklyn College and a graduate certificate in sexuality studies from the University of Amsterdam.



**Rebecca Rolfe** (Treasurer) is the Deputy Executive Director of the San Francisco Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Community Center. She has been active in the anti-violence movement for over 20 years. She is passionately committed to addressing inequities based on gender, race, economic status, and sexual orientation. Rebecca lives in San Francisco, California with her partner of twelve years and their two dogs.



**Robin Rosenbluth** (Board Member) is the Assistant Vice President of the Columbia Medical Center. She also teaches fundraising at Columbia, NYU, and the Support Center. Previously, she was the Development Director of the Ms. Foundation, a board member of the NYC Anti-Violence Project, and worked with environmental groups, museums, and other women's organizations. She has been active in international solidarity movements in Central America and South Africa as well as the women's and anti-racist movements in the U.S. Robin and her partner of more than 20 years have raised two children in Brooklyn, where they currently reside.



**Joy Rucker** (Board Member) of Oakland, California is the Executive Director of the HIV Education and Prevention Project of Alameda County, CA. For the past 25 years she has worked to support the homeless, at-risk youth, people dealing with substance abuse issues, pregnant incarcerated women, and people living with HIV/AIDS. She is the former Deputy Director of Health for the Health, Housing and Integrated Services Network, a national model for services for formally homeless people with multiple disabilities.

**ASTRAEA IS SEEKING NEW BOARD MEMBERS!**  
If you are interested in joining a committed, diverse, and active national Board, please contact **Melissa Hoskins** at 212.529.8021 or [melissa@astraeafoundation.org](mailto:melissa@astraeafoundation.org).

## WAYS TO GIVE to astraea

Astraea has received the highest rating of 4 stars from Charity Navigator — an honor given to less than one quarter of America's nonprofits. For more information, visit [www.charitynavigator.org](http://www.charitynavigator.org).

- \* Use Astraea's Business ExtrAA number—752242—when booking flights on American Airlines (AA). You receive frequent flier miles and we receive support from AA.
- \* Become a member! Send your annual gift using the enclosed envelope or donate online at [www.astraeafoundation.org](http://www.astraeafoundation.org).
- \* Join the Leadership Gift Circle by making an annual gift of \$1,200 or more.
- \* Ask your employer to match your gift, and double your impact!
- \* Contribute appreciated securities through our broker. Please confirm Astraea's current account information prior to making a stock transfer by contacting the office."

### STAFF

**Katherine Acey**, Executive Director  
**Namita Chad**, Grants Administrator  
**Kerry-Ann Dacres**, Accounting Clerk  
**Jennifer Einhorn**, Director of Communications  
**Ivory Farley**, Membership Coordinator  
**Candace Sala Hewitt**, Events Coordinator  
**Melissa Hoskins**, Assistant to the Executive Director  
**Fred Humphrey**, Director of Finance  
**Jazmine Irizzary**, Director of Administration  
**Joo-Hyun Kang**, Director of Programs  
**Shaya Mercer**, Philanthropic Partnership Officer  
**Lorraine Ramirez**, Program Assistant  
**Dulce Reyes**, Program Officer  
**Audrey Rivers**, Administrative Assistant

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 Visit us: [www.astraeafoundation.org](http://www.astraeafoundation.org)

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

### OUR MISSION

The Astraea Lesbian Foundation for Justice works for social, racial, and economic justice in the U.S. and internationally. Our grantmaking and philanthropic advocacy programs help lesbians and allied communities challenge oppression and claim their human rights.

### WHO IS ASTRAEA?

Astraea or "Starry One" was the Roman title of the Goddess of Holy Law or Libra, and was also known as the Goddess of Justice. In most ancient writings, Astraea is associated with natural law, matriarchal justice, and the personification of truth and justice.

This newsletter was printed with soy-based ink on post-consumer content paper at a lesbian-owned and operated printshop.

## Become an Astraea Partner for Justice!



Jami Porter Lara & Kathy Brown (front row) in Albuquerque, NM host a fabulous community gathering to benefit Astraea! Also pictured: Katherine Acey (Astraea), Back Row: Candace Hewitt (Astraea), Susan Hallgarth, and Mary Ellen Capek.

### Support Astraea Events through Host and Sponsorship Opportunities

Astraea seeks individuals, businesses, and organizations to become Partners for Justice by hosting or sponsoring an event. Hosting or sponsoring an event is a great way to inspire your community and increase financial support for the LGBTI social justice movement in the U.S. and internationally. Hosts and sponsors receive acknowledgement in our newsletter and website, as well as other benefits.



Melissa Hoskins (Astraea), Louva Hartwell (NativeOut), Anguksuar (Two-Spirit Press Room), and Coya Artichoker (spoken word poet) participate in the Two-Spirit sessions at the Creating Change Conference in Oakland, CA.



Astraea is a key partner in the New Women's Movement. Mary Kay Penn (NWM consultant), Sara Gould (Ms. Foundation), Barbra Phillips (previously with Ford Foundation), and Katherine Acey (Astraea) participate in the 3rd NWM retreat in Chicago.



Lynn Gernert & Susan Weiler host an NYC Justice Social.\*



Astraea grantee partners meet to discuss Astraea's U.S. Grants Program and movement building efforts. Front: Veronica Combs (liquidFIRE Productions), Shaba Barres (Old Lesbians Organizing for Change) Back: Joo-Hyun Kang (Astraea), Christina Smith (Affinity Community Services), Ellie Kimaro (Northwest Network of BTLG Survivors of Abuse), Kebo Drew (Queer Women of Color Media Arts Project), Alex Lee (TGI Justice Project), Francine Ramsey (Zuna Institute).



Diane Sabin, Katherine Acey, Margie Adam, Nancy Baker, and Anne Dorman enjoy themselves at a Bay Area Justice Social.\*

\*Justice Socials bring together members of Astraea's Leadership Gift Circle, staff, board & friends to mobilize resources for LGBTI organizing around the world.

## upcoming events

**Los Angeles Spring Fever II** — June 22, 2006

**Funding Change and Strengthening Communities:**

**2nd in a series of LGBTI Giving and Activism**

**Retreats** — Dallas, TX, November 2-5, 2006

**Calling All You PARTY GIRLS!** Do you host regular bar or club parties in your city? Can you help Astraea put more fun in fundraising and outreach by introducing your crowd to the Astraea Lesbian Foundation for Justice? Together we can create the ultimate social network for social change.

If you are interested in becoming a host or sponsor of an Astraea event, please contact Candace Hewitt, Events Coordinator, at 212.529.8021 ext. 14 or [candace@astraeafoundation.org](mailto:candace@astraeafoundation.org).

Astraea events are held year-round from coast to coast. For upcoming Astraea events in your area, check our website:

[www.astraeafoundation.org](http://www.astraeafoundation.org)