

# The Grassroots Leader

Everyone a Learner. Everyone a Teacher. Everyone a Leader.



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Volume 1 Issue 3 November 2010

**Mission:** The Grassroots Leadership College supports the development of grassroots leaders by building skills and relationships in a supportive and stimulating environment.

Hello GLC graduates, workers, and friends!

Building connections, that's what it's all about. Building connections is at the heart of what you'll see in this month's newsletter and at the heart of community organizing.

This month's newsletter talks about how GLC grad Alan Chancellor builds connections and supports our community's youth as they grow into adulthood. We visit with faculty member Boris Frank and celebrate with him 46+ years of professional community building as he receives a lifetime achievement award from the Association of Fundraising Professionals. We connect with GLC faculty member Kathy Germann and learn how to hold meetings where connections come naturally, and we honor the years of GLC grad Deloyd McCoy and the connections he made in his life. This is just a sampling of the stories in this month's edition. We hope you enjoy this round of "The Grassroots Leader"

*Peace,* Amy S. Mondloch, Executive Director

Alan Chancellor:  
One size does NOT fit all

by Beth Quinn

Alan Chancellor is a man on a mission, finding innovative ways to help the youth of his community develop into confident, productive adults. His mission informs every aspect of his life, from his work, to his activism, to his role as a father. Alan works part-time in the Intensive Supervision program of Youth Services of Southern Wisconsin, Inc. where he runs weekly groups with young men between the ages of 12 and 17. He also works with the Focus Program, a residential community corrections program for boys in trouble with the law, and in his spare time, he volunteers with "Mentoring Positives," a non-profit providing one-on-one mentoring with youth.

Alan has learned in his years working with young people is that "one size does not fit all." When considering the problem



Alan with his GLC semester coach, Bert

Welcome

Alumni Story

of kids dropping out of school, Alan asserts that, "they are being pushed out" because the schools don't understand them and can't – or won't -- meet them where they are. In contrast, Alan counsels that "we must deal with our young people on an individual basis and get beyond this one-size-fits-all approach; I treat young people with compassion, unconditional love and respect." Alan finds this particularly critical in his work with youth in the juvenile justice system, a system that tends to limit its response to the crimes committed. Alan knows that alone this approach is "fruitless." In contrast, he strives to program to the whole person, believing it is "more important to provide young people with all the positive things they need to develop into healthy adults."

A graduate of the GLC semester program, Alan went on to be a coach in the same program and to

serve on the GLC board for nearly two years. He credits the GLC with giving him "the confidence to ask questions, to try to implant myself into the community" and in showing him "that I did have valid knowledge and information I could share." Importantly, Alan came to understand that "I am not just an employee of the county or an employee of the Focus program. I am a community stakeholder in Madison. I am an African-American man who cares about the community and the young people growing up here."

Alan feels his GLC experience was instrumental in "opening me up to everything else that's happened in my life since then" and has provided "a blueprint" on how to overcome challenges. After completing the program, Alan enrolled and completed MATC's Human Services program, which resulted in his Dane County Youth Services job. In 2009,

he was awarded the Youth Work Newcomer of the Year Award from the Wisconsin Association of Child and Youth Care Professionals.

Alan sees the "one-size-fits-all" approach as equally problematic in leadership development and coalition building. Not all approaches will work with all communities. You have to begin by building on existing relationships and community ties. Coalitions and cross-community ties will emerge "organically" from there. The GLC helps with this since, in Alan's experience, it "can unfog your window to the world and increase your peripheral vision" and teaches participants to notice things that they may have "never really paid attention to before." Once we are aware of "the larger community's issues," Alan concludes, "we can, as the school talks about, 'coalition build.'"

## Dancing into our Power. Rae Atira-Soncea

by Andrew Bernhardt

I never met Rae. I have only heard about what an amazing, fiery, compassionate, welcoming person and artist she was, and from the brief descriptions I have gathered, I have been handed more than words; these descriptions are the brushes, crayons, yarn, wood, glass, clay, paint set, mirrors, chalk, and bits of paper and tile that I will use to create and weave a story about this woman: a collage of feelings, emotions and

moments from the people that loved her.

Rae was an artist that believed in the healing and uniting powers of the craft. Math Heinzl, her partner, told me that she "was very good at using the arts to bring people together." She believed in the innate ability in every human being to create his or her own art, and scoffed at notions and labels of good art and bad. Although I never heard her say this, I find it easy to imagine that she would



Lady of Faith Lady of Infamy

declare loudly, boldly, 'all art is beautiful!' then explode into a roar of good-natured laughter. This is made explicit in her master's thesis work, "Sweeping Changes;" she writes that the, "inspiration [for her work] came from my own sense of stubbornness and outrage. I came into graduate school interested in exploring fiber and "traditional/craft" techniques used as Art. I felt some resentment toward the attitude of some within the art department that craft was not Fine Art. I had a strong desire to show them just how important/impressive/ artful 'craft' can be."

More than art itself, I believe Rae valued and cherished the process of creating and making. In Rae's words, "the process of making is what holds the earth together, whether it's making love or making bread or making babies or making art. It's part of the process that maintains the world. We should never discourage anyone from making or creating or engaging the body-mind in that dance or that flower arrangement because it does two things. It makes the person sane, and it keeps the world going."

Rae Atira-Soncea worked at Grassroots Leadership College (GLC) as a coach, faculty member and board member. Rae changed the lives of those around her through her stories, art and compassion. She inspired connection and action. Believing that art will make a better world, she drew on fine art, folk art and storytelling traditions to realize her visions. Rae believed in the intrinsic

value of every living creature and committed her art and work to making the world a welcoming place for the art, creativity and intelligence of all people.

**"We should never discourage anyone from making or creating or engaging the body-mind..."**

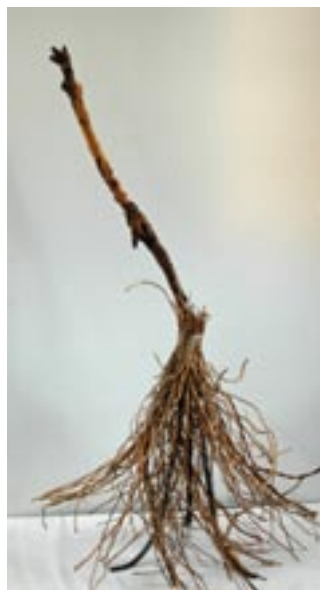
In addition to volunteering her time and energy at the GLC, Rae worked at the Overture Center, as the multi-faceted Coordinator of Community Engagement, Education, and Accessibility. According to Beth Racette, a friend and fellow coworker at the Overture Center, "Rae brought joy to the work place and connected with everyone; nobody was an outsider to her circles." When I spoke with Beth, she recounted how she could clearly recall hearing Rae's peal of laughter ringing across the office; Rae passed away on March 1, 2009, but the echo of her laughter still rings clear at the Overture Center and everywhere she graced with her presence.

A community forum at the Overture Center is scheduled in honor of Rae, her art, and her community activism on November 7th, 2010 10am-4pm, entitled **Spinning Our Skills and Weaving New Connections** in conjunction with a retrospective exhibition of Rae's art on display in the Overture Center Galleries from October 25

to January 9. The forum invites community members to spend a day sharing, learning, exploring, playing and creating art with the intent of building new connections, enhancing existing skills, and growing and discovering strange and wonderful interdisciplinary melds focused on positive community change.

Rae's art is beautiful; I went to the Overture Center to learn a little bit more about Rae and to prepare for writing this article. I was amazed at the grace,

intricacy and detail in her work. My favorite piece on display was one of her brooms, entitled "Honeysuckle Dreams." I was especially moved by her description of the piece; it spoke to me... no, Rae spoke to me. Everything I know of Rae comes from others, but this was the first time I heard her speak. She writes, "Each of the brooms could almost be considered a love letter to women, but



Honeysuckle Dreams

this one is specifically to my grandmothers, who are the ones that taught me to love being a woman. My grandmothers danced through many dramatic, sad or normal times, and each of them has given me an alternative picture of what older women are. Wise, strong and outrageous in their own right, they worked hard, laughed, and argued with each other. They taught me

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resilience. The honeysuckle is resilient: cut it back or dig it up, and it comes back. Each of my grandmothers carried her name proudly. They were short little women who were majestic in their stature, righteous in their anger, humorous and stubborn. Never would these women sit meekly by and allow someone to dictate their lives, nor did they encourage their granddaughters to. This broom

is a message of reclaiming in that I want each of us [man or woman, granddaughter or grandson] to dance into our own power and catch/make our own dream."

Math told me that, "My hope for the forum is that it will bring together the different groups that Rae worked with in her life;" I think she would also hope that the forum helps us all dance into our own power.



Age of Fire: Transformation

## A Passion For Change: Remembering Deloyd McCoy

Spring 2005 graduate Deloyd McCoy passed away in mid October at the age of 53. Deloyd was a special man. Life had been hard. Poverty and prison, and being a Black man with limited access to education had all taken their toll, but he was turning things around. In 2007, Deloyd shared with us how the GLC helped in that process. Here's a little of what he said.

"I was directed by Tamra, who is a member of Voices Beyond Bars. It was through her encouragement that I joined the College. When I first heard "College", I felt excluded because of my lack of education and my dyslexia. One of the things that went through my mind was stereotyping and labeling that I might become associated with, but mainly I was being very hard on myself. However, my passion for change within our society was strong and I was able to put all my fears behind me and go forward. I felt totally put of place but at the same time highly honored to be amongst such educated and devoted people from so many walks of life.

Around about the middle of the

semester, I realized that even educated people were people too, and that took a lot of the pressure off me. It was not until the end of the semester that I finally realized that a great opportunity had been handed to me on a silver platter and until this day I am still using some of the language, skills, and techniques that I learned from the GLC."

Deloyd was an active part of Madison Urban Ministry's (MUM) prison re-entry work. He acted in Returning Prison Simulations educating the public about prison issues; was a member of Voices Beyond Bars; and a speaker to community groups sharing his own experience as someone who had turned his life around.

Linda Ketcham, executive director of MUM, had this to say about him, "DeLoyd really was family to us. I'll never forget the day DeLoyd brought in the photos from his daughter's wedding. He had worked so hard and achieved so much in terms of family and work; he really pulled his life together. When he walked in to MUM with his photo album from the wedding I had never seen such joy in

his face as he told us about walking her down the aisle and showed us the pictures of him in his tux, with his daughter, just a wonderful memory. He was so proud of his daughter and so thrilled to have been part of her special day."

We thank Deloyd for all the contributions that he made to our community and wish healing for his friends and family.



Paying homage: Mark Sobrilsky

## Celebrating Mark Sobrilsky: a man of amazing strength



The Grassroots Leadership College has lost a wonderful volunteer and friend. Mark Sobrilsky, whose story was highlighted in last month's newsletter, passed away unexpectedly earlier this week.

For those who knew Mark, please join us for an informal celebration of his life from 4-7pm at 2724 1/2 Milwaukee St. Saturday, November 6th.

For info call 441-0085.

Please bring both your stories of Mark and your traditions of grieving to the celebration, along with a dish to share. We will be creating a group art project so please bring inspiration and any art supplies or collage materials you have. Those unable to attend are welcome to email thoughts or materials to Amy or drop by the office.

Mark was a talented man who taught us well who the "everyone"

is in "everyone a learner, everyone a teacher, everyone a leader." Much of his life was defined by a body that didn't answer to his brain because of cerebral palsy. His inner strength moved him from being institutionalized at a young age to becoming an active part of the community living is his own home, playing soccer, being active in his church and volunteering, and drawing to him a large circle of friends. He changed many lives for the better. We will miss him.

Visitation and services will be held at Lake City Church, 4909 Buckeye Road on Monday, November 8<sup>th</sup>; visitation will be held at 12pm followed by the memorial service at 1pm. An additional celebration of Mark's life will happen on November 20th from 4-6pm at Faith Community Bible Church 3 N. Park St.

Volunteer Story

## Boris Frank receives Lifetime Achievement Award

Grassroots Leadership College faculty member Boris Frank will be honored by the Madison chapter of the Association of Fundraising Professionals (AFP). Mr. Frank is to be recognized with AFP's Lifetime Achievement Award on November 12th at their Philanthropy Day celebration.

Boris has been with the GLC since our beginning in 2003 because, as he says, "It's grassroots—it starts at the most elemental level of serving people and providing people opportunities in the community." The concept of the grassroots is important to Boris who sees himself not as a fundraiser, but as a development specialist. When he started out, his mentor Mack



McCardy gave him some sage advice: 'Surround yourself with dedicated and passionate people

whether they be staff, or volunteers working as a team to achieve the goals of the organization.' That's exactly what Boris has done. His work and his love for the community is connecting people, building relationships, and giving people the chance to team up and accomplish incredible things.

Asked for words of wisdom to share with GLC graduates Boris said, "Follow your passions, avoid pessimists, be optimists."

Thank you, Boris, for all you've done for the GLC and the community and congratulations on your Lifetime Achievement Award!



## Community Shares Campaign Announcement

It's Community Shares Campaign Time! Do you have a Community Shares Campaign at your workplace? The Grassroots Leadership College is a new member group, so be sure to look for us in the list of groups to donate to. If you give through the public sector campaign you may need to look twice for the GLC. In some campaign books we were listed as the Madison Area Grassroots Leadership College and in others we

were listed correctly as the Grassroots Leadership College.

If you don't have a Community Shares campaign at your worksite you can give at [www.communityshares.com](http://www.communityshares.com) or contact Community Shares to set up a 2011 campaign at your worksite.

You can also contribute directly to the GLC at our website [www.grassrootsleadershipcollege.org](http://www.grassrootsleadershipcollege.org)

## Two simple tips to make your meetings better: Insight from GLC faculty member Kathy Germann



Why is it that some meetings result in arguments, isolation, and disengagement while others foster productivity, inclusiveness, and stronger connections? This month, we asked GLC faculty member Kathy Germann for tips on how leaders can create better meetings, and, as a result, foster better connections.

disengagement, and potential arguments. To avoid this, make sure to be clear about the desired outcome of the discussion: Is it to share information, analyze information, or make a decision?

During the meeting, avoid relying on open-ended discussions as the sole means of communication and making connections. Open-ended discussions often only enable the loudest, the most out-going, and the most powerful to speak; forcing all others to compete for a chance to make their voices heard. One alternative process that Kathy often uses is "*think-pair-share*." This offers everyone time to think and gather their thoughts before any discussion takes place, which is useful for people who speak a different primary language than the meeting facilitator or who need more time to process. First, participants are asked to think on a topic and write down their thoughts. Next, everyone pairs up to trade ideas. Finally, the entire group comes back together for participants to share their thoughts and come to the desired outcome.

What to know more? More processes to help leaders, organizers or group facilitators foster connections in meetings can be found:

- at [http://www.visual-literacy.org/periodic\\_table/periodic\\_table.html#](http://www.visual-literacy.org/periodic_table/periodic_table.html#),
- in the book, [Facilitator's Guide to Participatory Decision-Making 2nd Edition](#), by Sam Kaner, or
- by attending any of Kathy Germann's workshops. To find out more about Kathy's workshops or her consulting work, give her a call at (608)233-6757 or email her at [kathy@kathygermannconsulting.com](mailto:kathy@kathygermannconsulting.com)

Kathy Germann offers two tips:

- Clearly define desired outcomes prior to holding meetings.
- Utilize processes other than open-ended discussion during meetings.

Before a meeting, leaders, organizers or facilitators need to clearly define the meeting's desired outcome, place it in the agenda and distribute the agenda to participants. Simply listing the topic of discussion is not sufficient. For example, a topic could be, "Hiring a new employee." One person may come to the meeting ready to discuss when that should happen, another person may be ready to talk about why that should happen and another person may be ready to discuss how that should happen. When the meeting takes place, people end up discussing the topic, constantly shifting the conversation to what they prepared to say. The end result is an unfocused meeting, confusion,

Tip of the month

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## GLC Events

Interactive Community Forum honoring Rae Atira-Soncea  
*Spinning Our Skills and Weaving New Connections* [register here](#)

Sunday, Nov. 7th  
10 to 4pm Overture Center

Getting Involved: An informational session on becoming a  
GLC board member and other volunteer roles.

Sunday, Nov. 7th  
4pm Overture Center

## Additional Events

Dialogues on Homelessness. For more info, contact Donna  
at (608) 609-8522 or [madisonhomelessnessinitiative@gmail.com](mailto:madisonhomelessnessinitiative@gmail.com)

2nd Saturdays, Oct. to May  
Madison Central Library  
1:30-3:30pm, 2nd floor

Art Exhibit: Sober Journey: Stories and Visual Art  
Opening reception Nov 8th, 5:30-8:30pm. For more info, contact  
Dr. Stephanie Joy Smith, arts curator [Stephanie@hep.wisc.edu](mailto:Stephanie@hep.wisc.edu)

November 8th to 14th  
Commonwealth Gallery  
100 South Baldwin, 2nd Floor

Honoring Our Common Differences: Creating  
Inclusive Organizations Join facilitator Kathy Germann  
in a safe forum for self-reflection and dialogue about inclusivity.  
Cost \$150. For more info, visit <http://www.dcs.wisc.edu/pda/diversity/honor.htm>

November 9th  
8:30am to 4:30pm  
UW-Madison Pyle Center

Mayor's Neighborhood Roundtable. Neighborhood  
leaders will have the opportunity to learn about the development  
review process and share their ideas, values and experiences to  
build stronger communities.

November 6th  
8am to 12:30pm  
Urban League of Greater  
Madison, 2222 S. Park St.

Nominations Due for Jeffrey Clay Erlanger Civility  
in Public Discourse Award The award honors Jeffrey Clay  
Erlanger, who was an individual of integrity, passion, intelligence,  
and civility.

By November 8th  
5pm  
at City Hall

Contact Us

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