The traditional funding sources were working on issues that are too controversial for groups which are often too small, too new, or lacked access to other financial resources and grassroots support needed to help low-income people organizing themselves to address systemic problems of poverty, racism, and social inequity. In their own communities and neighborhoods. Many sources including individuals, businesses, and foundations in order to provide the critical financial support needed to help low-income people organizing themselves to address systemic problems of poverty, racism, and social inequity in their own communities and neighborhoods. ACF supports communities with little or no access to other financial resources and grassroots groups which are often too small, too new, or working on issues that are too controversial for traditional funding sources.

The Appalachian Community Fund (ACF) funds and encourages grassroots social change in Central Appalachia (East Tennessee, Eastern Kentucky, Southwest Virginia and West Virginia). In our 20-year history, we have awarded over $5 Million to more than 300 organizations working for justice. ACF pools resources from many sources including individuals, businesses, and foundations in order to provide the critical financial support needed to help low-income people organizing themselves to address systemic problems of poverty, racism, and social inequity in their own communities and neighborhoods. ACF supports communities with little or no access to other financial resources and grassroots groups which are often too small, too new, or working on issues that are too controversial for traditional funding sources.

The Appalachian Community Fund is a member of the Funding Exchange and Community Shares of Tennessee.

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APPALACHIAN COMMUNITY FUND ★ CHANGE, NOT CHARITY

APPALATION

COAL AT WHAT COST?

By Terza Adkins
Ohio Valley Environmental Coalition (OVEC), www.ohvec.org

“If the American people could see what I have seen from the air and ground during my many trips to the coalfields of Kentucky and West Virginia: leveled mountains, devastated communities, wrecked economies and ruined lives, there would be a revolution in this country.” Robert F. Kennedy Jr. said after a recent tour of West Virginia while filming his documentary, Crimes Against Nature. Kennedy described the environmental devastation as the worst he’d seen anywhere.

Mountaintop removal coal mining (MTR) is a radical form of strip-mining used in the Appalachian regions of West Virginia, Kentucky, Tennessee, and Virginia. Every day, coal companies detonate 2,500 tons of explosives to literally blow off the tops of mountains in order to reach thin seams of coal beneath the raths. These explosions are equal to the power of a Hiroshima bomb dropping every week, annihilating some of the most biologically diverse temperate hardwood forest habitat in the world, and destroying and displacing entire human communities.

People who stay in their homes and communities confront numerous problems including contaminated drinking water, damage to homes from blasting, flooding, coal waste impoundment leaks, the threat of coal sludge impoundment failures, and respiratoiy and other health problems related to mining activities. According to the EPA (Environmental Protection Agency) 1,200 miles of Appalachian rivers and streams have already been buried, and 470 of Appalachia’s mountains have been permanently destroyed. The EPA also estimates that without a significant policy shift, mountaintop removal and other surface mining will destroy nearly 1.5 million acres in the Central Appalachian region by the end of the decade, an area larger than the state of Delaware.

The movement to end mountaintop removal has gained momentum and is approaching a critical tipping point. In 2007, for the first time a federal judge ruled that permanent damage to streams and the environment overrides the temporary economic losses for a mining company.

OVEC’s coordinated citizen effort also resulted in West Virginia legislature mandating that the state study the contents and effects of toxic coal sludge injection and its impact on West Virginia’s drinking water and the environment. As of February 2008, the Congressional Clean Water Protection Act has 128 co-sponsors. This bill would protect streams from being filled with mining debris, and, in effect, bring about the end of MTR.

If a foreign enemy had done to this country what the coal industry has done to West Virginia, it would be regarded as an act of war.”

—ROBERT F. KENNEDY JR.

OVEC was formed in 1987, and, for the past 11 years, has been working to build coalitions among citizens and other groups to end the extreme social and environmental injustices caused by mountaintop removal coal mining and coal sludge impoundments. OVEC also works with other ACF grantees, including KFTC, Coal River Mountain Watch, and Save Our Cumberland Mountains, as part of a large, multi-state alliance fighting to protect the region. In addition to federal legislation banning mountaintop removal, citizens groups are supporting state-level bills in West Virginia, Tennessee, and Kentucky that would ban MTR. To find out more information about these grassroots legislative efforts and how to get involved to protect homes, land, and streams, please visit: www.appalachiancommunityfund.org.
The voices of Kentuckians and other region, and this project works to insert the climate change significantly impacts the businesses, sustainable forestry, renewable energy and other priorities.

Appalachians into the debate while also tackling energy issues head-on. With allies, we are fighting the construction of new coal-fired power plants and offering alternatives.

KFTC in support of energy efficiency and renewables, and exploring a green jobs initiative for low-income utility consumers. Harlan County members are also working with the Massachusetts Institute of Technology to determine the feasibility of using wind energy to power all of Brumley, KY.

Appalachia’s history has been shaped by coal and the hard-working miners who perform one of the most difficult and dangerous jobs under some of the harshest conditions. We owe these miners—and mining communities across Appalachia—our respect and our gratitude. We owe them a better future beyond coal.

As a young child Saadia Williams loved books. “Through reading you can go any-where you want to go,” Saadia remembers her mother, Lula B. Williams, saying as she encouraged her love of reading and emphasized the importance of a good education. Saadia was born and reared in Knoxville, TN and she sought out library books that would take her to places both far and near, and, most importantly, tell her stories about her people, African American people. Saadia avidly read about African American his-tory and pored through books about inventions, discoveries, and other contri-butions to history and society made by African Americans. No one had shared anything like this with her in school.

One day in class she raised her hand and asked, “Can you tell me what people who look like me did?” Her teacher paused for a minute before brushing off her question. The next day Saadia raised her hand and asked the same question. Again, her teacher brushed her off.

Saadia could tell that she was begin-ning to irritate the teacher, but she knew her question needed to be answered. “At that moment,” Saadia recalls, “I made the conscious decision that if a teacher, or anyone, didn’t know how to answer my question, I’d teach you.” From that day forward, in every essay, paper, and presentation Saadia took for granted her experiences and the oppression that people, African American people. Saadia values ACF’s commitment to anti-racism, both institutionally and as a grantmaker. “I like that ACF asks grantees to speak to the issue of race and what they’re intentionally doing to look at this issue. Racism certainly is a pervas-ive issue today.”

“I am the hope and the dream of the slaves. My forbearers had the hope and the oppressor need work—the more we can bring these two entities together across bridges the better we all will be,” Saadia shared. “If I didn’t believe that change was possible, I wouldn’t be as passionate about working for it.”

Saadia joined ACF’s family of donors several years ago when she learned about ACF’s work and mission of Change, Not Charity™. “When I give to ACF, I really like knowing that my donation stays here in Appalachia,” Saadia shared. “Often times the work that goes on in Appalachia is not as highly regarded by major funders as the work in big cities, and the work we do is as valid and criti-cal as in any other place. Major funders have ‘abandoned’ Appalachia in many ways, and it is important that Appalachian communities know that ACF is here and is an available resource.”

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“I am the hope and the dream of the slaves. My forbearers had the hope and Saadia shared in a teachable moment she’s known for helping facilitate. “What I, what we, choose to do with it is up to us.”

Saadia is the Executive Director for the Race Relations Center of East Tennessee (RRC), whose mission is to promote racial justice and equality through dialogue, advocacy, research, and training. The RRC serves a nine county region in East Tennessee. Saadia earned her Bachelors of Science degree from Tusculum College in Greenville, TN (where she was awarded a 4-year academic scholarship), and earned her Master’s Degree in Social Work from The University of Tennessee, Knoxville.
WE ARE GRATEFUL TO THE FOLLOWING FOUNDATIONS AND INSTITUTIONS FOR THEIR SUPPORT OF ACF FROM JANUARY 1, 1987 THROUGH FEBRUARY 28, 2008 WITH ONE OR MORE GRANT AWARDS OR GIFTS:

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We Shall Overcome Fund
Whistle Communications

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Saadia wrote about the Black experience. She had no idea at the time that she was taking a stand for social justice. She just knew it was the right thing to do, and that it helped her develop feelings of self-worth that she was otherwise not getting through school.

Today, Saadia readily, and happily, suggests resources that would have bene- fited her teachers, such as “We Can’t Teach What We Don’t Know” by Gary Howard.

Her belief that change is possible inspires her drive and her passion for working for change. “Both the oppressed and the oppressor need work – the more we can bring these two entities together across bridges the better we all will be,” Saadia shared. “If I didn’t believe that change was possible, I wouldn’t be as passionate about working for it.”

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“I am the hope and the dream of the slaves. My forbearers had the audacity that I could be here today. I am living their dream” Saadia shares in a teachable moment she’s known for helping facilitate.

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DONOR SPOTLIGHT: SAADIA L. WILLIAMS

A BETTER FUTURE—BEYOND COAL

By Kentuckians for the Commonwealth, www.kftc.org

After 26 years of fighting coal industry abuses, Kentuckians For The Common- wealth (KFTC) and other Appalachian groups are creating a new coal-free region. This vision has become critically important as the question “If not coal, then what?” faces us, and, increasingly, solid alternatives are being laid on the table. KFTC began focusing on building a better future beyond coal in 2003 and in 2006 KFTC, along with the Mountain Institute for Community Economic Development launched the High Road Initiative to help make alternatives a reality. The Initiative seeks to build a sustainable economy in the coalfields by creating an effective and accountable economic development system that supports good jobs through hometown businesses, sustainable forestry, renewable energy and other promising sectors.

At the center of the Initiative is KFTC’s Renewable Energy & Energy Efficiency Project. The current debate on global climate change significantly impacts the region and its people. KFTC wants to insert the voices of Kentuckians and other Appalachians into the debate while also tackling energy issues head-on. With allies, we are fighting the construction of new coal-fired power plants and offering alterna- tives. KFTC is supporting tax incentives for energy efficiency and renewables, and exploring a “green jobs” initiative for low- income utility consumers. Harlan County members are also working with the Massachusetts Institute of Technology to determine the feasibility of using wind energy to power all of Brumley, KY.

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The working on issues that are too controversial for groups which are often too small, too new, or access to other financial resources and grassroots. ACF supports communities with little or no in their own communities and neighborhoods. Problems of poverty, racism, and social inequity people organizing themselves to address systemic financial support needed to help low-income and foundations in order to provide the critical many sources including individuals, businesses, $5 Million to more than 300 organizations In our 20-year history, we have awarded over over 300 organizations working for justice. ACF pools resources from around him in search of coal.

The GENOCIDE OF APPALACHIA: One of OVEC’s organizers, Maria Gunnios, contemplates the destruction at Kayford Mountain, where Larry Gibson’s family has lived for 230 years. Coal companies are using ANFO (ammonium nitrate and fuel oil) blasts and heavy machinery to take off the tops of the mountains already been buried, and 470 of Appalachia’s mountains have been permanently destroyed. The EPA also estimates that without a significant policy shift, mountaintop removal and other surface mining will destroy nearly 1.5 million acres in the Central Appalachian region by the end of the decade, an area larger than the state of Delaware. The movement to end mountaintop removal has gained momentum and is approaching a critical tipping point. In 2007, for the first time a federal judge ruled that permanent damage to streams and the environment overrides the temporary economic losses for a mining company. "If the American people could see what I have seen from the air and ground during my many trips to the coalfields of Kentucky and West Virginia: leveled mountains, devastated communities, wreaked economies and ruined lives, there would be a revolution in this country," Robert F. Kennedy Jr. said after a recent tour of West Virginia while filming his documentary, Crimes Against Nature. Kennedy described the environmental devastation as the worst he’d seen anywhere. Mountaintop removal coal mining (MTR) is a radical form of strip-mining used in the Appalachian regions of West Virginia, Kentucky, Tennessee, and Virginia. Every day, coal companies detonate 2,500 tons of explosives to literally blow off the tops of mountains in order to reach thin seams of coal beneath the Earth. These explosions are equal to the power of a Hiroshima bomb dropping every week, annihilating some of the most biologically diverse temperate hardwood forest habitat in the world, and destroying and displacing entire human communities. People who stay in their homes and communities confront numerous problems including contaminated drinking water, damage to homes from blast-
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