



# CROSSING BARRIERS

Working with young people to  
bring about systemic change

# Annual Report

# 2010

CrossingBarriers

450 North Syndicate Street, Suite 45, St. Paul, MN 55104 Phone: 651-603-5899 \* Fax: 651-603-5967 \*

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

Dear Friends:

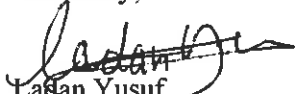
In 2010, CrossingBarriers strengthened its foundation and capacity to work with youth from low-income immigrants and communities of color that are facing poverty. As a young organization of 5½ years, we have been able to successfully implement our mission and grow each year thanks to the hard work of our student leaders and community outreach volunteers. In 2010, our students designed a 12-month leadership training curriculum for high school students, training in the areas of civic engagement, leadership development and community organizing skills. Understanding the concept of community organizing, we saw the need to bring diverse groups of students together so they can learn how to address their concerns together.

In April of 2009, CrossingBarriers received 501c3 status from the IRS. We always kept our eye on evaluating the success of our work and sustaining our organization. Like many non-profits, CrossingBarriers faced funding challenges in 2010, but we have been able to stretch our budget by exploring new resources and partnerships with other non-profits. From 2009 to 2010, we conducted over 23 presentations, community workshops on education, youth and community-based issues. These were gatherings of diverse groups from parent councils, teacher training programs, low-income community members, non-profits, youth summits and institutional stakeholders. Over 1198 youth, adults and professionals from diverse social and economic backgrounds heard from our student leaders, volunteers, community supporters and staff through workshops, trainings, presentations, community gatherings in order to work together address issues that concern our schools, youth, communities and amplify our unheard voices.

In 2010, CrossingBarriers recruited new board members, volunteers, student leaders and community partners to expand and strengthen our programs such as: Eden Prairie Education, St. Paul Education Project, Collaborative Programs and Leadership Development. We began working with The Charities Review Council to strengthen our accountability standards, capacity and transparency to inform donors. This process helps CrossingBarriers strengthen public disclosure, governance, financial activity and fundraising.

In 2011, we will expand our training series and diverse low-income community groups and leaders to be change agents in their communities. We will develop partnerships with community groups and organizations that work with youth to advocate for quality of education in their local schools, districts and address community-based issues to improve quality of life for their families and communities. We will continue to amplify the voice of young people. We look forward to sharing our success and work with you in 2011 and beyond.

Sincerely,

  
Ladan Yusuf  
Executive Director

  
Jim Scheibel  
President of the Board of Directors

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## OVERVIEW AND PROGRAMS

The mission of CrossingBarriers is to develop leadership skills of youth and community members to improve education, address community-based issues and be agents for change. CrossingBarriers is a grassroots multi-ethnic organization. We work with low-income students, youth and parents in the Twin Cities metro area that continue to struggle in poverty. Our work is led by the initiatives and the needs of our leaders. CrossingBarriers is for youth and community members to learn how to successfully navigate schools; address barriers in education; related community-based issues to bring about change. Our student leaders, youth and parents come from school districts or neighborhoods where their voices are underrepresented. We give a voice to unheard low-income leaders who are committed to providing long-term stability and educational success in their community. We provide citizenship development where youth, parents and community members can come together to support each other, learn about civic engagement, political issues and develop ways to work with the mainstream community on constructive solutions. We work with young people and community members that reside in Minneapolis, St. Paul and surrounding metro neighborhoods.

**Leadership Development Program** prepares youth/student leaders as change agents to learn the skills to be civically engaged in the specific community-based issues that impact their neighborhood and schools. It helps them amplify their voice by learning about themselves and realize the potential they have as leaders of today and tomorrow. Through this process, they outline strategies to improve their schools, community, empower themselves so they are not disconnected from our society and be constructive solution finders. Our student leaders some who attend college take workshops on public policy -governance and community organizing. In turn, they reach out to younger high school students from ages 16 to 18; conduct workshops with them about leadership development, community engagement, organizing, action steps and project development.

**St. Paul Education Project:** In St. Paul, high school student leaders organize and engage students from Saint Paul Public Schools to address the issue of bullying by conducting outreach; present to local youth programs and implemented a community survey to over 100 local high school students. This survey, designed by youth, analyzed the causes of bullying and how to prevent it. They presented their findings to

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The Saint Paul Schools Board Members and to local community centers. In addition, student leaders conduct presentations about the challenges students of color face in schools; provide recommendations on how the school district can improve teacher communication; parent involvement and academic success.

**Eden Prairie Education Project:** In Eden Prairie, student leaders advocated for Eden Prairie School District and its board to improve the quality of education immigrant and students of color receive from high school to elementary schools. The barriers are poor curriculum in English Language Learners Program (ELL), high enrollment of students of color in Special Education and low performance in math and reading. The main focus here is the high achievement gap between white students and students of color. To address this, student leaders of CrossingBarriers conducted workshops; reached to immigrant parents with limited English so they can learn to advocate for their children; continued to amplify their voice to eliminate policies and programs that widen the achievement gap. The student leaders reached out to mainstream parents by conducting workshops about the challenges low-income students face and brought together diverse parents so they can advocate for the whole community.

**Workshops and Presentations:** In 2010, 310 participants from diverse high schools, colleges, teaching institutions and community organizations attended presentations/workshops conducted and designed by our student leaders, volunteers and staff. The focus was education organizing and critical issues facing youth of color from low-income families that struggle in schools. We trained student leaders to conduct workshops and outreach. They worked with 52 high school students through workshops and focus groups exploring challenges our youth face succeeding in schools. Our student leaders trained 35 immigrant parents on advocacy skills to address school barriers. These parents in turn reached out to other parents through neighbor-to-neighbor door knocking to get involved in school boards, committees and community meetings. From 2009 to 2010, 888 community members from diverse backgrounds youth, parents, civic leaders, teachers, public figures, city council, teachers and mainstream non-profits and organizations heard about our work and participated in community gatherings on education advocacy.

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Financial Summary December 31, 2010

Source of dollars used for the programs

**Revenue**

Grants	\$39,850.00
Other miscellaneous revenue	\$202.00
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$ 40,052.00</b>

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**Expenses**

Program services and expenses	\$29,308.19
Management and general expenses	\$17,878.44
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$47,186.63</b>

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<b>Change in Net Assets</b>	<b>(\$7,134.63)</b>
<b>Net Assets 12/31/2009</b>	<b>\$27,506.64</b>
<b>Net Assets 12/31/2010</b>	<b>\$20,372.01</b>

## **Board of Directors 2010**

*Jim Scheibel*

*Rukia Abdi*

*Sina Black-Jones*

*Ah Vang-Lo*

## **Student Project Leaders**

*Mandeq Mohamed*

*Sagal Muse*

*Rare Adam*

*Osob Ali*

*Firaoli Adam*

*Osman Ahmed*

*Mohamed Abdul*

## **In-Kind Contributors**

*Rebecca Anderson*

*Ah Vang Lo*

*Doug Margolis*

*Bill Ashworth*

*Gary Miller*

*David Shulman*

*Osman Ahmed*

*Eric Osekowsky*

*Kevin Adam*

*Nick Skochinky*

*Abdirizak Mahboub*

## **Collaborative Partners**

*Cedar Riverside Neighborhood Revitalization Program*

*Minneapolis Parks and Recreation Board*

*Community Action Partnership of Ramsey & Washington Counties*

*Skyline After School Program*

*University of Minnesota, Department of Second Language Studies*

*St. Mary's University, Department of Education*

## **Staff**

*Ladan Yusuf*

*Charlotte Lunde*

*Mai Ku Moua*

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## The mission of CrossingBarriers

To develop leadership skills of youth and community members to improve education, address community-based issues and be agents for change.

**We thank the following foundations for their support and believing in our work.**

*St. Paul Foundation*

*Headwaters Foundation for Justice*

*Christian Sharing Fund, Catholic Charities*

*World Day Prayer*

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