

# Catalyst Project

a center for political education and movement building

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Ingrid Chapman  
Chris Crass  
Amie Fishman  
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To our comrades, friends and families,

The Catalyst Project needs your help to implement our "Solidarity with Reconstruction Summer" in New Orleans program. Both the People's Hurricane Relief Fund (PHRF) and Common Ground (CG) are calling for thousands of volunteers to come to New Orleans for the summer. We are responding to a specific call from PHRF and the anti-racism working group of CG for Catalyst and others to come to New Orleans and help build the infrastructure for political education. We need your help to make this happen.

Our plan is to send one organizer, Ingrid Chapman, to New Orleans to work full time from June through August, and three other organizers, Amie Fishman, Clare Bayard and Chris Crass, for two week periods over the summer. We need to raise \$7000 to make this happen. This will cover travel and cost of living stipends for organizers. Your donations to Catalyst are tax deductible and very much needed.

This is a critical time for Catalyst to bring our skills and resources to support the peoples' movement to rebuild New Orleans, led by Black and Latino people who are most targeted by institutional racism and oppression. The struggle in New Orleans has the potential to build and inspire all our movements for social justice in this country.

Additionally, this summer is a key time to work with thousands of young people coming to volunteer. It is an incredible opportunity to build organizing skills and commitment to racial and social justice. Catalyst focuses on building anti-racist practice and principled leadership of mostly young white people involved in activism and organizing. We see this summer as an important time to work with the thousands of white volunteers, including many who will be opening their eyes to systemic racial injustice for the first time. Many of these young people will continue to be involved in social justice work when they return home, and will draw lessons from their time in New Orleans for years to come.

Catalyst organizer Ingrid worked in New Orleans from January through March of 2006 with both PHRF and CG. Ingrid brought her community organizing skills to PHRF's Reconstruction Work Group to support Lower 9<sup>th</sup> Ward residents develop a People's Reconstruction Plan for New Orleans. Over spring break, she brought her mass direct action coordination skills to help PHRF coordinate the hundreds of mostly Black student volunteers who came to New Orleans from around the country. Additionally, Ingrid helped build an anti-racism working group in the mostly white CG. CG was founded by long time African-American New Orleans organizer Malik Rahim, and mobilized thousands of mostly white students and volunteers from around the country. The working group developed an anti-racism political education program for the volunteers who worked with CG over spring break. This included anti-racism caucuses twice a week with experienced facilitators, presentations by local organizers and residents once a week, and one evening and two full day Undoing Racism workshops led by the New Orleans based People's Institute. Catalyst sent Chris down for two weeks in March to support the anti-racism working group. Over the summer Ingrid, Amie, Clare and Chris will build on this work guided by the following goals:

1. Support people of color and working class led organizations in New Orleans working to build the power of survivors to lead the rebuilding effort with justice for all people.
2. Support the anti-racism working group of CG to be an effective, strategic and dynamic force.

Our strategy towards these goals: help create and implement a political education program to help volunteers have a powerful political experience that supports their life-long commitment to social justice. We will join a team of people from both PHRF and CG in New Orleans to do this work. We are also working in collaboration with other Bay Area organizations such as POWER (People Organized to Win Employment Rights) and SOUL (School of Unity and Liberation) to develop the PHRF curriculum.

To help us do this work, please make checks out to Catalyst/Tides and mail them to:

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If you have any questions contact Catalyst coordinator Chris Crass at [chriscrass@mutualaid.org](mailto:chriscrass@mutualaid.org).