

A Place to Stand:

A Tribute in Prose to the 2003–2004 WILD Class

by
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Participants:

Adrienne Thompson,
Citizen Alert, Las Vegas, NV

Amy Herzfeld, Idaho Women's
Network, Boise, ID

Andrea Hackett, Las Vegas
Dancers Alliance, Las Vegas, NV

Andrea Shipley, Working
for Equality and Economic
Liberation, Missoula, MT

Ari Rapkin, Community Alliance
of Tenants, Portland, OR

"bob" Maureen, Gay and
Lesbian Community Center
of Utah, Salt Lake City, UT

Cara Shufelt, Rural Organizing
Project, Scappoose, OR

Carlos Marentes, Comite
Pro-Amnistia General y
Justicia Social, Seattle, WA

Gloria Muñoz, United Vision
for Idaho, Boise, ID

Josie Margallo-Michael,
Oregon Action, Portland, OR

Mary Martinez-Wenzl,
Community Alliance of
Lane County, Eugene, OR

Moon Vasquez, Northwest
Labor and Employment Law
Office, Seattle, WA

Patricia Dowd, Sierra Club,
Wyoming Chapter,
Cheyenne, WY

Rose Spears, Oregon
Action, Portland, OR

Shannon Bedard, Odyssey
Youth Center, Spokane, WA

Walking into a room of sixteen strangers was anything but strange.

We started by hugging, creating ground rules, exchanging curious looks.

**There were games, an obscene amount of games and a willingness to divulge.
A soul-sharing extravaganza.**

It was more than trust; it was more than a connection. We became life-long friends with folks creating change.

A place of safety and mischief. A sanctuary of being.

In the middle of our self-awakening, there were hours of intense, important training. We learned how to take care of members, board, and self. On top of this was a slew of electoral organizing, strategy, and sustaining work to enable not only our organizations, but our own work as activists and individuals.

And oppression, plenty to go around. That's why we're here. A commitment to peace.

A commitment to creating a safe place for folks to teach each other. We learned the ABC's of activism. From community organizing to women's rights in twelve short months. Of course, we have more to learn. A lifetime is only a short time to begin to fathom the oppression that the people of this world have survived and continue to suffer.

Life-affirming. Work-affirming. A sense of origin.

The experience is one to recommend to all those working not only to create change, but to embrace wedge issues, work through them and find solutions. Too many times, we find ourselves lost in our work; without meaning. But WILD teaches you that we are all in the same boat. Working for change and learning to love.

An excess of kindness. Gutsy.

Did we mention electoral organizing and skinny dipping? Who said our work couldn't be fun? We are alive, inspired and eager to learn. This is WILD. Are you ready?

Beautiful trainers. Navigating a precarious landscape with style and grace.



They moved through rocky but inescapable cultural terrain, made safe through good facilitation.

So many voices. A brilliant dialogue. A perfect melody.

We were all there for the same thing: learning, strategy, and understanding. But what we found was a utopia without fear. Sure, there were hardships and processing, but we learned patience and the compassion we need to learn. And that holds true for all spirits, young and old. We are ready for change and it starts with each one of us. We are awake and ready for change and we remember that love is the reason we do this work.

With the 7th class of the Western Institute for Organizing and Leadership Development (WILD), 100 organizers have now completed the Center's rigorous training program. Through a series of residential retreats combined with field work, participants develop their skills, political analysis, and leadership. As two recent graduates attest, they also build relationships, have fun, and wade through personally challenging territory.



WILD graduates and trainers celebrate months of hard work together.

By sharing their experience in WILD, Oregon Action leaders Josie Margallo-Michael and Rose Spears doubled the benefit to their organization.



“Because of the skills and connections to such fantastic people, I am more able to be effective in the work I do. I am much more ready to take myself seriously as an activist.”

— Ari Rapkin
Community Alliance of Tenants, Portland



Training sessions can get tense but who says social change work isn't fun?



Western States Center field director Kelley Weigel, with Mary Martinez-Wenzl of CALC, is herself a WILD graduate and now lead trainer.

Curriculum Highlights:

- Models of Organizing*
- Framing Oppression*
- Organizational Development*
- Unstructured Fun*
- Campaign Development*
- Power Analysis*
- Research for Action*
- Gender Oppression*
- Wedge Issues*
- Shared Political Analysis by Sisters in Action for Power*
- Fund Development*
- Electoral Organizing*
- Tribal Sovereignty by Leah Henry Tanner*
- Meeting Facilitation*
- Volunteer Supervision*
- The Prison Industrial Complex in the West by Scot Nakagawa*
- Strategic Planning*

Cross-training & Mentorship Sites:

- Oregon Action**
ROGUE VALLEY, OR
- Northwest Labor and Employment Law Office**
SEATTLE, WA
- Pride at Work**
SEATTLE, WA
- Blue-Green Coalition**
CHEYENNE, WY
- Seattle Young People's Project**
SEATTLE, WA
- Pineros y Campesinos Unidos del Noroeste (PCUN)**
WOODBURN, OR