

**Youthbuild Graduation #14**



Proud graduates of Isles' YouthBuild Institute's Cycle 14 class.

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- I have transferred \_\_\_\_\_ shares of \_\_\_\_\_ stock to Isles, Inc.
- Employer matching gift
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**Resource Development, Isles, Inc., 10 Wood Street, Trenton, NJ 08618**  
Please contact Isles at 609.341.4700 with any questions.



A young student takes the lead plowing a community garden at Isles' annual plow event.

**Isles Leadership**

- |  |   |
|--|---|
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|--|---|

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**Newsletter**

**PELOSI VISITS ISLES,  
Is Inducted into YouthBuild Class of 2008**

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi visited Isles' YouthBuild Institute on February 29, where she paid tribute to Isles' work in training youth for green jobs.

In his opening comments, Trenton Mayor Doug Palmer said, "It is a great day for Trenton, Isles and Youthbuild!" Mayor Palmer, recent past president of the U.S. Conference of Mayors, was instrumental in bringing the speaker to Trenton.

"As perhaps the most powerful woman in America, you are a great role model for all the young women here. Thank you for visiting our school." Nikita welcomed the speaker to YouthBuild and inducted Ms. Pelosi as an honorary member of Isles' Youthbuild Class of 2008. The Speaker reciprocated by inviting the class to her office in Washington, "for a class reunion."

Referring to Isles' plans to train students to install solar panels and learn about other green collar jobs, Speaker Pelosi said, "If you want to predict the future, you have to invent it. Isles' Youthbuild is doing just that. Students, you are getting training that kids didn't get a few years ago, to create the jobs of the future."

Congressman Rush Holt also spoke, noting, "Trenton makes, the world will buy." He cited Youthbuild as a model for others, "What we are talking about here in Trenton is of world importance."

Speaker Pelosi also talked of the need to expand investments to protect the climate, create jobs and improve lives. Congressman Frank Pallone and other dignitaries also participated.

In a follow-up letter to Isles' Marty Johnson, Speaker Pelosi noted, "It was a pleasure to see you in Trenton. I was glad to join you to discuss our green energy revolution and ways to ensure all our cities in America become green. The students at Youthbuild are the promise of a better tomorrow, not only for the environment, but for our economy. It is an honor to be a part of the Youthbuild Class of 2008...I look forward to our continued dialogue."



(From left) House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, Congressman Frank Pallone, Trenton Mayor Douglas Palmer, Congressman Rush Holt, and Isles' YouthBuild student Nikita McFarland speak at a press conference on green job training.

**THE OTHER BYOB:  
Build Your Own Business**



Several of Build Your Own Business' 2008 graduates, (from left) Al Shaw, Otis Boone, Amber Harris, Janice Wilkins, Pamela Barge, Doretha Riley, and Sylvia Stout.

Got an idea for a new business and the drive to start it? Isles can help. We now offer step-by-step training to design, build and grow your own business. Build Your Own Business (BYOB) offers the know-how, funding and networking needed for entrepreneurs to succeed. This training builds on the strengths that already exist in communities – people with skills, drive, relationships and resources to make a difference.

After a 10-week business training course, new business owners receive personal business consulting along with a low-cost loan, patterned after the Nobel Prize winning Grameen Bank. This model uses peer lending circles of six to eight borrowers, where circle members decide who is ready to borrow, and share in the risk of each loan. If the first borrower's loan payments are not on time, subsequent loans to other members are delayed.

So far, nine loans totaling \$4,600 have been made to businesses, such as a personal concierge, a pest control service provider, and a gift basket designer. In addition, BYOB connects members to skilled mentors and other small business owners.

Since January 2007, 76 people have completed BYOB training. Every two weeks, 25 people participate in business support groups that encourage, educate and deliver microloans starting at \$500. One graduate, Connie Dacton, notes, "The financial aspects of a business can be daunting. Isles helps you map out the important steps you need to reach your financial goals and helps you understand how to get there." Ms. Dacton owns Carella's Chocolates in Hamilton.

Contact Leigh Gibson at [lgibson@isles.org](mailto:lgibson@isles.org) for more information.

## MESSAGE TO OUR FRIENDS

*Dear Friends,*

These are very interesting times at Isles. This newsletter outlines some recent milestones, but several more lie just ahead.

Two projects worth noting include Isles' new Home Energy Action for Trenton (HEAT) and the Center for Energy and Environmental training (CEET). The HEAT project will find the most cost effective ways to save energy for families in older neighborhoods that critically need the savings. CEET will train entry and higher level workers for a growing number of "green collar" careers in New Jersey. The New Jersey Department of Labor is partnering with Isles on the CEET, and training will begin in early 2009.

To offer more timely updates and analysis on these and other projects, Isles is upgrading our website at [www.isles.org](http://www.isles.org). In a couple of weeks it will be up – let us know what you think.

With each uptick in the price of fossil fuels and evidence of global warming, the demand for Isles' services grow. How can America address poverty, save energy and preserve open spaces? By making cities and older suburbs healthy and fun. How do we do that? Through self-help strategies that restore the environment, de-concentrate poverty, and build assets and wealth in those places.

We created Isles 27 years ago to explore the potential to create those strategies, one community ("isle") at a time. Luckily, we had the support of an engineering professor at Princeton University at the time – Steve Slaby. Steve's voice was silenced this summer, but his energy and ideas continue to work their magic here at Isles. A brief tribute to Steve is below. I doubt we would be here without him.

The Princeton University Engineering Department continues to support Isles' work. This fall, two courses, CEE 477 and EPICS are helping Isles develop innovative ways to make existing buildings more energy-efficient.

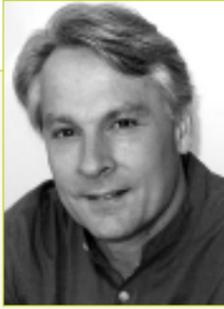
Finally, with national elections looming, we look forward to some fresh debate on the joined environmental and social challenges and opportunities we face as a country. Of course, these interesting times require more than voting. We need interesting people to step up and get involved.

Won't you?

In community,



Marty Johnson



## SAVING HOMES AND NEIGHBORHOODS

Foreclosures threaten a growing number of families, but they also ravage neighborhoods, where they can cause spikes in crime and depreciating property values.

Nearly 1,000 loans in the Trenton area are in pre-foreclosure or foreclosure. More than 300 sub-prime loans made in 2006 in the Trenton area will likely go into foreclosure soon. The costs to families, communities and taxpayers in the Trenton region will exceed \$40 million, and these are only the financial costs.

With the support of the New Jersey Housing and Mortgage Finance Agency, Isles expanded to help a growing number of

homeowners throughout Mercer County. As part of Mayor Palmer's Task Force on Sub-Prime Lending and the National Homeownership Preservation Project of NeighborWorks America, Isles applies the best national thinking and approaches to addressing this crisis.

Unfortunately, the large volume of families in trouble is severely taxing the capacity of lenders, governments and "helping" organizations in the region. Stay tuned for more information on Isles' Web site. This has enormous potential impact on the health of communities in Trenton and throughout the suburban region.

The key to avoiding foreclosure is to get help early, while there is time to negotiate with lenders and others. For that reason, Isles is aggressively working to get the word out – there is no shame in saving your home!

Citing Isles' ability to bring financial skills to families on the street, Henrietta Owusu, project coordinator for the City of Trenton's Division of Home Production, says, "We're really grateful we have Isles in the city."

If you are having trouble, don't wait until it is too late. Call 609.341.4714, and talk to a specialist.



## RE-VISIONING AN HISTORIC TEXTILE MILL



For over 20 years, the mostly vacant, former Atlantic Products textile mill at One Johnston Avenue was a symbol of our decaying industrial heritage. Over 30,000 train riders a day travel past the old mill, located between the Trenton and Hamilton train stations on the Northeast Corridor line. In the near future, it will serve as a powerful symbol of the potential for creative, environmentally green adaptive re-use of an historic landmark.

Combining the three themes of community development, environment, and the arts, the 240,000 square foot mill in Hamilton's Bromley neighborhood will house an exciting array of new offices, training center, housing, arts studios, and other uses.

The three-story brick building once employed thousands of workers in the region. It includes a 60-foot-high clock tower, with an historic mechanical clock that Princeton University's engineering department students and faculty are rebuilding and preparing to re-install in the fall.

The high visibility renovation will apply affordable, yet state-of-the art, green technologies and energy-efficient design. In addition to housing Isles' consolidated offices and training center (Isles now operates out of four different locations in the Trenton area), the building will serve as an environmental education facility and demonstrate the potential for renovating industrial buildings in the region for mixed uses.

Isles' lead architect is Randy Croxton of Croxton Collaborative in New York city, a leader in the green building movement in the U.S. A capital campaign, along with other regional and national private and public sources of funding will make the redevelopment possible.

## PROFESSOR STEVE SLABY, *Founding Trustee of Isles 1922 – 2008*



Professor Steve Slaby

Professor Steve Slaby passed away on July 5. He was an early friend, mentor and advocate for a small group of students that, in 1981, believed they could make a difference in the world. Marty Johnson was one of those students, and Steve joined him and a few others to found Isles.

Professor Slaby was a pioneering engineering professor at Princeton University, where he encouraged his students to learn – and do something about – the role of technology on society. Steve believed in the potential for everyone to design and use low-cost, "appropriate" technologies to build community and restore the environment. His

teaching and friendship, along with the support of Professor Richard Falk, inspired us to create Isles. Steve was a rebel at Princeton and beyond, challenging those around him to think critically, and then do something about making the world a better place.

He will be deeply missed, but his spirit can still be found in the countless number of lives that were touched by his research, courageous teaching, high expectations, and infectious desire to stand up for what he believed was right.

## *A Giving Spirit*

We hope it is a growing trend. Isles recently received a charitable annuity bequest from Bill and Nancy Strong of Princeton. First, they donated \$5,000, and then they bequeathed a \$25,000 charitable annuity to Isles.

They noted, "We want to make our money address inequalities in our world. From talking with folks in Trenton about Isles, seeing their community gardens, visiting their rehabbed homes, and touring with them in the striking red-brick mill that will mean many more YouthBuild jobs – Isles is a cause we heartily support, and the staff are people we trust."

In addition, a charitable annuity offers returns of about 7 percent for people ages 70 and older. "Directing our earnings toward positive, life-affirming enterprises like Isles builds the kind of world we want for our grandkids – and kids everywhere!"

For more info on charitable annuities, contact Sonja Allen, vice president of Resource Development, at 609.341.4743.



Bill and Nancy Strong support Isles' efforts with a charitable annuity bequest.

## WELCOME ABOARD

Isles' Board of Trustees recently appointed five new members: April Aaronson, Ed Butler, Tom Byrne, Liz Erickson and Rev. Karen Hernandez-Granzen. All bring extraordinary talents and connections to Isles' work.

*April Aaronson* is director of policy, planning and evaluation for the New Jersey Department of Human Services in Trenton.

*Ed Butler's name might be familiar*, as he served as senior vice president of Isles' Youthbuild from 2001 to 2005. Today, he consults on youth programs around the country.

*Tom Byrne* is president of Byrne Asset Management, LLC in Princeton and has extensive nonprofit, finance and politics background.

*Liz Gray Erickson* worked for Save the Children, where she co-founded Youth Noise – a web-centered nonprofit that inspires and empowers young people to become a force for social change.

*Rev. Karen Hernandez-Granzen* has been pastor of the Westminster Presbyterian Church in Trenton since 1995, and is a regular participant in Isles' work.

Welcome to the Isles family!

## SAVE MONEY. LIVE BETTER.

### Wal-Mart Invests in Isles

On Wednesday, June 11, Wal-Mart came to Isles' YouthBuild Institute to present a check for \$30,000 to support stipends for students. This contribution is part of a \$5 million Wal-Mart Foundation national effort to support alternative urban education.

Quadrie Peoples, 17, a YouthBuild student, spoke at the event. "Isles' YouthBuild Institute has helped me learn that young people can be part of the solution to the problems our society is facing. I am proud of the accomplishments my classmates and I have already achieved together."

Marty Johnson, Isles' president, thanked Wal-Mart and described the potential for Wal-Mart to change urban education in America. "Knowing that it is good for business and the environment, Wal-Mart made the decision to "green" its stores, trucks, products and even suppliers. Given their size, their positive environmental influence rippled throughout the nation's economy. Just imagine if they invested the same way in urban education, which is also a wise, bottom line investment!"

YouthBuild students learn more than construction – they learn and apply "green" building techniques, including: sustainable flooring, insulation from recycled products, compact fluorescent light fixtures, high-efficiency heating and cooling systems, and using solar panels.



Isles' YouthBuild student and event keynote speaker, Quadrie Peoples shares his gratitude for YouthBuild and support from Wal-Mart.

## YOUTHBUILD TRAINEES REPAIR KATRINA DAMAGE



YouthBuild students, Confessor Santa III, Bessie Williams, and Justin Schanck, work on a home damaged by Hurricane Katrina.

In April, 14 of Isles' YouthBuild students traveled to Gulfport, Mississippi to rebuild a home damaged by Hurricane Katrina. Student Lewis Williams said at the time, "I feel like I'm doing something good for somebody I don't even know...just like [YouthBuild] is doing something good for me."

The week-long Mississippi trip challenged the students to apply the job and life skills they learned at YouthBuild. The trip was sponsored by Americorps.

Youthbuild counselor Dan Leibowitz, noted, "The trip to Gulfport was an eye-opening experience and an amazing opportunity for all of the students who were able to go. It gave them the chance to give back to someone who was in great need, and it proved to them that they have important skills and worth."

In Trenton, Youthbuild students renovate abandoned homes while they work to earn their high school diploma. Applications for this year's new Youthbuild class are still being accepted for students ages 16-24. Call 609.341.4771 to apply.

## PRINCETON IN ISLES' SERVICE



Princeton University's class of 1983 reunite for a day of service at Isles' One Johnston Avenue.

From around the country, more than 80 members of Princeton University's class of 1983 and their families spent May 29 and 30 at One Johnston Avenue, Isles' textile mill conversion project. As part of their twenty-fifth reunion class service project, the volunteers demolished ceilings and walls, piece by piece, to be re-used later in the project in an environmentally sound way. They also learned what it takes to manage Isles, and what to look for in community organizations closer to their homes.

Volunteer Margarethe Laurenzi, class of '83, said, "I was deeply inspired to work alongside my classmates, under the guidance of (Isles' YouthBuild Institute graduates) Jimmy (Richardson) and Donta (Sanders). The work you are doing is fantastic, Marty. The world needs more of what you give, and I hope that you continue to take the time to 'educate' the rest of us, so that we can contribute in ways large and small to your efforts."

Isles' connections to Princeton run deep. Founder Marty Johnson graduated from Princeton in June of 1981, and, motivated by his anthropology senior thesis work, he started Isles with other students and faculty in April of 1981. Many other staff, board members and volunteers are alumni and faculty at Princeton University. In September, incoming Princeton University freshman spent a week at Isles through their Community Action (CA) Program, where they worked in community gardens, rehabilitated buildings, and learned about the nuts and bolts of community development. CA is sponsored by the Student Volunteers Council.

## MAKE IT UNLEADED

While the scope of lead poisoning in Trenton is still little understood, national research is increasingly clear: even at low levels, lead in a child's bloodstream impacts intelligence, behavior and, of course, his or her future.

The vast majority of lead poisoning occurs in homes. To better understand the threat of lead poisoning in Trenton, Isles has tested over 500 standard homes – a sampling of the roughly 12,000 standard units in the city. Isles found high levels – exceeding EPA limits – of lead in 43% of the homes. How can we reduce the lead threat to kids?

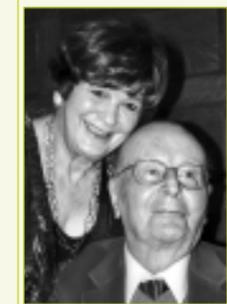
Eliminating all the lead is too costly, so Isles, working with the NJ Dept. of

Community Affairs, found a relatively low cost way to make homes lead safe. We recently completed the remediation of 39 homes, making them safe to live in and, at the same time, improving the energy efficiency of the homes – all for an average price of \$11,000.

Studies show that the cost of a lead poisoned child over their lifetime exceeds \$200,000, and some of these homes poison multiple children; clearly, we must find ways to reduce this threat. With additional testing and remediation, we can envision the potential to eliminate the threat of lead poisoning in Trenton.

## THANK YOU

### Bill and Judith Scheide



Isles' new Scheide Center for Youth Development.

To celebrate friend William H. Schedie's 94th birthday, Isles orchestrated a birthday bash like none other. A Bavarian orchestra, never before seen in America, traveled to Princeton to play Bill's favorite music, conducted by Mark Laycock. The sold out event raised funds for

## A BIG VICTORY FOR FAIR HOUSING IN NEW JERSEY

On Thursday July 17, Isles and the rest of the leadership of the New Jersey Regional Coalition (NJRC) joined Governor Corzine, Speaker of the Assembly Joe Roberts, Assemblywoman Bonnie Watson Coleman, and other dignitaries for the signing of the Omnibus Housing Bill (A500), one of the most far-reaching housing bills in the history of New Jersey.

Isles' Marty Johnson is a founder and chairman of the NJRC, a statewide organization dedicated to researching critical issues in the state, then educating and mobilizing people of faith to participate in public life. Working with leaders and trainers of the Gamaliel Foundation, the NJRC and its thousands of friends across the state – especially faith leaders – played a key role in helping get the bill passed.

In addition to raising additional funding for housing statewide, the bill eliminates the use of Regional Contribution Agreements (RCAs) in the state. RCAs allowed wealthy towns to transfer their affordable housing to



Governor Jon Corzine, Marty Johnson, and David Rusk attend the signing of Housing Bill A500, abolishing Regional Contribution Agreements.

cash strapped lower income towns for a fee. RCAs helped make New Jersey one of the most segregated states in the U.S.

David Rusk, nationally known author and expert on housing policy, said, "Passage of New Jersey's Omnibus Housing reform bill, including RCA repeal, is the most momentous success of community organizing that I have participated in over the past dozen years. Indeed, in terms of fundamentally changing the 'geography of opportunity,' it is the greatest success that I know about anywhere."

For more information on the NJRC, go to [www.njregionalequity.org](http://www.njregionalequity.org).

## IT'S EVERYONE'S JOB

### Healthy School Campaign Moves To Newark

No doubt about it, kids learn better in a clean and healthy school. What is the best way to clean up schools?

Adopt the Trenton Coalition for Healthy Schools' "Top Ten" lists – one each for the classroom, the principal and maintenance staff – that outline the most important steps to achieve a healthy school.

The Trenton Coalition, led by Isles, created the campaign in 2005 and has helped implement it in Trenton and other New Jersey communities. Beginning this fall, all Newark classrooms (3500), each principal (150) and every maintenance person (400) will adopt this training.

Cheers to healthy schools, Newark!

## MOVING TO OPPORTUNITY

Lets face it – New Jersey is one the most segregated states in the country, both economically and by race. Poor areas tend to be very poor, and wealthy areas exclusively wealthy. Historically, state and federal government housing programs added to the segregation by concentrating funds for low income housing in already low income areas.



Opportunity New Jersey customer, Thyjan Durr (right) meets with her new property manager, Carol Elliott (left) to sign the lease to her new apartment at Northgate Village in Burlington Township.

To turn this around, we need both community development in low-income neighborhoods and new tools to open up and integrate communities. Opportunity New Jersey (ONJ) is one of those tools. Partnering with the New Jersey Regional Coalition (NJRC), Innovative Housing Institute (IHI) of Baltimore, and Fair Share Housing Center (FSHC), Isles has created ONJ to help families in poverty-stricken areas move to high opportunity towns in south and central New Jersey.

ONJ identifies available housing in places where schools are strong, taxes low, neighborhoods safer, and jobs more plentiful. ONJ developed an Opportunity Index, mapping the locations of the most desirable towns. Isles recruits and counsels families seeking to transition from low opportunity to high opportunity communities.

To assure their success, Isles prescreens applicants that want to move before connecting them with a prospective landlord. Isles also provides important support services, including credit counseling and repair, budgeting, networking in the suburbs, securing rental subsidies, and maintaining a home. National and state funders support ONJ, including the Annie E. Casey Foundation and the Ford Foundation.

## THE SPIRIT MOVES

Diabetes, heart disease and other ills tied to obesity threaten the health of many families in the Trenton region. They are also very expensive for taxpayers. The good news is that despite all the hype around diets and other gimmicks, nearly all of us can control the two factors that dictate our health – what we eat and physical activity.

To help people get off the couch and move towards healthier lifestyles, Isles works with faith groups and others to combine the fellowship and influence of faith with the many benefits of exercise – especially walking. The Spirit Walk organizes walking events throughout the year, with one large celebration in May.

Over 500 people attended the Third Annual Spirit Walk on Saturday, May 3. The Walk

and celebration included a one-mile and a three-mile walking loop. The Spirit Walk brought together 20 churches and synagogues, the City of Trenton Dept. of Recreation, YWCA and other groups.

Live entertainment, door prizes and raffles kept it fun. In addition to faith leaders throughout the area, Assemblywoman Bonnie Watson Coleman (D-Mercer) continues to help fuel the growing faith walking movement in Trenton. She energized a group of pastors to rally support for the Trenton Spirit Walk and encouraged houses of worship to participate. Her commitment to her constituents' health is making a difference! For more information, contact Steven Board at 609.341.4758.



Walkers celebrate their final stretch of the Spirit Walk.

## HEALTH IS GOOD FOR BUSINESS:

### NJBiz Magazine Award

Healthy places make healthy people, and healthy people make healthy businesses.

Isles creates healthy places by cleaning up environmental hazards, helping gardeners grow thousands of pounds of produce annually, creating parks and greenways, and educating youth and adults about ways to get involved.

As a result, Isles was selected by NJBiz Magazine as the **New Jersey's Health Care Hero** for healthcare education. Elyse Pivnick, vice president, Environment and Community Health, accepted the award in early July. The statewide magazine cited Isles for its innovative work to improve the Trenton area's health and environment.

## VOLUNTEERS AND A CHANCE ENCOUNTER

Recently, longtime Trentonian newspaper columnist L.A. Parker was driving by Perry and Stockton Streets when he spotted a large group of high school students working in one of the many community gardens in Trenton. Intrigued, he stopped to talk to them.

They were an energetic group of female students from the Stuart Academy of the Sacred Heart in Princeton – volunteering for Isles. Impressed by their enthusiasm and knowledge of the city, L.A. Parker wrote a column about it. He wrote: “Thanks here to the Stuart Country Day School students for displaying the character that undoubtedly will serve them well as they head toward college.”

The students are some of the many volunteers that work alongside community residents in Trenton to make difference. In addition to Stuart, Princeton Day School, The Lawrenceville School, Bristol-Myers Squibb, NRG Energy Inc., the Urban Teacher's Academy at The College of New Jersey, Lawrenceville Presbyterian Church, Princeton University, Nassau Christian Church, Wyeth Corporation, the Junior League of Greater Princeton and numerous other groups volunteer. So should you.

To volunteer, visit Isles' website or call Charles Phillips at 609.341.4715.



YouthBuild students and Isles staff spend a day hiking through Wyoming's scenic land.

Isles' staff Andre Thomas, Rukiya Blackwell, and Marty and Liz Johnson also joined the students. Andre Thomas said of the trip, “We were exposed to a different culture that taught us people live according to their habitat. Survival is different out there, people use their resources differently and their co-existence with wildlife taught some valuable lessons. We were exposed and engaged in activities that took us out of our comfort zones, and that gave us a sense of accomplishment.”

## BE THE CHANGE CAMPAIGN

One day, a handful of Mahatma Gandhi's followers were bemoaning the many injustices in the world. He countered that, to make a difference, “We must be the change we seek in the world.”

Honoring the very personal nature of change, Isles' Capital Campaign is named after that quote. The Campaign, now in its early “family” stage, will make it possible for many people to invest in Isles' future.

Laying the foundation for the next 25 years, the Campaign will raise \$10 million to convert a historic textile mill into an exciting mixed-use green village, including Isles' headquarters, training center, artist studios and other public uses. In addition, the funds will help grow Isles' endowment, providing vital seed funding for critical future projects.

Please consider a donation to the campaign. Your gift will bring self-sufficiency and health to families for generations to come. Naming or memorial gifts are available.

For questions or to participate in the Campaign, visit our website or contact Yuki Moore Laurenti at 609.341.4721 or ylaurenti@isles.org.

*Campaign Honorary Co-chairs:* Scott and Hella McVay, Douglas H. Palmer and Christiana Foglio-Palmer, James and Louise Rolling, William and Judith McCartin Scheide, Harold and Vivian Shapiro, and Paul Volcker

*Co-chairs:* Robert Harris, Katherine Hatton, and Anastasia Mann.

*Steering Committee:* Richard Bilotti, Tom Byrne, Brian J. Clancy, Bruce Coe, Barbara Wittner Coe, Isabella de la Houssaye, Liz Gray Erickson, Jon Erickson, Leslie E. Gerwin, Steven Goodell, Daniel A. Harris, Dorothy Highland, Joseph Highland, Cosmo Iacavazzi, Betsy Lane, Jeanne M. Oswald, Linda Warder Revelle, Eldar Shafir, Manish Shah, and Barbara Trelstad.