



CivicWeek: San Francisco 2008
Faced with the tightening budget of a working class American family, students at the San Francisco Food Bank attempt to provide for the basic needs of a household.

(No) Money in the Bank

How the dwindling economy is hurting the world of 501(c)3s

Just one year ago, 46% of Americans cited the war in Iraq as their top election issue, according to an NPR poll. These days, the political landscape looks drastically different. In a Gallup poll conducted a few months before the November election, 49% of Americans described the economy as a “Very Important” factor in their election decision. In less than a year, the US economy has come to the forefront of Americans’ concerns.

Every American is aware of the crisis that is plaguing the

economy today. Not only do headlines across the nation broadcast warnings of the largest recession since the Great Depression, but most Americans can feel the tightening economy in their own lives.

A falling stock market, rising prices, higher rates of unemployment, and a \$700 billion bailout plan means less money in the pocket of every American. Consequently, Americans have become more careful with their charitable contributions.

No group has felt the effects of the economic downturn more decisively than non-profit organizations. According to the Center on Philanthropy at Indiana University, the Philanthropic Giving Index (which measures the current and future giving environment through a survey of non-profit professionals) has fallen to its lowest rate since 2003.

More and more Americans who previously did not depend on charitable organi-

zations are now turning to non-profits like the Salvation Army for support in this harsh economic environment. Due to dwindling donations, these organizations are often not able to provide help.

“It will be really telling to see how Christmas goes,” said Melissa Temme, spokeswoman of the Salvation Army. Temme asserted that need traditionally increases in the winter months, when many of the less fortunate seek a hot meal, a warm bed, or adequate clothing. Charities depend on each and every penny they receive to fill this increased need. This aid is rapidly dwindling as non-profits enter the crucial winter months.

Non-profit organizations are not asking for much, just \$5 or \$10 here and there. As the chilly winter months and the season of giving approaches, please keep these struggling non-profits in your hearts and minds - they need your help now more than ever before.



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the Jargon: financial terms to know



Federal Reserve (noun) / central banking system of the United States, known informally as the Fed. Controls domestic money supply by adjusting interest rates and the availability of money.

Ben Bernanke (noun) / chairman of the Federal Reserve since 2006, successor of monetary policy legend Alan Greenspan.



The Big 5 Banks (noun) / five largest banks in the United States; formerly Bear Stearns, Goldman Sachs, Lehman Brothers, Merrill Lynch, and Morgan Stanley.



Interest rate (noun) / for a borrower: the price charged for borrowing money, for a lender: the price received for delaying the use of money. Generally expressed as an annual percentage.

Recession (noun) / period of significantly reduced economic activity. A sustained recession is a depression.

Dow Jones Industrial Average (noun) / a stock index of the 30 largest companies in the US. Traditionally an index of the industrial sector, known informally as Dow Jones or the Dow.



Inflation (noun) / rise in general level of prices of goods and services over an extended period of time. Inflation in the US means that each dollar can buy less goods and services.

Sources:

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/business/economy-watch/timeline/>
http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/us_elections_2008/7710056.stm

The Civic Education Project combines traditional education and community service to promote civic responsibility among young people, giving them the knowledge, experience and leadership skills they need to make a positive impact on society.

The Civic Education Project is made possible thanks to the generous support of:

The Jack Kent Cooke Foundation
The Malone Family Foundation
The Robert R. McCormick Tribune Foundation

CEP's Catalyst newsletter is written and produced by Amanda Laabs and Jessica Zhao.

CEP Updates

It's been a busy year. Check out what's been going on at CEP since the last issue.

We're Going Green

In an effort to reduce our carbon footprint, Catalyst will be available exclusively on the web in 2009. Visit our new website (www.civiceducationproject.com/connected) to update your contact information so you don't miss a minute of CEP news.

CEP's 10th Anniversary

This year marks 10 successful years of meaningful, life-changing programs that have engaged over 2,300 young people in communities across the country. Stay tuned for more ways CEP will be celebrating this occasion in the coming months.

New Program Assistant

At the end of the summer, CEP bid a fond farewell to Davis Parker, our outstanding Program Assistant for the past three years. This fall, CEP welcomed Jody Koizumi, who had been a temporary staff member at CTD since the spring, and brings a wealth of experience with teaching and youth programs. Goodbye, Davis, and welcome, Jody!

2009 Programs

Student and staff applications are now available at civiceducationproject.com – apply today!

- Spring**
- March 15 - March 21, 2009
CivicWeek: Chicago, IL / Education & Youth Development
 - March 22 - March 28, 2009
CivicWeek: San Francisco, CA / Hunger & Homelessness
 - March 29 - April 4, 2009
CivicWeek: Washington DC / Politics & Urban Poverty
 - April 5 - April 11, 2009
CivicWeek: Chicago, IL / Public Health
 - April 13 - April 19, 2009
CivicWeek: New York, NY / Law & Social Justice
- Summer**
- June 28 - July 17, 2009
CTY Civic Leadership Institute / Baltimore
CTD Youth & Society / Evanston, IL
CTY Youth & Society / Baltimore, MD
 - July 5 - July 24, 2009
CTD Civic Leadership Institute / Chicago, IL
 - July 19 - August 7, 2009
CTY Civic Leadership Institute / San Francisco, CA
CTD Youth & Society / Evanston, IL
CTY Youth & Society / Baltimore, MD
 - August 2 - August 8, 2009
CivicWeek for CLI Alumni / New Orleans, LA

spotlight on service



Visit kiva.org for more ways to help.

As a pioneer in the web-based microfinance field, Kiva seeks to help entrepreneurs in the developing world lift themselves out of poverty. Kiva's mission is simple: to provide a venue for person-to-person lending.

The entrepreneurs, whose pictures and stories are featured on the website, request small loans (typically less than \$1000) towards a particular objective, such as purchasing cattle to raise and sell at market. Lenders can choose an entrepreneur to connect with, and loan as little as \$25.

Entrepreneurs agree to repayment terms of one year or less, while lenders receive updates and can witness the impact of their loans. When lenders get their money back, they can repeat the cycle and choose a dif-

ferent entrepreneur to help.

Kiva is just one organization in the microfinance field, which promotes economic independence by providing basic financial services and teaching basic economic concepts to third-world communities.

The beneficiaries of the loans are often marginalized by the economic systems in their countries. In fact, a large proportion of Kiva-featured entrepreneurs have been women. The focus on women has led to more independence for females. Studies show that loans have helped to increase the status of women and changed social attitudes in some communities.

If you would like to contribute today, visit kiva.org

September 15, 2008

Dow Jones average drops 500+ points,
Lehman Brothers falls

September 20, 2008

Congress proposes \$700 billion
bailout plan

Wall Street: A Chronology

May 29, 2008

JP Morgan successfully
buys Bear Stearns

September 18, 2008

The bailout: Five international banks
agree to invest \$180 billion in finan-
cial markets

September 21, 2008

Goldman Sachs and Morgan Stanley begin their
conversion to public banks

The Obama Plan

President-elect Barack Obama inherits an economy crippled by a housing crisis and the collapse of several major banks as well as a \$700 billion financial bailout plan newly approved by Congress. Below are some highlights from Obama's proposed plan of action. *Information courtesy of barackobama.com.*

Trade

Free trade is the name of the game. This includes aiming to stop barriers to US exports, amending trade treaties and ending tax cuts for companies that send workers abroad.

Unemployment

Tax cuts for small businesses and entrepreneurs. The plan also calls for an increase in minimum wage, more support of labor unions, and \$25 billion in a Jobs and Growth Fund which will maintain the number of maintenance jobs.

Tax Cuts

Tax cuts are in store for 95% of Americans. This includes a "Making Work Pay" tax credit of up to \$1000 per working family and eliminating taxes for senior citizens with incomes of less than \$50,000.

Going Green

Obama has planned a \$150 billion investment over 10 years to promote development of green technologies. The Renewable Portfolio Standards pledges that 25% of American energy will be renewable by 2025.

Alumni Profile: Clifton Mohomes

The Basics

program / CivicWeek:
Birmingham 2001
school / University of Illinois
at Chicago
year / Class of 2008
major / Psychology
current city / Chicago, IL



For Clifton Mohomes, participation in CivicWeek: Birmingham, Urban Poverty and Homelessness, opened his eyes to socioeconomic inequalities in the US and began his journey towards correcting those inequalities.

“Working with Habitat for Humanity in Alabama, I experienced a lot of firsts. It was the first time I did real community service, the first time I became aware of educational and social inequalities, and the first time I was exposed to my own cultural past.” Mohomes said.

Mohomes remembers his visits to important civil rights landmarks, including a civil rights museum, the site of the 16th Street Baptist Church bombing, and Martin Luther King Jr’s church.

His CEP experience led him directly to the heart of a movement with goals that continue to be as relevant as ever.

These days, Mohomes is still acting on his resolve to do something about the problems he first saw in Alabama. He splits his time between his work as a first grade teacher with Teach for America, and Dominican University, where he is working towards a Masters in Curriculum and Instruction.

As both a teacher and student, Mohomes realizes the significance of exposure to social realities from an early age.

“CEP was a defining experience in my life. It gave me exposure to the outside world,” he said.

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Nonprofit Organization
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Catalyst is going green!

Update your contact information at www.civiceducationproject.com/connected so you continue to receive all the latest news from CEP.