Responsive Philanthropy in Black Communities:

Mobilizing Our Resources for Impact

Karen Kelley-Ariwoola

2012 James A. Joseph Lecture

Association of Black Foundation Executives
2012 Annual Conference
Los Angeles, California
April 28, 2012

Introduction and Acknowledgements

Thank you, and good evening. I am so honored to be standing here this evening as a daughter of ABFE who has grown up in philanthropy anticipating the annual ABFE weekend and especially the James Joseph Lecture. Never in my wildest dreams did I imagine myself standing here. Tonight, I am thrilled beyond words. So many people in the audience have been an important part of my philanthropic journey, and I thank you all for your love and support. And a special greeting to all of my Minnesota folks—thank you for being here.

To Ambassador Joseph, tonight I pay homage to you: your leadership, your legacy and the generosity of your spirit. I am immensely grateful to you for the lessons I have learned from your life. I am honored to occupy this very special podium in your name. Thank you for all that you do!

Congratulations to ABFE President and CEO Susan Batten and the staff and board for planning a phenomenal weekend and for doing such a great job making ABFE the "go to" place for Black philanthropy. Congratulations also to my fellow awardees, the Marguerite Casey Foundation and Trista Harris, my Minnesota colleague. Both honors are well deserved!

Finally, I want to thank Emmett Carson for the very kind introduction. I am so blessed that once upon a time, I had the privilege of attending the Emmett D. Carson "School of Philanthropy." It was one of those bachelor's, masters and PhD programs done on an accelerated schedule. All kidding aside, Emmett has been my boss, my mentor and my friend. But as he knows, I like to call him my brother. Emmett is a very brave soul who will go to the ends of the earth to create a better world, and the greatest lesson I've learned from him is to "be of good courage." So thank you, Emmett, for helping me to find my voice, to maximize my God-given gifts for the benefit of others and for teaching me to face the challenges in our community with courage and conviction of purpose. Those are lessons that have served me well, and in fact have changed my life. And I will be eternally grateful to you for being such an amazing teacher.

ABFE's Responsive Philanthropy in Black Communities: Framework and Theme

Standing on the shoulders of all who have come before me, I want to spend my time tonight addressing our theme: "Responsive Philanthropy in Black Communities: Mobilizing Our Resources for Impact." I approach this theme with two fundamental assumptions:

1. The people in this room are all doing important things to promote responsive philanthropy in Black communities; and
2. Each of us can learn new ways and perspectives to refresh and hone our craft.

My premise is that the effective implementation of ABFE's framework and agenda for change depends on **each of us** deeply embracing it and making a personal commitment to do our part to implement it. I encourage each of you to spend our time together tonight making your own work plan of sorts. I hope you will think about the relevance of ABFE's framework to your work and make a plan for using and implementing your own local agenda for change when you get back home.

To get started, we will explore four core questions, and I will share lessons from my work that I hope are meaningful to you in yours. Finally, I will leave you with some words of inspiration to help you stay in the fight come Monday morning, when we have left the supportive cocoon we feel in the loving atmosphere of ABFE.

First, a preview of the four core questions:

1. What is YOUR Vision for YOUR community?
2. How will you maximize your personal and institutional power for community change?
3. Who will you bring with you for the journey?
4. What legacy will you leave?

My comments tonight are grounded in ABFE's "Effective and Responsive Philanthropy in Black Communities Framework,"[1] which describes "a set of tools and resources specifically to address the role of philanthropy in supporting Black communities." The framework recalls Dr. Martin Luther King's "vision of the beloved community," where "all of our destinies are integrally interwoven—that all boats rise on the tide of prosperity, equality and justice." The vision of the beloved community "compels us to look at individual communities as part of the whole," according to the framework. That leads us to our first question.

Question 1: What is YOUR Vision for YOUR community?

Creating a Personal Vision for the Community We Want to Heal

Tonight I invite you to spend a few moments thinking about the community in which you work, the community where you most want to have impact. This is my dream for my community:

> In North Minneapolis, where I live and where the highest concentration of Blacks in Minnesota also live, I envision a future where every child is ready for kindergarten and where they walk in the school door having had a range of enriching experiences, enough food to eat, great medical care, safe and affordable housing, and parents with jobs.
>
> I imagine that by the time those children are in third grade they are reading well, so that when they enter fourth grade they are reading to learn. I imagine them as strong eighth-graders, nailing the challenges of algebra and on the path to high school graduation. And I envision the young brothers who once were on the street using their skills in classrooms all across Minneapolis. I envision the auditoriums of high schools and the Target Center (home of the Minnesota Timberwolves) filled with Black families cheering on their graduating students because everyone deserves to hear "Pomp and Circumstance" played for them at least once in their life.
>
> Then the thrill of graduation spurs a desire for more learning, and I envision thousands of Black kids going on to college and graduating to a successful life. And I envision Black men working all over the Minneapolis metro area with jobs that support their families so that they can afford good homes. They no longer live in poverty, and they can hold their heads up with dignity. I envision the prisons in Greater Minnesota that are now warehouses for young Black men standing empty and crumbling from lack of use. And I envision the Black women in our community—who hold up everything but the moon—having their families intact, their men at home and their children thriving so that the tears they shed are tears of joy and not pain.

What is your dream for your community? Think hard on this question, and emblazon in your mind and heart a vision for the community that you want to heal. I believe that one of our first steps toward healing our community is to move beyond a theoretical construct about the future and begin to envision in detail, in the context of culture and place, with the faces of real people, the change we hope to see. As leaders of change, it is *our* job and *our* duty to hold the vision of the beloved community in our hearts and minds, to see it and feel it in such a real and tangible way that it motivates us to work harder than ever to turn our dreams into a new reality.

The Equity Gap

But everywhere—in your city and mine—the reality of where we are and where we want to be are miles apart. In Minneapolis, the disparities faced by Black people (both American-born and foreign-born) are stark. Though we are surrounded by more Fortune 500 companies per capita than any place in the country (including the headquarters of Target, General Mills and Best Buy), need and poverty surround us. For example, although only 19 percent of Minneapolis residents are Black[2]:

- Just 67 percent of Black kids are ready for kindergarten versus 94 percent of white kids.
- Only 39 percent of Black kids are reading-proficient at third grade compared to 88 percent of white kids—that is a 50-point gap at third grade—one of the highest Black/white achievement gaps in the country.
- Only 1 in 3 Black Minneapolis high schoolers graduate on time compared with 7 in 10 white students.
- More than half of all Black children (some 11,000 children) in Minneapolis live in poverty.
- While only 60 percent of Minneapolis residents are white, they hold 83 percent of the jobs—leaving a 25 percent employment gap between whites and U.S.-born Blacks (one of the largest gaps in the country).

As we heard from the National Urban League earlier today, these are the sobering facts that are mirrored in many of your communities around the country. As we begin to think about the impact that we wish to have in our communities, we need to know how we are doing—but we also need a vision of where we want to go. Knowing the data on your community and disaggregating it by race is fundamental to ABFE's Responsive Framework. In the absence of good data, we cannot design effective strategies for closing the gap.

During my last year at The Minneapolis Foundation, I had the privilege along with my colleague Jo-Anne Stately of designing a community indicators project we call One Minneapolis. We commissioned Wilder Research to develop it. Embedded in One Minneapolis is a vision of *one* city where everyone benefits.

In One Minneapolis we identified 24 community indicators in the three areas of The Minneapolis Foundation's strategic plan—education, economic vitality and building social capital—and we painted a picture of a Minneapolis that most people do not see. The dirty little secret is that Minneapolis is two cities and not one: one where many people (primarily white) thrive and another where primarily low-income people of color suffer from disparities on every indicator. The data on each of the indicators, broken out by race and ethnicity, and in some cases home language, gender, and whether residents were born in the U.S. or abroad, revealed gaps that we in this room are so familiar with—what we call the equity gap. I refer to the report as the Community's Dashboard because it provides that high-level overview of how we are doing and speaks the truth about our community without placing blame. The facts are the facts.

Moving in the Right Direction

One Minneapolis has served as an incredible discussion starter with everyone from members of the legislature, to the Governor's office, to the Mayor of Minneapolis and to those on the ground who are working hard to improve the community. In addition to One Minneapolis, with our colleague Carol McGee Johnson, we also built an equity framework[3] for the Foundation's unrestricted grantmaking. We created definitions of equity and require the Foundation's grantees to be explicit about how their proposed strategies will move toward closing the equity gap in our community. While very early in the process, the preliminary data is telling. It is helping grantees and the Foundation through its leadership work to become better aligned

against those community indicators. And the Foundation is already beginning to identify those community-based solutions that show more promise in closing the equity gap by addressing the underlying structural causes of discrimination, racism and inequity. Over time, the Foundation will continue funding more of what works and less of what doesn't. Our world is crying out to hear what works.

One benefit of an effort like One Minneapolis is that it provides the basis for a conversation about how improving the plight of the Black community can benefit the whole. I'm convinced that often having one or two compelling data points is enough to capture the minds and hearts of those who can help us strengthen our community.

This notion that john a. powell, director of the University of California–Berkeley's new Haas Center for Diversity and Inclusion, calls "targeted universalism"[4] is a powerful tool in our quest for impact. Data from reports like One Minneapolis clearly shows how improving outcomes for Black people can benefit everyone. The goal of One Minneapolis is universal, but the strategies proposed in ABFE's framework are targeted to meet the needs of Black communities. Efforts like One Minneapolis also provide a point of entry for building bridges with other communities of color whose profile of disparities is similar to the Black community. While ABFE focuses exclusively on the Black community, we share a similar plight with our other brown and black sisters and brothers, and we can work together to develop strategies both within and across our individual communities where there are common issues and approaches.

Each of our foundations or giving programs has its own culture and its own strategic focus. The point of ABFE's Responsive Framework is not to replace yours but to seek points of intersection and alignment that allow you to be more explicit and intentional about your focus on Black communities. So I urge you, if you have not already done so, to find a data-driven way to tell the story of Blacks in your community in the context of the whole and to develop your own narrative about your vision for the community—what's working and what it will take to close the gap. "Learning to tell our own story gives us control of how the story is told,"[5] is the profoundly simple way one storyteller puts it. An African proverb says, "Until the lions have their own historians, tales of the hunt shall always glorify the hunter." Telling our own story and framing our own vision provides a context of history and culture that is vital to how we will build our local strategies for change. Blacks in the regional groups that make up the Black Philanthropic Network have a great opportunity to help tell our story. Never forget that change is ultimately local and place-based.

Once we are grounded in the facts of our existence and in a vision for the future, we are ready for our next question. Now we need to think about how we as actors in philanthropy can create the change.

Question 2: How will you maximize your personal and institutional power for community change?

Redefining Our Role: Beyond Grantmaking

So often as Blacks in philanthropy, we do not think we have the personal or institutional power to create the change we feel is needed in our community. Too often we think of ourselves exclusively as grantmakers, thus leaving many opportunities for impact off of the table. As we think about the resources we need to close the gaps in disparities for Black communities, we need to think very expansively about the options and opportunities. I challenge you to think very differently about your role. While ABFE's framework touches on our roles beyond grantmaking, we need to be much more explicit about the other ways that we can lead.

Though I began in the field as a program officer and have spent my philanthropic career with varying degrees of accountability for The Minneapolis Foundation's unrestricted grantmaking (by my conservative estimate, influencing nearly $90 million over my 18 years), I rarely call myself a grantmaker. I think of myself as more of a catalyst, a facilitator or even a broker. I think of myself as an advocate, a connecter of dots, a community leader, an influencer of influencers, a puller of levers—a midwife of sorts, not always personally having the baby but helping to coach and support it along the way.

Perhaps this mindset comes from entering the field through a Community Foundation. On my first day of work I was given a book called the *An Agile Servant: Community Leadership by Community Foundations, and* was told that we had many tools in our toolbox. Grantmaking was only one of the tools. Others included community knowledge, relationships with donors, convening, communications and public information strategies, policy and advocacy, and, in 2012, we would add social networking and support for our communities to register to vote and build the capacity for civic engagement. There is also one that we often forget: our foundation's reputational capital. One of The Minneapolis Foundation's trustees once coined the phrase that the Foundation had both "cash and cache" and urged that we think strategically about when and how to use each. Many of these strategies lend themselves to digging beneath the symptoms of problems to truly understand the underlying and structural causes. It is at that macro, systems level that ABFE's framework is designed to have the greatest impact.

While I know that there are many types of philanthropic interests represented in this room, from our Black churches and Black Greek organizations to community, private and family foundations to individual donors, staff and trustees, we all can think **beyond the grant** as we work to amass the resources we need to create impact in our community. I encourage you to ask yourself: what are the tools in my philanthropy's toolbox? What can I bring to bear in addition to grantmaking to help my community?

Money Alone Is Not the Solution

Over the years one of my core operating philosophies has been not to lead with the money. Doing so sells everybody short. If the exchange with the grantee or the receiving party is only about the money, then why not just send a check? My notion of working in community starts first with building relationships up and down and across the community, at all levels, across sectors, across race, political affiliation and role. ***I believe that relationships are the most important currency that we have in building support for our community.*** Building relationships

starts with simply listening to the needs and concerns of community, then sharing our perspectives and then together exploring the best way that philanthropy can help.

I can think of hundreds of examples (and you probably can too) where money was not the answer or at least not the complete answer. For example:

- In Minneapolis, we would never have had the first accountability reports published by our school district back in 2000[6], if we had focused the conversation on the size of a grant we could give, and not on the size of the impact we could have.

- We would have never reduced youth violence in Minneapolis if we had only made grants to organizations helping young people instead of convening the community to get at the real underlying issues, engaging the Mayor and the City Council and current and former gang-engaged youth, then building a Blueprint for Action[7] that created a citywide **infrastructure** for reducing youth violence.

- In 2012, the State of Minnesota would never have received a $45 million Early Learning Challenge Grant and a $28 million Promise Neighborhood grant (both deeply benefiting Black communities in Minneapolis) if funders across the state had not joined with community to convene, advocate and influence new legislation and to compel the Governor to create a new Office of Early Learning, and, yes, leverage a small pool of grant dollars for change.

- We would have never positioned a stellar Black charter school called Harvest Preparatory School by offering a small grant, when, after bringing a group of wealthy donors to see their gap-breaking work with the same Black kids that are failing in Minneapolis Public Schools, in a single morning we were able to leverage a combination of grants and a program-related investment totaling over $800,000.

These illustrate just a few ways that we can "act bigger" by being more than grantmakers, with a greater benefit to our communities. And we cannot do this work alone. We must link arms to do it together.

Each of us has more power than we realize, and so do each of our institutions. Most of us sit at various tables of influence, and yet so many of us are not maximizing those opportunities for the Black community. If we are honest, some of us are just happy for ourselves to be at the table for ourselves, for our own individual edification and career growth. Some of us want to be more effective in speaking up and standing up for the needs of our Black community, but we are timid and often quiet when we need to be speaking truth to power.

I remember my earliest years in philanthropy (as a closet introvert). I was quiet so many times when I should have spoken up. We need each of us in all of the roles we play to have zero tolerance for the disparities in our community, and we need to speak truth to power at every opportunity we get. We don't have to engage in blame or beat people over the head with the problems in our community, but we do have an obligation to be bolder and more forthcoming.

Philanthropy holds a very special place in our society where we can often speak truth to power in a way that others can't. We are that third-sector voice that can, on behalf of the community, share what we know and believe to be true. I urge you to challenge yourself and your institution to find new ways to do this. Embracing ABFE's Responsive Framework requires us to think about how we can make every opportunity and a range of tools work for our community.

So with a clear vision for our community and a sense of how we will use our personal and institutional power to create change, how do we engage others to work with us? This leads to our third question.

Question 3: Who will you bring with you for the journey?

Mobilizing for Change: Just Do It, and Are You with Us?

Over the years I have learned many lessons about organizing and mobilizing people, and while I know there is a science to it and many schools of thought about how to do it, the most important thing is just to do it. The needs in our communities are so great and so complex that we cannot create deep and long-lasting change by ourselves.

My most recent lesson in mobilizing people and resources comes from working on the response to the tornado that hit North Minneapolis on May 22, 2011. The tornado, which hit at 2 o'clock on a sunny Sunday afternoon, resulted in only two deaths, yet it devastated the homes of thousands in this mostly Black, very poor part of town.

The initial organizing and mobilizing effort after the tornado was stellar. Many individuals, funders, government and first responders stepped up to the plate in the moments and days after the disaster. The community was there too, in the form of the Northside Community Response Team, an effort born in the early hours after the storm.

Louis King, president and CEO of Summit Academy OIC, a Morehouse graduate and former Army major, emerged as the leader. Instead of the usual handwringing that can go on in a crisis, Louis brought his military notion of "aim, shoot and fire" to the party. This clarity about the goal and strategy had an immeasurable impact: lifting people out of the sense of despair that plagues our community and giving people the courage to "just do it."

Louis taught me two important lessons about mobilizing community:

1) Too often we agonize over getting all of the "right" people on board at the beginning; xyz community activist, and Reverend so and so, and this or that politician and abc funder who has the big money. This "formula," of sorts, is important, but we cannot let it paralyze us. Louis taught me that we don't need everybody there on Day One; we just need enough people to start to move the ball and then others will join in.

2) The second big lesson is around engaging allies and building a coalition for change. As I look around this room, I see not only a sea of Black people but our allies of other hues as well. When we seek to build our agenda for change, let us not be afraid to extend a hand to others who either share our struggle or who are willing to invest the time and energy to understand. Building allies can be critical to success in achieving our vision.

Sometimes as Black people we are queasy about this. We don't want to let white people (or sometimes even other people of color) into our struggle because we fear they will co-opt or diffuse our message. Louis's litmus test for membership in the struggle is summed up in one critical question. Once you define the goal, he says, the only question one must answer to join is: ARE YOU WITH US? If the answer is yes, then all are welcome to join the struggle.

While ABFE's primary focus is on strengthening *Black* communities, let us not overlook opportunities to link arms with our Native, Latino, Asian-Pacific Islanders and foreign-born Africans (and our fellow philanthropic affinity groups that represent them). They all share much of our struggle. History has shown that we can share with others our success in breaking through the barriers that hold our community back.

Building Strong Black Nonprofits as Our Partners

As we mobilize around change for Black communities, I want to be sure that we take time to engage and strengthen our Black nonprofits in the process. The African American Leadership Forum across the northwest is thinking hard about this issue, as are some of our regional Black philanthropic networks. I remember the folks at Bay Area Blacks in Philanthropy (BAY BIP) , who honed the phrase "strengthening our house."[8] This reminds me of watching basketball games in my house (a house full of men, by the way) with a thunderous roar of "Whose House? OUR HOUSE. Perhaps ABFE needs to co-opt this chant as its own as we think about working with our Black institutions. "Whose House? OUR HOUSE."

Although they are bursting with the very Black people ABFE's framework purports to help, many of our Black organizations are hanging on by a shoestring, reeling from years of disinvestment by government and philanthropy, lack of the most current technology, and board and staff capacity that cannot meet the demands of the work or the competition from their mainstream counterparts. And, like those of us who are Black in philanthropy, many of our nonprofit heads feel isolated without a peer support network and without a talent pipeline of strong successors.

Our ancestors worked hard after slavery ended to establish an infrastructure of Black organizations. To be sure, times have changed, and we can theoretically go anywhere we want for help. But as part of ABFE's Responsive Philanthropy in Black Communities Framework, ABFE and all of us on the ground must lead the effort to lift up and partner with our NAACPs, Urban Leagues, the various former settlement houses named after our Black heroes and she-roes, as well as other Black nonprofits that must play a critical role in rebuilding our community. We should not be afraid on one hand to hold a high bar for the quality of the work and demonstrated outcomes, while at the same time offering a hand of support as they remain a critical part of the fabric of Black communities.

And if there are some organizations that cannot or will not or should not survive, let's not kill them by death by a thousand cuts, but let us help them find a humane and respectful way to close. We must strengthen "our house" in the context of ABFE's Framework for Responsive Philanthropy. We must not apologize for working to lift up our own organizations, just as others of various backgrounds do not apologize for lifting up theirs.

Now that we have crafted a vision for our community, found ways to use and maximize our power, and identified those who will come for with us on the journey, we must ask what history will say about our efforts—our final question.

Question 4: What legacy will you leave?

Crafting Our Legacy

I started my remarks by encouraging you to think about how you would personalize ABFE's Framework for Responsive Philanthropy in Black Communities. Ultimately, this begs the question of the legacy that you and I want to leave in our communities.

I have been pondering the notion of legacy deeply since I announced my resignation from The Minneapolis Foundation in January 2012. The cards, letters and tributes I've received have been so laudatory and kind, and have been filled with the language of "legacy." We often think of legacy as the money or things we pass on to the next generation, but in this case, I'm referring to the remnants of our life's work that we leave behind. It's fascinating to me that while others have been explicit about the legacy I have left, I never really set out to leave one. My parents, and ultimately my mother, Joan Milam Kelley, as a single parent, raised seven of us in a family that was deeply engaged in working in the community, and by the time I came to The Minneapolis Foundation in my thirties, it was a wonderful fit between the Foundation's work and my personal values and life mission.

Over the years, I came to work every day, trying to do my best work, wanting to have impact but not necessarily thinking that I was trying to leave a legacy. As I look to the next phase in my career, I realize that I need and want to be more intentional about the legacy I want to leave. I believe that each of us needs to do this work to determine what our legacy will be, because it helps us align our lives with purpose.

My passion lies in ending the racial disparities in education, from pre-kindergarten through grade 12, and I want my legacy to be about changing the trajectory for Black kids in Minneapolis (or wherever I live). I want to do all that I can not only to impact the lives of individual children but also to influence the system itself. I am also passionate about the national context in which we educate our children, the policies that help and hinder us, and the opportunities to cross-fertilize and share what's working on a larger scale.

In addition to my love of education, I remain passionate about helping philanthropy to maximize its ability to lead community change—especially as it relates to closing the racial equity gap. I hope to find ways to marry my commitment to improving outcomes for Black children, my passion for education, and my expertise in philanthropic leadership for the good of the community. Because of this sharpened focus, I will be more intentional about how I spend my time, which boards I serve on, where I volunteer and make charitable contributions in the community, and how I choose my next job.

Taking Care of Ourselves in the Process

But something else has occurred to me about the notion of legacy, and that is how we take care of ourselves as we work on the complex issues that undergird the Responsive Framework. I know that we are a group that works 24/7. I can testify by the time stamps on the emails sent and received that we are burning the midnight and the early morning oils. Many of you are jetting from coast to coast and around the world with little if any down time between.

Collectively we are tired, and we need to take better care of ourselves. We know that Black people are predisposed to every disease under the sun. To be and stay healthy, we need to eat better, exercise and engage in preventative measures. In addition, we need to find ways to manage the stress of living and working in a society in which the operating principles of privilege and power are often at odds with our core values of justice and equity. This situation can mess with us so that we start to second-guess ourselves and think that we, and not the system in which we work, are crazy.

Indeed, we all know why *The Help*'s Minnie Jackson put the poo in Miss Hilly Holbrook's pie.[9] Because there are days when the stress of being not only Black in America, but also Black in *philanthropy* in America, is too much for even for the best of us. I want to assure you, however, that though I have had a few Miss Hilly's in my life, I have never yet baked or delivered such a pie. Not yet.

Early in my career at The Minneapolis Foundation, Emmett Carson used to call me into his office and ask how I was doing. I would rattle off a list of my projects and give a quick update on things on my plate, and then try to get out of the corner office as quickly as possible. Emmett would give me that "look" (giving me the clear sense that I had not answered his intended question) and then would say, "Let me reframe the question: How is Karen the person?" Of course *that* question had an entirely different answer. I would explain, "Karen the person" was tired and had too many balls in the air, the boys were driving me crazy, I was worried about my aging mother, and our extended Nigerian family was in need, and on and on. And he would implore and encourage me to take care of myself and take time for myself. This, I might add, was advice that I seldom took, because frankly I could not imagine taking a moment for myself with all that was on my plate, personally and professionally.

Running a Marathon, Not a Sprint

But as I have had these few weeks to reflect, I realize that I (and maybe this applies to you, too) have been running this race towards justice and equality for Black people as if it is a sprint and

not a marathon. When my children, Solomon and Sam, were born in the 1990s, my husband, Joseph, and I had this naïve, hopeful belief that we were somehow bringing them into a better world. But it is so clear now that many of the issues that you and I labor on every day will not be fixed in our lifetime. I realize that I need to slow down a bit and "right size" the revolution in my own life, and maybe you do too. As Sam tells me (usually when I'm speeding), "Mom, you need to slow your roll." And I do!

Thinking about this, in this way, brings with it two concerns: 1) am I made of the same stuff as my ancestors? I mean really, did Martin or Malcolm or Harriet or Sojourner, or even my parents or grandparents, ever sit down or take a day off? 2) Am I abandoning the sense of urgency that a true commitment to healing our community requires? After deep reflection, my answer is: I *know* that my passion and commitment to and for change are as deep as my ancestors' was, and I *know* that even as I choose to craft a more balanced approach to working in the community, I will not abandon the sense of urgency.

Leaving a Broad Legacy That Embraces All of Who We Are

But I also hope that my legacy will be broader than just meeting the needs of the community. Our legacy is about our own personal health and well being too. I want to guide my two beloved sons through high school and into college and manhood (and in 2012, raising Black males is a challenging exercise). How does one raise healthy, confident Black males when practically everything in the larger environment challenges the very values and messages that we seek to implant in our sons?

Many of you in the audience may relate to Trayvon Martin's story, but I am Trayvon Martin's mother too. No mother should have to bury her son before he has even lived his life. As my mother would say, "if it is God's will" I want to be at my sons' high school and college graduations, aid in the selection of my daughters-in-law, dance at their weddings and rock my grandbabies and maybe even my great-grands. I want to be available for my friends and family, perform random acts of kindness and be able to stop and smell the roses of life. To do this, I need more balance in my life, and I bet we all could benefit from that.

The marathoners I know all talk about pacing themselves. Even when they train, they alternate between days of training and days of rest. Some strive to win the race, while many define success as just crossing the finish line. So tonight I urge us all, young and old, seasoned and emerging leaders, to think about our legacies. We have much work to do, but we need to be here to do it for the long run. And as you think of the legacy you will leave to the Black community wherever you are, be sure to consider the "person" in the middle of the equation, because your health and well-being will drive your ability to lead a life worthy of a legacy.

WE Are ABFE

ABFE's Responsive Black Philanthropy Framework will not happen without us. There is no ABFE "over there" who will do the work while we are all spectators on the sidelines. ABFE is us. And *we* are the ones who will and must create the change.

Conclusion

So as we work to create Responsive Philanthropy in Black Communities by Mobilizing Our Resources for Impact, we need to craft a vision for impact that we can rally others around,. We need to think broadly about our role as bigger than grantmaking. We need to build relationships as the basis for mobilizing others who can affirmatively answer the question ARE YOU WITH US? We need to attend to strengthening "whose house?" (OUR HOUSE). And we need to build a legacy that honors the wholeness of who we are as people.

And as we return to our respective communities, I encourage you to stay inspired to keep pushing toward our goal of a Beloved Community. Our ancestors found ways to keep stoking the fire of justice so that they would never give up. We owe it to our children and to our children's children and those yet unborn to stay in the fight. And we owe it to Ambassador James Joseph, who 41 years ago stood up with the cofounders of ABFE for such a moment as this. Because somehow, deep inside he knew that *we*, ABFE, could chart and lead a course for the improvement of our own community.

When you feel at your weariest, take a lesson from my brother that has daily inspired me: "Be of good courage." ***Be of good courage,*** ABFE, as we leave this place and go back to create real change on the ground. ***Be of good courage*** as we face the obstacles of injustice and apathy. ***Be of good courage*** because, truly, the future of Black America depends on us.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak to you this evening. It is an honor that I will treasure for the rest of my life. May God bless you and those that you love, as he has so richly blessed me. Good night.

Endnotes

[1] Association of Black Foundation Executives, "Effective and Responsive Philanthropy in Black Communities: Building a Framework and Agenda for Change," February 2012.

[2] The Minneapolis Foundation, One Minneapolis Report, Fall 2011.

[3] For more on community grants, see http://www.minneapolisfoundation.org/CommuniytGrants/Equity.aspx.

[4] John Powell, "Race, Place, and Opportunity," *The American Prospect*, September 21, 2008; http://prospect.org/article/race-place-and-opportunity.

[5] See qumsiyeh.org/tellyourstory/.

[6] The report was Measuring Up 2000, published by The Minneapolis Foundation, Minneapolis Public Schools and the Minneapolis Chamber of Commerce.

[7] Download the Blueprint for Action at http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/www/groups/public/@health/documents/webcontent/convert_278139.pdf.

[8] See http://blog.mkf.org/2012/04/17/strengthening-our-house-capacity-building-seminar-april-24th/.

[9] Kathryn Stockett, *The Help*, Amy Einhorn Books/Putnam, 2009.