



2010

Annual Report

THE POSITIVE FUTURES NETWORK



Dear Reader,

In a time when many print-based publications are shrinking or folding, YES! Magazine has dramatically expanded its reach and influence. Our web traffic increased by 58 percent in 2010, our email lists grew substantially, many other websites regularly reposted our articles throughout the year, and our staff spoke on the radio, on television, and at conferences.



Your generous underwriting helped us achieve this level of dynamism. Thank you.

Our growing influence is especially important right now when the political and economic mood is so gloomy, and the crises confronting us are ever more immediate. Conscious, caring people tell us they are deeply discouraged about the potential for change at the national level and are enormously grateful for the YES! “take” on where the positive possibilities lie.

Readers particularly appreciate our stories of change at the local level showing how they can get involved—ways to create a far more localized, healthy economy, steps that address climate change from the bottom up, means to find happiness in relationships, and how this work is part of broader movements that add up to real change. One reader recently commented:

“I’ve read the Community Resilience issue of YES! cover to cover about 20 times, and have underlined passages on just about every page. I’ll be taking your magazine and posters to my next Sustainable Delaware Ohio meeting. Keep up the great work!!!”

Jen Devere Warner
Delaware, Ohio

As a YES! Magazine supporter, you make this kind of inspiration possible. I’m so grateful to count you among our amazing community of change-makers.

Fran Korten, Publisher

In 2010, we published four issues of YES! Magazine. Those issues covered race in America, solutions to the water crisis, building resilient communities, and creating happy families. Each issue reframed a critical topic in terms of practical solutions.

We printed an average of 51,000 copies of each issue to fulfill subscriptions, sell on newsstands, and use in our education and media outreach programs. Your support allowed us to respond generously to requests for more than 22,000 free copies of our 2010 issues from teachers, grassroots organizers, faith leaders, policymakers, and journalists, who then used YES! to stimulate discussion and action.

Spring 2010 issue on race

“America: The Remix” focused on the changing nature of the U.S. population and the way many groups are embracing the cultural richness our diversity represents.

The issue, developed under the guidance of a diverse group of advisors, was received enthusiastically in many communities. For example, Pancho Ramos gave out copies of “America: The Remix” in Arizona while protesting the state’s new anti-immigration law. He handed the magazine to people on all sides of the issue, including some policemen, and got a positive response from everyone.

A number of media picked up our phrase, “America: The Remix,” including Charles Blow, a *New York Times* columnist. Fran Korten’s interview in this issue with economics Nobel Prize winner Elinor Ostrom was also picked up widely online, including by *The Economist* magazine’s website.



The YES! issue on race explored racial diversity in terms of cultural vibrancy rather than as a source of division.

Summer 2010 issue on water

“Will There Be Enough?” showcased three big ideas for solving the looming water crisis: caring for our watersheds, sharing water equitably, and conserving water.

We featured inspiring stories about towns that are taking back control of their water and the water-saving advantages of organic farming. The issue was popular with water advocacy groups such as the River Network and International Rivers. A number of governmental agencies made use of the issue in training programs and meetings, including the Indiana Water Quality Department, the Portland Parks Department, the Arkansas Water Conservation District, and the Seattle Public Utilities District.

Fall 2010 issue on community resilience

“Ready for Anything” struck a chord with the growing number of people ready to honestly face the consequences of climate change, peak oil, and a stalled economy. This issue was our all-time bestseller on newsstands. Leaders of Transition Towns and sustainability hubs used thousands of copies of the magazine to spur community discussions across the country.

“Your issue on Community Resilience gave me the kick I needed to start a Transition group in our community.”

Michael Pressman
Excelsior, Minnesota



The Water issue took on the looming shortages of fresh water across the world.



The Community Resilience issue showed creative ways to prepare for an uncertain future.

Winter 2010 issue on families

The final issue in 2010, “What Happy Families Know,” celebrated the fact that families take many forms far beyond the stereotype of “mom, dad, and the kids.” The economic recession is causing more adults to move in with parents and parents to move in with their kids, divorce is creating blended families, and single parents and gay and lesbian couples are raising children.

This issue proved extremely popular with our core audience, which gave a record number of gift subscriptions. Paul Winter honored YES! at each of his four Winter Solstice Celebrations at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York City. More than 8,000 people attended the concerts, where the Families issue was featured, and YES! was mentioned in the program.

Your generous support enabled us to respond to the many organizations that requested free copies of the magazine to further their work. Thank you.



The Families issue showed that the key to happiness lies neither in a particular family constellation nor in what a family can buy.

We made posters from each issue, and sold hundreds on our website in 2010. Many more people downloaded them for free.

What you can do, alone and with others, to share life

51 WAYS TO SPARK a COMMONS REVOLUTION

Jay Walljasper

24. BARTER, TRADE YOUR SKILL IN BAKING PIES WITH SOMEONE WHO WILL FIX YOUR COMPUTER.

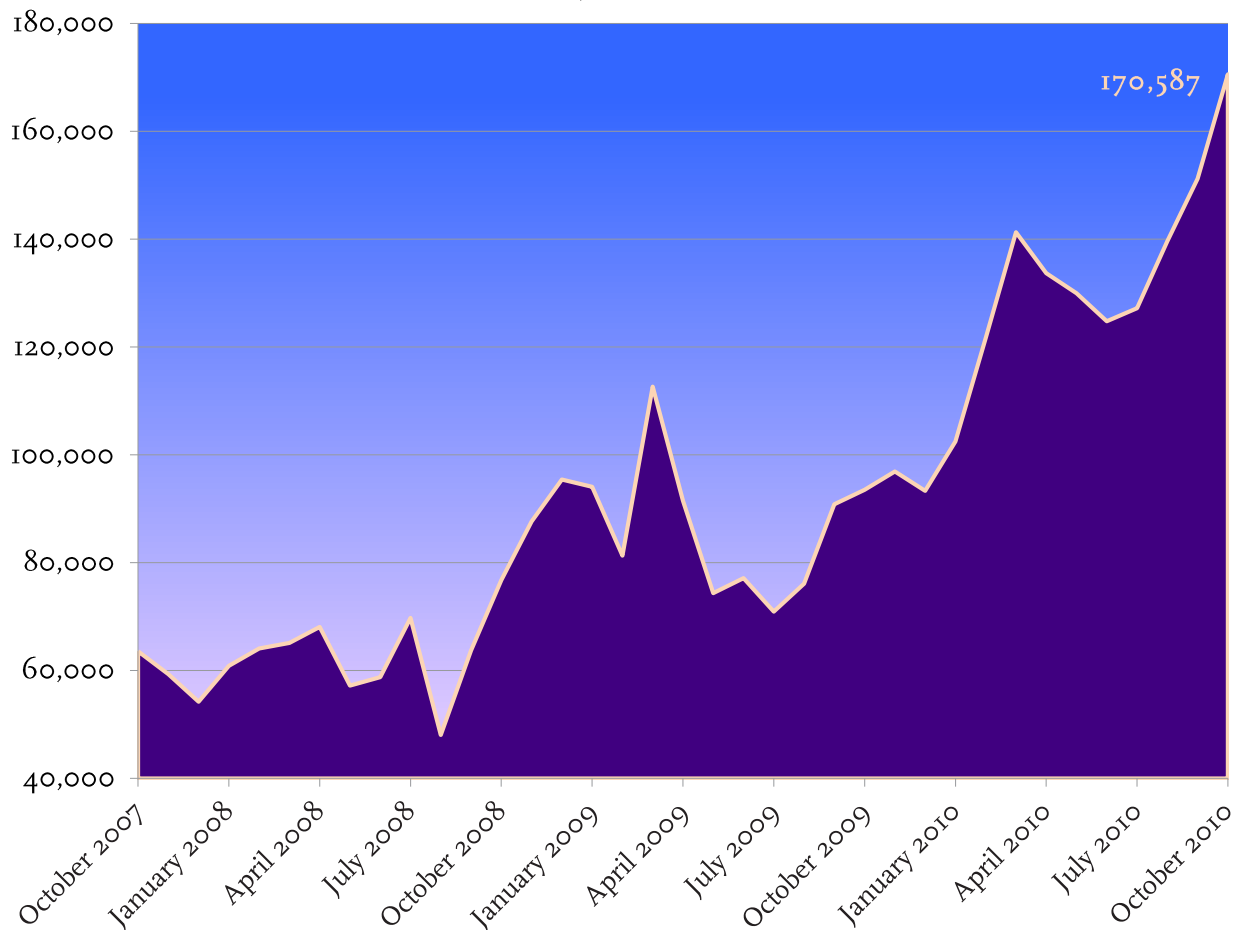
49. THINK OF YOUR COMMONS AS AN ENTHUSIASM.

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In 2009 we staffed up, rebranded, and reorganized to launch our program of daily online YES! stories. At the end of 2009, we began posting stories every day and promoting them through email, social media, and other websites. The chart below reveals the dramatic growth of our online presence during 2010, thanks to the advancements made possible by your generosity.

Monthly Visitors to the YES! Magazine Website
2007-2010



By the end of 2010, our website visits were up 58 percent compared to 2009. Our articles are now much more frequently reposted on key websites, and the momentum continues to grow. People are telling us, “YES! is everywhere.”

The growth in the number of people using our site is driven by several factors:

Timely reframing

Every day, YES! articles show our audience where the positive possibilities for change lie, and what individuals, personally, can do. We also lift up positive stories otherwise likely to be missed. For example, when U.S. Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood announced his vision of an interstate bicycling system to match the interstate highway system, we published an extremely popular article. Because these stories have the energy of the news cycle behind them, plus the freshness of the “YES! take,” they tend to travel far.



Daily postings in 2010 offered a timely “YES! take” on headline news such as the BP oil spill and the continuing banking crisis.

High quality, popular bloggers

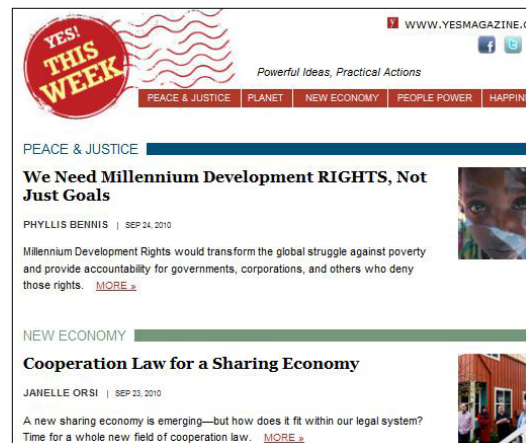
David Korten’s writing on the new economy attracts a strong following, as do Sarah van Gelder’s timely commentaries. During 2010, we added a number of regular contributors, among them:

- The Interfaith Amigos—a rabbi, pastor, and Sufi sheikh providing a compassionate perspective on issues such as the proposed construction of a mosque near New York’s “Ground Zero.”
- Shannon Hayes—on her family’s ongoing efforts to reduce consumption (and expense) while leading the rich, fulfilling, and fun lives of “radical homemakers.”
- Richard Conlin (YES! board member and Seattle City Council president)—on Seattle’s progress toward carbon neutrality.

- Chuck Collins—on mutual help in tough economic times through Common Security Clubs.
- Margaret Wheatley—on staying grounded in a difficult time.
- Grace Lee Boggs—on living for change.
- John Cavanagh and Robin Broad on “rootedness in an age of vulnerability,” with examples from the United States, the Philippines, Trinidad, and El Salvador.

Consistent promotion to our own growing networks

Our regular monthly email list grew to more than 50,000 subscribers by the end of 2010. In December 2009, we launched YES! This Week, our weekly news digest. By December 2010, it was reaching just over 12,000 subscribers.



Using our data to learn what works

We learn what works by scrutinizing our data, such as which stories people click on in emails or on the Web, newsstand sales, gift subscriptions, and social media sharing and commenting. For example, we are learning to optimize headlines to attract more readers.

Our data show that people are especially interested in stories about what they can do in their own lives and communities.

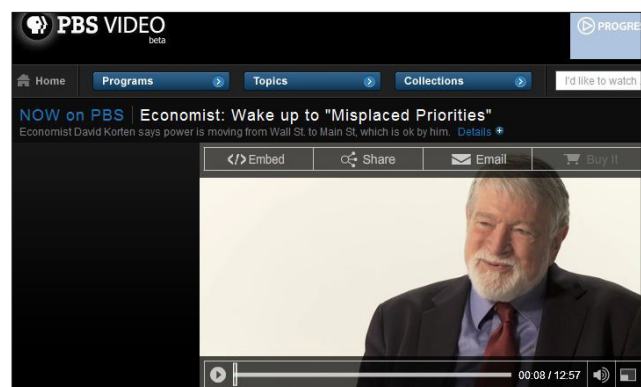
Your support helped us promote our articles to other media throughout 2010. As a result, YES! articles were quickly picked up on Common Dreams, Huffington Post, Alternet, Truthout, Truthdig, and other aggregator sites. Our focus on opportunities for change and our distance from the endless partisan debates allowed YES! articles to travel far beyond the regular progressive venues.

The American Forum's promotion of our articles to small town newspapers across the country helped us reach new audiences beyond typically progressive places. One reader told us how much she appreciated the YES! voice in her town:

"I would like to heartily thank YES! Magazine for sending out to local newspapers the article entitled, "The New Pioneers." It appeared in our paper, *The San Marcos Daily Record*, last week. I've been trying with my small voice to get the message out that business as usual is no longer an option. Your editorial reached many more people."

Betsy Robertson
San Marcos, Texas

We also connected with TV audiences. When David Brancaccio began planning his PBS special, "Fixing the Future," he turned to YES! for ideas on where to film "new economy" programs in action. Then, in October, his staff asked YES! editors for stories that show how people can implement "new economy" ideas. Of the 14 articles featured on the program's section on PBS.org, eight were from YES! Magazine.



David Brancaccio featured YES! board chair David Korten in his PBS special, "Fixing the Future."

Your contributions also helped us build our social media following. By the end of 2010, YES! fans and followers on Facebook and Twitter stood at a combined total of more than 25,000. As a result, thousands read, commented on, and shared articles such as “10 Ways to Solve the Jobs Problem” and “Pittsburgh Bans Natural Gas Drilling.”

We reached new readers through social media and interacted with long-time subscribers in new ways. On Twitter, for example, every Saturday is “Say YES! Saturday,” when many of our followers use the hashtag #sayyessat to share what they are doing to create a more just, sustainable, and compassionate world.

In October 2010, we began posting a question each week on our Facebook and Twitter pages to spark discussion and idea-sharing among our readers. The questions relate to personal choices and practical experiences, such as, “How do you combat cynicism within yourself?” “What are your tips for spending Thanksgiving with relatives whose views differ from yours?” and “How do you celebrate the holidays with less stuff?” These questions inspired lively conversations on both Facebook and our website.

Olav Kjørven, assistant secretary general for the United Nations Development Program, is one of thousands who participate in Say YES! Saturday.



The YES! Facebook and Twitter pages are vibrant hubs for YES! readers to discuss and share YES! stories and to contribute their own ideas.



Teachers are constantly discovering YES! as an educational resource, thanks to your contributions. One teacher wrote:

“YES! Magazine has inspired my students to passionately dive into classroom debate, collaboration, and extended research. I use YES! as the foundation for my curriculum because the quality of the articles and research far exceeds any texts available.”

Julia Anderson
Portland, Oregon

Key accomplishments of our Education Outreach Program in 2010 include:

Supporting classroom use of YES! through our monthly e-newsletter

The number of educators subscribing to our education e-newsletter reached 22,000 by the end of 2010. We featured partners with the best curricular materials related to the theme of the current YES! Magazine issue, along with YES! articles, charts, and quizzes. Our partners were delighted to have us direct our network to their materials. They, in turn, promoted YES! to their networks, helping us reach new audiences. Partners in 2010 included Teach for America, the National Science Teachers Association, Teaching Tolerance, the No Impact Project, the Howard Zinn Education Project, Global Oneness, and Annie Leonard’s “Story of Stuff.”



Teachers across the country used the YES! education newsletter to inspire their students.

Recruiting new teachers and librarians with free subscriptions

School librarians are powerful leverage points for informing both teachers and students about YES! as a valuable resource on contemporary issues. So in 2010 we launched a new program to enable librarians to subscribe to YES! for free. In 2010, nearly 1,800 classroom teachers and 100 school librarians took advantage of our free one-year subscription offer.

Encouraging engagement through the YES! Exemplary Essay Project

Your support made the YES! Exemplary Essay Project possible, which was a big hit with teachers and students. Teachers assigned YES! articles as the basis for student essays—such as Frances Moore Lappé’s “The City That Ended Hunger” and Puanani Burgess’ “Blessings Revealed.” After we featured Ragan Foley’s essay on No Impact Man’s “Christmas Without Presents” in our weekly email digest, her teacher wrote to us:

Students were highly motivated by the possibility that their essays could be posted on the website of a national magazine.

“Participating in the Exemplary Essay Project has meant more than you realize to so many of us here at GPS. You should have seen Ragan’s face yesterday when her article hit the press. I think it is safe to say it changed her life.”

David Cook
Girls Preparatory School
Chattanooga, Tennessee

Providing copies of YES! to educational programs

In October 2010, several Houston schools used the No Impact Project curriculum to help students learn to reduce their environmental impact. Organizers called to request as many copies as we could possibly spare of the Climate Action issue. They were ecstatic when we provided 2,000. Several important teacher-training organizations requested that we send copies of each issue of YES! Magazine to use in their training programs. We sent 400 magazines every quarter to organizations such as the Cloud Institute for Sustainability in New York, the World Affairs Council in Seattle, and the North Carolina Center for the Advancement of Teaching.

No Impact Project: Lesson Plans for Grades 6-12
Time: 50 minutes, with some lessons requiring outside time for data collection

All five lesson plans feature the film and book from the project, *No Impact Man*, which follows Colin in New York City as they examine how they live, exchange old habits for more environmentally-friendly ones, and discover in the process that such changes actually make them happier and healthier. The lessons also incorporate web site resources that build on themes that emerge from the family’s experiences.

Lesson One: Consumption
DOWNLOAD: [Consumption](#)

Educators can use this lesson to help students examine their consumption habits and consider strategies for acquiring necessities in ways that do less harm to the environment.

More on this topic:

- Thrift and Shift: Two ways to prioritize the economy
- The Overspent American

Lesson Two: Energy
DOWNLOAD: [Energy](#)

Educators can use this lesson to help students explore how they can reduce their daily energy consumption and speak out on the



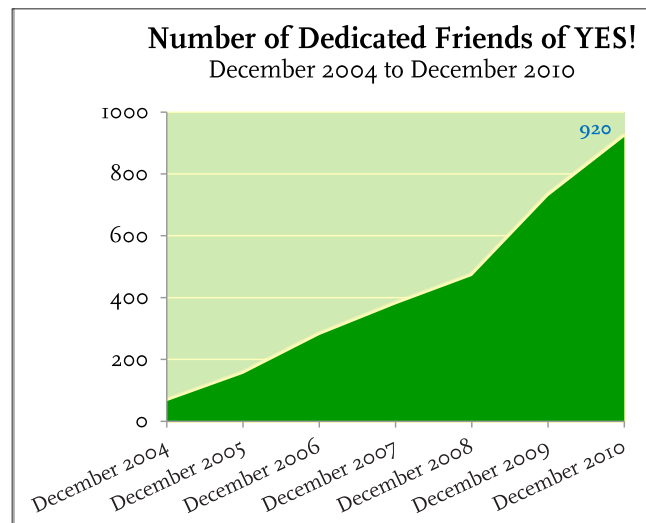
Schools in Houston reinforced the importance of students’ actions with the Climate Action issue of YES!

Your generosity allowed us to increase our organizational capacity in 2010. Here are some highlights:

Expanding our fundraising capacity

While tough economic times meant that most nonprofits experienced fundraising downturns in 2010, we were able to increase our number of individual donors and the total amount they gave.

In 2009, we added a fundraising staff person. This enabled us to expand our Dedicated Friends program, in which donors give an automatic monthly or quarterly donation. The power of this program lies in participants' 93 percent continuation rate from one year to the next. That provides a cumulative momentum, as the chart to the right reveals.



Keeping our technology up-to-date

When our limited-capacity phone system melted down in October, your support helped us to quickly put a new system in place. We moved to a computer-based voice system that gives us unlimited capacity and enhances our staff's ability to access the office phone system from home. We updated our computers, servers, and software—a never-ending task, crucial for an efficient workplace, especially given our recent growth.

Partnering in innovative ways

With your support, we reached new audiences, responded generously to requests for free magazines from grassroots groups, sent speakers around the country, and participated in the Media Consortium and Web of Change conferences. During 2010, we also brought in a consultant to hone our feedback skills, both with one another and for outside writers. All of this kept us on the cutting edge of change, made our message fresh and compelling, and helped our organization operate effectively in a rapidly changing media environment.

Media act as a mirror for society. When that mirror reflects partisan bickering, intractable problems, and sensationalism, people come to believe that they have little capacity for building a better world. They feel stuck regarding anything they can do to bring about change.

But when people see their highest aspirations reflected in the media and when empowering stories show the potential for widespread change, a vision of a better world comes into focus. Then, getting involved not only makes sense, it becomes a source of joy. Our readers tell us that shift in perspective is what happens when they read YES! Magazine, both in print and online.

Your generous contributions have helped shift the perspective of thousands of people. With your continued support, we'll reach many more with compelling stories about what's possible and how to make a difference.

Our society will only get through this turbulent time in a healthy way if millions of ordinary people act on the positive possibilities. We are grateful to all those helping YES! nourish the movements for change with a media mirror that says "a better world is possible, and you can be part of making it happen."

Thank you for helping to make change happen with YES! Magazine.

The Positive Futures Network
Operational Budget for 2010
January 1, 2010 - December 31, 2010

Income

Sales (<i>subscriptions, newsstand, books, back issues, posters, and other sales income</i>)	\$571,443
Donations from individuals	331,740
Foundation grants	658,248
Interest and dividends	13,557
Total income	\$1,574,988

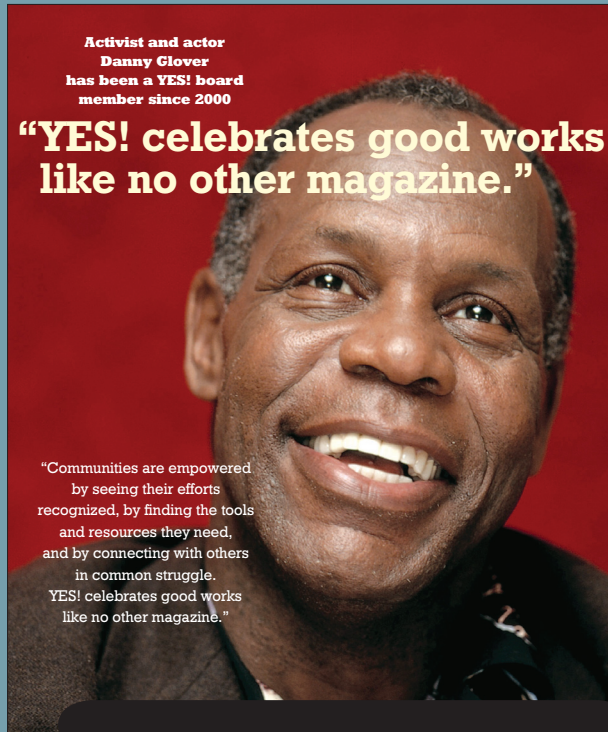
Expenses

Staff salaries, benefits, and taxes	\$889,496
Interns	28,964
Magazine paper, printing, and distribution	200,794
Magazine circulation services	65,600
Outreach (<i>education, media, High Impact Campaigns, marketing, and conferences</i>)	154,723
Editorial (<i>print and online</i>)	36,238
Development	55,317
Office expenses and equipment	111,856
Total expenses	\$1,542,988

Activist and actor
Danny Glover
has been a YES! board
member since 2000

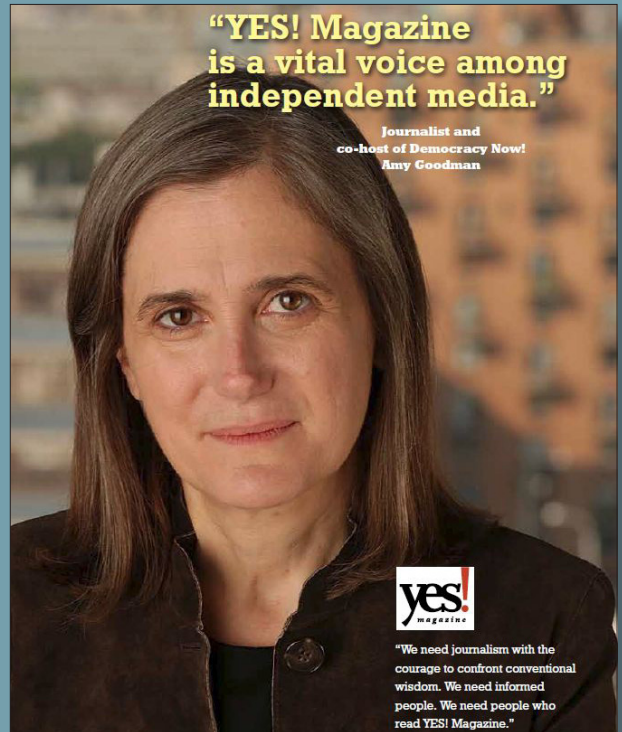
**“YES! celebrates good works
like no other magazine.”**

“Communities are empowered
by seeing their efforts
recognized, by finding the tools
and resources they need,
and by connecting with others
in common struggle.
YES! celebrates good works
like no other magazine.”

A close-up portrait of Danny Glover, an African American man with short grey hair, smiling broadly. He is wearing a dark jacket over a patterned shirt. The background is a solid red color.

**“YES! Magazine
is a vital voice among
independent media.”**

Journalist and
co-host of Democracy Now!
Amy Goodman

A portrait of Amy Goodman, a woman with long brown hair, looking directly at the camera with a neutral expression. She is wearing a dark jacket. The background is a blurred outdoor scene with trees and a brick wall.

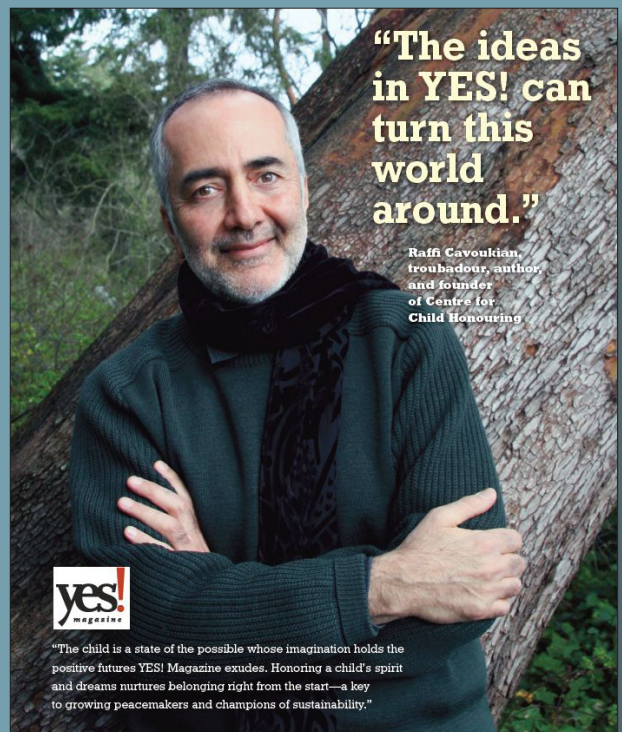
**“YES! Magazine shows me
hope is possible.”**

Native American
activist and author
Winona LaDuke

A portrait of Winona LaDuke, a Native American woman with long dark hair, looking slightly to the side. She is wearing a dark jacket and a beaded necklace. The background is a blurred indoor setting.

**“The ideas
in YES! can
turn this
world
around.”**

Raffi Cavoukian,
troubadour, author,
and founder
of Centre for
Child Honouring

A portrait of Raffi Cavoukian, a man with a grey beard and hair, wearing a dark turtleneck sweater. He is standing outdoors, leaning against a large tree trunk. The background shows green foliage.