

2015 ANNUAL REPORT

POSITIVE FUTURES NETWORK, PUBLISHERS OF

yes!
magazine



**Powerful Ideas
Practical Actions**



Thanks to generous donor support, YES! is about to celebrate 20 years of inspiring change. In our print magazine and online reporting, we look deeply at the root causes of the world's biggest challenges—from climate change to racial injustice to inequality—and showcase the people and organizations that are creating solutions that work for all. By fusing powerful ideas with practical actions, we drive profound change through a nationwide community of engaged citizens, educators, policy makers, and thought leaders. YES! is ad-free and published by the nonprofit Positive Futures Network.

Why does a No! guy like me read YES! Magazine?

We are in a desperate place. There's a lot we need to say "No!" to. In the middle of all that are opportunities to change in deep and meaningful ways. When we say "No!" to business as usual, then we say "Yes!" to a different way of doing things. And that different way is starting to emerge—the things YES! Magazine has been writing about for years, the things YES! has worked so hard to make happen.

Bill McKibben

Author, Activist, and YES! Contributing Editor



Nonprofit. Independent. Subscriber-supported.

“The articles inspire me to think deeply about my own footprint.

Showing that no action is too small is the best antidote to the constant harangue of violence and negativity we get from most of the news media. Thank you, YES! for showing us the positive possibilities!”

—Karin Schmidt, Basel, Switzerland

From the Executive Director

THANK YOU for making 2015 our strongest year ever.

In YES! tradition, we tackled head-on some of the most challenging issues of our time—and of course offered up grassroots solutions.

Our coverage of Black Lives Matter was particularly resonant. As systemic racism became harder to ignore, YES! responded with our summer issue, *Make It Right*. From Fania Davis's call for a Truth and Reconciliation process, to Alicia Garza's insistence on a loving, inclusive racial justice movement, we featured individuals and communities that are finding ways to talk about racism and beginning to heal the traumas of slavery's legacy. Thousands of readers used the issue to advance the conversation about eliminating racism in this country.

The power of social media to spread YES! stories really came home to us in 2015. Our Facebook followers grew to 146,000. As people shared our stories of neighbors coming together to create real estate cooperatives, develop fresh food initiatives, and stop the devastation of fossil fuel extraction, these stories sparked discussions and spawned similar efforts from New York to California.

2015 was also a year of diversification in our staff, our writers, and our audience. Thirty-eight percent of our stories are now written by people of color—journalists who bring their personal experience and vibrant voices to our pages. We reached out to the Millennial generation, who now account for 40 percent of our website visitors.

You'll read about all this and more in the following pages. And you'll hear from readers like Roger Ridgway of Mt. Vernon, Washington, who wrote us:

We've been with you for a long time, perhaps from the beginning—or almost, and we are always inspired and encouraged in our commitment to creating a positive future and a vibrant present.

That's the kind of commitment that YES! nourishes in hundreds of thousands of readers. Thank you for making this work possible.

With gratitude,



Fran Korten

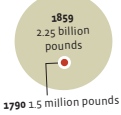


JUST THE FACTS

1 Slavery launched modern capitalism and turned the U.S. into the wealthiest country in the world.

Slave-harvested cotton dominated the 19th-century international market.

U.S. COTTON PRODUCTION



U.S. COTTON USED IN BRITISH TEXTILE INDUSTRY By the 1830s

77%

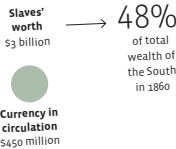


Cotton built New York City into a commercial and financial center.

For every dollar cotton made, about 40 cents ended up in New York as the city supplied insurance, shipping, and

40%

At the outbreak of the Civil War, the market value of slaves in the U.S. exceeded that of banks, factories, and railroads combined.



A NATION BUILT ON THE BACK OF SLAVERY AND RACISM

The nation paid reparations to slave holders—not to slaves.

No

40 ACRES AND A MULE

President Andrew Johnson overturned Gen. Sherman's famous promise, which would have redistributed roughly 400,000 acres to newly freed black families.

\$300

PER FREED SLAVE

On April 16, 1862, President Abraham Lincoln signed a bill ending slavery in the District of Columbia, providing for compensation to former owners.

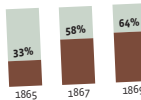
Vagrancy laws allowed police to sweep up black men and then rent them out as convict labor.

Following the war, convict leasing programs shifted the Southern prison populations to predominantly black.



2 Emancipation did not bring economic freedom to former slaves.

BLACK CONVICTS IN NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE'S MAIN PRISON



Discriminatory business policies kept white people economically ahead.

Black Codes were enacted to stop African Americans from owning their own businesses.

BUSINESS LICENSING FEES Under Black Codes in 1870



Southern merchants used unfair credit to impede black wealth building.

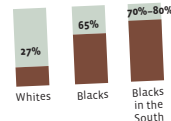
INTEREST RATES CHARGED BY MERCHANTS 1881-1889



Social safety nets have missed African Americans.

Social Security originally excluded domestic and agricultural workers—mostly African Americans, especially in the South.

INELIGIBLE FOR SOCIAL SECURITY IN 1935



3 Discriminatory policies then kept African Americans from receiving help other citizens received.

Racist policies contributed to the decline of black farmers.

By 1982, only 1.5 percent of farmers were black, and the USDA's Civil Rights Office—which investigated loan program discrimination complaints—was closed.

FARMLAND OWNED BY AFRICAN AMERICANS



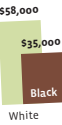
Money meant for distressed homeowners supported segregation.

In 1933, the Home Owners' Loan Corporation was created and helped more than 1 million homeowners. The HOLC was the origin of "redlining" maps.

GOVERNMENT LOANS TO AVOID FORECLOSURE



MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME in 2013



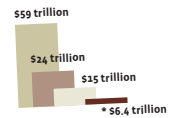
African Americans have barely any of the wealth and therefore little to pass down to future generations.

Economists estimate that up to 80 percent of lifetime wealth accumulation depends on intergenerational transfers.

0.5% of total wealth

Can we calculate the economic damage of slavery?

Estimates range from:



Urging a Nation Toward Racial Justice


In 2015 police violence against African Americans provided a wake-up call about the systemic racism in our country. YES! held up a mirror to the entrenched practices that sustain discrimination, and showcased steps we need to take to create a truly just society.

yes!
magazine

the result:
African Americans
have not been able
to get a foothold in
the economy.

The income gap has not
narrowed since 1970.

For every dollar
of assets white
households have ...



... black households
have a dime.

The nation's wealth,
is being passed to
future generations.

NATIONAL WEALTH
by African Americans

1.0%

1990,
a full 125 years after
Emancipation

...
today's dollars

Martin Luther King Jr.
calculated that making
good on the promise of
40 acres and a mule
(50¢ a week since the late
1700s for 4 million slaves)
would total \$800 billion.*
"They owe us a lot of
money."

Can America Heal After Ferguson? We Asked Desmond Tutu and His Daughter

South Africans surprised everyone by transitioning to a relatively peaceful post-apartheid society. Here's what Americans can learn.



In **2015**, the number of articles written by writers of color increased from **14 percent** to **38 percent**.

Desmond and Mpho Tutu discussed a path toward racial healing.

It Took Me Years to Believe That Black Lives Matter. Now Here's What I Need From You

Internalized racism prevented me from seeing how the system works.



YES! Reporting Fellow Marcus Harrison Green described how he came to terms with his own internalized racism—and urged readers of all races to repudiate racist attitudes.

Our infographic, "A Nation Built on the Back of Slavery and Racism," vividly illustrated the long history of economic discrimination against African Americans. It was a huge hit in social media, widely shared by faith and social justice groups, including numerous African-American organizations. Scholars cited it. Organizers used it in training programs. Viewed by thousands of readers, it helped advance the conversation about eliminating racism in this country.

Championing a New Economy that Works for All

These Neighbors Got Together to Buy Vacant Buildings. Now They're Renting to Bakers and Brewers

Though the model is new and small, it holds outside potential for the many neighborhoods whose downtowns are controlled by faraway landlords or retail chains.



A neighborhood event in northeast Minneapolis. Photo courtesy of the author.

For years, YES! has helped shape and inspire the New Economy movement. In 2015 YES! stories spurred communities across the country to start or consider land trusts, cooperative credit unions, co-op businesses, and other initiatives that support individuals and strengthen the local economy.

We published an article on Minneapolis neighbors who created a real estate cooperative that rejuvenated their downtown. It spread rapidly on social media, spawning similar efforts across the country.

This story received over 500,000 views on Facebook and racked up 67,000 likes, comments, and shares.



Christopher Lange There alot of vacant places in my hometown that can use this idea.

Like · Reply · Message · July 8, 2015 at 8:48am



Propel Studio If anyone wants to start doing this here in #Portland please get in touch with us. We would love to start investing in our neighborhoods and communities.

Like · Reply · Message · 11 · July 7, 2015 at 5:29pm



After reading the article about the Minneapolis neighbors, New Yorkers started a similar real estate cooperative. They've now raised \$1.2 million to buy vacant buildings and provide affordable rents.



Own a Home in Just Four Years? This Co-Op Program Keeps Workers in the Neighborhood

Nearly half of Evergreen's worker-owners have purchased homes through the program.



At the Evergreen Cooperatives in Cleveland, even employees with relatively low incomes can buy homes close to work. In the process they are revitalizing their neighborhoods.

The Bank-Free, DIY Lending System That Helps Friends and Families Finance Themselves

Who needs banks when you have communities? This finance model lets people help each other—without interest.



We reported on people-to-people financing models that strengthen communities instead of big banks.

Advancing Climate Action and Climate Justice

Wildfires, drought, the Pope's encyclical, the Paris climate talks, widespread protests against oil and coal production: in 2015 all these events brought unprecedented awareness to the urgency of climate change. YES! stories showed the breadth of movements to protect our planet, and featured the remarkable leadership of communities of color.



The Unist'ot'en clan, located between the oil-rich deposits of Alberta and the coastal ports to global markets, are fiercely resisting the oil and gas infrastructure planned for their lands. Our Special Report *Unsundered* described the Unist'ot'en encampment that is blocking three oil and gas pipelines.

COP21: A Rallying Cry—No Climate Justice Without Full Indigenous Rights

"We realize that in this country we don't have political power. So we have always looked at building alliances, coalitions, or being part of coalitions."



At the Paris climate talks, indigenous peoples called for policies that reduce emissions while protecting the places they call home. YES! was there.

How the Pope Is Revving up Climate Action in LA's Most Polluted Neighborhood

Catholic environmentalists are channeling the power of the Pope's words into action.



#MyClimateMoment: When Was the Instant Climate Change Became Deep, Urgent, and Personal For You?

Lots of us have had a moment—a revelation, observation, or interaction—when climate change became more than a concept. What's yours?



Spurred by Pope Francis' encyclical, churches in Los Angeles encouraged their congregations to protect the environment—and their own threatened neighborhoods.

As the Paris climate talks unfolded, YES! invited readers to share the moment when climate change became real for them. The response was huge, personal, and powerful.

Promoting Health, Redefining Happiness

Everyone wants to be healthy and happy. But how? In 2015 YES! showcased the importance of fresh food, a healthy environment, close friendships, and a sense of purpose—elements that promote happiness without consumerism or damage to our Living Earth.

Latinos Live Longest Despite Poverty. Here's Their Secret

U.S. Hispanics who pass down a tradition of food, family, and healing are healthier. But can they sustain that as generations become more assimilated?



Community connection and traditions of food, family, and healing are likely contributors to Latino immigrants' longer lifespans.

It's Where You Live

6 CITIES FOR HEALTH



HOUSTON

Restore the bayous for connection

While long dependent on the oil and gas industry, Houston is increasingly investing in sustainability. The city's \$480 million Bayou Greenways Initiative, a massive public-private project, will connect 10 bayous and creeks across the city and its periphery. In the past, bayous were straightened out and paved over to control flooding. Now, Houston is bringing these low-lying rivers back to their natural life: slow, gleaming waterways full of fish and bordered by wildflowers, grasses, and native trees. The city is also adding 4,000 acres of new and equitably distributed green spaces that will improve water quality. And it's providing an alternative to high-traffic streets by developing 300 continuous miles of hike-and-bike trails along the bayous. When complete, an estimated six in 10 residents will live within 1.5 miles of a bayou, park, or trail. For the nation's fourth-largest city, which sprawls over some 600 square miles, this is a powerful way to stitch its diverse population together.

36 YES! WINTER 2016 :: YESMAGAZINE.ORG

This article from our *Good Health* issue showed that green space, slow roads, renters' equity programs, and easy access to social services all help cities improve lives.

DESIGNING HEALTH

Anna Clark

The way we design our physical environment—our buildings, streets, and neighborhoods—can transform our well-being. We learned this more than a century ago, when the newly created New York City Department of Street Cleaning and a 1901 ban on poorly ventilated tenement houses helped curb the spread of infectious diseases. And later, with the nation's turn toward highways, urban sprawl, and communities without sidewalks, we also saw the rise of diabetes and other conditions related to inactivity. Active design aims to improve public health through urban planning and architecture. Done right, it can break citizens out of social isolation, encourage movement, and preserve natural resources.



EDINBURGH

Slowing traffic to 20 mph

Scotland's capital city is rolling out a plan to cap the speed limit at 20 mph on 80 percent of its roads. The slowdown is designed to encourage people to walk and bike, rather than drive, and to enhance pedestrian safety. A 2012 report by Transport Scotland recommends 20 mph speed limits on certain roads to improve bike and pedestrian safety. The Edinburgh slow roads movement builds on pioneering slowdown policies in Portsmouth, England, and Scotland's council of Fife, both of which implemented 20 mph limits on much of their roads. According to early data from Portsmouth, the total number of road collisions has dropped 13 percent. The Edinburgh plan is expected to be phased in starting in early 2017. Environmental advocates say that encouraging walking and cycling will contribute to the nationwide effort to reduce air pollution and lower carbon emissions.

ALBUQUERQUE

Apartments with on-site social services

Casitas de Colores is a family-friendly, mixed-income apartment complex in downtown Albuquerque that stands out with its bright stucco colors. But more dramatic is what's inside. This 71-unit complex has an on-site social services coordinator who connects resident families with local child care and health care providers and hosts bimonthly health screenings and trainings. The building's active design helps, too. Walking paths, open stairwells, courtyards, a 24-hour fitness room, bike storage, and a children's play area are integrated into its design plan. Reduced-speed elevators subtly nudge residents toward the stairs, and the building is within walking distance of major city destinations.

DETROIT

Vacant land becomes useful

City leaders have long been trying to find new uses for vacant spaces in shrinking cities. In Detroit, officials have found that one of the best ideas is also the simplest: The Detroit Land Bank Authority allows city residents to purchase the vacant lot neighboring their home for \$100, with no red tape. Residents also soon may be able to lease a vacant lot in their neighborhood for \$25 a year, so long as a neighborhood or local block group endorses its intended use. The Land Bank Authority empowers thousands of citizens to take ownership of land that has been long neglected in their communities. Once-dangerous eyesores are finding new life as gardens, playgrounds, pocket parks, off-street parking lots, flower farms, and art installations.

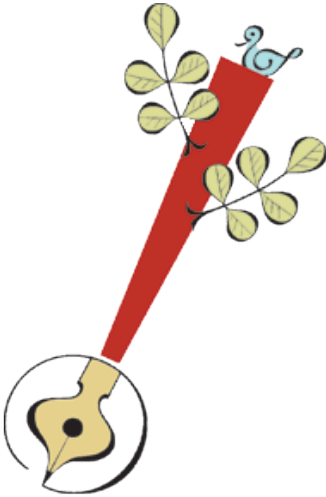


PHOTOGRAPHS BY JACK FELLNER, BONEYTONGUE, RICHIE CHAN/SHUTTERSTOCK, YES, ANNA CLARK

YESMAGAZINE.ORG :: YES! WINTER 2016 37

Mind + Body + Community. Our Winter 2016 issue explored the ingredients that make for a culture of good health.

Bringing Justice and Sustainability into the Classroom



In 2015, the YES! Education Outreach Program provided tens of thousands of teachers with classroom-ready materials for teaching about social justice and sustainability. Our YES! for Teachers e-newsletter provides a library of lesson plans on a wide range of topics. Our Writing Competition invites students to reflect on YES! themes in their own lives.

For Teachers
YES! For Teachers brings powerful ideas and practical actions to classrooms nationwide.

This Marine Biologist Taught at Occupy Camps. Now She's Written Curriculum to Inspire Students to Action.
Middle school and high school students constantly hear about the many challenges our society faces—from fracking to police shootings to corporatization. What they don't hear enough about is what they can do to make their world better.

RETHINKING Democracy!
Lessons and resources on American government and democracy

Infographic: Transportation for the New Generation
Walk! Bike! Ride the bus! Check out this infographic to learn how young people are leading the way in replacing driving with alternative transportation. Don't be fooled— it's not just because they want to save the planet. *Morgan Wright Jan 01, 2015*

Young people took **24 percent** more bike trips.

Young people walked to destinations **16 percent** more frequently.

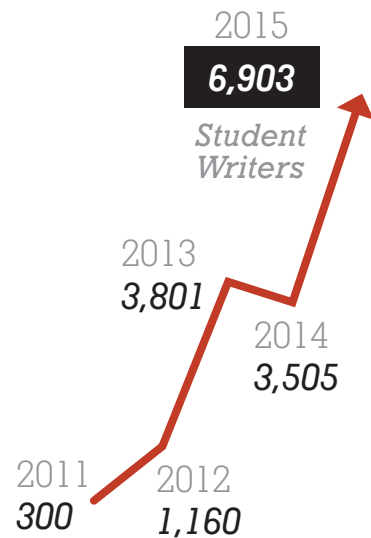
The number of passenger-miles traveled by young people on public transit increased by **40 percent**.

Winter Student Writing Competition: Every Girl's Right

Want a motivator to take your students' writing to a higher level? Here's an opportunity for them to write for a real audience, and the chance to get published by an award-winning magazine.



Photo of Kainat Riaz, Shazia Ramzan, and Malala Yousafzai courtesy of the Malala Fund.



Our Winter Writing Competition featured an interview with Malala's two friends who were also shot that day on the bus in Pakistan. Students were asked, *How would you feel if you were forcibly banned from going to school tomorrow—and indefinitely?*



“Had I been born a few hundred kilometers north of my birthplace, I could have been one of millions of girls around the world who was denied her right to an education. . . (Now) I stand with the oppressed and demand that my voice be heard.”
— Hamna Khalid, High School winner, Winter competition

18,647 students have participated in our National Student Writing Competition since its inception in 2011.

“It’s especially amazing how personal your whole process is and how you reach out to each author. I’ve never seen another contest for students that does this.” —Laurie Hornik, English Department Chair, Ethical Culture School, Bronx, New York

Training the Next Generation of Solutions Journalists

Each year, YES! provides hands-on training in solutions journalism to 10 to 12 college graduates. Since the program began in 1996, more than 200 exceptional young people have taken the skills they learned here on to jobs in journalism, community development, education, and other forms of activism. In 2015 these 11 interns were part of the YES! team.

Peter D'Auria
Miles Schneiderman
Kayla Schultz
Mary Hansen
Jennifer Luxton
Araz Hachadourian

Tony Manno
Morgan Wright
Alexa Strabuk
Cara Thompson
Joe Scott
Keith Barbalato

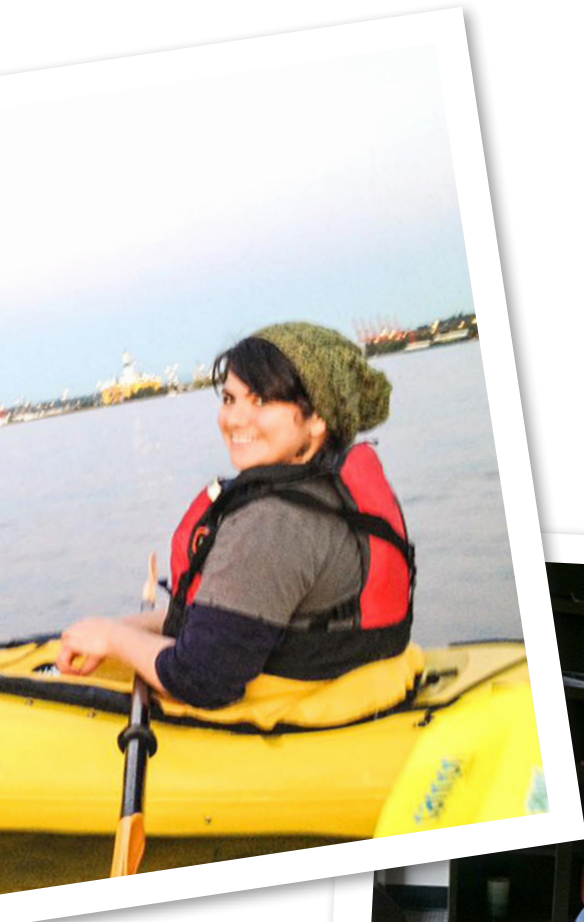


Interns Jennifer Luxton and Miles Schneiderman covering the Shell No! kayaktivism protest against Shell's plans to drill in the Arctic.



“YES! let me experiment with art, journalism, and multimedia to tell stories of a better world. I’ve never been in such a positive, supporting environment where the staff so sincerely believe in what they’re working for.”

—Jennifer Luxton, *illustration intern*



“I came to YES! on the heels of a reporting internship where I was inundated with bad news—ISIS, serial killers, Ebola—name a horrible thing and I wrote about it. YES! taught me that solutions journalism can be just as engaging and just as rigorous, and that stories of change are desperately needed in the world.”

—*Araz Hachadourian, editorial intern*



Intern Tony Manno reporting on the Unist’ot’en clan’s efforts to block three oil and gas pipelines in British Columbia.

Using Partnerships to Inspire Millions

YES! partners with media outlets and social change organizations to reach millions of engaged citizens.



THE HUFFINGTON POST



In 2015 Public Radio International began posting two to three YES! stories per week on its website.



NEW ECONOMY
COALITION

We served as the media outlet for the New Economy Coalition for New Economy Week (November 9–15, 2015). During that week we published 40 stories about creating an economy that works for all.

Tens of thousands of teachers learned about our Student Writing Competition through our partnerships with Participant Media, the Malala Fund, Rethinking Schools, and other organizations.

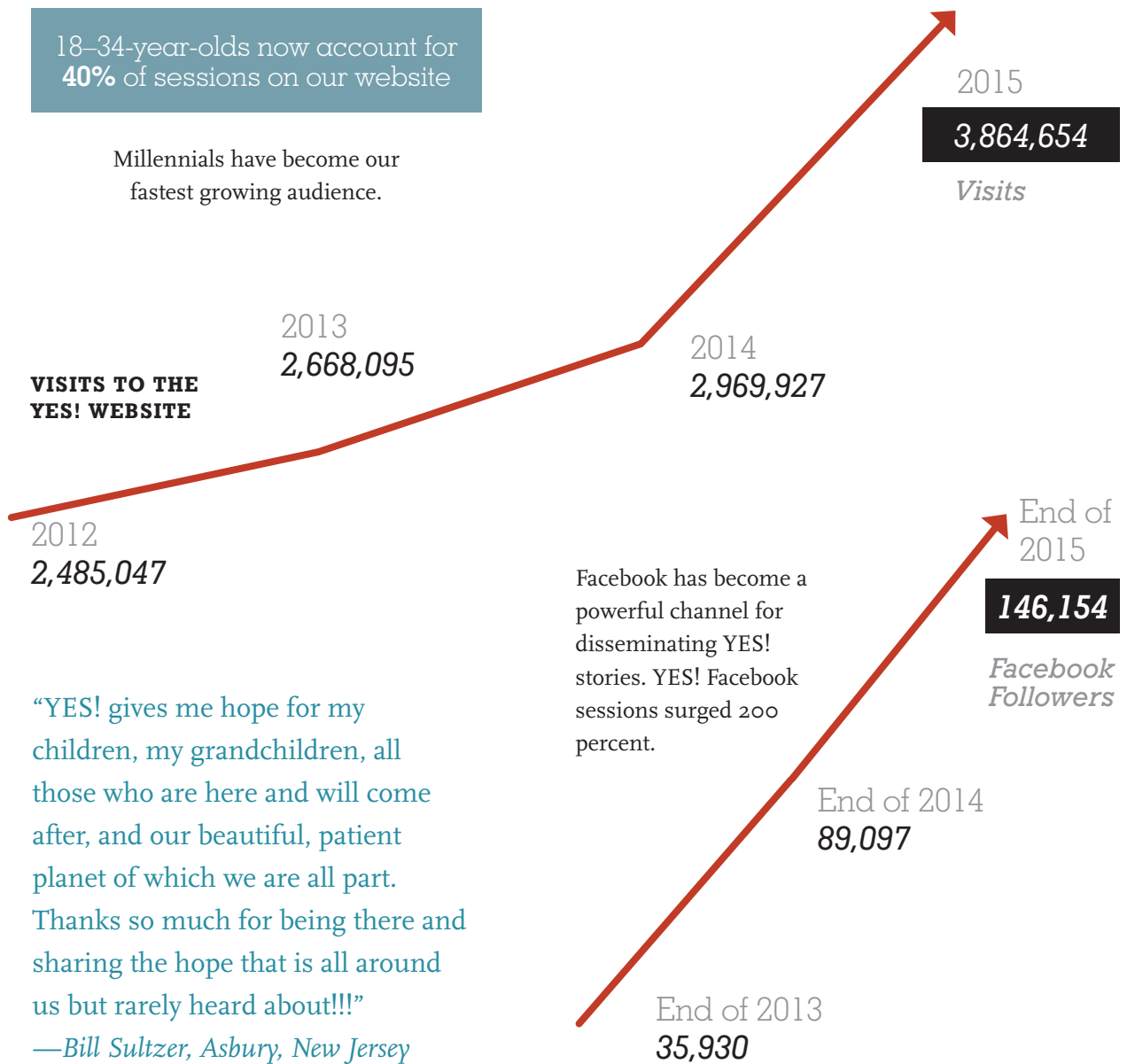


“At a time when negative, depressing news stories are the national norm, YES! speaks about the important issues of our time in a way that gives me hope. I’m inspired to be a better person now and for future generations. Thank you!!”
—Coralie, Binghamton, New York

“I am an inmate in North Carolina. I learn so much from YES!. It speaks to who I am and I will use my knowledge when I am free. Most of the world forgets us. Your magazine keeps alive some of the best parts of me.”
—Lucas, Alexander Correctional Institution, Taylorsville, North Carolina

Advancing Solutions Through Online and Social Media

In 2015, our online and social media traffic skyrocketed. Online sharing spurred discussion and adoption of YES! ideas across the country.



Food Stamps Are Worth Double at These Michigan Farmers Markets—Helping Families and Local Businesses

The USDA is putting \$31 million behind a program that helps low-income families take home twice the veggies, and local farmers make twice the money.



This article reached 102,000 Facebook readers in less than 24 hours. As a result, people across the country spread the word and urged their own farmers markets to adopt this USDA program.



Patricia Cowan Yes! Now everywhere please! Esp. The California drought !

Like · Reply · Message · April 22, 2015 at 4:36pm



Corinne Mignon Santa Fe does this too.

Like · Reply · Message · April 22, 2015 at 4:57pm



Kerry Burke Patrone Double at the Greensboro Farmers Curb Market in NC, too! Great program!

Like · Reply · Message · April 22, 2015 at 5:07pm



Jen Marin I think this is so wonderful.

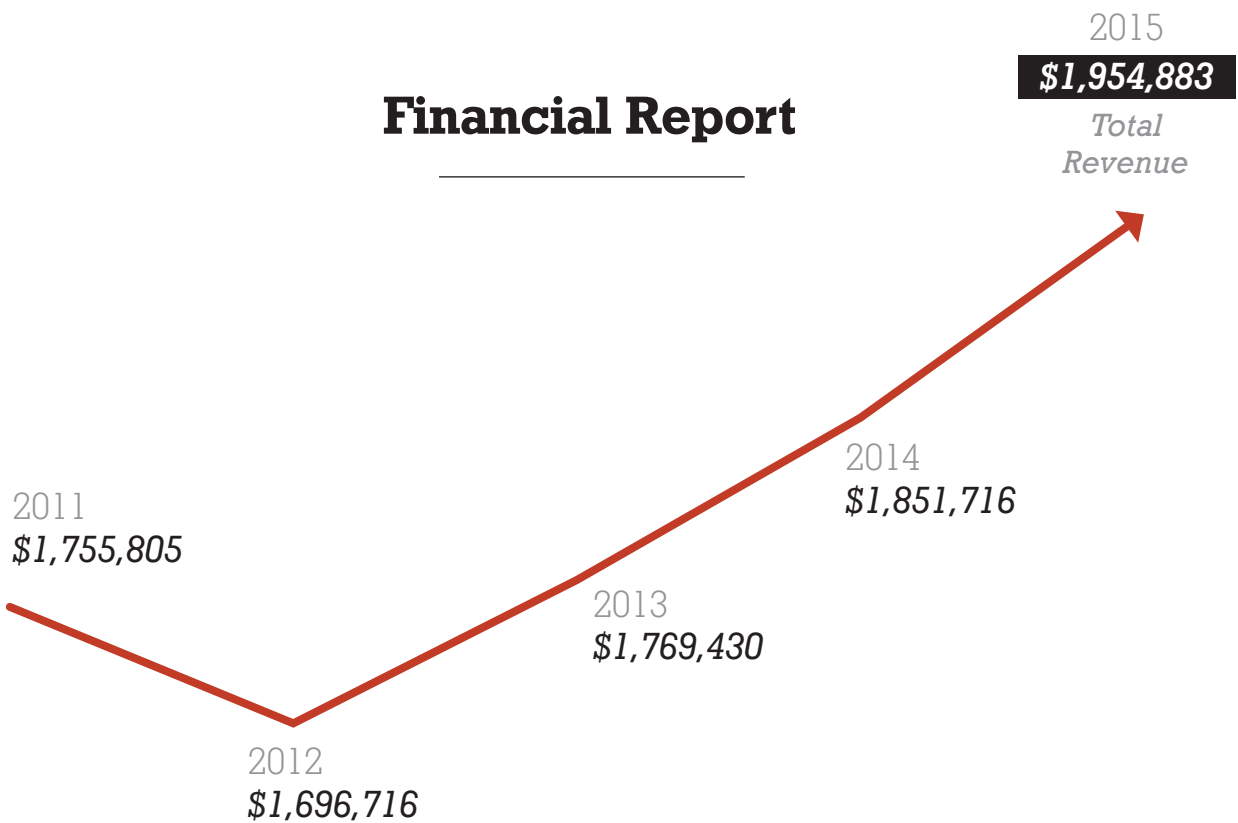
Like · Reply · Message · April 22, 2015 at 5:35pm



Joan Schaefer **Richmond Clintonville Farmers' Market** in Columbus, Ohio, does these! We love taking them at our farm stand.

Like · Reply · Message · 4 · April 22, 2015 at 5:36pm

Financial Report



2015 Operating Budget January 1, 2015-December 31, 2015

Income

Sales (subscriptions, newsstand, books, back issues, posters, other)	\$560,387
Donations from individuals	\$739,188
Foundation grants	\$650,750
Interest and dividends	\$4,558

Total 2015 income **\$1,954,883**

Expenses

Staff salaries, benefits, and taxes	\$1,089,038
Interns	\$30,847
Magazine paper, printing & distribution, and customer services	\$336,431
Audience development and outreach	\$149,483
Editorial (magazine, web, broadcast)	\$140,513
Development	\$88,896
Office expenses and equipment	\$98,529
General administrative	\$54,962

Total 2015 expenses **\$1,988,699**

Deficit taken from operational reserves \$33,816

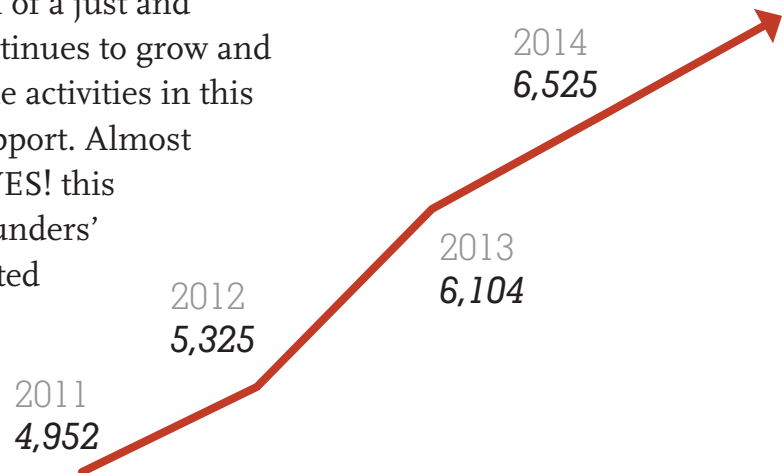
2015

6,950

Number
of Donors

Thank You, Supporters

Thanks to you—and our shared vision of a just and sustainable future—YES! revenue continues to grow and our influence continues to expand. The activities in this report were made possible by your support. Almost 7,000 people chose to make a gift to YES! this year. Below we thank by name our Founders' Circle members—those who contributed \$500 or more. We are grateful to all our donors for your continuing faith in YES! and the future we are building together.



Our 2015 Founders' Circle

Angels (\$100,000+): Tides Foundation * Satterberg Foundation * Cynthia Sears & Frank Buxton * Surdna Foundation

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David is president and founder of the Living Economies Forum and an active promoter of a New Economy agenda. His most recent book is *Change the Story, Change the Future*.



VICE CHAIR
Gideon Rosenblatt

Gideon writes about the impact of technology on people, organizations, and society. For nine years, he ran Groundwire, a mission-driven technology consulting group.



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Tanya is founder and executive director of the Global-Local Links Project, putting people and communities at the center of the global economy.



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Jill Bamburg

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A former Seattle City Council member, Richard co-founded Sustainable Seattle and formerly directed the Earth Service Corps.



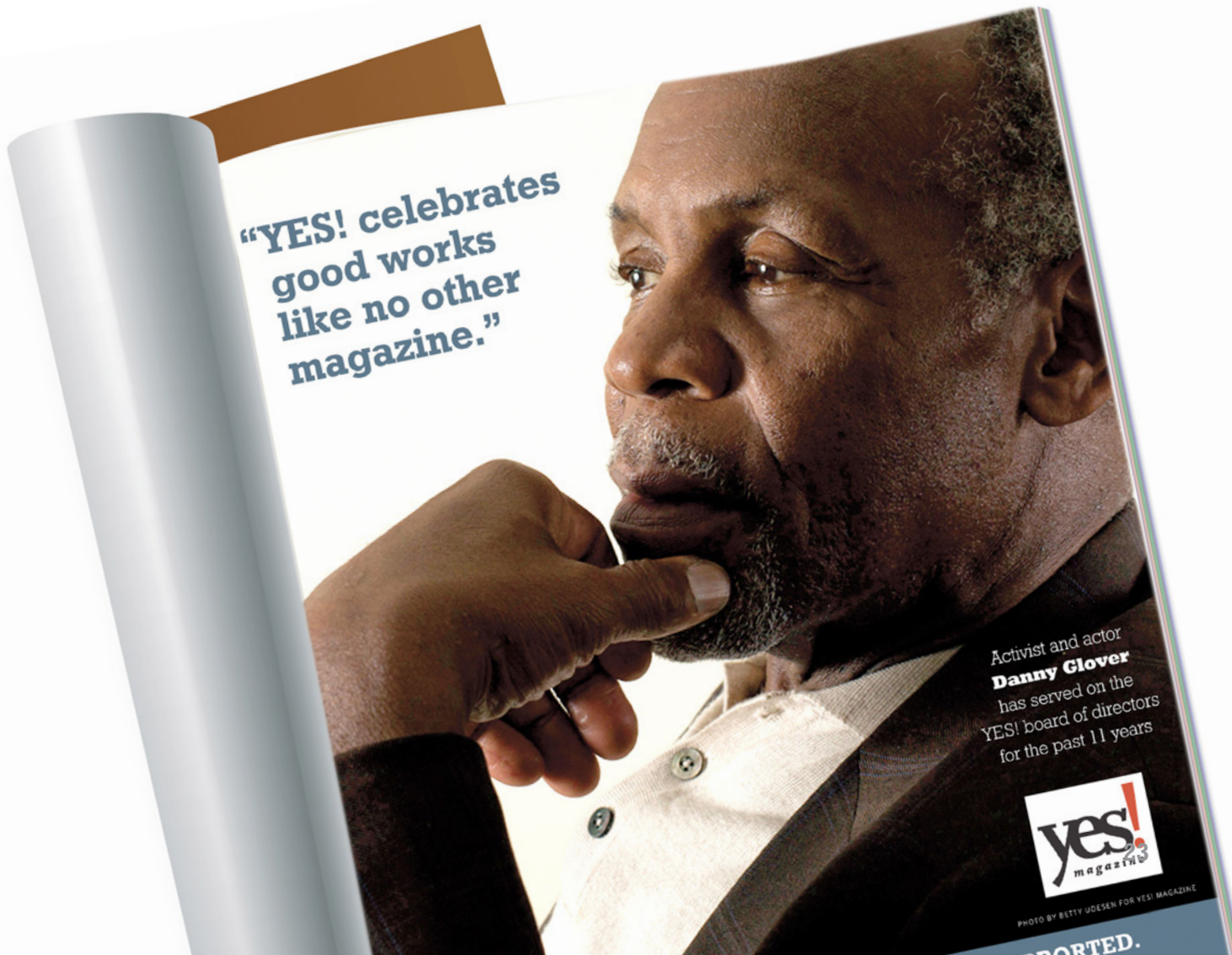
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In addition to acting, Danny is a Goodwill Ambassador for the United Nations, and works on behalf of AIDS victims, civil rights, and economic justice.



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Co-founder and editor at large of YES!, Sarah writes and speaks on building a more just, sustainable world.



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Wendell Berry, Elwha dam removal, Waimanalo farmers
BACK TO FRONT: PHOTOS BY GUY MENDES, JAMES WENGLER, AND PAUL DUNN.

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