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april 2⁷, 2⁰00

IMPACT F U N D

Opening Remarks

Shauna Marshall, Professor, Hastings College of the Law Board of Advisors, The Impact Fund

Honoring:

Louis Hiken and

The National Lawyer's Guild Committee for Democratic Communications

whose defense of Radio Free Berkeley's Stephen Dunifer led to the revision of FCC regulations to legalize micro-transmitter radio stations

Presenter: Abby Ginzberg, Ginzberg Video Productions, Board of Advisors, The Impact Fund

Michael Freund and California Community Health Advocates

whose environmental justice actions eliminated thousands of pounds of toxic emissions from the air throughout California

Presenter: Alan Ramo,
Co-Director, Environmental Law & Justice Clinic,
Golden Gate University School of Law
Board of Advisors, The Impact Fund

Mark Chavez and Jonathan Gertler

whose successes in consumer class actions and subsequent use of the <u>cy pres</u> doctrine are providing new funding for public interest litigation

Presenter: Brad Seligman, Executive Director, The Impact Fund

Entertainment: The Latin Tinge

The Impact Fund gratefully acknowledges the underwriters of this reception to celebrate **building victories** ...

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Michael Freund and California Community Health Advocates

Michael Freund is a sole practitioner environmental attorney who has specialized in the enforcement of Proposition 65 (the Safe Drinking Water and Toxic Enforcement Act of 1986), the landmark California initiative that requires disclosure of toxic emissions. In 1996, he teamed up as legal counsel with California Community Health Advocates ("CCHA") a non-profit corporation, to plan a legal battle against companies exposing us to toxic chemicals. While the objectives were clear for CCHA director Lorell Long, the reality was that CCHA had no funds to take on these polluters.

Fortunately, Freund and CCHA were able to receive support from The Impact Fund, which granted \$10,000 in 1996 and 1997 as "seed" funding for the work of CCHA. This funding covered the costs of expert studies of air pollution around a number of facilities. Based on the research funded by these grants, Freund began filing cases on behalf of CCHA pursuant to Proposition 65, targeting corporations that continued to expose individuals to various toxic chemicals including lead, methylene chloride perchloroethylene and hexavalent chromium.

The first victory came on June 30, 1997 when the Fresno County Superior Court approved a settlement against Duncan Enterprises, a company that was emitting lead from its facility and exposing the surrounding residential area. The settlement required Duncan to eliminate the major lead producing operation at its plant along with a payment of \$20,500.00. With the support from The Impact Fund and this first settlement, Freund, representing CCHA was able to commence what has turned out to be a programmatic effort against companies emitting toxic chemicals into the air and exposing numerous people, many of whom are people of color, the elderly and school children.

In the last several years, CCHA has won by settlement or judgment sixteen cases around the state, leading to the elimination of thousands of pounds of toxic emissions and thousands of exposures to children, school staff, the elderly, and other residents and workers in the areas surrounding these facilities. In each instance, the companies were emitting their chemicals lawfully pursuant to air district permits provided to them by the air quality management districts in charge of protecting the public's health. Without these cases, these companies would still be going about business as usual and emitting these carcinogens and reproductive toxicants.

Based on financial recoveries made in the abovementioned cases, CCHA not only has been able to repay its grants to The Impact Fund, but it has also been able to make significant donations to The Impact Fund as well as many other organizations taking on important public interest work.

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