

Wellstone!

1990 · celebrating twenty-five years · 2015

SPRING 2015

News from Wellstone Action

Igniting leadership in people and power in communities to win change in the progressive tradition of Paul and Sheila Wellstone.



Rhode Island State Representative Aaron Regunberg

How He Won

It's not easy to win a deeply competitive campaign for the State Assembly at age 24. It's especially tough when you're a first time candidate, not originally from the area, going up against the corporate education reform movement and an opponent funded by people like Michael Bloomberg.

Aaron Regunberg spent college and the years since graduating organizing his Providence, Rhode Island, community. He organized youth, their parents and their teachers to advocate for meaningful change in the schools. And he saw the tremendous impact that giving people a seat at the table, and a voice in the process, can have on winning progress.

"Too often that sort of inclusive governing that I fought for doesn't happen in the halls of government. I decided to run for State Assembly to continue this work, to bring more voices into the decision-making process, to strengthen the community that I love," explains Aaron.

Towards the start of his campaign, before his official announcement, Aaron, along with his campaign manager and deputy campaign manager, joined us for a training. We were in Providence for what we call a political pipeline training, giving community leaders the confidence to plan for a campaign, and then take the step to run for office with the skills they'll need to win.

Aaron faced a tough Democratic primary that included the leader of Teach for America in Rhode Island. Both believed that public schools needed to change, but they had vastly different visions for how

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From Ben

Friends,

There's no rest for the weary. And that's just fine, because at Wellstone we're not ones to sit around when there's so much progress left to fight for.



Ben Goldfarb

Wellstone wrapped up 2014 with hundreds of our alumni winning their elections, our Wellstone Corps and Organizing Fellows reaching out to many millions of voters as they empowered communities across America, and our incredible staff leading over 125 trainings from coast to coast.

Yet, nationwide, 2014 was a particularly tough year for progressives. So we're doubling down. This year will be bigger and busier than ever before as we prepare for the critical victories yet to come. In 2015, you'll find us training the next generation of changemakers, defending our democracy against corrosive conservative attacks, and building a pipeline of new community leaders to run for office and win.

And we'll do it all the Wellstone Way, by practicing a politics that improves people's lives. Here're a few examples of what I'm talking about: In this newsletter, you'll learn about how we're building an alumni network and digital resource library to support progressives well beyond a single training. And how we equipped a 24-year-old with the skills and tactics to win his unlikely campaign

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How He Won continued

to do that. So, running a smart, effective campaign with a clear message was key.

“Those 2.5 days made every day following on the campaign trail more valuable for me and my team. It was an important bump in morale, it gave us the confidence and the skills to know we could run a people-powered, values-first campaign and we could, we would, win.”

“... my organizing and commitment to progressive public policy remains a crucial part of my work now that I’m an elected official.”

Aaron and his team dove into our training. And a few days later, he launched his campaign with the same stump speech he built with us. “Wellstone guided us through a process to understand what a stump speech was all about. Our trainer helped me distill into a clear message my belief in bringing people together, and that our community has the answers to our toughest challenges if only we bring more voices into the process. The fundamentals of the message I wrote during that training was what I said at my kick-off and repeated a couple times a day for

the next six months.”

Aaron won his primary, and the general election, and is starting his career in the State Assembly. But his connection to Wellstone isn’t over. “My biggest suggestion for prospective candidates is to attend a Wellstone training, work really hard and win, and then attend another training.” Says Aaron, “After the election, I attended a governing as a progressive session. We focused on how to move our agenda through the process in the same inclusive way we ran our campaigns. I came into this campaign with a healthy skepticism about electoral politics. Wellstone gave me a vocabulary, the Wellstone Triangle, to understand what Paul Wellstone knew: my organizing and commitment to progressive public policy remains a crucial part of my work now that I’m an elected official.”

Today, our stump speech session at Camp Wellstone includes an example from Aaron’s stump. We highlight his stump speech not just because he won a tough campaign against a well-funded opponent but because of *how* he won: people first, values first, community first. He won the Wellstone Way, and now he’s governing the Wellstone Way. 

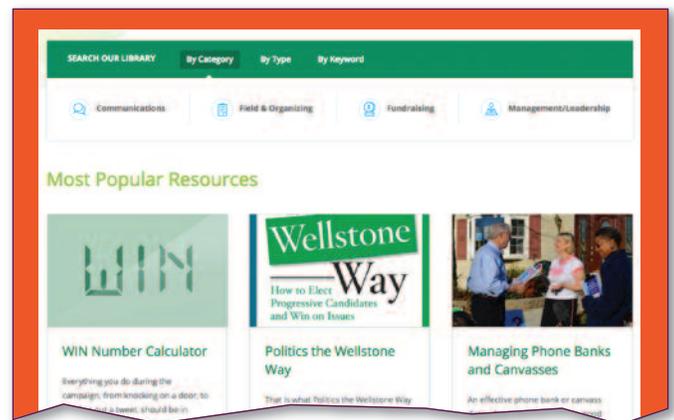
How Do I?

Being an organizer or a campaigner is tough. There’s always something, or nine things, going on. One minute it’s writing a campaign’s targeting plan, the next it’s writing a blast email. And that’s all before running out to go knock on some doors.

There’s a lot to keep in mind, there’s just a lot to do. That’s why Wellstone launched its online resource library. It’s quickly becoming the toolbox for progressives across the country as they campaign, and organize, to win change. Last year, we launched the site with dozens of resources built with support from some of the country’s leading campaigners.

This year, we’ve updated the toolbox with resources for organizers, young and old, based on a Civic Engagement Manual we wrote with our friends at the Texas Freedom Network Education Fund.

The next time you need a refresher on how to calculate and use your win number, some tips on tweeting, a sample of a campaign budget or even how to start a progressive organization



on a college campus, our library should be your first stop.

To stay ahead, progressives must never stop innovating. So we’re updating the library all the time.

We’ve done the work to gather up the cutting-edge strategies and current best practices to create this toolkit for progressives across the country. And now we’re proud to say that thousands of progressives are heading to our site every month when they want to run, and win, the Wellstone Way.

Check it out: wellstone.org/resources



From Ben continued

for the State Assembly against an opponent funded by Michael Bloomberg. And you'll read about one donor's story, building power from generation to generation.

It was in 1990, 25 years ago this year, that Paul Wellstone won his race for the United States Senate. He did it by organizing to build progressive power year by year. You can't build enduring power when campaigns pack up and leave communities the day after an election. That's where Wellstone comes in. We build

power, we partner with frontline organizations and we organize our communities day by day and year by year.

It's during odd-numbered years like 2015 when we have a real opportunity to prepare our movement and build our power. So, with your help, Wellstone will spend 2015 taking big steps forward to win that future where we all do better when we all do better.

Are you with us?

Ben

Donor Profile

Tammy Houghland knows what it takes to win and sustain progressive power from generation to generation.

As a kid, she watched her own mother, Marge—a teacher and leader for her local of the Illinois Education Association (IEA-NEA)—organize co-workers towards a strike before Illinois had a collective bargaining law for education employees. It could have landed Marge and her fellow activists in jail.

Tammy learned from her mom that public school employees deserve rights, protections and respect and that they needed to stand up for those rights. Marge avoided jail time and helped to negotiate successive collective bargaining agreements for her local and spent her career as a union and political leader.

“When you've got the weight of our democracy on your back, you want Wellstone at your side.”

In her college years, Tammy got involved in political activities. She became interested in labor relations and the rights of workers to have a say in their working conditions. And now, she's been a professional staff member of the Illinois Education Association-NEA for the last ten years.

“I believe Thomas Jefferson was right when he said that public education is the foundation of a free and democratic society,” explains Tammy. “I also believe that workers should have a voice in their workplace. My work with IEA—strengthening our public education system by empowering the people who serve students—allows me to live my beliefs.” Tammy builds power one member and one local at a time to have a strong voice in their own professional lives, and in the end, be the very best they can be for their students.



Tammy Houghland

She first connected with Wellstone a few years ago at an IEA-NEA staff meeting. “Wellstone struck so many chords and absolutely energized our group.” A few years later, IEA-NEA partnered with Wellstone to offer a series of trainings on campaigning and running for office. “I'd been to plenty of political trainings before, but this one really resonated with me. It taught us to stand up and push back against some of the country's worst anti-union and anti-education campaigns. I felt so empowered.”

“When you've got the weight of our democracy on your back, you want Wellstone at your side.” That's why she's not just a Wellstone alumna, but also a donor. Every year, she invests in Wellstone.

“I support the mission of training people to be effective advocates and to win. That's what I do in my work, and Wellstone does something similar in a national arena. I support Wellstone so Wellstone can go out and work with more unions and more progressive candidates.”

When Paul Wellstone won his Senate seat 25 years ago, he was a champion for workers, but we know the struggle is far from over. So, with the help of donors like Tammy, we're building more capacity, and more strength, in our unions.

Together, generation after generation, we're winning, we're making progress and we're sustaining a movement for enduring change. 

Stronger Together

Attending a Wellstone training is just the start of a progressive leader's connection with Wellstone. The hard work begins after our trainings, applying what they learned with us to win real progress on the ground. So we're determined to make sure that the first training is also just the start of their link to Wellstone.

That's why we're so excited to launch the Wellstone Action Alumni Association's online community.

Our alumni are part of an elite group of over 70,000 progressives from across the country equipped with the skills, strategies and tactics to win change the Wellstone Way. Staying connected means they're part of a community constantly striving to innovate, to learn best practices from each other and, yes, hire each other for awesome jobs!

Our online community is part of a broader alumni engagement focus of ours in 2015 and the years to come. In fact, just a few weeks ago, we welcomed our newest group of alumni into the Wellstone Action family at an event after our annual Twin Cities Camp Wellstone. The newest class of campers were joined by alumni from past Camps, by a few of our Wellstone Organizing Fellows and by many more friends and supporters. Alumni were able to network, swap stories and share what they have been up to since their Wellstone training.

We're all effective, passionate progressives. But we're stronger together. Our Alumni Association's online network is built to be a home base for people to share best practices, jobs and a vision for our progressive movement.

If you're an alum, be sure to join right away. It's all happening here: wellstone.org/alumninetwork



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It's been 25 years since a passionate professor's unlikely Senate race sparked a national movement. It's a remarkable span of time that's seen a movement grow into a catalyst for change that wins progress the right way, by practicing a politics that improves people's lives.

Paul Wellstone took on entrenched corporate interests to stick up for every American and today we've built a network of frontline partners equipped to inspire change.

Sheila Wellstone found her voice to become a national leader in the movement to end domestic violence and today we've equipped over 70,000 progressives with the skills and confidence to win enduring progressive power.

Paul Wellstone believed that weaving together electoral politics, community organizing and progressive public policy was the only way to create lasting progress. And today the Wellstone Triangle is a national model for winning enduring progress.

For 25 years we've been winning that world where we all do better when we all do better. It's a nationwide impact that Paul and Sheila fought for, but might never have quite imagined.

As we celebrate 25 Years of Wellstone, we're just getting started. We're going to keep fighting, keep organizing, keep winning. Why? Because Paul and Sheila would've expected nothing less from us.

We'll be celebrating 25 Years of Wellstone throughout 2015, with 25 Stories of Progress online, and with trainings and events offline and on.

Wellstone

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Learn about all of it here: wellstone.org/25