



THE AIDS LIBRARY

CLINICAL RESEARCH

CRITICAL PATH

THE LAX CENTER

PROJECT TEACH

Y-HEP

President

Scott Wilds

Vice President

Rev. Ernest McNear

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David Michelson

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Karam Mounzer, MD

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Jane Shull

*In Memoriam*

Lisa Botsum

Don Ellerman, PhD

Kiyoshi Kuromiya

Jonathan Lax

Gregory Loos, MSW

Yves Thillet, MD

Leonard West

The following are letters and emails, written to Critical Path as testimonials by many of our collaborative partners and individual users.

---

Dear Friends,

I received this urgent message today. The Critical Path Project is the only truly free Internet service available to low income people and nonprofit groups in the Delaware Valley.

Here at Nonprofit Technology Resources, our own donations of free computers to children, (and other disadvantaged populations) include a free Internet account thanks to the generosity of our friends at Philadelphia FIGHT.

Now, they need our support to help maintain this essential resource. Please consider writing a note in response to Ms. Fink's message below.

Should the Critical Path Project be forced to close down, over 1,400 children and low-income families who received free computers from NTR in the last several years will be forced off the Internet. Please read the appeal below and write to Juliet Fink so she can pass your concerns to the Mayor and other possible sources of support.

And, while we are not being asked to contribute towards the support of the Critical Path Project directly, I suspect that a cash contribution from NTR won't be turned away and the same thing might be true of any contribution you might care to make.

Thank you for your attention to this!  
Stan Pokras



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Dear Mayor Nutter:

The Delaware Valley Legacy Fund's first website was hosted by Critical Path for a time until outside funders enabled the organization to grow its marketing and outreach. In 2003, DVLF launched its own website on a separate server, releasing the space used to allow for other organizations and people to use the service.

The Delaware Valley Legacy Fund was an all-volunteer organization until just a couple years ago and the Critical Path service was a terrific way to improve communication about the LGBT community's endowment and programs to the City of Philadelphia as well as the tri-state region.

I am well aware of how important this service is to DVLF's grantees, many of which received their first grants from the Delaware Valley Legacy Fund and many are still receiving technical assistance from our organization. The potential loss of funding for Critical Path will provide a major hurdle for the organizations that are managing the important day-to-day work of education, outreach, and health awareness and HIV/AIDS education to Philadelphia residents. I'm very concerned that if Critical Path is no longer available to the thousands that use the services, that the long and hard work and many years of momentum may be lost.

I believe that if community organizations are forced to recreate a service such as Critical Path and generate services in a new way without any transition time that the overall effect will raise costs significantly more than the temporary cost to replace the funding. Any reconsideration of returning the needed funding for Critical Path is greatly appreciated.

Thank you, in advance, for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Perry Monastero

R Perry Monastero, Ed.D., Executive Director  
Delaware Valley Legacy Fund  
1234 Market Street, Suite 1800  
Philadelphia, PA 19107  
Voice: 215.563.6417, ext 117  
Fax: 215.563.6882  
Web: <http://www.dvlf.org>

[DVLF Builds Community by Advancing Philanthropy](#)

The Delaware Valley Legacy Fund's mission is to raise the permanent endowment for the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex (LGBTI), and straight-allied communities. DVLF supports nonprofit organizations through grants, marketing, fundraising, technical assistance, and planned giving trainings.

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August 13, 2008

Dear Mayor Nutter,

We, at Asian Americans United, urge you to help the Critical Path Project to retain its funding and continue its essential work in Philadelphia. As a non-profit organization that has been supporting people of Asian ancestry in Philadelphia to build community and fight for social justice, we rely heavily on the services that the Critical Path Project provide.

In addition to the hosting of our website and email addresses, the Critical Path Project provides invaluable technical advice and services. Their staff are highly qualified and extremely helpful, patient and kind. We rely heavily on their expertise as well as their generosity. We receive hosting and services free of cost, which allows us to direct our own funding to our programs.

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We realize that financial times are difficult in the current economic climate but we hope you will have the foresight to ensure that essential services are retained for the best of the City of Philadelphia. The digital divide is not going away. For small organizations like ours, Critical Path has been a vital resource in bridging this divide.

Sincerely,

Ellen Somekawa  
Executive Director, Asian Americans United

---

I recently learned of the loss of funding for Critical Path, and I am alarmed!

Our dear friend, Kiyoshi worked diligently to offer this service to so many of us in the community. It was his vision that people have access to information and services in order to live healthy and to make informed safe decisions.

Over the years I used Critical Path in my work (local, national and international) and my personal life. The students, families and professionals that I have introduced to Critical Path have found the information and services to be of great benefit.

To cut Critical Path services or to silence Critical path would leave so many people in the dark. What would we do? What would Kiyoshi do?

We need a miracle!

Sincerely,  
Judith Peters  
HIV activist



PHILADELPHIA  
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To Whom It May Concern:

For the past 14 years, the non-profit I helped found - the Youth Health Empowerment Project - has relied on the essential services provided by Critical Path Internet Services. In addition, over the past decade and a half I have relied on Critical Path for my own email and internet services.

As the President of the Northern Liberties Neighbors Association, and a member of the Wireless Philadelphia Advisory Committee, I am keenly aware of how real the "digital divide" is, and how important services like Critical Path are to giving low- and moderate income youth and families access to the kind of information many of us take for granted in this era of the always-on, high-speed internet.

The de-funding of Critical Path would be a catastrophe for working Philadelphians, at-risk youth, and a significant portion of Philadelphia's nonprofit infrastructure. Whatever the problems of DHS, Critical Path's excellent services are not part of them. Please do not penalize our communities and our nonprofits by de-funding Critical Path.

Respectfully,  
Matt Ruben

President, Northern Liberties Neighbors Association Co-founder, Youth Health Empowerment Project Member, Wireless Philadelphia Community Advisory Committee (writing as an individual, institutional affiliations listed for identification purposes only)

---

Dear Mayor Nutter,

We at Training for Change (TfC) would like to share with you the importance of the Critical Path Project for our work. For nearly 17 years, TfC has trained progressive activists and social change trainers in the tools of effective facilitation using democratic group process; communication across cultures, class and race; building coalitions among groups that often in-fight; and cross-generational mentoring. Renowned non-violent activist and author George Lakey, a resident of Philadelphia for 40 years, built TfC into an internationally-recognized center where people receive the highest-quality training to strengthen their social change movements.

Central to our growth and impact has been our website, for which Critical Path has been the server for 15 years. We run a complex site with multiple layers of tool and publication offerings, notices of upcoming workshops, archived materials, and articles recently-written by our trainers. Hardly a week goes by that we don't receive a phone or e-mail message testifying to the



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usefulness of the website for on-the-ground trainers and activists. We know we have an impact.

Without Critical Path's expert and patient assistance, Training for Change's positive impact in Philadelphia and beyond would have been reduced by at least 50% in my estimation.

We urge you, along with many of our peers who have also contacted you, to retain funding for Critical Path Project.

Sincerely and with respect,

Erika Thorne  
Training Associate

---

Dear Mayor Nutter,

My name is Andrea Lamour I am hostess of the tv show My World Lamour on channel 80 Comcast. Using Critical path as a tool enabled me to get my research and information needed to complete taping of most of my shows to date. Being a long time survivor of HIV myself along with many others, use the critical path services as a way of promoting quality of life. I am proud of the fact that I am the only transexual localy to have a television show but imagine what others like myself could do with the continuation of this program. It is not a luxury it is a necessity, that allows people who are infected or affected by HIV to keep up with mainstream society and do great things. Please remember quantity of life means little without quality.

Thank you for your time  
Andrea Lamour  
Miss Philly Black Pride 08

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Yes Critpath.org is apart of me I can find out information about the Virus that I live with no other web site has this it also helps me with every day living whating to live a healthy live and helps me give information to other's who can't get out for one reason or another it is needed it is part of me just like Phila Fight.

Kim Dorsey

---

Scott Tucker  
329 South Sycamore Ave  
Los Angeles, CA 90036

Mayor Michael Nutter  
City Hall  
Philadelphia, PA 19107

Dear Mayor Nutter,

Please do all in your power to preserve funding and support for the Critical Path System.

Critical Path serves two great purposes, and both are bound together. This system allows many people on low or restricted incomes to get the information they need to live better lives and to be active citizens. In the case of health care and emergency social services, this can often be life changing and indeed life saving information.

At the same time, Critical Path is a model of a decentralized and democratic broadcasting network. This is an essential tool for creating communities through communication. At low cost, this projects pays out high social dividends. Critical Path helps many community groups make the most of their limited budgets and resources.

Allow me to add a personal note here. Though I now live in Los Angeles, my home for over thirty years was Philadelphia. Kiyoshi Kuromiya was the creative spirit behind Critical Path, and he was a great believer in giving we, the people, the tools we need to find our common causes. He was also a friend and fellow worker in many health care projects, and his memory remains precious to many people round the world.

Critical Path is one of the practical foundations of democracy in the city of Philadelphia. It is also a model of free communication which should be emulated in other towns and cities. Please help preserve Critical Path for the good of the citizens of Philadelphia, and for the good of democracy.

Sincerely,

Scott Tucker,  
Writer and editor of Open Letter Online



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Since starting at Philadelphia FIGHT eleven years ago I have been enormously impressed by the service and support of Critical Path. Our organization uses the service for all of our email address and access to the internet. It is such a pleasure to go on the internet through Critical Path and have a screen that is devoid of all advertising. Little did I know the breadth of the services that Critical Path provides prior to this crisis in funding. Critical

Path has been providing website support to so many organizations that need this service and who without it will be forced to add yet another line item to their budget and have to raise funds for it adding to the burden. I want to add my passionate cry to have these funds reinstated so that Critical Path can continue to do the good work that it has done since the early 1990's.

Terry Trudeau, HR Director  
Philadelphia FIGHT  
1233 Locust St.  
Philadelphia, Pa 19107  
215-985-4448 x 104  
215-985-4952 (fax)

---

We just started our non-profit, The Tribe of Life. I was just asking Mr. Okras for some advice and help. It seems when they start cutting things the poor is always on the cutting board. We are told to do things for ourselves and when we do it seems as if the rug is pulled out from underneath us.

I wish I did have the monetary means of help, but as I said we aren't even situated yet. Having places to advertise on the web is very important, and I hope they realize this. I do hope there is someone out there who understands the importance of your help and pitch in to help you this time.

We'll be praying for you,  
Mr. Anthony Williams  
"The Tribe of Life"

---

The Critical Path AIDS Project bridges the digital divide for people with AIDS and their supporters. It was founded by a person with AIDS and has always been a trusted, independent and highly accessible resource for people with AIDS and activists. Because it is free and provides free tech support, Critpath affords internet access for people with HIV including low-income people of color, women, MSM, and recovering IVDUs---either in the privacy of their own homes or in the supportive atmosphere of Philadelphia FIGHT's AIDS library. Critpath enables low-income people with no previous computer experience to access sophisticated health and advocacy resources, work with experienced activists, and become experienced activists themselves. When I attend national and international conferences and people ask me about my email address, I always proudly cite this history: That Critical Path was the first and only PWA-founded service to provide free internet services, free email addresses, and access to free lists for every person with HIV and



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Don Ellerman, PhD

Kiyoshi Kuromiya

Jonathan Lax

Greg Loos, MSW

William Millet, MD

West



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activist in the city of Philadelphia. That is an amazing thing, and since the birth of Critical Path has been an essential part of the powerhouse of Philadelphia AIDS activism on a local, national and international scale.

Kate Krauss

Director, The AIDS Policy Project

web site owner, list owner and list subscriber to multiple critpath lists

I am writing as an individual user of Critical Path to access the internet at home. My husband and I are income-limited Seniors, and we cannot afford commercial servers such as Verizon: we even cut out our long distance telephone service. Luckily, Critical Path still flies on our low cost local phone service.

I received a reconditioned computer from NTR when I was enrolled as a Senior Citizen at CCP learning how to use the computer .

Without Critical Path, I would not have home access to the internet. When Critical Path was occasionally 'down', I used the Free Library Internet access. But with its 30 minute limit per day, I realize how fortunate I am to have the unlimited home access made possible by Critical Path.

I don't think I have to list for you how important internet access is for retired Seniors. Just one example: as the number and size of newspapers and periodicals shrink, electronic news is the only path left for thorough news reading, the only alternative to new-bite TV.

If I can help in any way, let me know.

Sincerely yours,  
Charlotte Elsner  
Phila. PA 19104

Critical Path is an important connection for me to the world as it is for thousands of other Philadelphia individuals and organizations. It would be missed if this group were forced to shut down. Please Mayor Nutter, I believe that Critical Path is one of the valuable special treasures of the Philadelphia region that it matters to keep going forward.

Iden Rosenthal

Mt. Airy

---

I purchased the computer and the internet for life from a charter school which no longer house the program, but to have critpath.org and my internet provider has been a great help to my children education. My children use to have to go to the public library to do research for projects and would have to wait in line for a computer and only have 30 minutes to do whatever they had to do, but critpath gave my children the opportunity to search the internet for whatever they needed and do it without rushing or waiting in line. We as parents need this for our childrens future.

Thank you, Tonia Terry

---

Dear Mayor Nutter,

I just received an email from the Critical Path Project about their loss of funding in your new budget and I hope to be one in a chorus of voices that will help to convince you to restore the funding.

I have used critpath services for more than 15 years now as a founding member of ACT UP Philadelphia and other activist groups and as an individual artist and activist. My dear friend Kiyoshi Kuromiya, the founder of the Critical Path Project understood the importance of the Internet far earlier than most other people and his vision helped to make ACT UP Philly the world-changing, life-saving organization that it still is today.

As an individual artist and activist I have used critpath services since my first days in front of a computer screen for email, Web hosting, Email mailing lists and for Internet access. The loss of these services will be a huge blow to the organizations and individuals who have been able, thanks to the continuing efforts of Philadelphia Fight, and to the intelligent use of funding by the City, to harness the power of the Internet as a force for positive social change. Thanks for your consideration in this matter,

Albo Jeavons



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Leonard West

Dear Mayor Nutter,

The undersigned individual urges you to find the means to support and fund the Critical Path Project.

As an individual with AIDS for over 20 years, I depend on the CriticalPath Project very much. Many of the organizations I have worked for in the past use this service, as well as myself, as our internet access. Not everyone has the resources to use the WiFi the City is proposing. Please read below and see what wonderful work is done, and what a dis-service to the community, the loss of CritPath would be.

For over 15 years, the Critical Path Project has been a major force in the Greater Philadelphia metropolitan region and worldwide in bridging the digital divide, offering free dial up Internet access and email accounts with no ads and no restrictions to over 10,000, mostly low-income families, as well as offering email, website hosting, and electronic mailing list hosting to local non-profit organizations, DHS family centers, and affinity groups throughout the nation.

They are currently the Internet backbone for the majority of HIV and LGBTQ organizations in Philadelphia, and thousands of members of these communities utilize their free services. This is particularly important for those who cannot afford high speed connections at home.

For the past six years, Critical Path has had a contract from DHS to provide Internet connectivity and host webpages for the Family Support Centers in the public schools. In addition to these functions, which Critical Path has always fulfilled, the contract has become part of the funding infrastructure that supports the Critical Path enterprise. This fiscal year, the contract was extended for two months, and is now due to end on August 31. While they recognize that DHS may have other funding needs at this time, they want to call to your attention the fact that this will be a devastating loss for Critical Path, and could result in their having to close down the entire network.

If they are forced to close it, the loss of Critical Path will resonate throughout Philadelphia

- Over 10,000 people in the greater Philadelphia Metro region, mostly low-income, would lose their Internet access from Critical Path, many of whom may not have the skills or knowledge to know how to get access any other way at this time.
- Thousands of people would lose access to their email accounts and the data saved in their inboxes and folders, including staff at organizations many of which receive funds from the City of Philadelphia, such as GALAEI, ASIAC, BEBASHI, The AIDS Law Project, Philadelphia FIGHT, and nearly 25 more.



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- Over 100 electronic Mailing lists, with thousands of local subscribers, many of which are key ways in which the non-profit community, educators, HIV researchers, and low-income Philadelphians discuss topics of importance to them and spread and receive information, will be shut down and forced to find another way to manage their lists.
- Nearly 75 websites, the majority of which are non-profits funded by the city of Philadelphia, such as Project SAFE, CHOICE, COLOURS, Asian Americans United, and many more, will be shut down and forced find money in their budgets to pay for hosting and rapidly find an alternative solution. Shutting down these websites, for even a short time means that those in the community, will not have access life-saving information.

A list of the organizations that currently utilize critical path is attached.

We urge you to find the means to refund the Critical Path Project and by doing so put digital inclusion at the top of your agenda. In order to more fully describe the Critical Path system and the important role it plays, they are requesting a meeting with you, along with a small representation of the organizations and individuals represented. They will contact your office for your response.

I personally thank you for your action and leadership.

Sincerely

**ROGER VANDRAGT**  
1427 West Girard Ave, Apt. 1R  
Philadelphia, PA 19130  
(215) 769-5983

---

Dear Mayor Nutter,

This letter explains why the Critical Path Project is a needed service for some of our city's most vulnerable citizens. In addition to my administrative work with the Lax Center, I am a psychotherapist to clients who suffer mental illness, substance abuse problems, and HIV/AIDS. They often are very socially marginal individuals who have little access to resources. It has taken a great deal of time to assist these clients to acclimate to using the internet as a tool to be more involved in the world. The benefits of these efforts are great. For example, one woman, recovering from crack addiction, is able to attend on-line Narcotics Anonymous meetings because she has internet access through Critical Path. I work with a man, who has limited cognitive capacity, but, because a Critical Path Project support person repeatedly demonstrated how to use Critpath email, is now able to communicate with his family in another state. A third client, an immigrant, is able to contact his family in South America. All of these clients struggle with depression, isolation, and feeling unwanted. Without on-going support for Critical Path, these vulnerable people will



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Leonard West

loose important social and psychological supports in their lives. I urge you to do everything in your power to restore the funding of the Critical Path Project.

Sincerely,  
Kevin Moore

Kevin Moore, PsyD  
Administrative Director of the Lax Center  
Director of the Diana Baldwin Clinic  
Philadelphia FIGHT  
215-985-4448 x121

---

Critical Path is important to so many low-income people Mayor Nutter must find funding for this program. I am, Wendy Harper NTR's Director of programs for Seniors; as a city employee, working for over twenty years with the Board of Pensions and Retirement I have seen first hand the devastation older adults face, which often is due to the lack of information. I founded a series of computer training sessions on my own several years ago and joined forces with NTR to help formalize my efforts. Working with volunteers from the City of Philadelphia, Independent Blue Cross, several Hispanic organizations, Project Shine (Temple Univ.) to name a few, The Senior Technology Awareness Program (STAP) has been offering training programs at the city's senior centers. NTR has raised funding to provide a limited number of computers to her students. Connectivity is a vital component for gathering information to make an informed decisions. Critical Path is the only means of connectivity for most of my students without this access low-income older adult especially those with mobility issues will be unable to easily find information regarding benefits eligibility, medical issue, personal interest or just stay in touch with family and friends( and avoid the isolation that plagues many seniors).

I can not speak enough of how important Critical Path is to STAP. Once again, I urge the Mayor to find the funding to continue this important program for the low-income community of our City.

Sincerely,

Wendy Harper  
215-686-1460

---

I have been a user of Critical Path since the late 1980s when I served as Editor-in-Chief of *AIDS Insurance Reports*, during which I found the organization's bbs to be an excellent informational resource and a medium for exchange of ideas. It is important, in my opinion, that funding be maintained for Critical Path to continue serving the community and its fight against the AIDS epidemic.



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*Leonard Levin, MS, MBA, RM(AAM), M(ASCP)*

*Administrative Director of Laboratory Services*

*Capital Health System*

*Trenton, NJ*

Dear Mayor Nutter,

We at Training for Change (TfC) would like to share with you the importance of the Critical Path Project for our work. For nearly 17 years, TfC has trained progressive activists and social change trainers in the tools of effective facilitation using democratic group process; communication across cultures, class and race; building coalitions among groups that often in-fight; and cross-generational mentoring. Renowned non-violent activist and author George Lakey, a resident of Philadelphia for 40 years, built TfC into an internationally-recognized center where people receive the highest-quality training to strengthen their social change movements.

Central to our growth and impact has been our website, for which Critical Path has been the server for 15 years. We run a complex site with multiple layers of tool and publication offerings, notices of upcoming workshops, archived materials, and articles recently-written by our trainers. Hardly a week goes by that we don't receive a phone or e-mail message testifying to the usefulness of the website for on-the-ground trainers and activists. We know we have an impact.

Without Critical Path's expert and patient assistance, Training for Change's positive impact in Philadelphia and beyond would have been reduced by at least 50% in my estimation.

We urge you, along with many of our peers who have also contacted you, to retain funding for Critical Path Project.

Sincerely and with respect,  
Erika Thorne  
Training Associate



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Mayor Michael Nutter  
City Hall  
Philadelphia, PA 19107

August 18, 2008

Re: Funding for Critical Path Project

Dear Mayor Nutter:

It has come to my attention that Critical Path, the organization that has supported our civic association's website and listserve for the past decade, may be losing its funding due to city budget cuts. The contract that Critical Path presently has with the City through DHS expires on August 31<sup>st</sup>.

Our civic association relies upon free services such as those extended to us by Critical Path in order to make up the gap between income from membership dues and other fund raising efforts. I know that many other nonprofit organizations are in the same position.

For this reason, I urge you to fund Critical Path so that this worthy organization might continue to serve the thousands of Philadelphia citizens as it has for the past fifteen years.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

President

Scott Wilds

Vice President

Rev. Ernest McNear

Treasurer

David Michelson

Christine M. Schwarz, President

Medical Director

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