



By Marion Gee

MEET KELLY CARLISLE: Woman Warrior for East Oakland's Underserved Youth

Kelly Carlisle has been seeking a life's mission for a long time. At 9 years old, she had nothing to do, nowhere to go, no program to join that her family could afford. "I remember feeling lost, wondering what am I going to be and where am I going to go?"

Even after attending college and working during the dotcom boom in the Bay Area, she still felt she needed a mission and decided to join the Navy shortly before 9/11. "I didn't want to just be a consumer. I wanted to be something that made a difference."

During the long nights on-board her ship, she discovered Stephen King's *Dark Tower* series and Tamora Pierce's *Song of the Lioness*. The books cemented her determination to be a woman warrior, like the main protagonists of these books. At the same time, she questioned whether the Navy was the right vehicle to make a difference in the world.

Then, a series of random events sparked her own quest, like the characters of the novels she loved, for justice and opportunity in East Oakland. When Kelly returned to the Bay Area she decided to start a garden with her daughter on their balcony. Shortly after, she read several articles highlighting Oakland's 40% high school drop out rate and the FBI's ranking of Oakland as the 5th most dangerous U.S. city. Suddenly, her mission became apparent: start a community garden for youth to learn about nutrition, food, and themselves, providing that alternative path she never had.

Kelly immediately bought the book *Non-Profit Kit for Dummies* and followed its first instruction: Tell everyone! Through family she eventually connected with Cynthia Armstrong, Director of the Tassafaronga Recreation Center in East Oakland, who was interested in starting a garden at the Center. Kelly recalls the fateful meeting fondly; "Cynthia marched me out here and said you can have all of this!"



In just three short years, Kelly Carlisle (above left) went from launching Acta Non Verba to meeting President Barack Obama. Official White House Photo by Amanda Lucidon

She had the idea, the partners, the place, and the name, Acta Non Verba: Youth Urban Farm Project. Now Kelly needed financial support to get the project off the ground. In 2011, Rose Foundation's Northern California Environmental Grassroots Fund, one of the first places to which Kelly applied, recognized her passion and gave Acta their first grant.

Since then it's been a whirlwind of success on the farm, with the kids, and in the media. On the ¼ acre they grow a variety of produce including cilantro, squash, strawberries, kale, tomatoes and more. Since 2011 over 200 kids have participated in their summer and spring camps.

Now there is more demand than they can meet. New pilot programs like a food stand and Community Supported Agriculture box are underway.

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New Fund to Direct Penalty Money to Community-Based Central Valley Water Projects

By Jasmine Amons

Drought. It's on many people's mind this year, as 2014 is set to be the warmest recorded in California. Drought has ominous implications in the Central Valley, a vulnerable region of the state, where farmworkers earn a paltry \$13,800 a year on average, and, in dry years, communities risk running out of drinking water.

With the drought complicating issues in the Valley, directing funding to the already hard-hit region becomes especially crucial. "Water tables are dropping," Andrew Altevogt, Assistant Executive Officer of the Regional Water Board, noted. "More and more ...

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LISTENING TO GRASSROOTS VOICES

By Tim Little, Executive Director

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The car thermometer reads 108°, Rose Foundation President Jill Ratner, our son Woody, and I are standing in the blazing sun in a community farm field in Shafter, CA. Surrounded by tomatoes, squash, peppers and berries, we've come to the heart of the Central Valley to experience Woody's summer internship with the Center on Race, Poverty and the Environment (CRPE), a Central Valley-based non-profit that combines cutting edge environmental justice legal services with Cesar Chavez-style organizing tactics. Woody is helping one of their local affiliates, the Committee for a Better Shafter, develop a plan to help some of the Valley's poorest residents grow food to eat and sell.

It's ironic, but if you are a farmworker in the Central Valley, chances are you can't eat the food from the fields where you work all day. Even worse, food in the store is expensive, and often many miles away. CRPE is helping local campesino families use their agricultural skills to break the poverty cycle.

In foundation lingo, towns like Shafter are called "disadvantaged communities," and they are. Their drinking water has unsafe levels of arsenic. In the midst of one of the great breadbaskets of the world, many families go hungry. They breathe some of the worst air in the country. Wages are rock bottom, but they have strong assets too – a vital community spirit, fierce pride in their homes, families and the place they live. And they are expert farmers. The garden is a symbol of that spirit and proof of their skills.

Rose Foundation specializes in awarding grants in disadvantaged communities, and we regularly get asked to speak about our community-centered grantmaking approach. To me, it boils down to this: regardless of the particular issue, community members are the experts, not us. They are experts at the air they breathe, the water they drink, the neighborhoods they live in and the wild places they love.

In our work bridging the spaces among communities, philanthropy, business and government, I often see the powerful institutions that shape our nation dismissing community voices as inconvenient and uninformed. That's a mistake.

Community members have personal knowledge of environmental impacts and offer creative solutions that put people first. We're proud of our grantmaking and programs that put community experts and voices front and center. It may not always be easy to listen, but it's the right thing to do. 🌱



Woody with Anabel Marquez from Committee for a Better Shafter in their community garden.



Welcome Danielle Beecham

We are excited to welcome Danielle Beecham, our new Grants & Administrative Assistant who supports

our grants programs' administration as well as Executive Director, Tim Little. Before joining our team, she gained grant administration and project coordination experience at Stanford University's School of Medicine. Danielle graduated with a B.A. in International Relations from San Francisco State University and studied for a year at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University in Port Elizabeth, South Africa. She is passionate about grassroots approaches to social justice and believes that one of the cornerstones of any sustainable society is protection of health and the environment.



Thank you & Farewell Myesha Williams

For five years, we were honored to work with Myesha

Williams, who poured her heart and soul into the *New Voices Are Rising* program, helping the program grow and adapt. From taking students to testify before the California Air Resources Board, to helping students fill out college applications, and showing teens how to build power in their communities, no challenge was too big or small in growing the next generation of youth environmental justice leaders in Oakland. We look forward to tracking her promising career and hearing about her continued successes with Prevention Institute.



Kelly posing with her youth participants for the photo that graced *Sunset Magazine's* Best of the West in March. Image courtesy of David Fenton at www.davidfenton.com

“Kelly Carlisle served our country in the Navy... And in a tough part of Oakland, California, she started an urban farm which Michelle would appreciate very much... thanks to Kelly, these boys and girls are not only learning the value of hard work... they’re changing how they think about themselves and opening their minds to what’s possible in their lives.” — President Barack Obama

With Kelly’s help, thirty youth participants opened savings accounts. While the farm stand proceeds are still small (last year netted \$764), 100% of those proceeds go directly into the kids’ savings accounts. Most importantly, to Kelly, the “work is showing children that there is something, some alternative to what they see every day. I hope that the children are learning that your passion can take you places... and change your life.”

Achieving this success wasn’t always easy. Kelly faced a lot of the growing pains like developing a Board of Directors. With these challenges, Kelly found Rose Foundation to be her most hands-on, supportive funder. “Rose Foundation is visionary. You recognized Acta was scrappy, you believed in our vision, and you provided patience and support, helping us succeed and understanding that while we had the passion, we didn’t come to this work with a degree in non-profit management.”

With our Grassroots Fund training, hands-on mentorship and support from Rose Foundation staff through our Community Leadership Project grant, Kelly grew and structured her board, enhanced her fundraising, and developed her leadership skills through the Rockwood Leadership Institute.

While attending Rockwood, Kelly made a friendly new connection that resulted in her meeting President Barack Obama! When asked about her take on the chance encounter Kelly explained, “Be nice to everyone you meet because you never know what amazing things can come of it.”

The President is a relative latecomer in recognizing Kelly’s successes. She was featured in numerous media outlets including

The New York Times and ABC, and was even named the “Best in the West” in *Sunset Magazine’s* March edition.

Over the past 20 years, Rose Foundation has awarded more than \$25 million in grants to community groups through our various grantmaking funds, each with distinct criteria and requirements. It’s a little complicated, so this segment, “Get to Know Our Grantmaking Funds!”, we highlight the grantmaking funds we administer and how they support our communities and the environment.

COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP PROJECT

In 2009, Rose Foundation received a \$1 million grant from the Community Leadership Project (CLP), a joint effort of the Packard, Irvine, and Hewlett Foundations to build the capacity of community-based organizations serving low-income communities of color. As a part of CLP, Rose Foundation supports 9 organizations (including Acta Non Verba featured on the left) from the San Francisco Bay Area over a 3-year period to help them strengthen their leadership, become more financially stable and adaptable to changing conditions.

Speaking to Kelly recently, she was still riding high from her meeting with the President, yet her first thought was, “Does this mean I have peaked? Is it all downhill from here?” We don’t think so – we know there is so much more we can expect from Kelly and Acta. The name of her organization is the perfect embodiment of Kelly and her quest – “Deeds not words” (the motto of the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy) and, in Kelly’s book of deeds, there is still more to be done. 🌱

Featured CLP Grantee People Organizing to Demand Environmental and Economic Rights (PODER)

PODER is a San Francisco-based group that organizes Latino immigrant families and youth to achieve healthy and just neighborhoods and build local community and political power to achieve real systemic change. Among other projects, PODER partnered with SF Bicycle Coalition, SF Police Department, and others to host a series of Bike Build Convivios (pictured), where community members get together to refurbish unclaimed bicycles for the community and learn about biking in the city.

To find out more, go to podersf.org or like them at facebook.com/podersf.



To find out more or get involved with Acta Non Verba, go to anvfarm.org.
To learn more about the Grassroots Fund, check out rosefdn.org/grassrootsfund.

NEW VOICES ARE RISING HEATS UP THIS SUMMER!



New Voices Are Rising's annual Summer Institute started July 1st, and our students have done so much in five short weeks: conducting water monitoring tests on Lake Merritt, performing creek restoration field work, touring the Mokelumne River watershed with Friends of the River, and even learning how to make a delicious apple cobbler using cardboard, foil, and the power of the sun!

FIELD TRIPS



Whether it was pulling invasive weeds at Heron's Head Park with The Bay Institute, tracing their water source up the Mokelumne River to Pardee Dam with Friends of the River and Foothills Conservancy, or touring communities right next to the Chevron Refinery in Richmond with Global Community Monitor, the students got to see and experience a lot of the issues

they were learning about from climate change, to water quality, to sustainability.

The highlight for most of the students was the Courtland Creek Restoration, with East Bay Academy of Young Scientists, a day of trash pick up and invasive weed pulling behind Fremont High School.

The students loved to see immediately how much their hard work made a difference in their own backyard. After hours of clean up they were able to see the stream begin flowing again, after it had been choked up by trash and invasive species.

The students loved to see immediately how much their hard work made a difference in their own backyard.

EXTERNSHIPS



Beyond working with *New Voices* staff, the youth participants also worked two days a week as externs with local non-profits and government agencies to get a sense of what it is like to work in the environmental field.

One host site, Communities for a Better Environment, plugged their externs into the "Revitalize Oakland" Campaign, developing messaging, a strategic plan, and creating a video to inspire youth to engage and take action on environmental justice issues in Oakland. The video is yet to be released, but be sure to follow us @rosefoundation on Twitter and we will announce it!



HANDS-ON EXPERIENCE



For 5 weeks, the students engage on the following themes: environment justice, water, food justice, transportation, and advocacy.

Mixing traditional lessons, with team-building, researching, writing, and hands-on lessons, the students get a taste of the many flavors that make up the environmental movement.

Solar Oven Construction & Cook-Off

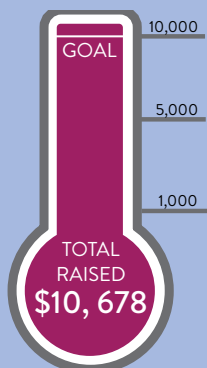
Michael Gutman of REACH the Future came in to teach our students how to construct a solar oven and cook in it. Then he taught them how to perform their own easy energy audits, all while a sweet afternoon dessert

cooked outside during the nice July warm spell.

Public Transit Advocacy Day

New Voices teamed up with Genesis, Urban Habitat, Public Advocates and the 6 Wins Network for a day of Public Transit Advocacy across the Bay Area in July. The students attended a community advocacy training in the morning, then split up into teams to talk to Metropolitan Transportation Commissioners (MTC) to urge them to expand the operating funding needed to increase transit service levels and ridership. It was quite the introduction to community advocacy for the youth! 🌱

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT



As the Summer Institute closes, we want to say a big THANK YOU who responded to our call for support by mail, email, social media and at the Film Festival. Your donations and support helped Oakland youth learn to be leaders on these pressing environmental issues. We could not do this program without all of your help!

STUDENTS OF NEW VOICES

Here is a quick glimpse at two student participants – the next generation of community leaders in Oakland.



Hasani, 17
Oakland High School

New Voices really opened my eyes to the problem of environmental racism in Oakland. It helped me to notice that in high-income neighborhoods, there are healthy food stores and barely any factories. In low-income neighborhoods, it is the exact opposite. It was also really eye-opening going to Richmond and observing the environmental racism firsthand. I hope one day I will be able to apply all that I have learned from *New Voices* to a future career in civil engineering.



Elizabeth, 17
Oakland High School

Thank you all for letting me have this opportunity to further my knowledge in a more professional environment. I have learned how it feels to work for several hours. I used to look at my parents and not appreciate it because I thought it wasn't that much but they work 12 hours a day, everyday. I only worked 8 hours a day for a month and I feel like I've done so much in life when this is not even the beginning, but a preparation to what awaits us all. I now know to honor your sleep and go to sleep early because you need to be good for work. All these little things I learned, are life lesson skills that will be really useful later on in life.

To see more about our students' experiences, Like us on [Facebook.com/RoseEnvironment](https://www.facebook.com/RoseEnvironment) and Follow us on Twitter ([@rosefoundation](https://twitter.com/rosefoundation)).





Laurel Firestone and Susana de Anda, co-founders of Community Water Center.

people[’s]...wells are running dry. They just don’t have water.”

Stories about water in the Valley tend to tell the same, unbelievable story – campesinos and their families waiting patiently at community wells after work to fill up

gallon jugs or spending their limited funds on bottled water just to meet their basic needs. Some of the water that does come out of the tap is a thick, murky brown, a sample of which used to be on exhibit at the Center for Disease Control Headquarters in Atlanta. Many wells are contaminated by arsenic, nitrate, and a host of unsavory bacteria. But there are efforts underfoot to change all of that.

The Central Valley Water Quality Community Grants Program is a new, cutting-edge grants program hosted at Rose Foundation with the purpose of supporting disadvantaged communities working on Central Valley and Sacramento Valley water quality issues. The Program was the brainchild of community groups and the Central Valley Regional Water Board, the state agency regulating water quality in the region.

“We had been advocating the Water Board to address the needs of disadvantaged communities...for probably close to a decade,” says Laurel Firestone, Co-Director of Community Water Center, a Rose Foundation grantee working to secure access to safe drinking water in the Central Valley. “We discussed funding opportunities and one of the programs [the Water Board] has is the Supplemental Environmental Projects.”

Supplemental Environmental Projects, known as “SEPs,” are environmentally beneficial projects that polluters (dischargers) can undertake or fund as restitution for polluting water sources. Traditionally, these projects supported much larger infrastructure, restoration, research or monitoring activities. “The way it was set up, SEPs were controlled by the dischargers and they directed [the money] where they wanted it to go,” Laurel explained.

Laurel and staff at the Regional Water Board wanted to guarantee that these SEPs – which are intended to benefit the communities directly impacted by pollution – didn’t only fund polluter’s pet projects.

“The one thing that we identified was not having a good list of [community] projects,” Robert L’Heureux, Enforcement Coordinator at the Regional Water Board admitted. “Disadvantaged communities also don’t have the wherewithal to propose projects on their own or enter into SEP projects,” Andrew added.

But these disadvantaged communities need this funding the most. “It’s hard for these communities to access resources... and develop the

kind of planning needed to be eligible for grants [and SEP money],” observed Laurel.

This sparked the idea for a specialized grant program. “We came up with the idea of [having] a third party to help administer SEPs together,” Laurel said. “We immediately thought of Rose Foundation. Through the Grassroots Fund, Rose has been able to build a network of real community-based, grassroots groups in the Central Valley. I don’t know any other foundation that could handle settlements that also has the breadth and reach to connect with really disparate, small, but vital community-based organizations.”

The Water Board, which was less familiar with Rose Foundation, became excited about the idea as well. “Rose is an organization with a lot of experience funding projects akin to what is important to our community and to our board members,” added Robert.

Rose Foundation held a pilot of the Central Valley Water Quality Community Grants Program last year and is running an open application process this fall. The 2014 Pilot Program’s Summary List shows the potential of this work. Groups are proposing to replace or rehabilitate contaminated wells, train local citizens to monitor their own water quality, and to reduce the impacts of contaminants.

The public health and economic benefits that can emerge from improving communities’ basic water sources are immeasurable. “It’s important...for public health to make sure that communities [and schools] can access safe drinking water,” Laurel explained. “It’s important for economic development. People can’t get loans or [start] small businesses if they don’t have a safe water supply. It reaches to every aspect of our society.”

The way the program is set up, however, the dischargers who have been sued by the Water Board must choose to direct funds to the Central Valley Water Quality Community Grants Program. While the Program “has the potential of being such a huge benefit and resource to the region,” Laurel says, it’s up to the dischargers to make the right choice, to keep money in the Valley and support safe drinking water projects serving communities that are typically overlooked and neglected. 🌱

[All the details and latest updates on this new pilot program can be found at rosefdn.org/centralwater.](http://rosefdn.org/centralwater)

Contaminated water that was on display at the CDC in Atlanta.



GRASSROOTS FUND BOARD GOES ON TOUR

On June 12, the Northern California Environmental Grassroots Fund Board, Rose Foundation staff, and other Grassroots Fund supporters were privileged to spend a full-day visiting some of our Grassroots Fund grantees in the East Bay to see their work in action!



Stop 1

Stop 1: The day kicked off with a stroll in the San Pablo Creek Watershed with SPAWNERS (San Pablo Watershed Neighbors Education & Restoration Society). Courtney Marshall, their Program Coordinator, showed us the river walk next to the El Sobrante Library and talked about their work on the site, including water quality monitoring, creek restoration workdays, a native plant demonstration garden and service-learning workdays for students.



Stop 2

Stop 2: Next stop was with Linda Schneider, Executive Director of Self-Sustaining Communities, (pictured) at one of their urban farms in Richmond. Sitting among the roaming chickens and rabbits, we learned about their work to help poor, urban Richmond neighborhoods become more self-sufficient, establish community gardens and provide seeds, tools, fruit trees, classes and chickens so residents can produce their own food.



Stop 3

Stop 3: We walked through another garden, this one in East Oakland, as Kelly Carlisle, Executive Director of Acta Non Verba: Youth Urban Farm Project, explained all that was growing on their quarter acre farm located in the City of Oakland's Tassafaronga Park. A panel of experts (pictured) from Oakland Food Policy Council, Sustainable Economies Law Center, Acta Non Verba and Phat Beets then discussed food justice and security issues facing Oakland.



Stop 4

Stop 4: Last but not least, we heard the truly grassroots efforts of Raptors are the Solution to ban rodenticides that are killing raptors, pets and other animals. Lisa Owens Viani, Co-Director, explained how they, along with other partners, pressured the California Department of Pesticide Regulation (DPR) to pull 4 rodenticides off the shelves to protect wildlife effective July 1, 2014. 🌱

A WILD & SCENIC® SUCCESS!

ROSE SELLS OUT OAKLAND'S FIRST WILD & SCENIC FILM FEST

Thanks to our supporters, the Wild & Scenic Film Festival kicked off on April 18 to a sold out crowd! We laughed out loud as a 6-year old narrated a coming of age tale with *The Scared is Scared*; we got inspired by our *New Voices Are Rising* film featuring alums Pamela and Eliezer as they navigate their paths as community advocates in Oakland; and we were angered to action by the devastating environmental and health impacts of fracking shown by the film *Backyard*.

We also heard from passionate *New Voices* alum Devilla Ervin and you generous supporters opened your wallets and donated another \$1500 to send a student through our Summer Leadership Institute – Thank you! We greatly appreciate you all coming out and supporting this event, Rose Foundation, and *New Voices Are Rising* – we hope you were as inspired as we were and we can't wait to see you again next year! 🌱

Check out all the photos at facebook.com/RoseEnvironment



MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

We will be bringing *Wild & Scenic Film Festival* back to Oakland in Spring 2015.

Interested in sponsoring, donating a silent auction item, or helping select the films for next year's film fest? Contact Marion Gee at mgee@rosefdn.org or call 510-658-0702 ext. 304.



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Founded in 1992, Rose Foundation for Communities and the Environment supports grassroots initiatives that inspire community action to protect the environment, public health and consumers, through grants to community-based organization and investment in our environmental justice youth leadership program.

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ON THE COVER: More than 200 students from K-8th grade have participated in Acta's educational programs on a 1/4 acre parcel of the Tassafaronga Recreation Center in East Oakland. Image courtesy of David Fenton at www.davidfenton.com

Upcoming Grant Opportunities & Application Deadlines

APPLICATIONS DUE **SEPTEMBER 15**
Puget Sound/Salish Sea Watershed Fund

APPLICATIONS DUE **OCTOBER 1**
California Watershed Fund

APPLICATIONS DUE **OCTOBER 15**
Consumer Financial Education Fund
(Invited Applicants)

APPLICATIONS DUE **OCTOBER 31**
Central Valley Water Quality Community
Grants Program (Invited Applicants)

APPLICATIONS DUE **NOVEMBER 1**
Grassroots Fund

APPLICATIONS DUE **NOVEMBER 15**
Cal Wildlands Grassroots Fund

Upcoming Events

OCTOBER 24, 2014

Grassroots Fund Convening
Grantees Register here:
rosefdn.org/grassrootsfund

SPRING 2015

Wild & Scenic Film Festival
& Rose Foundation Benefit
Comes Back to Oakland!



Enjoying the happy hour, silent
auction, films and more at our Wild &
Scenic Film Fest April 18.