

SPRING 2012



Rose Foundation

Supporting grassroots initiatives to inspire community action for environmental protection and public health.

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Rose Foundation

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Grassroots Fund Grantees Clockwise from top:

Friends of Del Norte is working to permanently protect Lake Earl, the largest freshwater lagoon on the West Coast.

Solar Richmond trains underemployed people in Richmond, CA to do solar installations, and then helps place them in green economy jobs.

The **Suisun Marsh Natural History Association's** environmental education program has served over 200,000 people since 1978.

Bridging the Grassroots Gap

By Tim Little

If not us, who? If not now, when?

That's what we asked ourselves nine years ago when we began to build a bridge across the chasm that separates most of organized philanthropy from the grassroots base of the environmental movement. As our *Northern California Environmental Grassroots Fund* looks back on awarding nearly \$2 million to more than 450 off-the-radar small groups from Crescent City to Bakersfield, these questions still ring true today.

Lifblood of the Environmental Movement

Volunteer-driven grassroots groups are the lifblood of the environmental movement. They have a direct personal stake in halting pollution, restoring wetlands, protecting wilderness, and educating the next generation of environmental leaders. They understand their local culture and politics. Their passionate volunteers can leverage a small grant into big wins. But most foundations don't fund these

SAVE THE DATE!

Spring Garden Party

To Kickoff Rose's 20th Anniversary
Sunday, May 20, 2012 • 3-6 pm

Live Jazz • Great Food
Silent Auction

Invitations
coming soon!



(Continued on back page)

New Voices Testimony Helps Decrease West Oakland Diesel Truck Pollution

UC Berkeley researchers recently credited California's tough port truck rules with cutting diesel particles in West Oakland truck exhaust by more than 50%, and reducing oxides of nitrogen from diesel trucks by 40%.



Victoria Ramirez, of Richmond High School, and Marisol Roque, of Mandela Academy, testify before CARB.

We are proud of the role our New Voices students played in this victory. Since 2007, they have spoken out at California Air Resources Board (CARB) regulatory hearings, seeking stricter clean port truck standards.

For decades, trucks that serve California ports have been the oldest, dirtiest trucks in the fleet. Sadly, these trucks also spend the most time in close proximity to residential neighborhoods near ports and along truck routes, where diesel exhaust contributes to increased risks of cancer or cardiovascular illness, and sends children to the hospital with asthma and other respiratory illnesses at rates several times the state average.

But in June 2010, after years of advocacy by community members and environmental allies, CARB finally required all trucks serving California's ports to meet new, stricter standards. (These regulations – adopted in December 2008 and implemented over 18 months – required truck owners to replace or retrofit old trucks that carried loads to and from California's ports.) Freight industry pressure continued, nonetheless, forcing the Board to consider dropping the new port truck standard at their December 2010 meeting.

Our allies and program partners tell us that the testimony by New Voices Are Rising students at CARB's December 2010 meeting was the deciding factor in convincing the Board to retain the tough port truck pollution control standards adopted in 2008, despite strong, organized and vocal industry pressure to scrap the regulation.

Congratulations to all our students on achieving this spectacular victory for clean air!

Young Leaders Help Plan for Our Future

By Jill Ratner

What's your vision for a healthy community? If you're like our *New Voices* students, here's what you might be thinking about:

- Parks, green spaces and trees throughout the neighborhood.
- All-ages community centers and a local library.
- Food markets that offer fresh food within walking distance.
- Walkable retail shopping areas with cafes and restaurants.
- A variety of affordable housing for current residents and families.
- Reliable, well-timed public transit.
- Bike lanes on main roads and safe pedestrian crossings.
- Good schools that everyone can walk to.

You can help our students make this vision real by joining them in participating in the Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS) Process.

Planning Green Communities

California's Sustainable Communities and Climate Protection Act of 2008 (SB 375) aims to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from driving 7% by 2020 and 15% by 2035. Cutting car emissions is key to fighting global warming in California – where nearly half the excess CO₂ in the air comes from cars and trucks. To reduce driving, SB 375 requires coordinated regional planning for transportation and housing development. This planning will make transit, walking, and biking real alternatives to driving. The law also sets another important goal – housing California's growing population – expected to grow 40% by 2035 – by planning for housing 100% of each region's projected population, without displacing current low-income residents.

Reshaping our Cities and Transit

The SB 375 planning process provides an opportunity to reshape city plans and zoning, and redirect transportation funding. New Voices Are Rising is part of the "Six Wins Coalition", a group of nonprofit organizations urging the Bay Area's regional planning agencies – the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) and the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) to plan truly sustainable development for the Bay Area. The coalition seeks plans that create walkable, bikable communities with access to local and regional transit, revitalize core neighborhoods without displacing current residents, provide economic opportunity and affordable housing, and reverse land use and transportation patterns that have pushed many working families out to distant suburbs.

Our Students' Vision

For New Voices Are Rising students, one of the most exciting possibilities is redesigning neighborhoods to create a sense of community. Stephen Vance, a senior at McClymonds High School, offers a vivid description of the kind of neighborhood he hopes will result from this planning process:

"Everyone's coming outside. You see kids playing and adults relaxing in the park. You see block parties and events. Neighbors come down and greet each other. You see people walking their dogs and shopping. You just see a vibrant community that you want to be a part of."

Still, students worry that new development may bring gentrification and displacement to their communities. Testifying at a public workshop in Dublin, Tanika O'Guinn, a senior at Oakland Technical High School, expressed concern that even mixed-income housing might cause existing businesses to be replaced with new ones where current residents can't afford to shop.

Not Everyone's Cup of Tea

Community displacement and social equity do not concern the most vocal critics of the SB 375 planning process. Outside the public workshop where Tanika spoke, a group of demonstrators chanted: "Equal justice NOT social justice" and "You ride a bike. Don't make me ride a bike." Planning opponents have shouted down meeting participants, intimidating people who disagreed with them. These critics adamantly oppose any effort to halt suburban sprawl through denser development. They also oppose efforts to protect open space at the edge of urban growth boundaries and beyond – equating protecting open space with taking private property without compensation.

Next Steps

The Bay Area's planning process has not yet produced any scenarios that address the equity concerns raised by New Voices and the Six Wins Coalition. In fact, unlike draft plans for Southern California and the Sacramento area, current Bay Area scenarios do not meet SB 375 greenhouse gas reduction targets, and are even less successful in planning housing for residents at all income levels. So we still have a lot of work to do – and we need your help!

At the end of March, MTC and ABAG plan to release a draft "preferred planning scenario" for public comment. Environmental review of that scenario begins in May. With enough public comment and participation by those of us who believe that climate change must be addressed, who value public transit, and who share New Voices students' vision – there is still time to seize this opportunity to create a healthier, more sustainable region, and a healthier, more sustainable California.

How to Get Involved

More information about how to engage in the SCS process can be found at: www.rosefdn.org/newvoices.

What I'm Doing With New Voices Are Rising

By Eliezer Mendoza

In February, I attended the Data Center's Environmental Justice Research Training Academy with Myesha [Williams], and 10 other environmental activists. It was a skills-based training for environmental justice groups.



Eliezer Mendoza is a senior at Oakland Street Academy and is interning with New Voices while he completes his senior research paper on environmental racism. He found out about New Voices through a fellow student who was part of the New Voices Summer Advocacy Institute.

Eliezer became interested in the topic of environmental racism in his junior year and has continued to learn about these issues and to explore what environmental justice might look like.

He is hoping to attend UC Berkeley next year to study architecture. He thinks that a good understanding of environmental issues will make him a well-rounded architect.

I didn't know that so many people looked at this problem from different perspectives – from community access to healthy food, to the pollution that makes people sick. It was an exciting training. I had the opportunity to learn useful tools and had fun. We learned through activities, games, and group discussions.

We discussed several scenarios. One was a fictional case study of a community near an oil refinery owned by Company X. We broke up into groups and addressed the issues of the community from different perspectives – gathering data, community health surveys, media outreach, alliance building and advocacy. We came up with a slogan of Company X is a Bad Neighbor and worked together to figure out how to get stories about what it's like living near this facility, and the different research tools we could use to do that. I learned a lot of good information, and this was perfect timing for me. I am writing

a research paper that focuses on environmental justice, and in it I talk about the Chevron refinery in Richmond. This experience gave me more ideas for my paper.

Environmental justice activist Michael James introduced us to participatory research. We learned how "research" has grown over the years and how communities are using it as a tool to validate what they already know from experience. One tool that I found useful was "mapping" – a strategy that gathers information that you can visually explore or present. Through this training I learned how to strengthen research questions and to apply various tools to my schoolwork and my life. Thank You!

Bridging the Grassroots Gap (continued from front page)

groups. They are perceived as too small, too new, or too risky. But local groups are an important component of any successful national or statewide environmental protection campaign, and they are often left out of the funding stream – this is the grassroots gap.

We are proud to say that in nine years, more than 25 prominent foundations have pooled a portion of their grant-making dollars with us to bridge that grassroots gap and utilize our efficient, collaborative strategy to leverage high-impact returns in conservation and environmental health.

Big Bang for the Buck

Operating on a user-friendly, quarterly grant cycle, Rose's Grassroots Fund strategically awards \$2,000 – \$5,000 grants to small "kitchen table activist" groups at the forefront of our state's environmental challenges. To find out more about these grantees, check out our searchable grants database: www.rosefdn.org/grantsdatabase.

More than Just Money

But as crucial as our financial lifeline is to under-resourced activists, one thing is certain – the work needs to continue even after the grant runs out. We're proud of our grantees who have used a grassroots grant to save agricultural land from being paved over in the Central Valley, or to build an environmental education program at a local school. But we also want each grantee to be stronger and more sustainable after our money is spent, so we attach a capacity building training program to each grant. All grantees receive scholarships to attend trainings on survival skills like bookkeeping, board development, media outreach and database management. We also convene them together to learn fundraising, communications, technology and strategy skills from each other and experts in the field.

Smart Investment

When we started the Grassroots Fund, our goal was to bridge the grassroots gap to give the community access to foundations whose doors are often closed to small and "scruffy" activist groups. But the foundations that participate in the Grassroots Fund reap big rewards too. Our funding partners benefit from Rose's extensive experience in community-focused grantmaking to efficiently pool their resources to penetrate deeply into communities, watersheds, and forests that they cannot reach on their own. They use the Rose Foundation as their "eyes and ears" to spot emerging new organizations and then nurture them into direct relationships with funding partners.

While originally designed to help foundations bridge the grassroots gap, many Rose donors have designated their gifts to the Grassroots Fund. Thank you for your generosity! In addition to helping enable community-based environmental work, you are helping us leverage money from big foundations towards the community. If you want to make a contribution to the Grassroots Fund, it's easy – just hit the donation button on our website and check the box for the Grassroots Fund.

2012 Grassroots Fund Goals

We have some ambitious goals for 2012. With your help, we can:

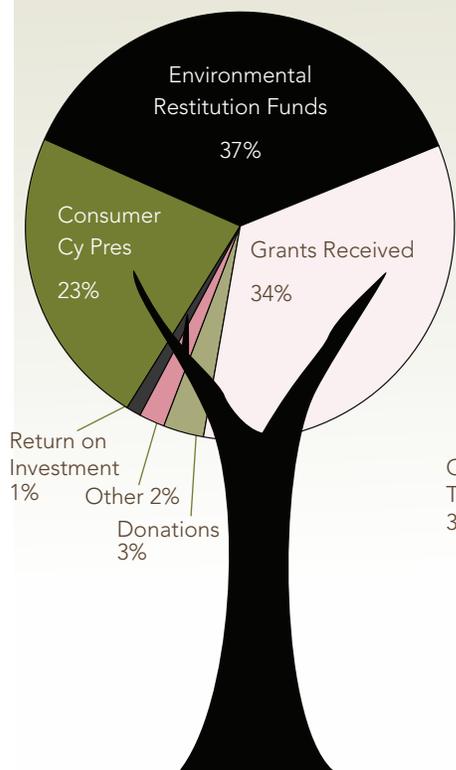
- Award at least 50 high-impact grants totaling \$200,000.
- Increase our capacity building and training program.
- Translate outreach materials and annual convening sessions into Spanish.
- Graduate groups ready for larger grants into relationships with funding partners.

In California, we have seen how environmental health and conservation initiatives that start here have the potential to ripple across the country. Collectively we have the resources, experience and responsibility to build the grassroots base of the environmental movement into a tremendous force for sustainability, conservation and environmental health.

If not us, who? If not now, when?

Financial Summary 2011

INCOME \$3,859,870



EXPENSES \$3,523,566

