



# Rose Foundation

*For Communities and the Environment*

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

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## Summer Grants Benefit Delta, Richmond Neighborhoods

*In the summer of 2007, the Rose Foundation awarded \$1.2 million in grants, primarily to organizations working to preserve or restore water quality in the Sacramento/San Joaquin River Delta, and to groups promoting environmental justice and watershed stewardship in the City of Richmond.*

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Above: AmeriCorps intern Genevieve Marsh helps the Sierra Nevada Alliance monitor upstream water quality. Photo: Do Lee

### Sacramento/San Joaquin Delta

The Delta has been the focus of intense media scrutiny, since it was discovered that populations of its key indicator fish species, Delta smelt, which had been in the millions, have dwindled alarmingly and appear close to extinction. As Bill Jennings, Executive Director of the California Sportfishing Protection Alliance, wryly commented, "Today we have reached the point where we could name the smelt rather than count them." The Sportsfishing Protection Alliance has sued many of the major Delta polluters, who are now compelled to engage in pollution reduction efforts as well as pay restitution. These payments helped fund the Rose Foundation's recent grants round. Grant recipients include:



Giant state water pumps are blamed for killing millions of Delta smelt.

- **Californians for Pesticide Reform**, organizing San Joaquin Valley farm worker communities to minimize pesticide runoff into the Delta.
- **Clean Water Fund**, working to reduce mercury in the Delta.
- **Sierra Nevada Alliance**, protecting the water quality of key tributaries that feed the Delta.



Left: The pristine Mokelumne River flows west towards the Delta. Photo: Tim Palmer

### Richmond Communities

Meanwhile, San Francisco Baykeeper and the West County Toxics Coalition confronted Veolia, charging that the international water conglomerate endangered public health and San Francisco Bay by mismanaging the City of Richmond's sewage system. A settlement requires Veolia to spend millions of dollars to upgrade Richmond's sewer system to stop overflows and spills. Through the Rose Foundation, a portion of Veolia's restitution monies have also been awarded to several neighborhood-based creek stewardship groups, as well as:

- **Blue Green Alliance**, forging a labor-environmental "green chemistry" partnership to promote solutions to oil refinery pollution in Contra Costa County.
- **Kids for the Bay**, bringing East Bay watershed education programs to Richmond's low-income urban schools.
- **Neighborhood House of North Richmond**, working with an environmental justice collaboration to reduce pollution and protect Richmond's environment.



Castro Elementary Students doing a creek clean-up  
Photo: Kids for the Bay



New Voices summer academy student, Christina McGhee (far right), urges the California Air Resources Board to adopt stronger controls on diesel pollution, as other New Voices students wait their turn to testify. Photo: Elizabeth de Rham.



New Voices summer interns after conducting a "Healthy Homes" inspection led by the Alameda County Lead Poisoning Prevention Program. Photo: Elizabeth de Rham.

## New Voices are Heard in Sacramento

In the early morning chill on Thursday, July 26th, a group of high school students stood outside a downtown Oakland office waiting for the van that would take them to Sacramento. All were interns with the Rose Foundation's New Voices Are Rising 2007 summer leadership academy – and they were meeting at 6:45 a.m. to make sure that they would get to the California Air Resources Board on time to support a hotly contested rule to cut diesel pollution from construction equipment and other heavy-duty off-road vehicles.

Diesel pollution contributes to two thousand premature deaths each year in California, and triggers tens of thousands of asthma attacks and other respiratory problems. At the hearing, the students quoted health statistics and reported their own observations and experiences with asthma, driving home the impacts of diesel pollution in their communities and throughout the state.

In the end, the Air Resources Board adopted the new rule despite strong industry opposition. This action will do more to protect public health in California than the entire package of diesel pollution control measures adopted by the ARB since the Board first identified diesel particulate as a toxic air contaminant in 2000.

Sixteen students from five Oakland high schools participated in this year's summer program. In addition to working with Rose Foundation staff, students "externed" two days each week with local non-profit or government agencies, including the Alameda County Lead Poisoning Prevention Program, Global Community Monitor, West Oakland Boys and Girls Club, Prescott Joseph Center for Community Enhancement, the Asian Pacific Environmental Network, Communities for a Better Environment, the California State Bar, and Bay Localize, where students helped plant a rooftop garden atop a middle school. Students rounded out their week registering voters in Oakland's chronically under-represented low-income communities.

## Clean-Fuel Buses Protect Students' Health



(From far right): The Sierra Club's Gordon Nipp looks on as Kern County Superintendent of Schools Larry Reider accepts a \$330,000 grant check from Rose Foundation Executive Director Tim Little. The grant helped Kern County buy four new school buses that run on compressed natural gas, eliminating diesel fumes, sparing the health of kids on the bus, and discharging 117 tons less air pollution over the course of their estimated service lives. Photo: Steve Talbot

## Welcome Elizabeth!

The Rose Foundation proudly welcomes our new associate, Elizabeth de Rham. Elizabeth leads sessions with the youth of New Voices Are Rising and is helping to plan future directions for the program. A Stanford graduate with a degree in Urban Studies, Elizabeth has worked previously with West Oakland's Ditching Dirty Diesel Collaborative, Youth Engaged in Leadership and Learning (YELL), and Business United in Investing, Lending, and Development (BUILD).

Photo: Jill Ratner



Our best wishes to Khailylah Jordan, who has left the Rose Foundation to complete her degree at Spelman College.