

New Voices and West Oakland Allies Announce Community Air Monitoring Program

(continued from front page)

Councilmember Nancy Nadel and Oakland city agencies, have secured important cleanup of street debris and controlled truck traffic from the facility, but concerns about toxic air pollution remain.

To help resolve the toxic threat, students and WOAM recently announced a new community-based air monitoring program that will target toxic pollution and other heavy metals emitted by CASS. Coached by Rose and the pollution watchdog group Global Community Monitor, neighbors and students have been trained to follow US EPA standards for taking air samples and will place portable air monitors throughout the neighborhood near CASS.

The community's work over the past two years prompted the Air Quality Management District to initiate limited monitoring of CASS. But AQMD's initial dismissive response, followed by slow progress, strengthened the neighbors' conviction that a parallel, community-based monitoring program is necessary to keep the pressure on regulators to do their job. This program is also a valuable opportunity for student engagement and learning.

New Voices staff will continue working with EXCEL students to support skill building in monitoring, results analysis, and communication with city agencies and the Air District.

Dirty Budget Deal for California

(continued from front page)

The Air Resources Board had previously adopted the diesel rule in a public process, based on scientific analysis and public comment, including testimony from Rose's New Voices Are Rising students. Our students were thrilled to be part of a victory that would allow every Californian to breathe cleaner air. To see the rule pushed back as part of a back-room deal is more than disheartening. It is infuriating. And it is wrong.

How could this happen? Instead of approving budgets by a regular majority vote like the legislatures of 47 other states, California requires a 2/3 vote in both the Assembly and the Senate. This "super-majority" requirement places extraordinary power in the hands of a few legislators.

This year, 40 of California's 119 legislators clung blindly to an ideological pledge not to raise taxes – despite an increasingly desperate shortfall in state revenues. The deal to end this stalemate was negotiated in secret – and then debated by the legislature literally in the dead of night. In the end, a handful of legislators extorted environmental cutbacks in exchange for their votes to close the budget deal.

This fiasco teaches a civics lesson that we ignore at our peril. California's super-majority requirement puts too much power in the hands of too few. It is time to eliminate the 2/3 requirement and bring the budget process back into the light of day. For clean air and clean government we need to get rid of the super-majority requirement. The sooner the better!



Rose Foundation

For Communities and the Environment

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

Spring 2009

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By Elizabeth de Rham



"CASS doesn't seem to care about the harm that they may be causing in terms of health issues for people who live in the neighborhood and youth, like us who go to school right down the street. We want our voices to be heard and to be a part of the community monitoring efforts to change this situation."
- Brittne Collins, Senior, EXCEL High School

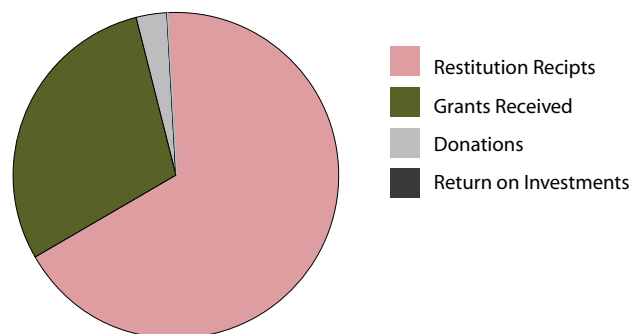
For two years, students from West Oakland's EXCEL High School have been pushing an industrial neighbor to clean up its act. In early 2008, they released findings of high lead levels in the air outside their classroom – just three blocks downwind of CASS, a scrap metal facility. The students met with concerned neighbors, who formed the West Oakland Air Monitors (WOAM). Students and neighbors, with the help of

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Top: Oakland Tribune reporter Cecily Burt (left) interviews New Voices students about air pollution concerns.
Bottom: New Voices student leader Jamelah Isaac explains the pollution monitoring project while Rose Foundation board member and Excel High School Law Academy Director Ina Bendich looks on.

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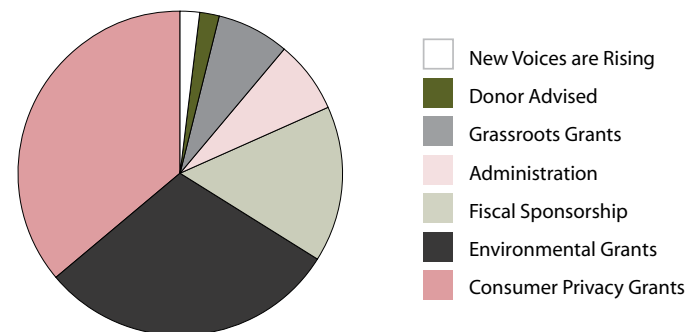
Income \$4,503,081



Income

Restitution Receipts	67%	\$3,031,276
Grants	29%	\$1,324,825
Donations	3%	\$127,797
Return on Investments	1%	\$19,183

Expenses \$4,303,225



Expenses

New Voices Are Rising	2%	\$96,600
Donor Advised	2%	\$105,973
Grassroots Grants	7%	\$321,119
Administration	7%	\$299,615
Fiscal Sponsorship	15%	\$651,018
Environmental Grants	29%	\$1,267,065
Consumer Privacy Grants	35%	\$1,543,700

A Dirty Budget Deal for California By Jill Ratner

California recently suffered through a 10-month budget standoff. As pressure mounted to resolve the stalemate, the Governor imposed mandatory unpaid furloughs, income-tax refunds were delayed, and billions of dollars in environmental funding was suspended –freezing funds committed to trails, watersheds and parks. Though a budget was passed, many environmental cutbacks and freezes remain in effect.

Schools and community services were the hardest hit, but California's environmental regulations were casualties, as well. The Governor and legislative leaders exempted several huge projects from environmental review and pushed back the effective date of rules requiring soot filters on construction equipment. Those filters trap the toxic diesel particles that cause cancer, heart disease, asthma and other respiratory illnesses. This delay in enforcement means that approximately 260 Californians will die before their time. Hundreds more will suffer preventable illnesses requiring hospital care, and thousands of Californians face preventable asthma attacks.

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Sign up for E-Newsletter

The Rose Foundation is starting a monthly email newsletter to make it easy to stay in touch with all our friends. To receive this regular e-news flash, just go to our website (www.rosefdn.org) and click on the E-Newsletter sign-up. Look for your first issue soon!

On the Road with Karla

As coordinator of the Grassroots Fund, Rose Foundation Managing Director Karla James is in regular contact with grassroots activists throughout much of California. But phone and email contact are not the same as personal communication. So Karla recently grabbed the chance to tour a number of small towns in the Central Valley, meeting with grantees to learn first hand about the issues and problems they face. In addition to returning to Oakland inspired, and with a fresh understanding of serious environmental health issues faced by farmworkers, Karla was proud of the praise extended to Rose by other funders. "Although the other foundations organized the tour, most of the groups we visited were Rose Foundation grantees," Karla explained. "A lot of the other funders congratulated us for helping to build the grassroots base of the environmental movement."



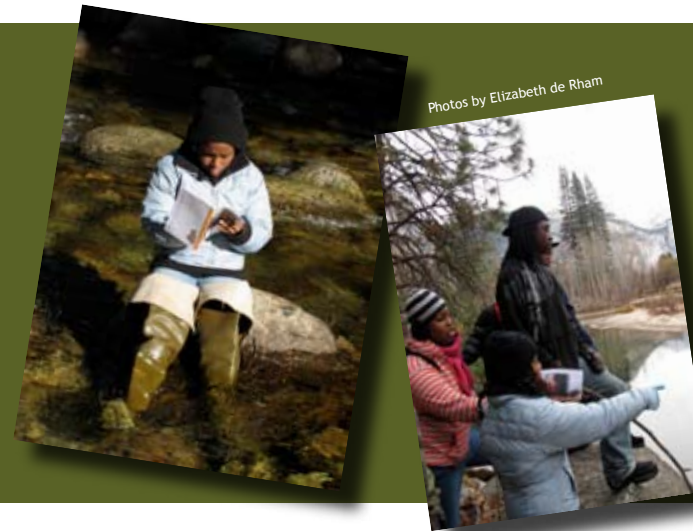
Photos:
Karla James



New Voices Students Study in Yosemite

For the 4th year in a row, Rose helped bring a busload of West Oakland students to Yosemite for a week of intensive environmental education taught by the Yosemite Institute. Please visit www.rosefdn.org for a full gallery of pictures from the trip.

Right: Lateefah Edmondson monitors Merced River water quality. Far Right: Hands-on field science by the banks of the Merced River.



Photos by Elizabeth de Rham

On The Road with Karla

Photos, left, top to bottom

Community Water Center activist Eunice Martinez explains that Tooleville's town water is so contaminated from agricultural runoff that drinking it would be lethal. A canal only steps from Ms. Martinez' house delivers clean surface water for irrigation. That water would be drinkable with only minor treatment, but Tooleville does not have the right to use this water as a drinking water source, so residents must drive 30 miles to the nearest town to buy drinking water. (Launched three years ago with a seed grant from Rose, the CWC has become a powerful voice for clean water in Central Valley.)

Irma Medellin of El Quinto Sol de America talks about how Lindsay's young children were accidentally sprayed with pesticides at their elementary school. El Quinto organized residents and used "drift catchers" to measure toxic air pollution. They found that chlorpyrifos (a highly toxic insecticide sprayed on citrus trees) exceeded EPA standards by more than 11 times. (El Quinto Sol is a grassroots grantee, and Ms. Medellin won Rose's 2008 Anthony Prize, recognizing outstanding grassroots activism.)

In Plainview, Teresa de Anda of El Comité para el Bienestar de Earlimart and Californians for Pesticide Reform shows reporters and foundation representatives the new 1/4 mile no-spray buffer zone around schools in session, residential areas and farm labor camps in Tulare County. El Comité and CPR led the struggle to ban spraying of restricted-use pesticides in these buffers. (Both El Comité and CPR are Rose grantees.)

Bridging the Grassroots Gap

By Tim Little

Parents gather around someone's kitchen table to talk about fears that pesticide spraying is making their children sick. Hikers ask tough questions about muddy water flowing downstream from a logging operation. Neighbors meet in a school gym to press a developer on the impacts of hundreds of new home sites. Dedicated teachers band together to implement an innovative new environmental education curriculum.

From the farthest fringes of California to its most populated urban cores, most local community members don't have a lot of money or high-level political connections. They may not know intricate policy nuances, and they can't write fancy grant proposals to get big bucks from major foundations. But they can rally together to take on the toughest environmental issues. Grassroots groups have a dedicated volunteer base, community presence and perspective, can-do optimism, experience in navigating local political dynamics, and personal knowledge of local issues. This people-power is the engine that drives environmental progress. But this great work usually falls through a big gap in philanthropic funding patterns.

The Northern California Environmental Grassroots Fund bridges the "grassroots gap" and helps the foundation world connect with the realities of grassroots activism.

Created six years ago by the Rose Foundation, Goldman Fund and the Compton Foundation, the Grassroots Fund has grown into a 20 foundation collaborative that has awarded over 250 grants totaling more than \$1 million. Rose is the Fund's host, staff and trustee, and grant decisions are guided by a volunteer board of community activists and veteran funders.

Most Grassroots Fund grantees are truly tiny. More than half have annual budgets under \$25,000 and have never raised a dime from foundations before. A grant of \$3,000 - \$5,000 helps these activists accomplish incredible feats of environmental stewardship.

In addition to the grants, Rose helps these small groups become more efficient by providing scholarship funds so they can attend trainings on accounting, building their boards, how to host fundraising parties - whatever they need to be more successful. Plus, every year we bring them together for a full-day of training around cutting edge issues like web-based communications, and to help them share challenges and advice with each other. The end result? We help them win important conservation and environmental health protections, build their long-term capacity to serve their communities, and form strong networks with each other for mutual support.



For a more information about the Grassroots Fund, including descriptions of all the grantees and instructions on how to apply, please visit www.rosefdn.org.

Fresh Vision on the Board: Sam Schuchat

An avid birdwatcher and backpacker, Sam brings his extensive background in government and management of not-for-profit organizations to Rose's Board of Directors. His past service includes Deputy Director for the Sacramento AIDS Foundation, Vice-President of the California Fish and Game Commission, Executive Director of California League of Conservation Voters, and Executive Director of the Federation of State Conservation Voter Leagues. He has worked as a community and union organizer, and has raised money for various community art projects. Sam is currently the Executive Officer of the California Coastal Conservancy, a state agency that works in partnership with local governments, public agencies, nonprofits and private landowners to protect, restore, and enhance coastal resources and to provide public access to the shore. Welcome Sam!



Save the Date!

Party on the Patio
in Rockridge!

Saturday, May 2 • 4-7 pm,
at Jill and Tim's house in Oakland

Please help us celebrate Spring at the Rose Foundation's Annual Garden Party. Enjoy yummy hors d'oeuvres and live music on terraces overlooking San Francisco Bay. Proceeds benefit New Voices Are Rising and other Rose programs. Look for your invitation in the mail soon.