A Note from Tim and Jill

This past year has found us – from moment to moment – pissed off, fearful, confused, determined, hopeful, and committed to moving forward toward the world we truly want to see.

We came of age when the momentum of the civil rights movement made it possible to believe that America truly could see justice for all. It was a time when public outrage at burning rivers and choking smog could drive a Clean Water Act and a Clean Air Act through Congress. An outpouring of protest could stop a war. A nation – however imperfect – could agree on ways to move forward toward a more perfect union.

Over the past year, on top of all the pressures of COVID-19, we have been called to protect the bedrock institutions of our democracy against fascism and racist-fueled greed. And as we stand here now, we are called to address the stark realities of the climate crisis and the challenge of moving forward toward racial justice.

Now, as always, we turn to the grassroots for solutions. Our grassroots leaders are lighting our path forward to sustainability, resiliency, and a better future.

We hope that like us, you find inspiration in these stories showcasing how grassroots leaders all over the country are finding ways to center communities and the environment in addressing the intersectional crises of the pandemic, the climate crisis, and justice, and to come together to build a livable, equitable future for us all.

(continued on page 4)
DONOR SPOTLIGHT

Our generous donors provide critical support to the grassroots movement for communities and the environment. Meet two of our dedicated donors and learn why they support our work:

Aidan Fite
Austin and Lauren Fite Foundation
New Voices Are Rising Supporter

Arlene Wong
Grassroots Fund Supporter and Recurring Donor

For more information about New Voices, head to rosefdn.org/New-Voices.

STAFF UPDATES

We are excited to welcome Rachel Farahbakhsh and Perla Orozco to the Rose Foundation, and welcome back Jada Delaney and Maria Rivera!

Jada Delaney, our New Voices Program Associate, was born and raised in Oakland. This summer, she joined us for her fourth year with New Voices, supporting our virtual 2020 Summer Academy. Jada is continuing her environmental justice work with Rose while studying Landscape Architecture at Arizona State University. Her goal is to introduce urban and landscape design to New Voices youth in connection with our communities’ environmental justice issues.

Rachel Farahbakhsh joins us as our HR Administrative Assistant with over 15 years of experience providing operational support to nonprofits on both coasts and in Latin America. A child of immigrants from Cuba and Iran, Rachel has honed her ability as an empathetic interpreter and likes to design processes that make her colleagues more efficient and effective. Outside of the office, Rachel performs samba reggae and takes her rescue dog fell-on adventures.

Perla Orozco joins us as our Communications Associate, originally from Lima, Peru, Maria Rivera learned to create a more positive environment by organizing in her own community. After moving from the Bay Area to Elk Grove, CA for a better environment for her daughter, she returns to the team as our Administration Assistant while studying Business Administration and Accounting at Cosumnes River College. She is excited to teach her daughter about protecting and loving nature and make a difference for her future.

TIMELY TOOLS FOR VIRTUAL GRASSROOTS ORGANIZING

Each fall, our California Environmental Grassroots Fund and California Wildlands Grassroots Fund host an annual Grassroots Grantee Convening. This event is part of our commitment to building grassroots power for community health, resilience, and conservation. Typically, activists from all over California come together for a day-long series of workshops to learn new base-building, organizing, and technology skills and to build connections with each other, strengthening their work and the collective environmental movement across the state.

The pandemic made meeting in-person impossible this year, but it didn’t stop us from putting on our annual Convening! Harnessing what we learned from our very successful, first-ever virtual New Voices Summer Academy (see page 7), we developed a new online model for our capacity building training that remained responsive to the needs of our small, mostly volunteer-run grantee groups. Throughout this tumultuous year, our grantees have continued to show up and fight for their communities and the environment; to show up for them, we planned to provide them with solutions and support to overcome the challenges of remote organizing at this year’s Convening.

As Program Organizer for Rose’s grassroots funds, Aurora Heying explains, “From the start of the pandemic, we were hearing from groups that they were struggling to adjust to social distancing, since their usual in-person strategies for organizing, like knocking on doors, were suddenly off the table. In response, we felt that online communications and virtual organizing were the obvious themes around which to shape this year’s Convening.”

We knew we needed help from virtual organizing experts, so we partnered with Social Movement Technologies—a nonprofit that provides digital organizing strategy and training for people powered movements—to facilitate the 2020 Convening. And to stave off Zoom fatigue, instead of a day-long workshop, we restructured the Convening into a series of seven, hands-on virtual workshops held on Fridays in October and November. At each session, we provided simultaneous Spanish translation to our Spanish-speaking grantees and their volunteers. And this new online format removed a significant barrier for our grantees — groups from outside of California were able to participate, building grassroots power across the nation!

The Convening workshops put theory into practice, equipping our grantees with the tools for everything from the basics of email marketing and petition creation; to how to level-up their use of social media and texting to grow their reach; the dos and don’ts of hosting virtual town halls on Zoom; and best practices for keeping volunteers active and involved. Thanks to Social Movement Technologies’ expertise and guidance, we utilized features like chat, polling, and breakout rooms to create interactive and engaging webinars for our grantees. As Aurora reflects, “This year’s Convening sessions were really valuable for our grantees. They learned about different tools, platforms, and technological innovations that will allow them to have a more strategic approach in their virtual outreach.”

And they are already putting these skills into action!

We are excited to continue providing our grantees with capacity building support that meets the moment! If you work with a small, grassroots activist group, this training series is for you! Find more information about our 2020 Grassroots Grantee Convening at rosefdn.org/2020Convening and contact our Grants Team (grants@rosefdn.org) if you would like to access the training recordings!
The fossil fuel industry has emitted over 70% of global greenhouse gases, causing a climate breakdown that impacts every aspect of our lives, including our health. Oregon Physicians for Social Responsibility (Oregon PSR) is organizing public health professionals and advocates as part of a broad community coalition to stop new and expanded fossil fuel infrastructure in the state of Oregon. Their teams of physicians and health professionals educate the community about the human health and watershed impacts of the fossil fuel industry and advocate at the local, state, national, and international levels for a cleaner, healthier future.

Sierra Business Council (SBC) • sierrabusiness.org
Truckee, CA • California Wildlands Rapid Response

Climate change is making our seasons in California hotter and drier, and our parched forests more and more susceptible to devastating wildfires. SBC is promoting forest-friendly solutions to reduce the amount of combustible material in our forests and boost the local economy, including implementing rural biomass utilization as a tool. Their new report “Biomass in the Sierra: A Case for Healthy Forests and Rural Economies” offers a blueprint for taking on biomass as an important forest resiliency technique, while also improving local economic equity. SBC believes this technique is “one of the strongest, most ‘shovel-ready’ tools” available to bring back healthy, fire-resilient forests.

Sugar Pine Foundation • sugarspinefoundation.org
South Lake Tahoe, CA • California Wildlands Grassroots Fund

More than four million acres of forests and residential areas have burned across California so far this year, and Sugar Pine Foundation is helping forests get a head start in regrowing. Employing a COVID-19 safe, socially-distant crowdsourcing model, they asked their community to collect native pine cones from local forests and mail them to their office. Thanks to the community’s efforts the group has already collected enough seeds to grow over 20,000 new trees for fire restoration!

Mycelium Youth Network (MYN) • myceliumyouthnetwork.org • Oakland, CA • California Environmental Grassroots Fund

Much like communities across the country, many Oakland residents live in a system of food apartheid, where economic and racial inequities impact residents’ access to fresh, affordable food. The pandemic has only increased these barriers. MYN knew these challenges were hitting families and youth particularly hard, so the group took their garden-based youth programming online. With this interactive and virtual model, students are learning about environmental science and home gardening for food justice. And, MYN is “equipping youth with hands-on, socially distant lessons, including teaching students how to build their own air filters to purify the smoky air that makes its way into homes throughout the wildfire season.

Chhaya CDC Development Corporation (Chhaya CDC) • chhayacdc.org • Jackson Heights, NY
Consumer Financial Education Fund

Chhaya CDC is providing needed economic support during the pandemic for one of New York City’s hardest hit communities — immigrants. The group offers online financial counseling to access city and federal resources, help put together financial plans, and provide tax preparation support. The organization is also dedicating efforts to support immigrant owners of small businesses and restaurants and advocate for an eviction moratorium and rent cancellation.

Mycelium Youth Network (MYN) • myceliumyouthnetwork.org • Oakland, CA • California Environmental Grassroots Fund

Central Coast Alliance for a Sustainable Economy (CAUSE) • cause.org • Ventura, CA • California Watershed Protection Fund

CAUSE knows that climate chaos brings higher temperatures, drought, and fire, all of which threaten our communities’ health. The group uplifts the lived experiences of communities to grow “understanding of the complex web of impacts of climate disruption, and how it worsens existing inequalities for the most marginalized people.” And with this perspective, CAUSE engages the community in holistic climate resilience measures that integrate property protection and the economic security of workers with the health and well-being of watersheds and communities.
WE HAD A BLAST!

At a time when our lives have been turned upside down and our connections to one another have been physically limited, we felt it was more important than ever to gather together as a community — safely online — to celebrate the power of grassroots activism and community resilience. Held over two weeks in September, our virtual 2020 Film Fest brought over 200 people from across the country together to celebrate stories of hope and community-driven change! Check out our incredible 2020 film lineup at rosefdn.org/2020FilmFest!

Although, at times, taking our Film Fest online felt like one big experiment, we are grateful for how successful the event turned out to be! As we continue to build our Rose Community nationwide, we look forward to gathering together for future virtual Film Fests.

"Thanks so much for showcasing these beautiful films! My kids and I have been riveted and inspired by these timely themes.”

Thank You to Our Generous Sponsors!

Thank You to Our Host Committee!

New Voices Are Rising offers academic year-long Fellowships to Summer Academy graduates and other highly-motivated students looking to grow in their leadership development journey. Each student works with New Voices to find a role and special project that they are passionate about, so they can achieve real community impact, further build leadership skills, and deepen their environmental justice knowledge. We are pleased to introduce our 2020 - 2021 Fellows — David, Michelle, Natalia, and Parker!

David, Food Justice Fellow, is a Junior at Oakland Technical High School who wants to pursue his dream of either being a doctor or working in environmental justice. He’s excited about joining New Voices for another amazing year. FELLOWSHIP PROJECT: David loved growing his own produce from home with the Summer Academy, so he’s channelling his green thumb into mentoring students at his school as they grow their own home gardens!

Michelle, AB617 Fellow, is a Senior at the Oakland Military Institute who is passionate about poetry, art, and creating a better environment and society. She is excited about the Fellowship’s online approach to advocacy this year, because it opens up an entirely new audience for her to reach. FELLOWSHIP PROJECT: Michelle is looking forward to hosting an arts and culture event to engage youth and other community members in conversations about the human impacts of local air quality and connect them with air quality efforts in Oakland and Richmond!

Natalia, Climate Resilience Fellow, is a Senior at Skyline High School in the Green Energy Pathway and this year’s All Student Body Secretary. She is very excited about the opportunity to meet and work with new people while making a difference in her community. FELLOWSHIP PROJECT: Natalia can’t wait to share what she learned about food justice in the Summer Academy with peers at a workshop she’ll organize, where high school students will explore Oakland’s food apartheid and solutions for food accessibility.

Parker, East Oakland Air Quality Fellow, is a Sophomore at Coliseum College Prep Academy. New Voices doesn’t usually accept sophomores as Fellows, but Parker is the exceptional exception! She’s most excited to work on environmental justice projects with the other Fellows who are committed to this work. FELLOWSHIP PROJECT: Parker can’t wait to connect her community with much-needed data and resources at an air quality presentation she is hosting in coordination with our East Oakland community partners.

AN ACTION-PACKED, VIRTUAL 2020 SUMMER ACADEMY

In the face of the pandemic, we found ourselves having to make huge adjustments for our collective health and safety. For New Voices Are Rising, that meant developing a remote Summer Academy that would still provide students with a hands-on, engaging STEAM curriculum, leadership development, and immersive community experiences. With help from our Youth Co-Coordinator and youth Peers on Duty (POD) Leaders, our first-ever virtual 2020 Summer Academy was a tremendous success!

Access was key to bringing our virtual format to life! With support from our New Voices donors and funders, we bridged the digital divide by providing participants with iPads and accessibility support. And we partnered with former grantee Growing Together to deliver fresh, locally-grown produce and garden kits to students, bringing our Food Justice curriculum to their homes! Each week paired themed discussions with at-home experiments, virtual field trips, and talks with guest speakers. For example, our Water Justice Week featured home water quality testing; a virtual tour of the Pardee Reservoir, our drinking water source; and a powerful conversation with civil rights lawyer Benjamin Crump about his work for justice in Black communities, from representing the families of the Flint Water Crisis to the families of victims of anti-Black violence, including Breonna Taylor, George Floyd, and Ahmaud Arbery.

Our culminating online Community Summit showed our students’ tremendous growth! Summer Academy Youth Co-Coordinator Andrea felt, “It was the perfect way to show everyone that we are working together as youth of color from Oakland to make real change. And virtual or not, New Voices always finds a way to make summer fun!”

For more stories from the Summer Academy, head to rosefdn.org/2020-Summer-Academy-Highlights.
The Rose Foundation for Communities and the Environment supports grassroots action to protect the environment, people’s rights, and community health.

IN THIS ISSUE

• Building Community Resilience Across the Country
• Timely Tools for Virtual Grassroots Organizing
• Meet the 2020 - 2021 New Voices Fellows

And so much more!

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The Rose Foundation for Communities and the Environment supports grassroots action to protect the environment, people’s rights, and community health.

Rose Foundation: 27 Years of Impact

What does building grassroots power & community resilience look like?

- Fiscally Sponsored Projects: 45
- Emerging conservation, economic equity, and grassroots advocacy projects incubated
- California Environmental Grassroots Fund
- California Wildlands Rapid Response & Grassroots Funds

- New Voices Are Rising: 175+
- Students graduated through our Summer Climate Justice Youth Leadership Academy
- 3,000+
- Local youth reached through our environmental justice curriculum

- Totaling 900 Grants: $3,525,000+
- Funds pooled from over 30 foundations & awarded to small groups to build the grassroots base of the environmental movement
- Totaling 100+ Groups: $1,850,000+
- Small grants to build the grassroots base of conservation & rapid response to urgent threats to wildlands in California

- Grassroots Leadership Fund
  - Totaling $85,000+
  - Awarded to grassroots groups across the country to address climate-driven urban flooding that impacts low-income, marginalized communities

- Donor Advised Funds
  - Totaling $5,975,000+
  - Awarded to help individuals and corporations invest in social justice & environmental stewardship

- Totaling $41,900,000+
  - Our role as a bridge between philanthropy & the community is recognized by state and federal courts, who appoint Rose Foundation as a trustee of cy pres or mitigation funds.

- Mitigation Funds
  - 8% Clean Air Infrastructure & Advocacy
  - 36% Community-based Watershed Stewardship & Protection
  - 3% Environmental Health & Toxics
  - 28% Consumer Financial Education, Privacy Rights, & Product Safety
  - 25% Other Environmental Grants