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New Voices Are Rising Gets Major Support From Two Government Agencies

Oakland CA 12/7/23: The Rose Foundation for Communities and the Environment was awarded two grants totaling $449,917 from two California state agencies—California Air Resources Board (CARB) and California Natural Resources Agency (CNRA)—both of which will support its youth environmental justice leadership program, New Voices Are Rising (NVR). Operating year-round, NVR seeks to educate and empower low-income BIPOC youth from across the Bay Area in the environmental justice issues that disproportionately impact their communities. These awards will fund different dimensions of the program relating to air quality justice and connecting participants with natural and cultural resources in their communities.

“This funding is a huge step in the next phase of New Voices Programming in the post-COVID world. This funding allows us to directly respond to youth interests related to access to greenspaces and the outdoors connecting high school youth to natural spaces and their concerns surrounding air pollution in their neighborhoods filling in data gaps for communities.” – Mykela Patton, New Voices Associate Program Director

Since its inception, NVR has been deeply engaged in local environmental health issues related to air quality. From protesting a proposed coal terminal in West Oakland to advocating for East Oakland’s designation as a priority community under AB617, youth participants have long championed the reduction of air pollution in their frontline communities. For this reason, it is especially exciting to announce the $299,917 grant from CARB to support NVR’s newest program Youth Power for Air Justice (YPAJ).

The three-year program seeks to address a significant data gap NVR youth found when monitoring the air in their own neighborhoods. Using home air quality monitors, participants will collect data on target pollutants like PM10 and PM2.5. Partner organizations will help synthesize the data and produce a community-informed draft air quality mitigation plan. In the third year of YPAJ, students and partner agencies will disseminate their findings to impacted communities as well as policy and governmental agencies. Through YPAJ, we hope to support frontline communities to build skills and knowledge in air quality monitoring so they can advocate, and effect change in planning dialogues from which they have been historically excluded.

NVR also provides participants with meaningful opportunities to connect with the natural environment and local culture. With a $150,000 award from CNRA, NVR will host 8 field trips in the summer of 2024 including a community tree planting and a visit to Oakland’s Black Panther Museum. Through these activities, NVR seeks to 1) reduce the barriers BIPOC youth face in accessing the outdoors and 2) increase knowledge and engagement in the Bay Area’s rich history of activism and community organizing. The program encourages youth to draw from

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this experiential education to better contextualize and mobilize against the pressing environmental and social issues they face daily.

Thanks to funding from CARB and CNRA, NVR is deepening its impact in Bay Area frontline communities, putting community voices, particularly youth, front and center in environmental and social justice efforts that protect local resources and promote community wellbeing.

**About Rose Foundation for Communities and the Environment**

Rose Foundation for Communities and the Environment supports community-based advocacy to promote conservation, equity, and justice through grant-making and direct service programs. Rose Foundation’s focus includes grassroots activism, watershed protection, environmental justice, and consumer rights. Rose also administers New Voices Are Rising, a youth leadership development and environmental justice advocacy training program. To learn more about the Rose Foundation, please visit [http://rosefdn.org](http://rosefdn.org).