



ROSE
FOUNDATION
 FOR COMMUNITIES &
 THE ENVIRONMENT

SPRING 2023 NEWSLETTER



New Voices Graduate Turned New Voices Leader

This year, New Voices Are Rising (NVR) reached an important milestone. Mykela Patton, a graduate of the program, was announced as our new Associate Program Director. Mykela assumed her leadership role in January 2023, taking over from Rose Foundation and NVR cofounder Jill Ratner. Jill has moved into a semi-retired position, serving as a senior advisor to the program.

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Transition is inevitable. Justice is not.

Examining the Willow Oil Project

On March 13, 2023, one of the largest and most controversial oil drilling projects in modern US history was approved by the Biden Administration. The Willow Project—an \$8 billion ConocoPhillips oil drilling operation—will span 23 million acres of untouched federally protected land located in the North Slope of Alaska’s Brook Range: generating 277 million metric tons of carbon dioxide, roughly 4 percent of U.S. annual emissions (Gordon).

Opponents of the project cite a rapidly warming planet and the urgent need to overhaul longstanding energy systems in order to avoid extreme climate disaster. Described as a “carbon bomb” with emission levels akin to adding 2 million gas powered cars to roads each year, or nearly 70 coal fired power plants operating for one year, Willow will make our efforts to avoid more than 2 degrees of warming virtually impossible. Home to half a million caribou and a crucial nesting ground for millions of migratory birds, opponents also argue the drilling will put wildlife at severe risk by disrupting animal migration patterns as well as open the reserve to future drilling sites (Friedman). Despite the wishes of countless Indigenous and environmental groups and the more than 5 million people who signed petitions denouncing the project, Biden has locked us into 30 years of extraction in sensitive ecosystems near Alaska Native communities, renegeing on his promise of ‘no more drilling on federal lands’.

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**Seven Years of Service
to the Rose Foundation
Thank You, Alan Ramo!**

Professor Alan Ramo is an Emeritus Dean and Professor of Golden Gate University School of Law in San Francisco, where he directed

its Environmental Law and Justice Clinic. Under his leadership, the Clinic won awards from the American Bar Association’s Section on Environmental Law, US EPA Region IX, the Environmental Law Foundation and the Clinical Legal Education Association, as well as a commendation from the San Francisco Board of Supervisors.

Before becoming a professor and founding the GGU Environmental Justice Clinic, he was the legal director for Communities for a Better Environment; prior to that he co-founded the Western States Legal Foundation addressing nuclear issues. He has served on a number of nonprofit boards, including San Francisco Baykeeper, the San Francisco Estuary Institute, the Impact Fund and the Jewish Film Festival, and the Los Angeles based Environment Now Foundation has awarded Mr. Ramo the Wells Family Award in the area of Urban Renewal.

As a practicing environmental litigator, Alan helped direct pollution mitigation funds towards the Rose Foundation’s grantmaking programs, and for the past 7 years, he has drawn from his wealth of experience to serve on the Rose Foundation’s board of directors. Throughout his tenure, he has contributed immensely to the direction and growth of the Rose Foundation. To recognize, and learn from, his service to Rose we asked him several questions about his time and experience as a board member.

As you reflect back on your service to the Rose Foundation, what is your hope for the organization as it continues to evolve and move forward?

Rose Foundation is a leader in moving money to diverse grassroots environmental groups working to transform their communities as they address systemic environmental problems. I can only hope the foundation continues to grow and reach more people as the problems become more severe and the resistance to change deepens.

You have watched the Rose Foundation grow from a two-person team to a \$28 million organization. What’s the enduring principle of the Rose Foundation and what do you think has changed?

Rose Foundation has maintained its integrity and belief in local activists as it has grown as an organization. The staff is larger, more diverse and the foundation’s institutional ties have deepened, but it’s the same feisty organization that seeks to smash pollution, fight racism and protect and enhance our natural environment.

The Rose Foundation's New Voices Are Rising program is grounded in the belief that frontline youth are not the future leaders of tomorrow but the current leaders of today. Their lived experience of environmental injustice has placed them in the unique position of understanding the burdens their communities face and the resilience required to overcome such obstacles. Since its inception, the New Voices Are Rising program has worked to uplift youth voices in the Bay Area that have historically been left out of environmental decision-making processes by creating a pathway to leadership.

Jill founded New Voices Are Rising in 2005. She has spent years designing the program to help young people in under-represented communities gain the skills and experience they need to begin to tackle the problems that disproportionately impact their communities. In many ways, Mykela's appointment to Associate Program Director is a dream realized for Jill, as she has worked to create a curriculum that instills knowledge and confidence in frontline youth to become environmental justice leaders.

Mykela joined New Voices in 2016 as a Summer Academy student and over the years has taken on ever-increasing leadership roles in the program. She has played an integral part in defining and building the NVR youth leadership pipeline including designing youth leadership positions and supporting the development of students' skills and experience in environmental justice work.

Mykela found her calling in environmentalism during her first summer with New Voices. There she was introduced to environmental justice, which as a low-income black woman from Oakland she found acutely relevant to her lived experiences and her community.



"I am incredibly happy and grateful that Mykela is charting the course for the program as it grows and moves into its next stage. She brings a wealth of environmental justice knowledge that combines personal experience with theory and analysis."

Looking back, to me it feels like she grew up in the program, and she played a key role in helping the program grow up around her."

- Jill Ratner

"NVR sparks something special in youth participants (myself included) in such an intentional, powerful, and community-based way. It would be amazing to see these ideas and conversations be continued in schools, alumni networks, community centers, libraries, literally everywhere. I want to see the development and power of youth innovation in thousands of students across the Bay Area."

- Mykela Patton

Over the next four years, Mykela grew through the NVR program. She worked as a Fall Administrative Intern, POD leader, and Youth Co-Coordinator, the latter two positions of which she helped design. In the fall of 2017, Mykela began her freshman year at Colby College in Maine. Still, she returned to New Voices each summer to support and contribute to the program's evolution. Guided by her input trying roles for the first time, the program grew into what it set out to be: a development pipeline for youth leadership.

In 2021, Mykela graduated from Colby College with a degree in Environmental Policy and

a concentration in Justice. She went on to work at Communities for a Better Environment focusing on clean air advocacy and youth organizing before rejoining the Rose Foundation in 2022.

Today, New Voices Are Rising continues to host POD leaders and Youth Co-Coordination to build youth participants' leadership skills through the program. Mykela's growth through the program and contributions to its development embody the ethos of New Voices: to educate and catalyze the climate leaders of tomorrow. 🌱

Still the project has received support from across party lines, including Alaskan politicians, labor unions and some Indigenous communities. Proponents assert the project will bring much-needed jobs and revenue to the state while boosting domestic energy production. Underscoring their argument is the inaccurate premise that stopping polluting energy is a zero-sum game—if we cut it off, someone else will turn it on. The demand still exists and so a market will open. On a local level, the neighboring Alaskan community is desperate for investment. Faced with the impossible choice of whether to save the environment or put food on the table, many locals feel forced to choose the latter.

This binary thinking about future energy—domestic vs. overseas oil production, environment vs. jobs, now vs. later—is emblematic of communities across the country as they grapple with the transition to a ‘green economy’. But make no mistake, these choices are impossible by design. The fossil fuel industry wants

us to frame these decisions in a way where there is only one solution. With a public paralyzed by choice or forced to fold to the powers that be, the current energy giants remain in power.

Beyond the question of ethics, two key flaws undermine the argument for any current or future dirty energy project like Willow. First, political scientists have overstated the relationship between collective action and climate change policy (Aklin, Mildenberger). In theory, when a collective action will occur regardless of one’s own participation, then an individual (or group, or nation) may be incentivized to free ride. This thinking has been used in anti-climate policy rhetoric, posturing another country will ‘free ride’ off our transition, reaping the final benefits of oil while we do the hard work of transitioning to renewables. Yet, there’s no empirical evidence of this. In reality, most policy is the likely outcome of political parties pandering to constituents who have been



While oil and gas jobs will disappear, jobs in renewable energy will open. In fact, according to the International Energy Agency, 14 million new clean energy jobs will be created by 2030 with another 16 million workers switching to new roles related to clean energy.

falsely led to believe the transition to green energy will cost them jobs. And herein lies the second weakness in the argument. For years, the fossil fuel industry has insisted that a transition to renewable energy means fewer jobs. Ample jobs and a healthy environment are not mutually exclusive. Not only can they exist at once, they must exist at once.

“Transition is inevitable. Justice is not.”
– **Climate Justice Alliance**

The world will transition to green energy, the question is when and how. To approach this question, you, the reader, should be aware of the term ‘Just Transition’. This relatively new phrase describes a framework for our transition to renewable energy. The International Labour Organization defines a Just Transition as: “Greening the economy in a way that is as fair and inclusive as possible to everyone concerned, creating decent work opportunities and leaving no one behind.” By centering the voices of those most directly impacted by climate change, a Just Transition strives to create an equitable and regenerative economy around the needs of communities and the environment. In short, it offers a model rooted in equity and justice for us to move quickly and thoughtfully forward. A Just Transition insists it is possible, and moreover necessary, to choose both jobs and the environment.

Our grantees at Rose Foundation for Communities and the Environment are demonstrating what a Just Transition looks like at the community level. It will involve local representation, career training, community-driven transition plans, and energy justice. These Rose grantees and many others offer a roadmap for other organizations and communities working towards a Just Transition. Underscoring these groups' efforts is an opportunity to restore public trust and rebuild an economy that works for everyone.

LOCAL REPRESENTATION

Rose grantee **NorCal Resilience Network** is catalyzing a Just Transition by supporting and activating community-based and ecological solutions in Northern California. Its regional network increases capacity for grassroots programs; builds out model sites for climate resilience; and strengthens solidarity across divides of race, class, and region with organizations through collaboration and collective impact (NorCal Resilience Network).

One pillar of NorCal Resilience Network’s work is BIPOC-centered climate policy and advocacy. By providing high-level training to underserved groups, the organization opens pathways to historically important decision-making spaces that the groups may otherwise not have access to. Having a seat at the table in government and policy-making arenas will allow for a shift of power and large-scale decisions to be informed by those who have first-hand experience in building resilience.

CAREER TRAINING

Frontline Catalysts, another Rose grantee, empowers youth from underserved communities across California to lead the movement for transformative climate justice. Youth in these communities live at the intersection of health, racial injustice, and environmental crises. Further, they experience educational inequities, denying them the resources needed to thrive and affect change in their communities.

In collaboration with the College of Ethnic Studies at San Francisco State University, Frontline Catalysts created the school's first Climate Justice Leadership Development Program grounded in ethnic studies for youth in communities most impacted by climate change. The Program provides core 21st-century skills—such as critical thinking, collaboration, technology literacy, and civic engagement—aimed at equipping the students with the tools to lead their communities towards climate power. With support from the Rose Foundation, Frontline Catalysts is committed to offering its Climate Justice Leadership Program at no cost to Title one schools in under-resourced communities.

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COMMUNITY-DRIVEN TRANSITION

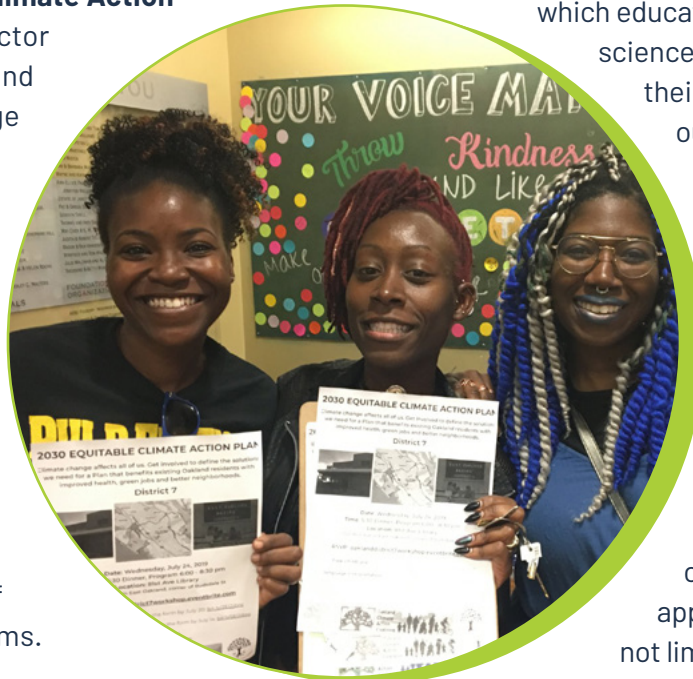
The mission of the **Oakland Climate Action Coalition (OCAC)**—a cross-sector coalition dedicated to racial and economic justice—is to engage Oakland residents in creating and implementing climate solutions that strengthen the environmental, economic, and social resilience of frontline communities (OCAC). The Coalition facilitates community-driven climate resilience planning to inform the design, development and implementation of City of Oakland’s policies and programs.

Among other projects, the Coalition is collaborating with the City of Oakland to adopt the 2030 Equitable Climate Action Plan (ECAP), one of the most ambitious and robust climate action plans in the state, if not the whole country. To safeguard community participation, the OCAC successfully advocated for the creation of an Oakland Climate Action Network to serve as a neighborhood-level oversight mechanism throughout the Plan’s implementation. With general funding from the Rose Foundation, the group is ensuring the Oakland Climate Action Network is budgeted and developed for 2022 - 2023.

ENERGY JUSTICE

The **West Oakland Environmental Indicators Project (WOEIP)** is a resident led, community-based environmental justice organization dedicated to achieving healthy homes, jobs and neighborhoods in West Oakland, California. Its work aids residents in understanding the political, social, and natural forces that impact their lives. WOEIP gives impacted residents the tools to participate in civic processes and to drive change from the bottom up.

The Rose Foundation most recently funded WOIEP for its Induction Cooktop Teaching Project which educates students in their science classrooms—and informs their families through strong outreach—about the indoor air pollution harms from fossil gas appliances. The group provides families with suggestions for how to reduce those pollution harms even while using gas appliances, but also introduces students and their families to the health and safety benefits of modern electric kitchen appliances, including but not limited to induction electric cooktops. Through projects that vary by grade level, WOEIP loans out induction kits to students and their families. It offers low-income families at Title one schools the option to keep the induction



West Oakland Environmental Indicators Project (WOEIP)

kit if they like using it. WOEIP’s work is increasingly important as low-income houses try to cope with rising energy costs. These communities face a higher barrier to transition to energy-efficient or clean energy appliances, with costs to upgrade certain appliances almost twice as expensive as it is in more affluent neighborhoods (Reames).

The Willow Oil Drilling Project points to a failure in our imagination to see a future of equitable resource sharing and a regenerative relationship to the earth. Yet this future is possible, and in many communities across the country, it is becoming a reality. These Rose grantees demonstrate a nation-wide movement to build community power and the Foundation’s goal to return decision-making to the hands of those most affected by environmental injustice.

“We so easily settle for the diminished world around us Unaware of what we have lost, we can’t imagine what we might restore.”

– Deborah Cramer, 2015 *The Narrow Edge*



Works Cited for article provided in full at [Rosefdn.org](https://www.rosefdn.org)

Calling Rose Grantees!

We are in the process of redesigning our website and are looking for images of the work your group has achieved with funding from the Rose Foundation. Please send 2 – 3 high quality photos by **July 15th** to **Sage Bachman at sbachman@rosefdn.org** to be considered. Thank you!

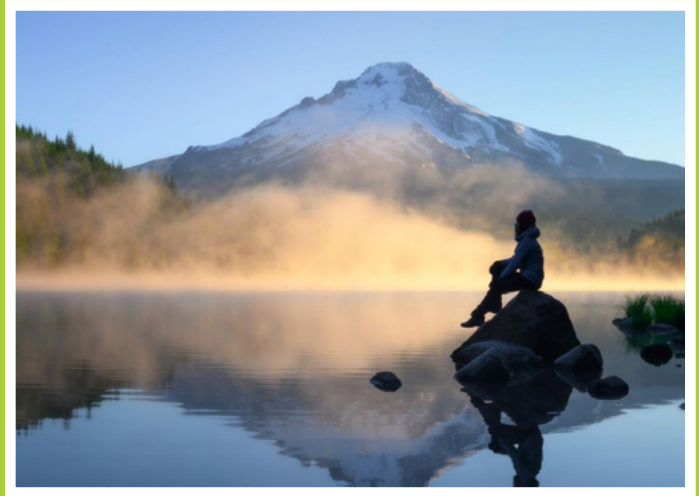
Check out these photos for inspiration:



California Watershed Protection Fund grantee Santa Barbara Channelkeeper



California Watershed Protection Fund grantee Urban Tilth



Columbia River Fund grantee WaterWatch of Oregon



Puget Sound Stewardship and Mitigation Fund grantee Northwest Maritime Center

THANK YOU, ALAN RAMO! CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

Can you tell us about your donor advised fund?

The Foundation provides guidance and a convenient mechanism for individuals to donate to individual groups working consistently with the Foundation's mission. It has enabled us to direct personal funds to activists who we know or are happy to learn about.

Do you have anything else you'd like to add about your time at Rose?

It has been a privilege to work with the Foundation's founders, Jill Ratner and Tim Little, who have dedicated their lives to building support for environmental activists and training the next generation of leaders. They have brought together a committed staff and board who I learned from in every interaction. 🌱




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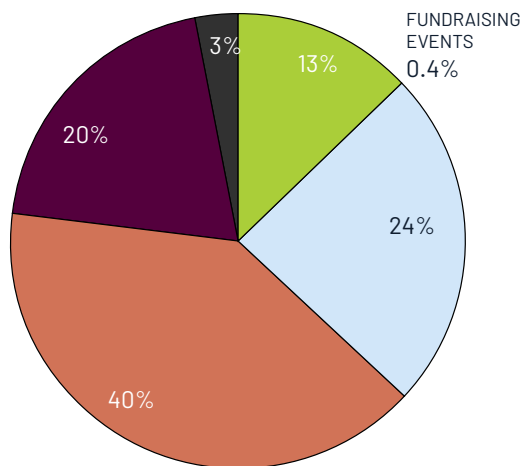
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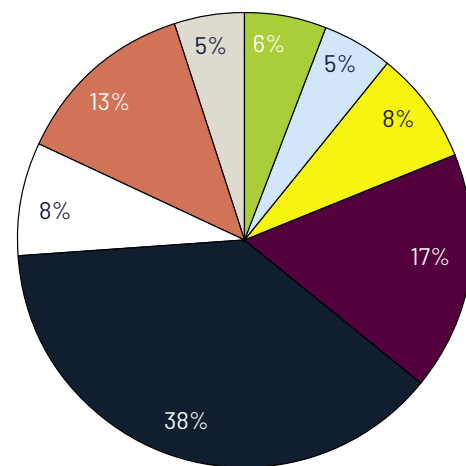
FISCAL YEAR 2022

TOTAL INCOME
\$7,425,573



-  DONATIONS
-  GRANTS RECEIVED
-  ENVIRONMENTAL MITIGATION & CY PRES AWARDS
-  CARRYOVER REVENUE
-  RETURN ON INVESTMENT

TOTAL EXPENSES
\$7,424,241



-  NEW VOICES ARE RISING
-  GRASSROOTS GRANTS
-  DONOR ADVISED GRANTS
-  FISCAL SPONSORSHIP GRANTS
-  ENVIRONMENTAL MITIGATION GRANTS
-  CONSUMER PROTECTION GRANTS
-  ADMIN & FUNDRAISING
-  PROGRAM MANAGEMENT