This winter, Rose Foundation staff and funding board members of the California Environmental Grassroots Fund (Grassroots Fund) visited grantees in the southern part of the Central Valley. Many of these farmworker communities are unincorporated: they are not governed by a local municipality and do not receive the same local services as a typical incorporated city such as police, emergency services, and municipal waste. These neighborhoods suffer from a historic lack of representation, resources, and infrastructure investment. For example, many neighborhoods don’t have sidewalks. And zoning regulations, which would keep polluting facilities a mandated distance away from people’s homes, are often nonexistent. As a result, poor air and water quality plague these towns, whose community members suffer high rates of cancer and asthma. Community activism has always been part of the Central Valley’s story, and that legacy continues. Volunteer-based groups are successfully defending their communities by expertly involving themselves in local politics. As Grassroots Fund Funding Board member Gustavo Aguirre plainly explains, “We have to fight for [our rights]; they’re not just going to give them to us.”

Follow our journey visiting some of these Grassroots Fund grantees:

Nestled among the fields between Bakersfield and Delano is our first stop, a community garden in Shafter. The garden lies next to an elementary school and a football field away from an oil drilling operation. We are greeted by members of Committee for a Better Shafter, passionate and determined organizers leading the fight for better air quality. As we take in the sights, they point out various sources of pollution impacting local air quality, including the nearby oil drilling and pesticide spraying on surrounding pistachio fields. The Committee’s leaders tell us about their work to establish a local urgent care facility to provide needed access to healthcare; lobby for a statewide pesticide ban; and develop a community air quality plan with $38 million of secured funding. Wow — that’s a lot of leverage from the Grassroots Fund’s small grant funding and capacity building support!

(continued on page 3)
ROSE FOUNDATION STAFF UPDATES

We are so excited to welcome familiar faces into new roles!

Inspired by our incredible grantees, Aurora Heying has stepped up to support them as the Program Officer for the Rose Foundation’s grassroots funds. Originally from Napa, Aurora studied cultural anthropology at Mount Holyoke College in Massachusetts. In 2018, she joined the team as our Administrative Assistant. She is excited to bring her experience to the role, helping grassroots groups build capacity and navigate the grantseeking process. Outside the office, Aurora can be found dancing Cuban salsa by Lake Merritt and doting on her succulent garden.

Sarah Quan comes to the Rose Foundation with over ten years of experience strengthening and resourcing organizations committed to building more healthy, sustainable, and equitable communities. She is proud of her work with values-driven organizations advancing racial, economic, and social justice. As our Data and Evaluation Director, Sarah is excited to lead development of our data management and evaluation systems. A devoted daughter of the Bay Area, you can find her strolling around Lake Merritt or rock climbing at Berkeley Ironworks.

Cindy Garcia joined the New Voices family as a participant in the 2018 and 2019 Summer Academies. Cindy was born and raised in Oakland and gained so much knowledge around Oakland’s environmental injustices from New Voices. She is a full-time student at Merritt College and is excited to plan the upcoming Summer Academy as the New Voices Are Rising Program Assistant!

Carlos Rangel Ramirez was born in México and raised in East Oakland. He majored in Chicano Studies with a Mathematics minor at UC Berkeley. As the New Voices Are Rising Coliseum College Prep Academy Project Assistant, Carlos supports students in advancing the Youth Air Monitoring project. He is interested in utilizing decolonized models of teaching mathematics to Black and brown students.

A FAREWELL & THANK YOU

In February, we invited our community to the office to celebrate and bid farewell to Megan Mubaraki, Program Officer of the Rose Foundation’s environmental grassroots funds. Over the last four years, Megan has supported and empowered grassroots groups across California and beyond. She has played an important role in growing our grassroots funds and providing crucial capacity-building support to our grantees, including through our Grassroots Grantee Convenings.

Thank you, Megan, for all your work to support and grow the grassroots! We are excited to have you continue with us as a contractor to support our Grassroots Leadership Fund, as you take time to find the next step on your path. You will always be a part of the Rose Community!

ROSE VISITS THE CENTRAL VALLEY (CONTINUED FROM COVER)

Next, we head to Lamont, where 10 determined organizers of Comité Progreso de Lamont have forced the county supervisors to pay attention. Committee members go to every public meeting, and it has paid off. Their sense of pride and empowerment is palpable. As one committee member explains, “they take our calls now!” They continue, “the supervisors are asking for community input,” and are working with them to develop county plans. The members share their successes, from securing funding and working with the county to redesign an accessible central park; to campaigning for four miles of sidewalks to be built around town; to advocating for an impressive new 42-family affordable housing development, including sidewalks connecting to the elementary school and post office and a resident rideshare program.

In neighboring Arvin, we meet members of Committee for a Better Arvin, who demanded change after two young men died from the local recycling center’s toxic fumes. They succeeded in overturning the facility’s ownership and negotiated a contract to both reduce 80% of air pollution and create a fund of about $30,000 per year to implement community projects.

For years, the group has also fought for an ordinance to limit the construction of new oil wells within 300 feet of homes. Throughout the process, the fossil fuel industry fought them tooth and nail. As one member describes, the oil companies “told us, ‘we’ll give you whatever you want,’” to continue drilling operations, “and we said, ‘what we want is no oil wells.’” The companies even attempted to bribe locals into submission. Despite unwavering money opposition, the committee’s determination paid off. The Arvin City Council finally passed the ordinance in 2018!

We end our trip in Bakersfield, where Greenfield Walking Group took back their neighborhood park, which suffered from broken infrastructure, drug use, litter, and gang activity. The group shows us around the beautiful community garden they built. The garden supports 20 local families and offers free activities to keep the community healthy and active, including Zumba classes and a student leadership program. Volunteers share stories about their efforts to demand local government meet their community’s needs, including advocating for a new, equitable Kern County General Plan.

I’m struck by our grantees’ commitment and passion, and humbled by how they have achieved so much with so little. Their love for their communities has moved them to fight — against all odds and with tireless determination — and win! These are the stories that give me hope. I am honored to support the work of the Program Officer for the Rose Foundation’s grassroots grantmaking programs.

Learn more about our Grassroots Fund on our website: rosefdn.org/grassrootsfund.

OUR GUIDE THROUGH THE CENTRAL VALLEY

We want to give a huge thank you to Gustavo Aguirre, a Grassroots Fund funding board member who led us through our site visits in the Central Valley. Gustavo got his start in community organizing when he was a farmworker and met César Chávez. Chávez shared some words of wisdom with Gustavo, who was inspired to fight for justice and serve others. Gustavo’s experience organizing in the labor movement taught him, “We have to use all the rights we have in our fight.”

Gustavo is inspired by the Grassroots Fund’s “commitment to creating a better world with clean air and water, and empowering communities to find their voice.” Thank you for spending the weekend with us visiting incredible grantees who are working for their communities’ safety, health, and the local environment!
ANNOUNCING GRASSROOTS LEADERSHIP FUND GRANTEES

This past fall, we began outreach to launch our Grassroots Leadership Fund (GLF), a partnership with the Kresge Foundation’s Climate Resilient and Equitable Water Systems (CREWS) Initiative. Over a two-year period, the Rose Foundation will support 16 grassroots groups — most with annual budgets under $75,000 — to address the climate-driven urban flooding that impacts low-income, historically marginalized communities all over the US. Through this fund, the Rose Foundation is able to funnel money where it is most needed: frontline climate resiliency efforts led by visionary, volunteer-driven groups. Thank you to CREWS partners Anthropocene Alliance, Deep South Center for Environmental Justice, Healthy Gulf, and Policy Link for connecting us with these groups across the country.

The GLF is the next chapter of the Rose Foundation’s grassroots story. Drawing on our learnings from and structures of several of our existing funds — the California Environmental Grassroots Fund, the Grassroots Training Institute, and our national privacy rights and consumer education grantmaking — the GLF has two goals: to send funding to groups working on urban flooding around the country; and to support those grantees in building their organizations, so they can thrive and grow long after our grant dollars are spent. Rose Program Officer Anya Diamond, who has been assisting with the administration of the fund, remarks, “The GLF feels more human-scale than some of the other national funds I work with. It’s promoting people’s visionary work with as few barriers as possible.”

We are proud to support these projects through our Grassroots Leadership Fund. Learn more about the Fund on our website: bit.ly/2QvFmZS.

GRASSROOTS GRANTMAKING IN THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST

For nearly a decade, the Rose Foundation’s grantmaking in the Pacific Northwest has funded a range of projects, from conservation to community science, environmental justice, and education. Over the years, we have awarded over $7 million to protect watersheds and communities in Washington and Oregon through five different funds.

When we launched the Puget Sound Stewardship and Mitigation Fund in 2012, we structured it to support both large established organizations and volunteer-driven grassroots groups. Over the years, as our funding pool expanded thanks to a series of large environmental mitigation settlements — many generated by the stalwart citizen enforcement of the Puget Soundkeeper Alliance — we found our grant award decisions skewing more toward the bigger groups. This year, we are going back to our roots — incubating grassroots activism, alongside our grantmaking to larger groups, to create lasting environmental stewardship in the Sound. We have reserved funding for small and emerging conservation and environmental justice organizations and will provide resources to help kitchen-table activists navigate the application process.

Without further ado, meet our inaugural Grassroots Leadership Fund grantees, who have inspired us with their dedication, vision, and collaborative spirit!

A Community Voice New Orleans, LA
Funded to organize residents and politicians around the Blight to Bioswales project, which works with the lowest income and most vulnerable residents to develop strategic plans to install bioswales and rain gardens that prepare communities for impending disasters.

Citizens’ Committee for Flood Relief De Sota, MO
Funded to mobilize local residents in generating political will around urban flooding protection, future planning, and emergency planning, in conjunction with local, state, and federal agencies.

Coalition for Wetlands and Forests Staten Island, NY
Funded to preserve Graniteville Wetland and Forest, ameliorate the effects of climate change flooding, buffer the effects of air pollution, and empower those most impacted by the climate crisis.

Community In-Power and Development Association Inc. Port Arthur, TX
Funded to continue combating urban flooding via community-led home repairs and federal buyout assistance; strengthening flood management infrastructure; keeping the community updated on local developments; and challenging big polluters.

Education, Economics, Environmental, Climate and Health Organization Gulfport, MS
Funded to expand educational and training outreach; build capacity to bolster understanding of flooding, environmental pollution, and climate change; conduct workforce training for a variety of environmental careers; and challenge the development of wetlands.

Elyria, Gloveville, Swansea & Partners (EGS & Partners) Denver, CO
Funded to focus existing work for community development in North Denver on educating community members on urban flooding, and training them to install and maintain rain barrels.

Georgetown Open Space Committee Seattle, WA
Funded to kick off a series of five coordinated neighborhood discussions about climate-induced flooding and emergency planning; create a coordinated neighborhood response team; and plan to address flooding and other emergencies, including how they involve the most vulnerable such as the elderly and disabled.

Greater Treme Consortium, Inc. New Orleans, LA
Funded to develop an environmental education, renewable energy, and cultural arts site, including cultural aspects of the Treme community. The artwork is a link to the community and opens doors to have conversations about green infrastructure, climate change, and how to address its effects.

Healthy Community Services New Orleans, LA
Funded to establish an Urban Agricultural Green Infrastructure Site to address repetitive flooding with green infrastructure and increase access to healthy food choices by growing food locally.

Hollygrove Neighbors Association New Orleans, LA
Funded to continue installing and maintaining green infrastructure, convening community members, repurposing vacant lots, and spreading their message to build a more sustainable future.

Little Growers, Inc. Palm Bay, FL
Funded to work in community gardens and help residents impacted by climate-related flooding participate in stormwater mitigation and green infrastructure projects.

Local Environmental Action Demanded Agency, Inc. Vinita, OK
Funded to continue protecting human health and the environment by researching, educating, and engaging the public, tribal, legislative, and agency staff on flooding.

Lower 9th Ward Center for Sustainable Engagement and Development New Orleans, LA
Funded to continue building knowledge among key stakeholders, incorporating resident voice into master planning, leading multiple lines of defense tours of the Bayou Bienvenue Wetland Triangle, and conducting resident resiliency-training workshops for hurricane preparedness and wetland restoration.

Mirabeau Gardens Neighborhood Association New Orleans, LA
Funded to address flooding and the impacts of climate driven extreme storm events by implementing Watershed Steward Training and the Watershed Steward Project. These programs will train community members to design and implement a model resiliency project to mitigate Marin City’s climate vulnerabilities via community-led, nature-based adaptation solutions.

The Progressive Club of Johns Island Johns Island, SC
Funded to affect ongoing development practices, City ordinances, and decisions made at all levels of the development process through continued data collection, forming detailed conclusions, and presenting results in civic and political venues.

Marin City People’s Plan Sausalito, CA
Funded to reactivate this association after Hurricane Katrina by building leadership capacity, offering empowering and educational programming for residents, and maximizing participation at meetings and events.

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CONGRATULATIONS, SOGOREA TE LAND TRUST!

Toward the end of last year, the Rose Foundation got a call from the Sogorea Te Land Trust, an Indigenous and women-led organization that facilitates the return of ancestral lands to Indigenous stewardship in the Bay Area. The Land Trust needed emergency help to process several generous year-end donations, while they awaited their 501(c)3 status. Sogorea Te asked us to be their bridge Fiscal Sponsor, and we were happy to help! In early spring, we got confirmation that Sogorea Te is officially an independent 501(c)3. Many congratulations to the Land Trust!

How can you support the cause?

While you’re thinking about taxes this season, head over to Sogorea Te’s website to calculate and contribute your Shuuumi Land Tax (bit.ly/2vtFul4)! The Shuuumi Land Tax is an annual, voluntary contribution you can make if you are a non-Indigenous person who lives on traditional Chochenyo and Karkin Chilone territory (from San Francisco to the South and East Bay). This contribution supports the Land Trust’s amazing work!

Save the Date - 2020 Film Fest

Films, Food, and Fun!
September 24, 2020

We are so excited to announce our 2020 Film Fest! Please mark your calendars for September 24, 2020 in Downtown Oakland! As always, there will be films, food, and fun as we celebrate grassroots activism for our communities and the environment.

New Voices Breaking Ground

This summer, New Voices is planning to break ground on a project to build a system of sustainable rain gardens at Coliseum College Prep Academy – a public middle and high school in East Oakland. As one of the first Oakland Unified School District Living Schoolyard Initiative projects, the gardens will act as a filtration system to clean water runoff from the campus, before it enters the groundwater system. The rain gardens will also bring with them the benefits of nature on mental health and well-being!
IN THIS ISSUE:

- Rose Visits the Central Valley
- Announcing Grassroots Leadership Grantees
- New Voices Goes Remote
- And so much more!

2019 FINANCIAL SUMMARY

INCOME TOTAL: $5.7 MILLION
- Donations • 13%
- Fundraising Events • 1%
- Grants Received • 32%
- Restitution Funds • 43%
- Return on Investment • 11%
- Admin & Fundraising • 9%
- Consumer Products & Privacy Grants • 19%
- Donor Advised Grants • 9%
- Environmental Restitution Grants • 26%
- Fiscal Sponsorship Grants • 24%
- Grassroots Fund Grants • 4%
- New Voices Are Rising • 5%
- Shared Program Expenses • 4%

EXPENSES TOTAL: $6.7 MILLION

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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.