



Ancestral Artistry

First Peoples Fund helps culture-bearing artists like Sean Sherman (BF'18) become entrepreneurs

Abdirizak "Zack" Mahboub (BF'10):
Cultural & community advocate



Making education more relevant:
Bringing companies into the classroom

Contents



FEATURES

14 Building a Cultural Epicenter
Abdirizak “Zack” Mahboub (BF’10) balances entrepreneurial ambition with a vision of building community

24 Ancestral Artistry
Through First Peoples Fund, Native American culture bearers embrace their creative worth, heal their communities with transformative art and become driving forces for tribal economies

34 A Bridge to Community
Through its BRIDGE program, Voices for Racial Justice works collaboratively to reunite incarcerated citizens with their community

42 Putting Down Roots
Bush Prize winner Hmong American Farmers Association cultivates richness in the local food ecosystem

50 A Winning Combination
Manufacturers and public schools in Winona team up to rethink how classrooms prepare students for life after graduation

ABOVE “ABI” (SHE IS AT HOME AT HOME, SHE SITS IN A CERTAIN PLACE) BY HILLARY KEMPENICH



DEPARTMENTS

- 4 Connect**
Building and strengthening connections between people working to make our region better for all
- 10 In Progress**
FINNovation + Impact Hub MSP are changing the landscape of social entrepreneurship
- 55 Buzz**
Catch up with Bush Fellows from the past four decades and meet Board Member Pam Moret
- 66 By The Numbers**
Bush Foundation investments in 2017

- 68 Learning Logs**
Community Innovation Director Mandy Ellerton shows how collaboration solves real problems through Community Innovation Grants
- 69 The Team**
Staff, Board of Directors and Advisory Committees
- 70 What We Do**
Discover how we try to do the most possible good
- 71 Think Bigger. Think Differently.**
Learn where Malini Srivastava (BF’14) rekindles her inspiration and drive

ABOVE FROM LEFT WES EISENHAUER, DAVID BOWMAN, GREG HELGESON, HUNT+GATHER ON COVER SEAN'S MAKEUP PROVIDED BY ANDREA HOLTON



ON THE COVER: Sean Sherman (BF’18), a.k.a. “The Sioux Chef,” is a First Peoples Fund artist using his unique talents to share ancestral knowledge and revitalize Native American cuisine.


Photograph by **BRENNAN PHOTOGRAPHY INC.**

Welcome

Welcome to our fifth issue of bMag!

We created bMag as a replacement for our annual report. Rather than focusing on the Foundation itself, we envisioned a magazine that would feature inspiring stories about others in our network. And instead of highlighting grantees and Fellows from a single year, we aimed to showcase organizations and individuals from throughout the years. We wanted to recognize that change takes time and that our investments pay off over years, and sometimes decades.

Through these stories, we seek to spotlight people and organizations actively working to shape their communities into healthier, more vibrant places. We all need other people to inspire us, to believe in us, to support us, to push us and to hold us accountable. We need to bring out the best in each other.

It is a time of polarizing conflicts, locally and nationally. But even when painful, conflicts create opportunities for change and for strengthening communities. We are excited to get to support people who are working tirelessly, creatively and bravely to make our region better for everyone. I hope their stories inspire optimism for what we can accomplish together! 

Jen Ford Reedy,
President



"Archibald Bush and Edyth Bassler Bush" acrylic on paper, 2013
ARTIST: Frank Gaard (BF'84) is a Minneapolis-based painter who has made a bold mark in the Twin Cities arts community. He is known for his satire and pop culture commentary.



The Bush Foundation invests in great ideas and the people who power them in Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota and the 23 Native nations that share the same geography.

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PHOTO: GLEN STUBBE/STAR TRIBUNE

Apply for a Community Innovation Grant

Grants for organizations to work with their communities to find breakthrough solutions to tough problems.

Applications accepted throughout the year.

bfdn.org/ci

Connect

Building and strengthening connections between people working to make the region better for everyone.

bushCONNECT On the Road

We believe in the power of events to inspire, equip and connect people to think bigger and think differently about what is possible in our communities. In 2017, we offered 225 scholarships to people from our region to attend national events together. Scholars went to the Aspen Ideas Festival, Independent Sector, MCON, PopTech, SOCAP and the Social Innovation Summit.



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- 1 • SOCIAL INNOVATION SUMMIT**
Participants at the Social Innovation Summit in Chicago, Illinois, included Adriana Alejandro-Osorio, who got to meet featured speaker Van Jones.
- 2 • SOCIAL INNOVATION SUMMIT**
Attendees at the Social Innovation Summit, including Betty Gronneberg (BF'16, center), made lasting connections and have stayed in touch after returning home.
- 3 • ASPEN IDEAS FESTIVAL**
Scholars arrive in Aspen, Colorado.
- 4 • ASPEN IDEAS FESTIVAL**
Bush Foundation Scholar Guled Ibrahim asks General David Petraeus about current events and the "Muslim ban" at the Aspen Ideas Festival.

PHOTO #3 LIZ MIYOUNG KAUFMAN MCON JOY ASICO

PHOTO #9 ISSA MANSARAY

- 5 • MCON**
Tipiziwn Tolman (center), a Cohort 6 Rebuilder from Standing Rock, spoke on a social justice panel at MCON about media narratives and the Dakota Access Pipeline.
- 6 • MCON**
At MCON, attendees gathered over meals and throughout the two-day event to build connections while in Washington, D.C.
- 7 • INDEPENDENT SECTOR**
Bush Foundation President Jen Ford Reedy speaks to scholars at Independent Sector's Our Common Future conference in Detroit, Michigan.



10

- 8+9 • POPTECH**
The long bus ride was worth it to get to PopTech in Camden, Maine! Our attendees connected beyond the conference during hikes and other activities and built new relationships with people outside our region, too.

- 10 • SOCAP**
Participants at SOCAP in San Francisco, California, explored how capital markets can drive positive social and environmental impact.

Event Sponsorship

The Bush Foundation sponsors events across the region where people can share ideas and build stronger networks.



1 • RURALX
Aberdeen RuralX keynote speaker Jason Roberts of Better Block Foundation presents on how leaders can create environments that promote growth and pride in their communities.

2 • TEDXBISMARCK
Volunteers and planning committee members at TEDxBismarck.

3 • CENTER FOR TECHNOLOGY AND BUSINESS, WOMEN'S BUSINESS SUMMIT
The Center for Technology and Business' Women's Business Summit in Bismarck featured a Breakfast with Entrepreneurs panel where speakers shared their entrepreneurship journeys.

4 • YWCA MANKATO, IT'S TIME TO TALK: FORUMS ON RACE
Participants at YWCA Mankato's It's Time to Talk: Forums on Race event explore the Faces exhibit, which asks participants to consider their social circles and implicit assumptions about race.

5+6 • POLLEN, WORK REDUX: CARE AND #LIKEABOSS: COLLABORATION
Attendees and speakers at two of Pollen's Work Redux and #LikeABoss events in Minneapolis, including Pollen Executive Director Jamie Millard (in green).

7 • TWIN CITIES STARTUP WEEK
Attendees at Twin Cities Startup Week talk through how to build a business while creating an impact.

8 • COALITION TO INCREASE TEACHERS OF COLOR AND AMERICAN INDIAN TEACHERS IN MINNESOTA
Participants at the Coalition to Increase Teachers of Color conference in St. Paul.

9 • TEDXGULLLAKE
Jingle dancers, drummers and singers from the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe perform at TEDxGullLake.

10+11 • REVIVING THE ISLAMIC SISTERHOOD FOR EMPOWERMENT (RISE), MUSLIM WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT CONFERENCE
Participants at RISE's Muslim Women's Empowerment conference in Minneapolis, including Taneeza Islam (BF'13, #11).

12 • BUNKER LABS MINNEAPOLIS, MUSTER
Participants at the inaugural Bunker Labs Minneapolis Muster event, bringing military veterans together to help other veterans start and grow businesses.

TEDXBISMARCK GREENSLEEVES CREATIVE CONCEPTS CENTER FOR TECHNOLOGY AND BUSINESS KYLE MARTIN PHOTOGRAPHY POLLEN HANNAH WAZWAZ AND NANCY MUSINGUZI

TWIN CITIES STARTUP WEEK GRACE VO

Bush Foundation Events

Bush Foundation staff and board members travel and host events across the region. In 2017, we held our Board Retreat and reception in Fargo, North Dakota; receptions in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, and Minneapolis, Minnesota; and other gatherings to connect our Fellows, grantees and others doing important work to make our region better for everyone.



1 • SOUTH DAKOTA RECEPTION

Board member Paul Batcheller gives the opening remarks at our South Dakota Reception.

2 • MINNESOTA RECEPTION

Board members Jodi Gillette (center) and Jennifer Alstad (right) with Cecily Engelhart of First Peoples Fund at the Minnesota Reception.

3-5 • EDUCATION EVENTS

Education Portfolio Director Kayla Yang-Best (#3), Strategy and Learning Vice President Allison

Barmann (#4, left, with Yang-Best), and speaker Jeff Duncan-Andrade (#5) address the crowd at events on the power and possibility of individualized learning, presented in partnership with The School Leadership Project.

6+7 • FELLOWS DINNER

Board Vice Chair Dr. Kathleen Annette (#6, left), Tea Rozman Clark (BF'15, #6, center) and other staff and Fellows enjoy conversation and laughter at the Bush Fellows dinner in Minneapolis.



8 • FARGO BOARD RETREAT

Bush Foundation staff members take a dinner break during the Fargo Board Retreat.

9-11 • NORTH DAKOTA RECEPTION

Connections abound at the North Dakota Reception, where Board Member Michael Solberg (#9) addressed the crowd and Board Chair Pam Moret (#11, back to camera) spoke with Kristi Hall-Jiran of the Community Violence Intervention Center.

12 • FELLOWS LAUNCH RETREAT

Christina A. Sambor (BF'14, center) connects with new Fellows at the Bush Fellows Launch Retreat.

13 • COMMUNITY INNOVATION CONVENING

Community Innovation grantees get to know one another at the Minneapolis convening.

14 • MINNESOTA CHANGE NETWORK RETREAT

Minnesota Change Network Cohort 1 participants deepen their connections at a retreat.

BATCHELLER WES EISENHAUER EDUCATION PHOTOS REBECCA LAWRENCE MINNESOTA RECEPTION AND FELLOWS DINNER PHOTOS BRUCE SILCOX

SAMBOR BRUCE SILCOX NORTH DAKOTA RECEPTION NICK FRIESEN

Creating Social Impact, One Business at a Time

How FINNovation Lab + Impact Hub MSP are changing the landscape of social entrepreneurship

by VICTORIA BLANCO



Jacquie Berglund (BF'14) and Mary Rick

Jacquie Berglund (BF'14) keeps several hardhats around her small office on the edge of downtown Minneapolis. Co-founder of Finnegans, the first beer company in the world to donate 100 percent of its profits (\$1 million to date) to charity, Berglund grabs one several times a day and heads three blocks to the construction site where her next big idea is taking shape. When it fully opens in late spring of 2018, Finnegans House will feature a brewery and taproom as well as a social business incubator and accelerator. The expanded space and mission are the result of a collaboration with Impact Hub MSP and promise to change the landscape of social entrepreneurship in the Twin Cities.

When Berglund started Finnegans in 2000, it was one

of the only social businesses in the country. She used the proceeds from beer sales to buy produce from local farmers, which she then donated to food shelves. She soon started looking for ways to broaden the conversation around the impact businesses have on communities and the environment. She received a Bush Fellowship in 2014 to expand and build support for other social entrepreneurs in the Twin Cities. Fast forward to 2017, when Berglund and Mary Rick, a co-founder of Impact Hub MSP and the current CEO of FINNovation Lab + Impact Hub MSP, are finalizing programming, budgets, design of the new Finnegans House building, and dealing with the frustrations that always come with construction. One cold November week, it was an electrical wiring

problem in the new building that had Berglund dashing between Finnegans and the construction site.

FINNovation Lab + Impact Hub MSP—or “the Collaboration,” as the two organizations affectionately call it—officially came together in 2017, when Rick was named CEO by a Joint Governance Board that is guiding the new alliance. Prior to joining the Impact Hub, Rick worked for six years as director of sales for Peace Coffee, a local fair-trade social business, where she strove to convince consumers that ethically sourced coffee must become mainstream. To Rick, ensuring the health and safety of underpaid coffee growers and the environment was integral to the success of Peace Coffee. Soon after a friend introduced them, while Rick still worked at Peace Coffee, Berglund and Rick realized they shared a goal of growing an economy that cares not just about the bottom line, but also about positively affecting the people who help create the product, the environment and consumers.

Other than Rick and Berglund, collaborators include current Impact Hub members, Finnegans fans, food charities, programming partners, volunteers, social entrepreneurs and funders (including the Bush Foundation). While Berglund runs Finnegans, Rick leads Strategy and Innovation for the Collaboration. She meets regularly with collaborators to develop programming that will help social entrepreneurs start and grow their businesses.

Once complete, their shared vision will be a modern, four-story, 44,160-square-foot building housing a production brewery and taproom on the first floor and the Brewer’s Den on the mezzanine, a social club where dues-paying Finnegans fans can try new beer recipes and attend monthly curated events for their professional and artistic growth. Seventy-five percent of the club’s membership dues will be tax deductible and will support charitable efforts by the Finnegans Community Fund. The third floor will feature commercial office space for rent, and the fourth will be the physical site of the new collaboration. At the Collaboration, social entrepreneurs will have an entire floor equipped with space to connect, learn and work. Income generated from the Brewer’s Den will help fund programming and workspace for emerging and established social businesses, which struggle to succeed in an economy that is built for for-profit models. “Berglund is a strong visionary and knows what impact she wants to have,” explains John Sankara, who is on the Board of Directors at Impact Hub MSP.

PHOTOGRAPH BY DAVID BOWMAN INTERIOR RENDERING GENSLE MINNEAPOLIS INTERIOR DESIGN BY GENSLE MINNEAPOLIS EXTERIOR KRAUS-ANDERSON



At the FINNovation Lab + Impact Hub MSP Collaboration, social entrepreneurs will have an entire floor equipped with space to connect, learn and work.

Social Business Values

Rick traces her interest in social businesses to her upbringing in rural Minnesota, where she learned to love and care for the open land and the people who depend on it. At the University of Minnesota, her studies in international relations and economics led her to Kenya, where she participated in a program focused on international development. Later, Rick was impressed by the number of social businesses she found in the San Francisco Bay Area, where she lived for 10 years.

These varied experiences led to Rick's conviction that capital must benefit the environment and people in order to be truly valuable. "The tools of business are the ones that I've come to, more and more, to solve social and environmental issues. I work through business structures to solve different world challenges."

Many entrepreneurs, including Berglund and Rick, use the metaphor of an "ecosystem" to describe the kind of impact the Collaboration wants to have on social businesses. By fostering natural connections between socially-conscious entrepreneurs, Berglund, Rick and their collaborators hope to encourage the growth of social businesses and thereby facilitate positive change outside of the business world.

"Growing and sustaining businesses that have impact in many ways" is important, says Berglund, because these businesses will build communities for the future. Social businesses are visionary because they care about the community and the natural resources behind a product and seek to decrease the negative effects of traditional business, like contributing to climate change, widening the gap between upper and working classes, and furthering racial divides.

The Collaboration believes that local communities are key to solving these large-scale problems. This is why the Collaboration prioritizes investment in local talent and believes that a stronger future must include social entrepreneurs from every culture, religion and background. We want "a good quality of life for every Minnesotan. We have the talent, vision and fantastic philanthropic community here," says Susan Hammel, CEO of Cogent Consulting and a collaborator.

Berglund remembers the uncertainty and hope she felt when she first started Finnegans, and the people who supported her along the way. Through its Social Business Ventures Initiative, the Bush Foundation supports visionaries like Berglund and Rick by offering financial support to get started.



Finnegans Brewer's Den

Allison Barmann, who oversees the Social Business Ventures Initiative at the Bush Foundation, also believes it's important for businesses to care about social change, partly because they wield so much money and decision-making power. "We need the business sector's support to solve pressing problems in our region. We need every sector of the economy really intentionally working on these issues."

What They Do

As construction of Finnegans House nears completion, Rick is developing programming for the Collaboration. In addition to providing a space where social entrepreneurs can gather on their own, Rick plans to establish workshops, fellowships, lecture series and other programs to give social entrepreneurs access to the education and funding they need to develop their businesses. The Social Business Fellowship will be "an incredible opportunity for aspiring social entrepreneurs to advance their ideas and address a social or environmental need," says Rick. Another program, the Impact Investing Community Curation, is a collaboration between Impact Hub MSP and Cogent Consulting. Their goal is to map and activate the impact investing ecosystem in the Twin Cities. With support from the Bush Foundation, this program formed the Ecosystem Project to scale and mainstream impact investing activity in the Twin Cities. They mapped and convened the ecosystem in the first year, and are currently amplifying their impact by including more participants, deepening their relationship with existing collaborators, and increasing access to the ecosystem.

Rick and St. Paul-based Neighborhood Development Center (NDC) are launching the Neighborhood Development Program to serve residents and business leaders of the Elliot Park neighborhood. The NDC focuses on place-based economic support by offering trainings on business development and real estate to community members. Though still in the

early planning stages, Rick's main goal with the Neighborhood Development Program is to ensure that the construction of Finnegans House brings positive change to Elliot Park, a historically disadvantaged community.

Berglund has collaborated with the NDC since she opened Finnegans, which is also located in Elliot Park. Soon after opening, Berglund offered her Finnegans office for NDC-led training sessions to benefit local business leaders. Berglund didn't train local business leaders at that point; she instead used the shared space to build relationships with local residents and gain ideas on how the eventual Collaboration should benefit them. Having a physical space where social entrepreneurs can gather to meet, share ideas and attend programs is helpful in "accelerating the volume of interactions" between people who might not otherwise meet, explains Sankara.

Berglund, Rick and their fellow collaborators understand that designing a welcoming, thoughtful space is crucial to creating an incubator where socially minded entrepreneurs from different cultural, religious and economic backgrounds can come together to dream, plan and grow their social businesses. A thoughtful design will "allow for more deliberate and structured interaction," according to Sankara.

Sankara and Lori Most, another collaborator and founder of BinaryBridge, have attended numerous

roundtable meetings with other collaborators where they discuss the layout and spacing of the Collaboration. Most envisions private spaces to take calls, separate spaces to collaborate and hold in-person conversations, and access to common services for social entrepreneurs, like law firms or financial services. These conversations are still occurring, as Berglund and Rick work with designers to create a space that reflects everyone's needs and wants. "We're asking for the world, and the Collaboration is listening and accommodating," Most says.

Berglund, Rick and the collaborators want to provide the practical amenities that many social entrepreneurs need, but cannot afford. "A physical space is a catalyst for more visibility and action," according to Rick.

As plans continue to unfold, Finnegans House is set for a phased opening, with the brewery open on St. Patrick's Day 2018, and the event space and the Collaboration opening late spring 2018.

Though the Collaboration is young, Berglund, Rick and the hundreds of others involved believe they can foster change by creating a thoughtful space and innovative programming to support all social entrepreneurs. Every person involved wants to create solutions for the world's most pressing problems, and the Collaboration, through its physical space, programming and sense of community, plans to foster this hope for decades to come.



Finnegans brewery and taproom

PHOTOS DAVID BOWMAN



Building a Cultural Epicenter

Abdirizak “Zack” Mahboub (BF’10) balances entrepreneurial ambition with a vision of strengthening community

by QUINTON SKINNER

PHOTOGRAPHY DAVID ELLIS

Mahboub and co-owner, wife Sahra Gure, outside the Midtown Plaza Mall in downtown Willmar

On an autumn afternoon in 2017, Abdirizak “Zack” Mahboub (BF’10) stands outside the glass-walled front of the two-story building that will soon become the Midtown Plaza Mall in downtown Willmar. The former small-town Minnesota furniture store lacks curb appeal, but Mahboub’s vision fills in the blanks with the same contagious enthusiasm that caused the local Somali community and players in finance and community development to see it, too.

The road to developing a home for Somali businesses and services in this growing immigrant community has been winding. It takes a bridge builder to see a future in which people of many faiths and languages come together around a common goal—a vision that crosses barriers of entrenched misunderstanding and fear. In Willmar, Minnesota, Mahboub has shown his mastery both for seeing the vision and bringing it to life.

Outer Space & Small-Town America

Born in Somalia in 1960, Mahboub’s first inkling of life in the United States came when he was an elementary school student in Mogadishu. His father took him to see an Apollo 11 prototype and pictures of American astronauts walking on the moon. While there, he decided to travel to the United States one day and become an astronaut himself.

In 1981, Mahboub persuaded his father to allow him to come to

America to attend college, and he eventually earned a Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering from Massachusetts’s Wentworth Institute of Technology in Boston. Several years working as an information analyst for Electronic Data Systems, as well as starting a family, kept Mahboub in Massachusetts until he followed an employment opportunity for his wife, Sahra, and relocated in 2003 to Lewiston, Maine, home to a fast-growing community of new arrivals from now war-torn Somalia.

In Lewiston, distrust and hostility awaited the Somali refugees. Their language, dress and religion were all deeply unfamiliar to the nearly all-white community. Amid heightened tensions after 9/11, the mayor of the city wrote an open letter to the Somali community discouraging future immigration. The message was clear: Somalis were not welcome in Lewiston.

Mahboub embraced a public role of mediator after the mayor’s declaration. Back in Boston, Mahboub had founded a Somali community-based service organization, and in Lewiston, he had already opened a Somali restaurant—the first of its kind in the state. He was clearly vested in his respective communities. It was simply a matter of time before his passions and skills led him to take on an even larger role within and for his community.

Following the mayor’s letter, a small number of hate groups publicly demonstrated, and an even larger contingent of Somali supporters came together. During this upheaval,



Midtown Plaza Mall

Mahboub emerged as a trusted, authoritative voice for his community, and the story gained attention from around the world as a symbol of quickly changing times.

A Path Develops

“An improbable migration has turned into a large-scale social experiment,” wrote the *New Yorker*, after the town of Lewiston and the mayor’s declaration became the subject of a documentary called “The Letter.” Mahboub delivered much-needed connection and understanding—bridging communities in a spirit of reason and calm—in both the documentary and the defused crisis.

A few years later, after his wife visited the Twin Cities and fell in love with the area, Mahboub and his family moved to Minneapolis, joining its major Somali American community. He connected as a volunteer with social service organizations and in 2008 became the executive director of the Cedar Riverside Neighborhood Revitalization Program (CRNRP) in Minneapolis.

“It seemed really clear that he had a passion for a society to literally work

for everybody,” says John Bueche, who hired Mahboub while serving as Board Chair of CRNRP. “With Lewiston in his background, we thought that he might be able to follow through with that—and it turned out to be entirely true.”

Bueche cites Mahboub’s uncanny ability to maneuver among tense factions to bring about mutually beneficial results. In an East African community, for example, Mahboub facilitated local teens to engage in the arts during a spate of gun violence in their Minneapolis community. Bueche also lauds Mahboub’s ability to bring Somali elders into engagement and decision making.

By this time, Mahboub was an American citizen who had lived in the country for more than 25 years. As he devoted more and more of his time to the Somali community, his perspective broadened, along with the variety of his experiences.

“I feel that I have a privilege being in this country,” Mahboub says, “from first living on the East Coast and now, later in life, coming to Minnesota. It has given me an understanding of American culture and different ethnic

groups. It gave me insight into how all ethnic groups evolve generation after generation.”

Mahboub began to realize that he needed more tools to continue on his path of advocating for Somalis and East Africans, so he applied for a Bush Fellowship, which he was awarded in 2010. His immediate goal was to pursue a Master of Public Affairs degree from the University of Minnesota’s Humphrey Institute—a course of study that examined the intersection of economics, public policy, sociology and political thought.

“Most [Somali immigrants] become U.S. citizens and are eager to be part of the American community,” Mahboub wrote in his Fellowship application, “but they lack understanding of political, economic and social systems that impact their livelihood.”

At the time he applied for the Fellowship, Mahboub knew he needed to elevate his knowledge of economics and politics in order to truly effect change for the Somali community in



the Twin Cities. Little did he know that fate would take him a couple of hours west along quiet rural roads.

East Africa Meets Southwest Minnesota

After Mahboub earned his master’s degree, he was at a crossroads: He could stay in Minneapolis or follow emerging East African communities with the African Development Center—a pioneering community-based business and lending institution directed by the late Hussein Samatar (whose election to the Minneapolis School Board made him the first Somali American in the nation to win elected office). Mahboub chose the latter, which meant that in 2011, he moved his family to Willmar, Minnesota.

Willmar is home to about 20,000 residents in southwestern Minnesota’s Kandiyohi County. Settled on the ancestral land of the Dakota people, a convergence of agricultural riches and a stop on the railroad enticed

Scandinavian immigrants beginning in the 19th century. Once best known for a bank robbery by the Machine Gun Kelly Gang in 1930, Willmar is now associated with more lawful pursuits, like its thriving technological campus and industrial park, both major players in the local economy, and a Jenny-O turkey processing plant that provides an abundance of jobs.

About two decades ago, the community diversified further with the arrival of Latino immigrants attracted by agricultural-based labor. Despite challenges, members of that community began to put down roots, establish businesses and buy homes. In the last decade, an East African community has also begun to establish itself in Willmar.

“Where we are today with the East African community is where we were about 20 years ago with the Latino community,” says Ken Warner, president of the Willmar Lakes Area Chamber of Commerce.



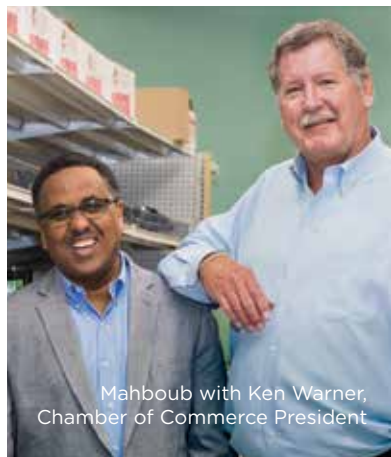
“I FEEL THAT I HAVE A PRIVILEGE BEING IN THIS COUNTRY, FROM FIRST LIVING ON THE EAST COAST AND NOW, LATER IN LIFE, COMING TO MINNESOTA. IT HAS GIVEN ME AN UNDERSTANDING OF AMERICAN CULTURE AND DIFFERENT ETHNIC GROUPS. IT GAVE ME INSIGHT INTO HOW ALL ETHNIC GROUPS EVOLVE GENERATION AFTER GENERATION.”

—Zack Mahboub



“SO MANY OF US ARE ZACK BELIEVERS, AND WE WANT HIM TO SUCCEED ANY WAY HE CAN. HE’S MY GO-TO GUY. I CAN ASK HIM ANY QUESTION ABOUT THE EAST AFRICAN COMMUNITY, AND HE’LL EXPLAIN IT TO ME. WHEN THAT HAPPENS, I’M LEARNING FROM A FRIEND AS WELL AS A MENTOR.”

—Ken Warner



Mahboub with Ken Warner, Chamber of Commerce President

Within a year of moving to the town, Mahboub founded the West Central Interpreting Service, a multi-lingual business with a network of subcontractors specializing in language interpretation for non-English speakers in their interactions with healthcare, schools, social services, courts and business. This entrepreneurial start-up thrived and has expanded service throughout the southwestern Minnesota region.

The Willmar East African community’s own entrepreneurial efforts were staring down a major setback in 2013. The Centre Point Mall was a downtown home to commercial tenants serving the Somali community, and when it was sold by the bank that owned it, a number of businesses—including a grocery store, community coffee shop and four additional establishments—had their leases terminated immediately.

“Zack tried to negotiate between the owner of the mall and the shop owners,” says Abdusalaam Hersi, who has known Mahboub since Lewiston and now owns the Salaam Transportation Co. in Willmar. According to Hersi, the negotiations weren’t successful, but perhaps that only added fuel to Mahboub’s quest for a space to call their own.

“A lot of East African businesses invested and lost,” says Mahboub. “That’s when myself and others started to ask: ‘What is a permanent space where these people can flourish?’”

Demonstrating Community Value

Willmar resembles many small, American communities. Much of the business and building activity these days is taking place on the periphery



Ainu Shams Grocery, the anchor tenant in Midtown Plaza Mall

of town. Downtown buildings are in various states of aging, some neglected by absentee landlords. Willmar could be said to be doing better than most small midwestern towns, but one can sense an uncertain future on its streets—a question of whether the community’s distinct history will endure.

In the middle of downtown is a two-story, nondescript hulk that reveals little of its history as the Erickson Building, the former home to a multi-generation furniture store that closed in the mid-1990s. Then the building became a manufacturing and administrative branch for an overseas electronics company, but that pulled up stakes a few years ago, too. Mahboub, on the heels of the closure of multiple Somali businesses at the Centre Point Mall, saw the possibility for a new market center based on ownership.

“The first time Zack gave me a tour,

he was walking with this great enthusiasm,” says Diana Anderson, president/CEO of the Southwest Initiative Foundation, a major regional development and investment organization. “Early on, it was difficult for anyone else to see his vision because the building was in a state of great disrepair.”

By this time, Mahboub had established himself as a solid figure in the Willmar community because of his entrepreneurial success as well as his eagerness to serve as a community ambassador. He and Sahra were constantly active and visible, making connections and hosting presentations and workshops where they explained details of Somali culture and took questions from community members eager to learn about the newcomers in their midst.

“So many of us are Zack believers, and we want him to succeed any way

he can,” explains Chamber of Commerce President Warner. “He’s my go-to guy. I can ask him any question about the East African community, and he’ll explain it to me. When that happens, I’m learning from a friend as well as a mentor.”

Build It & They Will Come

This goodwill got the ear of lenders and potential supporters for what was taking shape as the Midtown Plaza Mall. The 18,000-square-foot building was in rough shape but had good structural integrity, and its owners essentially released it to the community via Mahboub. However, the rehab of the building wasn’t going to be cheap or easy, so a strong economic case had to be made in order for the project to proceed.

“One of the things that I really appreciate about Zack is that he



Tenants and customers of the Midtown Plaza Mall



“OUR IMMIGRANTS BRING VALUE. THEY WANT THE AMERICAN DREAM—THE ABILITY TO CREATE A VISION AND A BETTER LIFE FOR THEIR KIDS.”

—Aaron Backman

views his work from an asset-based perspective,” Anderson says. “For instance: There isn’t really a culturally appropriate place in Willmar for the East African community to host weddings. Zack talks about the economic impact of that, how dollars leave the community when Somalis have to go to Minneapolis to hold a wedding or purchase things they need. Zack is coming from a place of positioning people to succeed and growing the economy for the entire community.”

Mahboub worked with local allies in government and economic development to put together a funding plan to launch renovation on the building that includes new electrical wiring, structural enhancements and extensive interior renovations.

“It was, to be honest, hard to sell to the bank,” Mahboub says. “The East African economy in southwest Minnesota has not been on the radar of the banks and the financing world. It is a matter of thinking about utilizing the power of these new immigrants breathing life into businesses and downtowns.”

Creating a New Center

“I was a little skeptical at first,” says Laura Warne, president of Home State Bank, a major investor in Midtown Plaza. “Not because of the tenant base, but because that’s a big building and it’s old. But we began to talk in terms of how to help him accomplish this goal and vision of a badly needed retail space for downtown tenants.”

A group of funders put together roughly \$500,000 to renovate the property, with stakeholders including Mahboub and Sahra, Willmar-based Home State Bank, the Southwest Initiative Foundation based in Hutchinson,



and the Kandiyohi County Economic Development Commission.

With a goal of having street-level businesses in operation and thriving by January 2018, it was ambitious. Much of its strength is in the diversity of the small businesses that make up the commercial core on the ground level. Among others, the mall aims to include:

- AINU SHAMS GROCERY, the mall’s anchor tenant, which specializes in Halal meats and other goods for the East African community. AINU SHAMS has been growing in its small Willmar storefront so quickly that it has been forced to keep cold storage off-site. Here, all operations are under one roof, with a small dining area for coffee and snacks.
- A hair salon for East African women, with culturally appropriate partitions and dividers.
- A clothing store for children.
- A shop for repair and sales of consumer electronics.
- A beauty products shop for women.
- A self-service laundromat.

Redoing the building’s wiring and installing fresh walls and amenities for these businesses was the first phase. Phase two included repairing the building’s large elevator, which will increase access to second-floor offices that companies like Mahboub’s West Central Interpreting Services

and Salaam Transportation have already begun to fill. The office level is already finished, with a communal kitchen and a conference room.

“Now that I have an office there, we see so many people coming in every day looking for a place to rent,” says Salaam Transportation’s Hersi. “Even

prior to the completion of the project—that tells you that the need is there.”

The third phase of Midtown Plaza will introduce major assets to the East African community in the building’s downstairs, including:

- A gathering center primarily focused as a home for Somali

ERNESTO VELEZ BUSTOS (BF’15) CONNECTING COMMUNITY, SEIZING OPPORTUNITY

From the point of view of Ernesto Velez Bustos (BF’15), the story of migrant and immigrant communities is best understood as one of evolution over time. That’s especially true in southern Minnesota and the agricultural community of Owatonna.

“We saw these populations established in the last half of the 1990s to 2004-2005,” Bustos says of the people who arrived from Mexico and Latin America for agricultural and canning jobs in the area. “Those people stayed, they got some factory jobs that paid well, and now they’ve been here for 15 years, and for the past 10 years have been stable. They’re growing generationally, and now things are more complex because we’re dealing with three different generations’ experience.”

Bustos arrived in the United States from Morelos, Mexico, when he was 19 and moved to Owatonna. As a young man he “did a little bit of everything,” including restaurant work and working on pipe systems for golf courses. In 2004, he started a job as a community organizer for Centro Campesino, a nonprofit advocating for Latino immigrants and migrants, and today he serves as the organization’s executive director, a role he has held since 2012.

In the beginning, Bustos’s work focused primarily on need-based programs: childcare for local migrant farm workers, who were housed in camps outside Owatonna, and labor rights and immigration reform for a community that lacked access to levers of power and was often on the disadvantageous side of a language barrier.

“Between all the work and outreach we did throughout the year, we would engage and touch more than 20,000 folks,” Bustos says, a number that the organization meets or exceeds annually today.

Centro Campesino has evolved along with its community, and Bustos, recipient of a 2015 Bush Fellowship, pursues a vision that draws together southern Minnesota’s Latino community to face broader regional concerns and challenges, pulling together the resources and talents of a wide range of community members and organizations.

“One of the biggest challenges is capitalizing on our current generational wealth that exists in this community,” Bustos says. “Not all of us own houses. Not all of us transfer wealth to the next generation. This lack of status has kept us out of decision-making since the 1990s.”

Part of Centro’s work focuses on another prong of this effort—working with tradespeople and workers to gain accreditation for skills they developed in their home countries—along with ongoing priorities in education, healthcare, general labor rights and immigration law. The longest-term priority, as it should be for a maturing community, is on youth.

“We don’t capitalize on all the talent that we have, and that includes concentrating on the demographics,” says Bustos. “We have a talent flight to the (Twin Cities) metro. I don’t think there’s enough intentionality on the local level so that youth can have a bright professional future right here in rural Minnesota.”

Bustos works in partnership with organizations in communities including Red Wing, Worthington and Rochester, and he increasingly looks at challenges and opportunities in trade, agriculture and climate and how future generations will approach them—building a bridge to a future in which all people co-create a whole stronger than the sum of its parts. —Quinton Skinner



Velez Bustos

BUSTOS MARIE KETRING

weddings. Because of their length—on average two days, some longer—East African nuptials often aren't a fit for local rental halls.

- A fitness center exclusively for Somali women, with private facilities to promote exercise while accommodating cultural standards.
- A ground-level mosque with a custom-built entryway to ward off the chill of the Minnesota winter.

Nestled amid antique stores, a coffee shop and other small businesses, the mall is scheduled to be gradually filled throughout 2018. If it lives up to its promise, the Midtown Plaza Mall will be a civic center, a contributor to the community tax base, and most importantly, a hub of East African culture and a symbol of its contribution to the life of Willmar.

“Zack’s vision for the building is that it will be an epicenter for cultural exchanges and idea-sharing for both Americans and new Americans,” says Dave Baker, a Willmar business owner and Minnesota State Representative. “I see myself as a colleague in this. He is where I was 15 to 20 years ago: expanding, renovating, putting everything on the line and getting something done.”

Aaron Backman of the Kandiyohi County Economic Development Commission predicts that in two to three years the Midtown Plaza Mall will be a preeminent gathering place. “It will be a place for people to meet, as well as for diverse businesses and their customers,” he says.

“Zack is a bridge builder and navigator, a champion who understands that you have to really respect both worlds,” Southwest Initiative Foundation’s Anderson adds.

“We understand that 100 percent



Bride Consultant Shop

INVESTING IN PEOPLE: THE BUSH FELLOWSHIP

The Bush Foundation believes in the power of people to make great ideas happen for their community. Each year, we award the Bush Fellowship to as many as 24 people from across Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota and the 23 Native nations that share the same geography. Bush Fellows receive a flexible grant of up to \$100,000, which they use to strengthen their leadership skills.

The Bush Fellowship is an investment in people who have a record of accomplishment and the potential to do even more for their community. Bush Fellows have shown extraordinary leadership and the ability to inspire those around them. They have a clear vision for what is possible in their community and what type of personal growth and development they need to make that vision a reality.

The hallmark of the Bush Fellowship is its flexibility. Fellows create their own growth plans that can include things like travel, completing a degree, and sharpening their leadership abilities. This flexibility gives Fellows the freedom to think bigger and differently about what is possible for themselves and their communities—and pushes them to build skills, make connections and pursue experiences they might not have previously imagined were possible.

To learn more, visit bfdn.org/bfp



Tailor

of growth in 13 of 18 counties in southwest Minnesota will come from people of color over the next 20 years. How do we create this future that works for everyone? Community leaders such as Zack pave the way.” Anderson cites additional Minnesota Demography Center statistics that predict that in the other five southwest counties, growth driven by people of color will range from 50 to 99 percent.

American Dreamers

“Our immigrants bring value. They want the American Dream—the ability to create a vision and a better life for their kids,” says Backman, who points to projects such as Midtown Plaza as a means for revitalizing downtowns in states of neglect.

None of this has come easily, even with financing in place. Mahboub has had to explain the value of business practices such as longer-term leases that have been met with skepticism in some quarters of his own community.

“We are a broken community after civil war for more than 25 years. All of our institutions have broken down, and a community loses trust and part of its culture when that happens,” Mahboub explains. “I wake up every day wearing my community hat and trying to make some difference. The goal is that, like for other immigrant communities before us, we become part of the DNA of America. But it isn’t going to be easy.”


Indeed, explains Warne of Home State Bank. “Zack has had to work hard to keep peace, to meet the expectations of the American financing world and to educate his tenant base, who haven’t had any banking experience or experience working with commercial landlords,” Warne says.

“Zack has done a nice job of surrounding himself with good professionals who want him to succeed, and he’s doing it in phases to truly be financially successful.”

This new story also feels like an old one: An entrepreneur steeping himself in business, politics and community reaches out and patiently forges alliances, bringing people together in shared progress and prosperity. Another kind of American dream realized.

“He is kind of the bridge between the mainstream and the newcomers,” says Salaam Transportation’s Hersi. “That in itself is of value, that would be sufficient—but he is also a great asset working to make Willmar better, to make the newcomers’ lives easier, to work with young people and job opportunities. Now there are many Somalis who want to stay in the area and sustain here for a long time.”

As Midtown Plaza comes together, with the sound of drills and hammers downstairs, Mahboub learns he has won a 2017 McKnight Binger Unsung Hero Award, an honor with a \$10,000 cash prize. He was nominated by leaders from the southwest Minnesota community, and now, on a small table in the second-floor reception area, is a basket of congratulatory flowers. The gift is from the Willmar Municipal Utilities Commission, on which Mahboub serves as secretary, and the card reads: “It couldn’t have been awarded to a better person. Zack, you are an asset to the Utility and citizens of Willmar.”

Mahboub is an asset whose vision points the way toward a better future in southwest Minnesota: a future of increased collaboration, understanding and prosperity for all. 



“Storyteller”
by Hillary Kempenich



Ancestral Artistry

First Peoples Fund helps artist entrepreneurs bring their ancestral knowledge to life

by JODI RAVE

In a New York University classroom, nearly 2,000 miles from his homelands on the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota, Sean Sherman (BF’18), Ogala Lakota, poured rosehip sauce over Buckskin Brown Beans. Next, he placed green cedar sprigs atop a pan of sliced elk and then moved quickly to sprinkle maple sugar over rabbit and Red Mohawk Beans.

With food prep in check, the Indigenous-foods culinary chef moved to the next room to deliver a presentation on food sovereignty. There, he reminded his audience: “History books will teach you that Indian history is ancient, but it’s recent. We know it. We grew up with it.”

While this is true, reclaiming history isn’t always easy. For centuries, generations of Native peoples passed on traditional knowledge in many ways, including songs, ceremonies, regalia, storytelling, Plains sign

language, totems, weavings and winter counts—a pictorial calendar that records important tribal events often drawn on hides. Much of those traditional ways of passing on knowledge, however, faded or disappeared through U.S. federal government assimilation policies where cultural practices of Native people were forcibly supplanted by white belief systems, ranging from education to religious practices.

Through the organization First Peoples Fund, Native American culture bearers like Sherman—or as many people know him, the Sioux Chef—are able to embrace their creative worth, heal their communities with transformative art and become a driving force for tribal economies through entrepreneurial ventures.

Hundreds of artists express themselves with support from First Peoples Fund through beadwork, pottery,



**“HISTORY BOOKS
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WE GREW UP WITH IT.”**

*—Sean Sherman,
Ogala Lakota, Chef*

baskets, carvings, quillwork, painting, culinary expression and more, and each brings back lost or faded traditional knowledge while breathing new life into the very idea of what Native art is. To help create a sustainable model for cultural restoration, First Peoples Fund also provides financial and professional support to help pave the way for a vibrant community of creators who understand where they came from and where they want to go.

“We were accountable to and responsible for that knowledge in our communities and how it was shared and taught,” says First Peoples Fund Executive Director Lori Pourier, Oglala Lakota.

Located in Rapid City, South Dakota, First Peoples Fund connects culture with a variety of training programs, including First Peoples Fund Fellowships, with fellows from 52 tribes in 22 states. The fund was established in 1995 by Jennifer Easton, and since then, staff members and affiliates have coordinated 250

workshops with 1,500 workshop artists and, since 1999, have awarded \$2.5 million in grants. Innovative practices have helped First Peoples Fund win multiple grants from the Bush Foundation, including the 2014 Bush Prize and grants from the Community Creativity Initiative, designed to make art central to problem solving.

As a Community Creativity Major Investment and Ecosystem grantee, First Peoples Fund upholds the values of Bush Foundation founders, Archie and Edyth Bush, who understood the worth, significance, benefit and importance of art and culture to a community.

“Art and culture can help people develop a sense of agency that they can make a difference in the world,” says Erik Takeshita, the Bush Foundation’s Community Creativity portfolio director. “They can help bring people together across differences, and within similarities, to have more empathy and understand one another.”



SCOTTI CLIFFORD AND JULIANNA BROWN EYES-CLIFFORD
Alternative rock duo Scatter Their Own

Embracing Worth

The tiniest of glass seed beads lay in hanks of yellow, green, red and purple on a white table. In the hands of Memory Poni-Cappo, the dainty, sand-grain sized beads will come to life in a floral design on an Anishinabe-inspired doll.

Poni-Cappo, Yuma Quechan, is an award-winning artist, but there was a time she didn’t consider herself an artist at all. She developed beading skills by designing other people’s dance regalia in urban California, and a family friend first suggested the young woman consider art as a career.

It was a life-shifting divorce, however, that forced Poni-Cappo to make some tough decisions that eventually transplanted her from the West Coast to her father’s homeland on the Turtle Mountain Reservation in North Dakota. She enrolled at the local tribal college, where fellow students were entering art contests for the American Indian Higher Education Consortium’s annual competition. She ended up submitting two items: a beaded, floral medallion and a doll. Both entries won awards.

“I had no expectation I would win anything,” she says. “I was in near tears. I never considered myself an artist.”

Now a First Peoples Funds Fellow, Poni-Cappo initially connected to the organization through her employer when she helped write a grant that brought one of the first juried art shows to the Turtle Mountain Reservation in September 2016. The two-day show proved to be a game changer for many local artists. According to Poni-Cappo, one artist credits the show for helping him make a \$10,000 art sale. To continue that momentum, the second annual Heart of the Turtle Art Show and Market was held September 2018 in Belcourt, North Dakota, and was sponsored by the Turtle Mountain Tribal Arts Association.

The artist who sells a piece of art—be it in an upscale gallery or on the street—represents an entrepreneurial spirit, says Kevin Killer (BF’15 and Cohort 1 Rebuilder), Oglala Lakota, who has collaborated on projects with the First Peoples Fund. “Once artists get out there in the community, they also share their own worth.”

Killer, a South Dakota state senator whose district includes the Pine Ridge Reservation, notes that talented Native artists have had fewer chances to tell their stories, create art and produce films because they have had fewer opportunities and resources, including training, equipment and



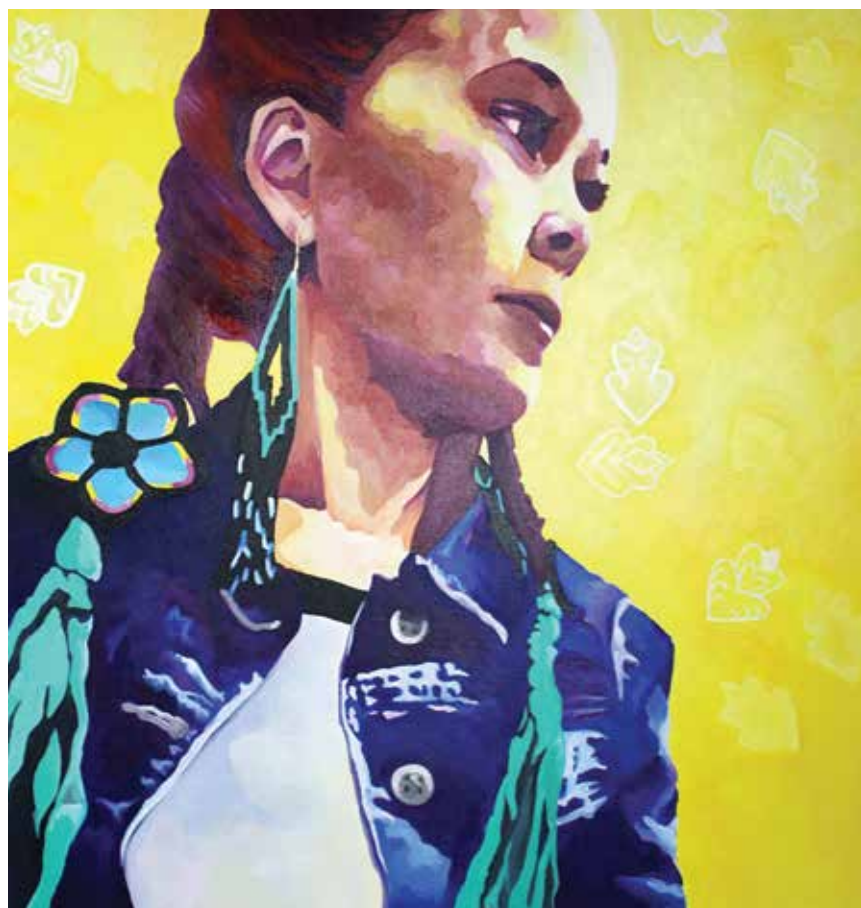
MEMORY PONI-CAPPO
Award-winning artist holding expertly crafted Anishinabe-inspired dolls

**“ART AND CULTURE CAN HELP PEOPLE
DEVELOP A SENSE OF AGENCY THAT THEY CAN
MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN THE WORLD.”**

*—Erik Takeshita, Community Creativity
portfolio director, Bush Foundation*

SHERMAN BRENNAN PHOTOGRAPHY INC. SCATTER THEIR OWN SHANNON BURNETTE-MEEK

PHOTO COURTESY OF MEMORY PONI-CAPPO. PHOTOS BY BOBBILYNN FREDERICK



HILLARY KEMPENICH

“Nindaanis, Budding Warrior” (My daughter, budding warrior) (above) and “Devotion” (below)



studio space. Their absence means a lack of Native voices in narratives about their homelands. The iconic Pine Ridge Reservation and the Oglala people have been the setting and subjects for international and national films, but most of these were directed by non-Native filmmakers.

Non-Native people can recognize distinctive narratives of place, explains Killer, but an Indigenous storyteller brings a different perspective. It’s the difference between someone connected to the land for 100 generations compared to the person who has been ranching on the land for five. First Peoples Fund is bringing film opportunities to Pine Ridge citizens, and one First Peoples Fund Fellow is now shooting a rare, feature-length film on the reservation.

Other First Peoples Fund Fellows are also getting creative with video projects. When an aunt and uncle in the Manderson community on Pine Ridge asked Scotti Clifford and Julianna Brown Eyes-Clifford to write a song about the impacts of big oil on land and water, the acclaimed musical duo of the band Scatter Their Own stepped up. Not only did they write a song, “Taste the Time,” which was produced by a First Peoples Fund grant, but they created a full-scale video production.

The CD was sold in their home city of Pine Ridge, South Dakota, in the Heritage Center Gift Shop. Locals and visitors alike fell in love with the song, and one fan even invited the couple to perform in Philadelphia.

Early in their career, the couple never thought of their musical craft as a way to make a living. “At first, we thought of it as being fun,” says Brown Eyes-Clifford. However, as the years

KEMPENICH AARON KEMPENICH

passed, the husband and wife transitioned their music from passion into business. After participating in nearly every First Peoples Fund workshop, the two have connected with filmmakers and performers across the country, sharing their experiences and learning from others. “It was great to meet other artists treating their art as a business,” says Brown Eyes-Clifford.

Jeremy Staab, Santee Sioux, also went to First Peoples Fund workshops—in fact, that was his introduction to the organization for which he is now a program manager. At the time of his first workshop, he was working for the Ho-Chunk Community Development Corp. in Winnebago, Nebraska. His clients were intrigued by the idea of a training that infused traditional Native cultural values with business skills, so he attended First Peoples Fund’s professional development training. “It actually made it a lot easier for my clients to relate to, as opposed to some of these Western-style business models,” says Staab.

Business schools typically don’t talk about values, explains Staab, who has bachelor’s and master’s degrees in business administration. “It’s not part of the conversation at all, but here it was a foundation and center of the curriculum.”

First Peoples Fund Fellows also make cultural values part of the conversation to spur positive change within their communities. “It means a great deal to me that First Peoples Fund grounds all of their work on a core set of values that are inspired by Lakota teachings,” explains Dyani White Hawk, a Sicangu Lakota artist who is the former gallery director and curator at All My Relations Gallery of the Native American

POURIER JESSICA MILLER

Community Development Institute (2014 Bush Prize winner) in Minneapolis and has had her work displayed in places like the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian and the Minneapolis Institute of Art.

“We are all human, and we are not perfect,” she explains. “But, we set out to do the work we do guided by values such as generosity, respect, fortitude, honesty and compassion. The First Peoples Fund makes an effort to actively remember who has brought us to the place we are today, honor those intergenerational connections, and continue to support and build our communities according to the values that have guided our people for as long as we know.”

Healing Art

It is late fall on the Pine Ridge Reservation in southwest South Dakota where swaths of majestic cottonwood rise along riparian lowlands near rivers, streams and creeks. The tree crowns are



“WE WERE ACCOUNTABLE TO AND RESPONSIBLE FOR THAT KNOWLEDGE IN OUR COMMUNITIES AND HOW IT WAS SHARED AND TAUGHT.”

—Lori Pourier, Oglala Lakota, executive director, First Peoples Fund



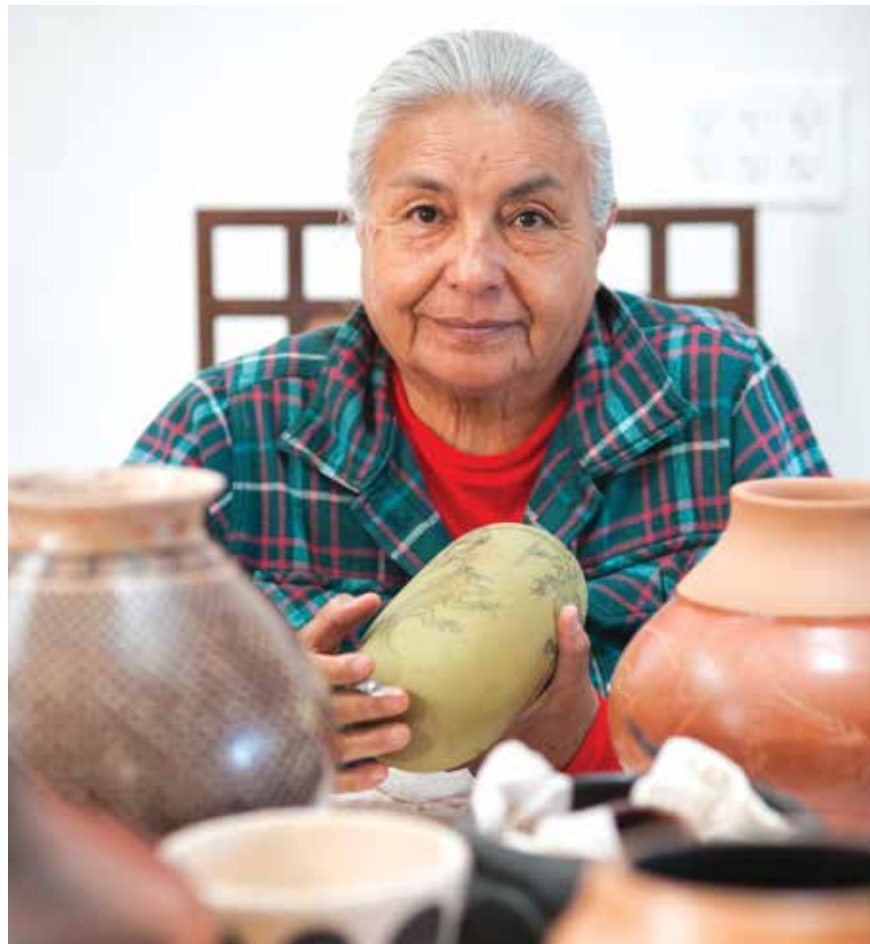
PUTTING ART IN THE CENTER: COMMUNITY CREATIVITY INITIATIVE

The Bush Foundation’s Community Creativity Initiative strives to make art and culture a central element of problem solving across issues, sectors and communities throughout our region.

Art and culture are vital assets for communities to solve problems and discover opportunities: They can inspire people to think bigger and differently about what’s possible, and they can connect and bridge people across differences.

Through targeted investments, the Community Creativity Initiative aims to help more artists and non-artists integrate art and culture into problem solving, show how art and culture can help solve problems, and make art and culture ongoing elements of problem solving. We are particularly focused on supporting efforts in communities of color, Indigenous communities and rural communities.

To learn more, visit bfdn.org/cc



JODY NARANJO FOLWELL-TURIPA

Renowned potter

bursting with the deep yellows of corn and squash. Some 28,000 people live here, connected through towns, villages and tiospayes—revered, extended family systems.

Despite frequent national stories highlighting pain and poverty, the Oglala Lakota remain strong in ceremony, art and culture.

Hillary Kempenich, an Ojibwe and Cree mixed media artist who lives in Grand Forks, North Dakota, recently visited Lakota territory with the Intercultural Leadership Institute,

a Bush Foundation partner and collaboration among four organizations: the National Association of Latino Arts, PAI Foundation, Alternate ROOTS and First Peoples Fund. The group discussed historical trauma—the cumulative emotional wounding of entire generations caused by traumatic events. “I don’t believe it’s historical,” Kempenich says. “We’re still living in that pain. It keeps happening to us on an everyday basis.”

Her art sometimes illustrates Native peoples’ tumultuous history,

reflecting on the disproportionate number of missing and murdered Indigenous women and the not-so-distant era of boarding schools. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, these schools removed tens of thousands of American Indian youths from their parents and communities across the country and forbid students’ connection to tribal languages and customs, including long hair, Indian names and traditional spiritual beliefs. Thousands of students were subjected to sexual, physical and emotional abuse, resulting in court settlements with Christian churches.

Despite the sadness behind some of her pieces—“I’ve been introduced as an artist who has really sad stories to tell,” Kempenich recalls—to know Kempenich’s art is to bear witness to the pride and strength of Native women. Her paintings might reveal a bitter, dark reality, but they also shine with bright colors. While some of her art includes well-known performers, such as the ballerina Maria Tallchief and singer Buffy St. Marie, Kempenich tends to paint women in her immediate surroundings. She counts her daughters among her muses.

“Art is about healing and translating those feelings,” says Kempenich. “It’s very therapeutic for our community.”

The healing begins with sharing stories from a Native perspective. These stories, she explains, often are told by white people and “not always told in a kind way.” Kempenich, who is now 36, is a recipient of the First Peoples Fund 2016 Artists in Business Leadership Fellowship. It has been four years since she began treating her art career as a full-time job, reclaiming history canvas by canvas.

Jody Naranjo Folwell-Turipa, Santa Clara Pueblo, received a First Peoples Fund Fellowship only two years before Kempenich, but she holds a much longer career as a renowned potter. At age 75, she understands the importance of art in her community. She looks at her life situation and asks: “What can I do to share what has been given to me?”

In 2014, she received the Jennifer Easton Community Spirit Award, a First Peoples Fund prize that recognizes artists who honor their responsibility to uphold cultural knowledge within their community. Folwell-Turipa counts the award among her most prestigious recognitions because it allowed her to connect with fellow Native artists. Prior to the award, her artist’s network mostly consisted of the Pueblo community and wealthy art patrons.

“It was an ‘a-ha’ moment,” she says. “It was so incredible. Even now, I feel so thankful I was given the opportunity to be able to listen and to visually be a part of the larger Indian community.”

Art Economics

Folwell-Turipa, who is now a First Peoples Fund Board Member, credits the organization for its diverse network. First Peoples Fund has partnerships across the country, including 12 reservation-based Native Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs), which have a mission to serve low-income communities through lending programs, including credit unions, banks, loan funds and venture capital funds.

The First Peoples Fund was founded with the intent to help CDFIs work with Native artists, from financial literacy and Individual Development Accounts to financial

education and marketing, explains First Peoples Fund’s Pourier. It’s the type of planning and programming essential to making art and culture a vital piece of tribes’ economies.

By increasing artists’ ability to earn an income through training and access to capital, Native nations can

partake in the global art market, where total sales reached \$63.8 billion in 2015. The United States commanded 43 percent of that market share, according to a TEFAF Art Market Report.

The cultural arts and tourism industry in Santa Fe County—which



LAUREN GOOD DAY “Prayers for the People” (above)
GILBERT KILLS PRETTY ENEMY “Stand With Standing Rock” (below)
 Both are contemporary forms of ledger art, which grew out of the winter count tradition that was originally done on buffalo hides.

NARANJO FOLWELL-TURIPA ERIC O'CONNELL

PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE ARTISTS

NOTES ON INNOVATION: BUSH PRIZE CASE STUDIES

An organization might share a great solution to a problem, but it's not often obvious how they actually came up with the breakthrough. The Bush Foundation is trying to show, not tell, how new solutions can transform a community: by presenting the steps through a series of case studies.

"We wanted a way to break down in more detail how organizations were able to solve community problems," says Mandy Ellerton, director of the Bush Foundation's Community Innovation Programs. "A lot of the time we only hear details about the solutions that successful organizations create. We miss out on learning from the hard work and creativity that the organizations put into the process of solving the problem in the first place."

To fill this gap, the Bush Foundation is publishing creative case studies to illustrate how Bush Prize winners, like First Peoples Fund, traveled from A to Z to come up with solutions to pressing community challenges. The Bush Foundation hopes these case studies help others learn from Bush Prize winners and inspire them to take on the hard work of problem solving. —Jodi Rave

Check out Bush Prize case studies and additional publications online at bfdn.org/casestudies, or sign up to receive free hard copies at bfdn.org/mail



is heavily influenced by American Indian art—generates more than \$1 billion in annual revenue, according to the University of New Mexico's Bureau of Business and Economic Research. While mechanisms are in place to track national art sales, a 2011 Government Accountability report on Indian Arts and Crafts revealed there is no national database to specifically track Native arts and craft sales or misrepresentation.

"Our artists are really kind of untapped," says Senator Killer. He values the presence of artists' work and ancestral insight in his district, and he and other community leaders understand the need to create business opportunities and spaces where artists can thrive. "They're sacred, and they're the protectors of our community," he says. "We need those places where you can protect that vision and that voice."

This is no small feat considering many Native communities lack basic necessities, such as jobs, housing and roads. "We don't have the basic infrastructure in any one of our communities on Pine Ridge," says Tawney Brunsch, executive director of Lakota Funds, a CDFI located in Kyle, South Dakota (and Bush Foundation Community Innovation grantee). "We don't have a 'Main Street' district. We don't have streets. We don't have curbs and gutters."

According to The American Indian Creative Economy Market Study Project, more than half of the citizens on the Pine Ridge Reservation depend heavily on home-based enterprises for cash income in an economy where there are few places to work other than the tribal government or the tribe-owned casino.

Of that number, 79 percent rely on traditional arts, such as beading and painting, for income. Sixty-one percent of the emerging artists surveyed live in poverty and make less than \$10,000 a year, compared to 7.5 percent of artists who receive business training from First Peoples Fund.

Entities that serve the Pine Ridge community recognize the unmet needs. As Lakota Funds set out to establish the Lakota Federal Credit Union, research for a business plan revealed 59 percent of the Pine Ridge Reservation was unbanked, meaning they did not use or have access to banking services.

First Peoples Fund and Lakota Funds have worked together on banking programs to help entrepreneurial artists build collateral, assets and credit. "The challenge is much greater for most artists because they have their artwork, they have their talent, but on paper, it's hard to put a value to that," explains Brunsch.

Step by Step, Artist by Artist

While Brunsch often finds that the artists don't think of themselves as business owners or entrepreneurs, training can get them on the road to being strategic about tracking income and expenses, in turn increasing their ability to support themselves and their families. To meet this need, First Peoples Fund provides grants to Lakota Funds, which uses them as capital for Art Builder loans.

The Oglala Lakota, like many Native nations, continue to rebuild their lives and economies after transitioning to reservation life. The Pine Ridge Reservation was established by treaty in 1889, a brief 129 years ago compared to centuries of life on the

Rolling Rez Arts



PAINTING AT STANDING ROCK BRANDIE MACDONALD ROLLING REZ ARTS BUS BRYAN DOUGLAS PARKER

Plains unencumbered by encroaching settlers. Rebuilding lives is a step-by-step process.

Lakota Funds and First Peoples Fund have also identified lack of creative work space as an issue that hampers artists. Many artists work out of their homes, often living in overcrowded conditions with many relatives. One quilter who lives near Corn Creek on the Pine Ridge Reservation gave up her living room for her quilting business. Lakota Funds' lending programs eventually helped her qualify for a business loan to help her build a shop. "She gets her living room back," explains Brunsch.

Meanwhile, many artists and culture bearers still need places to work and, moreover, the physical means to access opportunities for growth.

The Pine Ridge Reservation comprises nearly 3,500 square miles of landscape, ranging from Badlands and pine-covered hills to stretches of



"WE ARE SO GRATEFUL FOR THIS ROLLING REZ UNIT. ... THAT'S OUR BEST ABILITY TO SERVE THOSE MEMBERS."

—Tawney Brunsch,
executive director, Lakota Funds

mixed grass prairie. Vast distances and lack of transportation can hamper someone who needs to get from Martin, South Dakota, to the Red Cloud Gift Shop in Pine Ridge, 49 miles away.


"Artists were hitchhiking to our workshops way over at Lakota Funds in Kyle, and we'd see them walking down the road heading back to Porcupine," says Pourier. "We saw this energy of artists wanting to be together and share."

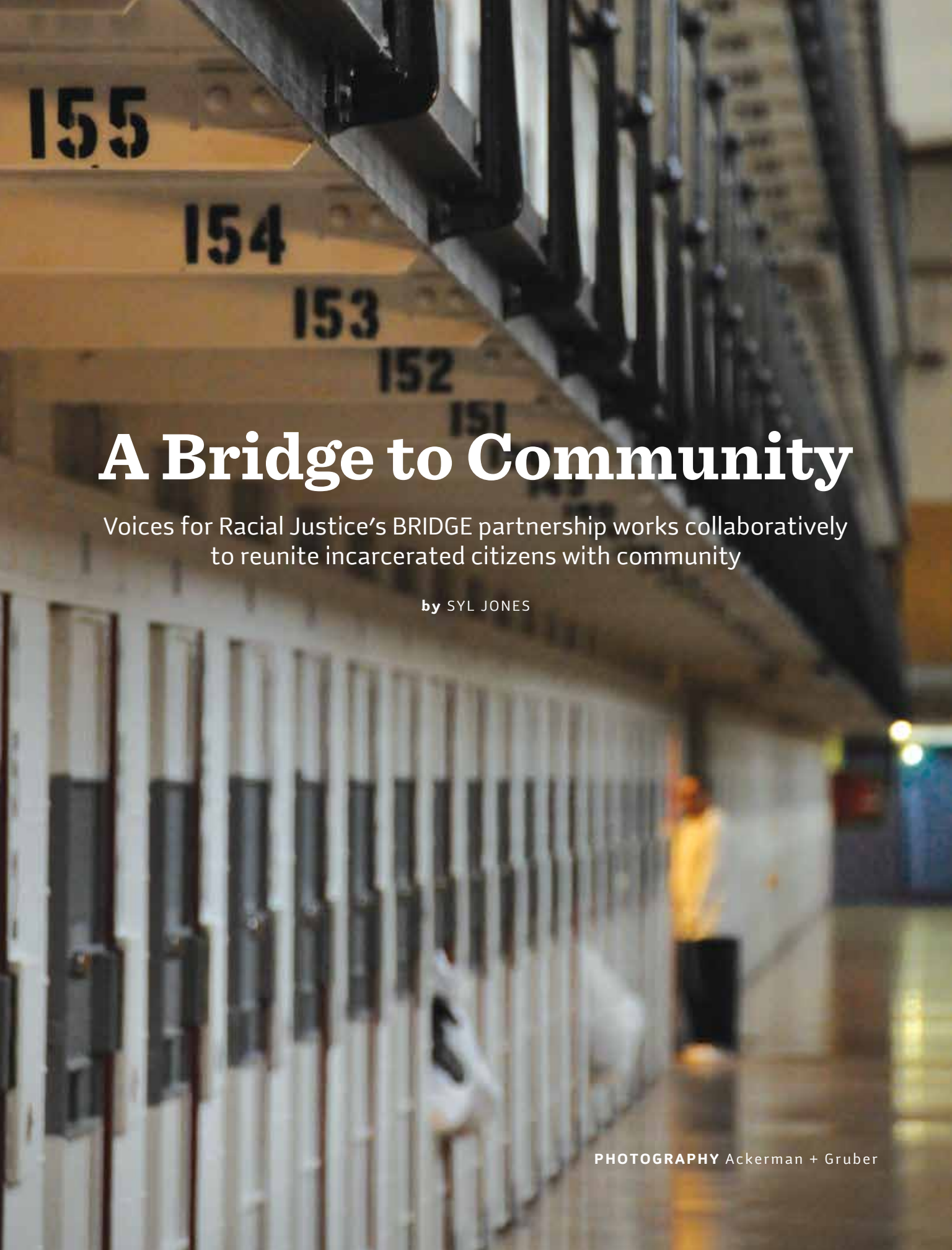
First Peoples Fund and Lakota Funds went to work to open yet another path to help artists. The two organizations collaborated with Artspace, a nonprofit organization based in Minneapolis, and several funders, including the Bush Foundation, to bring a mobile art van, Rolling Rez Arts—complete with a recording studio, film equipment and banking services—to each community.

"We are so grateful for this Rolling

Rez unit and the relationship we have with First Peoples Fund and Artspace because right now that's our best ability to serve those members," explains Brunsch. "We're happy to be a part of it to grow the economy here in Pine Ridge."

The Rolling Rez Arts unit proved to be a missing link to artists' growth, a missing link now leading to a bigger dream. This spring, construction is expected to begin on the Oglala Lakota Art Space, a first-ever art studio and artistic community space on the reservation. It will be built in Kyle near the Chamber of Commerce, Lakota Prairie Hotel and the Oglala Lakota College.

Senator Killer credits the organization as a valuable regional resource that helps preserve history, culture and language. "It's going to take that kind of creative storytelling and creative thinking to find and keep our place in the world." 



A Bridge to Community

Voices for Racial Justice's BRIDGE partnership works collaboratively to reunite incarcerated citizens with community

by SYL JONES

PHOTOGRAPHY Ackerman + Gruber

Huddled around a rectangular wooden table in a third-story room above East Franklin Avenue in Minneapolis is an intense multi-racial group confronting a serious challenge. Their aim: to repair the tattered racial justice infrastructure in Minnesota, and specifically, to build a structural connection between imprisoned individuals and their communities.

This is a radical notion. A common narrative is that prison is punishment for transgressive criminal behavior, and part of that punishment is to endure relative isolation with humility and grace. As the saying goes, if you commit the crime, you must do the time, and some even believe that ostracism after prison is part of that equation.

But a growing movement to improve connections between prisoners—a disproportionate number of whom are people of color—and their communities is emerging. Likewise, many organizations now believe that incarcerated individuals must receive fair and equitable treatment inside and outside of prison to improve the health and welfare of the larger community of which they are a part. This focus on true rehabilitation is crucial to helping individuals succeed after they are released and breaking the cycle of recidivism.

The BRIDGE, a program supported by Voices for Racial Justice (VRJ), is a partnership of currently incarcerated individuals, family members and community organizations determined to promote just and equitable treatment



Vina Kay, executive director, Voices for Racial Justice

for prisoners. The program works to amplify the voices of the incarcerated so they can be heard by everyone, including policy makers.

Created by Kevin Reese while he was incarcerated at Lino Lakes Correctional Facility (read a web exclusive on Reese at bmag.bushfoundation.org), the BRIDGE partnership came about because Reese heard a radio program about prison justice featuring VRJ's Executive Director Vina Kay.

"What I didn't know is that Kevin was listening in prison, and he later said that hearing the program was like oxygen to him," says Kay. "He told me, 'If you are doing work like this out in the community, then I should be doing it in here, too.' What Kevin was hungry for from the beginning was this bridge from prison to the community."

Reese's involvement exemplifies the

kind of radical inclusiveness that the Bush Foundation seeks and rewards through its Community Innovation grant program, through which the Foundation awarded the BRIDGE a \$200,000 grant in 2016. It is especially novel that Reese is collaborating with VRJ while still in prison, ensuring that his voice, and others that are often muffled or ignored, are primary in creating an authentic community-based solution. Centering the voices of those most directly impacted by mass incarceration—in this case, prisoners and their families—is an essential element to collaborative and inclusive problem solving.

A Healthy Collaboration

Currently, VRJ and the BRIDGE are working with various stakeholders in pursuit of an elusive dream:

STILLWATER STATE PRISON COURTESY OF THE MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS



BRIDGE team at a working session

“HOW DO WE MAKE SURE THAT RACIAL JUSTICE ORGANIZING IS NOT DEPLETING OUR COMMUNITIES AND THAT WE ARE DOING IT IN A WAY THAT LEADS NOT JUST TO POLICY CHANGE BUT IS ALSO HEALING?”

—Vina Kay,
executive director,
Voices for Racial Justice

that the health and well-being of incarcerated people does not deteriorate, and possibly even improves, while people are in prison. They are conducting a deep dive into health equity issues for prisoners, and with additional financial support from the Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota Foundation and the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH), the group is preparing a community-led report on their findings.

MDH and VRJ have collaborated before. When MDH published its findings in 2014 showing that structural racism is an animating force behind many healthcare disparities in Minnesota, VRJ was in the background. The organization supplied important community-based details to MDH and, according to Kay, “We felt like a lot of our work had been vindicated by the report. It is gratifying whenever a government entity acknowledges something like structural racism, which we have worked so hard to bring attention to.”

Mohamed Hassan, a grant manager at MDH’s Center for Health Equity, says that VRJ’s effectiveness is driven by its approach. “What’s unique about VRJ’s work is that all research, programming and policy recommendations are driven by and for community. Because of this, they are able to hear from and partner with community members in a way that a government agency could not do alone.”

While that is certainly true, VRJ’s greatest asset may be its ability to work as a cultural translator between individuals impacted by life and death issues, communities with a stake in those issues and policy-making organizations like MDH. This kind of work requires time and patience to build and maintain relationships on all sides, plus great sensitivity to potential pitfalls. Achieving alignment between the goals of a state agency and the aspirations of incarcerated individuals can be like walking a tightrope: It is only possible through a combination of humility, in-depth experience and street moxie.

Hassan emphasizes that, “As with many of our community partners, it has taken a number of years and intentional relationship building to build trust between MDH and the community. VRJ’s emphasis on collaboratively engaging with community members to co-create solutions to inequities and being accountable to their community is a critical part of why their approaches are effective.”

Although the main goal of the health equity report is to improve the health of all prisoners by shining a spotlight on the experiences of those impacted by incarceration, the legacy of this work may be the sophisticated network that has grown out of VRJ’s approach. Because it is based on trust

that links disparate groups together in a major problem-solving effort, that network can be cultivated and leveraged again and again to give voice to those who need and deserve a hearing on other issues.

Community Workshops

Given the lasting harm incarceration can do, creating a pathway out of prison and into a better future seems like a common-sense idea. Everyone wins, including society, and the breach created by the cycle of criminality, incarceration and the depletion of communities is effectively healed. At least, that’s how it is supposed to work.

But nothing involving the criminal justice system is easy, especially when it concerns inmates. Kay remembers that when VRJ began to work inside Minnesota prisons, “We originally tried to start a program that involved a series of meetings with incarcerated men on a regular basis, but we kept getting turned down. Finally, we asked for a one-day workshop, and that’s what we got,” Kay says.

Despite months of planning, crucial emails from VRJ to the Minnesota Department of Corrections (DOC) were lost, and someone from the agency called a few days before the scheduled meeting to say that the gathering would have to be canceled.

“I said, ‘Are you telling me I am going to have to call all of the people we have coming to this meeting, people who have put this on their schedule and planned to be there, and say that the meeting is not going to happen?’” Kay’s gentle irritation bleeds through as she recounts this discussion, but nothing seems to shake her dogged optimism. She is patient, well-informed and skilled at speaking to different points of view.

REESE COURTESY OF KEVIN REESE

Her pointed question caused the DOC to rethink its approach and, in the end, all sides agreed. On October 1, 2014, legislators, community activists, artists and thought leaders met with dozens of incarcerated men at Lino Lakes Correctional Facility, just as planned. As it turned out, the inmates had a great deal to say about their living conditions, emotions, families and the sense of disconnection many felt. A second all-day workshop was held on January 13, 2016, and the community visitors, which included DOC Commissioner Tom Roy and then-Lieutenant Governor Tina Smith, again heard



Kevin Reese

COLLABORATIVE PROBLEM SOLVING: COMMUNITY INNOVATION GRANTS

The Bush Foundation’s Community Innovation Grants fund problem-solving projects that make the region better for everyone. This program doesn’t focus on any particular issue, subject or population; rather, it supports problem solving that takes advantage of existing resources and collaboratively involves other partners, especially the communities that are being most affected by the work.

When organizations meaningfully engage those who are most affected by a problem, the solution is more likely to work. To do so, “thinking bigger” is a crucial first step. To help organizations take a step outside of their day-to-day work to do this big thinking, the Foundation has provided over \$35 million since 2013 to organizations working to address issues involving addiction, economic development, education, homelessness, sexual violence, mental health and many others.

If you’re inspired by the story of the BRIDGE program, here are a few tips for turning your community problem into an amazing new solution:

- Remember that innovation and problem solving require taking risks. At the outset, be clear with your staff and your partners that you might fail, but that failure can be the first step toward ultimate success.
- Talk to people outside your field about the problem you’re trying to solve. Sometimes new thinking springs from radically different perspectives. If you work in healthcare, talk to an artist. If you work in front-line social services, talk to an entrepreneur. If your field is agriculture, seek out someone in education.
- The power to find solutions is greater within groups than within any single individual, including you. Engage a variety of people, because you could be surprised to learn that others have been thinking about your problem and may have a potential solution. —Syl Jones

To learn more, visit bfdn.org/ci



directly from incarcerated men about how they experienced prison and what they hoped for both inside and upon their return to their communities.

Advocating Rights

In addition to studying healthcare inequities and organizing meetings between community members, government leaders and incarcerated people, the BRIDGE has led collaborative letter writing campaigns with groups advocating voting rights restoration, capping prison phone rates and advancing employment opportunities. The program has also convened families of incarcerated individuals to help organize, research and create policy strategies to address their

needs and those of their loved ones.

Through the BRIDGE program, VRJ has worked on issues such as “Ban the Box,” a policy approach intended to end the practice in many states that requires former prisoners to check a box on job applications indicating they have been convicted of a felony. Such disclosures often deprive former prisoners of equal economic opportunity because employers may be reluctant to hire someone with a criminal record. What’s more, the inability to find gainful employment after prison is correlated with increased recidivism rates.

In 2013 Minnesota “banned the box,” says Kay, “but there is still more to be done to open up opportunities

for employment to those with a criminal record.” Enforcement, it seems, remains a challenge: Some companies are using old employment applications, while others say they didn’t realize the law was in effect. Plus, potential employers can still inquire about a criminal record during the interview process, which can then cut off the possibility of employment. VRJ is working to close these loopholes and increase employment opportunities for those who have been incarcerated.

Choosing Optimism

VRJ’s work can, at times, be soul-crushing. Yet, as the lively and strong-willed individuals around the wooden table—including not just VRJ staff,

but also formerly incarcerated people and family members of those currently in prison—plot their next move, they exchange smiles, high-fives and plenty of exuberant laughter. In fact, they often share a meal together and seem more like a family than colleagues. While the undercurrent in the room can be sad, the dominant emotions are optimism and joy.

These dedicated collaborators understand that the work of changing the mass incarceration system must happen both inside and outside prison walls. In their offices and out in their communities, they formulate policy initiatives, engage with community members, and reach out to forge alliances with as many allies as possible.

Inside prison walls, different rules apply, including some that make a mockery of rehabilitation. Strict rules against touching visitors can be selectively enforced to deny prisoners human contact, and some are even demeaned or abused. These are challenges that the public hears about but does not see—or that don’t fit the standard narrative about prisoners. Changing that narrative so that prisoners are viewed as human beings is part of VRJ’s long-term challenge.

Kay, who grew up in Omaha, Nebraska, and is the daughter of Thai immigrants, knows that transforming the system takes a toll on the individuals doing the work, especially those whose lives are directly affected by that system. But she, other VRJ staff and their community partners find deep personal meaning in their work.

Mónica Hurtado, VRJ racial justice and health equity organizer, explained that she is engaged in this

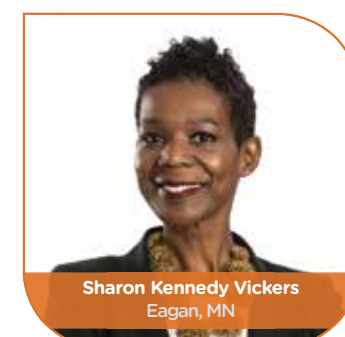
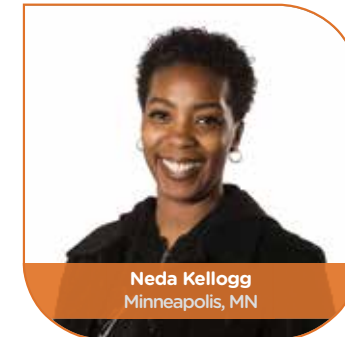
work for personal reasons. “I grew up in Colombia, where I experienced the challenges of a longer than 60-year-old civil war, internal displacement, poverty and mental health issues in my family,” she says. “One of my brothers has bipolar disorder and has been incarcerated at different points in his life. Working with incarcerated individuals and other members of the community directly affected by incarceration has been an amazing opportunity to connect my work with my own story. It has been such a challenging, powerful and healing experience.”

Beyond that, Kay notes, “As Kevin has told us, the work of envisioning and organizing for something different can be life-giving to those facing the oppression of incarceration. The partnership and trust of the Bush Foundation have given us the space to dream, learn, make mistakes and continually grow.”



Congratulations to the 2018 Bush Fellows

A Bush Fellowship is recognition of extraordinary achievement and a bet on extraordinary potential. Fellows are awarded up to \$100,000 to invest in their leadership development.



Applications accepted on August 7 and close on August 30, 2018.





Putting Down Roots

Bush Prize winner Hmong American Farmers Association cultivates richness in the local food ecosystem

by MO PERRY

PHOTOGRAPHY MIKE HAZARD/HAFA FARM

Pakou Hang (BF'11) and her six siblings spent much of their childhood rising early to weed and pick cucumbers on the family farm before school. Those cucumbers, which their parents sold to Gedney Pickles, paid for school tuition.

Hang went on to receive her Bachelor of Arts from Yale in 1999 and her master's in Political Science from the University of Minnesota in 2008. Even as she kept moving forward, she didn't stop looking back, and in 2011, she was awarded a Bush Fellowship to investigate the challenges Hmong farmers in Minnesota face in participating in the local foods and sustainable agriculture movements.

Farming has been an integral part of the Hmong immigrant experience ever since refugees started arriving from Southeast Asia in the aftermath of the Vietnam War. Today, Minnesota's Hmong American population is

the second-largest in the country, at more than 66,000. Hmong American farmers make up more than half of the vendors in Twin Cities area farmers markets and hold an important place in the Minnesota local-foods economy, which generates more than \$250 million in annual sales. But despite their significant contributions to the state food ecosystem, Hmong American farmers typically only earn about 60 percent of what their white counterparts do, and one quarter of Minnesota's Hmong population still lives below the poverty line.

To learn more about the needs and concerns of Hmong American farmers, Hang engaged in more than 40 one-on-one conversations with them and other community stakeholders. When a national conference of social investors seeking ways to support immigrant farmers came to Minneapolis, Hang hosted a panel discussion

"WE SET AMBITIOUS GOALS. WE'RE DATA-DRIVEN, RESULTS-ORIENTED AND ENTREPRENEURIAL IN OUR SPIRIT."

*—Pakou Hang,
co-founder, HAFA*

ALL PHOTOGRAPHY MIKE HAZARD/HAFA FARM HANG PASSENGER PRODUCTIONS



on the unique challenges and opportunities of Hmong American farmers.

Vang Moua, a Hmong American farmer who had been facing many of these challenges for decades, was among the stakeholders Hang invited to the conference. She rose and, in her native tongue, told the assembled mix of farmers and investors that she'd been waiting 20 years to have this conversation. "We have to stop waiting for someone to come and save us," Moua said to the crowd. "We can save ourselves."

"That remark was the tipping point," says Hang. "Vang made that comment at the conference on a Thursday. By the following Tuesday, I was incorporating the Hmong American Farmers Association (HAFA)." Hang, along with her brother and co-founder Janssen Hang, created HAFA in 2011 with a mission to advance the prosperity of Hmong American farmers through cooperative endeavors, capacity building, research and advocacy. Since then, HAFA's efforts have paid off—the association received a 2014 Community Innovation grant and a 2017 Bush Prize.

On a chilly October morning in 2017, Moua sits smiling in the renovated farmhouse at the center of the HAFA Farm, a 155-acre research and incubator farm in Vermillion Township, 15 minutes south of St. Paul. She has spent the morning harvesting Brussels sprouts, and her fingertips poke out of her fingerless gloves, covered in the rich soil of the fields surrounding the farmhouse. "I used to have to bring my harvest back to my house and store it in the garage," she says of the pre-HAFA years. "Now we have resources available. We have water, coolers and facilities to help us. Our quality of life has changed."

Planting Seeds for Growth

Though the obstacles encountered by Hmong American farmers include access to new markets, capital and credit to optimize operations, and opportunities for training and research, perhaps the most fundamental hurdle they face is land access. Without long-term access at an affordable rate, vegetable farmers can't grow perennial crops, which yield a higher profit margin than annual crops, or invest in farm equipment that improves efficiency. Lack of land access also leaves Hmong American farmers vulnerable to exploitation.

HAFA has collected stories from farmers who were forced to give up 40 percent of their crop yield to landowners, or who had to allow the landowners to harvest anything they wished from the farmers' rented plots, free of charge. These modern forms of sharecropping made securing permanent and affordable land a high priority for HAFA.

In 2013, a generous benefactor purchased the 155-acre farm in Dakota County and offered HAFA a long-term lease that would eventually allow the organization to purchase and manage it as a cooperatively owned agricultural land trust—the first of its kind in the country for immigrant farmers. Since acquiring the land, HAFA has remediated the soil, planted waterway pollinator habitats, restored the native oak savanna, added an agricultural well, renovated the farmhouse, and added produce washing and storage facilities. They also started a bee-keeping operation and are undertaking multi-year research to study the effects of various cover crops on water and soil health—just one example of a project that would be impossible without a permanent home.



The HAFA Farm, a 155-acre research and incubator farm in Vermillion Township, 15 minutes south of St. Paul



Hang describes HAFA as similar to a hungry startup: “We set ambitious goals. We’re data-driven, results-oriented and entrepreneurial in our spirit.” When HAFA was born in 2011, its member farmers were earning only \$5,000 in sales per acre while their nonimmigrant counterparts were making anywhere from \$8,000 to \$20,000 per acre. In 2017, HAFA farmers made an average of \$11,000 per acre—an increase of 120 percent.

They accomplished this through a creative, determined blending of innovation and commitment to traditional cultural practices, as illustrated by their microloan program. Hmong people have a deep aversion to debt, which can inhibit their ability to finance large investments in land or equipment. To address this hurdle in a culturally appropriate way, HAFA created a matched savings account in which members could have their investments matched by the organization. This

allowed members to leverage their savings and reduce debt risk while accessing funds to purchase a needed tractor or truck. In the four years since HAFA launched their farm business and food entrepreneurship program, it has helped secure more than \$200,000 in equipment for its members.

HAFA’s leadership also quickly identified that their members’ well-being and prosperity are inextricably tied to the overall physical and economic health of the broader community in which they live. In 2016, they developed multi-year, multi-sector partnerships to increase access to healthy, locally grown produce among anchor institutions on St. Paul’s East Side, where the majority of HAFA farmers live.

Institutions including Dayton’s Bluff Community Council, Metropolitan State University and Merrick Community Services agreed to buy produce from HAFA to use in meals, educate families about healthy eating, and

change practices and policies to emphasize local procurement. The HealthEast Care System now distributes HAFA’s CSA boxes to some of its most food insecure patients, and St. Paul Head Start gets almost a quarter of its produce from HAFA farmers, in addition to sending more than 120 kids to tour the farm each year and learn about sustainable agriculture and healthy eating.

Conquering Challenges Through Collaboration, Innovation and Inclusivity

Hang describes the five “spokes” in the wheel of HAFA’s economic development model, which addresses each of the obstacles faced by Hmong American farmers: access to land, access to new markets, business development, training and research. “Each spoke is necessary for the success of HAFA’s mission but none is sufficient in themselves,” says Hang. “You need them all in order to roll.”

“TRUE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IS LIFTING UP FAMILIES AND BUILDING INTERGENERATIONAL WEALTH.”

—Pakou Hang, co-founder, HAFA



Back: Janssen Hang, Elena Gaarder (BF’15), Rhys Williams
Front: Vang Moua, Pakou Hang (BF’11)



Elena Gaarder (BF’15), program officer for Nexus Community Partners, has been working with HAFA since 2013 when Nexus started funding HAFA through its grant program. She views the organization’s work through the prism of the Whole Foods Model, which centers on building a value-based food system that emphasizes equitable incomes for farmers and workers, ecological sustainability, and community building capacity.

“According to the Whole Foods Model, it doesn’t matter if you have access to land if you don’t have access to capital,” explains Gaarder. “Without a business plan or alternative markets, you can’t grow your profits. The HAFA Farm addresses the land access issue, but the organization has also been examining all parts of

the local food ecosystem, identifying barriers and then addressing them to build intergenerational wealth and expand broad-based ownership.”

Self-efficacy is a central operating value at HAFA; its members are the lead decision-makers, innovators and problem-solvers. “HAFA is membership-based, which is a departure from our peers (nonprofits that serve immigrant farmers),” says Hang. “In order to benefit from our programs, you have to join—be a member. We wanted people to understand you have to be part of the solution. We can build technical skills and allow them to build capital and buy a tractor, but if they’re not primed to think differently and build an economic framework and consciousness, we won’t really move people.”



GROUP PHOTO PASSENGER PRODUCTIONS



“WE EMPHASIZE THE CONCEPTS OF LAND TENURE, DIVERSIFYING INCOME AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT.”

—Janssen Hang, co-founder, HAFA


What’s truly innovative about HAFA’s model is the way it encompasses the entirety of that economic framework and empowers its members. It’s not only about providing material and logistical business needs. It’s also about imbuing the kind of training, resourcefulness and capacity building that can create a paradigm shift in a community, rippling down through the generations like a perennial crop that grows in bounty each season.

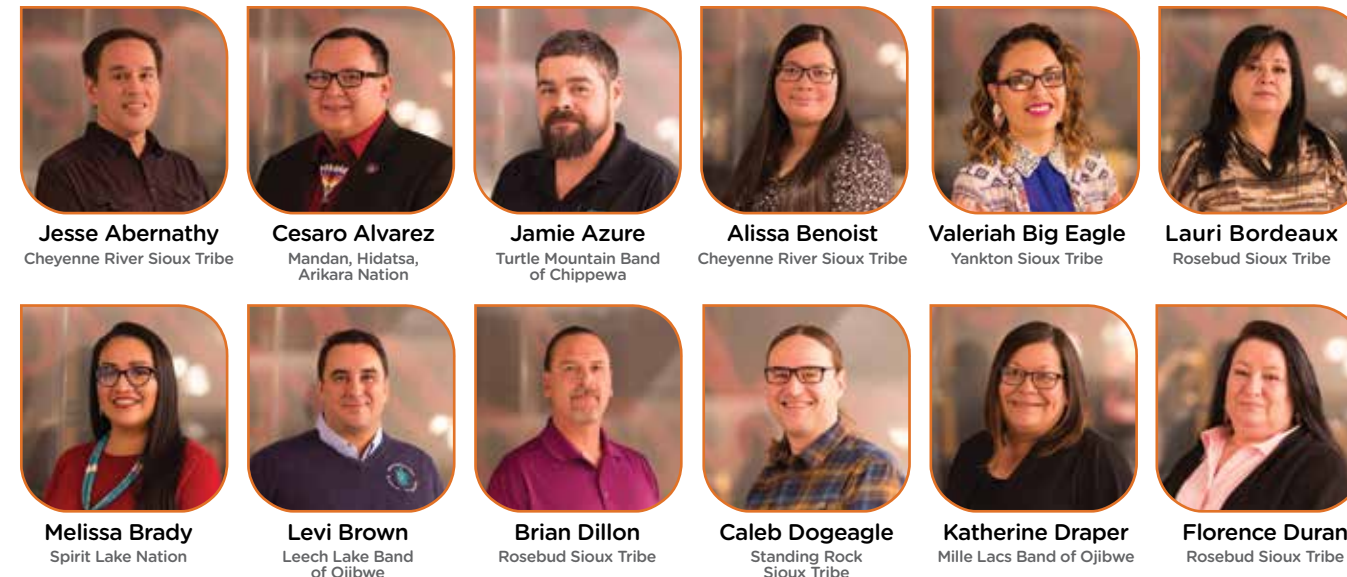
“Everything is tackled and looked at through HAFA, as opposed to just a couple of trainings here and there or a little land,” says Janssen Hang. “We emphasize the concepts of land tenure, diversifying income and business development, and help our members ask, ‘How do I improve my business and change my mentality?’”

To ensure that this capacity building continues to grow stronger with each successive generation, HAFA requires member farmers’ children to attend trainings and assist with tasks such as writing food safety and business plans. And many of the farmers’ children have helped spearhead a value-added program, in which they purchase produce from their parents and use it to create additional revenue-generating products such as carrot cake or jam.

“True economic development is lifting up families and building intergenerational wealth,” says Hang.

“You start by addressing income, but ultimately we’re focused on building sustainable wealth, which means focusing on children in addition to their parents.”

When asked what success looks like for HAFA, Hang says it will be realized multiple generations from now. “Success will be a Hmong American farmer in charge of a multifaceted corporation saying they got their roots from their grandparents, who were HAFA members—that this was the seed that built their family’s dynasty. The way the future views the past will be how we judge our success.” 



Jesse Abernathy
Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe

Cesaro Alvarez
Mandan, Hidatsa, Arikara Nation

Jamie Azure
Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa

Alissa Benoist
Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe

Valeriah Big Eagle
Yankton Sioux Tribe

Lauri Bordeaux
Rosebud Sioux Tribe

Melissa Brady
Spirit Lake Nation

Levi Brown
Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe

Brian Dillon
Rosebud Sioux Tribe

Caleb Dogeagle
Standing Rock Sioux Tribe

Katherine Draper
Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe

Florence Duran
Rosebud Sioux Tribe

Congratulations to Cohort 9 of Native Nation Rebuilders

The Native Nation Rebuilders Program is a leadership development opportunity for regional tribal citizens who have a passion for learning about innovative governance practices.



Paulina Fast Wolf
Oglala Sioux Tribe

Bradley Harrington
Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe

Cante Heart
Rosebud Sioux Tribe

Tamatane I’atala
Oglala Sioux Tribe

Elizabeth Jaakola
Fond Du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa



Margaret Landin
Mandan, Hidatsa, Arikara Nation

Jona Peltier
Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa

Peri Pourier
Oglala Sioux Tribe

Sterling Reed
Mandan, Hidatsa, Arikara Nation

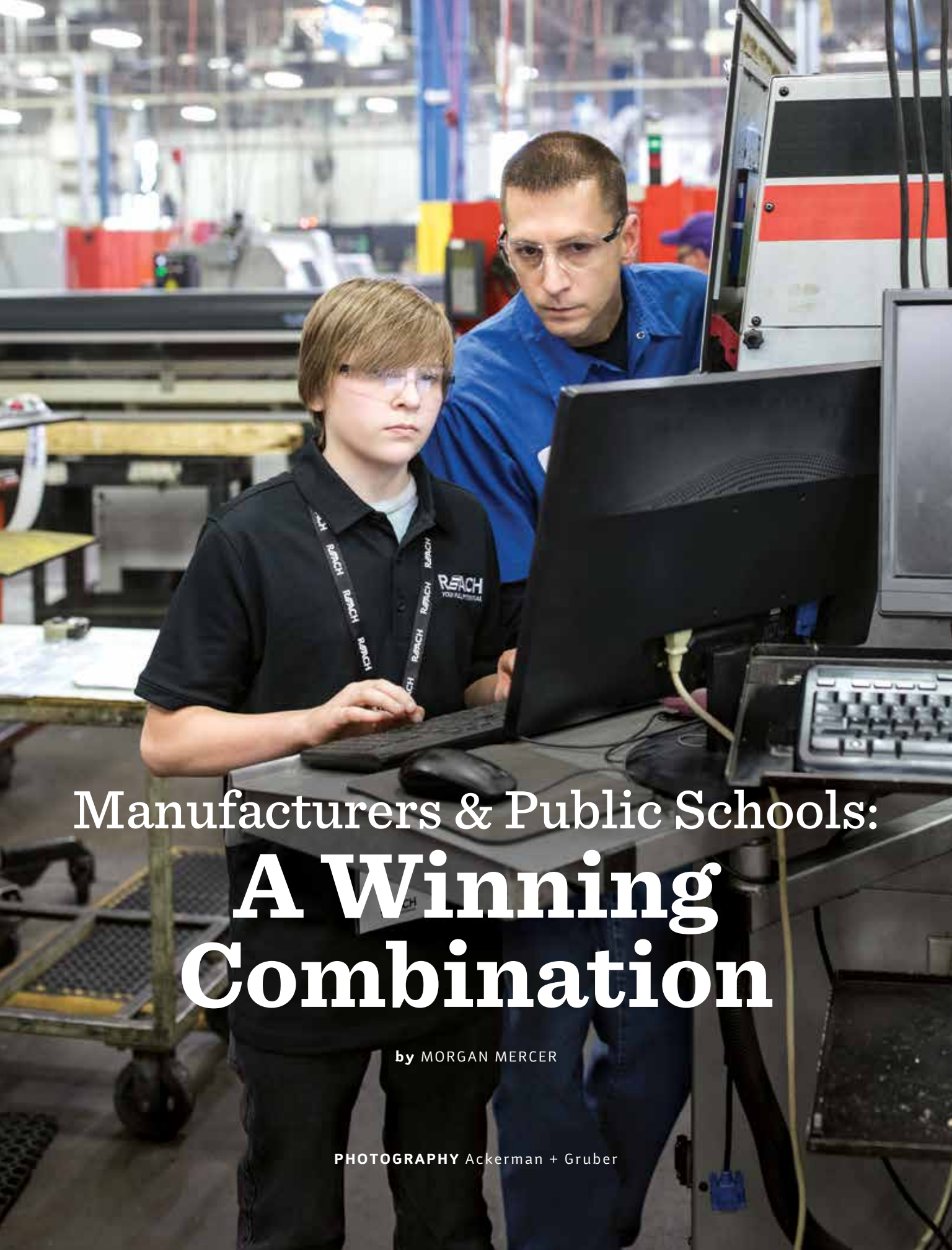
Cory Spotted Bear
Mandan, Hidatsa, Arikara Nation

Tori Whipple
Rosebud Sioux Tribe

Applications for Cohort 10 will open July 16, 2018. The Native Nation Rebuilders program is a partnership between the Native Governance Center and the Bush Foundation. Visit nativegov.org for more details.

PHOTOS: REBECCA CROOKS STRATTON





Manufacturers & Public Schools: A Winning Combination

by MORGAN MERCER

PHOTOGRAPHY Ackerman + Gruber

Across the state, companies are struggling to fill jobs, especially skilled positions. At the same time, public schools are challenged to connect students to the real world. To bridge this gap, manufacturers and public schools in Winona, Minnesota, have teamed up to rethink how classrooms prepare students for life after graduation.

The quiet murmur building in Winona, Minnesota, over the past few years had grown into a roar. Manufacturers in town all shared a common challenge: They couldn't find enough skilled workers. The shortage was nearing a crisis.

For more than two years, Peerless Industrial Group couldn't fill a maintenance electrician position. At one point, Benchmark Electronics counted more than 100 job openings in its facility. Day after day, frustration boiled over.

"We constantly had an ad in the paper for tool and die makers," says Tom Wynn, the former president and CEO at Peerless. "If our companies can't find skilled workers, they have to go somewhere else. None of us want to do that. We're proud we have so much manufacturing in our town. We want to keep it that way."

Winona was experiencing a symptom of a larger, pervasive issue. According to the Minnesota Chamber of Commerce, the number of businesses across the state that struggled to find employees more than tripled between 2009 and 2017—rising from 21 percent to 71 percent.

Simultaneously, Winona-area schools were facing challenges of their own. Not all students were succeeding in high school. In fact, the spring 2017 graduation rate for the Winona School

District, 83.1 percent, barely outpaces the statewide level of 82.2 percent. And those who do make it to graduation don't always possess the skills needed to gain employment.

Faced with these growing concerns, the chamber set out to find new ways to prepare high school students for future employment, and connect Minnesota companies with those who might join their ranks in the future.

With a \$300,000 grant from the Bush Foundation, the chamber piloted a new Business Education Networks initiative in Winona. Through it, local employers teamed up with the Winona Area Chamber of Commerce to prepare students for career opportunities in the

community. In 2017, the initiative started a unique program, REACH, in partnership with area schools and manufacturers to invest in the next generation. The idea was simple: Make education relevant to students' career interests by bringing companies into the curriculum.

"We want the emerging workforce to have a clearer pathway to careers that match their interests, passion and skills," says Della Schmidt, the president of the Winona Area Chamber of Commerce. "We need to make sure the educational system is aligning with where the jobs are going to be. It's important for the business community to lead the conversation because we are the ultimate employer."



REACH students visit a manufacturing partner and potential future employer

A Shared Solution

Landing a job wasn't easy. Seventeen-year-old Devon Moss didn't even know how to fill out an application. He asked his dad for help with the first one, but didn't feel confident finishing one on his own until he sat down in Rhonda Aspenson's workplace skills class, part of the REACH program, at the start of the school year in September 2017.

For 90 minutes a day, Aspenson practiced skills with REACH students that would improve their chances of finding and keeping a job. Moss learned how to write a resume, network and talk to prospective employers. That's when he realized a mistake he was making in applications. He was so used to using slang and abbreviations in text messages to friends, that he started using the same shorthand in emails to potential managers.

"It didn't work out so well. I learned that quick," says Moss, who stopped writing "lol" in job-seeking emails when he was joking or thought something was funny.

With Aspenson's guidance, the high school junior began dressing more professionally for his first job at Arby's, and even gained the brass to apply for a more competitive position at one of the manufacturing companies in town, Fastenal, the largest fastener distributor in the country. He hopes REACH will springboard



him to his next career move, too: first college, and then a job as a 3D or graphic designer.

Students like Moss are benefiting from REACH's individualized approach, a marked alternative to the one-size-fits-all approach to education. "We've been using outdated educational models where the students are all treated the same," says Schmidt, who leads the REACH initiative at the chamber. But with REACH, she continues, "We have the opportunity to change lives for the better and to give these students a hope and vision for their future."

The two-year program for juniors and seniors lets them earn up to 19 college credits for high school classes, get off campus to tour local businesses and apply for paid internships at Winona manufacturers their senior year. Most of all, it encourages students to start thinking earlier about what comes after graduation.

At the beginning of the 2017-18 school year, REACH launched with a cohort of 30 students. In its first run, the program targeted a group of juniors who, for one reason or another, planned to stay in the Winona area after graduation but were undecided about whether or not to pursue advanced education. Many of these teenagers were falling through the cracks at school. They weren't interested in coursework, missed classes too often or faced financial challenges at home. To be selected for REACH, each student had to write an application that demonstrated a renewed desire to succeed.

"If we can impact and inspire this group of students, then just imagine what we could do as we expand in the future," says Schmidt, who will open up the program to 90 high school students starting in the 2018-19 school year, and broaden REACH's employer portfolio to include a health and

human services career pathway.

Throughout the school year, the 30 teenagers in the program learned how to read blueprints, use computer-aided design or drafting software to render new products, and operate CNC machines, a device that controls machine shop tools through computer programming. Aside from technical know-how, students picked up on soft skills, too—such as work ethic, communication and teamwork—that employers say job candidates and recent hires often lack.

"If you have people coming in without those skills or expectations, you have a worker who just isn't ready to be a part of a business environment," says Corey Hancock of Benchmark Electronics, one of Winona's largest manufacturing companies. "When you're running a manufacturing operation, you're relying on everyone being on time for their role. When someone doesn't show up unexpectedly, there's a lot of disruption."

When students visited Benchmark in November 2017, they got a taste of what it means to work in manufacturing by testing simple circuits, matching blueprints to incoming materials and watching how R&D engineers use 3D printers to develop products. Today's manufacturing jobs aren't often what people expect. Employees need critical thinking, design chops



and computer-programming skills in order to create medical devices for companies like Medtronic, or build some of the world's fastest supercomputers like Benchmark does. For Hancock, it's important to get students through the door so they can see those opportunities for themselves.

"You can drive past a company like Benchmark every day, but never understand what they do and know if it's something you'd be interested in," he says.

Employers & Educators Unite

Just three months into REACH, Winona Senior High School teachers started seeing a change in their students. Kids who used to sit alone or struggled to start conversations with adults started coming out of their shells. GPAs went up, while unexcused absences and tardies went down.

"They have a reason to be in school," says Principal Mark Anderson. "Kids

"WE HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO CHANGE LIVES FOR THE BETTER AND TO GIVE THESE STUDENTS A HOPE AND VISION FOR THEIR FUTURE."

*—Della Schmidt, president,
Winona Area Chamber of Commerce*



ABOVE AND BELOW COURTESY OF WINONA AREA CHAMBER

INDIVIDUALIZED LEARNING: EDUCATION INITIATIVE

Our world has changed since our education system was created back in the late 1890s. Technology has advanced, our population has diversified and jobs no longer look the same. Despite these shifts, our education system has remained the same. This traditional system continues to batch students by age and teach more or less the same way, at the same pace.

"The current system works well for some kids: They perform well and go on to graduate on time. But it wasn't designed to work well for all kinds of students," says Kayla Yang-Best, the Bush Foundation's Education portfolio director. "Today, we expect our schools to help all kids reach their full potential. If we're going to do that, we cannot expect the traditional system to do it. We need a more individualized approach to learning."

Over the past two and a half years the Foundation has asked a single question over and over again: How do we make education more relevant for all students? Research points to individualized learning, a student-centered approach that customizes education to each specific learner. The Foundation has incorporated this approach into investments in education, targeting individualized learning approaches that incorporate three dimensions of relevance: how students learn (instructional relevance), who students are (cultural relevance), and where students want to go (career relevance). Through these three core areas, the Bush Foundation wants to reimagine our country's outdated system and transform our region into a national leader in individualized learning. —Morgan Mercer

To learn more, visit bfdn.org/edu

who haven't talked to people in the past are looking them in the eyes, starting conversations and shaking hands. It's not something they did before."

Now those habits are common practice when students attend industry luncheons or tour local companies like Fastenal. For Anderson, REACH is an opportunity for juniors and seniors to test-drive career options before they commit to an expensive college or get locked into a job.

"Our kids have always told us they want out of the building. That's not a bad thing," he says. "What they're telling us is, 'Let us go figure out who we need to be after high school.'"

REACH breaks ground by putting employers at the heart of those conversations. For the first time, businesses have a direct line of communication to students through the schools. They can share the types of jobs that are available in Winona, and what skills students will need to get hired. That's invaluable information for teenagers and teachers alike.

"The vast majority of our educators haven't spent time working in

the private sector, yet it's their job to educate these teenagers to enter that community," says Schmidt. "We have a big disconnect between the classroom, which is producing our future workers, and the business community where they'll eventually work."


Inside information from business leaders gives teachers like Aspenson the confidence to adapt their curriculum to fit the current employment landscape, and the credibility to promise students the skills they're learning will make them marketable in the future.

However, bringing two vastly different industries together required the right pacing. "If I put 10 business people in the room with 10 teachers, they would not have been as effective in their communication," says Schmidt, who initially separated employers and educators into two groups. The REACH Advisory Council, made up of business leaders, outlined the initial plan for the program. When it came time to decide how that vision would fit within the school system, Schmidt turned to a group of educators,



counselors and school leaders to workshop the idea. "We were able to share ideas, needs and desired outcomes without getting stuck in the weeds or in what makes us different," she says. To ensure educators and employers always had a voice at one another's meetings, Schmidt and Anderson participated in both groups.

The two teams came together for a joint brainstorming session as REACH students prepared to head out into the community on immersion experiences—hands-on tours at local manufacturers that let students learn about jobs firsthand. At the meeting, host companies told teachers about the work they do and what they hoped to show students when they visited. Teachers gave feedback on what would be appropriate for 16- and 17-year-old students to see, as well as how the immersion experiences could play off their classroom curriculum.

"They tell us what they need, and we tell them what we need," says Schmidt, who is excited to see where the next five years take her soon-to-be high school graduates. "We work together to create great future employees." 



Buzz

A showcase for the ongoing work of Bush Fellows, Foundation Board members and staff.

buzz (bəz/), n. a general sense of excitement about or interest in Bush Fellows throughout the years

THE BUSH FOUNDATION HAS INVESTED NEARLY \$1 BILLION IN MYRIAD ORGANIZATIONS AND INDIVIDUALS OVER THE PAST 65 YEARS. Over that time, the programs at the core of the Foundation have evolved through multiple iterations.

The prestigious Bush Fellowship is no exception. Since it was first awarded in 1965, Bush Fellows have included artists, government leaders, entrepreneurs, educators and more. One constant, however, is the Foundation's belief in the power of people to make great ideas happen in their communities. And that is the crux of the Bush Fellowship today: personal leadership growth and development.

On the following pages, you'll get a glimpse into the thousands of individuals whose lives—and communities—have been touched by the Bush Fellowship.



GETTING TO KNOW



- 56** Board Member Pam Moret
- 57** David Simondet (BF'78)
- 57** Mary Rockcastle (BF'83)
- 58** Kevin Kling (BF'88, '03)
- 59** Thomas Stenvig (BF'93)
- 60** Sunil Karnawat (BF'98)
- 61** Lee Ann Roripaugh (BF'03)
- 62** Mauricio Arango (BF'08)
- 63** Carlos Mariana Rosa (BF'13)
- 64** Megan Laudenschlager (BF'14)



BOARD MEMBER Q&A

Who is Pam Moret?

Get to know Bush Foundation Board Chair Pam Moret

WHERE ARE YOU FROM?

I was born in Rochester, Minnesota, and later moved to Fargo, North Dakota. I see myself as a North Dakota kid. Growing up in Fargo was fantastic. It's a prosperous community with three colleges, and I had access to many opportunities, even though it is in one of the least populated U.S. states. I claim my North Dakota roots very proudly, partly because a lot of people don't—what's up with that? It's fantastic to be from North Dakota!

HOW DID YOU COME TO THE FOUNDATION?

Serving on a variety of boards was always one of my career goals, and I've been privileged to see that become a reality. It was a delightful surprise to be nominated to serve on the Bush Foundation's Board. The Foundation's work was

fascinating to me, and I've always felt foundations are a very interesting tool for global change. When I went to my interview, I didn't expect to be chosen—when you look at the people on the board, they're rock stars. I was so honored to be selected, and it was immediately captivating. I got a crash course in the Bush Foundation, philanthropy in general, and the needs of our region.


HOW DO YOU APPROACH YOUR ROLE AS BOARD CHAIR?

There is a saying about effective boards: When board members are doing a good job, they have their "noses in and fingers out (NIFO, a play on the accounting term LIFO)." That means that you need to know what's going on and how things are going, but you are not running the organization. That is an art, not a science! I work very closely with Foundation President Jen Ford Reedy, and the two of us are extremely open with one another. As I work with Jen and the other board members, I am always trying to maintain that balance of being engaged at the right level to be effective.

WHAT'S ONE SUCCESS YOU'VE SEEN DURING YOUR TENURE?

I've seen the Foundation make remarkable progress on diversity, equity and inclusion work. There is a genuine and thoughtful way in which we are laying a foundation of training and conversation around equity and cultural competency for the board and staff, and that is coming through in relationships between staff, grantees and community members. Jen is pushing us to be authentic, committed, and really put our money where our mouth is. We've come a long way, and we're not stopping.

WHAT'S ONE THING YOU'RE TAKING AWAY FROM YOUR EXPERIENCE AT THE FOUNDATION?

There's an axiom I truly believe: "If you find you're the smartest person in the room, you're in the wrong room." When I sit in the Foundation's board room, with grantees, or with staff, I am never the smartest person in the room. I have learned constantly from so many smart people, and have been exposed to much more than I would have otherwise. I wouldn't have spent time kicking around the streets of Rapid City, South Dakota, or traveled to an oil field "man camp" in western North Dakota, or visited the Red Lake Nation—or all the other hidden gems in our region that I wasn't aware of, even though I am from here. I'm a richer person for having had those experiences. And that's pretty cool. 

PAM MORET GREG HELGESON

FELLOWSHIP: 40 YEARS OUT

David Simondet

When David Simondet became a Bush Fellow in 1978, he was the chief of police in Bemidji, an adjunct professor of criminal justice at Bemidji State, and a graduate student in the counseling program. Through the Fellowship, he dove deeper into crime prevention techniques and focused on gaining the skills to ensure law enforcement truly served their communities. While he later moved on to counseling and outreach programming, the same passion for community that first earned him the Bush Fellowship never went away.

What made you consider applying for the Fellowship?

To be honest, I did not think that I had a chance at winning, but it was about that time in my life when I knew that it was important to expand my horizons and increase my learning opportunities. I had hoped that I would develop

new leadership skills and that the Fellowship would help determine if I wanted to stay in police work or try to use those skills in another line or endeavor.

What aspect of the Fellowship did you find most valuable?

I think the best outcome of the Bush Fellowship is that it gave me encouragement to step beyond my comfort zone and do things that I had thought about but felt uncomfortable attempting. For instance, I received a master's degree in counseling while in my police job and later used those learned skills in a part-time job counseling chemical dependency clients. At the age of 76, I received another master's degree in gerontology at the same time as I was managing the Whitney Without Walls Program, an outreach program from the Whitney Senior Center in St. Cloud.



FELLOWSHIP: 35 YEARS OUT

Mary Rockcastle

Mary Rockcastle (BF'83) was teaching part-time at the University of Minnesota and working on her first novel when she became a Bush Fellow 35 years ago. Now, she is a professor and director of the Creative Writing Programs at Hamline University as well as the founder and executive editor of its national, annual literary magazine, Water-Stone Review.

When you applied, how were you hoping to develop through the Fellowship?

At the time, I was working on my first novel. I hoped the sustained time and effort would move me to a more effective writing practice and a deeper knowledge and ability to execute the novel form. While I did not publish that first novel, it launched my second novel, "Rainy Lake," which was published by Graywolf Press. That first novel was my apprenticeship novel; the experience of writing it helped me to develop a strong creative practice and taught me the pitfalls to avoid in order to write a more successful novel.

What aspect of the Fellowship did you find most valuable?

The biggest benefit at the time was the confidence that came from winning this prestigious Fellowship—that the judges had considered my writing to be very strong. It also affirmed that the work I was doing, that my identity as a writer, mattered. The confidence I gained from winning the Bush Fellowship carried me through many disappointments in my career. The experience laid the groundwork for my success afterward. It helped to build my faith in myself and strengthened the tenacity a writer needs to keep going in the face of rejection and failure, common to a writer's life. It also helped me to build a writing community, which has helped to sustain me. Having that focused time to write, knowing my value as a writer has been affirmed, meant everything to me then as a young writer who was relatively new to the Twin Cities, with a small child at home. I am immensely grateful for the opportunities the Bush Fellowship offered me.



ILLUSTRATIONS ALLEGRA LOCKSTADT

FELLOWSHIP: 30 AND 15 YEARS OUT

Kevin Kling

Kevin Kling’s (BF’88, ’03) voice has been heard by many. It has floated across the airwaves during his commentary on NPR’s “All Things Considered”; it has told tender, funny and moving stories to theater audiences around the world. While Kling already had a successful career as a playwright when he received his Bush Fellowships (which are now available only once to each individual), through the Foundation’s support, he was able to push the form of theater and also strip it down to see what storytelling, one person and an empty stage can do.

What were you doing when you applied for the Fellowship?

I was in the most crucial transition of my career. I was transitioning from being a playwright and an actor to becoming a storyteller—but I didn’t know that. I had planned on still being a playwright, but because of the Fellowship I could stretch and grow in ways I didn’t dream of, which led me to being a storyteller. Storytelling is really like a conversation. You are really 100 percent exchanging energy with the audience. In a one-person play it’s still kind of a voyeurism where the audience is peering in on another person’s life. In storytelling, it really, really is one-on-one engagement. You know the audience is there, and you talk to the audience as they are and as who you are.

What were you hoping to accomplish after your Fellowship ended?

As an artist you always want to be able to grow, to reach beyond your grasp, so to say what you want is a dangerous question—it puts a ceiling on what I want to achieve. I want to be pushing on what I’m doing, creating new forms, working on myself as an artist.

I think what’s especially important with the Bush Fellowship, is it allows many of us to stay in Minnesota instead of going off to one of the coasts. Minnesota has some of the best artists in the country, and it’s essential that they are able to stay here and make a living as an artist in their home. They can add to the fabric in their community, which I think is crucial to being an artist—you are part of the community.

Do you want to offer any advice to current and future Bush Fellows?

I think that the best thing you can do with the Fellowship is to risk, to reach beyond your grasp. It’s the luxury of time. One of the things I loved about the Fellowship was being encouraged to fail, as crazy as that sounds. You never learn from success. You only learn through trial and error.



FELLOWSHIP: 25 YEARS OUT

Thomas Stenvig

A former commissioned officer on active duty with the U.S. Public Health Service, Thomas Stenvig (BF’93) applied for the Bush Fellowship with the goal of earning a Ph.D. in order to learn about conducting research and enter the world of academia. Today, Stenvig is the doctorate program coordinator and an associate professor of the College of Nursing at South Dakota State University, where he has been for 17 years.

When you applied, how were you hoping to develop through the Fellowship?

Several professional colleagues had been selected as Fellows, and I had seen how their career trajectories and leadership impact were enhanced by the support and experience. I thought it would be a real asset to have the Fellowship support as I started my educational journey. After I finished my Fellowship, things just fell into place. I had the right credentials, and a position in academia was available that suited my interests and expertise. I’ve been involved in health policy, nursing and public health leadership ever since.

In what ways does the Fellowship continue to influence you? How has the Fellowship changed you?

I think back to the application process, the importance of being organized, and having the ability to communicate my

values so that others would believe in me. I still live my professional life adhering to those principles. Earning the Ph.D. with Fellowship support opened doors I never imagined existed when I started the journey.



Inspiration comes in many forms: places, people, experiences. Where do you find inspiration to lead?

Two things come to mind. The first is being open to what you can learn from mentors and others who take an interest in you. The second is that in our active lives we often do not appreciate the effects we have on others. Knowing that I have influenced the lives of others in ways I did not realize at the time it happened continues to give me inspiration.

Do you want to offer any advice to current and future Bush Fellows? What would you tell your past self the first time you sat down to apply for a Fellowship?

Consistency, focus and the ability to communicate your message and values are critical attributes. There are challenges during any growth experience. It is usually worth the effort to finish what you started.

ILLUSTRATIONS ALLEGRA LOCKSTADT

BUSH FELLOW & ALUM NEWS



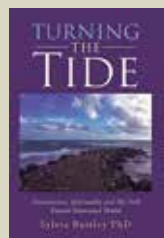
Ta-coumba Aiken (BF’92) created the 2017 Minnesota State Fair Commemorative Art poster. He says, “Just like the fair, my piece has your eyes moving from one place to another until they settle in on something familiar. I had hoped to embrace this magical place in a whimsical way, and I believe I accomplished just that.”

Norik Astvatsaturov (BF’08) was named a 2017 National Endowment for the Arts National Heritage Fellow. After immigrating from Armenia to North Dakota in 1992, he has spent his artistic career teaching and sharing his work in traditional Armenian repoussé with Americans and the Armenian diaspora.

Dr. Sylvia Bartley (BF’14) published “Turning the Tide: Neuroscience, Spirituality and My Path Toward Emotional Health.” Bartley says, “My central belief is simple: Neuroscience

and spirituality are not opposites, and can instead be used to feed and further each other. This union can have tremendous effects on our emotional health.”

Emily Baxter (BF’11) published “We Are All Criminals.” Through the first-person stories of hundreds of Americans, the book examines mass incarceration in the U.S., what it



means to have a criminal record and how race plays a role in the system.

Sarah Bellamy (BF’15), artistic director of Penumbra Theater, was featured on the story sharing nonprofit StoryCorps with her father, Lou Bellamy, who founded Penumbra in 1976 to give African Americans a forum in the local theater community.



Entrepreneur **Jacquie Berglund** (BF’14), musician **Venus DeMars** (BF’96), artist and politician **Andrea Jenkins** (BF’11), writer and playwright **Syl Jones** (BF’14), and nonprofit leader **Sandy Vargas** (BF’95) were selected for Pollen’s 2017 “50 over 50” list, honoring 50 of the most inspiring and accomplished leaders over 50 across Minnesota.

Nancy Ann Coyne (BF’10) presented “Speaking of Home,” an art installation featuring stories and photos of immigrants in downtown St. Paul skyways. The project sought to

connect the meaning of home for immigrants to Minnesota with the lives of the thousands of people who pass through the skyways daily.

Karen Diver (BF’02), who recently returned to the region after serving as special assistant to President Obama in Native Affairs, was appointed faculty fellow in Native Studies at the College of St. Scholastica in Duluth. The position is designed to strengthen the College’s work in Native American studies and its commitment to inclusive excellence.

FELLOWSHIP: 20 YEARS OUT

Sunil Karnawat

Life doesn't always go as planned, but for Sunil Karnawat (BF'98), he wouldn't have it any other way. He applied for a Bush Fellowship with the intent of developing and enhancing the programs at Turtle Mountain Community College, a Native American school located in Belcourt, North Dakota. But after graduating, life led him down a different path in the healthcare industry, opening doors to an adventure that provided him with the skills necessary to give back in ways he never thought possible.

What do you do now and how did the Fellowship help you get there?

I'm currently an executive director at Ultragenyx working to launch products for patients (mostly in pediatrics) living with rare diseases—diseases that are typically less than 200,000 cases in the country. These are diseases with no available treatments because it's not worth it financially for many companies. We launched the first product November 15, 2017, and we have less than 200 patients worldwide, so it's a really small population. We're currently waiting to get FDA approval for the second product in April 2018.

The reason I am where I am is because of the path the Fellowship has led me down, which has included stops at Medtronic, Deloitte, Johnson and Johnson, Novo Nordisk, and the small startup where I am now. These experiences

and the experiences I had while getting my MBA at the University of Minnesota's Carlson School of Management made me think about what I want in life and really grounded me in ways that have made me a better person. I cannot thank the Bush Foundation enough.



What aspect of the Fellowship did you find most valuable?

I think it was a combination of the courses and personal growth. As a part of the Fellowship, I was able to go to Harvard during the summer before I started my MBA to understand more about the basics of business communications and the key things you need to think about as you're communicating effectively in a business setting.

Do you want to offer any advice to current and future Bush Fellows?

Live the life that makes you feel like you're giving back. You've got to do what makes you feel good because when you're happy you're going to give a lot more back to the community. Be sure to keep an open mind because you never know when a new opportunity is going to open up. I believe the Foundation's purpose is to open the eyes of people to help them see things from a different perspective, and to give them the courage to pursue it.

FELLOWSHIP: 15 YEARS OUT

Lee Ann Roripaugh

Twelve years before Lee Ann Roripaugh (BF'03) was named the South Dakota Poet Laureate in 2015, she was named a Bush Fellow. Words always held power to Roripaugh, but with the time the Bush Fellowship provided her, she was truly able to challenge herself as an artist and teacher, focusing on intersecting identities and social justice issues that help define her purpose today.

When you applied, how were you hoping to develop through the Fellowship?

In addition to researching and completing a third volume of poetry, I was hoping to work on studying, reading and developing aesthetic breadth, both as an artist and a teacher. As an Asian American and pansexual writer, professor, scholar and literary community member, I wanted to think through various means of intersecting theory and praxis, particularly critical race theory, gender theory and queer theory.

What do you do now and how did the Fellowship help you get there?

I serve as the director of creative writing at the University of South Dakota, and the time afforded by the Fellowship early on in my career was seminal to helping me become both a stronger and more aesthetically diverse artist as

well as a stronger teacher to my students in mentoring their creative writing and also in my commitment to teaching social justice issues, addressing issues of decolonization and exploring intersectional identities within literature classes. Shortly after my Fellowship, I had the opportunity to direct a national writers' conference at the University of South Dakota, start a visiting writers' series and take over as editor-in-chief of the South Dakota Review, a national, quarterly literary journal. All of these endeavors have a strong commitment to aesthetic and cultural diversity, and as such have been projects that have undoubtedly benefited from the work I did during the Fellowship.



In what ways does the Fellowship continue to influence you? How has the Fellowship changed you?

The time and opportunity to question my own aesthetic practices and to challenge myself as an artist, scholar and professor came at a formative time and continues to influence my practice. I would like to think that I might have eventually arrived at this place on my own, but honestly, the luxury of time during the Fellowship came at such a formative time in my career—a time where I might have all too easily continued on a business-as-usual trajectory without the space to really think through difficult, upending questions.

ILLUSTRATIONS ALLEGRA LOCKSTADT

Betty Gronneberg (BF'16) spoke at GlobalMindED 2017, a conference and organization dedicated to creating a capable, diverse talent pipeline for first-generation-to-college, at-risk and low-income students, and job seekers. She also ran the second



Kathleen M. Heideman (BF'99) published a poetry collection,



"Psalms of the Early Anthropocene," and was named a finalist for Poet Laureate of Michigan's Upper Peninsula.

Andrea Jenkins (BF'11), poet, activist and historian, was elected to the Minneapolis City Council with 73 percent of the votes in her ward. This historic election made her the first openly transgender person of color to win election to public office anywhere in the United States.

Seitu Ken Jones (BF'92, '04) was selected as the 2017 McKnight Distinguished Artist. His wide-ranging career in painting, sculpture, set design, public works and environmental architecture has influenced public art and embedded Minnesota's stories in murals and civic infrastructure.

Stuart Klipper's (BF'80, '95) photography was exhibited at the Hillstrom Museum of Art at Gustavus Adolphus College. In addition to the exhibition, Klipper also spoke with students in both photography and senior seminar

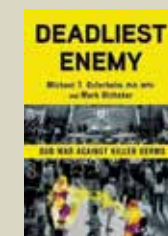
classes about his work, inspiration and funding sources.

Bryan G. Nelson's (BF'97) organization MenTeach is working with the California State University system on a teacher-preparation project to increase the number of men, particularly men of color, working in elementary education.



Kim Norton (BF'16) was elected to the Board of Directors of KSMQ-TV, the PBS television

network serving southeastern Minnesota and northeastern Iowa.



proposed public-private partnership to prevent and prepare for epidemics.

Dr. Michael Osterholm (BF'82) published a new book, "Deadliest Enemy: Our War Against Killer Germs." The book details the risks of infectious disease and a pro-

Teresa Luckow Peterson (BF'11) received the 2017 University of Minnesota, Morris Alumni Association Distinguished Alumni Award. The award honors her work to revitalize the native language and lifeways of the Dakota people as an educator and tribal leader.

Ranee and Aparna Ramaswamy's (BF'96, BF'02) Ragamala Dance Company showcased their artistic masterpiece



WRITTEN IN WATER BRUCE PALMER

FELLOWSHIP: 10 YEARS OUT

Mauricio Arango

To artist Mauricio Arango (BF'08), the Bush Fellowship meant time—time to explore new techniques, to travel, to research, to find new means of expression. It was time to figure out who he was as an artist. Now, he has evolved his love of photography into film production and development, and he is currently working on a feature-length script and wrapping up a 30-minute fiction film.

What were you doing when you applied for the Fellowship?

I had just finished the Independent Study Program at the Whitney Museum of American Art. I was in a period of assessment of my ideas, the form they had taken, and what I could do next. I was using photos, not as an end, but as constitutive elements of installations, and wanted to do something that was formally different. I took the application very seriously, but I also felt I was taking a big chance—it was a shot to the moon. Obtaining the Fellowship was like a dream that became real.

What were you hoping to accomplish after your Fellowship ended?

I had planned to work on the subjective effects of the violence that has affected Colombia, my home country, and I wanted to produce this in a form that was different to anything I had tried before. I wanted to make something that

was fair and truthful to the nature of the subject matter. I knew that I needed an extensive period to research and try things for the development of my ideas. Little by little, I discovered that I had a natural inclination to make films— something I hadn't fully explored before. This new form became the center of my work, and since then, most of my creative output has been films. By making films, I developed many new abilities because films involve many different facets. I learned I could write. I could draw. I found enjoyment working with larger groups of people like actors, crews, support staff, etc. I became a better communicator of my ideas.

Do you want to offer any advice to current and future Bush Fellows? What would you tell your past self the first time you sat down to apply for a Fellowship?

The Fellowship is indeed a turning point in ways that are very subtle and not apparent at the time you become a Fellow. Regardless of whether your application is successful or not, allow yourself to think on what you would really love to be doing if time and money were not a constraint. Look deep inside and figure that out. If you are working on a cause that you consider worthy, and you can express that with sincere and intense conviction, there are chances that other people will see that, too. If you are not selected, keep developing your idea. I could wallpaper my apartment with rejection letters. That's part of the game. But I always continue working on the projects, even if money is not on the table.



FELLOWSHIP: 5 YEARS OUT

Carlos Mariani Rosa

When Carlos Mariani Rosa applied for a 2013 Bush Fellowship, he was in the middle of his career as a Minnesota state representative and as the executive director of a nonprofit focused on race and education equity. Through the Fellowship, he was able to evaluate his purpose and better understand how he fit into the stories of those coming before and after him.

What aspect of the Fellowship did you find most valuable?

I was in my mid-50s at the time, and I had deep questions about my career and “where to go next” with it. I was feeling a sense of becoming an “elder” and didn't know what that meant. The cohort model was priceless for me. It provided me with a strong emotional connection to others on similar journeys, which helped me stay disciplined about tending to my own development, as I felt accountable to them and not just to myself.

What do you do now and how did the Fellowship help you get there?

I “do” the same work, but I do it from a slightly different frame of awareness. I am more in control of my purpose and more confident about making long-term “plays” for our nonprofit work. Coincidentally, my party regained control of the Minnesota House the year my Fellowship began. As a senior member, I chaired a House committee,

so I was re-thrust into critical leadership roles in the state legislature. The pace of work was intense and full, but the Fellowship fed me the energy to successfully navigate through the legislative session. I had the best two years of my legislative career passing major bills—the biggest and most meaningful in my years there, affecting the redesign of the school integration program, the Dream Act, and nation-leading legislation to redesign educational approaches and accountability systems for students learning English.

Inspiration comes in many forms: places, people, experiences. Where do you find inspiration to lead?

I don't believe I lead. I believe I play critically important roles in groups of others (of which I am a part) to do things that are new, difficult and that need resolving. One place I find inspiration is a deep sense that I am on a long journey that began before I came into this world and that will continue long after I have departed. I find great inspiration by the resistance of those who would be pushed to the margins— Dreamers, BLM, GLBT, Indigenous peoples. Honestly, given the present national political environment, I often struggle to find inspiration. My belief is that—just as I acquired new insight—others have learned more effective ways to drive change and to survive when under attack. I find comfort and inspiration in that knowledge.



ILLUSTRATIONS ALLEGRA LOCKSTADT

“Written in Water” in Berkeley, California. Rooted in the classical south Indian Bharatanatyam dance form, the piece draws on ancient influences and practices to explore the cultural complexities of the modern world.

Sun Yung Shin's (BF'07) book of poetry, “Unbearable Splendor,” was named a finalist for the 2017 Literary Awards given by PEN Center USA, the West Coast center of PEN

International, which is the world's oldest international literary and human rights organization.

Dave Smiglewski (BF'16), mayor of Granite Falls, Minnesota, was



elected to serve as president of the Coalition of Greater Minnesota Cities. As president, Smiglewski will help direct efforts to inform state legislators on issues

unique to greater Minnesota, such as local government aid, economic development, transportation and environmental policy.

Shana Sniffen's (BF'13) Karen Chemical Dependency Collaborative launched a bilingual Karen-English website, TohMoo.org, with information to help organizations



communicate on topics such as medicine, education, law and more.

Cathy ten Broeke (BF'04), director to prevent and end homelessness in Minnesota, saw significant accomplishments in 2017: The federal government confirmed that homelessness among veterans has been eradicated in southwest, northwest and west central Minnesota.

Anton Treuer (BF'08), author, professor, cultural trainer and one of the leading Ojibwe instructors in the country, piloted an elementary Ojibwe course at Central Lakes College in Brainerd, Minnesota.



Hamse Warfe (BF'16) was awarded the St. Paul Foundation's Facing Race award for his work to diversify

leadership across the state and to help immigrant leaders achieve financial success.

Steve Wellington (BF'83), president and owner of real estate company Wellington Management, was named one of Minnesota's top 10 most-admired CEOs by the Minneapolis/St. Paul Business Journal.

A Growing Community

Megan Laudenschlager (BF'14) had already been helping her hometown of Minot, North Dakota, but through the Bush Fellowship, she was inspired to foster rural communities throughout the whole state.

When Megan Laudenschlager was working as the Minot Area Community Foundation's finance and program director, she kept a dream book. In it, she would scrawl her hopes for the foundation, perhaps gaze at them after she wrote them down, and then table them for the future. They were big dreams at the time, ones that she wanted to accomplish in the future but wasn't ready to tackle yet.

Now, less than five years later, as founder and executive director of the nonprofit Strengthen ND, she still has a dream book. It's just used a little differently. As she puts it, "Instead of putting those ideas on the backburner, we just go for it."

This initiative and gumption was always in Laudenschlager, but her two years as a Bush Fellow helped unlock



it. She credits the Bush Foundation with helping her realize that failure is part of the process of innovation and pushing her to think bigger and reach farther than she had originally intended.

Laudenschlager had envisioned her 2014 Fellowship as a means to help her achieve a social entrepreneurship certificate and gain tools to help her community at home. At the time, Minot was still recovering from a 2011 flood

that decimated 25 percent of the city's housing and infrastructure, while also dealing with an influx of people due to an oil boom. In short, there were a lot of people looking for a foothold in the community, and Laudenschlager wanted to help make that happen.

While the end of her Fellowship still saw Laudenschlager pursuing ways to empower and unite people in her community, the means of doing so and the scope of community had changed. She ended up receiving a certificate in fundraising management through the Lilly Family School of Philanthropy and attending the Harvard Kennedy School of Government, where she met people from all corners of the world, attended national conferences and started dreaming in broader terms.

"My goals shifted from shaping the future of Minot to looking at community development in a different way: how we could support those in the nonprofit sector who are working to improve quality of life and increase access to services for people who really need it," says Laudenschlager. "That's where Strengthen ND came from. After many conversations with the Foundation and my mentors, I took the leap and started looking at how we could craft an

organization that could meet the needs that I was seeing not only in Minot, but across the state."

Strengthen ND is, to put it simply, a nonprofit that helps other nonprofits and organizations develop the rural North Dakota community. Workshops, boot camps, technical assistance and webinars are only a few of their offerings, and through a partnership with Minot State University, the organization has created a nonprofit certificate program to help community members learn financial management, grant writing, marketing, strategic planning and more.

While Strengthen ND has already helped numerous community members, from fundraising in the Williston area to securing grants for the economic development of Tuttle, Laudenschlager's dreams for the nonprofit, and for North Dakota, are still expanding.


"The Fellowship will always influence me in that I have a higher expectation of what I can achieve. There's always a fire within me to keep learning and doing more," says Laudenschlager. "There's so much strength that exists in our rural communities; there's so much resilience and heart within those people that you can't help but be inspired to continue." 

PHOTO: OTIS & JAMES PHOTOGRAPHY

STAFF, BOARD & COMMITTEE MEMBER NEWS



Bilal Alkatout joined the Advisory Board of the Coalition of Asian American Leaders, which works to connect and harness leaders' collective power to improve the community.

Allison Barmann joined the Board of Directors of Emerging Prairie, a Fargo-based organization focused on connecting and celebrating the

entrepreneurial ecosystem of the Fargo-Moorhead area.



Board Member **Mary Brainerd** was named the Minneapolis-St. Paul Business Journal's 2017 Women in Business

Career Achievement honoree. The award recognized Brainerd's distinguished career, including 15 years as the President and CEO of HealthPartners, a position from which she retired in June 2017.

Board Member **DeAnna Cummings** was selected as part of the first cohort of Michael Rubinger Community Fellows,

a program of New York-based Local Initiatives Support Corporation. The program offers 10 of the community development field's most promising leaders from across the country the opportunity to deepen their work around economic opportunity and disseminate their expertise nationally.



Duchesne Drew joined the Board of Directors of the St. Paul Area Chamber of Commerce, a network of businesses

and individuals focused on creating economic opportunity in St. Paul.

Molly Matheson Gruen joined the Board of Directors of the Minnesota Council of Nonprofits, a capacity-building organization that serves nonprofits across the state.



Board Member **Pam Moret** was honored as a 2017 Outstanding Director by Twin Cities Business. The award recognized Moret's outstanding service on the Board of Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota, a post she has served simultaneously to her role as Board Chair at the Bush Foundation.

Erica Orton was elected program Co-Chair on the Minnesota Evaluation Association's Board of Directors, which promotes and improves the theory, practice, understanding and use of evaluation.

Anita Patel was selected for the 2017-2018 Grantmakers for Effective Organizations Change



Leaders in Philanthropy Fellowship Cohort. Through the program, participants explore what it takes to lead transformational change through an individual, organizational and ecosystem lens.

Jen Ford Reedy joined the Board of Directors of Independent Sector, a national membership organization that brings together a diverse set of nonprofits, foundations and corporations to advance the common good.

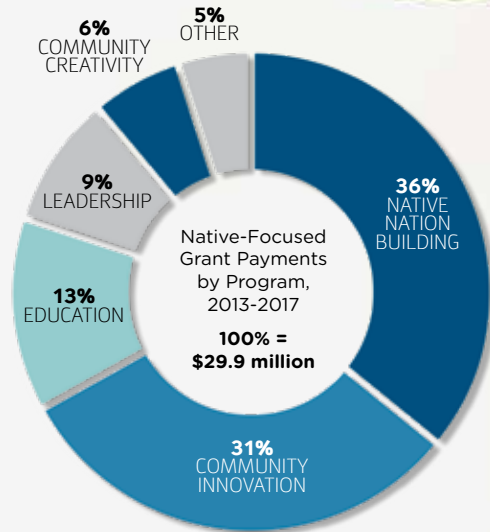
GOT NEWS?

Past and present Fellows: Please consider submitting your professional updates to bmag@bushfoundation.org

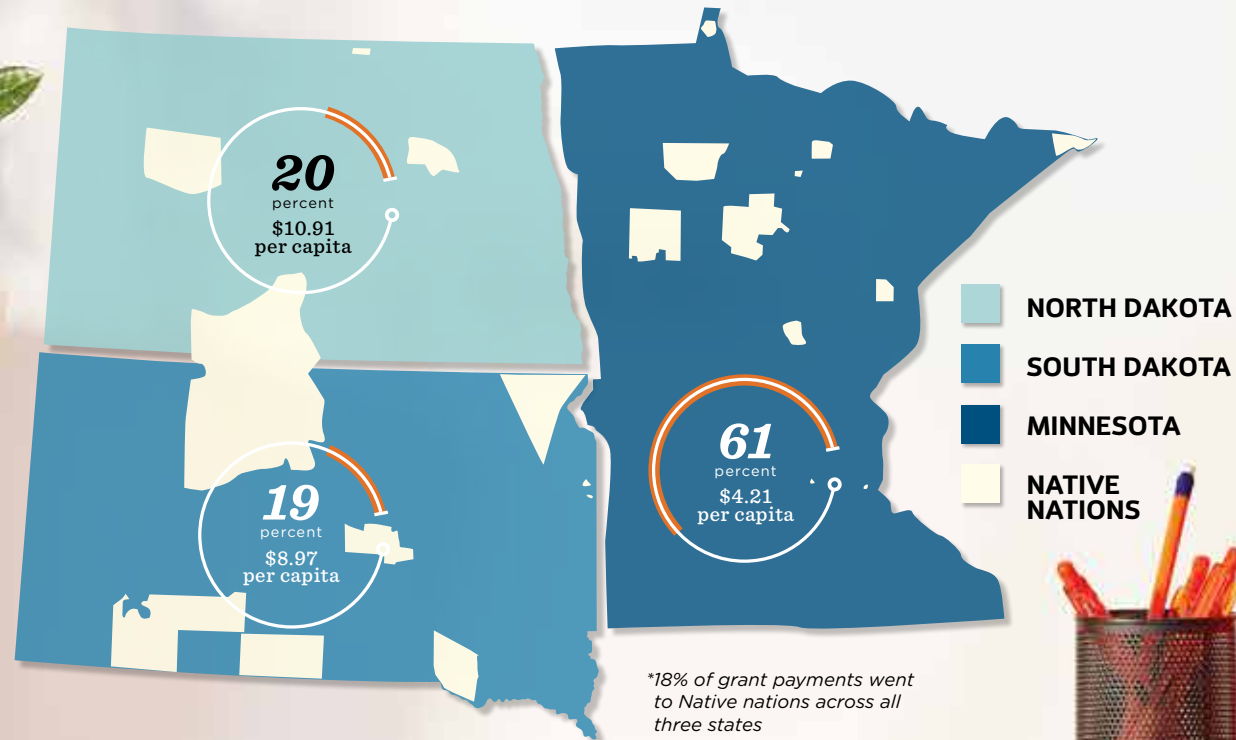
By The Numbers

SINCE 2013, THE BUSH FOUNDATION HAS GIVEN \$29.9 MILLION IN GRANTS SUPPORTING NATIVE NATIONS AND PEOPLE.

In striving to do more good every year, we consistently ask ourselves how we can better support the Native community and the 23 Native nations in our region. We are publishing a report on our investments in Native communities that will help us look deeply at how we can continue to make the region better for everyone, including the Indigenous people of this land. Learn more about our work supporting Native nations and people at bushfoundation.org.



2017 GRANT PAYMENT BY GEOGRAPHY



58%

of grants were made to advance racial and economic equity

52%

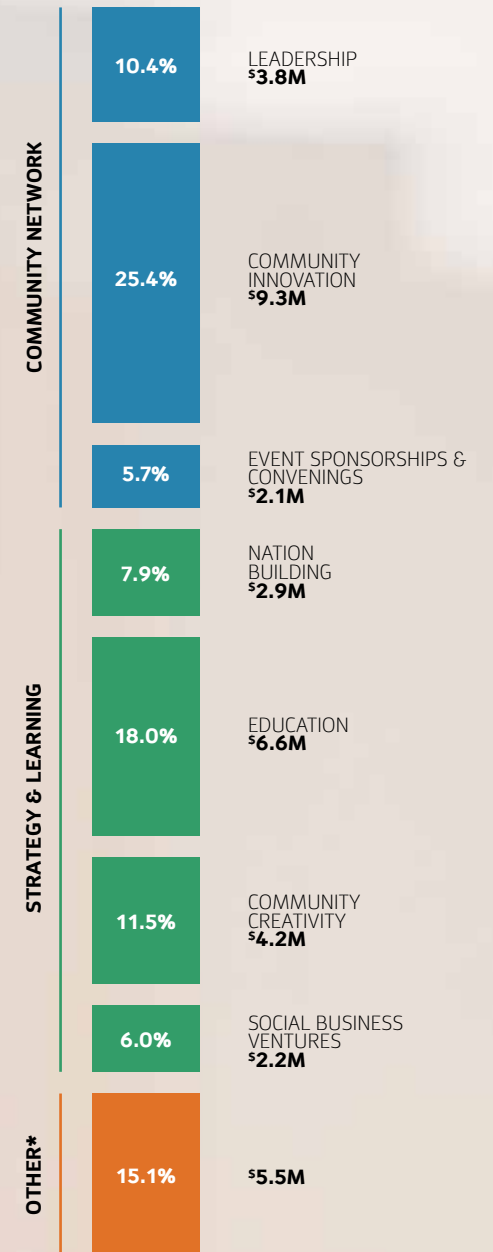
of grants were made through open and competitive processes

Bush Foundation Investment Assets End of Year

\$951 million in assets (as of 12/31/2017) including investments in equity, fixed income and real assets



2017 GRANT PAYMENTS BY PROGRAM



TOTAL GRANT AND FELLOWSHIP PAYMENTS: \$36.6M

*Includes grants made by the President's Innovation and Partnership Fund, in honor of Archibald and Edyth Bush and to support and promote the philanthropic sector.

Meaningful Collaboration

by MANDY ELLERTON, Community Innovation Director

“Collaboration.” It’s a word we throw around quite a bit in the nonprofit and foundation worlds. Sometimes it feels like everybody is, or should be, collaborating at all times. But what do we even mean by “collaboration” and why should we all think about it so much?

As often happens when a concept becomes popular, we may all mean different things when we use the word “collaboration.” Sometimes when people say “we’re collaborating,” they actually mean “we go to monthly coalition meetings, talk at each other, and then go back to doing whatever we were going to do anyway.”


On the other end of the spectrum, there are some groups that work so closely together that they make every decision together and get upset if any partner acts alone. In that case, collaboration can become almost paralyzing.

We’ve seen a lot of groups that excel somewhere in the middle. They share power and decision-making, but they empower each other to do what they do best. Trust is their bedrock, and they put a lot of energy into cultivating it.

Despite being an often-employed concept, collaboration is really hard. Even when done well, partners get upset, roles get confused and everything takes way longer than expected.

We think it’s worth it. We’ve seen time and again that true collaboration allows organizations to do more than they could do alone and ensures that critical voices are shaping the process. And despite being hard, it can also be pretty fun to be in it together—more fun than slogging along on a tough issue by yourself.

Through funding over 150 Community Innovation projects, we’ve had the opportunity to learn a lot about community problem solving—including what collaboration really looks like—with our grantees. We’ve teamed up with Wilder Research and Lemonly to gather, analyze and bring these lessons alive in creative pieces like the following illustrations, which share some of the problem solving and collaboration tips we’ve learned from our grantees.

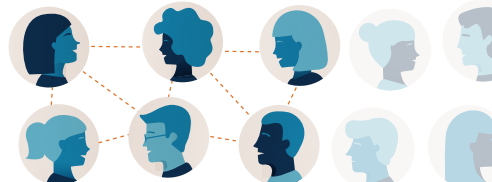
We hope sharing our learning will help more people dig in, solve tough problems, and make our region better for everyone. 

From Bush Foundation Community Innovation Grantees INSIGHTS INTO COMMUNITY PROBLEM SOLVING

Community Innovation Grants support communities working together to solve problems. Recipients of these grants have taught us that while working with others to solve problems is critical, it takes longer than anticipated and rarely goes as planned.

Tip: Take time to build relationships and figure out how to work with collaborators.

59% of grantees say that building relationships, collaboration structures and decision-making processes were critical to their success.



Tip: Be realistic about the capacity and resources you and your collaborators will need.

Relationships among collaborators can suffer without a clear understanding of roles and responsibilities and what will be needed to get the work done.

Talk with your partners about investing in training, education and resources.



“It’s a matter of bringing the right people to the table and ensuring that they have a voice. We don’t have any interest in going out and telling other people what to do. We want them to know that they’re the ones doing the work and they have input in the situation.”

To learn more, visit bfdn.org/ci



STAFF AS OF 3/31/18; ALL OTHER LISTS AS OF 12/31/17.

Bush Foundation Board of Directors

Jennifer Alstad
Dr. Kathleen Annette
Paul Batcheller
Mary Brainerd
DeAnna Cummings 1
Jodi Gillette 1
Kevin Goodno
Anthony Heredia
Curtis W. Johnson
Dr. Eric J. Jolly
Pamela Moret (Chair)
Michael Solberg
Irv Weiser
Tracey Zephier 2

Bush Foundation Staff

Bilal Alkatout
Amy Anderson
Stephanie Andrews
Maggie Arzdorf-Schubbe 1,2
Carly Bad Heart Bull
Allison Barmann
Shaylyn Bernhardt
Eileen Briggs 1,2
Erika Carter
Christie Carver
Justin Christy
Erin Dirksen
Duchesne Drew
Sareoun Earm 3
Mandy Ellerton
Jen Ford Reedy

Megan Forgrave
Katie Gleischman
Elli Haerter
Yong Her
Sharon Hollingsworth
Greg Keane
Naaima Khan
Scott Labott
Gao Lee
Kent Linder
Molly Matheson Gruen
Beth Norris
Kallie O’Hara
Erica Orton
Awale Osman 3
John Otterlei
Anita Patel
Khamara Pettus
Emily Shaftel
Erik Takeshita 1
Kia Vang
Beth Villalume
Kristi Ward
Nancy Weidler
Kayla Yang-Best

Bush Fellows Selection Panel

Rotolu “Ro” Adebisi
Sylvia Bartley 1
Joe Bartmann
Tim Baylor
Deb Benedict
Mary Brainerd 4

Lori Brown 2
Armando Camacho
Sunny Chanthanouvong 1
Laura Connelly 1
Clay Cudmore
Michael Gorman
Taneeza Islam 1
Dr. Erick J. Jolly 4
Matt Kilian
Elsie Meeks 1
Teresa Peterson 1
Miguel Ramos
Malini Srivastava 1
Michael Strand 1
Terri Thao
Sandy Vargas 1
Craig Warren

Bush Prize Selection Panel – Minnesota

Dr. Kathleen Annette 4
Michael Birchard
Tawanna Black 1
Emilia Gonzalez Avalos
Arlene Jones 1
Brad Pieper
Mechele Pitt

North Dakota Advisory Committee, includes Bush Prize Selection Panel – North Dakota

Twyla Baker-Demaray 2
Lori Brown 2

Kristi Hall-Jiran
Chuck Hoge
Marshall Johnson
Mary Massad
Zach Packineau
Robert Pope
Tom Shorma
Jessie Veeder Scofield

South Dakota Advisory Committee, includes Bush Prize Selection Panel – South Dakota

Marc Benoist 2
Taneeza Islam 1
Toby Morris
Lori Pourier
Jane Rasmussen
Ivan Sorbel
Bob Sutton
Ira Taken Alive
Ross Tschetter
Sheila Woodward

Legend

- 1 Bush Fellow
- 2 Native Nation Rebuilder
- 3 Ron McKinley Philanthropy Fellow
- 4 Foundation Board Member
- 5 Consultant



DO THE MOST
POSSIBLE GOOD
FOR THE
COMMUNITY

Archibald and Edyth Bush established the Foundation in 1953. They left few restrictions. It is up to the board and staff to figure out how to use Archie and Edyth's resources to do the most possible good for the community.

Today, the Bush Foundation invests in great ideas and the people who power them in Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota and the 23 Native nations that share the geography. We work to inspire and support creative problem solving—within and across sectors—to make our region better for everyone.

Broadly speaking, we do this in a few ways:

We invest in people and organizations working on any issue that is important in their communities. These investments are made through our Community Innovation and Leadership Programs. Grants and Fellowships are awarded through competitive processes open to all eligible people and organizations in the region.

We also invest in efforts to address

specific issues that we believe are a priority for the region. We manage these investments through our strategic initiatives—Community Creativity, Education, Native Nation Building and Social Business Ventures. Each initiative makes a handful of large investments annually to accomplish a goal.

We also support organizations that help create and sustain an environment for our programs and initiatives to be successful. Ecosystem Grants sustain organizations that create unique and significant value for the individuals and organizations we support.

Through communications and convenings, we share engaging stories about our investments and create and support events that inspire, equip and connect people across the region we serve.

The Bush Foundation has changed a lot since 1953. But the thing that has always been the same is our commitment to do the most possible good with the resources Archie and Edyth left to the region. **b**

Courtyards of Creativity

Growing up in India, Malini Srivastava (BF'14) spent every summer at her grandma's house. The house, shared with family and friends, centered around a beautiful outdoor courtyard. This was the gathering space: hordes of cousins chasing each other around, a table piled with food—"Someone was always eating!" Malini says with a laugh—dishes of puris (fried bread), curry, rice and lentils, all shared in the warm sunlight. At night, the cousins giggled and pretended to sleep on the cool tile, the stars overhead.

Srivastava carried the magic of that courtyard with her when she left to study architecture at the University of Minnesota. She was intrigued by the idea that certain physical spaces foster creativity and connection. It wasn't long before she discovered her favorite spot on campus: Rapson Hall Courtyard.

This indoor courtyard is spacious and sunwashed, surrounded by balconies and buzzing with conversation. "This place personifies what creativity is all about," she says. "It's unfettered by expectation, where no one limits the questions you ask."

The spirit of the courtyard allows for a variety of uses. One week, Srivastava and her class constructed a two-story structure in the space to experiment with sound waves. The next week, she attended an elegant art exhibition in the same setting. After taking a class of students to India, they shared stories from the trip in the courtyard. And when she completed her graduate studies, this was where Srivastava presented her master's thesis.

"It's a really flexible space that can get messy and then get dressed up," she says. "You can define it based on what's needed."

Srivastava's experiences in spaces like Rapson Hall Courtyard inspire her to focus on the needs of her community and how she can meet them creatively. An active architect who just won an American Institute of Architects' 2018 Young Architects Award, she is currently earning her doctoral degree at Carnegie Mellon University. Her brainchild—eFargo, an energy-saving initiative in Fargo-Moorhead that is estimated to have already saved the city \$3.2 million—recently won a \$5 million prize in a national energy savings competition.

"Every pursuit needs a physical and mental space," she says. "We need space that isn't programmed, space for breakthroughs. Space to think about what's missing, and what needs to happen." —*Marisa Jackels*



PHOTO BRUCE SILCOX

photo by HUNT+CAPTURE

Congratulations to the 2017 Bush Prize Winners



Appetite for Change
Minneapolis, MN



**Fargo-Moorhead Coalition
for Homeless Persons**
Fargo, ND



Hmong American Farmers Association
St. Paul, MN

The Bush Prize for Community Innovation celebrates organizations with a track record of successful community problem solving.

bfdn.org/bushprize



Latino Economic Development Center
Minneapolis, MN



Northfield Healthy Community Initiative
Northfield, MN



Vision West ND
Dickinson, ND



**Thunder Valley Community
Development Corporation**
Porcupine, SD





BUSH FOUNDATION

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Archibald and Edyth Bush

Investing in great ideas and the people who power them.