

# Justice Notes

SPRING 2018

Updates on Social Justice Fund NW's Donor Organizing in the Northwest

## Growing Donor Organizers Through Giving Projects

*SJF's innovative Giving Projects model has been embraced by a group of six participating funders called the Giving Project Learning Community, transforming the philanthropic approach of the community's members. In an article published in the most recent edition of the Grassroots Fundraising Journal, Zeke Spier & Allison Johnson Heist reflect on how the model has evolved over time. Here is an excerpt focusing on the particular impact it has had through engaging people of color as donor organizers.*

Three themes emerged from interviews with Giving Project donors who identify as people of color:

- They are deeply affected by the curriculum around race, class and money.
- They aren't comfortable using the term "philanthropist" to describe their role in the community.
- They are an underutilized resource when it comes to raising money for social movements.

### Discussing Race, Class & Money

The way in which the Giving Project curriculum addresses race, racism and white supremacy in all their forms is unique and sets the stage for participants of color to bring their whole



Members of the 2018 Criminal Justice Giving Project in Seattle.

selves to the process.

Most participants identified the content and conversations around class as being unexplored territory, and connecting their race and their class to their social identity was new work. Each Giving Project provides space and coaching for participants to explore their feelings about making a personal financial gift and asking people in their social networks for money. It's in exactly these places of exploration and tension that important

conversations within the group led to successful fundraising conversations with their donors.

### Engaging Donors of Color

The Giving Project engages people of color as fundraisers and donors in profound ways not seen in the broader philanthropic sector. Why has this model been so successful to date in capturing the attention, passion and resources of people of color? What are we doing right, and what might the



Giving Project Learning Community members participate in learning groups at a Seattle convening in 2017.

rest of the field be able to glean from our experience? And because the Giving Project is explicit in naming and addressing dynamics around race and class, how might that impact donors of color and their giving?

Many participants of color gravitated toward the alternative term of “donor organizer” [instead of “philanthropist”] which has emerged among Giving Project vernacular to describe how participants act as financial resource-gatherers for social justice. In this way, people of color described what could be key to revitalizing traditional philanthropy – a commitment to both giving and acting on one’s values in community.

### **An Underutilized Resource**

Finally, it became clear that people of color aren’t being asked enough to give. In a Giving Project, all participants donate from their own pockets in addition to fundraising from their networks. When participants are asked to consider a meaningful gift to the project, it often results in the largest gift they have ever given. Factors that lead to this significant contribution include being inspired to give to multiple organizations at once and seeing

the value and privilege of gaining in-depth knowledge of community work through the grantmaking process. What is most striking is that for many people of color interviewed for this project, this was the first time they had been asked to give a monetary donation to any organization.

*“There is work to be done on how we define centering folks of color within philanthropy, because it’s less about getting folks of color to fit into the model philanthropy, than getting philanthropy to fit into the model of how folks of color are already doing community giving.”*

– Social Justice Fund NW participant

### **Some Lessons Learned**

Fundraising with donors of color should be a two-way street. Organizations need to ask themselves what they will offer to donors of color in addition to what they hope to gain from engaging them.

To begin engaging donors of color in your work, follow the lead of those most directly involved in how giving and philanthropy works in communities of color. Listen to the cultural nuances that come up when discussing giving among and between communities.

New language will need to emerge in order to be inclusive and reflective of more communities involved in the work.

**LEARN MORE** Read the rest of the article at [bit.ly/donor\\_organizer](http://bit.ly/donor_organizer)

## **About SJF**

Social Justice Fund NW is a foundation working at the frontlines of social change. We leverage the resources of our members to foster significant, long-term social justice solutions throughout Idaho, Montana, Oregon, Washington, and Wyoming. For more about Social Justice Fund NW, visit [SocialJusticeFund.org](http://SocialJusticeFund.org)

## **About JusticeNotes**

JusticeNotes is a quarterly publication from SJF. If you have suggestions for future articles or have questions, please contact Burke Stansbury at [burke@socialjusticefund.org](mailto:burke@socialjusticefund.org).

# UBAX GARDHEERE

## IN LOVE WITH THE WORK

Ubax Gardheere is the Equity Strategies Manager for the City of Seattle by day. She is a fierce fighter for justice by heart who exemplifies all of what Social Justice Fund NW is about.

Ubax is also SJF's outgoing Board co-chair. This month we are honoring Ubax and her outstanding job on our Board.

Ubax started her relationship with SJF nine years ago, after attending SJF's annual dinner. Shortly thereafter she joined SJF's first ever Giving Project in 2010. The Project came at the right time as she was wanting to expand her understanding of philanthropy. "It was one of those things where the universe conspires" Ubax said. Ubax recalls the first Giving Project:

"I was struck immediately by the opening session, a powerful two-day exploration of class privilege and racial injustice, and how being on the receiving end of injustice had shaped me. For the first time I was exposed to very different people who were also shaped by injustice but were seeing it through a lens of privilege. I saw how they were learning to share that privilege.

The transformational work started happening from the beginning – a collective of people from different backgrounds, races, classes and realities bonded through working for the same goals and shared values. Very powerful stuff!

I knew about philanthropy before the Giving Project as a someone on the receiving end. I knew I wanted to help my community but I had this colonialist perspective – the one where "others" can help and make the decisions for you. Being part of this collective group opened my eyes to a different possibility: one where people can come together, create their own vision, understand the possibilities of that power, and then go out and raise money to support the organizations doing the base-building work in our communities. As a donor organizer on the grantmaking side it was unfamiliar territory. I was at the table making decisions, and became cognizant of the power I was gaining as a grantmaker, and the importance of the work that SJF is doing to make grant-making a democratic exercise."

After three Giving Projects and many site visits around the region, Ubax was amazed by the work being done. She decided to join the board of SJF.

"I was in love with the work, and wanted to contribute to the strategic direction of SJF and be even more part of the change that we were making, especially around the understanding and exercise of philanthropy. SJF has this capacity to attract people



with the same values, and I wanted to be a part of that choir, you know what I mean?"

And the choir was lucky enough to have her join our leadership team and stay for six years, the last two as a co-chair of the board. Ubax recounts her time on the board as both meaningful and full of changes. She started not knowing much about philanthropy and finished as "the board co-chair of a multi-million dollar philanthropic foundation – that's pretty remarkable!" Her experience on the board of SJF also gave her a lot of joy. "This community knows how to have a good time! People at SJF work hard and have tons of fun while they're at it."

Ubax, you will be missed as part of our board but we know this relationship is far from over. We will keep singing and dancing together for years to come as part of this movement for justice.

- By Palmira Figueroa



Members of the Immigration Justice Giving Project with leaders of Mujeres Luchadoras Progresistas.

# A VISIT WITH SJF GRANTEE Mujeres Luchadoras Progresistas

**BY SHARDÉ AMANDA NABORS**

Early one Sunday morning, I led a group of volunteers to visit SJF grantee Mujeres Luchadoras Progresistas (MLP) in Woodburn, Oregon.

MLP recently received a grant from the Immigration Justice Giving Project, but as a potential grantee for our Immigration and Economic Justice Giving projects, we were conducting a site visit to learn more about the organization. SJF site visits typically consist of a basic question and answer format, allowing us to get valuable information to bring back to the rest of the Giving Project for the decision-making process.

When we arrived, we were greeted by Rebeca, the Executive Director,

Elisa, who assists with translation and interpretation, and Illia and Margarita who are members of the organization. Between them there was more than 20 years of experience.

Mujeres Luchadoras Progresistas works to offer political education and advocacy for women, especially in the immigrant community. They address immigrant rights, offer domestic violence help, and advocate for policy change that affects women in their community on an institutional level. In the past, MLP offered sessions in their space, but they realized it created burdens for a lot of the people they serve. Due to documentation status and other fears, many women were hesitant to drive; some struggled with childcare; and many were too focused on more

immediate needs to take the time out to attend. Being led by the people they serve, they were able to make a change that addressed the accessibility issue and started having women in the community host sessions in their own homes.

The shift to house visits not only gave the women more accessibility and security, it also empowered them. Women who hosted house visits developed a sense of leadership and validation. MLP sees it as a way of buying in. They frame the house visits as a product they are selling (for free). They offer women a chance to get their friends and family together to share the product, much like a Tupperware party. In addition to spreading the education and resources, it becomes a way to

build and strengthen community.

Some of the women hosting our team shared stories of how the work has impacted their personal lives. One woman is as a domestic violence survivor who was able to leave her abuser with help from MLP. Before coming to meetings, she had been anti-social because of the abuse. She described feeling isolated and hopeless. The education and support she received was quite literally life-changing. Now, she considers herself a community leader and takes great pride in helping women in similar situations. The women are very passionate about the work they do because they empathize with the people they serve. Because they are the people they serve.

Mujeres Luchadoras Progresistas also has a radio program. Through this platform, they can reach even more women in the community who are unaware of or unable to attend house visits. Women have called or written in to thank MLP for the program and how

it has touched them personally.

Our hosts wrapped up our visit by introducing us to their Wreath Project. Every winter, MLP brings women together to make holiday wreaths to raise money. The wreaths are distributed as far as Seattle, where they have partnered with Grand Central Bakery as a pick-up location. Each wreath features a colored ribbon that connects it to the women who made it. The Wreath Project has been a big funding source and good way to get word out about the organization to the larger community.

After visiting Woodburn our team left feeling excited about the work being done. The love and respect MLP leaders have for their community really stuck with us and we look forward to the work they will be able to do as the organization grows.

**LEARN MORE** See the full 2018 Immigration Justice Giving Project grants list at [bit.ly/immigrationGP](http://bit.ly/immigrationGP)

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# DONATE

Building progressive power through donor activism

Donating to SJF supports the work of organizations that are community based and that use community organizing to achieve their goals.

Community organizing builds a base of people who share a common understanding of the problems they face, as well as a shared strategy to mobilize for change.

 **ONLINE** Donate to annual fund, giving projects. [SocialJusticeFund.org/Donate](http://SocialJusticeFund.org/Donate)

 **CHECKS** Send to Social Justice Fund NW, 1904 Third Ave, Suite 806, Seattle, WA 98101

[SOCIALJUSTICEFUND.ORG/DONATE](http://SOCIALJUSTICEFUND.ORG/DONATE)

# Welcome new SJF board co-chairs Kim and Molly

SJF is excited to officially welcome **Kim Powe** and **Molly Chidsey** as the co-chairs of our Board of Directors.

### Molly Chidsey

Molly is currently the Community Partnerships Project Manager for Metro regional government in Portland, where she leads efforts to incorporate racial equity into the regional garbage and recycling system. She has participated in two Portland-based SJF giving projects and joined the board in 2013.

### Kim Powe

Kim was introduced to SJF in 2015 and participated in the Seattle-based Environmental Justice Giving Project that year. She joined the board in 2016. Kim currently serves as the deputy director at Puget Sound Sage.

Thank you Molly and Kim for helping to lead SJF at this exciting moment of growth for the organization!



# Portland happy hour honors Dianne Riley, welcomes new Portland staff to SJF

At a happy hour in Portland on March 1, SJF celebrated Dianne Riley (pictured far right) who recently stepped down from five years as SJF's Oregon Director to take a job at the City of Portland.

We also officially welcomed new Portland-based staff: BW White (far left), our new Oregon development manager; and Melody Martinez (center), our Oregon program manager who started in August 2017.



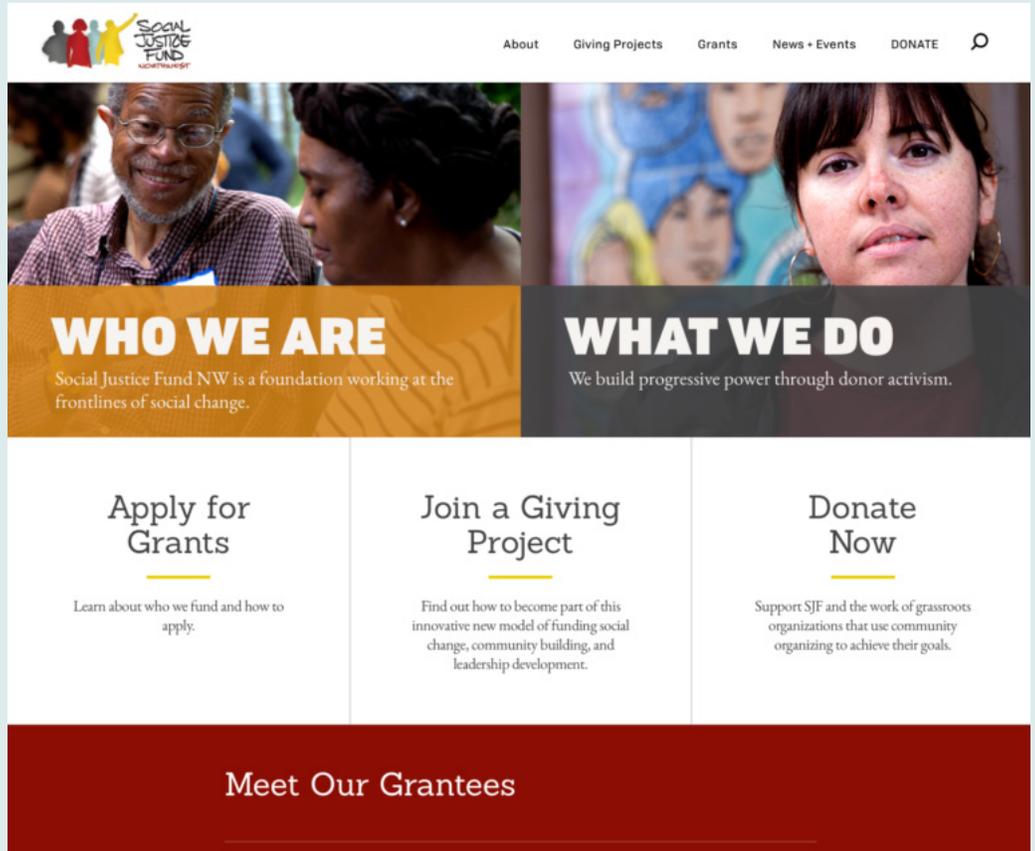
# Introducing the New SocialJusticeFund.org!

We are thrilled to launch SJF's new website!

We wanted to create a mobile-friendly, intuitive, improved website experience to better serve the needs of our grantees, Giving Project members, donors, and SJF members.

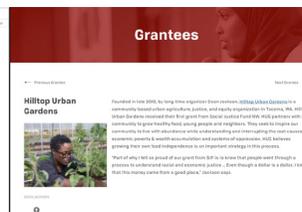
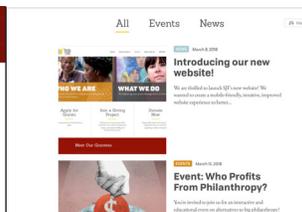
## FEEDBACK?

Have feedback on the new site? We would love to hear from you. Submit feedback at [bit.ly/SJF\\_website](http://bit.ly/SJF_website)



## Some key features of the new website:

FILTER BY				
Year	State	Issue Area	Conductivity	Search
ORGANIZATION	YEAR	GIVING PROJECT	GRANT CYCLE	STATE
African American Leadership Forum	2018	EPIC Zero Detention Project	EPIC Zero Detention Project	WA
Asian Pacific American Network of Oregon	2018	Environmental Justice Living Project	Environmental Justice Grant 2017	OR
Black Star Line	2018	EPIC Zero Detention Project	EPIC Zero Detention Project	WA



**Grantee Directory**  
Through the grantee directory, you can see all the organizations who have received Giving Project grants since 2008.

**Giving Project Member Profiles**  
Get to know some of the Giving Project members through their stories.

**News & Events**  
Find out what SJF is up to and learn about upcoming events.

**Grantee Profiles**  
Learn more about the work of the organizations SJF fund through Giving Project, Rapid Response and Seed grants.

**Giving Projects**  
Through the improved Giving Project section, learn about upcoming Giving Projects and find out how to participate.



1904 3rd Ave., Suite 806,  
Seattle, WA 98101



**LOOK INSIDE** for our Spring newsletter with stories of SJF members, grantees, and updates about our work

**Check Out Our New Website!**  
**SocialJusticeFund.org**



**SAVE THE DATE: JUNE 3, 2018**

Join Social Justice Fund NW in Celebrating 40 Years of Building Power for Lasting Change at our Anniversary Celebration!

3 pm-7 pm  
Washington Hall, Seattle



**40<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION**