



THE RUSSELL FAMILY FOUNDATION



# THE RUSSELL FAMILY FOUNDATION 2020 YEAR IN REVIEW



Partners, Colleagues and Friends,

While 2020 was one of the most challenging years we have faced yet, amidst the tragedy, frustration, and hardship, there was also an opportunity for growth, humility, and learning. During a global pandemic, we saw our partners overcome significant obstacles to flex their creative muscles and move quickly to meet the changing needs of our communities.

There are many wins in 2020 to celebrate. Puget Sound grantee Stewardship Partners' Snoqualmie Stewardship crew managed to install approximately 5,000 native trees and shrubs over the course of the year. Grantee ECOSS continued to tackle environmental degradation in urban communities and contribute to Puget Sound water quality. Despite local restrictions, our Environmental Education grantees got creative sending out at-home-activity-kits and live-streaming engaging online content such as virtual field trips and marine animal viewings to keep young people learning about their local environments despite being stuck at home. Our Youth Homelessness grantees pivoted quickly, turning Pierce County overnight youth and young adult shelters into 24-hour places of respite and care. To meet growing food insecurity issues, local food banks and meal sites stepped up in incredible ways, some increasing services by as much as 50%. For example, a graduate of our very own Jane's Fellowship Program, Tacoma Farmers Market Executive Director Anika Moran, launched the Fresh Express Mobile Market to serve low-income community members in Tacoma with accessible food solutions during the pandemic.

We worked hard to address the shifting needs of our valued partners and shared communities over the last year. In April, we launched a survey to see what supports our grantees could benefit from most. In line with our study's findings, we pivoted our grantmaking strategy for 2020 to include grantmaking outside our usual program areas with funds going to emergency food supports; grants supporting COVID-19 relief and pivots; and increased flexibility for how funding was used on the ground or just to keep the lights on.

On a personal note, it was a humbling year to be named the Foundation's next CEO. I am honored to be leading this organization in partnership with our staff, board and family members. Amid the ever-changing landscape, I am amazed by the continued energy of our staff, board members and family to rise to the challenges in service of our mission to contribute to a sustainable and peaceful world for people, places, and communities.

The problems that faced us in 2020 are far from over. We remain optimistic in knowing that our community will continue to be resilient, nimble and hardworking in the face of so many obstacles. We express our deepest admiration for and appreciation to our grantees, community partners and loved ones for your patience, inspiring work and humility as we chart these new waters together.

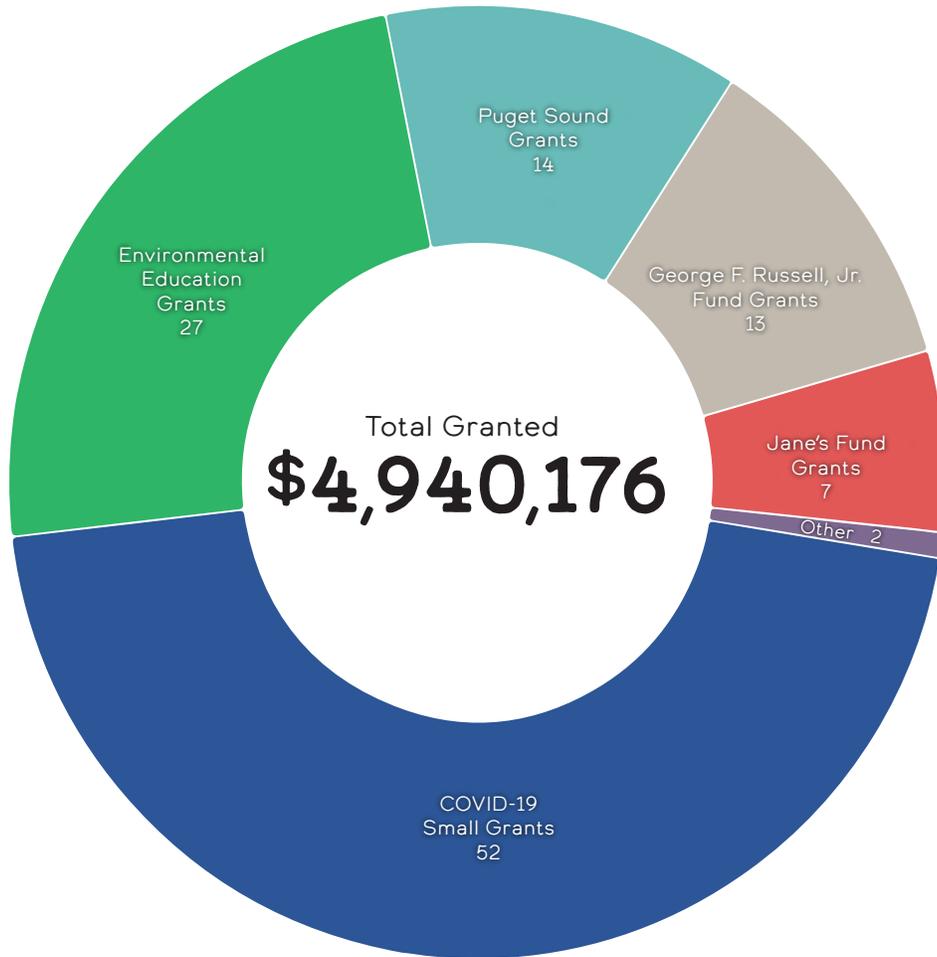
In gratitude,

**Kathleen Simpson, CPA, CGMA**

Chief Executive Officer

The Russell Family Foundation

# 2020 BY THE NUMBERS



**87**

Grantees provided COVID-19 support

Total COVID-19 Responsive Funding: \$1,824,925



**10**

Grantees provided Capacity Building support



**\$142,594,417**

Total Impact Investments

or 91% of portfolio (7.2% increase of impact alignment from 2019)



**12**

New graduates from Jane's Fellowship Program Class 8



**11**

Canopy: 11 organizations convening as a peer learning cohort of philanthropy partners

# STORIES OF RESILIENCE

## COVID-19 Relief Small Grants \$299,925



Photo c/o: Camp Fire Central

**“With the support of TRFF, our Alumni Team program has helped young people enhance their technical glass-making skills while learning to communicate and collaborate as part of a team. Creating art is central to what we do, but what we’re really doing is creating the community of people we want to live in, one student at a time.”**

– Dr. Kimberly Keith, executive director of Hilltop Artists in Residence

In a pandemic year, critical nonprofit and community organizations across the Puget Sound region faced unprecedented and unexpected challenges – from having to cancel major fundraising events, to not being able to operate on the ground in the communities they serve, leading to an even greater increase in demand for programs and services. These barriers challenged our grantee partners in new ways and many were just trying to stay afloat and operational. Listening to the community and understanding the complex impacts of the pandemic, TRFF issued a round of flexible COVID-19 relief grants totaling \$299,925 to 44 community organizations. Crossing TRFF’s various program areas, the assistance helped organizations

adapt operations such as new virtual programming, home-based experiential learning, emergency support services, and new technology.

Some of the nonprofit organizations that received COVID-19 relief grants included Hilltop Artists in Residence, College Success Foundation, Mountains to Sound Greenway Trust, Delridge Neighborhoods Development Association, and Duwamish River Cleanup Coalition/Technical Advisory Group. TRFF contributed \$1 million to Greater Tacoma Community Foundation’s Pierce County Connected Fund, providing urgent human service relief and support for Pierce County residents impacted by COVID-19.

**“Due to the COVID 19 pandemic, Nourish Pierce County customer numbers soared to the highest point in our nearly 40-year history. Thanks to The Russell Family Foundation, Nourish had the food & resources needed to continue our mobile food bank services in the Key Peninsula, an area of great need—especially during these challenging times. Without the foundation’s generosity and heart for the community, thousands of our neighbors in need would not have gone hungry. Thank you!”**

– Sue Porter, Chief Executive Officer of Nourish Pierce County

According to Northwest Harvest, the number of Washingtonians who cannot put food on their tables has more than doubled during the pandemic. A recent WAFOOD Survey from June-July 2020 found alarmingly high rates of food insecurity in Pierce County, ranging from 65-68% among lower-income households and households with children. To help address this need, in October, TRFF granted to six nonprofits working on food insecurity in Pierce, Kitsap, Thurston and Mason counties. The nonprofits,

Community Foundation of South Puget Sound, Thurston County Food Bank, Emergency Food Network (EFN), Nourish Pierce County, Kitsap Conservation District and LightHouse StoreHouse, used TRFF funding to support various services including drive-through food distribution, senior Meals on Wheels programs and other vital community food assistance. TRFF made an additional round of board discretionary grants that supported food security work in board members’ home communities.

## Food Security Grants \$500,000



Photo c/o: Nourish Pierce County

# STORIES OF COMMUNITY IMPACT

## ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

**Creating access to outdoor education and engaging the next generation of environmental stewards.**

**Total Granted in 2020: \$700,000**

Puget Soundkeeper's Lost Urban Creeks Project empowers youth to advocate for healthy waterways in their communities through cleanups, restoration, and water quality monitoring. Through their work, students hope to rally community members and leaders to take larger action against pollution to our urban waterways.



Photo c/o: Puget Soundkeeper

*"The sampling report that the Lost Urban Creek Youth put together is excellent and it shows an incredible amount of work that Springbrook creek desperately needs. I am so impressed by the youth...and I look forward to the time when they move into their careers as artists and advocates, scientists and policy makers, leaders and environmental protectors. And I look forward to when Springbrook Creek is transformed from a lost urban creek to the community recreational and environmental resource it should be, full of salmon, birds, and of course all of us tubing down - First Descent!"*

—Stephanie Hess, King County Environment Lab, Puget Soundkeeper Alliance/Unleash the Brilliance project

## JANE'S FUND

**Empowering Pierce County youth with education, scholarships, housing and basic needs.**

**Total Granted in 2020: \$200,000**

With two grants from TRFF in 2020, Tacoma-based Degrees of Change continued its work to help close persistent gaps in college completion through partnerships with higher education institutions and other anchor organizations. This financial support allowed the organization's programs to continue to help students begin, persist in, and graduate from college and transition into the workforce.



Photo c/o: Degrees of Change

*"Degrees of Change programming focuses on supporting local diverse young adults to complete college, develop their leadership skills and prepare for meaningful careers. In light of the pandemic COVID (new) and racism (not new), our partnerships to support the local community, the students we serve, and our staff had to change and TRFF's trust-based funding provided us with the flexibility we needed to meet these incredible challenges head on."*

—Nalani Linder, Tacoma Completes Director, Degrees of Change

## PUGET SOUND

**Protecting and restoring Puget Sound for present and future generations.**

**Total Granted in 2020: \$767,500**

Oceans Initiative is made up of a team of scientists on a mission to protect marine life in the Pacific Northwest and beyond, including sharing cutting-edge science to guide conservation action. TRFF's multi-year grant made in 2020 provides general programmatic support for the organization's Ocean Noise Program, which studies the effects of ocean noise on whales and dolphins and guides conservation action.



A family of southern resident orcas swims past Lime Kiln Lighthouse on San Juan Island.

Photo c/o: Toby Hall / Oceans Initiative

*"At Oceans Initiative, we are filled with purpose and optimism. We are more determined than ever to protect our Puget Sound ecosystem to support healthy, thriving, and sustainable populations of all marine life."*

—Erin Ashe, Executive Director, Oceans Initiative

## GEORGE F. RUSSELL, JR. FUND

**Tackling disparities and emphasizing community building and family-first initiatives.**

**Total Granted in 2020: \$670,000**

Hot Shop Heroes is a collaboration between the Warrior Transition Unit at Joint Base Lewis-McChord, the American Lake Veterans Administration and Museum of Glass. The program offers individuals with traumas and injuries that have occurred during military service with glass blowing courses - allowing them to heal through art.



Photo c/o: Dane Gregory Meyer / Museum of Glass

*"It is heartwarming to witness the healing power of our Hot Shop Heroes program for soldiers and veterans with traumatic brain injuries. The focus required by glassblowing helps quiet their minds, and the class format offers needed support and social interaction. Current and past funding by the George Russell F. Russell Jr. Fund has been crucial to this program's success and continuation."*

—Debbie Link, Executive Director, Museum of Glass Hotshop Heroes

# STORIES OF COMMUNITY IMPACT

## IMPACT INVESTING

Investing with purpose for a more sustainable and equitable region and world.

**Total Portfolio Impact Investments as of December 31, 2020: \$142,594,417**  
**Impact investments as a percentage of the total portfolio increased from 83.8% to 91%**

TRFF awarded a grant paired with \$500,000 in loan capital to Business Impact Northwest (BIN), a nonprofit regional Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI) serving under-banked small business entrepreneurs. Through this total portfolio activation strategy of stacking grant capital with investment capital, the hope is that BIN can build capacity as a lender and technical services provider in Pierce County and the City of Tacoma, serving more and diverse business owners previously left out of the market. BIN has a stated interest in supporting businesses owned by veterans, people of color, rural business owners, farmers, first-generation immigrants and the LGBTQ population.



Photo c/o: Business Impact Northwest

*"In these unprecedented times, our small business community is struggling like no other time in recent memory. Through this amazing partnership with The Russell Family Foundation, we will be able to help Pierce County small businesses not only weather this storm but hopefully come out even stronger. We are looking forward to deepening our work in Pierce County and supporting the recovery from this public health crisis."*

– Joe Sky-Tucker, BIN President and CEO, Business Impact NW

## SPECIAL OPPORTUNITY FUND

Pursuing opportunities to support work at the nexus of multiple interest areas.

**Total Granted in 2020: \$50,000**

TRFF made a grant to Forterra NW to build on the foundation's previous \$1.5 million loan commitment to the Forterra Strong Communities Fund Hilltop Rite-Aid project. The Hilltop neighborhood has been home to the Black community in Tacoma for generations. The grant is helping fund a community-driven design process for attainable housing and commercial space in Hilltop that addresses the ongoing displacement of long-time residents and businesses. Non-profit Fab-5 has partnered with Forterra to lead community-driven work including the selection of Black artists to create new works in the community.



Photo c/o: Fab-5

*"For me, it's all about cultural reclamation. Working through this project is an opportunity to empower and support the community in designing its own future. #DesignTheHill is about engaging young people and elders and bringing all our folks together to design the future of their neighborhood – putting families in charge. Not just because it is important for all of us to be there, but because the kind of solutions we need to create a stable world in a time with so much housing insecurity and crisis...those solutions can only come from the vision, imagination, creativity, and insight of those most impacted."*

– Chris Jordan, Director of Fab-5

## JANE'S FELLOWSHIP

Developing grassroots leaders poised to impact Pierce County communities.

In 2020, Jane's Fellowship Program Class 8 completed its leadership program, including a final fellowship session conducted virtually, and paved a path to make a deeper impact in the community. Working alongside each other, the Pierce County residents participated in a journey of grassroots leadership, training and discovery. These community leaders and changemakers focused on self-awareness, community engagement and social and racial equity, participating in training on adaptive leadership, community-centered collaboration and self-actualization.

*"During the fellowship, I improved my navigation skills around power dynamics and placemaking and invested in my creative process around storytelling and facilitation...I came in with so many notions of leadership, learning expectations and assumptions – they were all put to the test! As an extrovert/maximalist type, I had the opportunity to refresh my approach."*

– Filiva'a "Bojie" Mageo II, Class 8

*"Jane's Fellowship Program provided a foundation for believing in my worth as a person and as a leader in standing up for myself and others by supporting them in whatever way I can or that they would prefer."* – Sarah Luna, Class 8



Class 8 Graduates: (Upper Row Left to Right: Micah Tucker, Sarah Luna, Supreme XI Amaru El-Bey, Dionne Bonner; Middle Row: Alison Powell, Rosalinda Castro, Joseph Denton, Filiva'a "Bojie" Mageo III; Bottom Row: Melinda Raebyne, Levon Williams, Wendy Pantoja, Dakoda Foxx)

Thank you to our board, staff, grantees, fellowship graduates, and community for your partnership over the last year. We look forward to working and collaborating with you in the year to come.

Cover photos courtesy of: ASAS Puget Sound; ECOSSE; Ella Banken; Emergency Food Network; Oceans Initiative; Puget Sound Estuarium; Wild Society; World Relief Seattle, Hannah Letinich