

# JUSTICE WINS!

THE IMPACT OF YOUR SUPPORT





MRG



Community Alliance of Tenants



Friends of Family Farmers

# AN UNPRECEDENTED YEAR OF SOCIAL JUSTICE VICTORIES

## DEAR FRIENDS,

This year you helped to create progressive change across Oregon. **You donated and organized and volunteered – and the result has been an unprecedented year of justice victories!**

Our communities face serious challenges, but embedded in MRG Foundation's 37-year history is an unwavering belief that justice for all Oregonians is possible when we commit to supporting community-based organizing. Yet, there's no denying that our communities are struggling:

- Young Oregonians are faced with the soaring cost of higher education, fears of bullying, exclusion, and even deportation.
- Rural communities experience isolation and the loss of the common gathering spaces that are vital to a community's well-being.
- Incarcerated Native Americans – an all too often invisible population – are denied the right to practice their traditions, culture, and religion.
- Low income Portlanders struggle to make ends meet while grappling with a public transit system that increasingly fails to serve the public.

**Yet, in the midst of these significant challenges, there have been impressive victories that you've helped MRG Foundation fund!**

For instance, after 10 years of community-based organizing, educating, and alliance building, this spring the Oregon Legislature passed a slate of racial justice bills: Tuition Equity, driver cards, culturally competent health care. These bills are a joyful step toward securing justice for Oregonians of color!

I'm proud to say that MRG grantees and allies played a critical role in making these victories possible – including groups like Causa Oregon and Center for Intercultural Organizing who received their first grants from MRG Foundation more than 10 years ago.

**And these are just some of the successes you'll read about in MRG Foundation's latest impact report.** Within these pages, you will see examples of the resilience, the passion, and the grassroots efforts that have led to real justice throughout our state.

As I look back over this year, I am honored to have witnessed impressive work for progressive change in Oregon. And I am thrilled to stand shoulder-to-shoulder with you as we build on this momentum and continue expanding social justice in Oregon.

If you are inspired and motivated by what you read here I hope you'll fund this important work by returning the enclosed envelope or going to [mrgfoundation.org/contribute](http://mrgfoundation.org/contribute). **With your continued support of MRG Foundation our shared vision of a healthy, just, and joyful Oregon is truly within reach.**

In solidarity,



Sharon Gary-Smith





STATEWIDE

# Immigrant rights s through collective

## THE CHALLENGE

There are over 150,000 undocumented immigrants living, working, and raising children in Oregon - people who arrived as children or came to provide opportunities for their families. But, until the 2013 legislative session, institutional barriers prevented people from being able to thrive here in Oregon. Undocumented students raised in Oregon were expected to pay out-of-state tuition at public universities, effectively putting higher education out of reach for thousands of young Oregonians. And undocumented immigrants were denied driver's licenses, forcing them to drive illegally and without insurance to get to work, school, or medical appointments. This has been the status quo for many years, but here in Oregon we knew we could do better. MRG grantees and allies worked throughout the state to advance immigrant rights on three major fronts.

“MRG’s funding of farm worker and immigrant rights came at a strategic moment that helped develop a strong movement for change. And MRG’s continued support builds collective power with far reaching effects benefitting thousands of people.”

—RAMON RAMIREZ,  
PRESIDENT OF  
PCUN & CAUSA  
BOARD PRESIDENT



Amigos Multicultural Services Center

# Secured action

**TUITION EQUITY** MRG grantees like Latinos Unidos Siempre in Salem, Juventud FACETA in Eugene, and Momentum Alliance in Portland organized undocumented youth to testify in front of the state legislature. This work showed elected representatives the real, human cost of denying in-state tuition to undocumented students who graduate from Oregon high schools and it led to the Oregon legislature passing a tuition equity bill and guaranteeing equal access to higher education for all of Oregon's youth.

**DRIVER CARDS** Rural Organizing Project and Interfaith Movement for Immigrant Justice organized in Oregon's rural and faith communities for fair and equitable immigrant rights legislation. And, this spring the Oregon Legislature passed the Safe Roads Act with bipartisan support, allowing undocumented Oregonians – immigrants, seniors, and others without access to birth documents – legal access to transportation and insurance. MRG allies will continue building broad-based support to defend this victory at the ballot box in 2014.

**DEFERRED ACTION** When President Obama signed a memo calling for a suspension of deportation proceedings for undocumented youth pursuing education or military service (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals), MRG joined together with a coalition of local funders to fund Causa in Salem, PCUN in Woodburn, and other community groups who are providing legal support to undocumented youth applying for deferred action. This will allow thousands of Oregonians to live their lives in the communities they grew up in without constant worry of being deported to countries they may hardly remember.

## THE VICTORY

**2013 was an unprecedented year of success for immigrants in Oregon.** But these victories didn't materialize out of thin air. MRG has funded Oregon's immigrants' rights movement for over three decades. This year's successes took years of steady organizing and leadership development. There is still much to be done but thanks to the work of community activists and the support of progressive donors, Oregon will continue to be a leader in progressive immigration reform.



## STATEWIDE GRANTEES

### GENERAL FUND GRANTS

Asian Pacific American Network of Oregon **\$18,000**

Friends of Family Farmers **\$14,000**

Northwest Workers' Justice Project **\$16,000**

Oregon Action **\$17,000**

Oregon Community Health Workers Association **\$9,000**

Oregon Fair Trade Campaign **\$7,000**

Project REconomy **\$8,000**

Rural Organizing Project **\$16,000**

### TRAVEL & CRITICAL RESPONSE GRANTS

Oregon Fair Trade Campaign **\$1,000**

Rural Organizing Project **\$2,400**



**SOUTHERN  
OREGON**

# LGBTQ youth in rural communities have a place to go

## THE CHALLENGE

**Forty percent of homeless youth in Oregon are lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans or queer (LGBTQ) youth** who have come out, only to be rejected by their families. LGBTQ youth are twice as likely to be bullied and five times as likely to attempt suicide during their teen years. The situation is even more severe for youth in rural communities, and statistics can never fully convey the struggles of young Oregonians who are forced to deny who they are out of fear of bullying and harassment.

“We fund many organizations on our own, but it takes great time and effort to do due diligence in researching all of the groups. By contributing to MRG we know that organizations doing critical work, especially ones we might not have heard of, will be able to thrive.”

—MARC VALENS  
& ANNE GOLDEN  
OF ASHLAND,  
MRG DONORS

## THE VICTORY

Lotus Rising Project (LRP) has been organizing for more than five years to empower LGBTQ youth, advocate for anti-bullying policies, and create culture change in Oregon’s rural communities. But this work has been hampered by the lack of a safe, affirming community space to do their work.

MRG has supported LRP since their beginning to hire staff, secure office space, and provide stable programs for their youth. That effort culminated in the opening of LRP’s Resource Center, which provides a safe physical place for youth to gather and express themselves without fear of retribution. Whether they are organizing the alternative prom, conducting Not Straight Not Sure support groups, empowering students to start a Gay/Straight Alliance at their school, or simply providing a space to connect, LRP’s Center serves as a hub for developing supportive communities for all youth in Southern Oregon.



# Southern Oregon now for resources

## SOUTHERN OREGON GRANTEES



### GENERAL FUND GRANTS

Confederated Tribes of the Lower Rogue **\$5,000**

Grants Pass Intertribal Powwow **\$6,000**

Komemma Cultural Protection Association **\$9,000**

Lotus Rising Project **\$6,000**

Multicultural Association of Southern Oregon **\$8,000**

Red Earth Descendants **\$5,000**

Southern Oregon Jobs with Justice **\$7,500**

Unete Center for Farmworker Advocacy **\$9,000**

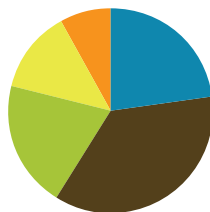
### TRAVEL & CRITICAL RESPONSE GRANTS

Lotus Rising Project **\$700**

Multicultural Association of Southern Oregon **\$1,000**

Southern Oregon Jobs with Justice **\$1,000**

### GRANTMAKING BY GEOGRAPHY



**23%** Statewide

**36%** Portland Metro

**20%** Willamette Valley

**13%** Southern Oregon

**8%** Central/Eastern Oregon

Multicultural Association of Southern Oregon



Red Earth Descendants



Southern Oregon Jobs With Justice





CENTRAL & EASTERN OREGON

# Jobs with Justice & solidarity in the face of

## THE CHALLENGE

**Solidarity is all about having one another's backs.** It's the centerpiece of the most effective organizing campaigns. And in many of Oregon's rural communities, with extreme disparity in the distribution of economic wealth and political power, solidarity isn't just important – it's absolutely essential. While conservative attacks on the public sector are in no way unique to Central Oregon, the isolation and marginalization experienced by progressives in the region can become frighteningly effective tools to keep people from recognizing their common interests or finding the resources, energy, and people needed to build progressive, community-based power.

“MRG supports innovation and collaboration and their funding has empowered us to expand our visibility, outreach, and relationships. Thanks, in part, to MRG we've achieved progress far beyond what we thought was possible.”

—DAVE STRANAHAN,  
CENTRAL OREGON  
JOBS WITH JUSTICE



Workers' Rights  
**20%**

Housing & Homelessness  
**11%**

**18%**  
Immigrant Rights



# Builds out of isolation

## THE VICTORY

### CENTRAL & EASTERN OREGON GRANTEES

With ongoing support from MRG Foundation, Central Oregon Jobs with Justice has been mobilizing and growing Central Oregon's progressive community since 2004. This year they realized their long-held dream of creating a dedicated social justice space, with the opening of the Central Oregon Social Justice Center. With a publicly visible location close to downtown Bend, the Center creates shared infrastructure and houses a diverse collection of social justice allies under one roof. On any given day you can find Human Dignity Coalition, immigration attorneys, Code Pink, Causa and other social justice groups all using the space side by side. The Central Oregon Social Justice Center provides an exciting venue to work across differences and across issues to build the community unity and solidarity necessary for an Oregon where all people can thrive.

#### GENERAL FUND GRANTS

Central Oregon Jobs with Justice **\$5,000**

KPOV Community Radio **\$9,000**

Oregon Rural Action **\$20,000**

#### TRAVEL & CRITICAL RESPONSE GRANTS

Central Oregon Jobs with Justice **\$1,000**

KPOV Community Radio **\$1,000**



Rural Organizing Project

Environmental Protection  
**8%**

Multi-Issue  
**28%**

#### GRANTMAKING BY ISSUE

**9%**  
Cultural Preservation

**6%**  
LGBTQ & Gender Equity



WILLAMETTE  
VALLEY

# Restoring Native c the Oregon State

“I support MRG because it is the only foundation that I know that is wholly committed to nurturing grassroots social change movements in Oregon. MRG's funding supports a range of causes that are near and dear to my heart and that can often be overlooked by other funders.”

—IB HAMIDE,  
EUGENE BUSINESS  
OWNER & MRG  
MONTHLY DONOR

Lakota Oyate Ki



## THE CHALLENGE

**The United States incarcerates more people than any other country in the world.** A sobering fact to start with, but it doesn't end there. While dominant religious traditions are supported by the Oregon Department of Corrections, Native American inmates are denied their right to follow in their traditions, carry a medicine bag, or even have an eagle feather.

The Oregon State Penitentiary will not allow Native American ceremonies to be conducted without an outside spiritual leader and OSP won't pay to bring Native spiritual leaders into the penitentiary. These policies reflect a widespread and longstanding effort to diminish Native cultural identity and independence.

# Culture inside Penitentiary

## THE VICTORY

### WILLAMETTE VALLEY GRANTEES

Located within the walls of the Oregon State Penitentiary, Lakota Oyate Ki (Lakota Club) engages incarcerated Native Americans in traditional Native American practices and traditions. And with a grant from MRG Foundation, the Lakota Club is able to provide a spiritual leader to guide Native American inmates through traditional cultural and spiritual teachings.

The Lakota Club has strong ties to community groups based outside the prison walls and creates a venue for Native Americans inside the prison to work together to address their collective concerns and needs to the prison administration. Organizing within the prison system has resulted in securing an annual powwow, access to ceremonial sweats, and the right for inmates to possess an eagle prayer feather. This cultural preservation work, in turn, creates a critical foundation and community for Native Americans to return to after incarceration.

#### GENERAL FUND GRANTS

Amigos Multicultural Services Center **\$10,000**

Civil Liberties Defense Center **\$15,000**

Community Alliance of Lane County **\$14,000**

Lakota Oyate Ki **\$6,500**

Latinos Unidos Siempre **\$10,000**

Mujeres Luchadoras Progresistas **\$10,000**

Salem/Keizer Coalition for Equality **\$18,000**

Voz Hispana Causa Chavista **\$7,500**

#### TRAVEL & CRITICAL RESPONSE GRANTS

Beyond Toxics **\$2,000**

Oregonians for Farm and Food Rights **\$2,000**

49%

GRANTS TO GROUPS LED BY PEOPLE OF COLOR

Mujeres Luchadoras Progresistas





## PORTLAND AREA

### GENERAL FUND GRANTS

African Women's Coalition  
\$10,000

Community Alliance of Tenants  
\$18,000

Interfaith Movement for  
Immigrant Justice \$7,000

Momentum Alliance \$16,000

OPAL Environmental Justice  
Oregon \$20,000

Oregon DREAMers \$6,500

Oregon Cultural Access -  
Disability Art & Culture Project  
\$9,000

Portland Central America  
Solidarity Committee \$8,000

Portland Jobs with Justice  
\$16,000

Red Lodge Transition Services  
\$8,000

Right 2 Survive \$8,000

Street Roots \$18,000

Voz Workers' Rights Education  
Project \$20,000

### TRAVEL & CRITICAL RESPONSE GRANTS

Community Alliance of Tenants  
\$1,000

Crag Law Center \$500

Voz Workers' Rights Education  
Project \$1,000

# OPAL puts the public back in "public transit"

## THE CHALLENGE

**TriMet, the Portland area's public transit agency, has been cutting service and increasing fares**, which disproportionately affects low-income riders and people of color throughout the region. In September 2012, fares reached a historic high and further cuts reduced transit service to its lowest per-capita level since 1975. Those who are transit-dependent are not only paying more and spending more time to get around, but are often forced to live outside of the urban core where housing is more affordable, yet transit service and jobs are more scarce.

## THE VICTORY

Using a \$20,000 grant from MRG Foundation, OPAL Environmental Justice Oregon organized transit-dependent communities to build power for transit justice. Its Bus Riders Unite (BRU) membership program develops leaders and mobilizes transit riders and allies to fight for more equitable transportation decisions. OPAL's organizing efforts have paid off! BRU has established itself as an effective voice for transit justice, successfully preserving the right to make round-trip transfers, winning \$1 million for a low-income rider fare mitigation fund, fixing up priority bus stops in East Portland and holding TriMet accountable. Through BRU, OPAL is placing transit-dependent riders at the decision-making table with TriMet and establishing a more equitable transit system.

**"MRG does critical work in communities around Oregon to inspire and grow the social justice movement. Being a monthly donor is my small part to ensure this important work has funding it can count on."**

— LIZ BAXTER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE OREGON PUBLIC HEALTH INSTITUTE



## GRANT PROGRAMS

# Investing in social justice

MRG provides nearly half a million dollars each year to support radical, cutting edge, and grassroots social justice groups through three primary grantmaking programs. MRG's grantmaking decisions are made by a volunteer committee of community based organizers who are directly involved in developing long-term solutions to complex social justice issues.

**GENERAL FUND GRANTS** are up to \$20,000 and they support Oregon groups who are organizing the people most directly affected by injustice to build collective power and create long-term social change. The stories you read in this Impact Report are primarily from our General Fund grantees.

**CRITICAL RESPONSE GRANTS** provide groups with up to \$2,000 to organize a progressive response to an unexpected crisis or opportunity for organizing. This year, a Critical Response Grant from MRG helped Beyond Toxics do analysis of previously unavailable pesticide spray records. They presented to the Oregon Senate, where they highlighted the disproportionate harm to rural residents caused by pesticide spray drift.

**TRAVEL GRANTS** are up to \$1,000 and they help MRG grantees make national and regional movement building connections and develop grassroots leadership skills. A Travel Grant from MRG enabled Lotus Rising Project to send students from Grants Pass to the Oregon Queer Youth Summit – a critical opportunity to develop progressive leaders and social justice activists.

“MRG Foundation grantees are on the front line of building a powerful multicultural movement strong enough to create the just society we're all striving for — it is such a privilege to be a part of that process.”

— AMANDA AGUILAR-SHANK, MRG GRANTMAKER & RURAL ORGANIZING PROJECT ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR

## OTHER PROGRAMS

# Workshops, special events, and thought-provoking forums

Through community discussions, workshops, and other gatherings, MRG creates opportunities for people to share their vision, develop their skills, and increase their giving to fund a just and joyful world.

## COMMUNITY BUILDING

MRG lifts up issues of race, class, and equity to spark action for social change. One way we do that is by convening social justice celebrations, like Justice within Reach in Portland and Peace & Pie in the Park in Eugene. Another way is by hosting forums on timely issues and events, such as the 2012 election and 2013 legislative session. This year, we featured local community leaders like Representative Peter Buckley, Mayor Kitty Piercy, University of Oregon Professor Dan HoSang, and former Representative Jo Ann Hardesty.

## DONOR ENGAGEMENT

MRG offers donor advised funds, which allow you to simplify your giving. You can make a single gift or stock transfer and make grant recommendations over time. This benefits donors by allowing them to take advantage of unexpected income, reduce their taxes, and make gifts anonymously if they wish.

## FUNDER ADVOCACY

MRG advocates within the wider foundation community for greater support of underfunded communities of color and community-based organizing as a strategy for social change. This year we allied with the Oregon Community Foundation, the Collins Foundation, NW Health Foundation, and others to collaboratively fund groups providing legal support to undocumented youth applying for deferred action (see Page 5 of this report for more).

## IN THE COMING YEAR

MRG will be offering even more opportunities for people to forge relationships with other justice-seekers and to think about their role in the social justice movement. You can look forward to workshops on strategic giving, estate planning, socially responsible investing, forums on relevant issues of the day, and the biggest Justice within Reach yet!

**For more information about community events, or to set up a donor advised fund, contact: Sheryl Sackman, MRG Development Director, [sheryl@mrghfoundation.org](mailto:sheryl@mrghfoundation.org) or 503.289.1517.**


**“It has been an honor to work with MRG Foundation and their grantees to facilitate critical conversations in Southern Oregon. MRG is an essential part of the progressive movement here and I'm proud to work with them to create a more equitable Oregon.”**

—PETER BUCKLEY,  
STATE REPRESENTATIVE


# Social justice is possible because of you

There isn't one person, campaign, or organization that can secure the just and joyful world we're working for. But, by working together, we can create an Oregon where all people, cultures, and ecosystems thrive.

In the same way, no person can fund the social justice movement alone. When you make a gift to MRG Foundation, you help make substantial investments in grassroots groups throughout Oregon. Whether you give \$5 each month or \$50,000 each year, there are many ways you can contribute:



Write a check



Charge it online




Become a monthly donor



Donate stock



Include MRG in your will



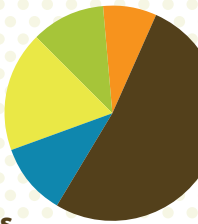
Establish a donor advised fund

To find out more, donate stock, or open a donor advised fund please contact: Sheryl Sackman, MRG Development Director, [sheryl@mrgfoundation.org](mailto:sheryl@mrgfoundation.org) or 503.289.1517.

Use the enclosed envelope or visit [www.mrgfoundation.org/contribute](http://www.mrgfoundation.org/contribute) to make your gift for social justice today.

## 2012-13 MRG EXPENSES

\$1.25 million



- 52% Grassroots Grantmaking
- 11% Donor Advised Grantmaking
- 18% Community Education
- 11% Fundraising
- 8% Administration



**STAFF**

Sharon Gary-Smith  
Edith Casterline  
Lisa Dawson  
Colin Jones  
Cris Lira  
Anita Rodgers  
Sheryl Sackman  
Kyle Weismann-Yee

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

Cassandra Villanueva, Chair  
Liz Baxter\*  
Sirius Bonner  
Shizuko Hashimoto  
Chris Kahle  
Andrea Miller  
Jeff Selby\*

\*New in 2014

**GRANTMAKING COMMITTEE**

Amanda Aguilar-Shank, co-chair  
Kasey Jama, co-chair  
Israel Bayer  
Patricia Cortez  
Khalil Edwards  
Vicky Falcón-Vázquez  
Michelle Glass  
Nate Gulley  
Penny Lind  
Andrea Miller  
Terrie Quinteros  
Rosario Quiroz  
Ari Rapkin  
Connie Saldaña  
Esther Stutzman  
Rosa Yadira Ortiz

**DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**

Sirius Bonner, Chair  
Elisa Harrigan  
Chris Kahle  
Chris Winter  
Carole Zoom

**JUSTICE WITHIN REACH 2013**

Tyler Brewington  
Bobby Foucher  
Mariotta Gary-Smith  
Chris Kahle  
Inger McDowell  
Heather Pruess  
Jeff Selby  
Carole Zoom

**PEACE & PIE IN THE PARK**

John Hofer  
Jorge Navarro  
Robin Brown-Wood

**FINANCE COMMITTEE**

Olga Turner, Chair  
Charles Carroll  
Miriam Levitt, Bookkeeper  
Pam Phan



MRG Staff and Grantmakers



**MRG STAFF & LEADERS**