

The Bush legacy — 55 years of giving

By Susan Guck

As the Bush Foundation turns its focus in 2009 to *Goals for a Decade*, it's important to pay tribute to the past. Over 55 years of giving, Foundation grants have spanned many areas of interest and types of organizations, and have totaled more than \$800 million.

Some grants have been large — the biggest ever was \$3 million to the Family Housing Fund of Minneapolis and Saint Paul in 2000. Some have been \$10,000 or less. We've funded areas of concentration that range from girls' math and science programs to faculty development at tribal and historically black colleges and universities; from ecological health and public broadcasting to domestic violence prevention and immigrants and refugees.

Whether these initiatives were marvelous successes or not, along the way we learned from every one. And we believe others have learned alongside us, not just grantees, but others who watched what the grantee made happen using Foundation resources. In some cases, the watchers liked what they saw and did more of the same.

As we now transition to the next phase of our history, we look back but also forward. Since 1953, the Bush Foundation has joined with thousands of previous grantees to plant seeds that have borne fruit greater than we could have imagined. Because of that, projects live on. The hypotheses investigated by many innovative pilot projects supported by the Foundation are now accepted as standard practice. Some projects grew to such an extent that other funding sources — larger foundations or state or local government — stepped up to ensure the projects' continuation. Still others used a Foundation grant as a springboard to something else, the evolution often beyond our greatest expectations.

We thought you might enjoy a few stories that showcase just some of the ways the Bush Foundation legacy lives on.

Building communities . . . literally

The Bush Foundation's capital projects grants list reads like a "Who's Who" of arts, education and human service nonprofit organizations. Here's just a sampling of organizations that have received a Foundation grant in the last 10 years to help expand or enhance their facilities—all of which will benefit their local communities for years to come.

Arts

- Minnesota Public Radio (serving the entire state)
- Prairie Public Broadcasting (serving all of North Dakota)
- Walker Art Center (Minneapolis, Minnesota)

Education

- Concordia College (Moorhead, Minnesota)
- Dakota Wesleyan University (Mitchell, South Dakota); see photos at right
- Dunwoody College of Technology (Minneapolis, Minnesota)
- Gustavus Adolphus College (St. Peter, Minnesota)

Human Services and Health

- Boys and Girls Clubs located in Minnesota (Twin Cities, Bemidji, St. Cloud, Detroit Lakes, Red Lake and Elk River) and South Dakota (Brookings and Rapid City)
- Children's Home Society of South Dakota (Sioux Falls)
- Prairie Learning Center (Raleigh, North Dakota)

Helping children succeed

Bush Foundation staff have long understood that a majority of children under the age of three are cared for by family, friends and neighbors. For this reason, many of the Foundation's grants focused on early childhood development training programs to reach informal systems of infant and toddler care (known as



In 2004, the Bush Foundation made a matching grant of \$425,000 toward construction of the George and Eleanor McGovern Library and Center for Public Service on the campus of Dakota Wesleyan University in Mitchell, South Dakota. This is just one of hundreds of capital projects the Foundation has contributed to over its 55 years of grantmaking.



“kith and kin”) and to enhance the welfare of young children nurtured in the most vulnerable settings.

Several such grants from 2000 to 2003 funded the development of a curriculum for social workers serving the Ojibwe tribes in northern Minnesota. “Social workers, even those who were of Native American descent, didn’t have an understanding of the tribal teachings or traditions,” said John Day, director of the American Indian Project at the University of Minnesota–Duluth (UMD), who was instrumental in developing the curriculum. “Over a period of three years, Bush Foundation grants allowed us to meet with the tribal elders, hear the traditions from them in their native language and augment our curriculum to reflect the Native American teachings and cultural nuances for raising healthy families.”

According to Day, prior to the introduction of this curriculum, a social worker’s typical response to finding an Indian child living with an extended family member would have been to remove the child from the home and place them with a non-Native foster care family. “But,” Day said, “we know from our research that Native children do best when raised within their extended community.” Eventually, he and his team were able to create an Indian child welfare certificate program for social workers, in support of the national Indian Child Welfare Act.

As a result of the work at UMD, the tide is changing. Social workers coming out of the UMD program at all

Supporting organizations through transition

When the Bush Foundation announced *Goals for a Decade*, we knew that the work of some organizations with which the Foundation had enjoyed long relationships would not align with these new goals. To help these grantees through this change, we made a number of transition grants.

“We wanted to ensure organizations that were counting on us to support their upcoming initiatives would have sufficient time to plan,” said Kelly Kleppe, director of program operations. “As we worked with grantees in the last half of 2008, they were thankful for the opportunity.”

Payments in 2009 for grants made in previous years and for transition grants committed in 2008 will total nearly \$17 million and are an important part of the Foundation’s legacy.

“The accomplishments of the 900-plus organizations we’ve funded in the past decade are incredible,” added Kleppe. “We look forward to watching how their programs continue to blossom and expand.”

levels have a better understanding of Native cultures and are carrying that message to the communities they serve. In addition, the curriculum has been made available to other colleges and universities across the country, where it's being adapted for other tribes. In one instance, Seattle-based Casey Family Programs has stepped in to support the development of a program for the Oglala Sioux on the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota.

"The whole process has given a tremendous boost to Native children and their communities," added Day. "There's been such tremendous response that we're now offering a program called 'Learning Circles' to non-Indian students, faculty and staff, and even to community organizations to help extend the understanding of the dynamics of the Indian family."

Protecting children from pesticides

If something could be done to reduce the chance of birth defects and cancer, wouldn't you want to know about it?

In 2003, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) scientists discovered a link between death rates from birth

defects among baby boys and farm counties that produced large wheat crops. The data showed that infants conceived in April or June, when pesticide application is at its zenith, were four times more likely to have birth defects. Researchers at the University of Minnesota arrived at a similar conclusion. The University's department of environmental medicine and pathology noted an increased rate of children with developmental disorders born to farm families in the Red River Valley of North Dakota, as well as an increase in thyroid cancer in adults living in the same area.

To address this deadly issue, the Bush Foundation awarded three grants totaling more than \$765,000 between 2003 and 2005 to the Minnesota Institute of Public Health (MIPH), a nonprofit agency whose goal is to safeguard and protect public health. As a result of this support, MIPH initiated a sweeping public education campaign to make people aware that infant death rates and birth defects could be reduced if farmers changed the way they applied pesticides. The campaign was so successful, it garnered national attention.

In addition, MIPH obtained commitments from key state players to include warnings about chronic disease from pesticides in the state's formal training guidelines. Finally, MIPH helped forge landmark agreements on pesticide information sharing. They created a collaboration among the University of Minnesota Extension Service and the Minnesota Departments of Agriculture and Natural Resources to share information with the state's 30,000 private and professional pesticide applicators. This collaboration,

Farmers who work with pesticides are at risk for health problems, as are their children if conceived during the summer, when pesticide application is frequent. Foundation-funded work supported pesticide handling training for farmers as a way of reducing this risk. (AP/Kiichiro Sato)



the first in the country, attracted broad interest, including from the EPA and other national agencies.

Leading the way to safety from domestic violence

The Bush Foundation made its first foray into supporting programs that address the issues of domestic violence in 1974 with a grant to Women’s Advocates, the first battered women’s shelter in the country. This grant was awarded three years before the State of Minnesota established the Program for Battered Women in the Department of Corrections. Afterward, the Foundation worked closely with the program as it created a statewide network of domestic violence service providers.

The Foundation’s mission to combat domestic violence didn’t stop there, however. It continued funding a wide range of innovative programs to address the abuse of women. Perhaps the most notable of these programs was the Domestic Abuse Intervention Project (DAIP) created by Minnesota Program Development in Duluth. Funded in part by a 1981 grant, the project created one of the first coordinated community response programs in the country. Eleven agencies formed the initial collaboration. These included police, sheriff and prosecutors’ offices; 9-1-1; probation officers; the criminal and civil court benches; the local battered women’s shelter; three mental health agencies and DAIP (then a newly created coordinating organization). Today, this approach is known as “The Duluth Model” and has evolved into the most replicated women’s abuse intervention approach in the United States.

Promoting faculty development

The Bush Foundation made its first contribution toward education in 1954 when it created a \$25,000 pool for

scholarships called the Fund for Scholars. Ever since, the Foundation has supported higher education as one of its focus areas.

In 1979, after years of spending its education funds primarily on capital projects and alumni challenge grants, the Foundation’s Board turned its attention to faculty development programs for four-year private colleges and public universities in Minnesota, North Dakota and South Dakota. Later, these well-regarded faculty development grants were expanded to include tribally controlled, accredited colleges and private historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs) in the United States.

In 1986, the Board decided to partner with the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation to extend its support for HBCUs to all private college members of the United Negro College Fund—an early example of how effective partnerships can make a significant difference.

One of the lasting outcomes of this support was the development of the HBCU Faculty Development Network, a collaboration of HBCU faculty and administrators that today boasts more than 150 annual members. A \$75,000 planning grant in 1995 helped the Network get started, which was then augmented by grants through 2006 totaling more than \$600,000.

Today, the HBCU Faculty Development Network promotes effective teaching and student learning through a variety of faculty enhancement programs. The Network also facilitates the sharing of ideas and achievements among faculty and administrators for collective success. 🌟

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Want to learn more about the Bush Foundation’s legacy?

Check out a new section of our website that records the background, success stories and lessons learned in the Foundation’s legacy program areas. You’ll also find electronic copies of many evaluations and reports that were produced by and for the Foundation over the years. We encourage you to visit us at www.bushfoundation.org/legacy.