



GRANTMAKING PROGRAMS

With assets of \$25 million, the Durfee Foundation currently allocates approximately \$1 million a year in grants. The programs it supports reflect the personality and values of its founder, Stan Avery. Ironically, the grantmaking philosophy and practices initiated by the second generation and fleshed out by the third generation capture Stan's spirit in ways that his own grantmaking never did. An innovator in business, Stan followed a traditional approach of granting foundation dollars to established cultural and educational institutions with which he had some personal connection. His children and grandchildren achieved the feat of moving the foundation into a new sphere of grantmaking while remaining entirely true to its founder. In preferring to initiate their own programs, the second and third generations pay tribute to Stan, the entrepreneur and risk-taker. By offering grants to talented individuals, they honor his belief that the greatest payoffs come from investing in the growth and development of leaders. And by rewarding individuals who are creative and imaginative, they recognize Stan's love of innovation and experimentation.

The trustees' bent for philosophizing has served them well. Over the years, they have periodically set aside time to examine their grantmaking, rethinking some aspects of their giving and refining others. The result is a board with a strong sense of shared values and goals. To hear family members, and executive director Claire Peeps, too, refer to a particular grant as a "very Durfee program," or an event as a "very un-Durfee thing to do" is to know that the board has arrived at a clear definition of who they are and what the foundation is about.

This section presents a detailed look at the origins, administration, evolution, and impact of six major Durfee Foundation programs: the American/Chinese Adventure Capital Program, the California Institute of the Arts/Durfee Residencies, the Durfee Sabbatical Program, Durfee Music Fellowships, Student Challenge Awards, and the Durfee Community Fund.

THE AMERICAN / CHINESE ADVENTURE CAPITAL PROGRAM

In 1929, Stan Avery and nine friends from Pomona College spent one year traveling in China, a trip that transformed Stan's life. To commemorate their father's experience, his children, Judy, Russell, and Dennis, established the American/Chinese Adventure Capital Program to provide funds to individuals who have a personal interest, dream, or project they want to pursue in China. The program is open to students, faculty, staff, and recent alumni of institutions in Southern California with which Stan was affiliated as an alumnus, board member, or donor: the five Claremont Colleges, the California Institute of Technology, and Occidental College. Another sponsor, the California Institute of the Arts, was added in 1997 after the foundation ended its successful partnership with the school in running a community arts grant program. Since 1985, the American/Chinese Adventure Capital Program had been open to applications every two to three years without a fixed schedule. In 1997, the board voted to make it a biennial program.

For the application process, interested individuals are invited to submit a two-page preliminary application briefly summarizing who they are and what they want to do in China. One month later, a panel composed of Carrie, Claire, other interested trustees, and several former grant recipients review the applications, which in 1997 totaled 300. The panel selects 75 finalists and invites them to submit a detailed description of their project, how they intend to carry it out, and how much it will cost. The finalists must also submit an endorsement from a sponsor at their university indicating that the institution considers the project feasible and safe. In the spring, the panel meets again to choose the participants. Although the board allocates a maximum budget for the program, it does not stipulate that any minimum number of participants must come from each institution or how many grants must be awarded. Rather, the final selection is determined by the quality of the projects and the likelihood of the applicant to complete it.

The American/Chinese Adventure program requires careful oversight and planning. Carrie visits each of the participating institutions in the fall to meet with the administration and often make a presentation about the program along with past participants who describe their adventures and show slides. Carrie counsels applicants during the fall, sets up the selection panel for readings of applications — which number in the hundreds — in December and March, and corresponds with all applicants after the selection process. The foundation's involvement does not end with the selection of grantees. Once the recipients start planning their trips some invariably run into problems with visas and itineraries that require the foundation's attention.

In 1994, Carrie and her husband traveled to China at the suggestion of Stan. He wanted all the trustees to go there but thought it was especially important for Carrie to make the trip because she administered the program. "It was a brief visit," she says, "but still long enough for me to understand the difficulties of traveling there and how flexible grantees have to be to carry out their projects. I think I can relate better to applicants for having been there, and I can only imagine what it was like when my grandfather traveled there in 1929."

Although the applicants must be affiliated with institutions of higher learning, the foundation is decidedly not interested in funding scholarly projects. Preference is given to projects that emphasize person-to-person contact with the people of China and that demonstrate creativity, imagination, originality, and a touch of whimsy. The applicants have not disappointed them. One person dreamed of building his own boat and traveling the length of the Yangtze River, another wanted to investigate the influence of alligators in Chinese culture and life, and a Jewish professor hoped to track down traces of Jewish history in China. The maximum grant the Durfee Foundation awards is \$25,000, and the size of grants vary according to the complexity of the projects and the recipient's age. Younger people usually receive smaller grants because they can generally travel more cheaply.

To date, 175 individuals have received grants to travel in China. Just as Stan's China adventure transformed his life, so has it changed the lives of the participants. Many make lasting friendships, a few have married Chinese citizens they met on their travels and others, like Pam Logan, an engineer, changed careers. Before going to China, she intended to be an academic. While there, she developed a burning interest in Tibetan history and culture. She went on to learn to speak Chinese and Tibetan, wrote a book about Tibetan warriors, and now runs a nonprofit organization that rebuilds and restores Tibetan monasteries. "The Durfee Foundation is willing to give grants for projects whose social purpose may not be immediately apparent," says Pam, "and yet sometimes amazing things come out of those projects that no one could have predicted. Lots of people travel to foreign countries and they are no different when they return. What makes the American/Chinese Adventure Capital Program different is that the grant inspires people to create a quest and see it through. That motivation was more important to me than the money." Stan dreamed that the Durfee China grants would produce a future ambassador to China. If traveling to China could turn a Ph.D. in aerospace science into a crusader who brings Italian experts to Tibet to restore sacred artwork, anything is possible.

In 1996, Carrie conducted a comprehensive evaluation of the 10-year history of the American/Chinese Adventure program. She conducted in-depth interviews with current and past coordinators of the program at each of the sponsoring institutions

as well as with a selection of past recipients. Based on the information gathered, she submitted a 24-page report to the board listing 28 recommendations for fine-tuning the program. Recommendations included ways to streamline the administration of the program, improve communication with the sponsoring institutions, and make the program more accessible to applicants. To that end, the foundation created a website with information about the China program, such as the application procedure, descriptions of past adventures, and a contact list of program alumni. Additionally, Carrie maintains extensive e-mail correspondence with prospective and actual applicants and with participants before and after their trips to China.

Having worked in nonprofit organizations herself, Carrie understands the importance of foundations being open and accessible to grantseekers and grantees. Including recipients on foundation panels is one way the foundation tries to break down barriers. Another is by soliciting and acting on the feedback of grantees. It is this involvement with the communities it serves that keeps programs like the American/Chinese Adventure Capital Program moving forward.

THE CALIFORNIA INSTITUTE FOR THE ARTS / DURFEE RESIDENCIES

The Durfee Residencies program brought together two of Carrie's interests: the arts and the nonprofit sector. Her idea was to give art students the opportunity to create works of art in community settings and to bring art to community nonprofit organizations. The California Institute for the Arts was Carrie's first choice as a partner, and she approached Steven Lavine, the president of the school, to see if he would be interested in participating in this venture. "Steven loved the idea of giving students a project and letting them run with it," says Carrie. "He had won a fellowship to travel abroad when he was a student, so this program really spoke to him."

The program was launched in 1994. Students and recent alumni were invited to submit applications with a description of their projects. Carrie and Robbie Macfarlane (later Claire Peeps), Steven Lavine and CalArts' director of special projects, Lynn Rosenfeld, read the applications and selected finalists from dozens of short project proposals. Finalists were invited to submit more detailed proposals along with recommendations from their professors and a letter of support from the nonprofit organization sponsoring their project. The same panel of four selected participants based on their project's creativity and feasibility, and on the participant's ability to work independently.

Over the years, students have proposed projects ranging from practical to innovative. Some recent examples include: a video documentary on the nature of biography using the Mark Twain archives as a subject; teaching photography and book-making at the Santa Clarita Senior Center; creating an urban garden in partnership with the Koreatown Association in Los Angeles; and producing a calendar for Planned Parenthood combining art photos with text to educate girls about contraception and sexually transmitted diseases.

After funding the program for three years, the board asked Claire to evaluate its effectiveness. While she believed the CalArts program had met its goals and worked smoothly, she questioned whether the funding was hitting the right target. From her knowledge of the Los Angeles arts community, the greatest need was not among art students but among working artists. The foundation was granting \$100,000 a year in stipends to CalArts students whose school already provided them with multiple resources and artistic opportunities. By comparison, few philanthropic dollars were available to more established artists in the area.

To get a better handle on the problems facing working artists, the Durfee Foundation convened a meeting of organizations funding individual artists locally and nationally. The situation was more dire than they imagined. Only a handful of local foundations funded individual artists. Furthermore, of the \$300,000 grant dollars targeted for individual artists in the Los Angeles area in 1997, \$270,000 was designated for visual artists. The Durfee Residencies had supported artists working in different disciplines. The fact that only \$30,000 was available for artists working outside the visual arts reaffirmed the

board's belief that their funding should remain focused on multidisciplinary arts. Based on the information gathered at the meeting, Claire recommended that the CalArts program be phased out. She further recommended that the funds for the CalArts program be redirected to establish Durfee fellowships for working artists in the Los Angeles area. The board agreed with both recommendations. Now the question was how to select the recipients.

"We feared that if we solicited applications, more artists would apply than we could accommodate, and we didn't want to waste their time," says Claire. "We also didn't think it was appropriate for our trustees to make the final selections without the input of experienced practitioners. We settled on a nomination process."

Just as the family trustees are responsible for overseeing the programs they create, Claire, because of her strong background in the arts and the board's confidence in her

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abilities, has responsibility for creating and implementing the Durfee arts fellowships. This fall she put together the first panel of 10 nominators. Rather than limit the nominators to the field of visual artists, she decided to draw from a range of disciplines: people working in local theater, contemporary and traditional music, dance, visual art, film/video, and literature. Beyond selecting the winners, Claire hopes that the panels will foster discussion among leaders from different disciplines in the Los Angeles art world who may not ordinarily get together. The foundation will present one-time awards of \$25,000 to three Los Angeles artists doing extraordinary work. The first winners of the Durfee Art Fellowships were announced in March 1999.

STUDENT CHALLENGE AWARDS

The Student Challenge Awards, the Durfee Foundation's only national program, was started by Mike Newkirk to give students gifted in the arts and humanities an opportunity to spend two intensive weeks during the summer at a scientific research station. The aim is to excite the students' imaginations, expand their potential, and stimulate their curiosity about science and technology.

When Mike conceived of the program he was a relative newcomer to the board, and he turned to Robbie Macfarlane, the executive director at the time, for help. The program's ambitious scope — selecting students from around the country, finding willing scientists working at appropriate research sites, and assigning students to research projects — was more than the foundation could handle on its own. Robbie recommended the foundation form a partnership with Earthwatch, a nonprofit organization headquartered in Massachusetts, which organizes trips for adults interested in assisting scientists doing field research. Earthwatch had a large network of scientists and knew how to manage the complicated logistics of arranging such trips. The Durfee Foundation agreed to pay Earthwatch to administer the program for which Mike would set the guidelines and select the participants.

Mike, a physicist, says his idea was to take talented teenagers and expose them to real science and state-of-the-art technology. "I wasn't pushing for any particular outcome," he says. "I hoped that the experience would affect them in ways I couldn't predict." To that end, Mike laid the guidelines for the program: the research project is of high caliber, the scientists are good teachers interested in working with inquisitive students, and the research is conducted at a site or facility where students can mix with other scientists. As for the students, Mike was not interested in reaching straight-A science students because they have already discovered science. He wanted to expose students gifted in the arts and humanities to the excitement of scientific research.

Although Mike had a clear picture of what he wanted the program to be, he had a hard time getting his ideas across to the schools and to Earthwatch. "The Durfee Foundation philosophy is not to do the predictable, which is what the schools were doing," says Mike. "They kept recommending students proficient in science, and we were looking for kids who were intelligent nonconformists." He had a similar problem with Earthwatch. Some of the sites it chose were not up to his standards and too many were concentrated in the earth sciences. Mike understood that a new program as large and complex as the Student Challenge Award would run into a few snags, and he was willing to keep working with Earthwatch until it caught on to what he was after.

Working closely with Earthwatch, Mike repeatedly emphasized the importance of holding to the criteria he had established. After several years, however, he concluded that Earthwatch was confusing the goals of the Durfee Foundation with those of its own programs. He decided to turn the management of the project over to a university that runs summer programs on college campuses for highly gifted students. Mike thought it would be a good match for the Student Challenge Awards. Instead, he encountered a new set of problems. Although the university streamlined Earthwatch's application process and created a safer environment for the teenagers, its strict academic perspective was at odds with the trustees' vision of the program. More serious, the foundation and the university had very different ideas about how they would work together. Carrie explains:

"They didn't get what this program was about. They thought a good site meant that a famous scientist was affiliated with the project, even if the kids only met with the scientist for 10 minutes. We didn't care if the scientists were household names as long as they were tops in their field and the kids had extensive and meaningful contact with them. We wanted it to be a time of exploration and wonder for the kids, but the university was too worried about liability and chaperoned the kids to the detriment of the program. The biggest problem, though, was that they didn't like working with us. They wanted to run the program themselves and then report back to us."

The Durfee trustees understandably take a proprietary interest in programs they initiate. While they invite the participation of individuals in the community as panelists and institutions like CalArts to work with them as partners, the trustees expect to have input into the application process. In the case of the Student Challenge Awards, the trustees had clear goals for the program and several years experience in running it. For three years, they tried to get their points across to the university's staff in meetings and telephone conversations, but the disagreements between the two organizations mounted and the program suffered. Applications dropped precipitously, and the university had difficulty lining up enough research sites.

"They thought we were breathing down their necks and trying to micromanage the project," says Carrie. "Their position was that foundations are supposed to act like newspaper publishers, and the organizations they fund are supposed to be the editors. We appreciated their honesty, but our ideas about partnership were just too far apart to continue working together."

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In 1996, the Student Challenge Awards resumed its partnership with Earthwatch, this time with a clearer idea of what was needed to make the program succeed. Taking the best of what the board had learned from its experience, Mike refashioned the administration of the program. This time one Earthwatch employee would be assigned to manage the program exclusively, and the Durfee Foundation would pay a portion of her salary. Dee Robbins was a perfect match for the

job. With a background in biology and creative writing, she embodied the type of student the Durfee Foundation was looking for. At last, Mike had found someone on the same wavelength with him. Within a year, the Student Challenge Awards program was back on track.

"The programs in 1997 and 1998 were phenomenal," says Carrie. "It says to me that you can have a good program idea but who you're partnered with makes all the difference in the world. The same program that faltered with one organization is now flourishing with another."

The Student Challenge Awards require impeccable planning to orchestrate all its parts. The call for students begins in the fall and Dee's search casts a wide net. Using various databases and school networks, she mails out close to 15,000 brochures asking teachers and principals to nominate students fitting the Durfee criteria. Of the 900 students nominated each year, more than 300 apply. Dee and the Earthwatch staff rank the applicants, and send the applications of those in the top half to Mike and Claire who select the 70 to 80 finalists.

In February, Dee begins inviting proposals from scientists whose research is of high caliber and amenable to the structure of the program. From the 20 or so scientists who usually apply, Mike selects 10 projects representing different disciplines and a variety of locations. In recent years students have worked among other places at a rain forest reserve in Costa Rica, a natural wildlife refuge in Oregon, a Hopi village in Arizona, the Los Alamos National Laboratory in New Mexico, and an earthquake fault system in Alaska.

The scientists hold the key to the success of the programs. It is their love and enthusiasm for their work that inspires the students. "The scientists who sign up are jewels,"

says Dee. "They spend their precious research time with high school students because they enjoy teaching and want to share the wonder of science with young people."

Dee assigns six to eight students to each research site. The foundation also pays for a graduate student to help manage each project and to bridge the age and knowledge gap between the scientist and the students. Besides learning about science, the students learn the equally important lessons of living and working together as a team. So far, says Mike, the students have adapted beautifully to all the challenges presented to them. "We regard them as special from start to finish and they respond in kind. We've had no problems. The kids have all risen to the occasion and, as a result, the scientists treat them like adults and give them lots of freedom to explore and experiment."

Now that the Student Challenge Awards program is running smoothly Mike has cut back on his involvement, although he estimates that he still puts in about 60 hours a year on the program. The trustees try to visit at least one site and, when convenient, they hold their summer board retreat near one of the sites so that the whole board can observe the program in action. "We hear so many bad stories about teenagers," says Mike, "but these kids are amazing. Reading their applications and seeing them in action gives me hope for the future of this country."

WHAT THE STUDENTS SAY

"I have been drilled to believe there should always be a precise response to my questions, that my teachers should always be equipped to give me the solution. Here we had to formulate our own answers, rely on our own knowledge. I had always been so afraid of not having the correct answer, but now I understand that the thought process counts, not just the right solution."

Sheri Frasat

The Impacts of Sea Level Rise on Coastal Wetlands

"How did this research experience compare to the way you learn science in high school? Like a hot fudge sundae to boiled spinach. The first is delicious, rewarding, and sticks with you. The second is slimy, vile tasting, and not merely as good for you as everyone says it is."

Cathy Plesko

Transient Phenomena in Astrophysics

MUSIC FELLOWSHIPS

The Music Fellowships, created by Jon Newkirk, the younger brother of Carrie and Mike, offer support to virtuoso performers living in Los Angeles to engage in the apprenticeship training of promising young musicians. The goal of the program is to assist master artists in sustaining their craft, transferring skills to the next generation of artists, and cultivating new audiences for their work.

When Jon joined the board in 1995, he was 25 years old and a newcomer to foundation grantmaking. After serving on the board for two years, the trustees felt he was ready to create a project of his own. The design and scope of the program did not emerge full-blown from Jon's head. Rather, they evolved over a year of conversations with Claire in which he considered and later rejected possibilities ranging from a music school to a video project for children.

Claire asked Jon, a geologist turned audio-engineer, to make a list of his interests and to rank them in importance. "I work at a recording studio in Hollywood where I hear all kinds of music," says Jon. "I like working with musicians and feel motivated by their creativity. I've played in bands on and off since I was in high school, and I realized that what really drives me is my interest in music."

With that as the starting point, Jon and Claire brainstormed ideas for projects. He knew he wanted to create something active that would produce visible results, and he wanted the program to be one-of-a-kind. "The problem was I didn't know what was out there," says Jon, "and Claire came to my rescue." Claire called heads of music schools in Los Angeles and across the country to learn about programs in their regions and to solicit their thoughts on what was needed. These conversations helped to shape her thinking and eventually led to her breakthrough idea. Jon recalled how it happened:

"One day Claire called me all excited from a pay phone. She had hit on what L.A. lacked — a program that targeted the area's musical diversity. L.A. has a huge immigrant population. Master musicians from all over the world live here, but there's no funding for them. We realized that we could fill that void."

Over the next months, Jon and Claire worked out the details of how they would structure the program, borrowing some elements from other Durfee programs. They asked 17 nominators — professional musicians, music professors, and other experts — to recommend musicians working in non-written traditions who are well known in their communities and who would enjoy teaching. A panel of five that included Jon and Claire made the final selections.

What Jon and Claire hadn't anticipated was the time musicians spend on the road. Because of their hectic touring schedules and/or playdates, many could not fulfill the teaching requirement. Of the 21 musicians recommended, six were selected: an Afro-Cuban drummer, a Nigerian percussionist who plays the talking drum, a Lebanese tabla player, an African-American saxophonist, a Cambodian violinist and orchestra leader, and a North Indian singer. The Durfee Foundation awarded each a support grant of approximately \$22,500 a year over the next two to three years.

Jon and Claire left it up to the musicians to select their students but they asked that preference be given to those who exhibited exceptional talent and discipline to benefit from this opportunity and who could not afford the classes on their own. The students, in turn, would be expected to: 1) meet with the teacher weekly for two years, with an option to continue for a third year; 2) participate in an annual Durfee Summer Music Institute that would bring together all the teachers and students in the program; and 3) perform at an annual public event arranged by the foundation. This past August, the foundation produced its first free outdoor concert in downtown Los Angeles to introduce the artists to a wider audience.

Because the program is new and there is nothing quite like it anywhere in the country, Jon and Claire decided that it would require a trial period of at least two years to streamline the program and judge its effectiveness. "We decided to let the program go on automatic pilot for the first year," says Jon, "and see what we learn." They have already discovered two things they overlooked in the initial planning. Some recipients mentioned that they didn't have a quiet space in which to teach their students, and the foundation agreed to help them find a practice room. Jon and Claire also recognized that because of the way the nomination process was structured, they had missed the opportunity to talk with the nominators and the winners. Durfee trustees like to bring together outstanding people to exchange ideas and to learn from them. Next time around, they would organize a venue to bring the nominators together for discussion.

For Jon, creating his own project has been an extremely rewarding experience. Besides meeting master musicians and learning about their musical traditions, he has carved out a new niche in the family. "Being part of the foundation has made me grow up. It feels great to sit around the table with family members and talk about our projects. Coming up with a project of my own has given me validity in the family. I'm really grateful for this opportunity. Without Claire's help, my family's support and, of course, Grandpa's for providing the budget, I never could fathom doing something like this on my own."

DURFEE SABBATICAL PROGRAM

The Durfee Sabbatical Program awards grants of \$25,000 to exceptional leaders in the nonprofit sector who, working under prolonged stressful conditions, face burnout. The goals of the program are to support leadership preservation by giving the leaders time off to reflect on their lives and work and to promote staff development while the leaders are away. Of all the Durfee programs, this one most directly embodies Stan's philosophy that the greatest gains for the community come from investing in creative individuals.

"We looked at leaders in the nonprofit community and saw how overworked, stressed out, and underpaid they were," says Carrie. "We considered giving grants to the organizations but decided a better use of the money would be to offer sabbaticals to the leaders of the organizations. In some cases, the only way they can rest up is to quit their jobs. We hoped to prevent that from happening by giving them time out to focus on themselves and their families and to replenish their spirits."

This enlightened program was conceived by the Durfee Foundation's previous executive director, Robbie Macfarlane, although in many ways it has its roots in the Durfee Awards created by Dennis Avery that recognized the extraordinary achievements of ordinary individuals. Carrie and Claire expanded the program to its present form. They spent one year talking with grantmakers and grantseekers and thinking about how to structure the program. Particularly helpful were their conversations with the people at the Vanguard Public Foundation in San Francisco who run a similar program for community organizers.

The selection of Sabbatical Program grantees, the foundation's most labor-intensive process, lasts for six months. It begins with an ad for applicants placed in key publications aimed at the nonprofit sector and mailings to hundred of nonprofit organizations throughout Los Angeles County. To be eligible for the program, applicants must live in Los Angeles and work full-time for social service or arts organizations, have worked a minimum of seven consecutive years in the nonprofit sector, have a demonstrated track record of contributions to the community, and show financial need. The application form consists of six questions, which applicants answer in essay form:

- Why are you engaged in your current field of work?
- What significant lessons have you learned along the way?
- What do you see yourself doing five years from now?

- What is the projected length of your sabbatical and how do you plan to use your time?
- What benefits do you expect to gain from a sabbatical and how will it affect you personally and professionally?
- What leadership and learning opportunities will be available to staff while you are away?

At the beginning of the application period, the foundation holds an informational open house where prospective applicants can learn about the program. Next, Carrie and Claire appoint a panel of knowledgeable people in the community to help them select the winners. This year the panel consisted of two former winners and a Sabbatical finalist, an arts performer, who, interestingly, was disqualified from the competition when he won the MacArthur "Genius" award. Each panelist receives a stipend of \$1,000 for reading the applications before the first meeting and for three days of panel work — one day to rank applications and choose finalists and two days to interview finalists and select the six winners. Carrie and Claire also participate in the panels. In 1998, 45 individuals applied for the grants.

In between the first and second meetings of the panel, Carrie and Claire call the three references listed by each finalist. Then Claire makes a site visit to each of the finalists' organizations and reports back to the panelists about what she has observed. "Doing the site visits is the joy of this job," says Claire. "It's what revitalizes me. These visits are not about examining financial statements but rather of getting a gut feeling about the organization, its stability, and the level of stress people work under."

The conditions of the grants sound like every employee's dream: grantees are free to use the money in any way they choose; sabbaticals must be no shorter than two months; and grantees cannot spend more than 25 percent of their time on professional development. "The hardest thing to get across to the finalists," says Carrie, "is that we don't want or expect them to produce a product. Some applicants are so modest that they don't even request the full amount of the grant; we have to tell them it's okay to increase their requests."

Choosing among worthy candidates is difficult and often the deciding factor is not the applicants but the level of development of the organization. In some cases, the panelists conclude that the staff is not sufficiently independent and that the organization would suffer if the director went on sabbatical. Also influencing their decision is the candidates' ages. Preference is given to older candidates who have worked more years.

In addition to the grant awarded to the recipient, the Sabbatical Program offers \$5,000 to the grantee's organization on the condition that it set up a permanent, revolving fund for staff development. The purpose of the fund is to enable staff to attend conferences or take short-term leaves that might advance their professional growth. The Durfee Foundation regards the \$5,000 as a seed grant and expects the organization to maintain the fund as a permanent line item in its budget.

In October 1998, the Durfee Foundation hosted a "very unDurfee" kind of event, a reception at the Santa Monica Museum of Art to honor the sabbatical recipients from 1997 and 1998. What makes it "an unDurfee thing to do," says Claire, is the family's discomfort with being thanked publicly for their contributions. "They pre-

fer to stay in the background but, in this case, they felt the issue of burnout in nonprofits merited greater exposure, and this was a way to attract media and public attention. It's also a chance for us to toot the horn for these outstanding leaders. They are the unsung heroes of this city." More "Durfee-like" was the smaller event that followed; sabbatical recipients and their families gathered at the home of Judy Newkirk for dinner, conversation, and relaxation.

While the Durfee Sabbatical Program gives awards to individuals, the benefits are felt by many: the winners' families, the organizations and their staffs, and the communities the

organizations serve. The Durfee Foundation also counts itself among the program's beneficiaries. All the trustees remarked that meeting these leaders and hearing their stories was a humbling experience. "These people are saints," says Carrie. "They give of themselves all their lives. We feel honored to know them." The thorough selection process serves another purpose: it educates the trustees about a range of nonprofit organizations and their needs. "We get a bird's eye view of what's going on in different organizations and different communities," says Claire. "From talking to the candidates, we recognized that many of these leaders did not know one another, and we arranged to bring them together so that they know what one another is doing."

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WHAT THE SABBATICAL RECIPIENTS SAY

"I want some uninterrupted leisure time with my family — not having to respond to crises at the crisis center, not worrying about deadlines, not having to hear about the hurt and abuse people suffer on a daily basis, not watching the news, not having to worry about the enormous hotline telephone bill and how it will be paid, not having a meeting, not carrying a beeper or cell phone. I don't believe I've had such a period of time since I became executive director in 1985.

Patricia Occhiuzzo Giggans

Los Angeles Commission on Assaults Against Women

"I have been tired for a very, very long time.... I want to be more than a work machine. I want to make sure that my tombstone will say something other than: She was born, she cared about kids, she worked, she died. I have never had a substantial vacation. I want some time to think. I want to read books of no social consequence... Time to myself is what I want. It is the most valuable commodity I can imagine. I want the muscles in my back to unwind. I want to sleep until I'm not tired anymore.... I want to remember my life."

Carolyn Reid-Green

President and CEO

Drew Child Development Corporation

"I was floored to no end that someone would tell me to go on vacation and do what I wanted to do with the money. I wondered if these people were for real. When I found out they were, I felt really honored because it meant that they recognized that the work I was doing was important. It took me a while to decide how to use it because I thought of it as a gift, something special, more than just money. My wife and son and I traveled to the east coast where we had never been to visit the important historical sites from early American history. The first three weeks I felt nervous about not working because I'm used to a 60-hour week. I didn't realize how stressed out I was until I relaxed. Then I could enjoy being with my family. When I returned to work, I saw that my staff's confidence in themselves had been strengthened. They saw that I trusted them and that they could do the work without me. The trip gave me time to reflect and when I returned I looked at things differently. I still work long hours but I've learned to schedule things more realistically."

Luis Mata

Executive Director

Multicultural Area Health Education Center

DURFEE COMMUNITY FUND

The Durfee Community Fund was set up in 1992 in response to the riots that took place in South Central Los Angeles after the acquittal of the white policemen who beat Rodney King, an African American. Disturbed by the violence and the conditions that precipitated it, Russell Avery consulted with Robbie Macfarlane, the Durfee Foundation's executive director at the time, about what role the foundation might play in helping troubled communities in Los Angeles receive badly needed social services. They settled on providing small, one-time grants to start-up grassroots organizations. Through conversations with community leaders, they were referred to Mary Ochs, who then worked for the Legal Aid Society and was familiar with grassroots organizations throughout the city.

The Durfee trustees met with Mary to plan the best way to structure the program. Taking into account the foundation's commitment to fostering leadership and funding riskier programs, Mary suggested that it target dynamic community leaders and groups in transition from a volunteer effort to a more formal organization. The goal of the Durfee Community Fund is to give new groups a quick boost. To do so, the board designed a streamlined funding process free of the usual hoops that grantseekers must jump through. For this program, the foundation eliminated application forms and proposals.

"Start-up groups have a tough time finding funding because they aren't connected to a network and don't have many financial resources," says Carrie. "Usually they have one key person who's devoted to the program and keeps it going. Few foundations are willing to fund groups that don't have a three-year track record. We want to open doors for them. Once they get a grant from us, it makes it easier for them to get funding from other sources."

The board charges Mary with identifying fledgling groups that can benefit from a small grant. She looks for groups working on compelling problems and that have outstanding leaders who demonstrate commitment, passion, entrepreneurial spirit, and common sense. Preferably, their program is already operating so that funders have something to evaluate. Mary prepares half-page reports on the most promising groups and submits them to the board. Then Claire or one of the board members accompanies Mary on site visits to get a feel for the program and to talk with the leaders about their plans for using the grant. Typically, the board awards grants between \$2500 and \$7500 to eight to ten recipients each year.

The Durfee Community Fund was originally set up to run for one year, but the trustees were so pleased by the programs it has invested in that they decided to fund it indefinitely. Since 1992, the Durfee Community Fund has awarded 42 grants to

groups offering services in such areas as literacy, affordable housing, job development, workers' rights, and afterschool programs. One organization the trustees are particularly proud of is also one of their first recipients of this program: the Al Wooten Center in South Central Los Angeles. The center was started by Faye Rumph, whose son Al was killed in a drive-by shooting. Rather than retreating into her grief, Faye turned her sorrow into social action. She rented a small storefront office space and opened an afterschool program. When she couldn't find funding, she refinanced her home to keep the program alive. The Durfee Community Fund awarded the Al Wooten Center \$5,000.

"Faye is soft-spoken and low-keyed," says Mary, "but there is no mistaking her drive and determination. Russell and Robbie were very moved by the love and affection she gives to the kids and her willingness to put up her home to start this program."

The Al Wooten Center has substantially expanded its funding base since the Durfee Community Fund grant. With an operating budget of several hundred thousand dollars a year and a larger facility, it now serves 200 children daily.

Another success story is Tomorrow's Entrepreneurs Today, started by Fannie Butler. A teacher and guidance counselor in South Central Los Angeles, Fannie started teaching young African Americans about entrepreneurship in her spare time. Having found her calling, she quit her job, trusting she would figure out a way to support herself. Like Faye Rumph, Fannie had difficulty attracting funding for her program until she received a start-up grant from the Durfee Community Fund. Under her tutelage, the young participants have started businesses making and printing flyers, designing greeting cards, and baking and selling cookies. "These are kids who have lots of problems," says Mary. "Starting their own businesses does wonders for their self-esteem, as does meeting real-life entrepreneurs."

In 1997, Stan Avery met with some of the students involved with Tomorrow's Entrepreneurs Today. He talked about his humble beginnings and the struggles of starting his own business in Los Angeles during the Depression. Later, he and Carrie showed the students around Avery House, the dormitory Stan funded at Caltech, and ate dinner with them in the dining hall. When Stan Avery died just two months later, Fannie Butler attended his memorial service.

Looking back on the Durfee Community Fund's six-year track record, the board concurred that the program is fulfilling its twin goals of investing in riskier groups and giving a leg up to neophyte grassroots organizations. In fact, what they had designated as high-risk grantmaking is looking more like good investments: at the close of 1997, 38 of the 39 programs they funded are still going, and some have grown substantially.

Having a nominator who knows the communities and its leaders is key to developing this kind of grant, and the Durfee Foundation could not have found a better match than Mary, currently the organizational development coordinator at the Center for Community Change. Her work at the Center — identifying grassroots

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groups, assisting nonprofit groups in getting up and running, and providing her skilled technical assistance — gives her firsthand and up-to-date knowledge of what is happening in South Central and other troubled communities. Mary participates in the Durfee Community Fund on a voluntary basis and, as a way of saying thanks, the board makes a modest annual grant designated for the Center's operating expenses. Recently, the trustees voted to expand the nomination process for this program; the next round of grants will be recommended by Mary and three additional nominators.

As important as Mary is to the program, the Durfee Community Fund would not have the same drive if not for the participation of the trustees. Accompanying Mary on site visits, they not only develop a better understanding of the needs of the community, they feel inspired by the work of the dedicated people they meet. Getting to know the grantees has deepened the board's commitment to supporting start-up groups.

"Who else will fund fledgling groups if not family foundations?" asks Carrie. "Not the government, not United Way. Small grants given at the proper time can make the critical difference between programs floundering or stabilizing. We try to make responsible grants but it's also not the end of the world if one goes awry. For all of the risky grantmaking we have done with this program, it is pretty phenomenal that virtually every group is still going and some have really taken off and become well-established."

Although the foundation does not require Durfee Community Fund recipients to submit reports at the end of a grant, in 1997 Claire did a follow-up telephone interview with each one to see how the groups were faring. She asked: What was the size of your budget before receiving the Durfee grant? What is it now? Has your mission changed? What obstacles have you encountered? If there were a Phase Two of this program, what would you want it to be? The recipients' answers confirmed the board's conviction that small grants can yield big returns — that is, when the grants are timely and the program is well-conceived.

While pleased that the grants have been successful in launching new programs, the trustees wanted to follow up on the information Claire gathered in her telephone

interviews. The board, along with Mary Ochs, organized a get-together with the recipients to hear what was on their minds. Virtually all expressed their frustrations in trying to plan from year to year when they were uncertain of their funding. Tired of relying on grants from the government and foundations, they wanted to develop revenue-generating businesses that would allow them to move toward financial independence. Some already had projects underway; others were searching for ideas.

Impressed by the recipients' desire for independence, the board voted to launch Phase Two of the Durfee Community Fund: awarding grants to help nonprofit organizations launch an entrepreneurial wing. One of the first recipients was Venice Community Housing Project. A timely grant of \$50,000 gave a jump start to Clayworks, a new business the organization was developing to train and pay young people to manufacture and install tiles. Venice Community Housing Project already had one training program in place as part of its construction business. With the addition of these programs, the organization is eligible to apply for city and county contracts that have set-asides for businesses working with at-risk youth. "The Durfee grant was essential to getting this program moving," says Steve Clare, the organization's executive director. "They believed in what we were doing and saw its potential. With their help, we were able to provide wages for the workers and set aside money to hire a project manager to market our service."

Whereas the Venice project is moving ahead, another project they funded went under. The Durfee Community Fund gave Skid Row Access a \$20,000 grant to open a storefront in a mall during the Christmas holidays to sell handcrafted wooden toys made by people living on skid row. "We had our radar up looking for entrepreneurial projects," says Claire. "We had become familiar with Skid Row Access when their executive director applied to our Sabbatical Program. We were very enthusiastic about what they were doing and the energy of the people involved. We also received strong recommendations from other funders who had made major grants to the organization. In retrospect, we probably should have checked it out more thoroughly."

What the Durfee Foundation didn't know was that the organization had been beset by internal conflict. Moreover, it hadn't calculated its inventory and ran out of merchandise midway through the holidays. Adding to their woes, the phone system kept breaking down. Not long afterwards, the organization completely folded. Far from being discouraged by the failure of the Skid Row Access grant, the Durfee board

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decided to educate itself about this type of funding. Carrie contacted colleagues who referred her to Jed Emerson, the director of the Roberts Enterprise Development Fund in San Francisco that provides funding and technical assistance to nonprofit enterprises. Carrie acknowledged that she didn't know much about nonprofit enterprise, but she was eager to learn about this emerging field. The Skid Row project provided a good lesson on what a foundation should not do.

"Jed told us that we had given Skid Row Access just enough rope to hang itself," says Claire. "Giving a group a one-time goodwill grant is not the way to encourage entrepreneurship. What's needed is long-range strategic planning coupled with long-term financial support."

As it happened, Jed Emerson was looking for a Los Angeles funder to participate in a preliminary collaborative study to see if the Roberts Foundation's Venture Fund model would be viable in the Los Angeles area. The Durfee Foundation provided a \$10,000 grant to the Center for Nonprofit Management to match a \$30,000 grant from the Rockefeller, Surdna, and J.P. Morgan foundations to create a prospectus for a Los Angeles Venture Fund. The prospectus has just been completed, and the Center for Nonprofit Management is currently seeking funding for a multi-year, multimillion-dollar project. It is too early to know what transpires from these efforts but what is evident is that when funders listen and respond to grantees, their grant-making keeps evolving.



CONCLUSION

Since its founding 38 years ago, the Durfee Foundation has evolved and changed as each generation has put its stamp on the foundation's governance and grantmaking: Stan Avery's philosophy of promoting and rewarding individual endeavors influenced the course of the foundation; the second generation applied that philosophy to the foundation's grantmaking, shifting the focus from traditional to inventive programs; now the first wave of the third generation is bringing its talents, expertise, and distinctive personalities to bear, creating new programs and initiating new ways to interact with the large and diverse communities that make up metropolitan Los Angeles.

Stan Avery inherited his knack for tinkering from his New England relatives. Earlier generations tinkered with machinery; Stan's descendants have turned their tinkering talents to the foundation. Over the years, the trustees have returned again and again to the foundation's guidelines, honing its mission and guidelines and refining their goals. The changes grew out of the trustees' direct involvement in the programs they fund and their contacts with a range of individuals and nonprofit organizations in the Los Angeles area.

The family believes strongly that foundations need to know firsthand the populations they serve. Working directly with grantees, advisory committees, and foundation colleagues, trustees build the kind of partnerships with the communities that are at the heart of good grantmaking. Through follow-up meetings with recipients of the Durfee Community Awards, the board recognized the need to add an entrepreneurial wing to the program to help the organizations gain more self-reliance. Discussions with colleagues at the Vanguard Public Foundation helped them shape the Durfee Sabbatical Program, and Claire's conversations with professors of music and heads of arts programs across the country led her and Jon to establish Durfee Music Fellowships for non-traditional musicians representing Los Angeles's vital immigrant communities. It is the family's engagement in the foundation and their openness to new ideas and new perspectives that keeps the Durfee Foundation board evolving and growing.

This year Halina, the eldest daughter of Dennis Avery, joined the board and Diana, the youngest daughter of Judy Newkirk, is soon to follow. Halina, an opera singer, and Diana, a dancer, will bring their interests and experiences to the foundation, opening new doors to the foundation and forging new pathways into the community.

In an active foundation like the Durfee Foundation, it is easy to lose sight of the bigger picture. Absorbed in keeping programs on track, overseeing investment of assets, and preparing for meetings, board and staff are swept up in the immediacy of day-to-day tasks. Participating in a project like this one — chronicling the story of the family foundation — trustees and staff are often left with a new sense of the foundation and their role in it. As Russell Avery put it, “All the years I served on the board, the foundation seemed like a sidelight to the family. In reading this [manuscript] I realize the foundation now has a history of its own.”