STANDING ROCK STRONG

2002 BUSH FELLOW
JODI GILLETTE

GREAT TEACHERS CULTIVATE GREAT MINDS

A Look at Major Education Investments
Welcome to

After your great response to last year’s inaugural issue of b, we’re back with more amazing stories about our 50+ years of investing in great ideas and the people who power them.

We’ve also packed this issue with what was new in 2014: bushCONNECT, a revamped website, event sponsorships and two open grant programs—Leadership Network Grants and Education Ecosystem Grants.

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More than 1,000 leaders from across the region grabbed a seat at Minnesota’s Guthrie Theater in May 2014 for bushCONNECT—a first-of-its-kind event that was equal parts summit, networking mixer and tent revival.

“What we’re trying to create today is a space where you collide with new ideas,” Foundation President Jen Ford Reedy explained in her welcome. “You will meet new people who may be useful to you right now, or a week from now or a year from now, when you’re needing a new perspective on your work.”

The idea for bushCON had emerged more than a year earlier, when the Foundation’s increased efforts to bring community leaders together were earning rave reviews from participants. “There was a strong feeling of isolation among leaders in many of the communities we serve; they craved opportunities to be in the same room,” says Dominick Washington, the Foundation’s communications director. “We decided to double down on that and see what more we could do.”

Inspired in part by Steven Johnson’s bestseller Where Good Ideas Come From: The Natural History of Innovation, the Foundation aimed to break out of the conference room mindset (“where ideas go to die,” Johnson joked to the bushCON audience in his remarks). The experience pushed participants a little outside their comfort zones by encouraging them to trade randomly assigned session tickets and construct the day’s activities based on their interests—from the art of stage combat, to rapid-fire five-minute talks with Ignite Minneapolis, to “The Four Habits of Highly Effective Conversations” brought to life by The Theater of Public Policy.

The Foundation transformed an entire floor of the Guthrie into a Network Zone where attendees recruited from more than 20 partner organizations could study a network map presented by Michael Bischoff and members of Social Innovation Lab that showed how everyone in the room was connected. In the Network Zone, attendees could share their personal and professional stories with Pollen for on-the-spot illustrations called “Careercatures.” The Guthrie’s escalator—the longest in Minnesota—became a storytelling vehicle for coaching on how to create a great one-minute escalator pitch.

A team devoted to creating fresh connections across social media promoted the event throughout the day with the #bushCON hashtag. By noon that day, Washington says, “#bushCON was trending nationally, which exceeded all of our expectations. The energy of the day was great.”

So are the after-effects: 94 percent of bushCON goers who responded to the post-event survey reported that the event helped expand and strengthen their networks, allowing them to connect with an average of five new people that day. That and other feedback has helped the Foundation plan for bushCONNECT 2015 slated for May 4, again at the Guthrie.

—LAURA BILLINGS COLEMAN

Learn more about the connecting effect of bushCON in By the Numbers on page 34.
In April 2014, the Foundation earmarked $280,000 for a new event sponsorship program to inspire, equip and connect leaders across the region. “We receive so many great sponsorship opportunities, we committed that money in a matter of months,” says Julie Cohen, communications program manager at the Foundation. “So we kept going.”

All told, the Foundation provided $642,795 to support 65 gatherings across the region in 2014, ranging from the Women’s Business Conference in Bismarck, to the South Dakota Innovation Expo in Sioux Falls, to the Indian Business Conference in Eagle Butte, to TEDxFargo.

For 2015, the Foundation increased its event sponsorship budget and shifted to a quarterly application schedule. (See Forecast on page 47 for deadlines.) Beyond a good investment in the region, the event sponsorship program advances the Foundation’s work in other ways. “We want to reach audiences that can benefit from our grant and fellowship programs, while we support efforts to bring leaders together across many sectors,” says Cohen.

To learn more or apply, visit bfdn.org/EvSponsor.

Participants in the Foundation’s long-running Regional Arts Development Program gathered in July to celebrate. As the program came to a close after nearly 20 years, they reflected on ways the multyear grant initiative had strengthened the arts ecology of the region. All told, the program provided $24.6 million in unrestricted, strategic funding to 28 mid-sized arts organizations. Continuing support for the arts is evident in the Foundation’s priorities for 2015. In late March, the Foundation will announce the Community Creativity Cohort, which will help define new needs in the arts and shape the Foundation’s future arts funding.

Learn more at bfdn.org/CCC.

A HOME FOR HOMELESS YOUTH

In November 2014, the Edyth Bush Charitable Foundation chose Beacon Interfaith Housing Collaborative to receive a one-time Archibald Bush Legacy grant of $100,000, which the Bush Foundation matched. Based in Archie and Edyth Bush’s winter home in Winter Park, Florida, the Edyth Bush Charitable Foundation wanted to support a nonprofit serving Saint Paul that best exemplifies Mr. Bush’s commitment to his home community. Community nominations identified 80 organizations. Saint Paul Mayor Chris Coleman narrowed those to five, from which the Edyth Bush Charitable Foundation selected the recipient. The Collaborative will use the $200,000 for Prior Crossing, the largest supportive youth housing development in Ramsey County with 44 studio apartments, situated along the light rail line that runs between the Twin Cities’ two downtowns.

Learn more at bfdn.org/Beacon.

FORT BERTHOLD ROAD TRIP

A group of Foundation Board members and staff visited the MHA Nation in May. The trip included a stop on the shores of Lake Sakakawea near New Town at the Earthen Lodge Village (above), which honors Mandan, Hidatsa and Arikara history and culture. The group traveled highly trafficked Highway 22 along the western edge of the reservation to see some of the impacts of oil development. They also learned about the progress of the MHA Nation Tomorrow project, a new strategic plan for the MHA Nation, supported in part by the Bush and Northwest Area foundations.

Visit the rebooted BushFoundation.org. Making programs and priorities more transparent was the goal of the Foundation’s streamlined and simple-to-search website, launched in July 2014. Be sure to check out the “What We’re Learning” section, where we share the impact of our investments in great ideas across the region, and lessons that may be useful in your own work.

Learn more at bfdn.org/WhatWe’reLearning.

From left, Calvin Grinnell; Board members Tim Mathern (BF’99), Dee Thomas and DeAnna Cummings (BF’07); staff Allison Barman, Kristi Ward, June Noronha, Jaime A. Pinkham, Julie Wells; Rebuilder Roger White Owl Jr. (Cohort 5); staff Mandy Ellerton; Board member Peter Ponnehamp; and staff Jen Ford Reedy, Lars Leafblad and John Fetzer.

SPONSORED BY THE BUSH FOUNDATION...

From left, Edyth Bush Charitable Foundation President David Odahowski, Beacon Interfaith Housing Collaborative Executive Director Lee Blons and Bush Foundation President Jen Ford Reedy.
No one’s keeping score at this Monday night pick-up game between members of the University of Minnesota Duluth Bulldogs and two dozen kids taking part in the Building Champions Program. Even so, Men as Peacemakers (MAP), the violence prevention organization behind this afterschool youth sports program, has plenty riding on the outcome.

“Male athletics can promote a very homogeneous and hypermasculine culture, which research would suggest can increase the likelihood of harm coming to women through sexual violence,” says Ed Heisler, MAP’s executive director. “We’re aiming to shape athletic environments that promote gender equity and respect.” With sports pages that have been dominated by headlines about players charged with domestic and sexual assault in the last year, Heisler adds, “it’s an idea that has found a lot of traction.”

That’s why the program is fanning out to playing fields across Duluth, training coaches in the Arrowhead Youth Soccer Association on the powerful role they play in the lives of young athletes, setting expectations for fair play that go far beyond the locker room. Partnerships with the University’s athletic department and the Boys and Girls Club also bring male and female college athletes from several sports together with youth for post-game conversations about what concepts like sportsmanship and teamwork really mean off the field of play.

While this new approach to violence prevention will take time to play out, the community of Duluth has a history of creating new approaches to domestic violence, driving the creation of “The Duluth Model” in the 1980s, now the most widely used batterer intervention program in the country. MAP sees its work as the logical next step, says Heisler, “heading to a place where men are actively engaged in this movement to end violence.”

“The kids probably don’t realize they’re getting violence prevention training, but role modeling and messaging can really make a difference as they grow,” Heisler says. “Our ultimate goal is to connect boys’ and men’s heads with their hearts.” — LAURA BILLINGS COLEMAN

Men as Peacemakers is the recipient of a 2013 Community Innovation Grant.
T he prairie winds that roll across South Dakota and eight Sioux nations carry the potential to produce three times the electricity their citizens can use. Harvesting the wind energy—and the green jobs that go with it—has long been the goal of the Oglala Sioux Tribe. But year after year, it ran into the same roadblock. “We’d been trying about 10 years now to establish a commercial wind farm that belonged to us,” says Lyle Jack, development manager for the Tribe’s Office of Economic Development. “We tried every model there was to make this a reality, but every time you’d get investors interested in the idea, they’d want ownership of the project.” Aware that other Sioux tribes across South Dakota, the fifth windiest state in the country, were encountering the same hurdle, he says, “We decided it was time to reach out and see what we could do together.”

The result is the Oceti Šakowin Power Project—a first of its kind effort to launch a tribally owned power authority across eight Sioux tribes: Crow Creek, Cheyenne River, Flandreau Santee, Oglala, Rosebud, Sisseton-Wahpeton, Standing Rock and Yankton. The planned one-gigawatt wind farm would create as many as 500 construction jobs and more than 75 permanent jobs for Native and non-Native people.

“The potential of this is staggering,” former President Bill Clinton said at the Clinton Global Initiative in July 2013. That’s where Oceti Šakowin—Lakota for the Seven Council Fires of the Sioux Nation—shared its plans for the first time. “This is an amazing thing, and if it works, there are a lot of other tribal lands and a lot of other tribes out there who will be able to take this and make their contribution to our country’s future.”

Oceti Šakowin partners pitched the project to President Obama last summer during his historic visit to the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation. In November, tribal leaders met with eight federal agencies in Washington, D.C. Despite the support of two presidents, the project still faces stiff headwinds before it can move forward with plans to issue up to $3 billion in power revenue bonds. “There are still lots of obstacles,” Jack says. The project will need to come up with about $11 million in seed money, a high financial hurdle for many from tribal communities addressing issues that ranged from hunger to homelessness to chemical dependency, relationship violence and high drop-out rates.

Tribal communities have been particularly successful at earning Community Innovation Grants. Of the 69 projects funded since 2013, 16 have been to projects in Indian Country. For instance, the Native American Community Board in North Dakota counties as they implement seed money, a high financial hurdle for many from tribal communities addressing issues that ranged from hunger to homelessness to chemical dependency, relationship violence and high drop-out rates.

This is an amazing thing, and if it works, there are a lot of other tribes out there who will be able to take this and make their contribution to our country’s future.

—PRESIDENT BILL CLINTON, JULY 2013
FOLLOW THE LEADERS

Winners of the 2014 Bush Prize for Community Innovation

Bush Prize winners have proven track records for converting bright ideas into powerful solutions for their communities. Follow these 10 winners in 2015 and beyond to stay on top of how the recognition (and creative capital) of the Prize supports them to do more good across the region.

- **Breaking Free**
  St. Paul, MN
  Led by survivors of prostitution and sexual exploitation, Breaking Free has helped more than 6,000 women and girls escape sex trafficking, abuse, addiction and poverty. bfdn.org/BFree

- **Cannon River Watershed Partnership**
  Northfield, MN
  The Partnership takes a grassroots approach to keeping waterways clean through its Southeast Minnesota Wastewater Initiative—21 communities that together have prevented 1.25 billion gallons of untreated sewage from polluting lakes and rivers since 2002. bfdn.org/CRWP

- **Community of Care**
  Arthur, ND
  Providing caring, cost-effective services and support that allow rural seniors to “age in place” has made Community of Care both a resource and role model for rural communities across North Dakota. bfdn.org/CoC

- **Domestic Violence Crisis Center**
  Minot, ND
  North Dakota’s oil boom more than doubled the number of women seeking assistance from the DVCC, which opened the New Beginnings Campus for women and children who are recreating their lives. bfdn.org/DVCC

- **Face it TOGETHER Sioux Falls**
  Sioux Falls, SD
  Face it TOGETHER Sioux Falls takes a community approach to recovery, with a nonclinical, peer-to-peer addiction management model and results that outpace more traditional treatment methods. bfdn.org/FITSF

- **First Peoples Fund**
  Rapid City, SD
  First Peoples Fund connects Lakota, Dakota, Nakota and Ojibwe artists to materials, markets and entrepreneurial mentors so they can be culture bearers and leaders of social change. bfdn.org/FPFP

- **Legal Services of North Dakota**
  Bismarck, ND
  To serve disadvantaged clients across the state, LSND pioneered an intake system that became a national model for increasing legal service delivery under challenging conditions. bfdn.org/LSND

- **Main Street Square**
  Rapid City, SD
  Main Street Square transformed a blighted urban area into a buzzing village green that continues to grow new businesses. bfdn.org/DRC

- **NACDI**
  Minneapolis, MN
  NACDI asked Native people to envision a future that went far beyond meeting basic needs, then it created an innovative asset-building approach where American Indian culture is the engine of economic growth. bfdn.org/NACDI

- **North Dakota’s oil boom** more than doubled the number of women seeking assistance from the DVCC, which opened the New Beginnings Campus for women and children who are recreating their lives.

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- **Turning this small town on the Root River into a thriving center for the arts has sparked a rural renaissance and earned Lanesboro Arts national recognition as a leader in creative place-making.**

- **To serve disadvantaged clients across the state, LSND pioneered an intake system that became a national model for increasing legal service delivery under challenging conditions.**

- **To serve disadvantaged clients across the state, LSND pioneered an intake system that became a national model for increasing legal service delivery under challenging conditions.**
President Obama takes the podium and someone in the crowd cries out, “We love you!” Obama replies. A few minutes later, he remarks, “I’m proud to have Native Americans serving with dedication and skill in my administration, including somebody I love—Jodi Gillette of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe.” The crowd of Native leaders cheers in agreement and recognition for Gillette, a woman known for her mile-wide smile and her high-wattage intelligence. Bush Fellow Jodi Archambault Gillette (’02) is quietly powerful, unshowy, humble—still, people love her like she’s a rock star. In fact, serving as special assistant to the president for Native American affairs does make her a star in Indian Country. Jodi Gillette gets things done and done right. What’s not to love? For a Lakota woman to have the love of the people means her leadership is true and strong. And with no experience working in Washington, Gillette’s Lakota upbringing and culture have been an unusual, but valuable, skill set as well. “My Indian name means the people watch her,” she explains. But the name implies a two-way gaze. “My grandparents and my mother always reminded me that someone’s watching me too, and it is important to always be very careful of my words and actions.” That early advice prepared Gillette for the spotlight in which she now must serve not only Lakota people, but hundreds of tribes: “I never imagined that I would have a platform to be in front of so many people. But my family helped me become self-aware, which is very useful in my current position. I hope to continue to honor my name and the dignity of my family.” Gillette’s doing a good job there. And her work is noticed. Kevin K. Washburn, assistant secretary for Indian affairs in the U.S. Department of the Interior, says, “Jodi works as though all of Indian Country is riding on her shoulders. She is a great example of how talented people can make government work better.” Washburn goes on to note, “She can also be tough, which is an important qualification for the White House position. I have seen her fight to ensure that her constituency needs are heard loud and clear among numerous competing priorities at the White House. She may not win every bureaucratic battle, but she wins a lot of them because she never goes down without a fight.” In 2009, the new president appointed Gillette deputy associate director of intergovernmental affairs. It was an historic honor—she was the first Native American to hold that position, which acts as the “front door” to the White House for tribal
nations. Over the years, Gillette coordinat- ed the disbursement of $3 billion in funds for Native American communities via the Re- covery Act, and she conducted intensive efforts on provisions of the 2013 Violence Against Women Act, which finally recog- nized the inherent right of tribal nations to prosecute non-Indians who commit violence against women.

In 2012, President Obama appointed Gillette to her current position, in which she advises him as a member of the White House Domestic Policy Council. In a statement announcing her appoint- ment, President Obama said, “Jodi Gillette will be an important member of my administration’s efforts to continue the historic progress we’ve made to strengthen and build on the government-to-people relationship between the United States and tribal nations. She has been a key member of my admin- istration’s efforts for Indian Country, and will continue to ensure that Native American issues will always have a seat at the table.”

THE ROAD TO THE WHITE HOUSE

The Standing Rock Sioux Reservation straddles North Dakota and South Da- kota. Gillette lived in both states growing up, as well as on Pine Ridge Reservation. When asked to identify three moments along the road from Standing Rock to standing next to President Barack Obama, she said, “I actually have four.”

Moment One: My upbringing—being raised on a reservation—and my home- land have made me the person I am today. I could not know the things I know if I was raised somewhere else. My upbringing and my experiences living on the reservation impact my work each and every day.

One of seven children, Gillette’s parents are respected educators and administrators of schools and programs in Indian Country. She was also raised with her grandmother on Pine Ridge and often remarks on the influence of her elders. Family is at the center of Lakota values and for Gillette. She spent more than a decade serving families and children in North Dakota as director of the Native American Training Institute, which works to create a safe and healthy envi- ronment for children.

Gillette also shared her passion for basketball through coaching and has become a nationally known and com- petition-winning pow-wow dancer and traditional artist. These are all forms of cultural expression that she learned from her grandmother on Pine Ridge.

Moment Two: I was very fortunate to go to great schools and have a college experience that opened up numerous opportunities. My higher education played an instrumental role in my career path and my desire to see all Native youth graduate from high school and enroll in higher education.

Gillette attended reservation schools in South Dakota and graduated from Bismarck High School in North Dakota. For a time, she planned to be an engineer. “I was enrolled in a science and math program in high school where, for the first time, I was exposed to successful people of color who were engineers and scientists. That experience opened my eyes to other professions.” But her call to public service was there from an early age as well. “I also considered becoming a member of the Peace Corps after the organization came to my community to discuss their work. I found their work very interesting since I always knew that I wanted to help people in some capac- ity.” Rather than enrolling in engineering school or working abroad, Gillette earned a degree in government and Native American studies from Dartmouth College in 1991.

In 2002, Gillette earned a Bush Fellowship, which she used to obtain her mas- ter’s degree in public administration from the University of Minnesota Humphrey School of Public Affairs. “I didn’t think I would have gone to graduate school without the Bush Fellowship,” she says, adding, “The graduate degree was pivotal to my career, because it gave me the credentials and the self-awareness of what type of leader I would like to be.” That combination, like her cultural upbringing and early education, serves Gillette well in that she says being self-aware fits the leadership style of the Obama White House. “Luckily, in this administration, I’ve gotten to work side-by-side with several senior White House officials who do the hard work to make meaningful progress on important issues. They are humble and quiet leaders, and soldiers in the fight to make a better future.”

Moment Three: I was inspired to join the Obama campaign after the candi- date gave a speech to the Crow Nation. That speech, his ideas and that he deeply cares about Native Americans motivated me to work on the campaign and do everything I could to get him elected.

During the 2008 presidential campaign, Gillette led North Dakota First American Vote, a tremendously successful get-out-the-vote drive aimed at reservations. Not only had Obama impressed her with his speech to the Crow Nation, he made promises she would soon be helping him keep. “The idea for the Tribal Nations Conference was something the president talked about when he was a candidate,” she explained. “When Obama lost North Dakota but won the election, and soon after Gillette began her work in Washington. With her help, the president and his team have convened tribal leaders and cabinet members on a government-to-government basis for six years running.

Moment Four: My family is everything. My children and my husband have provided a different perspective on the work I do on behalf of this administration. They keep me grounded and focused.

Gillette has a lifelong commitment to families and children. She knows what the hideous statistics on suicide and离 dropout rate mean in real terms. In this job, Gillette says, “I have an opportunity to make real change for our Native youth and a president who supports my goal.”

Gillette comes at the serious issues Native youth face by building on success.

“We know that tribes are doing great things. But like tribal issues, Native youth issues sometimes are invisible because we are such a low percentage of the United States’ overall population.” With such little attention paid to the nation, how will the Obama administration increase the visibility and voice of Native youth?
Words cannot describe the honor and pride I have in our president. He gets it. He understands that nobody in the United States SHOULD BE LEFT BEHIND. He sees the urgency and magnitude of the work that we have to do as a country and within our own borders. I’m excited that I get to work for a president who wants to make lasting change now and not wait for the next administration to take action. —JODI GILLETTE, 2002 BUSH FELLOW

Gillette is enacting a plan. “We hope to break through the silence by starting a Native youth network under the Generation Indigenous initiative (bfdn.org/xGen). ‘Gen I’ focuses on removing the barriers that stand between Native youth and their opportunity to succeed.”

THE ROAD AHEAD
Four important moments brought Gillette from North Dakota to Washington, D.C., and to reflection on how her work makes a difference. “Several tribal leaders have told me that the Obama administration has provided hope where there was none. With progress like restoring jurisdiction to tribes over non-Natives who commit domestic violence, they tell me they feel like anything is possible.” Perhaps most remarkably, she says, members of America’s most marginalized group “feel like what they say matters, and that people from all levels are listening to them.”

That tribal leaders are now being listened to is due in no small part to a humble dancer from North Dakota. Assistant Secretary Washburn sees the long-term impact in Gillette’s work. “Probably her most important accomplishment is the creation of the White House Native American Affairs Council, which brings an all-of-government approach to serving Indian tribes.” Most of the president’s cabinet are members of the Council, which, Washburn says, “has succeeded in dramatically raising the profile of Indian issues among the highest level of government officials. We are working now to institutionalize the Council so that it will live long after this administration is gone. If we can succeed, that may be Jodi’s most important legacy.”

Gillette has made Native nations an integral part of how the federal government makes decisions regarding tribes. “It can only get better from here. Through tribal consultation and constant communication and dialogue we can get some amazing things accomplished.” And Gillette’s work is a big part of the reason things will get better, according to Assistant Secretary Washburn. “Her most important success has been earning the trust of the president.”

Where does Gillette see herself next? “Continuing to help improve the lives of Native Americans,” she says, adding, “at some point, I would like to return home and help the people on my reservation.”

A velvet rope separates me from the tribal leaders gathered in Washington, D.C. I’m a poet with a White House press pass—roped off with the photos, gazing amazed at the dignitaries, the code talkers, the all-female Native color guard. I post myself in the back so I can stand. Good choice because soon I’m next to Jodi Gillette. She’s called her job “the front door to the White House” for Native people. Yet here she is, at the back door briefly, surveying the room, assureng elders a clear path to their seats, making history ready to happen.

We have been together like this before. In 1992, just out of college, Jodi honed her organizational skills as primary coordinator for Our Visions: The Next 500 Years. The brainchild of her mentor, Suzanne Hapajo, the gathering involved dozens of Native American tribal leaders, educators, and artists. Jodi had asked me to help wrangle elders (Ojibwe artist George Morrison, a Hopi prophet, an Alaskan carver) and to write notes. Here we are, decades later, in our same roles—only on a national level—at the sixth White House Tribal Nations Conference.

Native youth are attending the Conference for the first time; they bring a buzz to the room everyone can feel. When President Obama—the first president to visit a reservation since Clinton—announces a plan to uplift Native youth called Generation Indigenous, they know that, even though they are on the bottom by U.S. standards, today they are at the top of the American leader’s agenda. He says it’s not just a promise—it will happen. And because it’s not just a promise, the president needs the right person to make sure it gets done.

No problem. Jodi Gillette is right there for him, at the front door.

Heid E. Erdrich is a member of the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Indians and a 2001 Bush Fellow. Her most recent book is Original Local: Indigenous Foods, Recipes, and Stories. HeidErdrich.com
Even before there was a Bush Foundation, Archibald Bush invested in education. His support to both individuals of promise and multiple educational institutions inspired a Foundation priority that’s been constant for the last 62 years.

By Andy Steiner

Over six decades, the Foundation has worked to improve education using broad strategies that encompass grants to colleges and universities (see By the Numbers on page 34) and investments in Bush Fellows (see 50 Years of Fellowship on page 24). But in 2009, the Foundation focused its resources on a specific education goal: increase the percentage of students from all backgrounds who attain postsecondary success. Today, we are pursuing this goal in two ways—Major Investments and Education Ecosystem Grants.

Through Major Investments, the Foundation invests in large, long-term grants focused on specific education improvements. This developing portfolio began with the $40 million Teacher Effectiveness Initiative in 2009. We invested in a second Major Investment in 2014 that explores alternative pathways to teacher licensure. And we’ll launch several new Major Investments by the end of 2015, with more to follow in future years.

To support these Major Investments, we began offering Education Ecosystem Grants in 2014. These provide operating support to organizations that help create an education ecosystem where other organizations can succeed in reducing disparities and improving student outcomes.

The five stories that follow spotlight only a sample of grantees’ education efforts in the region. Much like Archibald Bush’s early investments, they illustrate how individuals and organizations are thinking bigger and thinking differently about how to reach better educational outcomes for all students in the region.

GREAT TEACHERS CULTIVATE GREAT MINDS

Co-Teaching for Success

Josh Engel pretty much always knew he wanted to be a teacher. “Teachers were very impactful in my life,” he says. “I am the youngest of five boys, so I never had a younger brother to help when I was growing up. I wanted to someday have the opportunity to help younger people. That’s why I became a teacher.”

Engel earned his teaching degree from Minnesota State University, Mankato (MSUM) in 2012, and entered a two-year co-teaching fellowship program borne out of a partnership between MSUM and Mankato Area Public Schools. The fellowship program, funded in part through the Bush Foundation’s Teacher Effectiveness Initiative (TEI), is a way new teachers like Engel can make a smoother transition from a preparation program into teaching.

During the fellowship, Engel earned valuable teaching experience under the watchful eye of co-teacher Bridget Weigt, a master teacher with years of experience in the district. He credits Weigt with helping him become a better, more effective teacher. Her years of experience and perspective paid off when it came to lesson planning, classroom management, understanding school culture and working with parents, he says.

“We’d have conversations about things I was struggling with, what was going well, what she could do to help,” Engel says. “Bridget would co-teach lessons, give feedback and even help prep for lessons when I needed more time. She would do anything that I would ask of her. My first two years in the classroom would have been much more difficult without her.”

The many challenges new teachers face in the classroom result in startling statistics—more than 40% leave within five years, according to a 2014 report by the Alliance for Excellent Education. Co-teaching is one strategy that the Foundation believes can help reduce this number.
The co-teaching fellowship offered at MSUM, says Allison Barmann, the Foundation’s vice president for strategy and learning, “gives new teachers the best possible start to their careers. And it strengthens the co-teaching bond between the teacher-preparation program and the K-12 school district.” The various co-teaching strategies of TEI partners were specifically called out by external evaluators in 2014 as one of the biggest successes of the Initiative to date.

With Weigt’s support and guidance, Engel was able to make the most of his two-year fellowship, teaching physical education and health at two middle schools in the district. Though the work was full-time, he completed his master’s in experiential education in 2014. Engle now works as a full-time developmental adaptive phys ed teacher at Pictures, a Mankato Area Public Schools program for children with special needs. Engel says he hopes he’ll be able to pay it forward, by serving as a mentor for another up-and-coming teacher like Weigt did for him.

“Bridge’s had such a great impact on so many teachers, improved how they worked with students. Who wouldn’t want to be able to do that?”

“WE NEED TO FIND AND SUPPORT NEW TEACHERS WHO ARE GOING TO SERVE AND STRENGTHEN SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITIES AT THE HIGHEST LEVELS” — Patrick Duffy Saint Paul Public Schools

“...there’s a gap splits along racial and ethnic lines, how it can diversify the teaching workforce to better serve its students. “We think it’s important in boosting achievement for our students of color that they see themselves reflected in the curriculum and instruction,” says Duffy, director of leadership development for SPFSS. “To do that, we need to hire teachers whose life experiences reflect our students’ lives.”

“...we need to do something that goes beyond ‘tweaks’ to the system. We need to make bold leadership decisions that ensure that we’re supporting our existing teachers to be the best teachers they can be for the students in their classrooms. And we need to find and support new teachers who are going to serve and strengthen schools and communities at the highest levels. This partnership has the potential for great change.”

“The district’s achievement gap justifies this approach. Duffy says, “We realized that in order to make measurable improvements, we need to do something that goes beyond ‘tweaks’ to the system. We need to make bold leadership decisions that ensure that we’re supporting our existing teachers to be the best teachers they can be for the students in their classrooms. And we need to find and support new teachers who are going to serve and strengthen schools and communities at the highest levels. This partnership has the potential for great change.”

Meet the other partnerships that are working to increase teacher diversity at bfdn.org/TeachDiv.

“IN THE END, WHAT WE’RE REALLY FOCUSED ON IS CREATING THE BEST TEACHERS. WE WANT THE KIDS IN OUR REGION TO HAVE THE BEST EDUCATION IN THE NATION. WE CAN USE DATA TO REACH THAT GOAL.” — Stacy Duffy North Dakota State University

“From the beginning of the Teacher Effectiveness Initiative, the need for a way to share data with the partners was clear,” said Allison Barmann, the Foundation’s vice president for strategy and learning. “Do the partners’ credit that they’ve looked beyond what it would mean to share their data to how doing so can benefit each of them and the teachers they prepare.”

The partners in the Common Metrics system have presented papers on the results of their collaboration at education conferences, most recently in spring 2015 at the annual conference of the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education. “We have really high-quality, well-aligned instruments that are the envy of many teacher-preparation programs around the nation,” Duffy says. “When we present at national conferences, our room is just packed.”

While that professional acclaim is nice, Duffy says that the best measure of the Common Metric system’s success is the quality of teachers the participating institutions produce.

“The in the end, what we’ve really focused on is creating the best teachers,” she says. “We want the kids in our region to have the best education in the nation. We can use data to reach that goal.”

Driving Improvement with Data

Associate Professor Stacy Duffy and her colleagues at North Dakota State University have always wanted to create the best teacher-preparation program in the nation. They began collaborating with the 13 other partners in the Foundation’s Teacher Effectiveness Initiative (TEI) that they were able to collect the robust data that drive their improvement strategies today.

“To get a more accurate measure of NSSU’s program performance, Duffy has collaborated with assessment personnel from the 13 other colleges and universities to design and implement a new system they all use to gather and compare feedback about their teacher-preparation programs. They call it the Common Metrics system.

Over the last five years, the Common Metrics system has designed and administered, with support from TEI and two technical assistance consultants, four surveys that span a teacher candidate’s path from entering teacher-preparation through the first teaching year. The surveys cover factors from what inspired the candidate to teach, to how well they apply specific teaching skills. All participating programs use the resulting aggregate data to inform their improvement strategies.

Although the teacher-preparation institutions that make up the Common Metrics system compete for teacher candidates, they have committed to working together for the common good of their teacher-trains and the young people they will be educating. This is key to the project’s success, Duffy believes. “Our collaboration is really about program improvement and preparing better teachers. We just want to make curriculum better. We’re a cohesive group with a lot of trust.”

Evaluators who conducted the midpoint evaluation of TEI recognized the collaborative as one of the biggest successes to emerge thus far from the Foundation’s current work.

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Forging a New Path to Teaching

Most educators begin their careers after earning a degree from a traditional teacher-preparation program. But in some regions, the demand for teachers in areas of need has encouraged education leaders to develop nontraditional ways to recruit and prepare new teachers.

In the Twin Cities, for instance, the national organization Teach for America (TFA) has partnered with the University of Minnesota to launch a new teacher-preparation program that will prepare urban educators who come from nontraditional backgrounds.

TFA recruits a diverse pool of recent college graduates and career changers—professionals who have a track record in both leadership and academics. The two-year Alternative Pathway to Teaching Program at the University’s College of Education and Human Development prepares TFA corps members over an in-depth, eight-week summer program. That fall, they become the teacher of record for classrooms in struggling urban or rural schools.

These new teachers receive ongoing support from the University, school-based mentors and TFA instructional coaches, and their teacher training at the University continues through that school year and the next. As part of their work in teacher preparation, they are required to support the planning and launch of their first true alternative pathway to teaching in Minnesota. The Foundation has provided $1.9 million to support planning and startup of this Major Investment.

Deborah Dillon, associate dean of graduate and professional programs at the University’s College of Education and Human Development, was part of the team that developed the curriculum for TFA’s UMN program. She says these teacher candidates have the desire and ability to work in public schools for the common good. Having completed an undergraduate program at a top institution, Dillon says, “These individuals are excellent candidates for this type of program.”

With its long history of preparing teachers, the University brings to the program expertise, a commitment to research-based programs, a strong reputation and infrastructure. TFA’s established history of recruiting college graduates and professionals who are changing careers—particularly those who self-identify as people of color or as coming from low-income backgrounds—to become teachers made it a perfect partner for a program focused on an alternative pathway to teaching.

It’s easy to imagine that proponents of this new way of learning and teaching might view TFA as the perfect partner for a program focused on creating modern information age classrooms where learning plans can adjust to meet the unique needs of individual students. Enabling technologies allow for a shift to more customized and personalized education. By moving away from one-size-fits-all, time-based, batch processing mode of education, schools can reach more children at their skill and interest level.

And performance-based, student-paced education increases student agency and success. The Education Ecosystem Grant to TIE “helps us spread these ideas and build this capacity in schools so they can engage in more customized learning for students,” Mathiesen says. “We have pieces of these ideas and technology established around the state, but we need more organized leadership to record that information, share it, and help grow and disseminate it within all schools in South Dakota.”

TIE is a component of Black Hills Special Services Cooperative, an agency that advances public education and technology in the state’s rural communities. Joe Haug, the Cooperative’s executive director, says that TIE, which began some 20 years ago as a way to distribute computer technology and training to South Dakota schools, continues to live up to its mission as it prepares educators across the state to create the transition to customized learning. “With the Bush Foundation dollars, we’re just starting to see the first steps happen,” Haug says. “We’re reporting best practices. We’re learning from each other. This is TIE’s director. She came to her current position after earning a degree in chemistry at Yale University.

“TECHNOLOGY CREATED MORE ENGAGEMENT WITH MY STUDENTS. IT ALLOWED THEM TO PURSUE CONTENT OF INTEREST IN A WAY THAT WAS MORE STUDENT-DIRECTED AND LESS TEACHER-DIRECTED.”

Julie Mathiesen
Technology & Innovation in Education

Middle school science teacher Amy Napelton is in her first year of the TFA/ UMN program. She came to that program after completing a bachelor of science degree in chemistry at Yale University.

Customizing Learning through Technology

Two years ago, Watertown High School began offering some of its students a chance to customize what they studied and to set their own pace of learning. Principal Mike Butts is leading the customized learning program, but he credits another organization in South Dakota’s education ecosystem—Technology and Innovation in Education (TIE)—for the early thought leadership that made the program possible.

“TIE is leading the customized learning movement in South Dakota,” Butts says. “It brought together the think tank of educators that developed the program and today trains teachers at customized learning programs across the state in how to ensure students succeed.”

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Middle school science teacher Amy Napelton is in her first year of the TFA/ UMN program. She came to that program after completing a bachelor of science degree in chemistry at Yale University.
Since launching the world’s first charitable beer company in 2000, Bush Fellow Jacquie Berglund has turned FINNEGANS into one of the flagship brands of the social enterprise movement, investing 100 percent of profits in locally grown produce to fill food shelves across the Midwest. Over the last 14 years, the positive buzz she’s built for such beers as “Finnegan’s Irish Ale” and “Dead Irish Poet Stout” has also made Berglund a sought-after guru on the social entrepreneur circuit, fielding dozens of calls and emails every week from like-minded start-ups hoping for her help.

“The number one thing everyone always wants to know is if I had investors, but I didn’t. I had $500 in the bank,” says Berglund. “I’m what you call a professional boot-strapper.”

Sharing what she’s learned with other businesses committed to more than the bottom line is one of Berglund’s passions, but with just six employees behind FINNEGANS’s 10,000-barrel operation, finding time to answer every request isn’t easy. So when a friend encouraged her to consider whether a $100,000 Bush Fellowship could help her do more good, Berglund took a closer look at the program; turned out the Foundation was seeking applicants with “a record of success,” “generosity of spirit” and the vision to create a greater impact.

“I’d already been doing some soul-searching about how I wanted to give back, and I had a project I’d been working on in my head,” she says. “Just being asked to think about what I could do with a Bush Fellowship helped me get some clarity on what my next chapter was going to be.”
In the Words of Bush Fellows...

Last March, Berglund learned she’d received a 2014 Bush Fellowship, a gift of time and money that she’s investing in what she calls the “FINovation Lab,” a business incubator aimed at growing other socially responsible start-ups.

“The hardest part of the Fellowship for me so far has been putting the money into what I need to be the best leader I can be in five or 10 years,” says Berglund, who just hired a coach to help her make the most of her $100,000 Fellowship stipend. “I have to admit I’d never heard of the Bush Fellowship before, so I still can’t believe that an organization is investing money in the givers and the rescuers and the people in my field who are trying to figure out how to do good. I feel really honored—and also really motivated to do more.” See an interview with Berglund at bfdn.org/xFinn.

"This program is designed to seek out and develop broad-gauge men who can be effective leaders.”

—1964 Bush Fellowship Program Guidelines

Jacquie Berglund never imagined she’d be a Bush Fellow; it’s a safe bet that Archibald Bush could not have imagined it either. Though Archie was a bootstrapper himself, starting his journey from Granite Falls to the Fortune 500 with just $25 in his pocket, he was also a tactician who saw little redeeming value in beer. More to the point, the fellowship he first outlined was never intended for women, seeking only “experienced men between the ages of 25 and 40 so that they may train themselves further for major leadership in business, government, the professions and union management.”

In fact, the very first fellowship program was created in the image of the Bush Foundation’s founder, a quick-on-his-feet square dance caller who quit school in the eighth grade to help out on his family’s farm. In 1908, at the age of 21, Archie Bush set out for Duluth, attending business school at night and landing a bookkeeping position recently vacated by William Mc Knight, the future chairman of the board of 3M. A natural-born salesman and fast study, Bush helped save the company from near bankruptcy, riding the firm’s turn-around all the way to a rosewood paneled office, where he served as Mc Knight’s second in command and chair of 3M’s executive committee.

While he’d built a fortune worth more than $200 million at the time of his death in 1966, Bush himself believed he might have accomplished even more if he’d had time to look up from his desk and take the long view of the business climate and his own career path. “The Bush Fellowship really came from Archie’s own observation that if he’d had a mid-career opportunity to strengthen his skills and refocus, he could have been a more effective leader in the later part of his career,” says Susan Snowhalter, a 1983 Bush Fellow, who served as a long-time consultant to the Foundation.

“In his own career, Archie Bush saw that great ideas are nothing without the people to power them,” says Bush Foundation President Jen Ford Reedy. “And so investing in individuals is one of the things that we do that feels most directly tied to his philanthropic lineage.”

While every initiative created over the last 50 years, from the first Bush Leadership Fellows Program to the current Native Nation Rebuilders Program, has expanded on Archie Bush’s original aim, Reedy says they’ve all shared the same premise. “Every fellowship we make is a statement of our belief in the power of people to get things done. It’s true that investing in individuals can be a little riskier than funding organizations or ongoing programs, but for us the higher risk means there’s a higher return, too. If you look at the extraordinary people the Foundation has backed over the last 50 years, there’s no question that providing fellowships has given the region a great rate of return.”

More Bush Fellows quotes at bfdn.org/50Fel.
him that civil rights and human rights were not the only areas where black folks were equipped to serve," says Williams. During a break between interview sessions for a handful of finalists for the 1970 fellowship, Williams ran into his friend John Taborn (left), a professor in the department of Afro-American and African studies at the University of Minnesota. “We wished each other luck because we didn’t believe that both of us could be awarded the Fellow- ship,” recalls Williams, who later served as the state’s first prison ombudsman, and was elected to the Minneapolis School Board. “But we both thought we had a shot.”

Ensuring that the Fellowship program served communities of color, emerging immigrant groups and other underrepresented voices was a drive led by the Foundation’s first president, Humphrey Doermann (far right), and the Fellowship program’s first director, Don Peddie (right). Both Harvard graduates who had worked on the business side of the former Minneapolis Star and Tribune, the two followed their own news sense for seeking out emerging leaders. They also encouraged the talented people they encoun- tered through their own personal grant programs to apply for Fellowships. Impressed by the leadership team behind the Foundation’s organizational grant programs to the state’s first battered women’s shelter, for instance, grantmaking staff practically insisted that Women’s Advocates founder Sharon Rice Vaughan pursue a Fellowship, which she received in 1979. (Though she was not the first woman to earn a Fellowship, “I may have been the first Bush Fellow to wear sandals,” she jokes.)

Many other applicants were recruited via “Peddiegram”—3x5 notecards Peddie typed up and sent to promising people, encouraging them to pursue the Fellowship program and, particularly, place- ment at Harvard’s Kennedy School of Government—the academic destination for more than 300 Bush Fellows since 1984. John Archabal (right), who joined the Foundation in 1979 and served as director of the Bush Leadership Fellows Program for much of the next 36 years, shared the Foundation’s early commitment to encouraging emerging voices from every point of view. “John used to emphasize that the Bush Foundation was agnostic on the issues,” Showalter says, choosing Fellows from across the political spectrum and with a broad range of backgrounds and experi- ence. “We knew that the Bush Fellowships could provide credibility to people and open doors, but the respect for the process went both ways.” Showalter recalls, “Many times after an applicant interview John would lean over in awe and say, ‘Wow, this person is so smart.’ The Foundation itself had great respect for applicants who came forward.”

Enabling organizations across the region have the cultural agility to effectively lead and advocate for diverse communities was the inspira- tion behind the new Leadership Network Grant Program the Foundation launched in 2014. These grants support projects that range from building bridges among different Asian ethnicities and generations through the Coalition of Asian American Leaders, to expanding programming in rural areas in Minnesota served by the Initiative Foundation and West Central Initiative, to building a talent pipeline for pub- lic service through the New Sector Alliance. “Creating the Leadership Network Grant Program was a natural extension of our Fellow- ship work,” says Foundation President Jen Ford Reedy. “We want leaders to be better equipped and better networked to lead change. By part- nering with other organizations who do this, we ensure leaders have more options to dis- cover and develop the skills and support they need to become more effective leaders.”

Developing new leaders in education was the goal of three sepa- rate Bush Educator programs for district superintendents, school principals and classroom teachers, efforts that strengthened the skill sets of 722 educators between 1979 and 1997.

And since 2010, the Native Nation Rebuilders Program has invested in building the leadership skills and nation-building knowledge of more than 110 emerging and existing Native leaders. In 2010, the Foundation launched its current Bush Fellowship Pro- gram and in 2013 initiated the Ron McKinley Philanthropy Fellowships (see page 32). All told, the roll call of individuals who have benefited from support of the “fellowship” model—the Foundation’s five Fellowship programs, three Bush Educator programs, and the Rebuilders program—now includes the names of more than 3,000 people who’ve received nearly $100 million in support.

While each program had different audi- ences and aims, Martha Lee, manager of Fellowships for much of the time from 1994 to 2014, says they were all fueled by a similar philosophy. “There was a strong feeling that the Bush Fellowships were meant to give people a push to do something they couldn’t do on their own. It wasn’t intended as financial aid for people taking the obvious next step in their careers,” she says. “It was meant to disrupt your work in an important way, and force you to think bigger about what was possible.” (Read more about Lee on page 43.)

The Fellowship selection panels frequently encouraged applicants to take their proposals back to the drawing board, pushing them to take greater risks with their Fellowship plans. “Human nature being what it is, people don’t always see in themselves the same talent and potential that other people can see,” Lee says, pointing to Repa Mekha, a 2005 Bush Fellow, now the president and CEO of Nexus Community Partners, as an example of the process.

After a career in social services, Mekha was considering a shift toward economic and community development, “but I wasn’t thinking big enough,” he recalls. “In my original plan I think I’d suggested going to Metro State, but everyone insisted I had to get out of town and go to Harvard. That changed everything for me. It gave me a balcony view of the work I wanted to do, and a global reach that I didn’t think I had the local expe- rience would have provided me.” (Read how Mekha continues to “Think Bigger, Think Differently” on page 48.)
Native Nation Rebuilders
Cohort 6

The Native Nation Rebuilders Program is a cohort-based leadership program to equip and connect Native leaders to drive nation-building efforts within and across their nations.

Marc Benoist
Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe

Cecelia Big Crow
Oglala Sioux Tribe

Christina Bowstring
Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe

Melissa Boyd
Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe

Nicole Buckanaga
Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe

Lisa Casarez
Mandan, Hidatsa and Arikara Nation

Laurie Davis
Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa

Joe Dunn
Standing Rock Sioux Tribe

Brandon Etoh
Standing Rock Sioux Tribe

Kendra J. Enright
Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe

Barbara Fabre
White Earth Band of Ojibwe

Vanessa Northrup
Oglala Sioux Tribe

Vanessa Northrup
Oglala Sioux Tribe

Betty Hailey
Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa

Chad Harrison
Standing Rock Sioux Tribe

Brad Hawk
Crow Creek Sioux Tribe

Lorna Latue
White Earth Band of Ojibwe

Chelsey Luger
Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa

Michelle Moran-Walking Elk
Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe

Mona Thompson
Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe

Steven Sitting Bear
Standing Rock Sioux Tribe

Ila McKay
Spirt Lake Nation

Annette Teters
Oglala Sioux Tribe

Tipi Two Young
Standing Rock Sioux Tribe

Joshua Weston
Flathead Northern Salish Tribe

Veronica Smith
Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa

Chesney St. John
Lower Sioux Indian Community

Veronica Smith
Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa

Lorna Latue
White Earth Band of Ojibwe

Ila McKay
Spirt Lake Nation

Brad Hawk
Crow Creek Sioux Tribe

Michelle Moran-Walking Elk
Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe

Lorna Latue
White Earth Band of Ojibwe

Chenzie Luger
Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa

Michelle Moran-Walking Elk
Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe

Ila McKay
Spirt Lake Nation

The diversity in career paths of Fellowship recipients has characterized this program since its inception. ...This pattern seems likely to continue.”

?1991 BUSH FOUNDATION ANNUAL REPORT

“The Fellowship opened up a WHOLE NEW WAY to look at healing. It re-built confidence in my po-tential to help patients.

?2003 BUSH FELLOW, PLYMOUTH, MINNESOTA

Don Peddie

(Please contact the Bush Foundation Communications Office for photos and contact information.)

The Fellowship opened up a WHOLE NEW WAY to look at healing. It re-built confidence in my po-tential to help patients.

—PARIN WINTER

2003 BUSH FELLOW, PLYMOUTH, MINNESOTA

Academic Bias

Don Peddie (left), the Bush Foundation's first Fellowship direc-tor, died in 2013, at the age of 93. A scratch golfer and long-time human resources executive at the Minneapolis Star and Tribune, Peddie took an impartial approach to recruiting talent—but when it came time for Fellows to chose an academic path, he couldn’t hide his strong bias in favor of Harvard Crimson.

During her selection interview, Jenkins says the challenges she outlined in the transgender community, from high rates of domes-tic violence to growing disenfranchisement caused by voter ID laws, “were new territory for 98 percent of the people on my selec-tion panel, but they gave me their stamp of approval.” Four years later, Jenkins makes time to meet with other emerging leaders looking for advice about how to apply. “Having the Bush Fellowship puts you in this lineage of leadership that is very empowering, and you want to keep that going forward.”

“Just applying for the Bush Fellowship is like taking a gradu-ation seminar on self-reflection,” says 2014 Bush Fellow Michael Strand (left), a ceramic artist who heads up North Dakota State University’s visual arts department. “It forces you to consider where you are and where you want to go so that, in a way, the benefits of being a Bush Fellow actu-ally start the moment you begin the process.”

“The first time I applied for a Bush Fellowship in 2000, I didn’t get it,” says An-drea Jenkins (right), a poet and policy aide in Minneapolis’ eighth ward who is a 2011 Bush Fellow. But the process helped set her own mission in motion. “By the time I applied again, I’d accomplished everything I’d set out to do, and now I was thinking about my appli-cation less as a ‘project’ I wanted to do and more as a life goal, which is to develop myself on behalf of the trans-gender community to be a national leader and a voice for advocacy.”

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“The Fellowship is distinctive in its flexibility, allowing Fellows to articulate what they need to become a better leader—whether through a self-designed learning experience or an academic program. It provides them with the resources and support to make it happen.”

—2015 BUSH FELLOWSHIP GUIDELINES

Listening to the challenges leaders like Jenkins see in their communities has helped the Foundation be more responsive in its grantmaking, both to organizations and to individuals. “The defining feature for the Foundation’s Fellowship programs over most of the last 50 years has been flexibility,” says Reedy. “The Bush Fellowship is really unusual in the degree to which it’s personalized—Fellows design their own fellowships.”

Even so, Kendra Enright worried she was in the wrong place when she took a break from the cafés and bars she runs on the Cheyenne River Sioux Reservation to show up for her Fellowship interview in 1999. “It seemed like everyone else I met was planning to pursue higher education. I wanted to go to paracaidic school,” says Enright. She made a strong case to the selection committee showing how her training could improve health care in her rural tribal community, which sometimes relied on ambulance teams from more than 60 miles away. “I was 42 years old, and I also wanted to show people that you can do what you want at any point in your life,” Enright says, adding that the same philosophy inspired her to start nursing school at the age of 51. “There is a ‘right time’ for a Bush Fellowship, but the timing isn’t related to age,” says Reedy. “It’s related to moments of openness in a person’s career, where for one reason or another you’re ready to take a risk, and introduce some chaos and disorder and uncertainty into your life. It has to be a moment when you’re willing to be transformed.”

At the same time, Reedy adds, “The time to start thinking about a Bush Fellowship is now—whether you’re ready or not. The power of the program is often in articulating what you want to do. I encourage people to see it as a participatory process—talking to people about your vision and getting help as you figure out the distance between where you are and where you want to go. Then when it fits that right moment of your life, you’re ready.”

The Bush Fellowship helped Enright see how every person in a community makes a difference based on how they answer challenges: “Yes or no—are those the two basic options we’ve got in life. Most of the time we live in our own little boxes, and it’s hard to lift your head up and look out when we’re so tied down to what we’re doing every day—struggling financially or struggling professionally;” she says. “Having the Bush Fellowship gave me the financial means and also that little push to get out of my box and see what I can do for my people.” It’s also why, after a few years of considering taking part in the Bush Foundation’s Native Nation Rebuilders Program, Enright applied in 2014 and earned a place in Cohort 6 (see page 30).

“I’d say if you want to make a difference,” Enright says, “the answer is usually ‘yes’.”

In January, the Foundation welcomed new Ron McKinley Philanthropy Fellows to the Foundation—Aya Johnson (left) and Avi Viswanathan (far right). Launched in 2013, the Ron McKinley Philanthropy Fellowship prepares high-potential individuals from communities underrepresented in leadership positions in philanthropy for careers in the field. The program is run by the Minnesota Council on Foundations. The Fellows are employed by MCF and placed at participating foundations for three years. Over the course of their appointment, Fellows receive significant professional development and networking opportunities.

“For foundations to remain credible partners, their staff must reflect the shifting diversity of communities,” says Alfonso Wenker, MCF’s director of diversity, equity and inclusion. “These leaders bring strong community relationships that will help position their host sites for the future.”

“2015 Ron McKinley Fellows

The Fellowship is dedicated to the late Ron McKinley, a longtime member of the philanthropic and nonprofit communities.

Learn more about the Ron McKinley Fellowships at bfdn.org/RMFPFellow.

2015 Bush Fellows

A Bush Fellowship is both a recognition of extraordinary achievement and a bet on extraordinary potential. These 23 exceptional Bush Fellows have demonstrated creative, committed leadership and have compelling visions for what more they can do for the region. The Fellowship provides up to $100,000 to help them realize their visions. The money can be used for academic programs or for self-designed programs to grow their personal impact. Since 1965, the Foundation has named more than 2,200 Bush Fellows.

Accepting applications for the 2016 Bush Fellowship beginning June 30, 2015. Learn more about the program and meet this year’s remarkable Bush Fellows at bfdn.org/2015BFP.
BY THE NUMBERS

7% increase in payments in 2014...a total of $30.5 million

$904 million in assets at the end of 2014...an increase of 1.7%

Payments for grants and fellowships in 2014:
- Education: $9.1 million (29.8%)
- Leadership: $4.3 million (14.1%)
- Native Nations: $1.4 million (4.6%)
- Other: $3.3 million (10.8%)
- Community Innovation: $10 million (32.8%)
- Communications & Convenings: $2.4 million (7.9%)

2014 Payments of $30.5 million went to:
- North Dakota: 71% (Pop. 708K)
- Minnesota: 7% (Pop. 3M)
- South Dakota: 10% (Pop. 494K)
- Native Nations: 12% (Pop. 512K)

We spent less to operate in 2014...

...since 1969, including $240.7 million to five long-term programs since the 1980s:
- Child Development (1980-2009)
- Regional Colleges (1980-2009)
- Tribal Colleges (1982-2008)
- Major Investments (2009-present)

Payments for grants and fellowships in 2014:
- 7% increase in payments in 2014...
- a total of $30.5 million

Watch for several new, multimillion dollar Major Investments in late 2015!

Grants awarded through open process:
- 56% in 2014
- 39% in 2013
- 9% in 2012

6 months after BushConnect 2014...
- 185 survey respondents reported they
- had interacted with 525 attendees
- or 3.5 people each after the event!

$337.3 million to education...

$904 million in assets at the end of 2014...an increase of 1.7%

Historically Black Colleges & Universities

1981-2008

Regional Colleges

1980-2009

Tribal Colleges

1982-2008

Major Investments

2009-present

That's 37% more in grants!
LEARNING LOG

For the last 15 years, ArtsLab has been giving urban and rural arts organizations the keys to growth.

The Jamestown Arts Center had a beautiful vision for brightening up downtown, but the business community of this east central North Dakota town of 15,000 wasn’t buying it. The multi-use arts center, located in Jamestown’s historic business district, wanted to transform a vacant lot into a community arts park. Unfortunately, the idea wasn’t gaining any traction with the business community. Jamestown Mayor Katie Andersen had a beautiful vision for Art Park. Unfortunately, the idea wasn’t gaining any traction with downtown business just didn’t see us as a serious partner in economic development and improving our downtown,” says Angela Martini, the Center’s advertising and PR coordinator: “Our relationships with city officials were deteriorating.”

But just two years later, Jamestown Mayor Katie Andersen has become one of the Arts Park’s greatest advocates, showing design plans to potential developers and assuring them they’ll want to be in the room really helped us to do a 180 on this project.”

Martini says. “But that’s what we got out of being in ArtsLab.”

ArtsLab is a peer-to-peer capacity-building program that works to strengthen small and mid-sized arts organizations—often the most overlooked groups in the arts ecology. Launched in 1997 by a pilot project of five Twin Cities foundations including Bush, ArtsLab brings together a cohort of more than a dozen arts organizations for a demanding collaborative learning experience designed to strengthen the range of skills arts groups need to succeed—from motivating board members to strategic planning to articulating the positive impact creative capital can bring to urban and rural communities. “ArtsLab actually was borne of a belief among those arts funders that providing dollars to organizations year after year for projects, without supporting building their capacity, would not likely bring them to the next level of sustainability,” says Sharon Rodning Bash, program director for ArtsLab, which became a core program of Arts Midwest in 2012.

ArtsLab participants are selected through a competitive process and chosen from a variety of disciplines. They discover plenty of common ground through weekend retreats and webinars. “One of the best parts of ArtsLab is finding out that you’re not the only one challenged by board development or fundraising or finding an audience,” says Randy Reyes, artistic director of Mu Performing Arts. “Everyone in the room is struggling with the same things.”

During Mu’s recent ArtsLab immersion, the Asian-American arts organization was faced with managing the retirement of founder and executive director Rick Shiumi, and choosing his successor. To begin that transition, ArtsLab encouraged Mu to drill down on its bedrock values and vision, before starting the search for a new leader. “It was really important to understand the value of the organization beyond the founder, and to put Mu’s mission on the forefront of the process,” says Reyes. The process also assured Reyes that “we all understood what our work was going to be” before he accepted Mu’s offer to take over the position.

The Jamestown Arts Center—which also managed a leadership transition during its ArtsLab experience—chose the Arts Park as the focus for its forward momentum. The Center began breaking down city officials how creative spaces have helped drive economic development in other small towns. They also fanned out for a series of artist-led “imagination conversations” encouraging community buy-in by asking residents to brainstorm ideas for Art Park as the focus for its forward momentum. The Center began breaking down elements they’d want to see in the Arts Park. “We really got people involved, and I’m not sure we would have thought to do all of that without the ArtsLab team,” says Martini. “The amount of wisdom in the room really helped us to do a 180 on this project. In fact, the Jamestown Arts Center generated so much public support for the Arts Park that it’s now included as part of the City’s Land Use and Transportation Plan, one of the innovative ingredients that earned the Center a 2014 Bush Foundation Community Innovation Grant.

To read a report on ArtsLab, “Capacity Building and Resilience: What Participants Learned Through ArtsLab,” visit bfdn.org/xALeval.

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**BUZZ**

A showcase for the ongoing work of more than 2,300 Bush Fellows, Rebuilders and Foundation Board members, consultants and staff. Share your Buzz and stay in touch at BMag.BushFoundation.org.

**HISTORIC CHANGE: OGLALA LAKOTA COUNTY**

South Dakota State Rep. and 2015 Bush Fellow Kevin Killer (Rebuilder Cohort 1) won re-election to serve District 27 for a fourth-term in November—and a second victory at the polls he values just as highly. By a four-to-one margin, the community he represents in Shannon County voted in favor of adopting a new name: Oglala Lakota County.

Located entirely within the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation, where 93 percent of the population is Native American, the county was named for a chief justice of the Dakota Territory Supreme Court who worked to wrest control of the Dakota Territory from the federal government.

Don Ardell (BF’72) was honored as one of two founding fathers of the wellness movement at the 2014 Global Spas & Wellness Summit in Marakisha, Morocco in September. Ardell is the current U.S. champion for his age division in both triathlon and duathlon.

Rebuilder Twyla Baker-Omaray (Cohort 2) was named president of Fort Berthold Community College in October. She previously served as director of the National Resource Center on Native American Aging at the University of North Dakota.

Don Bergin (BF’01) received a special Emmy as producer of Make It OK, a documentary that was associated with Shannon County and its high poverty rates, and replace it with a name reflecting the pride and heritage of the Oglala Lakota people.

“This is a declaration saying, ‘Hey, we are still here. That’s something to build on, and inspire our partners who invest in our communities. It is setting up for success,’” —NICK COLEMAN

Killer hopes the new name will remove the stigma that was associated with Shannon County and its high poverty rates, and replace it with a name reflecting the pride and heritage of the Oglala Lakota people.

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The Full EBAM
(EDGAR, BARRY, ANTHONY, MACAVITY)

William Kent Krueger (BF’82) won all four major awards for mystery writing for his novel Ordinary Grace, a grand slam known in the genre as “the full EBAM.” Those are the Mystery Writers of America Edgar Award, the Barry Award, the Anthony Award, and the Macavity Award. Krueger also won his fifth Minnesota Book Award in 2014 for Tamarack County.

What’s the biggest obstacle to opportunity students in North Dakota’s public schools face? “Poverty,” says Rita Kelly (BF’94), a former high school principal in Bismarck. “I can’t think of anything bigger.”

Twenty years ago, Kelly won a Bush Fellowship that allowed her to earn a Ph.D. in school administration, writing her doctoral dissertation about the experiences of Native American students in urban schools. One lesson she took away: Teachers need more training when it comes to understanding the daily challenges faced by low-income kids.

“Things look very different, depending on where you’re standing,” Kelly says, adding that it was once “a revelation” to her that schools had to send food packages home with many students to ensure they had enough to eat over the weekends. “You have to be an extraordinary child to overcome the effects of poverty, but not everyone can be that extraordinary.”

Now retired from her role overseeing gender and minority students in North Dakota’s Department of Instruction, Kelly hasn’t stopped advocating for Native American and minority students in her state. “If these problems were simple we’d have solved them a long time ago. But they’re not simple. The deeper you go, the more layers you find. It’s humbling.”

– Nick Coleman

BUSHFOUNDATION.ORG
PLANTING SEEDS OF CHANGE

As a new 2013 Bush Fellow, Chuck Waibel of Milan, Minnesota, hoped to work on an initiative to revitalize rural food deserts with winter-grown produce. He died of colon cancer in August 2013, just weeks after his Fellowship began.

Before his death, Waibel told his wife and greenhouse partner, Carol Ford, of his hopes for his memoir: “I would like to see all the people I’ve worked with on local foods come together to say goodbye to me but also hello to each other. I can imagine them meeting and greeting, finding common cause and pondering new collaborations. So invite them in and, you know, let them be sad for a while, but then bring them together to move forward and just watch what happens! It’s always been about building community. All of it has. Putting all those dedicated minds together—it’s bound to make great things grow.”

Ford is carrying on their shared work by establishing a greenhouse growers network with a memorial grant the Bush Foundation made to the Southwest Regional Sustainable Development Partnership in 2014.

—NICK COLEMAN

Reserve Bank of Minneapolis

During her three-year term, she and other Council members will provide anecdotal information and additional perspectives on economic information and reactions to district and federal economic policy.

Puppet master Sandy Spieler (BF ’86 & ’02) was honored at the annual May Day Parade. In February, The Roseville, a composition by Irish musician David Treuer (BF ’08) will debut at Asilah Ghvai (Irish Gaelic for “bright vision”), a joint concert of Opera’s board chair, Angela. The East Metro Symphony Orchestra that explores the intersections of traditional Irish and classical orchestral music.

Erik Takahata (BF ’05), deputy director of Twin Cities LISC, is leading a new national initiative to support creative placemaking in low-income areas. Supported through a partnership between the Local Initiative Support Corporation and the Kresge Foundation, the effort will invest in economic development and cultural activities that create jobs, attract patrons and build a strong sense of community among residents.

Anton Treuer (BF ’08) will leave his position as executive director of Minnesota’s American Indian Community Center to return to his role as an artist and writer directly with students. “My primary passion is teaching our students and working with our culture.”

Prudence, a new novel by David Treuer (BF ’03), was published by Riverhead in February 2015.

Roman Verostko (BF ’09), a pioneer in code-generated imagery, reprised his 1982 computer-code light show “The Magic Hand of Chance” for a special showing as part of the 2014 Northern Spark celebration. A former Benedictine priest and professor emeritus at the Minneapolis College of Art and Design, Verostko also discussed his lifetime of work at the sold-out Epix Festival, a creative-coding and data-design event that attracted guests from 14 countries to Walker Art Center in June. Learn more about his work at verostko.com.

Erma Vizenor (BF ’88), chairwoman of the White Earth Nation, spoke at the unveiling of a new memorial to Native American veterans at the Minnesota State Capitol in May: “For once, we want the facts stated and the truth known,” said Vizenor, who began pushing the state to recognize its Native warriors nearly a decade ago. “Our American Indian veterans have served this country honorably and well.”

Post and Macalaster College professor Wang Ping (BF ’00) published Ten Thousand Waves, a collection of poems from Wings Poets. A film inspired by the title poem was featured at the Museum of Modern Art in New York in 2014.

Composer Judith Lange Zaimont’s (BF ’05) new Symphony No. 4, PURE, COOL, (Winter) had its premiere in Vienna, Austria, in November. Performed by the Janacek Philharmonic Orchestra Ostrava under Nils Moos, the new five-movement symphony was conceived as an exploration of the various states of water.

BUSH BOARD & STAFF NEWS

The Board welcomes two new members: Kathy Annette (BF ’88), chairwoman of the Minnesota Council on the Arts, and Erik Takeshita (BF ’03), was published by Riverhead in February 2015.

D eciding when a person is ready for a Bush Fellowship is “an art, not a science,” according to Martha Lee, who served as manager of the Bush Fellowship Program before leaving in December 2014 to start her own consulting practice. “I think it starts with a person who has some scars. A person who’s been knocked down and had to pick themselves up—people who know what they don’t know, who are at the point where the investment in them could really make a difference.”

Hired in 1994 by Foundation President Humphrey Doerrmann and Bush Leadership Fellowship Director John Archabal, Lee started in a part-time role that required some heavy lifting. Literally. “It was my job to send out the application forms, sort out the information, request the references...there were bags of mail. And it was my job to open them up.”

“There were so many bright, accomplished people who were Fellow- ship applicants or were working at the Foundation—I was just praying I wouldn’t sound stupid,” Lee remembers, laughing. But by the time her mentor Archabal retired in 2009, she had a firm grounding in the Foundation’s long legacy of investing in individuals.

During her 20 years at the Foundation, she says, she learned two things. “I found out that the Foundation needed the grantees as much as the grantees needed the Foundation, because we learned so much from them. Second, this idea of providing an invitation to people to step outside their comfort zone in the service of their own learning and growth is crucial. Not a lot of other foundations do it, so my hope is that the Bush Foundation will continue to invest in bright, accomplished individuals with great potential.”

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—NICK COLEMAN
WHO IS JENNIFER ALSTAD?

Five facts about Foundation Board member Jennifer Alstad

1 MULTICULTURAL, MULTILINGUAL: Adopted as an infant from Korea, Alstad was raised in a Norwegian-American family on a “century farm” near Granite Falls, Minnesota—the same town where Archibald G. Bush grew up. In addition to Norwegian and French, she is fluent in Mandarin and moved to Taiwan to study the language in 2001.

2 BAKED TO PERFECTION: To improve her award-winning entry in the Minnesota State Fair’s 4-H baking competition, Alstad baked 200 practice loaves of pineapple bread with a cinnamon-and-coconut topping at the age of 13.

3 COMMUNITY CONTRIBUTOR: “My belief system stems from growing up in a place where you just can’t just pick things to do because you’re good at them—you have to do them because they need to get done.” Alstad served as president of her class from seventh to tenth grades, and earned varsity letters in tennis, basketball and track for the Granite Falls Kilowatts. “I was a terrible athlete, but they needed everyone so they had enough kids for practice.”

4 EARLY RISER: After tenth grade, Alstad earned a scholarship for the University of Minnesota, becoming the first high-school-age student to enroll under the state’s new postsecondary options. (Her parents made sure she lived in a dorm for her class from seventh to tenth grades, and earned varsity letters in tennis, basketball and track for the Granite Falls Kilowatts. “I was a terrible athlete, but they needed everyone so they had enough kids for practice.”)

5 FORCE FOR THE FUTURE: The mother of a first-grader and a preschooler, Alstad was named Minnesota’s Young Entrepreneur of the Year in 2000 and made Minnesota Business Magazine’s “20 under 20” in 2013. She joined the Foundation’s Board in 2010 and believes passionately that the Foundation is “an important force for good and innovation” in the region. She likes to ask questions to help decide what work needs to be done. Why does it matter? What difference does it make? How will it make things better in the future? “I think we are true to what Archibald Bush envisioned—to ask how your gifts and challenges can be used in the world, to make it a better and stronger place. We have to hold those things up.”

—NICK COLEMAN

BUSHFOUNDATION.ORG

Robert Jones, Tim Mathern (BF’98) and Peter Pennekamp ended their Board terms in February 2015.

Board member Jan Malcolm received the Lifetime Achievement Award at the 2014 Leaders in Health Care event sponsored by Minnesota Business magazine.

Board members Jan Malcolm and Wendy Nelson, former president Anita Pampusch and current president Jen Ford Reedy were among the 84 local women honored by The George Family Foundation’s Celebrating Twin Cities Women Leaders event in September.

Beth Norris transitioned from a part-time office assistant position to a new role as full-time grants administration assistant in November. She’s been with the Foundation since 2008.

Community Innovation Association’s Rachel Orville left the Foundation in January to farm on a CSA in Maine.

The Bush Cities Business’ editorial staff named Foundation President Jen Ford Reedy as one of the 100 People in Know in 2015.

Board member Michael Solberg is the new CEO of Bell State Bank, headquartered in Fargo.

Ron McKinley Philanthropy Fellow and Community Innovation staff member Dameun Strange and his band Shiro Dames opened for Macy Gray in September at the First Line Music Café.

Board member Dee Thomas received the MAAP Exemplary Award from the Minnesota Association of Alternative Programs for outstanding dedication, service and commitment to alternative education.

After more than 11 years with the Foundation, Communications Manager Victoria Tirrell will leave in spring 2015 to launch a consulting practice and pursue publication of her novel. She is the editor of “In the City” magazine and worked extensively on Giving Strength, the Foundation’s previous magazine.

Ron McKinley Philanthropy Fellow and Community Innovation staff member Coya H. White Hat-Artchoker was named among “The Top 26 Significant Queer Women of 2014” by editors of Velvetpark, a lesbian and feminist arts and culture platform based in New York City. Born and raised on the Rosebud Reservation, White Hat-Artchoker is a founding member of the First Nations Two Spirit Collective; she has worked as an activist since she was 15 years old.

“I want to figure out how to make this world a place where people feel they belong,” June Noronha, senior manager on the Native Nations Team, says in a video for Green Card Voices, a Twin Cities-based nonprofit that shares first-person immigration stories from foreign-born Americans. A Macalester College graduate, Noronha was born in Kenya to Indian parents and was newly deported from the U.S. when Kenya revoked her right of entry after Kenyan independence and the United Kingdom did not honor her citizenship. Hear the story of how Sen. Hubert Humphrey—a former Macalester student who had helped find her a path to U.S. citizenship—went to her aid.

—NICK COLEMAN

June Noronha at 17, just before leaving Kenya to study in Saint Paul.

PHOTO: BRUCE SILCOX
FORECAST
Mark your calendar for upcoming convenings, and new grant and fellowship opportunities. Watch for live updates at bfdn.org/Forecast.

COMMUNITY INNOVATION

2015 Bush Prize for Community Innovation (Up to $500,000)
ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS THROUGH APRIL 30, 2015
bfdn.org/BP
The Bush Prize honors and supports innovative organizations with a track record of making great ideas happen, providing creative capital for the organizations to use however they choose.

Read more about the Bush Prize on page 10.

Community Innovation Grants ($10,000 to $200,000)
ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS BEGINNING SEPTEMBER 9, 2015
bfdn.org/CIGrants
Community Innovation Grants support communities to use problem-solving processes that lead to more effective, equitable, and sustainable solutions.

Read more about Community Innovation Grants on page 8.

2016 Education Ecosystem Grants (Up to $200,000)
ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS SPRING 2016
bfdn.org/EdEco
This flexible open grant program provides operating support to organizations that create an education ecosystem where other organizations can succeed in reducing disparities and improving outcomes for all students in the region.

Watch for our announcement this fall of multiple new Major Investments in education. Read more about our work in education on page 18.

NATIVE NATIONS

Native Nation Rebuilders Program
ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS JULY 21 - AUGUST 27, 2015
bfdn.org/Reb
The Native Nation Rebuilders Program annually chooses up to 30 existing and emerging Native leaders who want to strengthen their leadership skills and nation-building knowledge so they may be instrumental in moving their nations toward realization of their tribes’ unique goals.

Read more about the Native Nation Rebuilders Program on page 30.

LEADERSHIP

2016 Bush Fellowships (Up to $100,000)
ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS JUNE 30 – JULY 30, 2015
bfdn.org/BFP
The Bush Fellowship is both a recognition of extraordinary achievement and a bet on extraordinary potential. Funds can be used for academic programs or for self-designed programs to develop their leadership capacity.

Read more about Bush Fellowships on page 24.

2016 Ron McKinley Philanthropy Fellowships
ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS LATE SUMMER 2015
bfdn.org/RMPFellow
Created by the Bush Foundation and now a program of the Minnesota Council on Foundations, the Ron McKinley Philanthropy Fellowships prepare individuals from communities underrepresented in philanthropy for careers at foundations.

Read more about Ron McKinley Philanthropy Fellowships on page 32.

2016 Leadership Network Grants (Up to $200,000)
ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS SPRING 2016
bfdn.org/LNG
This flexible open grant program allows us to support the good work that others are doing to develop the leadership capacity of the region.

Learn more about Leadership Network Grants on page 28.

EDUCATION

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CONVENINGS

Event Sponsorship (Up to $50,000)
bfdn.org/Sponsor
Grants from this program build on our belief that the region will become more resilient and innovative when leaders are better equipped and better connected to effectively lead change. By supporting a range of community events, we increase access to networking opportunities.

Read more about Event Sponsorship on page 5, and keep up with events coming to your community at bfdn.org/Esponsor

bushCONNECT
GUTHRIE THEATER
MINNEAPOLIS
May 4, 2016
TICKETS AT BUSHCONNECT.ORG
bushCONNECT is a regional leadership networking event powered by the Bush Foundation and created in partnership with nearly 30 organizations from Minnesota, North Dakota and South Dakota. The day is about the connections people will make when we bring together different networks of leaders. It’s about thinking bigger and thinking differently about what’s possible in your community.

Read more about bushCONNECT 2014 on page 3.

OTA
BISMARCK, NORTH DAKOTA
April 24, 2015
SIDUX FALLS, SOUTH DAKOTA
August 28, 2015
TICKETS AT WEAREOTA.COM
Spring and fall, people from across three OTAs (South Dak-, North Dak-, Minnes-) gather to transform them-selves and the region. We hope you will join OTA-ites, Bush Fellows, Rebuild- ers and Foundation staff at one or both events.

Stay current on all our grant, fellowship and convening opportunities at bfdn.org/Forecast. And keep in touch at bMag@BushFoundation.org.
C on the way we build neighborhoods shape our sense of community and inspire us.” That was the question that brought Repa Mekha to the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University for his 2005 Bush Fellowship. “I started wondering why there were no persons of color influencing the way our environments were being built, and thinking about ways we could bring a new perspective.”

Bringing more input from color into community planning is now part of Mekha’s mission as president and CEO of Nexus Community Partners, which makes grants to community- and culture-based organizations to ensure development projects are built on community strengths.

When Mekha is looking for inspiration himself, he visits one of the first projects Nexus supported, the Cultural Wellness Center that serves the diverse Phillips and Powderhorn neighborhoods of Minneapolis.

“The moment you walk in you exhale. You feel this sense of freedom and this sense of release. It’s the most powerful experience in a physical environment I’ve ever had—and this is before anyone says anything to you,” says Mekha. “I go there sometimes and I sit; I might read and I might not. The space allows me to just be. In terms of my own spirit, my own sense of groundedness, it’s one of the best places I know.”

2015 BUSH PRIZE SELECTION PANEL – MINNESOTA
Montana Bryand
DeAnna Cummings 1, 5
Natalie Rasmussen
Timothy Rose
Alfonso Wenker 4
Kayla Yang-Best 6
Tracey Zepher 2, 3
2015 BUSH FELLOWSHIP SELECTION PANELS
Ta-coumba Aiken 2
Tia-Candra Aiken 3
Vickie Allen 1
Lee Antell 1
Lisa Bedine
Gene Borgia
Cheryl Boyd
Donald Day 2
Troy Geist
Michael Goar
William Goetz
Dwight Gourneau 1
Andrea Jenkins 1
Tim Jennings
Margaret Anderson Kellihier 1
Matt Kilian
Loïs Lopez
Elise Moldk
Norea Mehta 2
Dana Nelson
Natalie Rasmussen
Timothy Rose
Alfonso Wenker 4
Kayla Yang-Best 6
Tracey Zepher 2, 3
*Advisory Committees selected 2015 Bush Prize winners from their respective applicant pool. Jessie Veeder also participated in the 2014 Bush Prize Selection Panel for North Dakota.

LEGEND
1. Bush Fellow
2. Native Nation Rebuilder
3. Consultant
4. Ron McKinley Philanthropy Fellow
5. Bush Board Member
6. Bush Staff Member

REPA MEKHA
President and CEO
Nexus Community Partners
Saint Paul, Minnesota

Bush Foundation staff at a September 2014 retreat.

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Learn more about the Cultural Wellness Center at pccwc.org.