FEEST
Taking on school lunches

HOMELESSNESS
New allies emerge

HIGHER ED
A former teacher’s rewarding promise

THE LONG HAUL
A critical path that could change the course of philanthropy
Committed to Lasting Change

Seattle Foundation’s role is to create greater equity and opportunity in all aspects of a healthy community. To advance this ideal, we work every day with our philanthropic and community partners. Uniting passion and discipline creates lasting change. This intersection is the heart and science of philanthropy.

Every day, I have the great privilege of meeting leaders on the frontlines of community change. From forward-leaning CEOs to fearless community leaders, these are the people who believe that together we can and must do more to make Seattle a stronger, more vibrant community for all.

*Heart & Science*, a new quarterly magazine, will share how philanthropists, community organizations and Seattle Foundation build partnerships to create lasting change.

In this inaugural issue of *Heart & Science*, we elevate *Basic Needs* and *Vibrant Communities* – two essential aspects of society that must be supported in order for a community to thrive.

The need to invest in affordable housing and nutritious food, and reduce the number of people without shelter has never been greater. For the past two decades we – the public and private sectors, philanthropic organizations and the community – have been collectively working to reduce homelessness. And we’re just not there, as evidenced by the many tents dotting the highway corridors and reminding us of the human suffering right here in our community.

*Vibrant Communities* highlights our investments in resident-led solutions to community challenges and underscores the importance of partnering with community-based organizations.

I hope *Heart & Science* inspires and motivates you. Subscribe to our blog seattlefoundation.org/Blog to keep up-to-date between quarterly issues. Together, we can address disparities and create greater equity and opportunity for all.

In partnership,

TONY MESTRES, PRESIDENT & CEO

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**Heart & Science**

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President & CEO
Tony Mestres

Vice President, Communications & Marketing
Mary Grace Roske

Vice President, Community Programs
Michael Brown

Editors
Michael Nank, Maggie Wykowski

Design
206Inc.

Photography
Mike Kane, Michael Nank

Special Thanks:
Sarah Meyer, Bill Vesninski & Kim Wright

To subscribe, email heartandscience@seattlefoundation.org or visit: seattlefoundation.org/heartandscience
**Homelessness: State of Emergency Persists**

Late last year, Seattle Mayor Ed Murray and King County Executive Dow Constantine declared a state of emergency over homelessness. Proclamations of a state of emergency are usually called in response to natural disasters; however, local deaths related to homelessness surpassed those caused by natural disasters in 2015. Sixty-six people who were homeless died by Sept. 2015. Murray stated that 47 of those people died in the streets. Struggles for safely dealing with homeless encampments like The Jungle – an area under I-5 where hundreds of people have lived – continue. Significant public health, fire, safety, structural and environmental risks plague The Jungle. But with few places to safely and legally live outside, and insufficient shelters and affordable housing, people like those living in The Jungle have become more isolated from service providers available to connect them to housing.

The 2016 One Night Count survey found nearly 11,000 individuals were homeless (unsheltered, in transitional housing or shelters) in King County and of those people 4,505 were without shelter. Seattle saw a 19 percent increase in people sleeping outside compared to 2015. *(Read more on pg. 6.)*

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**Family Philanthropy**

**Raised Healthy, Wealthy & Wise**

In her book *Raised Healthy, Wealthy and Wise*, author Coventry Edwards-Pitt demonstrates how the “wealthy” aspect of this trio can make it difficult for children to develop into purpose-driven, independent and successful individuals. The book compiles case studies of children from wealthy families who became successful inheritors, and chronicles the choices parents made and messages shared that influenced their children’s transition into adulthood. Touching on early childhood practices from allowance to who pays for college, the book shares strategies so parents can allow their children to struggle, fail and recover from missteps and challenges. Recognizing parents are hardwired to help their kids, she shows readers the difference between a helping hand and a hindrance that prevents growth and learning.

Philanthropy has emerged as an excellent avenue to introduce concepts of wealth, community and responsibility to children. Such opportunities create space for families to reflect on their shared story, values and desired legacy.

Learn More:
Call 206.515.2111 or email philanthropicservices@seattlefoundation.org

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**GiveTogether Puts Focus on Child Welfare**

In 2015 alone, more than 1,300 youth were removed from their homes and placed in King County’s child welfare system. Outcomes for these children vary greatly, and include challenges in educational attainment, physical and mental health, and achieving long-term stability.

This spring, GiveTogether – a collective giving effort that combines Seattle Foundation resources and expertise with community philanthropists’ interests – focused on supporting parents in crisis to keep their children out of the system and ensuring foster care placements meet children’s cultural needs.

To Learn More About GiveTogether:
Visit: seattlefoundation.org/GiveTogether
or contact Christine Stansfield at 206.515.2109
Q. What drives Seattle Foundation’s work in Basic Needs and Vibrant Communities?

A. Creating equity and opportunity for every individual, every family and every community in the region is at the core of what we do at Seattle Foundation. It’s our true north. Basic Needs and Vibrant Communities are fundamental to ensure all communities thrive.

Grounded community partnerships are one of the reasons why our Healthy Community Framework, which identifies eight essential aspects of society that must be supported in order for a community to thrive, is so important. If we just move the needle on one of those elements it’s great for that particular area, but it’s not great for the entire community. We can get everyone a job, but if we’re still having an affordable housing crisis, or folks need to commute two hours in order to get to work, then we haven’t gotten to that healthy, vibrant community.

Q. What is the “heart and science” of philanthropy?

A. The heart of philanthropy is the interests and passions of generous people. The science uses deeper data to direct those passions in effective ways, informing strategies on complex issues. The capability to support philanthropists with both the “heart” and the “science” is unique to a community foundation and why we can be such a valuable partner.

Q. What do you see missing in philanthropy today?

A. There’s a system coordination piece that needs to develop, there’s a deeper level partnership across sectors that needs to develop – and not top down, but bottom up. There has to be more engagement with the community. We have to avoid fragmenting an already fragmented system.

Communities of Opportunity, a joint program of Seattle Foundation and King County, provides a model for how to disrupt this type of fragmentation. The effort draws leadership from the community, nonprofits, philanthropy and government. It’s not seamless to have that many parties actively collaborating, but the outcome of greater impact and community change warrants the effort.

Q. Do you see a critical path that could change the course of philanthropy?

A. We should really be in this for the long haul. But there is whatever fear that keeps institutions, board members and individuals from playing the long game.

It’s taken us generations to end up in many of these situations, so do we honestly think that three years, or five or 10, is going to get us out of it? No. We have an obligation to play the long game and do it intentionally. Impactful philanthropy is, by its very nature, a long-term investment and we need to believe in and remain committed to those investments, through highs and lows.

Q. What gives you hope for creating equity and economic opportunity for all?

A. We live in a region where, in many ways, the City and the County are trailblazers in terms of promoting the importance of equity and social justice. This has given philanthropic organizations a space to move in to. We had talked about addressing disparities, but using common language, like “equity” and “opportunity”, means that when we are moving forward with systems change around economic opportunity or educational attainment, we are all looking through a collective lens that provides for a much more structured and strategic conversation.

So for me, the past two to three years have been the most heartening when it comes to how equity and opportunity are addressed. It’s not a catch phrase. And if we want to remain a vibrant region, then we need to collectively ensure that we have an equitable community, both from a racial and income perspective.
NEW ALLIES EMERGE TO TACKLE HOMELESSNESS
by Stuart Eskinazi

His two feet pulsating in pain from serious infections that had set in, Jim, a Vietnam veteran, resorted to living in the trees of a Kirkland area greenbelt. It hurt less to stay in the air than to be on the ground.

But he had to eat. So each day, Jim would climb down to rummage through garbage bins of the homes lining the greenbelt, looking for food. For more than 30 years — almost as long as he had been home from Vietnam — Jim had been homeless.

Basic survival had become most of his life — that is, until a homeowner opened his heart, a nonprofit steered him toward services, and a landlord took a chance. For the past two years, after living in trees, Jim has lived comfortably in a one-bedroom apartment on the Eastside.

Gwen Hosea-Mimms, a program coordinator with the YWCA of Seattle-King-Snohomish, helped secure housing for Jim by negotiating a lease with a landlord. She recalls visiting him for the first time after he had moved into his new place.

“I have a door of my own that I can close,” Jim told Hosea-Mimms, who began calling him “Smiley” because his smile couldn’t have been any bigger at that moment.

On a typical night in King County, nearly 11,000 men, women and children stay in homeless shelters, transitional housing or sleep outside because they have no other options.
MULTIPLE FACTORS DRIVING HOMELESSNESS HIGHER

Unfortunately, Jim’s story is not uncommon. On a typical night in King County, nearly 11,000 men, women and children stay in homeless shelters, transitional housing or sleep outside because they have no other options.

Our region’s skyrocketing rents, combined with a scarcity of available housing, make it nearly impossible for low-income individuals and families to obtain a permanent and affordable place to live.

Our region’s skyrocketing rents, combined with a scarcity of available housing, make it nearly impossible for low-income individuals and families to obtain a permanent and affordable place to live.

The average median rent in King County is a staggering $1,450, while in Seattle it’s closer to $1,660. For about half of the renters in King County, rent is unaffordable – meaning they pay more than 30 percent of their total income towards housing. For low-income households earning half of renter median income or less in King County ($22,500) in 2014, the demand for affordable units exceeded supply by more than 47,000 units.

The shortage of affordable housing inventory is not the only challenge in moving people off the streets or out of temporary shelters. Several complex social issues are linked to homelessness.

Many people who are homeless have jobs—but their wages either are too low or their work is too seasonal to secure stable housing. Domestic violence can also be a contributing factor. One study found that 92 percent of homeless women had experienced severe physical or sexual assault at some point in their lives.

Nearly 36 percent of homeless persons are living with a mental illness. Individuals returning to the community after discharge from mental health facilities, the foster care system or state prisons also struggle to find the stable housing they need to anchor them as they search for jobs and services to help them succeed. Drug and alcohol addiction are often factors as well.

Youth homelessness shares many of the same drivers, but LGBTQ youth are notably overrepresented. In many cases, LGBTQ youth face homelessness after being rejected by family or their communities because of their identity.

FRAMEWORK FOR A HEALTHY COMMUNITY

Without stable housing, individuals and families are thrown into a tailspin of uncertainty and the pool of greater Seattle residents facing homelessness grows every day. Research demonstrates that swiftly meeting the basic needs of housing and food allows children and adults to stay on their feet and plan beyond tomorrow.
As one of eight elements within Seattle Foundation’s Healthy Community Framework, Basic Needs is comprised of three strategies: to address and positively impact homelessness, build more affordable housing and alleviate hunger.

**A NEW ALLY: LANDLORDS**

With spotty rental backgrounds and few financial resources, people who are homeless routinely find their searches for rental housing end unsuccessfully at the application process. The Landlord Liaison Project, however, provides landlords safeguards and incentives to relax their screening criteria for the homeless, thus increasing the availability of private-market rental housing for persons trying to move from homelessness to permanent housing.

“"If we truly are going to end homelessness in our region, it’s going to take all of us.”

- Mona Tschurwald, YWCA Project Director

Since launching in 2009, the Landlord Liaison Project has helped find stable, permanent housing for some 2,400 families and individuals in Greater Seattle. The program partners with more than 200 landlords — some of whom own multiple properties and others who have just one. The program, which YWCA designed, is a best-practice model now being emulated across the country.

“"In this market, landlords can fill their units easily,” said Mona Tschurwald, who directs the project for the YWCA. “They really are going a step above and beyond in renting to people who previously have been homeless.”

Back in Kirkland, Jim might never have found housing had it not been for an area homeowner who knew nothing about the nuances of the social service system — but was ready to help. After spotting Jim digging through his garbage, he began placing a fresh sandwich atop the bin each day.

It took persistence and patience, but eventually the homeowner won Jim’s trust and drove him to visit Congregations for the Homeless, an Eastside nonprofit that the homeowner found online.

The nonprofit linked Jim to the medical help he needed to save his ailing feet from amputation. It also directed him to a shelter where he spent his nights with a hot meal and a warm bed. A partner agency of the YWCA, Congregations for the Homeless also enrolled him in the Landlord Liaison Project to help him find a permanent home.

“If we truly are going to end homelessness in our region, it’s going to take all of us,” Tschurwald said. “It’s not just nonprofits, government, or religious groups. It’s everyone — from a homeowner who is committed to help to a landlord who is willing to give a guy a break. If everyone does just a little bit, we can make it happen.”

Organizations across Greater Seattle are working to prevent homelessness, increase affordable housing options and provide people in need access to food and basic support. To learn more about our work with these committed organizations visit seattlefoundation.org/communityimpact.
Across the US, students line up daily at school cafeterias where options of fresh and nutritious foods are sparse. For Fatma Zubeir, an 18-year-old senior at Highline Public Schools’ Evergreen Campus in White Center, her daily lunchtime options come off the line in the form of pizza and chicken burgers with fries.

Depending on the day, Fatma and her fellow students see additions to the menu: Nacho Tuesday or Teriyaki Day for example. But if you want, Fatma says, you can have pizza or a chicken burger with fries every single day at school for lunch.

Off-campus choices for healthy foods are also limited. With nearly 80 percent of students receiving free or reduced lunch, school meals are the only option available to them. That’s why improving school lunches is at the heart of ensuring young people have access to healthy food.

This is also the mission of the Food Empowerment Education and Sustainability Team, or FEEST, formed to tackle getting healthy, culturally appropriate food in schools. FEEST uses food as the catalyst to empower and develop young people as leaders and change agents, citing school lunch as emblematic of the national need to strengthen our cultural competency. “Our mission is to set the table for young people to do the systems change work necessary to seize opportunity and address the challenges they see in their lives and communities.”

- Lisa Chen, executive director of FEEST

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opportunity and address the challenges they see in their lives and communities,” explained Lisa Chen, executive director of FEEST.

Now in its seventh year, FEEST holds a weekly dinner program at Evergreen Campus, as well as Chief Sealth High School in Delridge. “There’s the systems change work that we do and the culture shift change that we do and a lot of that happens at our dinners,” added Chen. Community dinners are the centerpiece of FEEST’s engagement. FEEST dinners typically start right after school and run until 6 p.m., with most participants walking straight from their last class right into the dinner program.

The dinners take place in the high school home economics classroom. Students lead the majority of activities. “This is a youth led and youth driven program,” Chen points out. “We have an agreement called ‘pass the power, share the power’ so we give a lot of trust to the young people that we work with. They actually know so much more than they have been given space to share.”

These weekly dinners are an opportunity for young people to re-imagine their relationship with food. The dinners are mostly improvised. Students are provided fresh vegetables, spices and other ingredients and they are asked to prepare a meal using their imagination only. “When young people go through a dinner program, some of them are seeing kale and carrots in the fresh form for the first time and it’s completely changing their relationship to food,” Chen noted.

But for some students, the FEEST program is not always an easy sell. “After my classes were done, the first thing I wanted to do was head home,” Fatma recalls. “What do I need from this place? I’ve already spent eight hours here.” But one day her friends finally convinced Fatma to try it out and she was sold. “I came into the dinner and met the directors there and it was a cool space. People were blasting music and there was food everywhere and there was a lot of talk and laughter in the air – people were having fun.”

For Fatma, the dinners were an eye-opener. She came across various fresh vegetables that she had never heard of. And even if she had seen the vegetables used by her parents, Fatma never ate them herself.

Students who attend FEEST dinners are encouraged to join a leadership development cohort where they choose a community action project to improve health disparities and the built environment around them, making access to healthy foods more possible.

One of those campaigns developed by the youth led leadership team is improving school foods at the Evergreen Campus, which Fatma has helped lead over the last two years. “The school district recognizes that students aren’t eating – or that they are throwing a lot of their food away,” said Elizabeth Ortega, program director at FEEST. “It’s very much on the nutrition instructor’s mind that lunch is not working as well as it could and we need to get feedback from young people. FEEST is the way to do that.”

To find out why young people were not eating their school food, FEEST conducted an extensive survey asking students how they felt lunches could be improved. “It was very clear from the survey that people wanted more veggie options because there are so many Muslim students that could only eat Halal meat,” Chen pointed out. In addition, the survey found students were passing on, or throwing away, the existing vegetable options as they just couldn’t compete taste-wise with more appealing, but less healthy foods.

“When young people go through a dinner program, some of them are seeing kale and carrots in the fresh form for the first time and it’s completely changing their relationship to food.”

- Lisa Chen, executive director of FEEST
FEEST’s approach and work embodies Seattle Foundation’s Vibrant Communities strategy to prioritize resident-led efforts and leadership development to impact systems and community change in our region.

FEEST is a partner in Seattle Foundation and King County’s Communities of Opportunity initiative in the White Center neighborhood. Communities of Opportunity (COO) supports community-identified goals that increase equity and positively influence policies, systems and practices within local communities and across the region. To date, COO has invested more than $7.5 million across King County. COO communities not only represent where the greatest health, social, economic and racial inequities exist in our region, but also where the greatest opportunities exist for community investment and impact.

These findings prompted the students to conduct a large taste test with 100 students giving feedback on recipes from FEEST youth. As a result, FEEST has now started a student advisory committee with the school’s nutritionist, giving direct feedback and accountability to support successful change.

The survey and taste test have had a measurable impact on some of the food that is now being offered at Evergreen Campus. Healthy smoothies, a taste test favorite, can now be found as an option as students pass through the lunch line. Roasted asparagus and broccoli are also new to the rotation.

In the process, FEEST has found that going after something like school foods is not an easy undertaking. There are restrictions school districts have to consider at the federal level, restrictions at the state level, and just sheer local budgetary realities.

FEEST recognizes that it is unrealistic to expect all students to want the healthy option. But when students taste the fresh version of food they typically eat, it can be such a huge shift for them. “We’re in it for the long haul,” Ortega exclaimed. “You can’t ignore systems change and change all of the school’s foods and make it all healthy without actually bringing the students along with us.”

It’s this long-term, systems change approach that teaches teens how to work through a complex system to make meaningful change. In doing so, FEEST develops young students to be savvy leaders that can spot problems and are emboldened to find solutions now and in the future.

Meanwhile, Fatma continues to work not only on the weekly dinners but she has taken a leadership role in FEEST meetings that focus on policy and advocacy work — work that furthers systems change. “The battle with school lunches is never ending,” Fatma said. “We’re half way there you could say, but we have a long way to go. But as long as they see that we won’t stop, I feel like change will happen.”

To learn more about organizations like FEEST, contact Aaron Robertson at 206.622.2294 or email a.robertson@seattlefoundation.org.
Teacher Loren Smith realized so much potential in her elementary school students who were immigrants that she made a promise to them – and to herself: “Work hard, stay in school and I will pay your way to go to college.”

Through an 18-year partnership with Seattle Foundation, Smith has converted her promise into rewards by creating a scholarship fund that has benefited well over 130 students.

“These kids are so incredibly deserving...even at a young age, they realize they have to work twice as hard...”
- Loren Smith

And yet, due to financial constraints and family obligations, advancing to college for these students is often not a possibility. “These are highly capable students, who have so much to contribute to society,” says Smith. Her scholarship is one of the few available to English Language Learner (ELL) students.

Smith grew up in Chicago in an intellectually stimulating family environment where education was highly valued. She went on to become a teacher. Inspired at how immigrant students in her classes demonstrated an eagerness and enthusiasm to learn, she became certified as an ELL teacher in Seattle.

After her mother died in 1998 and left her an inheritance, Smith partnered with Seattle Foundation to set up a scholarship fund in her mother’s name for the 20 young students to whom she had made her promise. A handful of Smith’s former students eventually benefited from the Nora Stone Smith Scholarship, but the fund’s promise was not being fully realized until Smith, at the encouragement of Seattle Foundation, extended the scholarship’s reach to any ELL student in Washington state.

“Seattle Foundation has helped me fine-tune the scholarship to be my vision of what I want it to be,” Smith says. “I love working with the staff because they’ve been so responsive to my ideas for making the application process more accessible to students with limited English proficiency. They have also helped widely promote the scholarship, so we now have students from throughout Washington applying.”

Each winter, the applications roll in. No matter how many she reads, Smith cannot help but be moved by what the young scholars write. Many are refugees who recount the challenges and tragedies they faced before ever arriving in this country. Almost all express a desire to apply what they will learn in college to improve the health of their communities.

It was at a Seattle Foundation scholarship award event where Smith met some of the scholarship winners in person. She says she found it “incredibly emotional and rewarding.”

Although 95 high school seniors applied in 2016, only a small percentage of them will be awarded. The need simply outweighs the resource, which is why Smith continually is looking for more funding. “My only regret,” she says, “is that I can’t fund them all.”

Smith’s scholarship is one of nearly 50 scholarships Seattle Foundation manages to create equity and opportunity for students needing financial assistance. For more information about how you can support students or to apply for a scholarship fund, contact us at 206.515.2119 or visit seattlefoundation.org/scholarships.
Facing Homelessness, an organization founded by architect/photographer Rex Hohlbein, raises awareness of those living without shelter and other basic needs through the sharing of photos and personal stories.

For this photo Hohlbein commented: “Addy is an amazing person, wise way beyond her 4th grade years. Addy and her family have gone through some tough times living through homelessness, just recently getting into housing.”

Visit seattlefoundation.org/heartandscience for more #truestories.

#TRUESTORIES