

WIKIMEDIA/GERRYSHAW

Advancing Research and Practice

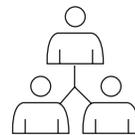
REPORT TO COMMUNITY 2017



“

We invest in big ideas in science and civil society. We support discoveries in their earliest stages that will ultimately improve human health, democracy and understanding. We seek out curiosity, collaboration, leadership and courage, knowing that the first steps in solving complex problems are steps into the unknown—and they are rarely taken alone.

”



Introduction	3
Investing in the Next Generation of Leaders in the Biomedical Sciences	4
Strengthening Public Engagement with Science and Evidence	7
Designing for Greater Trust and Participation in Journalism and Civic Life	10
Building Progress through Collaboration	13
Board of Directors, Scientific Advisory Committee and Staff	20
Mission and Guiding Principles	21
2017 Grants	22
Financials	23

Advancing Research and Practice to Address Issues that Matter to Communities



Connections across different types of knowledge and experience fuel advances in both science and society. In this Report to Community, we are pleased to highlight growing networks that are forming to bring people together around envisioning new solutions, at a time

when many are striving to find meaningful ways to engage in public life and scientific discovery.

After years of working in parallel on effective ways to communicate about vaccine safety, Dartmouth College political science Professor Brendan Nyhan and Vermont Department of Health's Christine Finley are now working together to design a rigorous real-world evaluation of what approaches work in their local context.

The two teams were brought together by the Science Communication Partnership Awards—an open call for collaboration between researchers and practitioners. The awards themselves were also the result of a partnership: The Rita Allen Foundation and the National Academy of Sciences created the award as part of the Arthur M. Sackler Colloquium on the Science of Science Communication in November 2017 and a collaborative report, *Communicating Science Effectively: A Research Agenda*.

Other highlights include:

- The **Rita Allen Foundation Scholars** program, which champions outstanding early-career scientists investi-

gating cancer, neuroscience, immunology and pain. Our newest Scholars are working to solve mysteries of gut microbes, chronic pain and brain development. Read more in **Investing in the Next Generation of Leaders in the Biomedical Sciences (Page 4)**.

- The Foundation is helping to increase investments, knowledge and coalitions that advance the role of science and evidence in our society. This includes efforts aimed at enhancing science coverage in the news, gathering knowledge about Americans' attitudes toward science, and prototyping new approaches to improve the flow of accurate information. Read more in **Strengthening Public Engagement with Science and Evidence (Page 7)**.
- An informed society depends on a strong news ecosystem. In the face of unprecedented challenges to the news industry, the Foundation is investing in real-world research and practical tools to boost the capabilities of newsrooms, including the Coral Project's Ask and Talk platforms, which are transforming readers' interactions with news. Read more in **Designing for Greater Trust and Participation in Journalism and Civic Life (Page 10)**.

Advancing productive engagement with science and democratic dialogue across our society requires both curiosity collaboration. In the face of new challenges, we are inspired by new partnerships to address a shared sense of urgency and a need to work together for a better future, one that is informed by evidence, determination and democratic ideals.

Elizabeth Good Christopherson
President and Chief Executive Officer

Investing in the Next Generation of Leaders in the Biomedical Sciences

✓ The Rita Allen Foundation Scholars program provides critical support to outstanding early-career scientists, giving them the freedom to seek new avenues of discovery. As their work increasingly combines biomedical research with physics, computational science and other fields, Scholars are also finding new ways to share their stories and expertise with colleagues, collaborators and broader audiences.

→ Rita Allen Foundation Scholars Class of 2017



DINGDING AN
Boston Children's Hospital
Project: How do signals from resident bacteria keep the intestines healthy?



KYLE BAUMBAUER
University of Connecticut
School of Nursing
Project: Can a targeted intervention prevent chronic pain after spinal cord injury?



RICHARD DANEMAN*
University of California,
San Diego
Project: How does the blood-brain barrier influence the activities of neurons in the brain?



ARKADY KHOUTORSKY
McGill University
Project: How does the matrix of proteins that surrounds neurons affect changes leading to chronic pain?



STEPHAN LAMMEL
University of California,
Berkeley
Project: How can chronic stress change neural circuits and lead to depression?



CONOR LISTON
Weill Cornell Medicine
Project: What are the molecular mechanisms of working memory?



KATE MEYER
Duke University School
of Medicine
Project: How does a modification of RNA influence the brain's development and activity?

* Milton E. Cassel Scholar

Since 1976, the Rita Allen Foundation Scholars program has provided transformative grants to young leaders in biomedical science, whose pioneering research is advancing our understanding of the human condition. The Scholars program supports basic research in the fields of cancer, neuroscience and immunology. The Rita Allen Foundation also collaborates with the American Pain Society to sponsor a joint award to scholars studying mechanisms and potential treatments for pain. Through the Scholars, the Foundation embraces innovative research with above-average risk and groundbreaking possibilities. The more than 150 recipients have made significant advances in their fields of research and have received honors including the Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine, the National Medal of Science, the Wolf Prize in Medicine and the Breakthrough Prize in Life Sciences.

Scholars are nominated by select research institutions in the United States and chosen by a Scientific Advisory Committee of leading scientists and clinicians. Scholars and their affiliated institutions receive grants of up to \$110,000 annually, for a maximum of five years. Scholars in the class of 2017 are examining the role of microbes in intestinal health, the prevention of chronic pain, and the complex signals that shape development and disorders in the brain. Visit the Rita Allen Foundation website to learn more about the Scholars' research.

<http://ritaallen.org/scholars>



Scholars gathered for a science communication training program in Princeton, New Jersey, in July 2017.

In 2017 the Foundation hosted a training program for current Scholars in conjunction with the Alan Alda Center for Communicating Science. The highly interactive sessions were organized in response to Scholars' interest in gaining new skills to more effectively share their science with different audiences. Scholars practiced listening and connecting with others' beliefs and values, learned to convey their research in "Just a Minute," and related personal stories that expressed their passions while explaining the process of science. Dinner speakers included two seasoned science communicators and Rita Allen Foundation Directors: Samuel Wang, a Princeton University neuroscientist and 2000 Rita Allen Foundation Scholar; and Robbert Dijkgraaf, a mathematical physicist who serves as Director and Leon Levy Professor at the Institute for Advanced Study.

Elena Gracheva Investigates Why Hibernating Rodents Feel Less Cold



The ability to hibernate is a key adaptation for small mammals such as 13-lined ground squirrels and Syrian hamsters. These animals withstand winter's cold by lowering their body temperature and drastically slowing their breathing, heart rate and metabolism.

Elena Gracheva, a 2013 Rita Allen Foundation Scholar and a neurophysiologist at Yale University, is examining unique features of the rodents' nervous systems that contribute to cold tolerance.

In a study published on December 19, 2017, in the journal *Cell Reports*, Gracheva and her colleagues found that rodents that hibernate also show cold tolerance in an active state, and that a protein channel in sensory neurons in the skin, TRPM8, mediates this reduced cold sensitivity. In mice, which do not hibernate, TRPM8 is activated when the temperature decreases. In contrast, the researchers discovered, the forms of TRPM8 found in the squirrels and

hamsters did not show increased activity in response to cold, allowing them to hibernate.

"Extremophiles [like squirrels and hamsters] can teach us a lot about biology in general, and maybe even benefit human society," Gracheva told *National Geographic*. Insights into the molecular basis of cold sensitivity could inform the treatment of cold allodynia, a condition that can arise from chemotherapy or nerve injury and causes even mild cold to evoke severe pain; as well as approaches to medically induced hypothermia and cold storage of organs for transplantation.

In addition to a Rita Allen Foundation award, Gracheva has received a Yale Scholar Award in Neuroscience, an Alfred P. Sloan Foundation research fellowship and a Beckman Foundation Young Investigator award.



A 13-lined ground squirrel

Tuan Trang Identifies Drug That Eases Opioid Withdrawal



The opioid addiction crisis is compounded by the agonizing symptoms of withdrawal, which make it difficult for many people to stop using the drugs. Tuan Trang, a 2014 Rita Allen Foundation Award in Pain Scholar and a neuroscientist at the University of Calgary, has explored

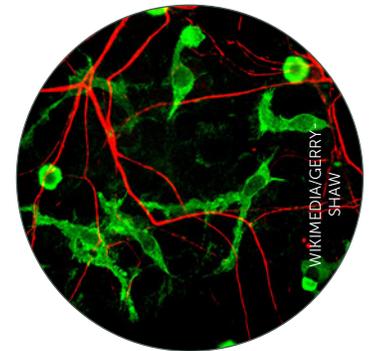
the importance of cells called microglia in mediating these withdrawal symptoms. Microglia are immune cells that reside within the central nervous system, where they play a vital role in fighting infections and can also produce signals that influence neural activity.

Trang and his team discovered that a protein called pannexin-1 (Pax1) allows microglia to release molecules that trigger withdrawal symptoms through the activity of spinal cord neurons. An existing drug used to treat gout can block the Pax1 channel and reduce withdrawal symptoms in an animal model, the researchers reported in *Nature Medicine* on January 30, 2017.

"Opioid withdrawal is aversive, debilitating and can compel individuals to continue using the drug in order to prevent these symptoms," Trang said in a news story announcing the findings. "In our study, we effectively alleviated withdrawal symptoms in rodents, which could have important implications for patients that may wish to decrease or stop their use of these medications." Trang is now collaborating on a pilot clinical study to test this therapeutic approach in patients undergoing opioid tapering.

In addition, his lab has found that targeting Pax1 can reduce joint pain in a model of arthritis; these results are also the impetus for an upcoming clinical trial.

In 2017 Trang received young investigator awards from the Canadian Association for Neuroscience and the Canadian Society for Pharmacology and Therapeutics.



Rat microglia grown in tissue culture (green) are surrounded by nerve fibers (red).

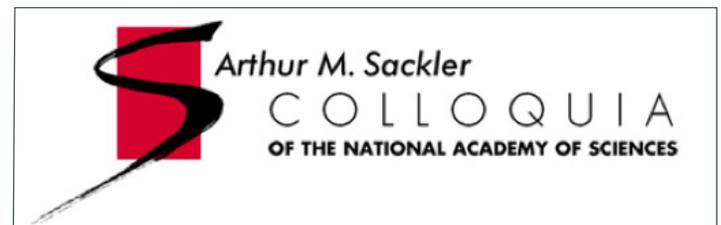
Strengthening Public Engagement with Science and Evidence

✓ Throughout history, advances in science and democracy have been closely intertwined. Today, rapid changes in science, technology and communication present new challenges for civic engagement. The Foundation is investing in research and practical approaches to help more people experience the wonder and value of science, and to improve understanding of evidence on topics of public concern. These bold experiments are also building new connections among scientists, policymakers, journalists, educators and others.

→ National Academy of Sciences: Arthur M. Sackler Colloquium on the Science of Science Communication III Building Capacity for Science Communication Partnership Awards

In 2015 the National Academies, with initial support from the Rita Allen Foundation and others, convened a multidisciplinary committee to review the science communication landscape and recommend actions to advance research and practice. The committee's report, *Communicating Science Effectively: A Research Agenda*, points to key gaps in current knowledge and calls for practitioners to work more closely with science communication researchers. In support of this goal, the Foundation and its partner funders sponsored the third Arthur M. Sackler Colloquium on the Science of Science Communication. Held in November 2017, the colloquium helped to forge stronger connections between science communicators and researchers in fields such as behavioral and political science.

The Foundation moderated a panel discussion, "A View from Philanthropy on the Future of Science Communication," and funded two Building Capacity for Science Communication Partnership Awards. Selected from an open call to spark new collaborations, the winning projects were: 1) "Evaluating New Approaches to Promoting Vaccination," involving



researchers from Dartmouth College and practitioners from the Vermont Department of Health; and 2) "Evidence-Based Science Communication to Policymakers," involving a team from American University, the American Association for the Advancement of Science and Durham University. The teams publicly discussed their research plans and outside experts provided feedback and ideas for strengthening the projects.

http://www.nasonline.org/programs/sackler-colloquia/completed_colloquia/Science_Communication_III.html

<http://www.nap.edu/scicomm>

American Academy of Arts and Sciences: The Public Face of Science

In an environment where significant segments of the public disagree with the scientific consensus on issues such as climate change and vaccine safety, understanding factors that influence public trust and perceptions is essential to improving science communication and fostering evidence-based decision-making. The Public Face of Science, a multiyear initiative of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, has convened experts from a variety of disciplines to gather, synthesize and disseminate knowledge on these topics. The project's first report, *Perceptions of Science in America*, is a compendium of findings from public opinion research—information that was previously not available in one place. The report serves as a resource for science communicators, advocates and researchers seeking to develop informed strategies for public engagement; it also identifies priorities for further research. The project's second report will focus on the landscape of informal science education experiences, while a third report will offer recommendations for more effective science outreach, including to rural and underserved populations.

The Rita Allen Foundation, one of several funders of The Public Face of Science, in October 2017 partnered with Media Impact Funders (MIF) to host a webinar previewing the project's initial findings. Throughout 2018, the Foundation is continuing to support MIF convenings and resources to deepen funders' knowledge and encourage investments to advance public understanding of science. Notably, *Perceptions of Science in America* is also the first publication to include data from ScienceCounts, which has received funding from the Rita Allen Foundation to conduct a benchmark study and test campaign that will guide approaches to increase public support for federally funded scientific research.



<https://www.amacad.org/publicfaceofscience/pfs.html>

→ Prototype Fund Open Call for Ideas to Improve the Flow of Accurate Information



Along with misperceptions of science, the broader prevalence of inaccurate or misleading information is a major challenge to the health of our democracy. To address this challenge, the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, the Democracy Fund

and the Rita Allen Foundation sponsored an open call for ideas to curb the spread of misinformation and produce ways to build trust in journalism. The funders collaborated to choose 20 winning projects and provide a total of \$1 million in grants. Several of the projects focus on involving the public in news gathering and developing tools to better reach diverse and politically disparate communities. Some focus on media literacy, providing ways to help people become responsible consumers of digital content. Others offer tools that advance deeper and more thoughtful methods of fact checking; including better ways to track misinformation, understand its sources and channels, and more effectively communicate the credibility of information. The winning teams were recognized in June 2017 at the Investigative Reporters and Editors conference, where they also came together for training in human-centered design; in April 2018 the teams presented their prototypes at a Demo Day as part of the International Symposium on Online Journalism.

<https://knightfoundation.org/press/releases/knight-prototype-fund-awards-1-million-to-20-projects-to-improve-the-flow-of-accurate-information>

<http://isoj.org/knight-demo-day>

Research and Resources for Science Communication and Engagement



American Association for the Advancement of Science — SciLine

SciLine, a new service from the American Association for the Advancement of Science, provides journalists with high-quality scientific expertise and context—on demand and on deadline. As SciLine Director Rick Weiss wrote in an October 27, 2017, editorial in *Science*, "... in the fight against misinformation, fact checking is often too little, too late. When it comes to stories about science—or about legislation, economics, or other domains where science can be informative—it would be far better to help journalists and the public get it right before having to call in the truth squads." SciLine has a database of more than 6,000 scientists and researchers, who field requests from a diverse range of news organizations. In addition, SciLine's editors have created fact sheets on specific newsworthy topics; started hosting live, web-based media briefings for reporters on various science-related topics; and have embarked on a bus tour to learn how SciLine can better serve local news organizations around the country. Founding support for SciLine was provided by the Quadrivium Foundation, with additional funding from the Chan Zuckerberg Initiative, the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, the Rita Allen Foundation and the Heinz Endowments.

<https://www.sciline.org>

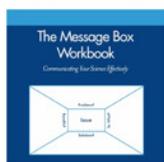


Arizona State University Foundation for A New American University — Innovations in Science News Literacy

A grant from the Rita Allen Foundation helped launch News Co/Lab, a collaborative lab based at Arizona State University's Walter Cronkite School of Journalism and Mass Communication. The lab is partnering with journalists, librarians, educators, technologists and others to help the public find new ways to access, understand, act upon and create accurate, evidence-based news and information. The Foundation's grant is also supporting projects specifically in science and health news literacy.

<https://newscollab.org>

COMPASS



COMPASS — Expanding the Reach of the COMPASS Message Box

One longstanding challenge in science communication is distilling complex research into straightforward messages that are meaningful for different audiences. COMPASS is a nonprofit organization that has been coaching scientists on communication and policy engagement since 1999. A grant from the Rita Allen Foundation has enabled COMPASS to expand the reach of its Message Box, a deceptively simple tool designed to help scientists effectively communicate their work to non-scientists. In 2017 COMPASS released a freely available workbook to guide any scientist through the process of using the Message Box. The Message Box provides a framework for organizing key information about a scientific topic, including the problems a research question seeks to address, the importance of those problems, potential solutions and the benefits of investigating those solutions. COMPASS has already used this approach to prepare thousands of researchers for engaging with school and community groups, journalists and policymakers. As a free online resource, the Message Box is reaching many more scientists, including graduate-level trainees, increasing support for an emerging culture that encourages scientists to share their processes and discoveries beyond their labs.

<https://www.compasscomm.org>
<https://www.compasscomm.org/the-message-box-workbook>

Designing for Greater Trust and Participation in Journalism and Civic Life

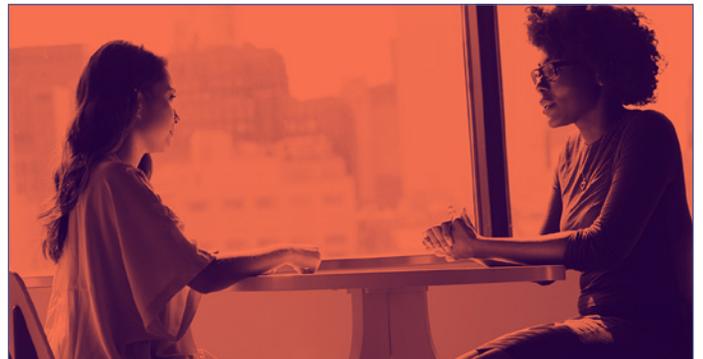
✓ Our complex information ecosystem and diverse society call for new approaches to strengthen connections between news outlets and their audiences, as well as between policymakers and their constituents. The Foundation supports projects to research, test and develop innovative tools that promote trust and engagement in news, including the Coral Project and the Center for Media Engagement. Grant partners DataKind, Digital Democracy and others forge tech-based solutions to help governments and nonprofits better respond to society's needs.

→ Mozilla Foundation: The Coral Project

The Coral Project conducts robust research and builds free, open-source tools that empower newsrooms to foster constructive dialogue with their communities. Its software includes Ask, a form builder for asking news audiences questions to improve reporting; and Talk, a flexible platform that reimagines online commenting and moderation to promote “safer, smarter discussions.” In addition, Coral offers a collection of Community Guides for Journalism, developed based on conversations with more than 150 journalists and community managers. More than 30 newsrooms are using Coral tools, including Univision, *The Washington Post*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *Miami Herald*, *PBS Frontline*, *National Review* and *News Deeply*. Support from the Rita Allen Foundation is allowing The Coral Project to improve its tools, as well as provide resources and training to help journalists use

them effectively; in March 2018 it introduced CoralCall, a quarterly virtual gathering for newsrooms to share experiences and feedback.

<https://coralproject.net>



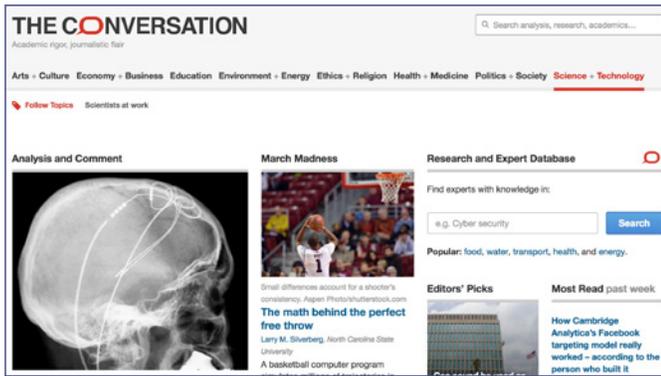
→ Moody College of Communication, The University of Texas at Austin: Center for Media Engagement (formerly the Engaging News Project)

The Center for Media Engagement (CME, formerly the Engaging News Project) envisions a vibrant American news media that empowers citizens to understand, appreciate and participate in the democratic exchange of ideas. CME works to help news organizations make decisions based on business and democratic considerations that are informed by social-scientific research. It strives for news audiences composed of better citizens—more informed, more tolerant of different views and more engaged in the political process. Since its launch in 2013, CME has piloted several new programs, tools and strategies; including engagement buttons, a quiz creator, and analyses of comment sections and webpage layouts. CME is also becoming a hub for

research with news and news-related organizations and is routinely contacted by newsrooms looking to figure out new ways of doing research to inform their work. For example, in 2017 CME collaborated with the Trust Project, an international consortium of news organizations, to evaluate the effects of embedding a suite of five “Trust Indicators” in online news articles. The research found that when Trust Indicators were present, readers viewed news organizations and reporters as more reliable; about one-third of readers were more willing to pay for news from organizations participating in the Trust Project.

<https://mediaengagement.org>

→ The Conversation US: Unlocking High-Quality Science for the Wider Community



The Conversation, first launched in Australia in 2011, is an independent news organization that actively seeks and supports academics who apply their expertise to write accessible, engaging articles on newsworthy topics. The Conversation US (TCUS) began in 2014 as a pilot project. Funding from the Rita Allen Foundation has allowed TCUS to expand the volume and reach of its content and

build a network of contributors and partner institutions; its university-funded membership model now includes more than 50 members. TCUS places a special focus on working with early-career researchers from U.S. universities, who gain useful and transferrable skills to help them contribute to a more informed citizenry. Crucially, TCUS's content is Creative Commons-licensed, allowing more than 100 popular sites to republish articles at no cost; distribution partners include The Associated Press, *The Guardian* and *The Washington Post*. In 2018, additional support from the Rita Allen Foundation will enable TCUS to further strengthen its science content, experiment with multimedia formats, and become more responsive to a broad range of audiences and media outlets.

<https://theconversation.com/us>



Concrete Ways Philanthropy Can Fight the Spread of Misinformation

“

The threat posed by policy debates dismissive of facts is spurring numerous efforts to find new ways to help Americans exchange ideas. Journalists, scientists, policy experts, community leaders, social entrepreneurs, and philanthropists have a critical opportunity to come together to shape a culture of civic learning, civic curiosity, and hope for a brighter future grounded in evidence and truth.

”

— WRITING IN *THE CHRONICLE OF PHILANTHROPY* ON MAY 2, 2017, RITA ALLEN FOUNDATION PRESIDENT AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER ELIZABETH GOOD CHRISTOPHERSON [CALLS FOR PHILANTHROPIC ACTION TO SUPPORT PRODUCTIVE CIVIC LEARNING AND DIALOGUE GROUNDED IN SCIENCE, EVIDENCE AND TRUTH.](#)

Using Technology to Inform and Empower

TV News Archive

Internet Archive: Exploring Machine Learning at the TV News Archive

The Internet Archive's TV News Archive is a resource for journalists, scholars and citizens to track and evaluate political news. This database, developed with support from the Rita Allen Foundation and others, includes a trove of TV segments collected over the past decade, along with thousands of linked fact-checks. A 2017 grant enabled the Archive, in partnership with machine learning experts, to enhance its capabilities for transcription, speaker and topic identification, and more—making its collection more useful for research and data analysis. The Archive's new tools include Face-o-Matic, which uses facial recognition algorithms to track the faces of high-level elected officials on major TV cable news channels; and Third Eye, which scans the lower thirds of TV screens, using optical character recognition to turn these fleeting editorial missives and content descriptors into downloadable data ripe for analysis.

<https://archive.org/details/tv>



DataKind: DataKind Labs Blueprint

DataKind connects data scientists with social change organizations to develop data-driven strategies for tackling challenges in education, health, safety and other critical areas. The Rita Allen Foundation supported a new effort to share the lessons and broaden the impacts of DataKind Labs, a pioneering program where DataKind's on-staff data scientists bring together multiple stakeholders on yearlong projects to tackle cross-sector challenges. The DataKind Labs Blueprint provides any organization with resources for adopting the DataKind Labs approach, outlining project-related processes from start to finish, and incorporating advice on best practices and pitfalls. The blueprint draws on examples from DataKind Labs' inaugural project supporting Vision Zero in three U.S. cities to reduce traffic fatalities.

<http://www.datakind.org>

<http://www.datakind.org/blog/introducing-our-new-labs-blueprint>



Institute for Advanced Technology and Public Policy, California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo: Digital Democracy

Digital Democracy brings greater transparency and accountability to state governments by offering a searchable video database of recorded legislative hearings. Launched in 2015 as a pilot version for California, the database empowers the media, citizens and watchdog groups to find and share video files and transcripts of hearings on topics of interest. Integrated data on campaign contributions and lobbying activities help users track influences on the legislative process. With funding from the Rita Allen Foundation, the Digital Democracy team refined the tool's software and user interface and assessed the project's outcomes. These efforts enabled Digital Democracy to expand to New York, Florida and Texas in 2017, reaching one-third of U.S. citizens. Digital Democracy is continuing to enhance its California database, as well as conducting user engagement training and media outreach.

<https://www.digitaldemocracy.org>



Participatory Politics Foundation — Councilmatic

Councilmatic is an open-source application that allows community groups and individual citizens to follow the actions of their city council and local agencies by searching a user-friendly database of proposed legislation, voting records and meeting minutes. Councilmatic also provides customized email updates for users and simple text-messaging tools to improve communication between council members and their constituents. With funding from the Rita Allen Foundation, in 2015 the Participatory Politics Foundation partnered with HeartGov, the Open Civic Data project and several elected officials to pilot Councilmatic in New York City and Chicago. The site has been particularly successful in New York, where the city council launched its own official version of Councilmatic in December 2017.

<http://www.participatorypolitics.org>

<https://laws.council.nyc.gov>

Building Progress through Collaboration

✓ Funding work at the frontiers of science and civic engagement, the Foundation has long recognized the value of teaming up to tackle multifaceted, quickly evolving problems. Recent grants support collaborative efforts by media organizations, tech companies and nonprofits, and philanthropic funders to move their fields in new directions.

Shaping the Future of Public-Interest Journalism and Technology

The Foundation supports diverse coalitions working to address complex issues such as verifying digital information, sustaining local newsrooms and documenting hate crimes

→ **First Draft News** (a project of the Harvard Kennedy School's Shorenstein Center)



The openness and accessibility of newsgathering have created significant challenges in terms of the viral spread of misinformation (both intentional and unintentional), protocols around verification, and ethical and legal questions about how to deal with new types of material from social media and other sources. First Draft News formed as a coalition of nine nonprofit partners and now comprises more than 100 partners, including some of the world's most influential nonprofit and for-profit news organizations, academic partners and platforms such as Twitter, Facebook and Google. Through applied research about the spread of misinformation, creation of new verification technologies, training for journalists and others, and convening to work on collaborative projects, First Draft is serving as a research, knowledge creation and sharing hub for coping with the rising challenge of online misinformation. Its recent work

has included a partnership with the Internet Archive to verify information from TV news, "A Field Guide to 'Fake News' and Other Information Disorders," and a free online course for journalists and others on identifying misinformation. Support from the Rita Allen Foundation enabled First Draft to conduct a strategic planning process to position the organization for growth and impact; it began in 2015 as a sponsored project of Meedan, Inc., and in 2017 joined the Harvard Kennedy School's Shorenstein Center on Media, Politics and Public Policy.

“
First Draft's core strength is being really connected to the news industry and to the platforms. We also work closely with academics and research institutes who do good work in the space but don't necessarily have access to practitioners. We try to bridge that.

”
— CLAIRE WARDLE, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, FIRST DRAFT
IN ["THE SCALE OF MISINFORMATION ONLINE IS GLOBAL. FIRST DRAFT IS PUSHING FOR MORE COLLABORATION — AND MORE RESEARCH — AS AN ANTIDOTE,"](#)
NIEMAN LAB, NOVEMBER 6, 2017

→ News Revenue Hub



The News Revenue Hub, an organization fiscally sponsored by the Institute for Nonprofit News, combines

the tools and knowledge developed in the nonprofit news sector to help digital news organizations grow and manage successful membership programs. By providing technology, resources, training and strategies, the Hub has helped

its clients raise more than \$4.3 million in reader revenue in its first 18 months. Support from the Rita Allen Foundation is allowing the Hub to develop its centralized services business model, bring on more diverse clients, and expand its suite of services to address their most critical sustainability needs.

<https://fundjournalism.org>

→ The Miami Foundation: News Match 2017



In 2017 the Rita Allen Foundation was one of nine funders joining News Match, a national campaign that raised a record-breaking \$4.8 million from individual donors and a coalition of foundations to

support more than 100 local and investigative nonprofit news organizations. The Foundation's support helped

to build the capacity of public-interest newsrooms and provided additional funds to organizations specializing in trustworthy and critical science journalism. News Match 2017 was launched by Democracy Fund, the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, and the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation.

<https://www.newsmatch.org>

→ Center for Cooperative Media, Montclair State University: Collaborative Journalism Summit

USA TODAY NETWORK



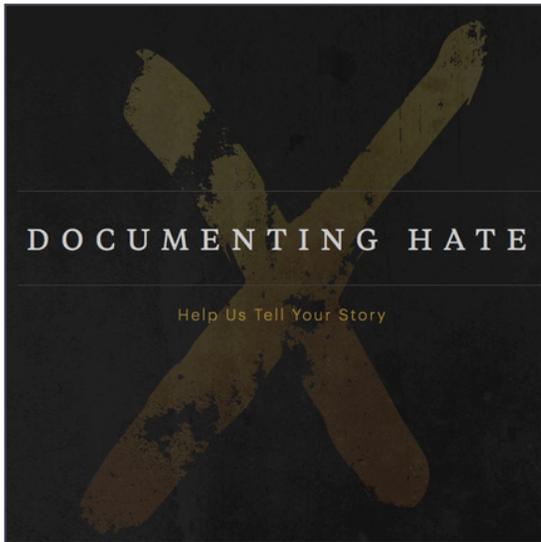
"The Wall" examined the audience engagement power of combining an important national story with new technology. The report examined all aspects of the border between the United States and Mexico, and the consequences of President Trump's proposed border wall between the United States and Mexico. This Pulitzer Prize-winning project brought together partners including The Arizona Republic, more than a half-dozen publications that are part of the USA TODAY Network, Arizona State University and Spaceship Media.

Housed at Montclair State University's School of Communications and Media, the Center for Cooperative Media (CCM) works with partners throughout New Jersey to grow, experiment with and strengthen local journalism. In 2017 CCM hosted the first Collaborative Journalism Summit, a nationwide symposium bringing journalists, publishers and media executives together to share best practices and ideas about collaborative journalism and cooperative news networks. The Rita Allen Foundation supported the summit along with Google News Lab, the Democracy Fund, and the Knight and Dodge Foundations. The Democracy Fund also joined the Foundation in supporting an open call for innovative

collaborative reporting projects that aimed to combine the resources and reach of two or more news organizations to create impactful, meaningful journalism. CCM awarded six grants for projects across the United States, covering issues such as the proposed border wall, climate change, youth health and municipal mergers. "The Wall," a collaborative project of The Arizona Republic, USA Today Network and others, received a 2018 Pulitzer Prize for explanatory reporting. CCM is now publishing case studies to share lessons learned from each of the winning projects.

<https://collaborativejournalism.org>

→ New York Public Radio: Documenting Hate



Documenting Hate is an initiative to create a comprehensive, reliable national database of identity-related violence and other hate crimes directed toward people, places and institutions. Led by the nonprofit investigative newsroom ProPublica, the project is a collaboration between news organizations, journalism schools and civil rights groups. The Foundation's grant to partner organization New York Public Radio is broadening the project's capabilities for collecting, fact checking and using data on hate crimes. In the first year of the project more than 3,500 people submitted personal stories of witnessing or being the victim of hate or bias via the Documenting Hate online form; 130 reporting partners around the country signed on to focus on the issue; and newsrooms published nearly 100 stories based on data submitted to the project. New York Public Radio and its reporting partners are also seeking to explore underlying beliefs and ideologies that foster attitudes of hate and bias, though they may not necessarily lead to hate crimes or bias incidents.

<https://projects.propublica.org/graphics/hatecrimes-stories>

<https://www.wnyc.org/story/documenting-hate-building-authoritative-source-bias-crimes>

→ Online News Association: Challenge Fund for Innovation in Journalism Education



Since 2014 the Challenge Fund for Innovation in Journalism Education has catalyzed collaborative projects to help journalism educators better prepare students to meet 21st-century information needs. The micro-grant contest encourages universities to create teams to pilot new ways of providing news and information. Each group receives up to \$35,000 for "live news experiments" that create oppor-

tunities for journalism schools to collaborate with newsrooms, researchers and other professionals to produce innovative local news for a digital audience. In 2017 the fund awarded grants for 10 projects, including: an effort to reach households without broadband access in rural southeastern Ohio; an immigration-focused student newsroom in Reno, Nevada; and an experiment in San Jose, California, to boost engagement by delivering local news briefings via "smart speaker" digital assistant devices. The Challenge Fund is supported by a collaborative that includes the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, the Democracy Fund, the Ethics and Excellence in Journalism Foundation, the Robert R. McCormick Foundation, the Scripps Howard Foundation and the Rita Allen Foundation.

<https://journalists.org/programs/challenge-fund>

→ Fast Forward: Accelerating the Civic Tech Nonprofit Ecosystem

Fast Forward aims to bolster and broaden the success of emerging tech-based nonprofits by providing startup funds, training and mentoring to teams of social entrepreneurs through its annual accelerator, the first and only tech accelerator exclusively for tech nonprofits. Each summer, Fast Forward chooses a new cohort of groups working to apply technology for social good, with special attention to fostering diversity and supporting people to solve problems they have personally experienced. Each organization receives support and connections to a network of high-caliber mentors to help improve and scale its product, establish nonprofit governance and raise funds. Fast Forward first partnered with the Rita Allen Foundation in 2016 to launch an ecosystem of support for tech nonprofits focused on civic engagement. The 2016 cohort included Democracy Earth, which piloted its blockchain-based voting technology for the Colombian peace referendum; and CommonLit, whose free online literacy platform now reaches more than 1 million students and receives funding from the U.S. Department of Education. Among the promising startups selected for the 2017 accelerator are Beyond12, a digital mentorship platform for transforming first-generation students into college grad-



Eight tech nonprofit teams received startup funds, training and mentoring as part of Fast Forward's 2017 accelerator program.

uates; and Raheem.ai, a chatbot for anonymously reporting and rating experiences with police.

<https://www.ffwd.org>

→ Building a Sustainable Future for Civic Tech



In 2017 the Rita Allen Foundation partnered with the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation to commission a research report on the emerging civic tech industry. "Scaling Civic Tech: Paths to a Sustainable Future" reveals opportunities and challenges faced by organizations working to connect

citizens with their government when seeking to scale and become financially sustainable. The report provides comprehensive analysis and synthesizes interviews with nearly 50 stakeholders, including founders of for-profit and nonprofit civic tech organizations, foundations, venture capital firms and other prominent voices in the field. The Foundation and its partners shared the report's key insights and best practices in a webinar discussion hosted by the Stanford Social Innovation Review.

<https://knightfoundation.org/features/civicttechbiz>

https://ssir.org/webinars/entry/sustaining_civic_tech_seeding_and_scaling_nonprofit_startups_free_program

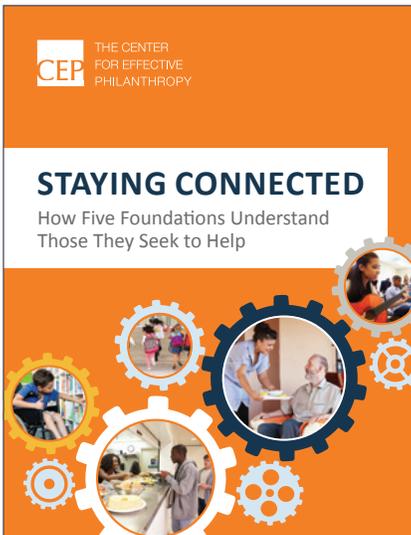
“
...As a field, we have spent considerable time lamenting civic tech organizations' struggles with sustainability. Our hope in presenting this report is to begin to change this narrative by provoking a more consistent, collaborative and rigorous field-wide conversation about not just challenges but potential solutions.
”

—JON SOTSKY, KNIGHT FOUNDATION,
AND JONATHAN KARTT, RITA ALLEN FOUNDATION

Joining Forces to Improve Philanthropy

The Foundation supports diverse coalitions working to address complex issues such as verifying digital information, sustaining local newsrooms and documenting hate crimes

→ Fund for Shared Insight: Listen for Good



Fund for Shared Insight is a collaborative effort among the Rita Allen Foundation and a dozen other core funders to improve philanthropy by promoting listening and feedback. U.S. foundations spend billions of dollars each year to solve society's toughest challenges, yet many foundations

and pointing to opportunities for improvement. In addition, Shared Insight supported the Center for Effective Philanthropy's report, "Staying Connected: How Five Foundations Understand Those They Seek to Help." The report features in-depth profiles of funders that, based on grantee feedback, successfully understand and respond to the needs of their intended beneficiaries.

<https://www.fundforsharedinsight.org>

<https://www.fundforsharedinsight.org/listen-for-good>

they support do not have accessible tools to gather, analyze and respond to feedback from the people they seek to help. Shared Insight mobilizes knowledge and resources to foster long-term change in the social sector. It supports foundations and nonprofits seeking to embrace and adopt feedback loops and share critical lessons, so their collective efforts have a greater impact on people's lives.

Since launching in 2014 with seven founding funders and 14 nonprofits, Shared Insight has grown to nearly 80 funding partners and more than 180 grant partners working on feedback practice, feedback research and foundation openness. Its Listen for Good initiative is a multi-sector grant-matching partnership that helps customer-facing nonprofits adopt a standard survey tool to solicit feedback from those they seek to serve. In 2017 Shared Insight released an evaluation of the first year of Listen for Good, as well as an analysis of nearly 30,000 survey responses, demonstrating the value of the program's survey tools in nonprofit settings

“
Let's refine and expand our notions of nonprofit effectiveness to be more inclusive, more nuanced, and more helpful to more actors. Science and evidence are not in opposition to, or incompatible with, equity. In fact, blending evidence and equity, listening and learning, feedback and flexibility may offer the best path forward for a more just society, with more opportunity and happiness for all.

”
– LISSETTE RODRIGUEZ, VICE PRESIDENT AND CHIEF PROGRAM OFFICER AT THE EDNA MCCONNELL CLARK FOUNDATION; AND FAY TWERSKY, CO-CHAIR OF FUND FOR SHARED INSIGHT AND DIRECTOR OF THE EFFECTIVE PHILANTHROPY GROUP AT THE WILLIAM AND FLORA HEWLETT FOUNDATION IN "PROMOTING DIVERSITY GOES HAND IN HAND WITH THE PUSH FOR EFFECTIVENESS," THE CHRONICLE OF PHILANTHROPY, FEBRUARY 26, 2018

→ Science Philanthropy Alliance

The Science Philanthropy Alliance is a community of funders dedicated to inspiring and advising philanthropists who wish to invest in curiosity-driven science—and to building support for fundamental research in the broader society. The Rita Allen Foundation joined the Alliance in 2016, and in 2017 Foundation President Elizabeth Good Christopherson became a member of its board of directors. The Alliance continues to expand its network of members and benefactors, and in 2017 released its second annual survey of private funding for basic research, tracking more than \$2.3 billion in investments by 42 institutions. The Alliance also highlights the complementary roles of private and public funding for fundamental science: It works to increase the amount and effectiveness of philanthropic support while emphasizing that funding from the federal government is indispensable to the U.S. research enterprise.

<http://www.sciencephilanthropyalliance.org>



I think philanthropy is more important than ever. It's most important for setting an example for the Congress, for showing the Congress that it's important to take risks and to take a long-term view when you're talking about science, and not to look [only] for short-term applications.

”

— MARC KASTNER, PRESIDENT OF THE SCIENCE PHILANTHROPY ALLIANCE IN “PHILANTHROPIC FUNDING MAKES WAVES IN BASIC SCIENCE,” THE SCIENTIST, DECEMBER 2017

→ Philanthropy for Active Civic Engagement



Philanthropy for Active Civic Engagement (PACE) is a membership network of foundations and funders

that invest in civic engagement and democracy. At a time of heightened concern about the health of U.S. democracy, PACE is connecting with a broader group of funders; in 2017 it welcomed 18 new members, many working outside traditional “civic” spaces. PACE also produced new primers for funders on Civic Engagement and Civic Learning, and expanded its team to strengthen the network’s voice and deepen member engagement. The Rita Allen Foundation shares insights with the PACE community from its investments in early-stage ideas to foster trust in media and civic spaces and curb the spread of mis- and disinformation. In 2018 the Foundation is joining with the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation to support a new PACE project exploring how civic engagement can

lead to better health and safety outcomes.

<http://www.pacefunders.org>

“

...We are inspired and encouraged by the number of funders that see (or want to see) themselves as weavers of the civic fabric and part of a growing movement to support people being active participants in creating and strengthening communities and our country.

”

— KRISTEN CABELL, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF PACE IN “PACE 2017: A YEAR IN REVIEW,” JANUARY 11, 2018

→ Media Impact Funders: Building the Knowledge and Capacity of Funders Supporting Public Engagement with Evidence



Media Impact Funders (MIF) is a network of philanthropists and foundations seeking to further their missions through media and technology projects, includ-

ing documentary films, investigative reporting and more. Through convenings and online resources, MIF enables funders to collaborate and increase the effectiveness of their work. In 2017 the Rita Allen Foundation partnered with MIF to organize a new working group of funders committed to fostering robust public engagement with science, evidence and facts. Together, this group is exploring emerging multidisciplinary research on effective communication—among its specific aims is to help advance the recommendations outlined in the National Academies’ report *Communicating Science Effectively: A Research Agenda* (see Page 7). Funding from the Rita Allen Foundation has allowed MIF to hold gatherings in conjunction with several social-change communications conferences, providing opportunities for funders to share ideas and hear from experts in the field. The Foundation also sponsored a webinar on the science

of communication and its implications for philanthropy; and participated in a series of virtual discussions on philanthropy’s role in combating misinformation.

<https://mediainpactfunders.org>

“

A growing number of grantmakers recognize the need to invest in productive public engagement with evidence and the scientific process. This is a moment we can seize to create new knowledge and new partnerships across divisions. Ultimately, we have the opportunity to strengthen our society’s ability to navigate complex issues across fields, from ecology to education to public health.

”

— ELIZABETH GOOD CHRISTOPHERSON, PRESIDENT AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, RITA ALLEN FOUNDATION

2017 Board of Directors

Elizabeth Good Christopherson
President and Chief Executive Officer

Robbert Dijkgraaf, Ph.D.

William F. Gadsden
Chair

Andrew K. Golden

Sivan Hong

Landon Y. Jones

The Honorable Thomas H. Kean

Geneva Overholser

Samuel S.-H. Wang, Ph.D.

Emeritus Members

Robert E. Campbell

Moore Gates, Jr.

Aristides Georgantas

Henry H. Hitch

2017 Scientific Advisory Committee

Members of the Scientific Advisory Committee are critical advisors to the Rita Allen Foundation Board of Directors on matters involving our Scholars program and other grant proposals.

Susan Dymecki, M.D., Ph.D.
Harvard Medical School

Kathleen M. Foley, M.D.
Rita Allen Foundation Medical Advisor
Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer
Center
Weill Cornell Medical College

Douglas T. Fearon, M.D.
Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory
Weill Cornell Medical College

Charles D. Gilbert, M.D., Ph.D.
The Rockefeller University

Gregory J. Hannon, Ph.D.
Cancer Research UK Cambridge
Institute
University of Cambridge
New York Genome Center
Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory

Jeffrey D. Macklis, M.D.
Harvard University
Harvard Medical School

Carl F. Nathan, M.D.
Weill Cornell Medical College
Weill Cornell Graduate School of
Medical Sciences

Joan A. Steitz, Ph.D.
Yale School of Medicine

Emeritus Members

Maurice S. Fox, Ph.D.
Irving H. Goldberg, M.D., Ph.D.
Howard H. Hiatt, M.D.
Thomas M. Jessell, Ph.D.
Arnold J. Levine, Ph.D.
James D. Watson, Ph.D.
Torsten N. Wiesel, M.D.

2017 Staff

Elizabeth Good Christopherson,
President and Chief Executive Officer

Kate Belyi, *Communications,*
Communications, Knowledge and
Secretary

Jonathan Kartt,
Program and Evaluation

Nancy Kovacevich,
Grants Administration

Molly Sharlach, *Communications and*
Digital Engagement

Ruth Stevens, *Program,*
Communications and Administration

Kari Williams Tyksinski,
Finance and Treasurer

Stephanie Zimmerman,
Executive and Administrative Support

Mission

✓ The Rita Allen Foundation invests in transformative ideas in their earliest stages to leverage their growth and promote breakthrough solutions to significant problems.

It enables early-career biomedical scholars to do pioneering research, seeds innovative approaches to fostering informed civic engagement, and develops knowledge and networks to build the effectiveness of the philanthropic sector. Throughout its work, the Foundation embraces collaboration, creativity, learning and leadership.

Guiding Principles



Innovation

We will be an innovative and agile organization; to this end, we will rely on strategic, collaborative approaches to initiate and support pioneering programs that break new ground and challenge the status quo.



Core Values

We will bring to our work and seek in our relationships with others a commitment to, and belief in, the positive power of courage, hope, passion and shared aspirations; we are committed to translate these core values into effective action.



Focus

We will focus our efforts on enduring areas of domestic and global concern; our goals especially include advancing the frontiers of biomedical science, leadership and education. We will respond to short-term societal needs and undertake programs consistent with the mission and vision of the Foundation.



Leadership

To be a leader and a model both in our programs and in our operations, we will embrace appropriate levels of risk; we will foster an entrepreneurial spirit informed by inquisitiveness, due diligence, creativity and responsible stewardship of our assets.



Lasting Outcomes

We seek to advance new ideas and discoveries that address the root causes of challenging problems; we will define success by objectives linked to a significantly positive and lasting impact on individuals and the broader society.



Learning

We will engage in a collegial process of continuous learning, hard work and reassessment; we recognize that these qualities are essential to achievement of our mission.



Collaboration

We will work with and convene leaders to develop and implement strategies that support innovation and bring new ideas and information to targeted groups; new areas of collaboration will evolve as we continually reevaluate human needs.

2017 Grants

The Foundation's grant making falls into two broad domains: Young Leaders in Science and Social Innovation, and Civic Literacy and Engagement. In addition to these main categories, the Foundation supports efforts to strengthen the philanthropic field.

List includes core grants in reverse chronological order.

YOUNG LEADERS IN SCIENCE AND SOCIAL INNOVATION

Rita Allen Foundation Scholars

\$2,750,000

CIVIC LITERACY AND ENGAGEMENT

News Match 2017

The Miami Foundation

\$50,000

A Solutions Forum to Address Misinformation Sharing

RTI International

\$38,990

Overview of Organizational Support for Science
Communication Among Scientific Societies

Northern Illinois University

\$12,345

Landscape Report to Inform the 2018

"University Focused" Workshop

The Center for Research on Lifelong STEM Learning,

Oregon State University

\$13,033

The Bridge

Public Radio International

\$50,000

Center for Scientific Evidence in Public Issues

American Association for the Advancement of Science

\$300,000

Innovations in Science News Literacy

Arizona State University Foundation for

A New American University

150,000

News Revenue Hub

\$150,000

RELIEF: Pain Research News, Insights and Ideas

International Association for the Study of Pain

\$100,000

Landscaping Overview of the North American Science
Communication Training Community

The University of Texas at Austin

\$14,618

Prototype Fund Open Call for Ideas to Improve
the Flow of Accurate Information

\$100,000

SciLine

American Association for the Advancement of Science

\$150,000

World Conference of Science Journalists (WCSJ2017)

Council for the Advancement of Science Writing

\$25,000

The Coral Project

Mozilla Foundation

\$80,000

Accelerating the Civic Tech Nonprofit Ecosystem

Fast Forward

\$50,000

Collaborative Journalism Summit

Center for Cooperative Media, Montclair State University

\$25,000

Exploring Machine Learning at the TV News Archive

Internet Archive

\$100,000

Raising Voices for Science: A Test Campaign
(including Rural Mississippi Extension)

ScienceCounts

\$300,000

Arthur M. Sackler Colloquium on the Science
of Science Communication III

National Academy of Sciences

\$125,000

Documenting Hate

New York Public Radio

\$150,000

Evidence-Based Science Communication: Planning Process

National Academy of Sciences

\$50,000

Digital Democracy

California Polytechnic State University,

San Luis Obispo

\$200,000

Building the Knowledge and Capacity of Funders
Supporting Public Engagement with Evidence

Media Impact Funders

\$125,000

Financials

Statement of Revenue, Expenses and Change in Net Assets (Modified Cash Basis)

2016 (Audited)

	Unrestricted	Temporarily Restricted	Permanently Restricted	Total
Revenue and Support				
Investment Income				
Interest and dividends	1,651,484	182,934	-	1,834,418
Net realized gain on investments	1,594,343	176,604	-	1,770,947
Translation gain	2,494	-	-	2,494
Costs attributable to investments	(1,101,248)	-	-	(1,101,248)
Net Investment Income (Loss)	2,147,073	359,538	-	2,506,611
Net assets released from restrictions	756,366	(756,366)	-	-
Total Revenue and Support	2,903,439	(396,828)	-	2,506,611
Expenses				
Grant awards	5,775,480	-	-	5,775,480
Program and foundation operations	2,302,164	-	-	2,302,164
Federal excise tax	-	-	-	-
Total Expenses	8,077,644	-	-	8,077,644
Change in net assets before appreciation (depreciation) in fair value of investments	(5,174,205)	(396,828)	-	(5,571,033)
Appreciation (depreciation) in fair value of investments	7,249,531	378,127	-	7,627,658
Change in Net Assets	2,075,326	(18,701)	-	2,056,625
Net Assets				
Beginning of Year	148,466,572	104,223	3,579,622	152,150,417
End of Year	150,541,898	85,522	3,579,622	154,207,042



92 Nassau Street, 3rd Floor
Princeton, New Jersey 08542
609-683-8010
609-683-8025 (fax)
info@ritaallen.org
www.ritaallen.org