Growing Philanthropy

COACHELLA VALLEY
2017-2018 Youth Grantmakers
Celia Cudiamat – Executive VP of Programs

It has been nine years since The Community Foundation launched the Youth Grantmakers Program in Riverside to encourage philanthropy among our local youth. Through this program, our young people become active agents of change, preparing them for responsive community leadership and practical hands-on service.

The Youth Grantmakers Program has truly grown over the years. We now have a Native Youth Program made up of students awarding grants to nonprofits serving the Temecula Valley. Established with an initial gift of $25,000 from the Pechanga Band of Luiseño Indians, the program empowers Native youth leaders to participate in grantmaking. It further represents the interests and passion of the Tribal Alliance of Sovereign Indian Nations (TASIN) to build a cadre of influential youth leaders and raise awareness of Native youth in Riverside and San Bernardino counties.

During the 2017-2018 academic year, Youth Grantmakers (YG) across our two-county region strengthened their leadership skills as they participated in philanthropy. They learned about the issues youth face within their local communities and beyond through presentations and needs assessments; increased their knowledge on prevention/intervention practices via reviewing grant proposals and conducting nonprofit site visits; and practiced philanthropy by recommending grants to nonprofits who proposed effective and impactful solutions to youth issues.

Awarding a modest amount of money, average of $10,000 per YG program, to multiple nonprofit organizations is the capstone of the program. Since inception, over 250 Youth Grantmakers awarded over $324,000 to over 135 nonprofits that serve young people!

Thank you to Bank of America for their generous ongoing support of our year-end recognition ceremonies. Many thanks, as well, to our donors and the myriad of supporters of our YG programs.

Congratulations to our Youth Grantmakers!
Denisha Shackelford – Youth Grantmakers Program Advisor

As the Youth Grantmakers Advisor for all four programs this year (Riverside, Coachella Valley, San Bernardino and Native Youth), I’ve been given the opportunity to plant and instill within this fast-paced generation the principles of philanthropy. It’s such a rewarding feeling to see this generation start to think of the needs of mankind, their peers, and the communities they reside in.

I also had the opportunity to participate and witness firsthand this year these amazing young people in action. They participated in multiple community service activities, including:

• Senior Holiday Gift Giving Campaign in Indio
• Walk to End Alzheimer’s in Coachella Valley
• Ice Cream Social at the Ronald McDonald House in San Diego

It was in those moments, I knew the seed of service had been planted.

I would also like to congratulate our Youth Grantmakers on another successful year of giving and growing. Your spirit of philanthropy, engagement, and hard work is a true testament of greatness that resides within each of you.

Also, to our graduating seniors, I am so proud of you and wish you well as you matriculate to the next academic phase of your life. You are the future of philanthropy and we rest with assurance in knowing that we are in good hands.
On behalf of Bank of America, I congratulate you on completing your service as a Youth Grantmaker. The knowledge you have gained about the nonprofit sector; their roles and responsibilities and the grantmaking process and decision making will prove to be invaluable as you develop into passionate and caring adults as volunteers, board members and philanthropists. You will open your heart to those in our community who need you and need your voice.

As our next generation of leaders Bank of America supports and celebrates your accomplishments. It is our hope that this program has been a turning point in your development. Whether you recognize it or not, today you are a different person than you were just a few months ago, with a different and broad perspective about society and our communities. We are counting on you to forge ahead with foresight and determination. Real leaders are ordinary people with extraordinary determination who understand the complexities of serving our community.

Once again, congratulations for dedicating your time to such a worthy program and best of luck on your future endeavors. I hope to see you in the board room of a local nonprofit someday.

Al Argüello
Senior Vice President
Market President, Inland Empire
Enterprise Business & Community Engagement
Bank of America
The Youth Grantakers are a collection of students from surrounding high schools that make up the Coachella Valley. We meet once a month for nine months on a Sunday for three hours learning about the world of philanthropy and the importance of giving back.

We go through a rigorous grant review training process. First, we assess the needs of our community by having our peers fill out a survey in order to determine what issues are most relevant to the youth in our schools and in our communities. We base our grantmaking decisions on the information gathered from these surveys. We also participate in community service projects together in order to demonstrate our dedication to helping others in a more hands-on fashion.

Our Youth Grantmakers Program is made up of members from all different walks of life and our group represents students from a wide spectrum of socioeconomic statuses, ethnicities, and cultures. At YG we celebrate diversity by learning from one another and holding events such as joint session where all the programs come together for a topic discussion on Diversity and Inclusivity.

Because we spend so much time together our relationships transcend the meetings and the site visits. We get to know each other and we learn to care about one another. We engage each other’s social media accounts. We support one another and we grow together.

Our mentors from The Community Foundation guide our efforts to make a difference in our community and teach us how to be as inclusive as possible. Youth Grantmakers is not just an organization that we join to look good on college applications; it is a program that transforms us into young adults who genuinely care about our communities and who understand that age should not determine our abilities to make an impact on the world.
On April 7, 2018 the Coachella Valley Youth Grantmakers joined over 500 people in the Walk to End Alzheimer’s hosted by the Alzheimer’s Association Coachella Valley Chapter.

One of the Coachella Valley Youth Grantmakers had a special interest in this cause and invited the group to participate as part of their community service activity. The student’s grandmother had Alzheimer’s and lost her to the disease last year. The Youth Grantmakers enthusiastically joined, and since this particular community service activity held a very special place in their hearts, the group was very hands-on. They helped gather signatures from attendees to let legislative officials know this disease deserves their support and attention for further research for a cure.

All funds raised through the Walk to End Alzheimer’s help expand the care, support, and research efforts of the Alzheimer’s Association.

Denisha Shackelford, Youth Grantmakers Advisor, stated, “Community Service is a very important part to the Youth Grantmakers Program. Community service is a big part of developing leaders in our communities, and connecting YG’ers to the things they are passionate about. While tragic, our YG’ers turned sadness into an opportunity to connect with their community and bring awareness to this disease.”

For the second year in row, the Coachella Valley Youth Grantmakers participated in the “Adopt a Family” Campaign through the Riverside County Office of Aging. An opportunity to give back the students not only donated goods, but delivered food baskets to grandparents in need during the Thanksgiving holiday. Valued at $250, the baskets came with a turkey, various canned foods and desserts. Grandparents raising their grandchildren in the Coachella Valley were the focus of this community service project.
On December 3rd, members of The Community Foundation’s Youth Grantmakers Program met in Beaumont for a joint session focusing on “Diversity and Inclusivity.” The Foundation hosted the session as part of its ongoing work to engage young people in philanthropy. The session kicked off with welcome remarks from Mayor Pro-Tem Nancy Carroll of Beaumont and Councilmember Art Welch of Banning. The students also heard from current board members, Gloria Macias-Harrison and Lynn Bogh Baldi. The conversation was facilitated by guest speaker Dr. Anthony Silard, President of The Center for Social Leadership and Assistant Professor of Nonprofit Management and Leadership at California State University, San Bernardino.

The group participated in several activities that required them to think about the impact and importance of diversity and inclusivity in both public and private spaces. One activity asked participants to share their personal experiences of being mistreated or times when they mistreated someone else because of their differences. Another activity had participants engage in a presentation exercise in which they had to take on the role of a Divisional Director for a clothing store in Los Angeles. Participants had to choose and build an argument for why the clothing store should diversify and were given two minutes to deliver their presentation. The students then discussed what they learned after the activities.

“I was pleased to see all the YG programs working together to reach a common goal of understanding, and respect for the differences we all possess.” said Denisha Shackleford, Program Coordinator and Youth Grantmakers Advisor.

This year, 101 Youth Grantmakers make up the Riverside, San Bernardino, Coachella Valley, and Native programs.
As part of an annual tradition of the Youth Grantmakers program, students from all four programs participated in a joint community service activity this year. Last December the Youth Grantmakers partnered with the Riverside Office of Aging in Indio for their Senior Holiday Gift Drive. They collected blankets, socks, gloves, scarves, and gift cards that were given to local seniors during this holiday season.

It was during a joint meeting held in Banning where the students brought in their donated items. Two representatives from the Youth Grantmakers Coachella Valley Program presented the gifts to the Riverside Office of Aging who expressed their desire to team up with the Youth Grantmakers again. It was a great feeling for the Youth Grantmakers to know that their generosity brought a smile to a senior’s face during the holiday season.

The Coachella Valley Youth Grantmakers brought out their “inner child” during their site visit to the Children’s Discovery Museum on January 14, 2018. The visit commenced with a tour led by TJ Hicks, Director of Education and Exhibits. He took the group through several exhibits including Toddlertown, Makerspace, Science Rules, and Let’s Get Physical. While there, the Youth Grantmakers had the opportunity to participate in an interactive team building activity where they had to form an arch using blocks. The Youth Grantmakers did great and managed to complete the activity in a minute and a half! Although according to TJ, he had a group of eight year olds that put the arch together in under a minute!

Denisha Shackelford, Youth Grantmakers Advisor, said, “All in all it was a great day and we look forward to the expansion projects of the Children’s Discovery Museum.”

The Children’s Discovery Museum was a grantee of the 2017 Coachella Valley Youth Grantmakers. They were awarded $1,500 toward their Diversity and Inclusivity program where they worked with middle school students to host discussions about the importance of cultural diversity with their peers in the Coachella Valley.
Braille Institute is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to eliminate barriers to a fulfilling life caused by blindness and severe sight loss. Each year, Braille Institute serves more than 75,000 people through a variety of free programs, classes and services at six centers and 220 community outreach locations throughout Southern California.

The Rancho Mirage Center was a Youth Grantmaker grantee in 2015 and was awarded $2,000 to provide monthly Individualized Educational Placement (IEP) courses for blind and visually impaired youth which cover such topics as computers, independent living skills, exercise and nutrition, and creative arts. The center also offers a variety of programs and services such as Low Vision Consultations that help determine the correct devices to maximize remaining vision along with In-Home Services that address quality of life changes, kitchen confidence, using technology, orientation and mobility. They also have a youth program for infants, children, and teens who are blind or visually impaired. Furthermore, the program creates opportunities to gain life experiences fostering confidence, self-esteem, and independence leading to higher education and employment.

Ellen Jones, Executive Director, says, “The Braille Institute Rancho Mirage Center encourages you to celebrate life!” And the Youth Grantmakers of Coachella Valley are honored to have played a part in the celebration.
2017-2018 SENIOR MEMBERS

Sharina Rose Agriam
Rancho Mirage High School
Accepted to: Undecided
“Participating in the Youth Grantmakers has inspired me to give back to my community. As a youth I believe I can make a difference.”

Rancho Mirage High School
Accepted to: Grand Canyon University
This program has opened my eyes and my heart. Since I’ve been a part of this program I have been more aware of the various non-profit organizations within our community. My love for the Coachella Valley is strong and making sure I contribute back to it as I grow older has definitely become a goal of mine. I’m so glad I came across this amazing opportunity!

Jessica Aguilar-Hernandez
Cathedral City High School
Accepted to: University of California, Davis
I’m very happy to have been part of the Youth Grantmakers Committee for two years because through this program I’ve been able to give back to my community; this is a life goal of mine. I’ve seen children from low income families be awarded for their academic achievements through the grants we have awarded to a nonprofit organization. If I can make an impact as a student in the YG program, I can’t wait to see the impact I will make on my community when I return to the valley.

Amanda Flores
Xaiver College Preparatory High School
Accepted to: University of Southern California
Being a Youth Grantmaker has allowed me to broaden my leadership skills and be a part of the movement led by youth in bettering our communities. There are a myriad of issues to be found within our communities and it is up to us to help these non-profit organizations continue their work in order to promote positive change. Youth Grantmakers has inspired me to have a greater impact on the world by being the voice of the voiceless, and to become the change that my generation can have on the world.

Catherine Gee
Xaiver College Preparatory High School
Accepted to: University of California, Berkeley
Youth Grantmakers has caused me to think about nonprofits and their impact on the community more critically. I can see both sides of community service, from direct service to the actual work philanthropy entails. It has also opened a door to speak freely about relevant issues pressing our community here in the valley.

Austin Good
Palm Springs High School
Accepted to: Loyola Marymount University and UC Berkeley
Growing up, my mother constantly instilled in me a need to give back to the community. During my Junior Year, my counselor came to me with the opportunity to join the Youth Grantmakers, and I readily accepted. In my second-year, I am so glad Denisha accepted me into the group, as it has truly changed my life and given me an opportunity to give back to the Coachella Valley community. As I move onto an education in both film and business, Youth Grantmakers has taught me invaluable lessons on the grant writing process as well as how to organize and study financial reports. I wish to thank The Community Foundation for this opportunity, my peers in Youth Grantmakers, and especially Denisha for being both an inspiration and teacher throughout these two years.

2017-2018 Senior Members
Nalleley Herrera  
Cathedral City High School  
Accepted to: California State University, San Bernardino  
Participating in the Youth Grantmakers program has made me more aware of how important philanthropy is. I have learned how the nonprofit sector works and its responsibilities to improve life within the community. Being part of the Youth Grantmakers program has allowed me to reflect and build off community assets to create a better change.

Jada McLean  
Palm Springs High School  
Accepted to: University of California, Davis  
Participating in Youth Grantmakers has taught me the importance of giving back to my community. I have learned how valuable nonprofit organizations are in the world and their need to continue doing the work they do.

Camille Omnes  
Cathedral City High School  
Accepted to: University of Indianapolis  
YGC has impacted my life in so many ways. This is my second year now and I can gladly say that this program has opened my eyes to opportunities. The first year, I wasn’t exactly sure how the program ran but attending meetings and projects that YGC offered, it definitely made me understand it better.

Jessie Ozuna  
Palm Springs High School  
Accepted to: University of California, Los Angeles  
Youth Grantmakers has provided me with the unforgettable experience of being able to positively impact the lives of youth in the Coachella Valley. As a co-chair, I have been able to step up to a greater role and become more involved in the program. I have reached a deeper understanding of my community’s nonprofit organizations, and I have a clearer idea of how to continue to help. My knowledge on this topic will continue to expand, as will my ability to help those in need, and my drive to make my community a better place.

Melissa Valdivia  
Rancho Mirage High School  
Accepted to: University of California, Santa Cruz  
Participating in the Youth Grantmakers has been an extremely rewarding experience. I have now become more aware of my community and what is affecting the youth I interact with everyday. I hope to work in philanthropy throughout the rest of my academic and professional career.
2017-2018 JUNIOR MEMBERS

Jonathan Afable
Xavier College Preparatory High School
Youth Grantmakers has opened my eyes to the many social problems in the community, especially those who are my age. It has inspired me to become more involved in volunteering and to give more of my time and talent to help those in need.

Jadore Kendall
Palm Springs High School
Youth Grantmakers has allowed me to make new connections and learn about organizations and how they work. It is also giving me the opportunity to help fund and maybe help people in need. It’s been a great experience and I’d recommend it to anyone. Can’t wait for next year!

Michael Marks
Palm Springs High School
It has taught me the importance of philanthropy. By participating in site visits, I’ve been able to see how funding programs can make a positive difference. It is because of these positive changes that I’m able to make through the YG program that I want to continue being involved in non-profits well after high school.

Andrew Nielson
Palm Springs High School
The Youth Grantmakers Program has given me an in-depth look into the grantmaking process. YG has trained me to properly review grants, the grantmaking process, and decision making. YG has given me the confidence to understand grants.

Melisa Oropeza
Palm Springs High School
It has opened my eyes and allowed me to see the other side of many different nonprofits, especially all the hard work and dedication that is put into making a big difference in our community.

Eleanore Smith
Palm Springs High School
The Youth Grantmakers Program has shown me the importance of giving back to my community. And with the help of these grant opportunities we are able to make an impact.
2017-2018 SOPHOMORE MEMBERS

Margaid Hanrahan
La Quinta High School
Participating in Youth Grantmakers has helped me think in a bigger sense about business and many other things such as building a foundation and a good reputation. I have made many great friends through collaboration and teamwork.

Malia Reed
Xavier College Preparatory High School
The Youth Grantmakers Program is an amazing program that allows youth from around the Coachella Valley to come together to learn about the importance of philanthropy and giving back.

2017-2018 FRESHMAN MEMBERS

Breanna Flores
Shadow Hills High School
Youth Grantmakers has allowed me to gain self-awareness through collaboration and teamwork. This opportunity enables youth to take charge and voice their opinions on issues that matter to them. Through our philanthropic and community service work, I have helped to generate the positivity needed to be the change in our communities.
Since leaving Youth Grantmakers in 2016 I have experienced numerous transitions in my life – from high school to university, from changing major to major, and most drastically, from turning teen to twenty. Yet what I acquired during those monthly meetings for two straight years never left me.

After spending my first year in the computer science program at the University of California, San Diego, I realized it was not the field for me. No matter how much I loved coding, a sense of community within the department was missing to me. With that in mind I went off and explored different options. Just as I was about to give up and turn my full attention to astrobiology I took a course on climate change. When I say it changed my life, it truly did. After much research and studying, I realize together we can solve the problems we are facing now. I found something I truly believed in and truly felt passionate about the future again. Now I carry around a usable baggie of metal utensils and a metal straw with me everywhere I go, follow a vegan diet, and use reusable produce bags at the grocery store. I even invested in a biodegradable phone case!

During my studies I also remembered an organization we supported during my two years with Youth Grantmakers - GRID Alternatives. I decided to reach out and see if there was any way I could get more involved in their mission to bring solar power to low income communities around the country. Since then I have participated in their volunteer orientation and have signed up to go on my first install with them over summer break. GRID Alternatives also has collegiate teams and I hope to bring UCSD into the forefront of solar power installation, especially in the low income communities that surround the campus.

Youth Grantmakers not only allowed me to learn more about the nonprofit world in my home town but it also gave me the tools to understand nonprofits all around. I also formed bonds with my fellow YG’ers that I cherish to this day. High school was a tough time for everyone and having peers to tackle the issues with is an incredible experience. Most importantly, for me that is, is the fact that Youth Grantmakers gave me my first taste of what it is like to be an active member of my community.
Looking back, I am very grateful to have been given the opportunity to be a member of the Coachella Valley Youth Grantmakers. I remember during my junior year I was told by a former member, Kristinely Afable, to join this program. At that time, I did not know what to expect nor what I would be doing. However, I did know that this was a wonderful program to be a part of. As soon as I joined, I was eager to begin participating in the various service activities. In fact, I became the chair of the community service committee and introduced several service projects to the group. During my first year, we participated in the Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Program of Riverside County for the Thanksgiving holiday and the Out of Darkness Walk for suicide prevention. It was also during this time I gained first-hand exposure on how to assess nonprofits and the work and deliberation involved in the grantmaking process.

This year, I am very proud to say that we volunteered once again for the Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Program and participated in the Senior Holiday Gift Drive, and the Walk to End Alzheimer’s. It is my hope that the future YG members continue to keep this tradition and add even more service projects.

It is through the Youth Grantmakers program that I have been able to broaden my leadership skills and gain new skills in the grant making process. This program is very unique because it seeks to improve the wellbeing of the residents of Coachella Valley by including students from every high school across the Coachella Valley. This opportunity enables youth to take charge and voice their opinions on issues that matter to them. The Youth Grantmakers strives to include an array of perspectives and allow the youth to share personal connections to specific organizations in need of funding. These past two years, I have gained self-awareness through collaboration and teamwork and have been able to generate the positivity needed to be the change in my community.

As my time at the Youth Grantmakers comes to a close, my commitment to service work is just getting started. My community awareness and resolve to help others does not end here. I will continue to be a voice for the voiceless wherever I go.

Finally, I would like to thank all my Coachella Valley YG members and The Community Foundation, especially Ms. Shackelford. Thank you so much Ms. Shackelford for your endless support and dedication to our program. I have faith the Youth Grantmakers program will continue to be a success in the future as well impact the lives of many more people in the Coachella Valley.
When I first arrived at the new member meeting of Youth Grantmakers, I had no idea what to expect. Little did I know that this program would grow to become one of the most significant and impactful activities that I have had the privilege to take part in. I joined this organization at the beginning of my junior year, and it has positively impacted my life and many others’ lives since. I became immersed in the program as we began to learn about nonprofit organizations, philanthropy, and the various different organizations in the valley. I learned so much about local nonprofits in the valley, thanks to my involvement with the Youth Grantmakers program. Taking the issues teens believe are most significant for our youth and then selecting grantees to help improve these issues is truly empowering. Joining Youth Grantmakers has not only allowed me help make a difference for youth in our community, but the program enhanced my personal view of the community that surrounds me. It gave me a different way to look at the area where I live while becoming aware of the different nonprofit organizations and opportunities to help youth. As I began my second year in the program, my experience was further enriched by the leadership role I took on as co-chair of the Coachella Valley Youth Grantmakers program. After taking on this role, I became much more involved in the program. I had the opportunity to see the powerful effects of nonprofits on the community, whether it be a site visit to the Children’s Museum, giving back to families in need during the holidays, helping Variety, the Children’s Charity of the Desert award bikes to hard-working children, or volunteering in the Walk to End Alzheimer’s. Participating in this program has also allowed me to meet other students from various schools in the valley with the same desire to give back. As a result of the Youth Grantmakers, I reached a deeper understanding of philanthropy and my community’s nonprofit organizations, and I have a clearer idea of how to continue to help. As I travel through college and the rest of my life, I know my knowledge on this topic will expand, as will my ability to help those in need, and my drive to make my community a better place, thanks to being a member of Youth Grantmakers.

Thank you!

Jessie Ozuna
2017-2018 Youth Grantmakers Co-Chair
# GRANTEES 2017-2018

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# CHARITY OF CHOICE 2017-2018

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Ms. Paula Myles

“If you don’t think one person can change the world, you should get to know a Youth Grantmaker.”

Diane S. Valenzuela
Senior Vice President - Wealth Management
Merrill Lynch Global
For more info on the YG Program, please contact
Denisha Shackelford at dshackelford@thecommunityfoundation.net