



The 2014-2015 Rose Youth Foundation members

Making the Tough Decisions

Rebekah Abrams, Freshman, University of Rochester
Julia Turnbow, Senior, Thomas Jefferson High School

Rose Youth Foundation was a unique experience. Having \$60,000 to grant and working in consensus helped to make it special. However, the defining feature of Rose Youth Foundation was that we, the teen members, made every decision: we identified grant priorities and we selected grantees.

We did not use a majority vote system to make choices. Instead, we worked in consensus, which caused some long but rewarding meetings. Working in consensus means that not everyone always agrees, but everyone commits to moving forward with a decision. While this tended to make the decision-making process longer, everyone had the opportunity to speak his or her mind, so we all had confidence in our final decision.

During the grantmaking process, we had the opportunity not only to learn about the problems in our community, but also to help fix the issues we encountered. We spent months learning about

the grant priorities we had selected: addressing homelessness and the education achievement gap. After we had gained a sense of what we were working to support, we had the pleasure of meeting with organizations that were addressing these issues. What we found was inspiring. The organizations we met with, and ultimately funded, were tackling problems with which we had grown familiar, and we were able to see the difference they were making.

As co-chairs, we are proud of the decisions our group made this year. And more than that, we are proud to have led a group of 23 intelligent, individual teens who came together to create one amazing community. As one body, we granted \$60,000 to seven organizations that will have a positive impact on our community. As teens, we seized a rare opportunity, one that few adults will ever have, to work together to help make the world better.

For the 14th year, Rose Youth Foundation, a collaborative philanthropy group at Rose Community Foundation, provided Jewish teens from the Greater Denver community the opportunity to learn about grantmaking and philanthropy. In 2014-2015, 23 Rose Youth Foundation members from 14 schools granted \$60,000. This report is about who they are, what they did and how they did it.

Closing the Gap

Josh Bogen, Senior, Denver School of the Arts
Zoe Miller, Senior, East High School

One of our grant priorities was funding programs working to close the achievement gap in pre-kindergarten through third grade. We were passionate about this effort, as education has far-reaching implications for almost all aspects of a person's future, including job security, healthcare access and financial stability. Failure to read proficiently by the end of third grade makes students four times less likely to graduate high school, and children with the lowest reading scores make up 63 percent of all students who do not graduate high school (*Early Warning Confirmed: A Research Update on Third-Grade Reading*, The Annie E. Casey Foundation).

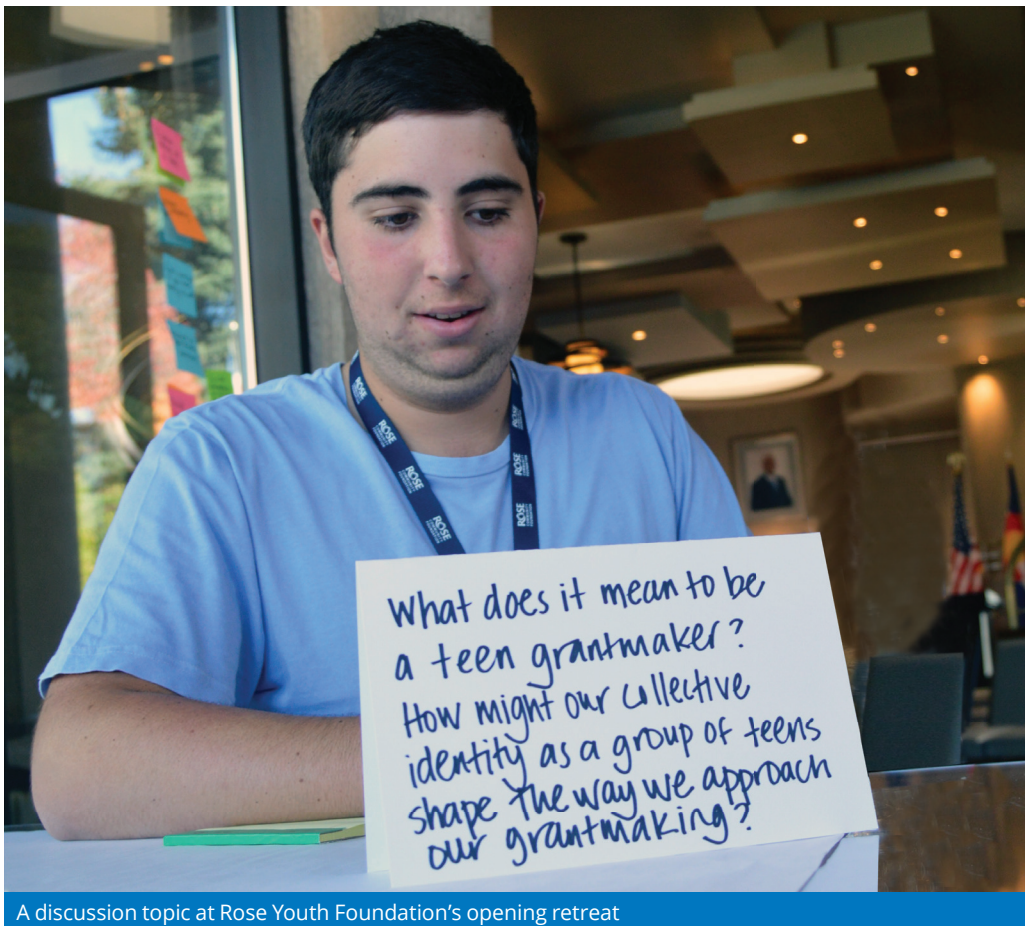
As Jewish teens, we sought to address this issue because we felt it reflected the teaching *v'hechezekta bo*, or "you shall strengthen those

needing help to become self-sufficient." As students ourselves, we know that education provides many of the necessary tools to become self-sufficient.

While evaluating grant proposals, we searched for programs that not only work to improve students' literacy skills, but also ones that serve students in an ongoing way. In addition, we limited our funding to programs within elementary schools or early childhood centers. Finally, we focused on funding programs with demonstrated results or those using evidence-based models. We were inspired by the effort, passion and program results of our four grantees for this priority: Colorado "I Have a Dream" Foundation, Growing Home, "I Have a Dream" Foundation of Boulder County and Reading Partners.

Ensure our youngest leaders continue to shape our community.

In 2011, Rose Community Foundation began a campaign to endow Rose Youth Foundation. Thanks to many generous donors, more than \$1.1 million has been raised toward our ultimate goal of \$2 million. An endowment for Rose Youth Foundation will ensure that future generations of Jewish teens will have the chance to experience this program and that our community will continue to benefit from the leadership and perspective of youth grantmakers. If you would like to make a gift to support the Rose Youth Foundation endowment, contact Ben Finan, collaborative giving coordinator, at 303.398.7417 or bfinan@rcfdenver.org.



A discussion topic at Rose Youth Foundation's opening retreat

Homelessness in Our Community

Tess Hankin, Senior, Colorado Academy
Avital Rotbart, Freshman, Metro State University of Denver

This year, Rose Youth Foundation made addressing homelessness, specifically teen and family homelessness, one of our grant priorities. We all agreed that this is a significant issue in our community, and that allocating funds to organizations serving homeless families and youth would be a worthwhile use of our grant funds.

Fifty-three percent of our community's homeless population is families and fourteen percent of the homeless population is unaccompanied youth (*2014 State of Homelessness Report*, Metro Denver Homelessness Initiative). Homelessness is detrimental to children's development and educational success. In addition, homelessness is an immediate threat to human life and safety.

There is an idea passed down from the Sanhedrin, an ancient court made up of 71 Jewish men who headed the supreme court in Judea, "Whoever destroys a single soul, it is as if he had destroyed a full world; and whoever saves one soul, it is as if he had saved the whole world."

As Jewish teens, the young people our grants will help are our peers, and if we can help to save even one life, it is as if we saved the whole world. The organizations we chose to fund, Comitis Crisis Center, Urban Peak and Warren Village, will help facilitate our aspirations to help homeless families and youth in our community.



Members of Rose Youth foundation brainstorm together

2014-2015 Rose Youth Foundation Members

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Volume 3, Issue 1

Rose Youth Foundation's
Report to the Community is
published annually by:

Rose Community Foundation
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Suite 1200
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Denver, CO 80246-1712

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Rose Youth Foundation's 2014-2015 Grants

Helping Unaccompanied Youth or Families with Children Experiencing Homelessness Become Self-sufficient

- **Comitis Crisis Center** (Denver) \$15,000 to support homeless teen outreach and family self-sufficiency programs in Adams, Arapahoe and Douglas counties.
- **Urban Peak** (Denver) \$8,250 to support trauma informed services for homeless youth.
- **Warren Village** (Denver) \$7,250 to help homeless single parent families achieve personal and economic self-sufficiency.

Closing the Academic Achievement Gap for Students in Pre-kindergarten through Third Grade

- **Colorado "I Have a Dream" Foundation** (Denver) \$7,500 to support project-based learning experiences after school at Ruby Hill Elementary for a new first grade class.
- **Growing Home** (Denver) \$7,000 to expand Blocks of Hope, developing language and literacy among high needs children and families in southwest Adams County.
- **"I Have a Dream" of Boulder County** (Boulder) \$10,000 to provide specialized learning and reading materials for after school and summer programs at Columbine Elementary School.
- **Reading Partners** (Denver) \$5,000 to expand one-on-one literacy tutoring to new Metro Denver elementary schools.



Rose Youth Foundation members celebrate their grantmaking work