

Lessons in Caring for Community Like a Rose Garden



By Penn Beldock

I recently joined a community garden and started tending my own plot. Soon after beginning this work, I realized being part of Rose Youth Foundation requires the same patience, outlook and consideration as growing a garden. I looked up how to grow the perfect rose and this is what I learned:

First off, roses crave sun, at least six hours a day is ideal. In my garden plot, I see the difference between the plants that grow in the shade and those that receive more sunlight. In the past two years, Rose Youth Foundation has shown me that there are many clouds teens may face – such as teen pregnancy and sexual assault. It can be difficult for those teens to constantly search for light and find a way to shine and grow when clouds are in their sky. But through community efforts and the work

of nonprofit organizations, eventually those teens can overcome their clouds and the sun can shine for them again.

Like roses, all of us need soil, a firm ground in which we can plant our roots and grow. Our group is very lucky because we have all been able to plant ourselves within the soil of Denver's strong and vibrant Jewish community. Our experience on Rose Youth Foundation has not only deepened our roots but also given us a foundation to build upon for the rest of our lives.

Most importantly, roses cannot continue to bloom year after year without fertilizer, water, inspection and pruning. Communities and individuals need the same nourishment. Through Rose Youth Foundation, we have felt the tremendous power that serving others in our community can have to lift our collective spirit.

Jewish Values Propel the Work of Teens to Serve Peers

By Ellie Shiovitz

In 2016-17, Rose Youth Foundation chose sexual assault prevention and treatment for victims as our grant priority. We began by identifying issues effecting the greater Denver community, such as homelessness, the education achievement gap, and environmental protection. As we researched the issues, we considered how a group of teen funders with \$60,000 to grant in a Jewish way, could make a difference in our community. We felt sexual assault prevention and victim treatment was an area we could have an impact.

While conducting our research, we learned startling statistics: one in three women and one in four men in the United States have experienced some form of relationship violence¹, and the majority of sexual assault cases occur between intimate partners². Sexual assault victims are three times more likely to suffer from depression, 13 times more likely to abuse alcohol, and 26 times more likely to abuse drugs³.

We learned there are populations that are at an even higher risk of sexual assault. Among them, people between the ages 18-25⁴, those experiencing homelessness⁵, and those identifying as LGBTQ⁶. We

decided to give higher priority to programs that serve these specific populations.

Our work was propelled by Jewish values. Judaism teaches *lo ta'amod al dam rei'echa*, do not stand idly by in the face of violence. We sought to equip our peers with the tools necessary to combat sexual assault and increase the likelihood of forming healthy relationships. We believe the positive effects of healthy relationship practices contribute to the greater good and support *darchei shalom*, the path of peace. Finally, we view our grants as a chance to serve those most at risk for sexual assault, as well as to provide support and care to victims with love and kindness, embodying the Jewish value of *chesed*. We will take this experience of acting in a Jewish way for the greater good of the community with us as a practice throughout life.

¹Black, M.C., Basile, K.C., Breiding, M.J., Smith, S.G., Walters, M.L., Merrick, M.T., Chen, J., & Stevens, M.R. (2011). The National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (NISVS): 2010 Summary Report. Atlanta, GA: National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

²Breiding, M. J. (n.d.). Prevalence and Characteristics of Sexual Violence, Stalking, and Intimate Partner Violence Victimization — National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (Rep.). Retrieved September 5, 2014, from Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website: <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/ss6308a1.htm>

³DG Kilpatrick, CN Edmunds, AK Seymour. Rape in America: A Report to the Nation. Arlington, VA: National Victim Center and Medical University of South Carolina (1992).

⁴Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Statistics, Sex Offenses and Offenders (1997).

⁵Kushel, M., Evans, J., Perry, S., Robertson, M., & Moss, A. (2003). No door to lock: Victimization among homeless and marginally housed persons. *Archive of Internal Medicine*, 163(20).

⁶David Cantor, Bonnie Fisher, Susan Chibnall, Reanna Townsend, et. al. Association of American Universities (AAU), Report on the AAU Campus Climate Survey on Sexual Assault and Sexual Misconduct (September 21, 2015). ("Victim services agency" is defined in this study as a "public or privately funded organization that provides victims with support and services to aid their recovery, offer protection, guide them through the criminal justice process, and assist with obtaining restitution." RAINN presents this data for educational purposes only, and strongly recommends using the citations to review any and all sources for more information and detail.)



The Power of Site Visits

By Cami Oberfeld and Adam Downing

This year Rose Youth Foundation met with eight organizations that work to prevent sexual assault and provide treatment and services for victims of sexual assault. These site visits helped bring to life proposals that were submitted by organizations seeking our support. Meeting with staff and seeing an organization's work in action helped us decide where our funding would have the largest impact and make the greatest difference in our community. After visiting each organization, we collectively decided which organizations we could fund with the \$60,000 available to grant. With so many incredible organizations serving our community, making funding decisions was no small feat, but we are confident we have selected five capable and compassionate grantees that fit the funding priority we believe needs to be addressed in our community.

We are proud to support the following organizations working to prevent sexual assault and to provide services and support to victims:

Colorado Youth Matters (Denver): \$10,000 for the Inclusive, Affirming and Empowering: Education as a Primary Prevention Against Sexual Assault workshop series, which focuses on healthy relationships, consent, safe media usage and online relationship safety for LGBTQ youth in Denver. We learned on our site visit how Colorado Youth Matters strengthens leadership and advances the movement for youth sexual health through training, research, advocacy, comprehensive sexuality education, youth/family partnerships, and by helping communities across Colorado reach their desired academic and health goals.

Project PAVE (Denver): \$5,000 for the Youth Community Education Program, which trains 10-12 high school and early college students as peer relationship violence prevention educators. Project PAVE's mission is to empower youth to end the cycle of relationship violence. We learned on our site visit that many of the student educators have been victims of sexual assault themselves. Their leadership empowers them to overcome their abuse and use their experience to help others learn to form and maintain healthy relationships.



SungateKids (Denver): \$15,000 for the Therapeutic Support Program, which provides concurrent, separate support groups for adolescent victims of sexual assault and their parents or caregivers. We learned on our site visit how the work SungateKids does for the Denver community is comprehensive and creates lasting recovery for victims and families. SungateKids works closely with partner organizations including law enforcement, child protective services and physical and mental health professionals. All of their services are free of cost so funds are never a barrier to a successful recovery.

The Blue Bench (Denver): \$15,000 for Sexual Violence Prevention Youth Programming, which provides workshops for schools and youth-serving organizations on preventing teen exploitation, reducing sexual violence through bystander intervention, promoting healthy relationships, and understanding consent. We learned on our site visit how The Blue Bench seeks to influence the future of sexual assault prevention by changing the conversation around healthy relationship behavior and increasing awareness in youth to recognize the signs of harmful and potentially dangerous actions.

WINGS Foundation Inc. (Denver): \$15,000 for support groups for LGBTQ adult survivors of childhood sexual abuse. On our site visit, we learned how this unique program helps victims deal with traumas they have held onto for many years. Support groups are kept small to allow individuals to address their traumas in a way that is supported by people with similar identities and experiences.

2017 Rose Youth Foundation Grants

\$60,000



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Empower the Community's Youngest Leaders for Generations to Come

We believe youth are not only tomorrow's community leaders, they are also today's, so in 2011, we began a campaign to endow Rose Youth Foundation. The ultimate goal is to raise \$2 million dollars to permanently fund this program. We want to ensure that future generations of young Jewish people will have the chance to serve their community as youth grantmakers and that our community will continue to benefit from their leadership and perspective. To date, more than \$1 million has been raised thanks to generous support from Rose Youth Foundation alumni, their families, individual donors and foundations. To learn more about how you can support the future of Rose Youth Foundation, contact Sarah Indyk at 303.398.7416 or sindyk@rcfdenver.org.

ROSE YOUTH FOUNDATION 2016-2017 BOARD MEMBERS

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About Rose Youth Foundation

Rose Youth Foundation is a youth-led Jewish collaborative giving program. High school students grades 10 through 12 use their Jewish values and the tools of strategic philanthropy to set funding priorities, meet with nonprofit organizations and collectively grant \$60,000 to the Denver Boulder community.

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