



ROOTS & BRANCHES FOUNDATION

FOUNDING DATE

2007

NO. OF MEMBERS

18

MEMBER AGE RANGE

25-40

ANNUAL MEMBER CONTRIBUTIONS

All members make a personally meaningful financial contribution to the group's grantmaking funds. There is no minimum requirement.

GRANTS AWARDED

In 2014, Roots & Branches Foundation awarded \$76,500 in grants to 4 nonprofits

DURATION OF GRANT CYCLE

8 months

ISSUE AREA OF FOCUS

Determined each year by members

FINANCIAL SETUP

Roots & Branches Foundation is a special program of Rose Community Foundation

NO. OF MEETINGS PER YEAR

14

CONTACT

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Case Study:

A Community Foundation's Giving Circle for Young Professionals

by Sarah Indyk, Philanthropic Engagement Officer

Roots & Branches Foundation, a special program of Rose Community Foundation, brings together 18 Jewish 20- and 30-somethings to use their values and the tools of strategic philanthropy to make a difference in the Greater Denver community through grantmaking.

Each year, Roots & Branches Foundation is comprised of a different group of 18 diverse individuals. Roots & Branches members work together with Rose Community Foundation staff for eight months to explore what it means to give in a Jewish way and to make grants that help solve problems in Greater Denver and Boulder's Jewish and broader communities.

Rose Community Foundation provides a grantmaking pool of \$60,000 and up to \$20,000 in additional funds to match funds contributed by members.



Giving circles don't follow a formula: they can be large or small, in-person or virtual, time-intensive or low-key. But they all share a passion for connecting, learning, and giving with greater intent and impact—by giving together. Our Case Study series introduces you to some amazing giving circles, showcasing their unique models. Find more Case Studies at www.AmplifierGiving.org



Starting Out

Rose Community Foundation created Roots & Branches Foundation in 2007 based on the findings of *Legwork, Framework, Artwork*, a Rose Community Foundation report on the needs and interests of Jewish young adults in the Greater Denver community. Participant-based research revealed that Jewish young adults sought a way to connect to one another and to Judaism that extended beyond religious practice or purely social gatherings and allowed them to use their Jewish identities as a tool to make a difference in their community. Roots & Branches Foundation was created to empower 20- and 30-something Jewish people with a seat at the communal leadership table, providing them with a place to make a difference alongside their peers and through a Jewish lens. Members come together from diverse backgrounds for a shared Jewish philanthropic experience rooted in contemporary issues and community commitment.



The Circle Experience

Each year, Rose Community Foundation brings together a different group of 18 young adults to form Roots & Branches Foundation. Members work together over eight months, getting to know each other, understanding their own and one another's Jewish values, becoming familiar with the tools of strategic philanthropy, exploring issues facing the Greater Denver community, identifying and articulating grant priorities, researching and meeting with nonprofits and making grant decisions. Members make all decisions through consensus. After the eight-month Roots & Branches experience, members join an alumni community of more than 140 former members who continue to connect to one another, community, philanthropy and Judaism.

Circle Activities

COMMUNITY SERVICE

Alumni annual day of service

CONNECTIONS & NETWORKS

Staff connect members to one another, to alumni and to other community members and leaders for networking

JEWISH RELIGIOUS EVENTS

Alumni and member Shabbat dinners and holiday gatherings

JEWISH EDUCATION EVENTS

Jewish philanthropic education is a core component of the Roots & Branches grantmaking cycle.

Jewish education is also a component of some alumni events and salons

PHILANTHROPIST SUPPORT

Understanding and practicing strategic, Jewish philanthropy is a core component of the Roots & Branches grantmaking cycle. Alumni are also supported in their philanthropic journeys through invitations to Rose Community Foundation events and philanthropic gatherings

COACHING & MENTORING

As well as serving as mentors and coaches to members, staff connect members to Foundation colleagues, to one another, to alumni and to other community members and leaders

Unique Circle Features

As a special program of Rose Community Foundation, Roots & Branches Foundation is well-resourced in terms of staffing, grantmaking funds and access to Foundation tools and information. Each year, Rose Community Foundation makes a significant investment in Roots & Branches Foundation because it represents the nexus of two core areas of the Foundation's work. First, Roots & Branches Foundation is aligned with two of the highest priorities of the Foundation's Jewish Life program area: connecting Jewish people to Jewish life and to one another, and developing leaders in Greater Denver's Jewish communities. Second, Roots & Branches Foundation engages young people in strengthening their community as philanthropists, helping to fulfill Rose Community Foundation's goal of

encouraging the practice of strategic philanthropy.

As a result of the Foundation's investment, Roots & Branches Foundation members benefit from professional staff with experience in facilitation and in grantmaking. Rose Community Foundation's Jewish Life program area provides each Roots & Branches Foundation cohort with a base grantmaking fund of \$60,000 and matching funds for all donations members make or solicit. These grantmaking and staffing resources allow Roots & Branches Foundation members to approach their philanthropic work the way a Foundation does, to learn tools and strategies, and to build a network to help guide their future philanthropic journeys.

Giving & Impact

OUR GRANTMAKING PROCESS

Each year, Roots & Branches Foundation members identify specific community issues they seek to address through their grantmaking. Rose Community Foundation asks Roots & Branches members to be focused and strategic in their grantmaking work, to view their grantmaking as a tool for change, to approach their philanthropy from a values-based standpoint and to practice Jewish grantmaking. In addition to selecting grant priorities, Roots & Branches Foundation members also identify the grantmaking mechanism, or tactics, that are best suited to each of their priorities. Often, the members create and Rose Community Foundation distributes a Request for Proposals, inviting nonprofits that fit the group's priorities and grantmaking criteria to apply for funds. The members review the resulting grant proposals, established shared grant review criteria, select finalists to receive site visits, and make funding decisions. All decisions are made through consensus. From start to finish, Roots & Branches Foundation's funding cycle takes eight months to complete, and over the program's first seven years, it has granted \$530,000 to support the Greater Denver Community.

“Roots & Branches was one of the most respectful, inclusive and enlightening group experiences of my life. It reinforced my desire to be active in the Jewish community and to celebrate Judaism as an adult, which I never really thought would become a priority for me.”

A ROOTS & BRANCHES FOUNDATION MEMBER

OUR IMPACT ON THE WORLD

Because each Roots & Branches Foundation cohort is made up of an entirely new group, priorities change from year to year. Providing support for meaningful, relevant and compelling Jewish engagement opportunities is the only consistent theme to emerge in the grantmaking, with two-thirds of cohorts prioritizing this topic. All cohorts have made one-year grants. Some provided general operating support while many focused on providing program funding. In 2014, Roots & Branches Foundation awarded \$76,500 in grants to four nonprofits:

Denver Urban Gardens

\$10,000 for the Women, Infants and Children (WIC) program at DeLaney Community Farm, which provides free vegetable shares as well as training in gardening and healthy food preparation for low-income families and \$2,000 plus technical assistance to develop Denver Urban Gardens' use of social media.

Revision International (Denver)

\$25,000 for Re:Farm, a program to increase access to healthy, local and organic food for low-income families by empowering residents to grow food in their own backyards. The program provides training, garden supplies and year-round support.

Community College of Aurora (Denver)

\$25,000 for the Healthcare Bridge Certificate Program to provide non-native English speaking students with advanced language development and health care skills and certifications. Upon completion of the program, students are prepared to enter a health-related career path.

Work Options for Women (Denver):

\$14,000 for the Advanced Culinary and Supervisory Skills Training Program, which provides paid and supervised, on-the-job training in culinary supervision and management skills. Students completing the program enter the job market at a higher wage and progress more quickly up the food services career ladder.