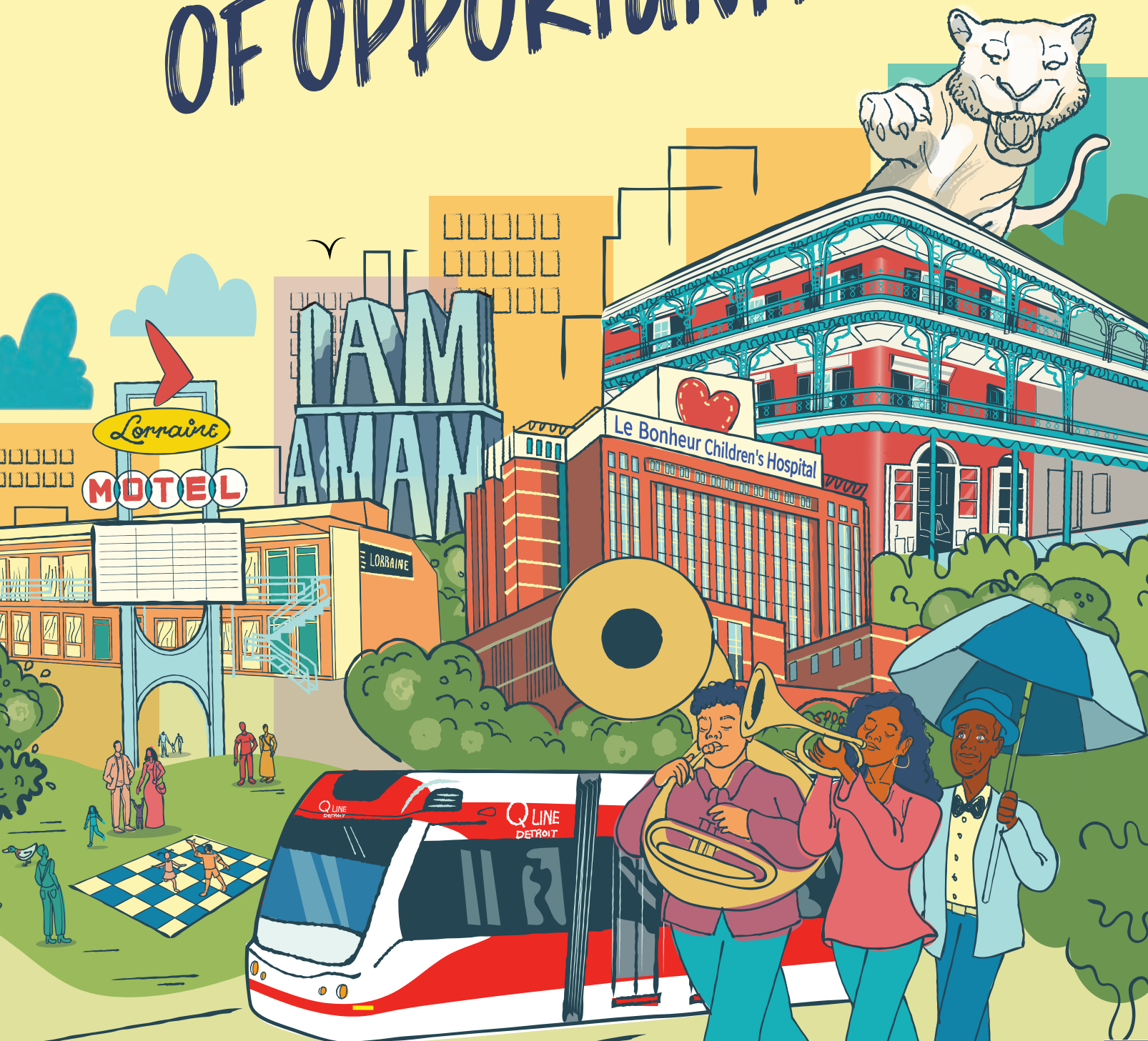




# THE KRESGE FOUNDATION

1924-2024

# A CENTURY OF IMPACT, A FUTURE OF OPPORTUNITY



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

8

## INTRODUCTION

Letter from Board Chair Cecilia Muñoz p.9

Letter from President & CEO Rip Rapson p.12

24

## FOUNDATION ORIGINS

1867-1927

28

## CAPITAL CHALLENGE GRANTMAKING

1928-2006

65

## A STRATEGIC PIVOT

2006-2016

117

## CITIES & EQUITY

2016-PRESENT

150

## CONCLUSION

Letter from Cynthia Kresge p.151

2023 Financials p.154

By the Numbers: Historical Grantmaking p.156

Credits p.158

# A NOTE ABOUT THIS PUBLICATION

This year marks a momentous milestone as we celebrate our centennial – a century dedicated to fostering opportunities and advancing equity across the United States and the world.

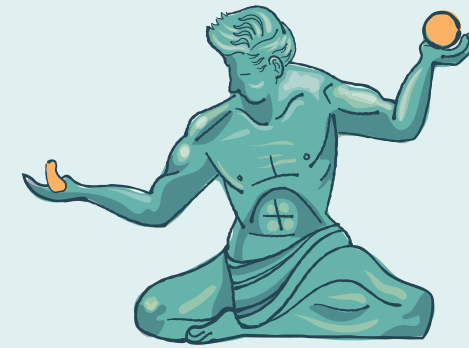
In this special centennial edition of our annual report, we are excited to present a unique experience: four pop-up features that bring to life iconic landmarks from the cities of Detroit, Memphis, New Orleans and Fresno. These are more than visual delights; they symbolize our deep-rooted commitment to these cities and highlight the cultural and historical richness that defines them.

Detroit, where our story began, stands as a testament to resilience and innovation. Memphis pulsates with a rhythm of cultural heritage and community spirit. New Orleans, with its vibrant tapestry of traditions, embodies creativity and resilience in the face of challenges. Fresno, a beacon in California’s Central Valley, showcases agricultural prowess and diverse community dynamics.

Each city exemplifies a unique blend of history, character and the promise of a brighter future. Through these landmarks, we celebrate not only the places but also the people – their vision, dedication and the vibrant communities they cultivate. It is our privilege to honor these dynamic cities and the remarkable individuals who contribute to making them extraordinary places to live, work and thrive.

The story of Kresge’s history is told through 100 moments of impact. These moments were only made possible because of the thousands of partners we have worked with over the last century. In many of these stories, readers will hear from those partners in their own words. We thank them for sharing their reflections.

Finally, please note that the stories appear chronologically, which is an imperfect system, as most of our work spans years, if not decades. Read on knowing that the order and year labels are a good approximation for how the story unfolded, while allowing for the reality to be far messier.



39 DETROIT



61 NEW ORLEANS



87 MEMPHIS



113 FRESNO

# INTRODUCTION

Kresge's Board Chair reflects on the nation's progress toward its quest to be a "more perfect union" and the foundation's role in helping realize that vision. At Kresge's 100th, it's time to rededicate ourselves to the mission, she writes.

## Challenges Remain, but Progress Toward Equity is Worth Celebrating

By Cecilia Muñoz, Board Chair, The Kresge Foundation

A centennial is an irresistible opportunity for celebration and reflection. It provides a great yardstick for measuring progress, celebrating impact, and, since The Kresge Foundation was set up to operate in perpetuity, recommitting ourselves to the work of the century ahead. It's also an excellent excuse to look back into history and examine how much has – and hasn't – changed.

When Sebastian Kresge launched his namesake foundation, the country was living through the period that is frequently called the "Roaring Twenties" for its great economic prosperity. That prosperity, it turns out, was enjoyed by only a tiny portion of the country's population. In fact, about 60% of American families lived on less than \$2,000 a year, which is what the Bureau of Labor Statistics described at the time as the minimum liveable income for a family of five. W.E.B. Du Bois observed in an essay when The Kresge Foundation was two years old that, "We have today in the United States, cheek by jowl, Prosperity and Depression." The 1920s are also the decade most associated with the launch of the Great Migration, the period during which millions of African Americans moved to cities in the North in search of safety from the terror and violence of the Jim Crow South, as well as job opportunities in a growing industrial sector.

We made progress in the 1920s: the movement to expand access to a high school education grew substantially in the years that Sebastian Kresge was building his company, and the 19th Amendment to the Constitution, which recognized the right of women to vote, was only four years old when he launched his foundation in 1924. But that's also the year that Congress passed the Johnson-Reed Act, which established immigration quotas explicitly designed to advance notions of "racial homogeneity," drawing immigrants from Northern Europe, limiting what were considered "less desirable" immigrants from other parts of Europe, and excluding people from Asia altogether.

You can see where I'm heading; while we have made enormous progress in the United States in the last century, the challenges we faced then have a lot in common with the ones we face now. I firmly believe that our progress as a nation, and the foundation's role in advancing that progress, is well worth celebrating. We should take inspiration from the fact that Americans have engaged our young democracy in a way that has allowed us to make progress toward becoming a more perfect union and that a good number of the institutions that have contributed to that progress have benefitted from our grantmaking.

And yet, every one of the things our nation struggled with a century ago – from economic inequality to fully realizing the rights of African Americans, women and so many others in our society – still challenge us today. While we rightfully take inspiration from what we have achieved, a centennial is also an opportunity to take a clear-eyed look at the work ahead.

This is what excites me about this moment; it’s an opportunity to reflect, learn and rededicate ourselves. Having built an extraordinary legacy that can literally be seen and felt all around the country at institutions that received capital and challenge grants, this foundation has contributed mightily to Americans’ health, education, culture and more. And as our understanding of the complexity of the challenges our nation – and our planet – face, our work has evolved in its focus and sophistication. We work on expanding equity and opportunity in America’s cities, and the range of tools that we use goes well beyond grantmaking. We also use social investments, our convening power, the extraordinary expertise of our team, and our deep commitment to listening and working in partnership with local communities and their leaders to help them make change. You can see the effects in our hometown of Detroit, as well as Memphis, New Orleans, Fresno and a host of other American cities. We live in challenging times, to be sure, but our capacity to do our part to meet the moment has grown considerably over 100 years.

As we embark on our second century, we have a strong foundation to build upon. Our journey thus far, marked by a willingness to take calculated risks, to invest in areas often overlooked by others, to continually refine our tools, and to steadfastly pursue equity, is a testament to our unwavering commitment to understanding our times and serving humanity, as Sebastian Kresge envisioned a century ago.

So, as we celebrate how far we have come, here’s to the work ahead of us. Onward!



**Cecilia Muñoz**  
Kresge Foundation Board Chair

**RIGHT**

Members of the Kresge Board of Trustees in June 2024 at the foundation’s Midtown office. From left: María Otero (now retired), Audrey Choi, Cecilia Muñoz, John Fry, Kathy Ko Chin, Paula Pretlow, Rip Rapson, Saunteel Jenkins, Scott Kresge, Richard Buery Jr. and Suzanne Shank. Not pictured: Jim Bildner (now retired).

**“THIS FOUNDATION HAS CONTRIBUTED MIGHTILY TO AMERICANS’ HEALTH, EDUCATION, CULTURE AND MORE.”**

– Cecilia Muñoz



# The Kresge POV: Philanthropy Has a Role to Play in City Transformation

By Rip Rapson, President and CEO, The Kresge Foundation

One hundred years ago, Sebastian Kresge created a foundation in his name with the mission to promote human progress. Since then, Kresge's board members, staff and presidents have collaborated to give shape and direction to that charge.

When one's founding documents allow such sweeping discretion, it's tempting to cast your net broadly – to sidestep the need to choose among countless worthy causes. Tempting, but ill-advised. Spreading philanthropic resources too thin causes us to flow, amoeba-like, from one urgency to another. We need a point of view to focus our efforts.

The challenge is accordingly how we decide where, how and to what we direct our resources – not just our endowment, but our attention, our credibility and the dedication, learning and creativity of our people.

Over the 18 years in which I've had the privilege of serving as president of the foundation, we've come to an understanding of how to meet that challenge: being additive rather than redundant ... being expansive without losing focus ... calibrating between reasonable risk and aspirational audacity ... using the full suite of tools of a private philanthropy.

As we see it, Kresge as a philanthropy plays six fundamental roles – engaging tasks that we do well and calling on tools that we use with skill – which we blend, stack, and combine with the freedom that few of our counterparts in other sectors enjoy.

Let me say a bit more about why these roles are important in the first place, and then suggest how they have informed our work at Kresge.

## The Unique Attributes of Private Philanthropy

Our grant and investment dollars align with, animate and give credibility to everything the foundation does. But they alone are insufficient to the full realization of our purpose, particularly when viewed in the context of the vast

dollars available to the public and private sectors. If we are to contribute to social progress, therefore, we must move into lanes difficult, if not impossible, for the private and public sectors to occupy – something made possible by our enormous privilege of being able to hold long-term perspective, take risk calibrated to the magnitude of the challenge, draw on a deep and diverse toolbox, and anchor our efforts in equity and justice.



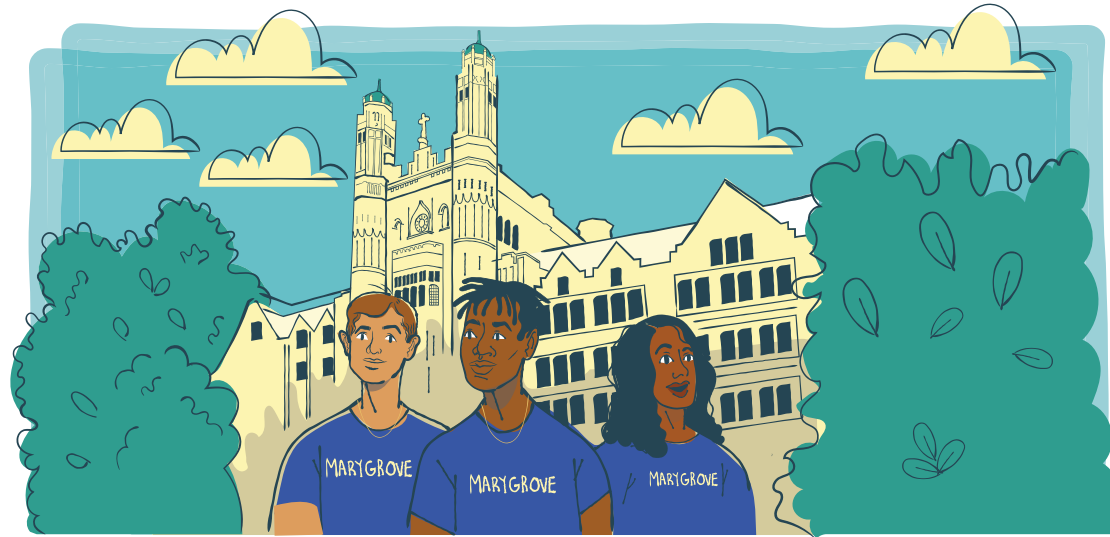
Stated somewhat differently:

- We can be a source of patient, discretionary capital, balancing the imperative of responsive and transactional support with the desirability of addressing systemic drivers of unjust and inequitable social and economic systems.
- We can serve as society's social venture capital.
- We can fashion a unique alchemy by interweaving grant dollars with creative financial tools, intellectual contributions and partnerships.
- We can create powerful and enduring relationships that translate into the kind of trust essential to pursuing community change.

## Six Roles From the Detroit Experience

These qualities have translated into six roles that have enabled Kresge to adapt to the extraordinary cycles of uncertainty and disruption that have washed over Detroit – and other communities – over the last two decades: the ravages of the Great Recession and the housing foreclosure crisis of 2008-'09 ... the existential threat posed by the largest municipal bankruptcy in American history ... the wholesale reinvention of neighborhood revitalization tools in the bankruptcy's aftermath ... the dizzying dislocations in public health, small business viability, and daily life occasioned by COVID ... the searing energies of racial justice and reconciliation following the George Floyd murder.

They have proven to be levers capable of cracking open and shifting systems, recasting the interplay of government, the private sector, and civil society.



**First, table-setting.** We could use our perceived fairness to convene community members around the kind of gnarly, long-term issues that the public and private sectors wouldn't, or couldn't, address, cutting a channel for philanthropy to help overcome stubbornly resistant civic inertias.

**Second, capacity-building.** We could fund the mechanisms by which citizens become well organized where they live, augmenting local decision-making and investment capacities in ways that inject local voice into processes that are too often hard-wired to marginalize them.

**Third, risk mitigation.** We could peel away the first layer of risk in critical transactions outside the comfort fence-line of public and private sector actors, either by serving as a “first-mover” or by assuming the top level of financial loss.

**Fourth, value guarantor.** We could underwrite public goods that signal to private markets that these are places and activities capable of anchoring a community's sustained long-term health and stability.

**Fifth, ground-truthing.** We could offer our knowledge of the local circumstance to those not familiar with the city – other philanthropy, the federal government, or others – to help them determine how they might best invest their time, talent and resources.

**And sixth, civic stewardship.** We could invest in building, strengthening and sustaining the fragile civic and cultural ties that help bind a city together – whether through arts and culture, human services supports, community organizing or otherwise.

The roles became far more than theory – far more than a neat and tidy rubric capable of housing the wide spectrum of Kresge activities during a tumultuous period of Detroit's history. They instead redefined what we sought to accomplish wherever we worked – and how.

Our experience, moreover, underscores that these roles activate with greatest potency when deployed in combination. The resulting arrangements suggest a

form of reverse engineering: clarifying what we want to accomplish, then working backward to assemble the right players equipped with the right tools ... applied in the right proportions ... in the right sequence ... at the right pace.

Only then do we forge a truly effective, equitable and accountable civic problem-smashing machinery. A machinery not limited to just city hall or state government. Or to just corporations, no matter how enlightened. Or to just philanthropy. And not even to just community residents. Instead, all parts of civil society working in a mutually reinforcing way to advance the common good.

Consider, for example, the power of setting the table for community residents to participate in the reimagining of an early childhood development system ... then strengthening community capacity by providing the kind of technical assistance and networks of exchange necessary for long-term, sustained professional growth of early childhood providers ... and then investing in childcare facilities that serve as neighborhood anchors. The cumulative effect is to create the preconditions for both expanded access to high-quality care for thousands of Detroit's youngest residents and long-term economic stability for childcare providers. And that is exactly what has materialized through the decade-long commitment Kresge and others have made to the Hope Starts Here initiative.



Or consider the catalytic effect of providing the risk capital that absorbs the first layer of exposure in an otherwise elusive housing strategy ... thereby inviting external investors to see the financial feasibility of undertakings they would otherwise cordon ... and, in turn, beginning to build the muscle of community-based lending capacity. The net result: starting in motion a flywheel of more balanced, equitable investment in an essential building block of community health and vitality.

At the risk of grandiosity, the roles are like colors on a painter's palette or notes in a musical composition. One is good, but it's the blending and layering that create something truly special.



## Beyond Detroit

Representatives from other communities had taken notice of our experiences in Detroit and were curious to know whether and to what extent what we had learned might be translatable to their circumstance. We started testing the idea of supplementing our discipline-based grantmaking – which had always been national in scope – with an elevated focus on a few other cities.

We returned to the challenge I noted earlier of not outstripping our capacities by becoming too diffuse. We assessed where we were already making grants ... where there were reliable local partners able to ground us ... where the challenges of race, poverty and economic opportunity bore resemblance to Detroit ... where the scope of public systems was not so large as to marginalize our engagement ... and any number of other factors.

At the end of the day, though, it was an accretive process, not prescriptive. Over the next decade, it led us to land in Memphis, New Orleans and Fresno. In each, the six roles played out differently, but continued to imbue our way of working with a valuable form of constancy.

### New Orleans

Kresge joined with other funders to aid the city of New Orleans in the immediate aftermath of the unthinkable horrors of Hurricane Katrina in 2005. By 2020, though, many of the others had withdrawn, leaving Kresge one of three national community development funders still committed to the city.

New Orleans has a syncopated rhythm that is unlike any other place in the country. Moving beyond the French Quarter and tourist venues, the city is an asset-rich tapestry of diverse neighborhoods with distinct characteristics, passionate residents and dedicated community partners.

That reality invited us to pivot from emergency support to investments across the spectrum of the city's community development needs. We found an



invaluable ground-wire in the Greater New Orleans Foundation's extensive and thoughtful programming in such diverse issues as water management, workforce development, economic opportunity and nonprofit capacity building.

The community foundation's expertise and connections enabled us to explore how our engagement could weave across the disciplines in which we brought independent expertise:

- Pursuing commercial corridor redevelopment in Tremé/Iberville, Central City, the Claiborne Corridor, and Broad Avenue through a blend of arts and culture activities, small business funding, and public health strategies;
- Supporting revitalization of the Lower Ninth Ward through community planning, mixed-income housing investments, early childhood development strategies, and flooding mitigation and adaptation projects;
- Building the development capacity of community-based organizations led by people of color through support for a new community development finance institution, pooled dollars for community development organizations, and a small business development fund;
- Developing next-generation climate adaptation strategies through social investments in the installation of solar units and weatherization services to provide energy resilience to low-income households and places of worship during power grid failures.

### Memphis

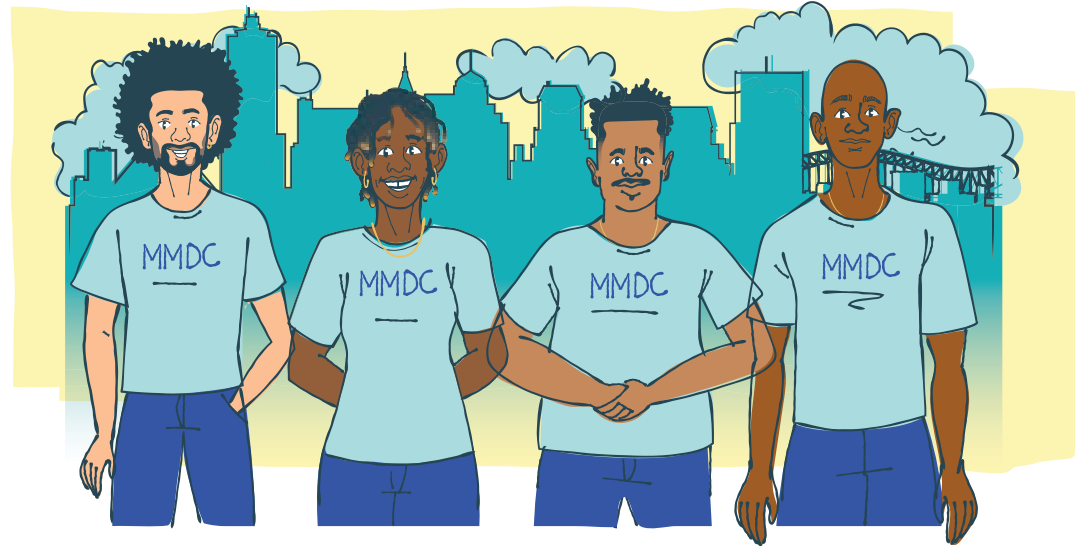
Over the last decade, Memphis has gone from a location Kresge knew in passing – where we saw similarities to Detroit and invested episodically – to a city we know well and to which we have intensified our commitment by building out each of our six roles.

We supported local efforts to promote broad-based civic engagement and table-setting through the Memphis 3.0 Comprehensive Plan, a racial justice consortium of some 50 community organizations, and the convening of higher education leaders.

We contributed to deeper and broader civic capacity by strengthening networks of human services organizations, encouraging local philanthropy to support the community development sector, and creating a small grants initiative for community-driven, neighborhood-level projects to promote physical change.

We exported our experience with Detroit's Woodward Corridor Fund by first providing grants to the Memphis Medical District Collaborative, a partnership among major healthcare institutions, city government and neighborhood associations, and then extending a \$6 million loan guarantee to help secure \$30 million in commitments from private banks to create the Memphis Medical District Fund. The fund has telescoped what would otherwise have been a 15-20-year arc of housing and commercial development into five to seven years.

The success of this de-risking effort led to our launching a blended loan-grant fund – again, modeled after similar efforts in Detroit – designed to serve businesses owned by people of color who sought space in the district. We also worked with



a housing nonprofit to create a source of loans for affordable homes for working families in the medical field. And we supported efforts to persuade the district's eight healthcare and educational institutions to buy from local businesses and hire local residents.

Guided by long-time Memphis leader Carol Coletta, we furnished early and high-leverage support to the Memphis River Parks Partnership for the redevelopment of the city's riverfront and the formation of a civic commons district comprising a library, park and art museum, all sending powerful signals about the long-term investability of the central business district.

We encouraged external funder collaboratives – ArtPlace America, LISC, ioby and the Strong Prosperous and Resilient Communities Challenge, among others – to invest in Memphis. We also funded the Memphis & Shelby County Division of Planning and Development to improve Memphis's ability to draw down competitive funds from the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act.

We invested expansively in the city's arts and cultural ecology, emphasizing activities that promote community development and civic engagement, including the Memphis Innovation Corridor project, the Memphis Music Magnet and the Historic Clayborn Temple.

Our work in Memphis suggests the high dividends that can be paid from the translation of ideas and approaches from Detroit. But it equally underscores the need for immersion in local context and trusted local relationships over the long-term – the precondition for being able to utilize the full toolbox of grant dollars, intellectual capital, lending expertise and connections to a national funding network and best-in-class technical assistance providers.

## Fresno

Fresno is growing – indeed, it is the largest California city gaining population. Although 50 percent of the city's residents are Latine, its population also comprises large and diverse Arab, Asian and Black communities. Dominated by the agricultural economy of the vast Central Valley, the city has the state's lowest

rate of economic mobility, with a poverty rate twice the nation's average. As the city's land mass has increased through annexation, poverty has concentrated in the central city and the southwest quadrant of the city. Municipal leadership – in both the public and private sectors – has seen underrepresentation of Black and Brown communities.



Each of these dynamics would appear to make Fresno a very different city from Detroit, limiting our ability to see connections between the two. Since our first engagement with the city a decade ago, however, it has become clear that the two communities share a suite of core challenges. Both are battling poverty and limited generational social and economic mobility. Both share histories of Black Americans migrating from the South, white flight and disinvestment in the downtown core. Both cities are seeking to address the enduring social and economic scars caused by highway development erasing the cities' previously vibrant, predominately Black communities. And more.

As with New Orleans and Memphis, our earliest connections to Fresno came through grants targeting arts and culture, education and environmental causes. The intensification of those connections came in 2018 when we selected Fresno as a site for the American Cities Program-designed Shared Prosperity Partnership – comprising Kresge, the Brookings Metro program and The Urban Institute. We teamed with the Central Valley Community Foundation, newly led by the former Mayor Ashley Swearengin, to convene community leaders from a broad swath of sectors and political ideologies to identify steps the community could take to expand opportunities for low-income residents to participate fully in the region's economic growth.

That convening was, in Swearengin's estimation, pivotal to the creation of the DRIVE initiative 12 months later, a \$4.2 billion, 10-year, 14-part investment plan to advance inclusive economic development, strengthen human development systems (including health care and education), improve public infrastructure and promote equitable neighborhood development. That framework, in turn,

contributed to a steady flow of state resources into Fresno, including a \$250 million commitment to fund infrastructure and affordable housing downtown. Fresno was also selected to be a stop on the state's high-speed rail line linking Southern California and the Bay Area.

Kresge's subsequent role has spanned cross-sector planning and collaboration (including a close working relationship with municipal government), community and economic development investments (including a loan to the Fresno Housing Authority), collaboration with other funders (most particularly the Irvine Foundation and the California Endowment), and support for the expansion of the community foundation's operations and programming.

Our disciplinary teams have also elevated the prioritization of Fresno within their national portfolios, including postsecondary attainment through our Education team, preventative health through our Health team, resilient power to health centers through our Environment and Social Investment teams, expanded cultural investments through our Arts and Culture teams and a guaranteed basic income pilot program through our Human Services team.

## The Six Roles Across the Four Cities

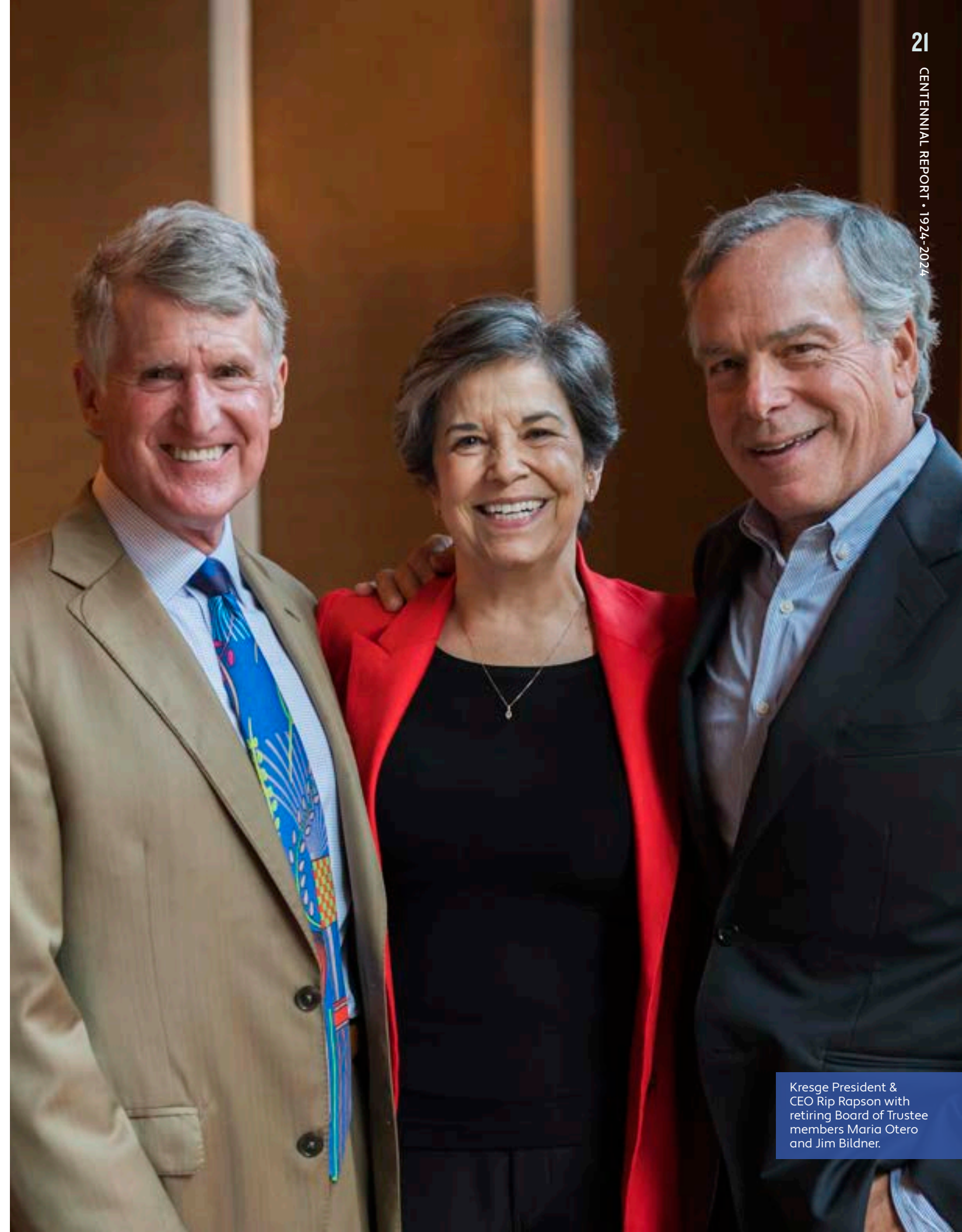
When we set tables, we give form to systems that didn't exist before. When we de-risk transactions, guarantee value or guide outside dollars to ground, we show that money can move outside customary and often rigid channels, prompting capital to flow with a different valence to low-income families and low-wealth communities. When we build capacity and give people affected by dysfunctional systems more robust tools to change them, we create new civic nodes and new connective tissue. Through all of these, we are deconstructing the underlying norms and values that guide "how things get done" in cities.

Kresge continues to learn, city by city. It is a process that is nuanced. That is contextual. That is multifaceted. But it has affirmed that there is a meaningful and compelling role for philanthropy to play in helping set the long-term trajectory of American cities. That role is not to stand outside the fence-line of civic decision-making. It is not to wait for the perfect moment. It is instead to embrace our uniqueness while recognizing our limitations ... to work in an integrative, cross-disciplinary way without becoming paralyzed by complexity ... to recognize the imperative of patiently chipping away at the intractable without sacrificing a sense of urgency.

It is in this spirit that The Kresge Foundation's centennial both impels us to reflect on the path we've traveled and invites us to interrogate how best to move forward.



**Rip Rapson**  
President and CEO  
The Kresge Foundation



Kresge President & CEO Rip Rapson with retiring Board of Trustee members Maria Otero and Jim Bildner.

# A Thank You to Two Retiring Trustees — and a Welcome

Just as 2024 marks the first 100 years of our foundation’s history, it also concludes a significant era of trustee leadership. I’ve not known a day at Kresge that wasn’t shaped by the involvement, creativity, and governance of Trustees **Jim Bildner** and **Maria Otero**, who retired from the board in June.

**Jim** was undeniably the fountainhead for Kresge’s development of a social investments practice, and his early and direct involvement in shaping its purpose, approach and aspirations continue to serve as the bedrock for the practice today. His passion for the arts had a direct and powerful influence on the migration of our arts and culture program and his full-throated support helped both the Board and staff understand that there are times when extraordinary commitments are the only way to meet fully the magnitude of the challenge at hand. He has guided our Investment Committee with an unwavering commitment to the portfolio’s need for appropriate risk tolerance, adherence to the first principle of ensuring perpetuity, and assurance of meeting the Foundation’s complex liquidity needs. And, he has brought a clear-eyed and deeply disciplined view to monitoring the organization’s spending policy.

**Maria** embodies *alegría de vivir* – a joy for life – and her approach always pulled from a reservoir of experiences that lent wisdom and insight into every topic or setting. Her extraordinary background in international economic development, her unparalleled sense of diplomacy honed at the State Department and her completely unflappable temperament combined to provide Kresge with a leader who was always in service to our increasingly impactful social investments portfolio and our growing staff. In no small part as chair of our Social Investments Committee, she helped develop what I believe to be the nation’s most high-functioning philanthropic social investments practice.

Jim and Maria have brought profound passion, insight, commitment, and humanity to every aspect of their service and for that we will always be grateful.

Anticipating, but dreading, Jim and Maria’s departures, the board’s search committee outdid itself in identifying two women who individually and collectively bring a rich set of skills, experiences and expertise to the vacant posts. Appointed in June 2024, I am pleased to introduce the newest Kresge Foundation Trustees:



**Anna Blanding**  
CIO, ConnCORP

Anna Blanding is the chief investment officer of ConnCORP, which is a Connecticut-based enterprise whose mission is to drive economic development and economic justice in underserved communities by investing in commercial and residential real estate, and in minority-owned businesses. Anna’s extensive investment career has steadily served the social sector at nonprofits and foundations alike including the Community Foundation for Greater New Haven, Opportunity Funding Corporation, Annie E. Casey Foundation and Choate Rosemary Hall.



**Linda Hill, Ph.D**  
Professor, Harvard Business School

Linda Hill, Ph.D, is the Wallace Brett Donham Professor of Business Administration at Harvard Business School. She is an internationally recognized researcher and expert on leadership, collaboration and innovation, and has authored or co-authored dozens of books and scholarly articles on the topics of management, leadership development, and building agile and innovative organizations.

# FOUNDATION ORIGINS

1867-1927

The Kresge story begins on a farm in Eastern Pennsylvania with the birth of founder Sebastian S. Kresge. His entrepreneurial spirit leads to a five-and-dime chain that takes the retail world by storm and brings about levels of wealth he never dreamed possible. And The Kresge Foundation begins.

1867-1927

1867

## Sebastian Spring Kresge



Sebastian Spring Kresge, born on July 31, 1867, near Scranton, Pennsylvania, was the fifth of seven children of Pennsylvania Dutch farmers. The family lived a frugal life and raised their children with an emphasis on religion, hard work, thrift and helping others. Young Sebastian, displaying an early entrepreneurial spirit, developed a profitable enterprise keeping bees and selling honey. Sebastian's dislike for farm work fueled his determination to further his education and pursue opportunities for advancement. After working a series of odd jobs, he became a traveling salesman. Through that work, he learned about and met the retail entrepreneurs of the time, including F.W. Woolworth and John McCrory.

2

1899

## S.S. Kresge Co. Pioneers Discount Retail Era

After five years as a traveling salesman, Sebastian used \$8,000 he had saved to go into business with John McCrory. Together, they opened two five-and-ten-cent stores in 1897: one in Memphis and one in Detroit. In 1899, Sebastian traded his half-interest in the Memphis store for full ownership of the Detroit store, marking the inception of one of the most influential retail empires in American history.

The success of the dime-store concept – offering household goods at reasonable prices – spurred Sebastian to quickly open more stores and expand the business. In 1912, when the chain had grown to 85 stores, it was incorporated for \$7 million as the S.S. Kresge Company. By 1928 the stock was the highest trading issue on the New York Stock Exchange, selling for \$800 per share. Sebastian built a company that, by 1949 after 50 years in business, had 694 stores with sales approaching \$300 million.

In 1962, the company launched its first Kmart store, which offered a larger footprint and more expansive product offerings while continuing to cater to budget-conscious consumers. Kmart store openings accelerated nationwide throughout the next three decades, eventually replacing Kresge stores.

2

The S.S. Kresge Store on State St. in Salem, Ohio, circa 1958.

Credit: Creative Commons



3

1924

## Articles of Incorporation

The S.S. Kresge Company's success brought wealth. Sebastian Kresge directed much of his share of profits into philanthropy. On June 11, 1924, on his retail company's 25th anniversary, he established The Kresge Foundation with an endowment of \$1.3 million and a simple but profound directive: "To promote the well-being of mankind." Two years later the foundation's establishment became public when it was announced that Sebastian contributed a gift of stock valued at \$22 million. In total, he gave more than \$60 million to the foundation.

4

1925

## The Foundation's First Gift

The foundation trustees met for the first time in 1925. According to a 1953 foundation report, the inaugural Kresge trustees – Sebastian, his cousin and his lawyer – "had at the outset little background in philanthropy or related fields. They spent the early years learning fundamentals and experimenting with grants." Their first disbursement of funds was \$100 to the Salvation Army of Detroit. It was part of a first round of giving that totaled \$12,950 and was divided among 10 institutions. The gifts ranged from \$100 to \$7,500 and the beneficiaries varied from a symphony orchestra to a small-town hospital.

5

1926

## Children's Homes and YMCAs

In the early years, Kresge's primary interests focused on organizations concerned with education, religion, care of children and aged people, health and youth development programs. Major early beneficiaries included organizations that house and care for children. One of the earliest examples of this is what developed into a longstanding relationship with the Methodist Children's Home Society (MCHS) of Detroit.

In 1927, Kresge made a \$225,000 grant to MCHS for the purchase of 28 acres of land and the construction of a new children's home – what became Children's Village in Redford, Michigan. The residential approach was seen as a major improvement in care versus the standard institutional settings of the time. Between that year and 1953, the foundation gave more than \$2.7 million to the organization.

Many early grants were also directed to organizations that provided youth development programs. It was Sebastian's view that organizations engaged in work among young people "afford one of the most effective means for building good character and making good citizens in the broadest sense of the term."

Another early benefactor was the Detroit YMCA (Young Men's Christian Association), which received the foundation's first six-figure grant of \$100,000 in 1926 for its building fund. Other early grantees in this area included the Boy/Girl Scouts of America and various Boys' Clubs.

Kresge has awarded more than **\$96 MILLION** to YMCA and YWCA chapters around the world.



4

Stanley S. Kresge and Harry B. Cunningham, S.S. Kresge Co. chairman of the board and president (far right), present a gift of \$100,000 in 1969 to officials from the Salvation Army in Detroit.

# CAPITAL CHALLENGE GRANT-MAKING

1928-2006

For the first 82 years of its existence, The Kresge Foundation became known and revered for its singular approach to grantmaking – using capital challenge grants to build civic buildings around the world. More than 10,000 buildings received support through this grantmaking effort.

# 1928-2006

6

1928

## Albion College

Albion College is an undergraduate, liberal-arts institute in Albion, Michigan, and the alma mater of three generations of the Kresge family. Albion College President **Wayne Webster, Ed.D** reflects on Kresge’s decades of support.

“The relationship between Kresge and Albion College extends all the way back to Sebastian Kresge’s son Stanley, who graduated from Albion in 1923. Their first gift (a personal donation that pre-dated the incorporation of the foundation) was used to build the Stanley S. Kresge Gymnasium a century ago. Multiple campus buildings were constructed with Kresge support: Wesley Hall, Seaton Hall and our Science Complex, to name a few. Our campus would not be what it is without the Kresge family, whether that’s students’ academic, residential or athletic experiences. The Albion College Science Complex resulted from a Capital Challenge Grant partnership with Kresge. We’ve got about 1,300 students at Albion, and they have access to equipment and opportunities for hands-on research that’s unparalleled. Those research experiences elevate their success in graduate programs and their careers. A lot of our students go on to grad school at places like the University of Michigan and Purdue. We have relationships with Columbia and Washington Universities, where we tend to place our math and engineering graduates. Our students are accepted into pretty much every top-notch graduate program in the country.

“When you make a gift at an institution like Albion, it’s not just what happens here. It impacts countless others. Kresge’s legacy here has benefitted all of Michigan. Whether it’s for-profit or nonprofit, there’s not an industry in the state that Albion leaders haven’t touched.”

Total all-time giving to Albion: **\$11.1 MILLION**

## “OUR CAMPUS WOULD NOT BE WHAT IT IS WITHOUT THE KRESGE FAMILY, WHETHER THAT’S STUDENTS’ ACADEMIC, RESIDENTIAL OR ATHLETIC EXPERIENCES.”



**Wayne Webster, Ed.D**, Albion College President



6 Stanley & Bruce Kresge, 1951, Albion College. Credit: Kresge Family

7

1929

### First Challenge Grant

In 1929, Kresge made its first capital challenge grant to the Clarke School for the Deaf in Northampton, Massachusetts, for \$5,000, provided that the school raised \$2 million. This type of grant that linked capital to a nonprofit’s internal fundraising capacity represented a radical new form of funding and became the model for Kresge’s grantmaking for many decades. After more than 10,000 capital challenge grants, the national (and in some cases, international) landscape is dotted with buildings – libraries, hospitals, schools, museums and other facilities – that still stand and continue to serve the public good in part because of Kresge capital challenge grants.

8

1930

### Post-Depression Debt Relief and Church Expansions

As a devout churchman, Kresge devoted considerable philanthropic support to religious institutions during the Great Depression, as churches struggled to stay afloat and serve congregations. During the 1930s many churches, pressed by creditors to repay their debts, found it difficult to meet their financial obligations. Kresge made a considerable number of grants to help churches address this debt emergency. The foundation also began in the 1940s to help many religious institutions fund the maintenance, expansion and building of new churches. One example is the First Methodist Church of Ann Arbor, Michigan, which received a \$100,000 grant in 1937 toward a \$300,000 renovation and expansion.

9

1941

### University of Michigan Common Cold Research

Health has been one of Kresge’s major fields of interest since the foundation’s earliest years, with an emphasis on supporting medical research and investment in scientific equipment. This focus has helped modest projects, like writing medical textbooks, as well as ambitious initiatives like building new laboratories and hospitals. Kresge made its first medical grant in 1941 to the University of Michigan for \$15,000 to support research on the common cold. That was followed in 1949 by a \$3 million gift for the university to build a medical research building. Grants have subsequently been awarded to multiple universities for research in fields as varied as cardiology, epilepsy, hearing, multiple sclerosis, ophthalmology and AIDS research.

10

1943

### Wayne State University Kresge-Hooker Scientific Library

The Kresge Foundation began what would become a long-standing relationship with Detroit-based Wayne State University in the mid-1940s. It helped the university acquire and house a world-class scientific library for the benefit of academic research and the Southeast Michigan technical-industrial sector.

In total, Kresge has made more than **\$27 MILLION** in grants to Wayne State University.

The foundation gave \$100,000 toward acquisition of the prestigious Hooker Scientific Library, a comprehensive 21,000-volume collection with some papers dated as far back as 1665. To house the collection, a second grant of \$1 million was made in 1949 to construct the Kresge-Hooker Scientific Library, which is now the Purdy/Kresge Library.



10 Purdy/Kresge Library on Wayne State University’s Midtown Detroit campus. Credit: Wayne State University





1944

## Interlochen Center for the Arts

Interlochen Center for the Arts is an arts institute in Interlochen, Michigan, with a residential academy for high school students and summer arts programs.

In 1944, founder Joseph Maddy shared his plans for a student performance space with Stanley S. Kresge, who had personally supported Interlochen's National Music Camp. The foundation enthusiastically backed the project, and the open-air Kresge Assembly Hall was dedicated in 1948. It was later expanded to become Kresge Auditorium, and regular foundation gifts continued through 1989 and exceeded \$1.1 million. Interlochen has showcased well-known performing artists at Kresge Auditorium over the decades, from James Taylor and Willie Nelson to The Beach Boys, Steely Dan, Indigo Girls, The Avett Brothers, and numerous others.

But its main focus has been on student performances and learning. When it first opened, the hall was primarily an educational space, with a cacophony of rehearsals, ballet performances and recitals at all hours. Generations of students have honed their artistry and gained professional experience on the Interlochen stage. Proceeds from Arts Festival performances, held in Kresge Auditorium, support student scholarships.

Kresge Board Chair Cecilia Muñoz is an Interlochen alumna. She grew up in Metro Detroit and witnessed Kresge's imprint on the nation. "I spent many summers at the Interlochen music camp and rehearsed and performed in Kresge Auditorium," she said. "To have civic buildings, places where the arts are performed, where people can gather, where you can find cultural resources from your city: That's what makes a place a place. And to think that The Kresge Foundation has made that possible all over the country and [in] other parts of the world, it's a really extraordinary legacy."



11

National Music Camp, Interlochen, Michigan, circa 1953.

## "I DEEPLY APPRECIATE THE KRESGE FOUNDATION FOR CONTINUING TO THINK CAREFULLY ABOUT HOW RACE PLAYS OUT IN AMERICA."



Michael Lomax, Ph.D, UNCF President and CEO

12

1947

## UNCF

UNCF is an educational nonprofit that provides financial support to Historically Black Colleges and Universities, awards scholarships to minoritized students, and advocates for community involvement. UNCF President and CEO **Michael Lomax, Ph.D**, describes how Kresge has supported the institution (including with grants exceeding \$39 million).

"I don't know that Mr. Kresge and the folks who founded the foundation understood that they would be supporting UNCF for 80 years. But our very significant fundraising record is due to Kresge's support. UNCF was founded at the end of World War II in 1944 as a united fundraising campaign for what are now called Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). Since that founding, we've raised almost \$6 billion and helped nearly 600,000 students earn college degrees. Kresge was inspired to donate to UNCF a year after our first campaign, and the foundation has continued to support us ever since.

"Currently, we award over 10,000 scholarships a year, hovering around \$100 million in student scholarships. That's on top of funneling operational funds to the 37 schools we support. What we've seen at HBCUs is that 75% of their students fall in the lower socio-economic range, and over 50% are the first in their families to attend college. Degree completion moves them pretty directly into the middle class.

"We are on a journey to be a more perfect union and a better society. Race plays a role in that. I deeply appreciate The Kresge Foundation for continuing to think carefully about how race plays out in America and how their support should be lent to institutions where the longstanding damage of American racial policy continues."

# 13

1948

## Kresge Eye Institute

The Kresge Eye Institute is a premiere center for eye care, research and medical education – and one of the only institutions that Kresge helped to launch through a \$612,000 grant in the late 1940s. **Dr. Mark Juzych**, chair of Ophthalmology, Visual and Anatomical Sciences at the Kresge Eye Institute, shares how the center helps patients today.

“Kresge Eye Institute revolutionized eye care. The institute was launched in Detroit in 1948. Kresge provided space and funding for the treatment of complex eye problems, and that pioneering work continues today. In 1966, the eye center became part of Wayne State University. We see around 100,000 patients every year and provide necessary eye surgeries to prevent blindness and preserve vision. It’s our privilege and honor to treat underinsured and uninsured patients, along with veterans at Detroit VA Hospital.

“Because Kresge’s aid went to developing a cutting-edge research agenda, we’ve received some of the highest levels of grant support from the National Institutes of Health’s (NIH) National Eye Institute, along with philanthropic backing from Research to Prevent Blindness. One of our most exciting research projects involves optogenetics, a technique to make retina cells sensitive to light after other essential cells have been damaged, which has the potential to restore sight lost to macular degeneration.

“Kresge Eye Institute actually has one of the largest ‘residence’ ophthalmology residency programs in the United States. Kresge’s support has allowed us to function as a holistic center, housing patient care, research and education of future ophthalmologists under one roof.”

**“KRESGE EYE INSTITUTE REVOLUTIONIZED EYE CARE. WE SEE AROUND 100,000 PATIENTS EVERY YEAR AND PROVIDE NECESSARY EYE SURGERIES TO PREVENT BLINDNESS AND PRESERVE VISION.”**



**Dr. Mark Juzych**, Chair of Ophthalmology, Visual and Anatomical Sciences at the Kresge Eye Institute



14

Participants at the Art as Ritual project take part in a one-day convening in September 2016.

*Credit: The Fred A. and Barbara M. Erb Family Foundation*

# 14

1949

## Detroit Institute of Arts and Kresge Court

At the heart of Detroit’s art scene is a world class museum: the Detroit Institute of Arts. The museum advocates for educational exhibits that uplift and reflect the diversity of cultures and human experiences. Kresge’s first grant to the DIA was in 1949 to fund manuscript research about the history of textiles. Most subsequent grants supported facility improvements, including various expansions and renovations. One of the most significant capital projects Kresge supported was to help the museum cover an open-air courtyard with a glass ceiling. The resulting Kresge Court provided 3,000 square feet of exhibit space and today serves as a relaxing and comfortable “cultural living room” for visitors.

# 15

1949

## First Grant Over \$1 Million

Consistent with Kresge’s interest in funding medical research during its first quarter-century, Kresge made its largest gift to date in 1949 to the University of Michigan for the construction and furnishing of a centralized medical research building. The \$3 million, five-story structure opened adjacent to the university hospital in 1954 and featured flexible laboratory facilities to study various diseases and conditions such as arthritis, cancer, hypertension and allergies. In a letter to confirm the project’s completion, U-M Vice President Wilbur K. Pierpont told Kresge leadership, “We are very well pleased with ... the Kresge Medical Research Building ... and I am sure that the faculty of the Medical School consider it one of the finest research facilities available to any medical school staff in the country.”



16

The Stanley S. Kresge Learning Resource Center, seen in this rendering, houses the Meharry Medical College Library.

Credit: Meharry Medical College



16

1977 Meharry Medical College School of Dentistry, Nashville, Tennessee.

Credit: Meharry Medical College

## 16

1957

## Meharry Medical College

The evolution of Kresge's grantmaking can be illustrated through its relationship with Meharry Medical College, a historically Black college founded in 1876 in Nashville, Tennessee. Meharry was the first medical school in the South open to African Americans and continues to educate physicians, dentists, researchers and health policy experts through its medical, dental, graduate and applied computational sciences schools.

The relationship with Meharry began during Kresge's challenge grants era when trustees approved a \$1.5 million grant to support the construction of a library and learning resources center (LRC). As with all Kresge's challenge grants, the idea was to incentivize the college to raise the balance of the funds needed for construction from others. The effort was successful and the center was dedicated as the Stanley S. Kresge Learning Resources Center in April 1973.

In 1999, the college participated in another major Kresge program: its Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) Initiative (page 52).

Bill Moses, managing director of the foundation's Education Program, stresses the importance of the length of the HBCU initiative grants, which were designed to give colleges the long-term support they needed to overcome problems that had been decades in the making. "We provided training, convening, mentoring, direct support and bonus grants over five years to help make change," he said.

A decade later, at the tail end of its Green Building Initiative (page 57), Meharry was awarded a \$700,000 challenge grant to support a green renovation of the 35-year-old LRC, achieving LEED standards.

In December 2008 as the economic downturn severely impacted the nonprofit sector, Kresge awarded a \$100,000 grant to support college operations. "If ever there was a time for Kresge to put its resources on the line to help nonprofit organizations ... it is now," said then Board Chair Elaine Rosen. "The magnitude of the economic contraction demands we be both creative and aggressive in our grantmaking."

Today, the relationship with Meharry continues. For example, a Kresge staff member serves on an advisory committee for the college's new Meharry School of Global Health. Meanwhile, Kresge is working with the college to help it find housing for its medical residency students working in Detroit.

17

1966

## Family Leadership Continues After Sebastian S. Kresge's Death

Recalling that his mother and grandmother were both centenarians, a Time Magazine obituary of Sebastian S. Kresge, who died Oct. 18, 1966, at the age of 99, said, "... attaining the century mark was one of [his] few failures in a long and productive life." Having stepped away from the daily operations of his namesake corporation one year after creating The Kresge Foundation, Sebastian spent the next 41 years keeping tabs on the business and his philanthropy from homes in New York City, Eastern Pennsylvania and Miami.

Meanwhile, his son Stanley became increasingly involved in the company, serving as an S.S. Kresge Company employee and executive for 44 years and as a trustee of the foundation for 54 years. He became the foundation's president in 1952, chairman in 1966, and honorary chairman in 1978 until his death in 1985 at the age of 85.

In total, four generations of the Kresge family have actively served the foundation. Stanley's son Bruce, a retired family physician, served as a trustee for 37 years and board chair from 2000 to 2003. Bruce's five children have each served as a trustee including his youngest child, Scott Kresge, who joined the board in 2023.

Sebastian Kresge's legacy of generosity lives on in the foundation that he started and through his family's continued support of – and participation in – the mission of The Kresge Foundation.

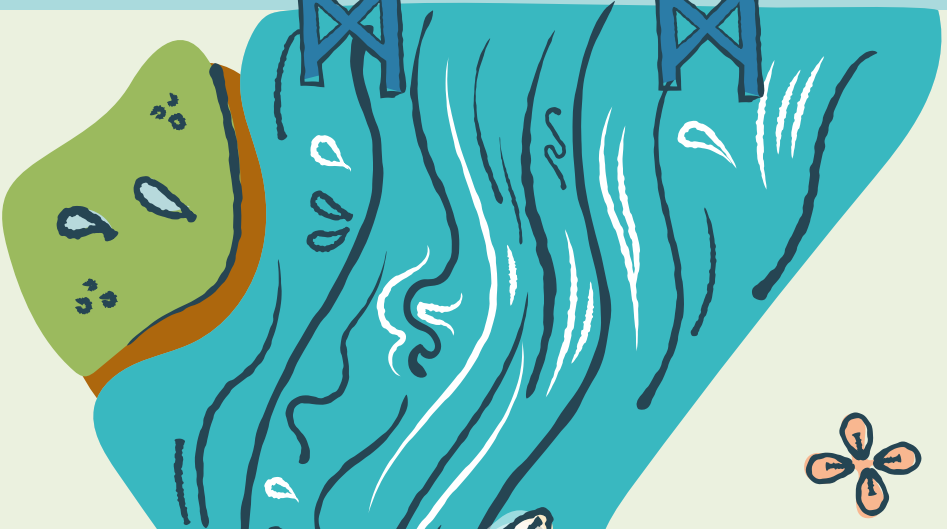


17

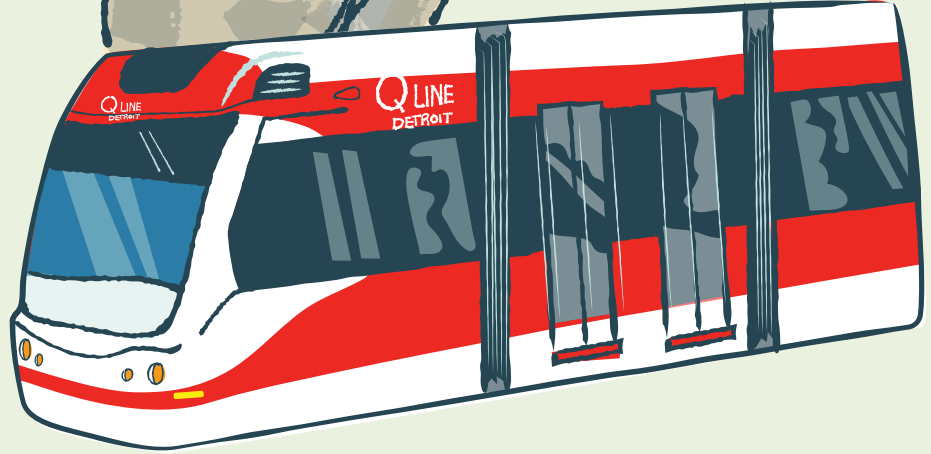
Front from left: Katherine Lutey, Cynthia Kresge; back: Deborah McDowell, Susan Drewes, Scott Kresge, Bruce Kresge.



Home of the first S.S. Kresge Co. store, Detroit is still The Kresge Foundation's hometown, our heart and soul. The Motor City thrums with artistic heat, defined by a never-say-no attitude. A place with a hustle in its step. Unafraid to grind. From the Detroit River to Eight Mile, Moross to Telegraph, Kresge's story will always be a Detroit story where more than \$1 billion in total support has been invested.



WHAT UP DOE!

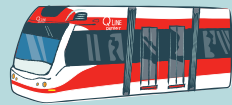




**United We Stand Sculpture**  
by Charles McGee



**The Spirit of Detroit**



**QLINE Streetcar**



**Michigan Central Station**



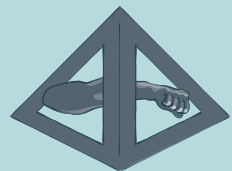
**Ambassador Bridge**



**Comerica Park  
Tiger Statue**



**Girl with the D Earring**  
by Sydney James



**“The Fist” Monument to  
Joe Louis by Robert Graham**



**Ally Detroit Center and  
Renaissance Center**

18

1968

## International Grantmaking

Outside of a small (but highly impactful) portfolio of higher education grants in South Africa, Kresge now works solely in the U.S. But before its mission narrowed in on American cities, the foundation supported international partners in 18 countries with capital challenge grants. A few examples:

- The foundation in 2006 helped fund renovations of YMCA branches in central Mexico.
- Between 1968 and 2003, Kresge made eight grants totaling \$1.35 million to renovate and expand the Bermuda Biological Station for Research Inc.
- At Queen’s University Belfast in the United Kingdom, Kresge supported construction of the central library in 2004, expanding student resources.

19

1969

## Conservation and Land Protection

As the environmental movement gained momentum in the 1960s, Kresge increasingly provided grants to assist in conservation of natural resources. From the Maine Islands to Bermuda, Kresge has backed initiatives that promote environmental sustainability including programs supporting marine research, environmental education and land protection. This support via capital challenge grants continued through 2007, when Kresge made a \$1 million grant to protect forest land in Minnesota. “We are pleased to be able to make this challenge grant toward the protection of the outstanding ecological and recreational values embodied within these forests,” Kresge President and CEO Rip Rapson said. This body of work served as the precursor to today’s Environment Program.

20

1970

## Response to Tax Reform Act of 1969

Congress passed the Tax Reform Act of 1969 following mounting concern about the activities and influence of more than 25,000 philanthropies then in existence. As the first and most extensive government regulation of philanthropic behavior, the act laid out several rules and requirements for private foundations that are still in place today. One of those rules imposed limits on the amount of financial interest a foundation could hold in an individual company. Throughout its 50-year existence, Kresge had been a significant shareholder of S.S. Kresge Company stock, which appreciated rapidly with the expansion of the company’s Kmart-branded stores. In accordance with the act, Kresge began to sell these shares in the early 1970s and also executed a \$20 million stock swap with the Ford Foundation, a significant shareholder in Ford Motor Co.

## 21

1971

## Kresge College and Support for Higher Education Institutions

For its first eight decades, Kresge supported thousands of college campus building and renovation projects. But only one institution, the University of California-Santa Cruz's Kresge College, which was built with a \$650,000 Kresge gift, shares the foundation's name. Education Program Managing Director **Bill Moses** shares the story.

"Founded in 1971, Kresge College was originally envisioned as a community for scholars living in an American version of an Italian hill town. Nestled in a dense grove of coastal redwoods, the architecturally celebrated campus captured the spirit of the era and set the stage for Kresge College's intellectual identity. The college embraced participatory democracy in its governance, focusing on then cutting-edge topics like humanistic psychology, women's studies and environmental studies, and became known as a home for creativity, iconoclasts and diversity.

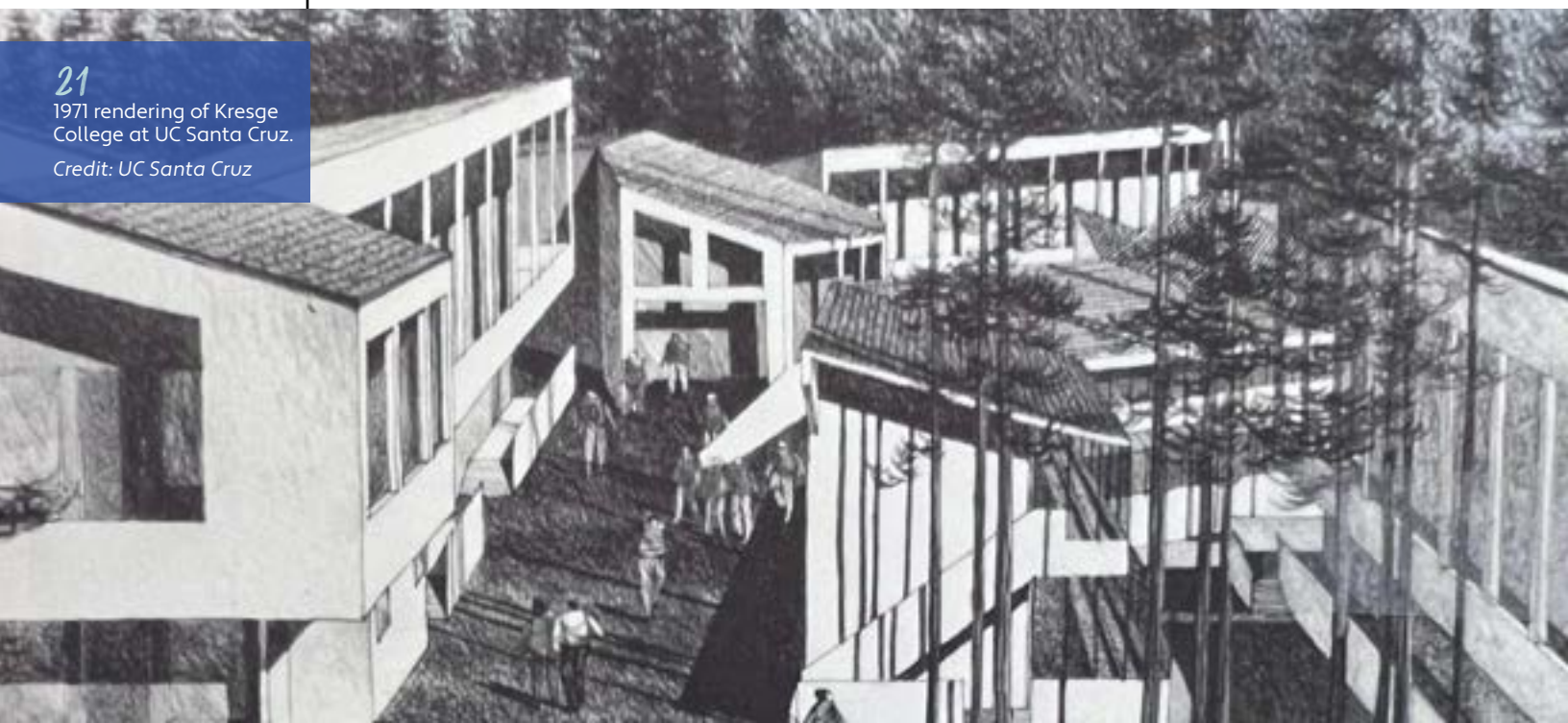
"Today, Kresge College is part of a highly selective public land-grant institution that counts a Nobel Prize laureate among its distinguished faculty. Yet, while Kresge College has evolved over the past half-century, it remains true to many of its early goals.

"Kresge College is still known for its creativity, independent spirit and interdisciplinary learning approaches, and it serves as a hub for community engagement as well as housing UCSC's student-run newspaper, food co-op, writing program and annual campus Pride celebrations. Echoing the foundation's own strategy and values, Kresge College serves a diverse student body: At least

21

1971 rendering of Kresge College at UC Santa Cruz.

Credit: UC Santa Cruz



two-thirds of UCSC's students identify as students of color, 40% are Pell eligible, and 36% are among the first generation in their families to attend college. Kresge College, like its namesake foundation, continues to exemplify its shared benefactor's goal of serving humanity."

## "KRESGE COLLEGE ... CONTINUES TO EXEMPLIFY ITS SHARED BENEFACTOR'S GOAL OF SERVING HUMANITY."



**Bill Moses**, Managing Director, Kresge Education Program

## 22

1974

## Zoos and Aquariums

Zoos and aquariums go beyond traditional animal care, making connections between animal conservation and increased access to educational opportunities, particularly for underserved communities. From 1974 to 2014, Kresge awarded 73 grants totaling more than \$33 million to zoos and aquariums across the country through its capital challenge grant program. Examples include: the National Aquarium in Baltimore, which received \$600,000 toward the renovation of the Atlantic Coral Reef and Open Ocean exhibits; the Lincoln Park Zoo in Chicago, which received \$3 million for the Pritzker Family Children's Zoo and renovation of the Laflin Building; \$2 million to Shedd Aquarium in Chicago for the Oceanarium and South Wing; as well as support for the San Francisco Zoo primate discovery area and the St. Louis Zoo Learning and Discovery Center.

## 23

1979

## Food Banks

Community-led solutions like food banks help ensure that everyone has access to fresh food. Between 1979 and 2010, Kresge made 40 capital challenge grants to support the nation's food banks as they made improvements, expanded or built new warehouses. Through these investments, these community partners were able to expand their reach, store and distribute more food, and make a greater impact. Beneficiaries included Ozarks Food Harvest in Springfield, Missouri; Gleaners Community Food Bank of Southeast Michigan, Rhode Island Community Food Bank, The Cleveland Food Bank and Atlanta Community Food Bank.

## 24

1979

## Cultural Institutions

Kresge has long understood the importance of arts and cultural institutions in lifting the human spirit and enriching lives and communities. From the first cultural grant to the Detroit Symphony in 1926 to the multitude of capital challenge grants, Kresge has provided millions in funds to building projects for performing arts centers, theaters, concert halls, historic preservation organizations and more. From 1976 to 2005, Kresge awarded more than 900 grants totaling more than \$400 million to arts and humanities organizations. A few examples: Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater (New York), Carnegie Hall (New York), Folger Shakespeare Library (Washington), Guthrie Theater (Minneapolis) and the National Trust for Historic Preservation (Washington).

## 25

1984

## Statue of Liberty

Standing tall above New York Harbor since its dedication in 1886, the Statue of Liberty is an iconic symbol of freedom and democracy. But by the late 1970s the statue had suffered from years of exposure to the elements, and there were structural concerns that needed to be addressed. That led President Ronald Reagan to establish the Statue of Liberty-Ellis Island Foundation in 1982 to raise funds for restoration ahead of the statue's 100th anniversary. Envisioned as a public-private partnership, the federal government provided some support, but most of the funding was expected to come from private donations. So the Statue of Liberty-Ellis Island Foundation launched a nationwide fundraising campaign, appealing to individuals, corporations and foundations for donations.

As small donations trickled in from across the country, The Kresge Foundation committed \$3 million as a capstone challenge to the effort in 1984. The foundation's contribution played a crucial role in the restoration project, said Denver Frederick, who served as the chief development officer for the restoration project. It wasn't just about the money, Frederick noted. While the \$3 million was important, it was what the grant signaled that was even more important. Getting a capital grant from Kresge was known to be a highly challenging process, Frederick said, so if a project did get a grant, it signaled to others that it was a solid investment. "It was like a Good Housekeeping seal of approval," Frederick said. Ultimately, the restoration project was completed in time for the statue's centennial celebration, and it continues to be a major tourist attraction, drawing millions of visitors each year.

25

1984 photo of the Statue of Liberty under renovation.

Credit: Statue of Liberty & Ellis Island Foundation





26

1984

## Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan

Kresge helped stand up the newly formed Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan (CFSEM) with a \$3 million grant for its permanent endowment. Kresge also committed to an additional \$2 million challenge grant. According to John Marshall, Kresge president from 1987 to 2006, the grants together represented one of the largest starting gifts for a community foundation in the country. Since then, CFSEM has grown to be among the top 25 community foundations in the United States, distributing more than \$1.4 billion to support metro Detroit nonprofits focused on arts, children and youth, economic stability, health and human services, and the environment.

27

1988

## Art Museums

Art gives meaning to life and helps people understand the world. Kresge has provided millions in funds to help build, renovate and expand art museums throughout the country. Kresge awarded major capital challenge grants to art museums as varied as the Metropolitan Museum of Art (1976, 1988 and 1990), Seattle Art Museum (1988 and 2006), and the New Orleans Museum of Art (1990). The Wing Luke Museum in Seattle's Chinatown focuses on the culture, art, and history of Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders. A Smithsonian Institution affiliate and the only pan-Asian Pacific American community-based museum in the United States, it received a capital challenge grant in 2006.

28

1988

## Science Initiative

By the 1980s, Kresge had funded the construction of countless college buildings, teaching hospitals, medical schools and research institutions. But many of those institutions now sought the foundation's help to repair, upgrade and replace dated scientific equipment to ensure that their facilities remained modern and practical. In response, Kresge began the Science Initiative, which ran from 1988 to 2007. In total, 150 grants totaling more than \$52 million were awarded. As the first of Kresge's special initiatives, the Science Initiative set in motion a new funding model the foundation would use to advance many of its goals while at the same time continuing to build the fundraising and operational capacity of nonprofits nationwide.

29

1990

## Detroit Opera (formerly Michigan Opera Theatre)

Detroit Opera has been a hub of dance, music and education since the 1960s. It's also a place of transformation, thanks to David DiChiera, a 2013 Kresge Foundation Eminent Artist, composer and former Michigan Opera Theatre director. DiChiera helped bring about opera's cultural renaissance in the 1970s, and ensured that Detroiters would see themselves reflected in performances by casting people of color and prioritizing diversity in productions.

Kresge first became involved with Detroit Opera in 1990, during a transitional period. The opera had begun producing shows on a grand scale that required more space for the crowds clamoring to attend productions like "Aida" and "West Side Story." DiChiera set his sights on the old Capitol Theatre, considered Detroit's first movie theater, as the opera's future home. Two capital challenge grants totaling \$2 million funded substantial renovations and infrastructure projects, which enlivened the neighborhood and drew art lovers to the city center.

Subsequent funding has ranged from supporting programs to a major gift to build Detroit Opera's Ford Center for Arts & Learning. The center allowed the organization to expand its Community Program and Dance Department, and increase outreach including programs for Detroit schoolchildren and touring ensembles.

"With Kresge support, Detroit Opera is bringing a progressive, experimental approach to the operatic art form, addressing issues that are relevant to Detroit and beyond," said President and CEO Patty Isacson Sabee. "It is our duty as one of our region's anchor cultural institutions and gathering space to ensure that community members see themselves in our work. The Kresge Foundation has made this possible, deeply rooting us as a cultural force that attracts visitors from all over the world."

30

1991

## Van Dusen Endowment Challenge

Named for Kresge Trustee Richard Van Dusen and launched in 1991, the year he died, the Van Dusen Endowment Challenge was created in partnership with the Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan to help nonprofits based in Southeastern Michigan begin to build the endowments they needed to support their long-term goals. In another example of how Kresge funds capacity-building in the nonprofit sector, the six-year, \$18.4 million initiative enabled the organizations to build their endowments using matching grants from other funders. The initiative delivered on its promise: When it ended in 1997, 38 Detroit nonprofits had increased their endowments by \$50 million through matching grants.

1993

## A Focus on Diversity Begins

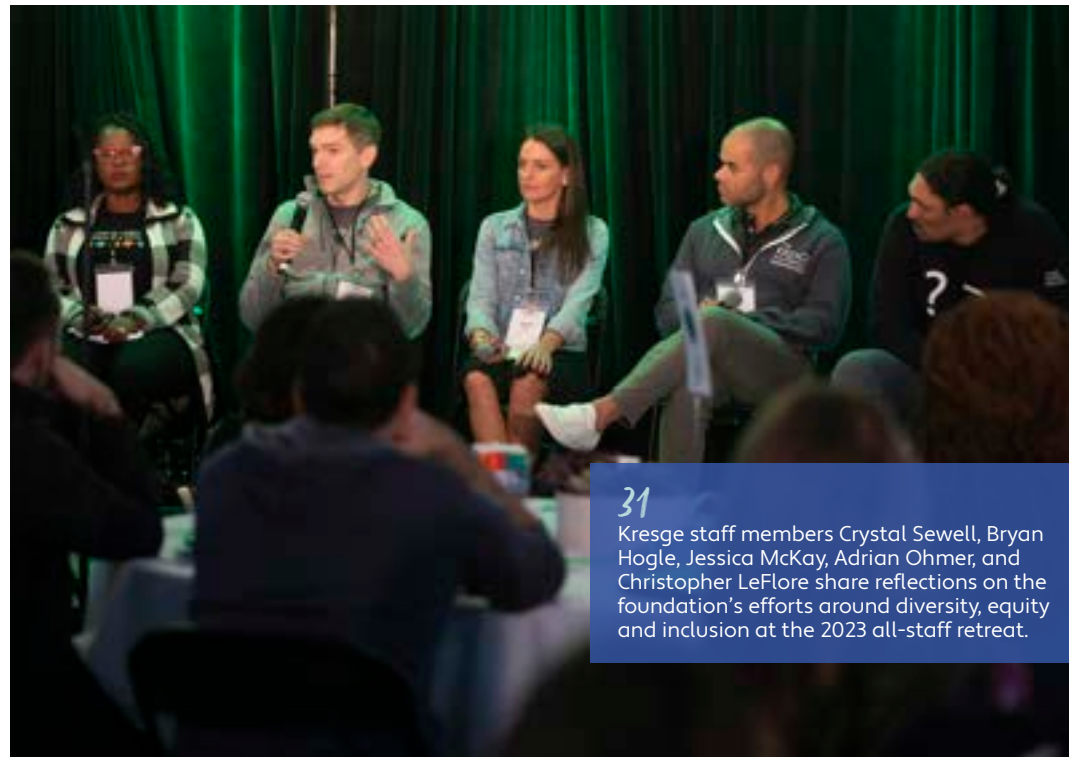
Kresge’s dedication to diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) has enhanced the foundation’s ability to do value-driven work. This commitment has persisted for decades and is visible within internal culture and external grantmaking.

Kresge issued its first formal statement about diversity in its grantmaking in 1993. It read: “The Foundation’s Trustees believe that American Philanthropy should serve the needs and concerns of our diverse nation. Accordingly, [our] review of grant requests takes into account [that] potential grant recipients demonstrate, through their governance, staff, and individuals served, a significant commitment to serving diverse populations.”

The next milestone came after President and CEO Rip Rapson arrived in 2006 and began to evolve the foundation’s model of philanthropy, providing the structure to support organizations committed to improving life outcomes of low-income people (page 66). This led to the adoption of the Urban Opportunity Framework (page 86). DEI work then evolved through multiple phases.

First, Kresge redefined its talent strategy and developed organizational norms rooted in equity and inclusion. A learning agenda elevated the understanding of history, behavioral science, and emerging frameworks for thinking about race and ethnicity.

“We began to focus on the significance of diverse talent – the diversity of our staff, the process of creating diverse pipelines for new hires, the competencies required for us to work effectively in communities of color, the composition of senior leadership positions, and a great deal more,” said Crystal Sewell, Kresge’s chief human resources officer.



31

Kresge staff members Crystal Sewell, Bryan Hogle, Jessica McKay, Adrian Ohmer, and Christopher LeFlore share reflections on the foundation’s efforts around diversity, equity and inclusion at the 2023 all-staff retreat.

In 2012, Kresge launched a strategy review to align grantmaking with the Urban Opportunity Framework and soon after embraced five organizational values: Respect, Creativity, Partnership, Opportunity and Stewardship (page 96). Equity-focused grantmaking strategies and initiatives followed, setting the tone for grantmaking to advance justice.

Deeper education and analysis were prioritized to normalize discussions of race, racism and issues impacting other social identities. The first DEI workgroup was created following the 2016 presidential election – and the ensuing violence. The cross-departmental task force developed a roadmap for the organization to fully embrace DEI.

In 2017, a task force launched that developed four internal pilot projects to elevate diversity among the foundation’s vendors and talent, while creating an educational curriculum and infusing equity into program strategies.

In 2019, “Equity” was elevated as the foundation’s sixth organizational value (page 138).

Responding to the racial reckoning and global pandemic of 2020, packages of grantmaking were constructed to support communities of color disproportionately impacted by COVID-19 (page 143) and to build up organizations advancing racial justice.

In 2021, the foundation adopted an Equity Organizing Framework to better understand and track how it seeks to advance equity. The framework captures five roles the foundation holds: funder, employer, economic entity, community citizen and community. In January 2022, an Equity Task Force began to steward the DEI work and it is charged with auditing organizational progress toward the five-part framework, and providing learning and engagement activities that drive diversity, equity, inclusion and justice.

“While everyone at Kresge plays a role in advancing these efforts, the Executive Team recognized the need for a more formal infrastructure to ensure [that] as an institution we are doing all we can to further equity and justice within the communities we serve,” said Jennifer Jaramillo, Kresge’s chief people officer and Equity Task Force member.

## 32

1993

## Detroit Initiative

In 1993, when the Detroit Area Special Grants Program – a precursor to the Detroit Program – was created, the place Kresge called home was emerging from a period of extreme hardship. With a mood of optimism presiding over the city, Kresge sensed an opportunity to contribute to its revitalization. It marked a turning point in the history of the foundation, which until then had been place agnostic.

Starting with a five-year funding initiative that awarded \$34.45 million to metro Detroit organizations, Kresge’s support helped community organizations reshape downtown. The initiative helped fund the transformation of Campus Martius Park from a monument surrounded by roadways and traffic to a thriving community space. It also helped support the renovation of the Eastern Market historic commercial district and the creation of the Detroit RiverWalk, a three-and-a-half-mile route providing views of the Detroit River and city skyline.

Meanwhile, through the initiative, Kresge formed enduring partnerships to harness the time, resources and funding of companies, public-sector organizations and other foundations toward future projects. It also invested in capacity building to strengthen both individual philanthropic leadership and the Detroit nonprofit sector more broadly.

“The Detroit Initiative was the foundation’s way of organizing itself to make a significant difference in its hometown,” said Detroit Program Managing Director Wendy Lewis Jackson. “It laid the groundwork for what is now our approach to place and working as a place-based philanthropy.”

## 33

1999

## HBCU Initiative

Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) hold immense significance in the hearts and minds of their graduates, and for good reason. Since their founding, HBCUs have historically provided a nurturing educational environment for Black students, fostering their academic success and bridging the racial attainment and wealth gaps for graduates. HBCUs have had a disproportionately positive impact on society despite their limited financial resources and direct underinvestment by government.

HBCUs make up only 3% of U.S. colleges and universities but enroll 10% of all African Americans – and produce 70% of the country’s Black doctors, 80% of Black judges, 40% of Black engineers, and a sitting U.S. vice president. As a result of their extremely large role in educating the nation’s Black students, HBCUs play a vital role in narrowing the income and wealth gap by elevating families from lower-income backgrounds to higher incomes at nearly double the rate of predominantly white institutions.

Kresge has made more than 60 grants, exceeding **\$75 MILLION**, to strengthen HBCUs.



33  
Students attend class in a lecture hall at an unidentified HBCU.  
Credit: UNCF

The Kresge Foundation has long advocated for and supported HBCUs, recognizing their pivotal role in advancing educational equity. Years before equity became a formal Kresge value, the foundation made grants to HBCUs including through UNCF (page 33), Meharry Medical (page 36) and other capital challenge grants.

“The whole notion of raising significant dollars for historically Black colleges and not doing it one institution at a time but doing it for a network of institutions was innovative and unusual in American higher education, and certainly innovative and unusual for historically Black colleges,” said Michael Lomax, Ph.D, president of UNCF. “[Kresge’s support] also represented a Good Housekeeping seal of approval.” Having the backing of a foundation as reputable as Kresge made it easier for UNCF to successfully approach other funders.

As Kresge’s program teams created new initiatives in the 1990s, the HBCU initiative launched in 1999 with \$18 million in funding over five years. Five institutions – Bethune-Cookman College (Daytona Beach, Florida), Dillard University (New Orleans), Johnson C. Smith University (Charlotte, North Carolina), Meharry Medical College (Nashville, Tennessee) and Xavier University (New Orleans) – received different forms of support, including training, convening, mentoring, technical assistance and access to nationally recognized consultants. Each year, a Learning Institute was held for their professionals to strengthen the institutions’ alumni relations, communications, fundraising and marketing competencies.

“We were dealing with problems that took decades or centuries to be created,” said Kresge Education Program Managing Director Bill Moses, who worked on the initiative as a program officer. “And you can’t fix them in three-year, let alone one-year, grants.”



Unrestricted bonus grants totaling up to \$25,000 per year were awarded to the institutions as they achieved their annual benchmarks. And a one-time, \$100,000 challenge grant could be earned by achieving a major milestone. “As colleges set and met those goals, they were getting bonus grants, so they were turbo-charging progress,” Moses said.

Kresge’s Education Program has continued to support HBCUs from governance and financial aid to online course delivery and green infrastructure. Amidst a landscape where sporadic HBCU engagement from other major foundations is typical, Kresge’s unparalleled and enduring dedication to the sector sets it distinctly apart.

33  
 Today, Kresge continues to support HBCUs, including Delaware State University, through the Education Program.  
 Credit: DSU

## 34

1999

## Partnership to Raise Community Capital

Building on the Van Dusen Endowment Challenge, Kresge developed this initiative in 1999 to strengthen the capacity of six community foundations at a key point in their development. The foundations participating in the \$18 million initiative were: Community Foundation of the Eastern Shore (Maryland), Sioux Falls Area Community Foundation (South Dakota), Wyoming Community Foundation, Community Foundation of South Alabama, Saginaw Community Foundation (Michigan) and Community Foundation of Broward (Florida). The foundations used Kresge funds to invest in the technology, marketing and human resources necessary to expand their individual donor bases. The successful initiative helped the six foundations raise a combined \$60 million in unrestricted and agency-restricted endowment funds over five years.

## 35

2001

## Campus Martius

Located in the heart of downtown Detroit, Campus Martius Park is the city's official gathering place for residents and visitors. It has won numerous awards for public space design, management, operations, placemaking and programming. Named the nation's best public square by USA TODAY readers, the 2.5-acre park is a year-round outdoor venue with gardens, performance stages, food trucks, an urban beach in the summer, an ice rink in the winter and an annual holiday tree lighting ceremony that attracts thousands.

In 2001, Kresge provided a \$3 million grant for the first phase of the construction of Campus Martius and the establishment of a conservancy endowment fund. Education Program Managing Director Bill Moses explains the significance of Kresge's grant and the project.

"The creation of the park was chosen as the signature of the Detroit 300th Anniversary Legacy Project at a time when confidence in the city was at a low ebb. The establishment of the Detroit 300 Conservancy endowment fund was critical in that it created a focal point for the park in terms of long-term maintenance and programming. The result has been the creation of an incredibly welcoming space that has become the symbol of Detroit's rebirth."

The park, which opened in 2003, was designed by the landscape architecture firm Rundell Ernstberger Associates in conjunction with the Detroit 300 Conservancy. Its dominant, open greenspace allows for multiple uses, including hosting the 2024 NFL Draft, which broke attendance records.

## 36

2001

## 9/11 Response

"We were all taken out of our comfort zones by this tragedy, even the people like us who are supposed to be professionals in giving," wrote former Kresge President John Marshall after the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks. In response, Kresge approved special grants, including:

- \$2 million to the Nonprofit Finance Fund to support local nonprofits in addressing the extraordinary needs following the tragedy.
- \$350,000 to the Arab Community Center for Economic and Social Services in Dearborn, Michigan – home to one of the largest concentrations of Arab Americans in the country – to support an educational and outreach campaign to foster understanding of Arab-American culture.
- \$750,000 to The Community Foundation for the National Capital Region to serve an expanding immigrant community through its Building Bridges Initiative.

## 37

2003

## Green Building Initiative

One of Kresge's early contributions into the environmental movement was through the built environment. In launching the Green Building Initiative in 2003, Kresge for the first time gave preference to building projects that incorporated green building design. Planning began in 1999, the same year as a \$10 million grant to The GreenWays Initiative in Detroit, to "green up" the Detroit Initiative and support the beginning of a 50-mile urban greenway system. Then, between 2003 and 2009, 47 grants totaling \$8.2 million were awarded through the Green Building Initiative. With bonus grants available for buildings that achieved LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certification, the funding enabled nonprofits to explore options, putting them on the path to constructing or renovating more environmentally sustainable buildings.



35

Nik West performs at Summerfest in Campus Martius in 2016.

Credit: Downtown Detroit Partnership

2003

## Support for Public TV and Radio

The nation's PBS channels and NPR stations, including the radio outlet's national headquarters, have received support for both general programming and capital projects. **Rich Homberg**, Detroit PBS president and CEO, reflects on what his station has been able to accomplish with Kresge support.

"We've spent nearly two decades reinventing Detroit Public Television, and literally every step of the way, Kresge has played a critical role. They provided funds for a new building in Wixom to house the station, along with broadcast and production equipment. Now, we're better equipped to tell stories that matter to our communities. For over a decade, Detroit didn't have a classical music station. Kresge gave us the support to launch one in 2005, and today WRCJ is thriving and serving Detroit's classical and jazz communities. After the revitalization of Marygrove, Kresge allowed us to house our news, public affairs, and arts and culture teams on the campus, right in the heart of Detroit. We use the in-house theater to produce Detroit Performs: Live from Marygrove, where we bring in performers and important voices to capture their performances and share them with Detroit. Public television stations have always had a significant relationship with children and their parents. In 2021, we established the Michigan Learning Channel, the first distance-learning channel in Michigan that delivers curriculum-based programs, in partnership with educators, 24/7 to every family in the state. Much of that work was facilitated by Hope Starts Here, an initiative by Kresge and partners to improve Detroit's early childhood programs. People's responses to what we've built have been extraordinary. We're deeply committed to the goal of helping Detroiters understand each other. It's a grand mission."

**"WE'VE SPENT NEARLY TWO DECADES REINVENTING DETROIT PUBLIC TELEVISION. NOW, WE'RE BETTER EQUIPPED TO TELL STORIES THAT MATTER TO OUR COMMUNITIES."**



**Rich Homberg**, Detroit PBS President and CEO

Detroit PBS has received at least **\$8.4 MILLION** in Kresge support since 1959.

**"I DON'T THINK MANY CITIES HAVE THE LAYERS OF COMMITTED PHILANTHROPY AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT WE HAVE HERE. WE'RE VERY LUCKY."**



**Sue Mosey**, Former Executive Director, Midtown Detroit Inc.

2004

## Midtown Detroit Inc.

Midtown Detroit Inc. has been the recipient of Kresge Foundation support since 2004. Former Executive Director **Sue Mosey** shares her reflection.

"Kresge has funded and supported almost every aspect of Midtown Detroit Inc.'s work for the past 20 years. Back when Kresge and NCB Capital Impact launched the Woodward Corridor Investment Fund with us, we were just coming out of the recession. The fund jump-started a lot of new development and mixed-income housing around Woodward [Avenue]. We helped residents of all income levels and added a lot of new units at a time when financing them would have been impossible otherwise.

"One of our signature programs engaged anchor institutions like Wayne State University in the rebirth of the neighborhood. Kresge and others supported a residential-incentive program, raising \$10 million for down-payment incentives and rental subsidies for resident employees and potential transplants. A lot of people still own the homes they bought with their down-payment assistance.

"Detroiters value their culture and the local artists who bring communities together. Kresge has a wonderful Arts in Detroit program that was really pivotal in helping creatives access direct funding and elevate their work. And Kresge is funding some of our major cultural institutions, which have leveraged the support to grow their audiences.

"Kresge understands that our city requires a consistent, long-term approach to fully experience the impacts of financial investment. I don't think many cities have the layers of committed philanthropy and community development we have here. We're very lucky."

40

2005

## Helping New Orleans Recover from Katrina

In 2005, devastation struck New Orleans. Hurricane Katrina displaced residents from their homes, destroyed infrastructure and stole lives. But the city's community development, health and education nonprofits led the recovery. They provided emergency assistance and laid the groundwork for restoration. Kresge partnered with these organizations and other funders to identify critical needs across the city. Ultimately, Kresge provided \$4 million, including grants to Dillard University, Xavier University and the Michigan United Way Fund dedicated to Katrina recovery. Projects supported community health, climate resiliency, Historically Black Colleges and Universities, housing and the region's human services sector. This direct support offered a preview of the foundation's future work in New Orleans, which is now a Kresge focus city.

41

2006

## Funding Capacity Building, Leadership and Infrastructure

Capacity building support has been a priority since Kresge's early days. It is an approach that acknowledges the limits of grantmaking dollars by investing not only in the programs or services that the grantee provides, but also in the individual skills and leadership within the grantee's organization.

"Capacity building is critical because the dollars we can give to grantees in any one grant only go so far," says Caroline Altman Smith, deputy director of the foundation's Education Program. "We see capacity building support as a key piece of the partnership puzzle, because it helps organizations we work with become stronger, more resilient and to develop a more sustainable funding model."

The foundation's Leadership and Infrastructure Funding Team (LIFT) is a cross-departmental committee that works to promote leadership development and to strengthen equity and diversity in the nonprofit world.

Launched in 2006, LIFT works across all Kresge's program areas. LIFT funds an array of membership associations such as the Council on Foundations, Council of Michigan Foundations and key nonprofit infrastructure organizations like the National Council of Nonprofits and Independent Sector. LIFT also manages the foundation's relationships with identity-based affinity groups such as the Association of Black Foundation Executives and Emerging Practitioners in Philanthropy.

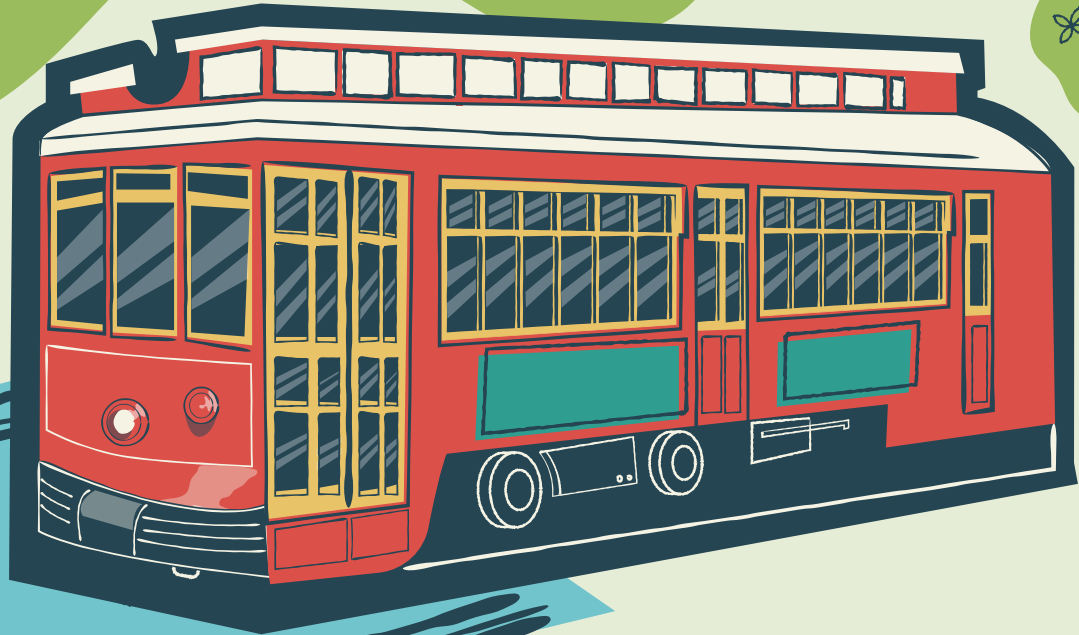
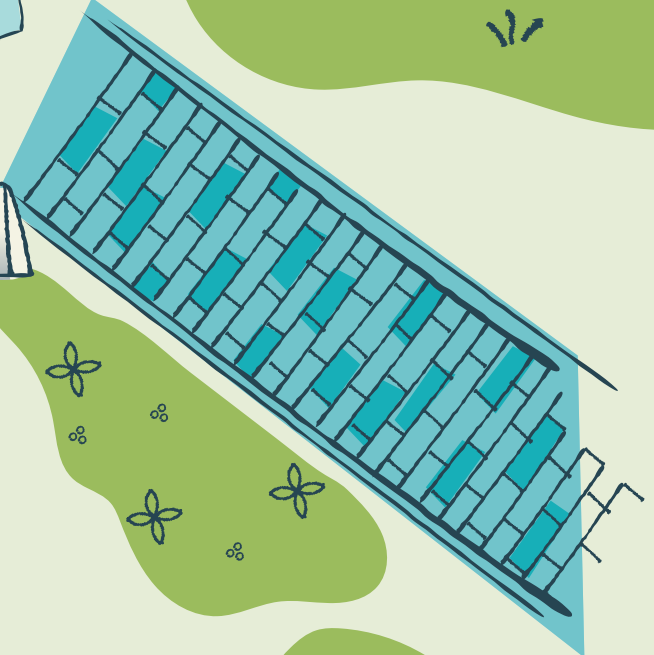


Home to Canal Street (where a S.S. Kresge store operated until the 1960s), second line parades, beignets, Cajun food, Creole roots, the birthplace of jazz, a celebratory spirit, and people of the most resilient kind. Kresge's giving in New Orleans dates back to 1959 and totals \$60 million in grants and \$27 million in social investments.

WHERE Y'AT?



AUDUBON PARK







Shotgun Houses



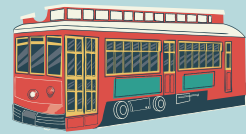
French Quarter



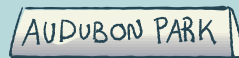
Ninth Ward Victory Arch



Second Line Parade



Canal Street Trolley



Audubon Park

# A STRATEGIC PIVOT

**2006-2016**

With John Marshall's retirement, Kresge's board searches for and hires in Rip Rapson a new leader who will expand how the foundation does its work. Building on the past, Kresge's new modus operandi includes a values-lens, strategic program areas, and a growing centering of expanding opportunity in cities.

2006

## New Foundation Leader Sets Stage for Bold Change

In 2005, Rip Rapson – a civic leader in Minneapolis who had served as that city’s deputy mayor – received a call from a national search firm tasked with finding Kresge a new CEO asking if he would be willing to talk about the job. He demurred. The consultant then asked if he would be willing to meet with the search committee to talk about the model of philanthropy he had pursued at the McKnight Foundation. He replied that he would be delighted to do that.

In this first meeting with Kresge’s board, Rapson suggested that the foundation could have a more transformational impact by applying four principles to its work:

1. Become a source of **long-term patient capital**, sighting against a more distant horizon line in measuring its impact;
2. **Embrace risk-taking** at an order of magnitude commensurate with the scale, complexity and severity of the challenges the city faced;
3. **Diversify its toolbox** to include strategies tailored to the needs of the community, not driven by the more formulaic approaches demanded in capital challenge grantmaking; and
4. Introduce a focus on **people in greatest need**.

Rapson left this meeting believing he had given Kresge’s leadership a lot to consider, but that his work and life would remain in Minneapolis. That is, until Kresge’s board came back asking him to consider the role more seriously. After a few more conversations the board offered Rapson the top job, which he enthusiastically accepted.

What emerged over the next three years under Rapson’s leadership was a vision that transitioned Kresge from a capital challenge granting institution into a strategic philanthropy focused on investing grant capital across six program areas. The new north star sought, in Rapson’s words, “to improve the economic, social, cultural and environmental conditions of low-income and underserved communities.”

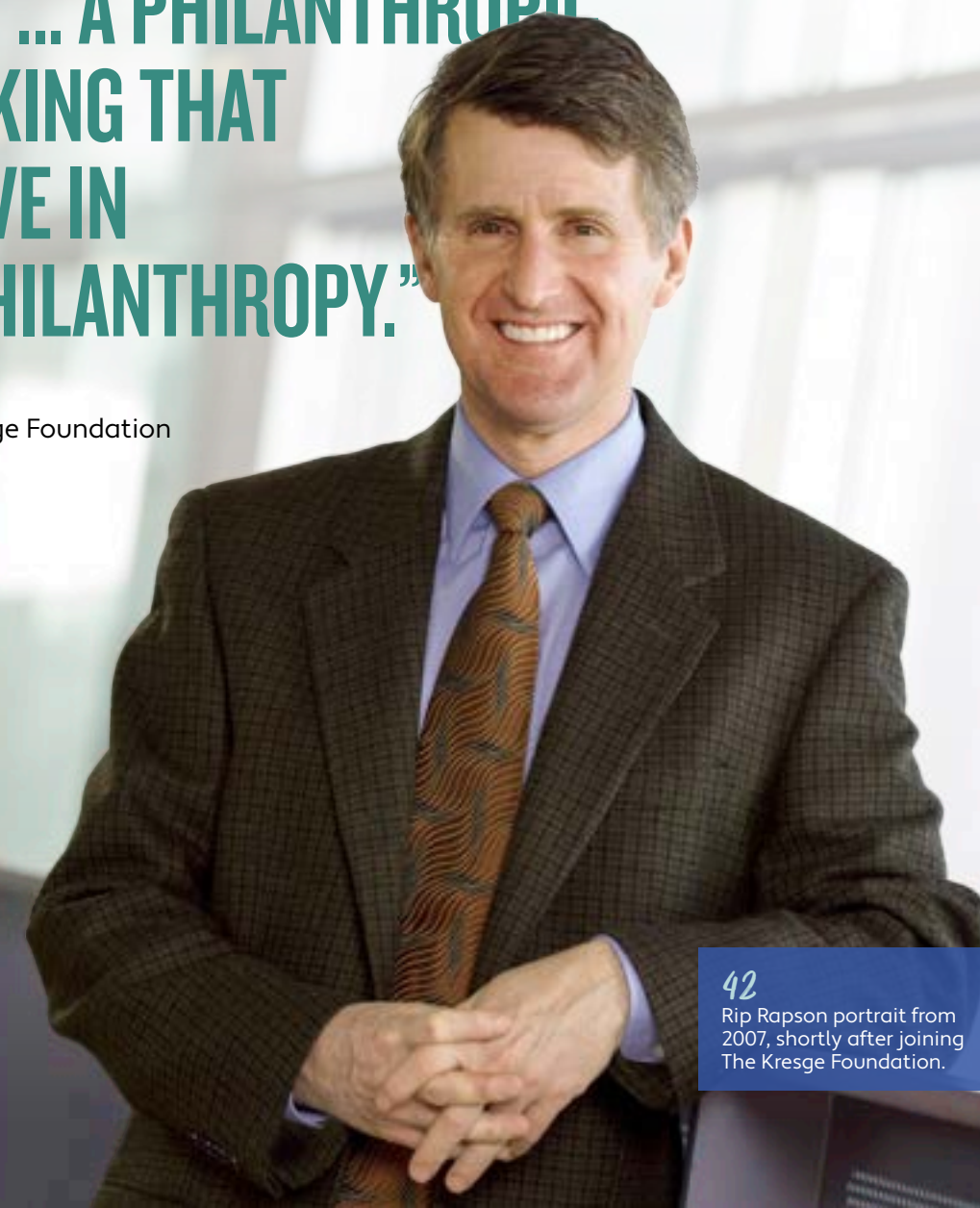
The increased definition of the foundation’s work in Detroit was accompanied by the emergence of six grantmaking disciplines – arts and culture, environment, health, higher education, human services and community development – with the attendant expansion in staff and build-out of a full spectrum of operational departments, including human resources, finance, investments, grants

management and communications. Rapson says the twists and turns of his Kresge career would most definitely surprise his 2006 self.

“When I first interviewed, I never dreamed that we would be where we are now, almost 20 years later,” he said. “I had certainly hoped that we could explore ways to make our grantmaking more flexible and test expansive ways of building the capacity of nonprofit organizations to address community challenges. I never dreamed that we would diversify our tools as we have, that we would work in multiple places as we have, that we would have contributed to the revitalization of one of the great cities of the world as we have. And I certainly never imagined that we could build, as we have, a philanthropic way of working that is distinctive in American philanthropy.”

“I CERTAINLY NEVER IMAGINED THAT WE COULD BUILD ... A PHILANTHROPIC WAY OF WORKING THAT IS DISTINCTIVE IN AMERICAN PHILANTHROPY.”

– Rip Rapson  
President and CEO, The Kresge Foundation



42

Rip Rapson portrait from 2007, shortly after joining The Kresge Foundation.

2006

## Detroit Riverfront Conservancy

In 2003, Kresge committed its largest-to-date capital challenge grant – \$50 million – to the newly established Detroit Riverfront Conservancy. It was the cornerstone investment that allowed the neglected riverfront along the Detroit River to begin a 20-year (and still ongoing) journey to become one of the city’s jewels and a beloved community gathering place. **Matt Cullen**, chair of the Riverfront Conservancy, reflects.

“The river has always been, symbolically, the heart of the City of Detroit, but we turned our back on it for decades. When General Motors moved to the Renaissance Center in 1996, we immediately embraced a broader vision of what the riverfront could be. We created the Winter Garden, which is a five-story atrium opening up the Renaissance Center to a plaza on the Detroit River. In many ways, that was the genesis of the RiverWalk. We immediately wanted to take the next step in embracing the riverfront by creating still more public access, something we had never had in Detroit. I pitched it to Kresge and said, ‘If you don’t do this now, in five years the opportunity will be gone forever.’

“Kresge didn’t just give us \$50 million in 2006. There were multiple benchmarks: Set up a board, and you get so much. Set up bylaws, and you get so much. Raise your first \$3 million, and you get so much. The goal was to make sure we secured that \$50 million and matching engagement from the entire community. Nearly 20 years later, the RiverWalk’s success is uncontestable. It changed how Detroiters interact. It changed the level of hope that people have. It’s the United Nations of people down there. And there is much more to come as we near completion of our bridge-to-bridge vision.”

43

The Detroit RiverWalk has turned once underutilized waterfront into a vibrant public space for walking, jogging, cycling, fishing, cultural events and more.



43

Detroit Riverfront illustration.  
Illustrated by Justine Alletette Ross

“IT CHANGED HOW DETROITERS INTERACT. IT CHANGED THE LEVEL OF HOPE THAT PEOPLE HAVE. IT’S THE UNITED NATIONS OF PEOPLE DOWN THERE.”



**Matt Cullen**, Chair of the Riverfront Conservancy



## Eastern Market

The Kresge Foundation played a key role in convincing the City of Detroit to transfer management and promotion of Eastern Market from its Recreation Department to a professionally staffed, nonprofit public authority. CEO of the Eastern Market Partnership **Dan Carmody** shares the story.

“Over the previous 10 years, numerous studies concluded that the city’s public market and local food district would benefit by being managed by a single purpose nonprofit dedicated to the market’s success rather than by a city department with a declining budget and many competing interests. Kresge backed the many Eastern Market stakeholders who fought to implement this change by providing significant early funding to jump-start both the building of an effective market organization and the badly needed capital upgrades for market sheds.

“Since 2006, Eastern Market has invested more than \$25 million in capital improvements to market sheds and food business accelerators, has developed extensive programming related to food access and food entrepreneurship, and has led several initiatives to retain the authenticity of the Eastern Market and to preserve its three core roles: keeping the market a place about food, remaining a place where people – especially those with limited means – go to start a business, and a place that welcomes everyone.

“The successful regeneration is the result of a high-performing public-private partnership between the City of Detroit, which still owns the public market, a strong nonprofit that manages the public market and advocates for the Eastern Market District, and the 600 vendors and brick-and-mortar businesses that call Eastern Market home. Together we shepherd the market’s rich history to build a healthier, wealthier and happier Detroit.”

**“TOGETHER WE SHEPHERD THE MARKET’S RICH HISTORY TO BUILD A HEALTHIER, WEALTHIER AND HAPPIER DETROIT.”**



**Dan Carmody**, CEO, Eastern Market Partnership



45

Students study and converse on the campus of Cape Peninsula University of Technology in South Africa.

45

2006

## South Africa

### Education Program

For the past two decades, Kresge grantmaking and investments have been directed to organizations in the U.S., with one exception: South Africa. Support has come through two major initiatives, one to help the nation's institutions improve their fundraising capacity (Inyathelo), which ran from 2006-2021, and the other to help improve student outcomes (Siyaphumelela). **Francois Strydom**, senior director at South Africa's University of the Free State, who developed the South African Survey of Student Engagement (SASSE) with the University of Pretoria's **Melody Mentz**, reflects.

"When asked what kind of support they needed, discussions with South African vice chancellors pointed in one direction: student success. And after Kresge took a group of South Africans to the Achieving the Dream conference, where U.S. college practitioners share knowledge on accelerating student success and equity, it became clear that South African universities could learn from their American peers. As a result, Kresge launched Siyaphumelela ("We Succeed"), an initiative promoting the use of data analytics to determine why students are not succeeding, enabling institutions to focus on the most effective interventions.

"Both U.S. and South African higher education institutions had increasingly diverse student populations, with many from underserved backgrounds. From



45

Students celebrate graduation from Nelson Mandela Metro University.  
Credit: NMMU

an initial five universities, Siyaphumelela now helps 20 of the country's 26 public universities advance student success. [The initiative has] created a massive amount of intellectual and social capital, and a network of people who learn from each other. Kresge's willingness to go the distance in South Africa is an important signal to other funders and to the institutions. In student success, you have to be a marathon athlete. It's not a sprint."

**"[THE INITIATIVE HAS] CREATED A MASSIVE AMOUNT OF INTELLECTUAL AND SOCIAL CAPITAL, AND A NETWORK OF PEOPLE WHO LEARN FROM EACH OTHER."**



**Francois Strydom**

Senior Director, South Africa's University of the Free State



**Melody Mentz**

University of Pretoria

46

2007

## New Economy Initiative

### Detroit Program

**David Egner**, President and CEO of the Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation, and the former executive director of the New Economy Initiative (NEI), shares his recollection of the launch and impact of NEI.

By 2019, NEI had invested more than **\$120 MILLION** into more than 14,000 entrepreneurs and companies, and has already had an economic impact of **\$2.6 BILLION** in the metro Detroit region.

“It came at a critical time in Detroit’s history. With a looming bankruptcy and emerging foreclosure crisis, having Kresge, Ford Foundation and W.K. Kellogg Foundation step forward with \$25 million lead commitments, along with seven other foundations, to launch a new \$100 million initiative was a significant moment in the way philanthropy approached its role in community. NEI was formed with the aspirational goal of moving Detroit’s regional economy from one that focused solely on a specific industry to one that took a more dynamic stance. It was a leap of faith and a culture change moment for philanthropy to not only make this substantial investment together, but to make it without a clear path forward in how this was going to be achieved. We had to be entrepreneurial in testing ideas and approaches rather than funding a fully baked program.

“Through early stumbles, NEI found its stride in growing Detroit’s entrepreneurial ecosystem and, by 2013, NEI broadened its focus beyond the Woodward Corridor into the city’s neighborhoods by introducing a more inclusive, robust and coordinated entrepreneurial support system. It’s not a leap to say that NEI – a groundbreaking multi-philanthropic endeavor – helped set the stage for many future collaborations in the following years, most notably the Grand Bargain (page 97).”

# “THROUGH EARLY STUMBLES, NEI FOUND ITS STRIDE IN GROWING DETROIT’S ENTREPRENEURIAL ECOSYSTEM.”



**David Egner**, President and CEO, The Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation

46

Sarah Pappas of Fresh Cut Flower Farm waters her garden. She won \$10,000 through NEI Ideas.

Credit: NEI



47

2007

## Community College Support

### Education Program

For much of its history, Kresge didn't offer grants to community colleges, but that changed in 2007. One of the first community college organizations it partnered with was Achieving the Dream, a nonprofit that builds capacity for community colleges while closing equity gaps. Community college support is now a cornerstone of Kresge's Education Program. **Karen Stout, Ph.D.**, president and CEO of Achieving the Dream, has witnessed the value of having Kresge as a partner and shares her reflection.

"Kresge has allowed us to reach over 300 community colleges in our network, fundamentally improving student success and driving equitable outcomes. Kresge was a key funder for our Foundations of Transformation intensive, where college leadership receives coaching to improve student success, especially for racially-minoritized and poverty-impacted students. When these colleges commit to the whole-college transformation, we are seeing significant gains in the overall student completion rates and reductions in equity gaps. We've taken what we learned to help colleges in South Africa experience the same kinds of data-informed transformation processes by partnering with the nonprofit, Saide.

"More recently, Kresge helped us launch our Racial Equity Leadership Academy in coordination with the University of California Race and Equity Center. That program is designed to help colleges envision vital racial equity goals and launch a strategic plan for student success. We also have two new colleges entering our network from Fresno as part of Kresge's place-based strategy.

"I think a key lever for transforming communities is investing in community colleges. We're stronger and better when students have better outcomes. I think that really resonates with the overall Kresge vision of building vibrant communities."

**"I THINK A KEY LEVER FOR TRANSFORMING COMMUNITIES IS INVESTING IN COMMUNITY COLLEGES. WE'RE STRONGER ... WHEN STUDENTS HAVE BETTER OUTCOMES."**



**Karen Stout, Ph.D.**, President and CEO, Achieving the Dream

48

2008

## Combatting Lead Poisoning

### Health Program

In 2008, the Health Program launched Get the Lead Out, an initiative aimed at raising national awareness of lead exposure risks and preventing childhood lead poisoning by improving substandard housing for families with low incomes. Coordinating with the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Kresge awarded \$4 million in grants to six nonprofit and municipal organizations engaged in lead testing, abatement, advocacy and data collection in Detroit, Newark, N.J., and Oakland, Calif. Subsequent grants supported additional work in these cities, as well as an effort in Greensboro, N.C., that would go on to receive national recognition for its pioneering healthy housing efforts.

49

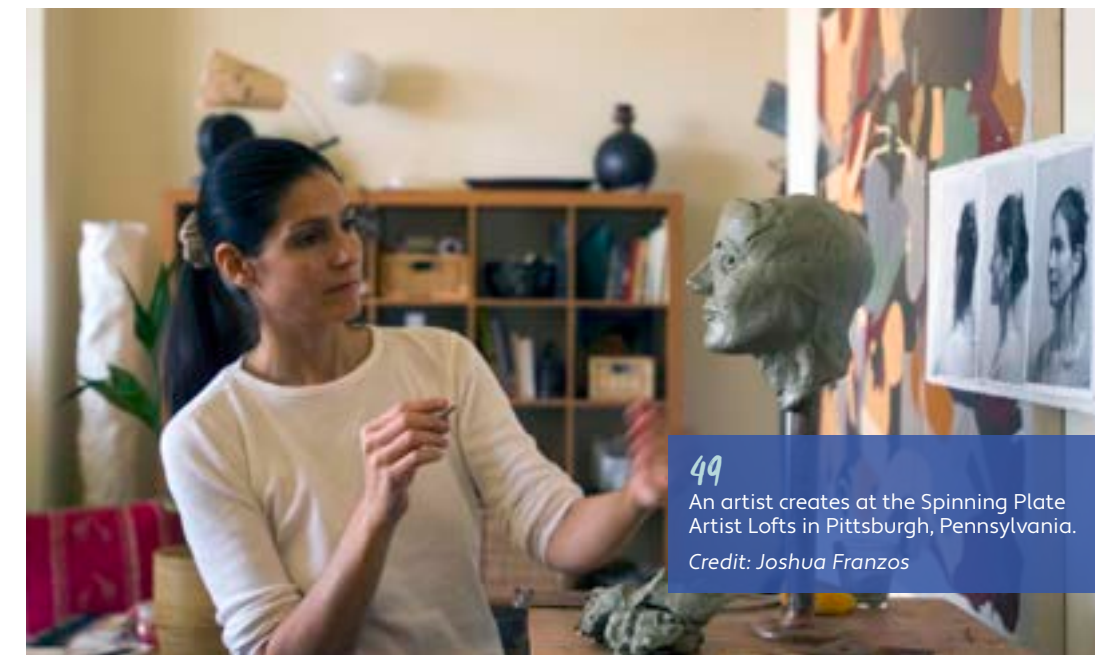
2008

## Artspace

### Arts & Culture Program

Artspace is a nonprofit real estate organization specializing in creating, owning and operating affordable spaces for artists, creators and creative entrepreneurs. These spaces include workforce housing, live/work apartments for artists and their families, art studios, space for arts-friendly businesses and other projects. With more than 40 years of experience in creative placemaking across the country, Artspace has developed projects in Kresge's focus cities of Detroit, Memphis and New Orleans, as well as other large cities where artists are at risk of gentrification, such as Minneapolis, New York and Seattle.

Kresge's support of Artspace includes more than **\$10 MILLION** in grant funding and a **\$1 MILLION** guarantee.



49

An artist creates at the Spinning Plate Artist Lofts in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

Credit: Joshua Franzos

## 50

2008

## Kresge Arts in Detroit

### Detroit Program

Kresge Arts in Detroit has awarded more than \$9 million to 380 Kresge Artist Fellows, Gilda Awardees and Kresge Eminent Artists from across metro Detroit. Kresge Arts in Detroit is a separate nonprofit set up to manage the fellowship program and the annual Kresge Eminent Artist award. Director **Christina deRoos** shares her take.

“Detroit artists have played an important role in shaping the city’s narrative and sharing complex stories of our people and neighborhoods. In 2008, Kresge brought our community the idea of directly, intentionally supporting and elevating individual artists holistically, not solely their artistic work.

“This started with naming Charles McGee as the first Kresge Eminent Artist, recognizing his lifetime of achievement. You could see his work at that time at the Detroit Institute of Arts and his murals and sculptures in public spaces. However, the honor – with a no-strings-attached cash award of \$50,000 – created a moment for the greater Detroit community to come together and celebrate his story as one of our stories. And we’ve continued each year since 2008, most recently with the naming of Nora Chapa Mendoza as our 16th Kresge Eminent Artist with an award now of \$100,000.

# “DIRECT, NO-STRINGS-ATTACHED AWARDS TO INDIVIDUAL ARTISTS SUSTAIN DETROIT’S CULTURE AND COMMUNITY.”



**Christina deRoos**

Director, Kresge Arts in Detroit

“In 2009 we named and celebrated our first cohort of Kresge Artist Fellows. These artists are from across the range of career stages and disciplines, making contributions to our community through their sustained creativity and quality of craft. Fellowships began with 18 artists receiving a no-strings-attached award of \$25,000 – [growing] to 24 artists receiving \$40,000 in 2024. And in 2015, we added the Gilda Snowden Emerging Artist Awards at \$5,000 each for early-career risk-takers who are gaining momentum. There are now 10 selected annually.

“These artists include Jessica Care Moore as Detroit’s Poet Laureate, the late musician Amp Fiddler and numerous national award winners of U.S. Artist

## 51

2008

## Expanding Kresge’s Financial Toolbox through Social Investing

### Social Investment Practice

Early on in his tenure, President and CEO Rapson proposed expanding the foundation’s financial tools beyond grants, allowing Kresge to do more and make a greater impact with its resources. The Social Investment Practice debuted in 2008. Its first investment round was a series of no-interest loans to human services organizations, a response to the 2008 recession that threatened the survival of many nonprofits.

“It was a profound moment for vulnerable populations,” said Trustee Jim Bildner, who retired from the Kresge Board of Trustees in June 2024. “The fiscal crisis hit every element of the preexisting safety net, creating an enormous supply-and-demand problem we had not seen since the Great Depression.

“The idea to make these no-interest loans came from the Trustees themselves, which was rare,” Bildner said, “and took less than 30 days from idea to reality.”

Since then, working with multiple capital tools has become integral to Kresge’s mission. Over \$500 million has been invested, leveraging over \$1 billion through non-grant forms of capital like equity investments, program-related investments and guarantees. Although some board members supported expanding the financial toolbox, others considered it antithetical to the foundation’s ethos, said former Managing Director Kimberlee Cornett, to loan money to nonprofits and expect them to return it with interest.

It also took focused and slow work to align the new investing tools with grant strategies. Cross-departmental training helped social investors better understand



# “WE HAVE TO MAP OUR STRATEGIES ... AND CONSIDER WHAT IT’S GOING TO TAKE TO MAKE STRUCTURAL CHANGES IN THE ECONOMY, TO TURN IT FROM BEING AN INEQUITY ENGINE TO AN OPPORTUNITY ENGINE.”



**Aaron Seybert**  
Managing Director, Kresge Social Investment Practice

program strategies and allowed grantmakers to become comfortable with finance tools.

“It was pretty bumpy for the first two years,” Cornett said. “There was tension about the impact investing work diverting resources out of the payout and reducing the grant budget. That was a big issue we had to overcome.”

Overcome indeed. These tools have played a central role in a variety of marquee Kresge-funded projects, including the transformation of the Marygrove campus in Detroit into a cradle-to-career educational hub, the attempt to bring inclusive community development to the Memphis Medical District and Detroit’s Woodward Corridor and Midtown neighborhood, and recent work advancing the just energy transition through the adoption of solar in low-income communities.

Guarantees have emerged as a unique philanthropic tool, with Kresge pioneering their use. Over 80 guarantees have been made, each one removing layers of risk that have unlocked other investors’ dollars.

Under current Managing Director **Aaron Seybert**, the practice continues to thrive. Seybert sees the Social Investment Practice as a bridge between community-driven initiatives and capital markets, aiming to address systemic inequities. Moving forward, the focus remains on leveraging capital to create lasting impact and transform economies into engines of opportunity.

“We have to map our strategies to the massive influence the private market has on the lives of everyday people,” Seybert said, “and consider what it’s going to take to make structural changes in the economy, to turn it from being an inequity engine to an opportunity engine. If we ignore that, it’s to our peril.”



51

A new resident cuts a ribbon at Deborah Strong Housing, part of the Strong Families Fund initiative, which received Kresge social investment support in 2015.

52

2008

## PolicyLink

### Arts & Culture, Detroit, Environment, Health, Human Services Programs

Everyone should have the opportunity to be economically secure and live in a healthy community. PolicyLink, a national research and action institute, has woven together advocacy, applied research, communications, and community engagement since 1999 to achieve racial and economic equity. PolicyLink has worked with nearly every Kresge program team to advance more just and equitable systems and processes. Kresge grants totaling \$15.3 million to PolicyLink have supported efforts to design and implement more than \$3 billion in federal place-based policy wins. This has included a Healthy Food Financing Initiative; launching the Water Equity and Climate Resilience Caucus; anchoring the healthy housing and racial equity field; accelerating arts, culture and equitable development; designing innovations in the human services sector to center racial equity; and equipping advocates with local data to inform policy and systems changes.

## 53

2009

## College Attainment

## Education Program

Since its inception, Kresge has considered education a key pillar of its grantmaking. In 2007, it started to reevaluate its focus as it became clear that America's position as a world leader in education outcomes was slipping. For the first time, young people were earning college degrees at lower rates than their parents had and the gap in college attainment rates between white students and students of color was widening.

"We knew if we wanted help more people to get degrees, we had to focus on the institutions that were doing the heavy lift," says **Bill Moses**, managing director of Kresge's Education Program.

So, Kresge started directing the bulk of its higher education grantmaking toward efforts to increase education access and student success – a strategy it also pursued in South Africa. And rather than making grants to individual institutions, it took a more systemic approach by, for example, funding college districts or supporting capacity-building efforts at groups of colleges.

What drove the foundation's strategy was a recognition that simply getting more students into college was only half the battle. Those students also needed to graduate, and this meant implementing change at the institutions themselves.

Many colleges and universities, established in the 19th century, had been designed around the needs of student cohorts consisting mainly of affluent white men. They had not adapted to the students of the 20th and 21st centuries – something that became even more apparent in South Africa after 1994, when the end of apartheid meant the student bodies at many institutions rapidly became majority Black.

"The challenge was that the universities had rules, processes and cultures that were more wedded to the past than to the present or the future," says Moses. "We felt universities needed to change to help students succeed."

It was for this reason that in 2021 Kresge made a grant of \$2 million to the newly-formed National Institute for Student Success (NISS) at Georgia State University. The NISS works with colleges and universities to help them introduce the systems and technologies that can help increase college access and completion. As with so much of Kresge's approach to change-making, the strategy was and continues to be driven by a desire to use its funding in a way that extends its impact.

"We started to think about how many lives a dollar of our philanthropic investment would benefit," says Moses. And, he explains, rather than funding individual institutions or boutique programs, by working in a more systematic way "you can have a huge impact."

According to Stronger Nation, the U.S. college attainment rate in 2008 was 34%; in 2022, it rose to

**\$54.3%.**

# "WE FELT UNIVERSITIES NEEDED TO CHANGE TO HELP STUDENTS SUCCEED."



**Bill Moses**

Managing Director, Kresge Education Program



53

A college graduate hugs a supporter.

## 54

2010

## ArtPlace and Creative Placemaking

### Arts & Culture Program

Operating from 2010-2020, ArtPlace America was a \$150 million funder collaborative that successfully positioned arts and culture as core strategies of community planning and development, and strengthened the field of Creative Placemaking. Eleven private philanthropies, including Kresge, joined with the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) and several federal agencies to establish ArtPlace as a nationwide initiative that put arts at the center of economic development.

The idea of ArtPlace emerged from a July 2010 meeting convened by then-NEA Chairman Rocco Landesman, who made the case that art could – and should – play a significant role in shaping and strengthening communities.

“[Kresge’s investment] was a big bet because until that point, [we] had not participated in an initiative of this scale,” said Regina Smith, managing director of Kresge’s Arts & Culture Program, who joined Kresge in 2008 as a program officer. “This was (for us) an untested concept – a national public-private partnership where arts and culture strengthen communities – and yet this new way of thinking and working appealed to Rip Rapson, who attended that NEA convening.” It also appealed to the Arts & Culture Program, whose current strategy “had been dominated by a sector-specific approach to stabilizing the balance sheets of arts and cultural institutions,” following the financial crisis.

But in 2012, the Arts & Culture Program unveiled a strategic priority on equitable Creative Placemaking.

“There are many folks, particularly in philanthropy, who frame their work as ‘giving voice to the voiceless,’ ” said Jamie Bennett, former executive director of ArtPlace America. “And in doing so, they’re saying that the problem is that these communities have no voice. But the reality is that every community I’ve ever experienced absolutely has a voice, but often, it seems like the people who hold money and power don’t have ears. The problem is not that the community doesn’t know what it wants. The problem is that the urban planners and the deputy mayors and the commissioners don’t always want to listen to what the community wants. And so rather than ‘giving voice to the voiceless,’ I’ve tried to think about the work we did, particularly at ArtPlace, as ‘giving ears to the earless,’ and how we help the folks that hold the money and power to listen differently.”

Today, Kresge’s Arts & Culture Program continues to support place-based initiatives by positioning culture and creativity as drivers of more just communities. Through this cross-sectoral approach that integrates creative practices into community development, Kresge aims to ensure creativity is valued widely as an integral resource for healthy and sustainable places, and for residents of color to live abundant, self-determined lives.

## 55

2011

## Community Development Finance

### Social Investment Practice

Kresge provided Opportunity Finance Network (OFN) a \$10 million, program-related investment in 2011 to support OFN’s NEXT Awards program, which celebrated innovation and impact among community development financial institutions (CDFIs). It was the largest impact investment to date, and one of the first partnerships with the community development finance sector. OFN Senior Advisor **Beth Lipson** worked on the program and shares this reflection.

“Kresge joined other partners to advance and spotlight more than 50 CDFIs for their innovative strategies to expand affordable housing, consumer financial services, community-based health care and small businesses. Kresge’s substantial PRI (program-related investment) supported the program for two years and expanded CDFI coverage in underserved communities.

“The impact on NEXT Awardees covering low-income people and communities included: the Corporation for Supportive Housing increased the development of supportive housing in new geographies in low-income communities; the Opportunity Fund developed a new loan product to reach small business owners in the most underserved communities; and the Primary Care Development Corporation expanded their successful program, which provides affordable capital and technical assistance to community healthcare organizations, beyond New York State to underserved communities across the U.S.

“Kresge also served as a critical thought partner, both in program design and serving on our NEXT Awards Selection Committee. Kresge’s PRI support and grant capital helped drive CDFI innovation by providing flexible long-term loans paired with grant capital and visibility. The NEXT Awards partnership helped propel high-potential CDFIs to the next level of growth, success and staying power.”

“KRESGE’S SUBSTANTIAL PRI SUPPORTED THE PROGRAM FOR TWO YEARS AND EXPANDED CDFI COVERAGE IN UNDERSERVED COMMUNITIES.”



**Beth Lipson**  
Senior Advisor, Opportunity Finance Network

56

2012

## Final Capital Challenge Grants

As the foundation shifted to become a strategic grantmaker in the mid-2000s, Kresge began to reduce and eventually discontinue making capital challenge grants. In 2012, Kresge made its final capital challenge grant to the Neighborhood Service Organization for a fundraising campaign to renovate the historic Michigan Bell Building and provide supportive housing services to Detroit's unhoused population. Throughout the foundation's 100-year history, Kresge awarded over \$3 billion through more than 10,000 capital challenge grants that helped build the nation's nonprofit infrastructure through the construction of libraries, hospitals, schools, museums, community centers and other facilities.

57

2012

## The Urban Opportunity Framework

Kresge's new grantmaking approach – in Detroit and across disciplinary areas – had solidified sufficiently for the board to formally adopt urban opportunity as its guiding investment framework. This reoriented the work again to focus ever more particularly on place.

In the 2012 annual report, then-Board Chair Elaine Rosen explained it this way: “We looked at our programs and asked: Are they supporting our broad mission to promote human progress? Are our strategies focused laser-like on problems that, if ameliorated, will give greater numbers of individuals the opportunities necessary to lead self-determined lives? In short, would Mr. Kresge be proud enough?”

The decision, then, was that working in and for cities – and for the less wealthy people living in them – would constitute a new north star for the foundation.

But, why cities? Cities are powerful vehicles of change; they offer a concentration of the skills and ideas needed to spark innovation; they have a density of assets that contribute to expanded opportunity; they are manageable units of governance; and they are open to engagement.

“We have chosen to work along a spectrum,” Kresge President and CEO Rip Rapson wrote in 2012. “At one end, we provide funding to partners, aimed at stimulating direct results for low-income people. ... At the other end, we invest in activities or infrastructure that benefit all city residents but will flow benefits indirectly to a city's most isolated and disinvested neighborhoods. In the middle, there will be activities that have qualities of each.”



Home of the Blues, soul and rock 'n' roll: a city that sings its own tune. Tastes like tangy, pit-fired BBQ. Sounds like the Mighty Mississippi rolling past. The site of Sebastian Kresge's first foray into the five-and-ten-cent business and the final breath of a civil rights King. Kresge's giving in Memphis dates back to 1956 and totals \$52 million in grants and \$10.5 million in social investments.



BEALE STREET  
MEMPHIS

Le Bonheur Children's Hospital

Lorraine  
MOTEL

WHAT UP,  
MANE?

I AM  
AWAY

## 58

2012

## General Operating Support

The development of the foundation's strategic programs in the mid-2000s marked a sea change toward providing unrestricted funding for use at a nonprofit's discretion. In 2023, nearly half of the foundation's funding was allocated to general operating support, representing a major shift from historical grant practices. Vice President of Programs **Benjamin Kennedy** reflects on this transition.

"We started off providing program grants that included general operating support to help staff meet the day-to-day costs that running a nonprofit can incur. Because, at the end of the day, nonprofits are people-powered and someone has to look after the people. Now, unrestricted funds comprise a substantial portion of the grants we offer.

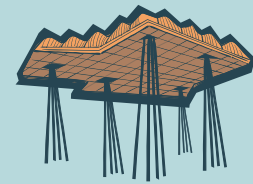
"General operating support represents a philosophical evolution in our practice and how we think about our partners. It isn't helpful for us to dictate to a nonprofit how they should use a grant. Access to unrestricted funds gives them the flexibility and agency to make decisions regarding their most immediate priorities. They're closer to the communities they serve and recognizing their expertise is an important part of our organization's strategy."

**"BECAUSE, AT THE END OF THE DAY,  
NONPROFITS ARE PEOPLE-POWERED  
AND SOMEONE HAS TO LOOK AFTER  
THE PEOPLE."**



**Benjamin Kennedy**

Vice President of Programs, The Kresge Foundation



**Sunset Canopy  
at Tom Lee Park**



**Peabody Ducks**



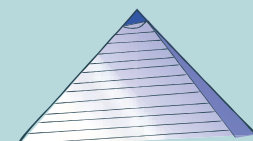
**National Civil Rights Museum  
at the Lorraine Motel**



**Le Bonheur  
Children's Hospital**



**Beale Street**



**Memphis Pyramid**



**I AM A MAN Plaza**

## 59

2012

## Climate Equity Field Investments

### Environment Program

In 2012-2013, Kresge’s Environment Program made a series of grants that forged new relationships that continue to influence its work and the climate equity field today.

Partners for Places (P4P) launched as a matching-grant program to improve communities by building partnerships between local government leaders, frontline communities and place-based funders. National funders invested in local projects developed through these partnerships to advance efforts to create communities that are sustainable, prosperous and just. The efforts took place from coast to coast and focused largely on empowering and engaging low-income neighborhoods. To date, this successful matching-grant program has awarded \$10.9 million, leading to more than \$21.6 million in investments.

Clean Energy Group (CEG) is a leading source of independent information on the technical and financial aspects of clean energy – especially resilient power or solar+storage – for low-income communities. CEG’s team has built trusting relationships with dozens of community-based organizations. CEG advances local policies, programs and market structures to accelerate the deployment of clean energy in low-wealth communities and communities of color.

Urban Sustainability Directors Network boasted 115 members in 2013. In addition to general support, Kresge’s first grant also funded research to document best practices in incorporating social equity in urban sustainability efforts. “The research served as a springboard for USDN’s future, significant efforts to ensure that low-income communities and communities of color are meaningfully engaged in and equitably benefit from cities’ efforts to transition to clean energy and prepare for the effects of climate change,” said Jessica Boehland, Kresge Environment Program.

Finally, the City Energy Project launched as a partnership between the Institute for Market Transformation and the Natural Resources Defense Council. Working in 20 U.S. cities, it brought together city leadership and staff, the real estate community, and nonprofit stakeholders to design and implement locally appropriate energy efficiency policies and programs that reduce energy use and carbon emissions, while also enhancing real estate value, job growth, air quality, grid reliability and climate resilience.

## 60

2012

## College Access Support

### Education Program

Earning a quality post-secondary education is the surest pathway to increased opportunity and economic mobility for graduates. Kresge’s Education Program assessed data in 2012 and saw that, while more people were entering college and graduation rates had improved, racial, ethnic and socioeconomic inequities persisted around the ability to access and pay for college. They decided to do something to help.

Through the Education Program’s Urban Pathways to College focus area, Kresge seeks to help students from low-income households better navigate the college-entry process, including common hurdles like the Free Application for Financial Aid (FAFSA) form. High school seniors fill out the FAFSA to tap into billions of dollars in federal support available for post-secondary education. Many students who could receive funding do not file a FAFSA, leaving upwards of \$2 billion unclaimed that could support their higher-learning goals.

Kresge has partnered with the National College Attainment Network (NCAN) for more than 10 years to launch initiatives to increase FAFSA participation. One such effort included a \$1.6 million grant to launch the 2016-17 FAFSA Completion Challenge Grant Initiative, which awarded up to 20 U.S. cities with grants up to \$55,000 to support their efforts to raise FAFSA completion rates in their communities.

“FAFSA completion is the key to unlocking the entire college financial aid process, especially for students who are often underrepresented in higher education,” said Caroline Altman Smith, deputy director of The Kresge Foundation Education Program. “For students from low-income households and students of color, this is a critical gateway.”



60 College Beyond students gather at the University of New Orleans in 2019.  
Credit: Jonathan Bachman



**61**  
The QLINE, decked out in a wrap celebrating Kresge's centennial in 2024, zips down Woodward Avenue.  
Credit: Aaron Dawson

# 61

2012

## RTA and M-1 Rail

### Detroit Program

For many years, the Detroit region's lack of a multimodal, coordinated mass transit system was an impediment to its growth. In 2007, Kresge made its first investment in a new rail system funded initially by a partnership of private sector actors. Former Kresge Detroit Program Managing Director **Laura Trudeau** shares more.

"Kresge believed in the benefits of mass transit systems in communities. The initiative overcame several obstacles to launch. A four-county Regional Transit Authority (RTA) was formed in 2012. A ballot effort in 2016 to fund a four-county system failed by an extremely slim margin. Still, the QLINE streetcar system launched in 2017 as a connector for Detroit's 3.3-mile-long downtown district and a catalyst for development and further transit investments.

"Regionally, more communities have opted in to fund the region's suburban bus system, and the RTA has begun to deliver regular bus service between Detroit and

**"THE SYSTEM SERVES ALL RIDERS, ESPECIALLY RESIDENTS OF DETROIT, AND SERVES MANY NEEDS BEYOND COMMUTING."**



**Laura Trudeau**, Former Managing Director, Kresge Detroit Program

# 62

2013

## Cross Program Collaboration

Kresge concentrates its grantmaking and social investments across seven disciplines: American Cities, Arts & Culture, Detroit, Education, Environment, Health and Human Services. While each program team has a distinct strategy, over the past decade they have worked intentionally to unravel complex social challenges at the intersections of those areas. To further encourage this collaboration, the foundation provided special funding pools for staff to define cross-team grant opportunities and create working groups to strategize place-based initiatives.

PUSH Buffalo is an early example of a partner supported by multiple Kresge teams. The organization was founded to create affordable housing opportunities in Buffalo, N.Y., and has expanded to champion energy efficiency, green development, living-wage jobs, quality education, health care and transportation. Kresge mobilized support from the Environment, Arts & Culture and Health programs to support PUSH Buffalo's efforts to reduce social inequities and encourage grassroots, place-based solutions.

Cross-team collaborations acknowledge that the thorny problems faced by residents in American cities don't originate from one source, but rather a layering of systems.

"When you're embedded in a place, you have to juggle, combine and reconcile all of these systems simultaneously," President and CEO Rip Rapson said in an interview in Shelterforce magazine. "But what we're trying to do is have our programs be less standing side-by-side and more mutually informing one another. That is a challenging piece of work."

QLINE has catalyzed some **\$10 BILLION** in investments along the Woodward Corridor and is slated to transfer in fall 2024 to a public operating entity.

An evaluation by Informing Change found Kresge made **245 cross-team grants** between 2011 and 2018, totaling more than **\$101 MILLION**. Today cross-team grants are no longer the exception, but the norm.



## 63

2013

## Kresge Values

In 2013, Kresge was several years into a transformation, moving away from challenge grants toward an urban opportunity framework. This shift required restructuring program implementation, and Rapson saw an opportunity to interject a value-based lens to advance Kresge's mission. Kresge Vice President, CFO and Chief Administrative Officer **Amy Robinson** shares her take on that time.

"After months of leadership sessions, five new values emerged: expanding **opportunity** in the nation's cities through **respect, partnership, stewardship** and **creativity**. They also manifested another key element: matching the internal culture with our values commitment to grantees and partner organizations. Equity was always implicitly threaded throughout our programs to help people prosper and participate in all aspects of civic and economic life. After deep retrospection on the part of Kresge staff, we recognized that expanding opportunity in American cities requires acknowledging and dismantling structural impediments to racial justice. Constant attention to enacting our values has influenced our internal culture. We're constantly questioning how to model our values and help staff members thrive at a workplace where they feel respected and energized. We know we're successful when staff feel a true sense of partnership across the organization.

**"WE'RE CONSTANTLY QUESTIONING HOW TO MODEL OUR VALUES AND HELP STAFF MEMBERS THRIVE AT A WORKPLACE WHERE THEY FEEL RESPECTED AND ENERGIZED."**



**Amy Robinson**

Vice President, CFO and Chief Administrative Officer,  
The Kresge Foundation

## 64

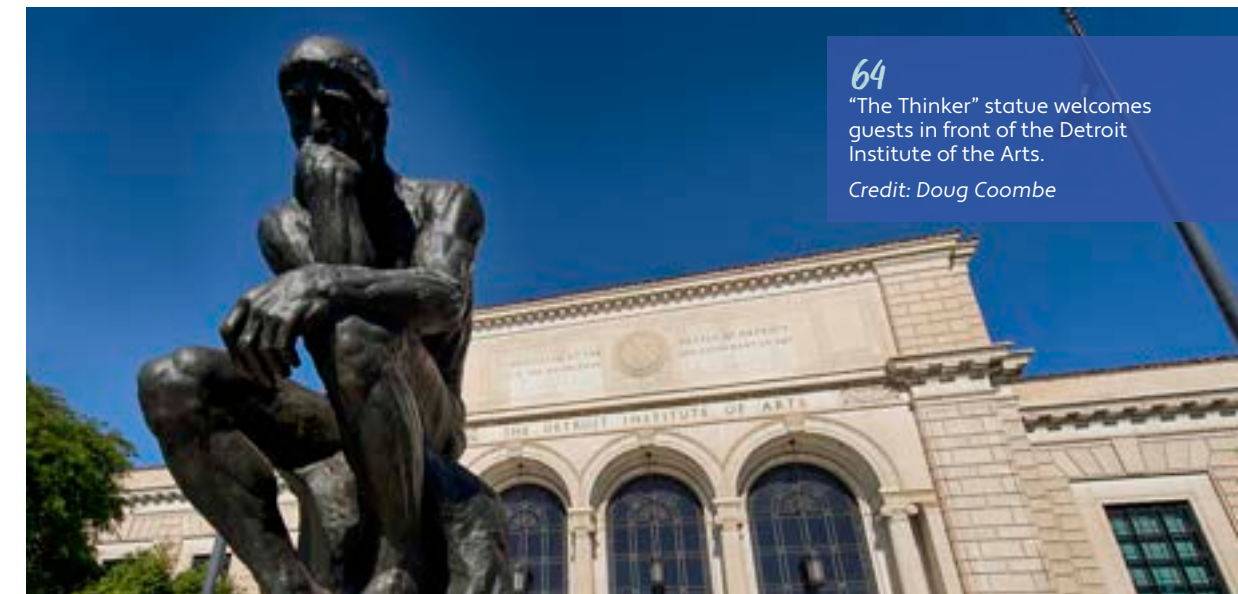
2013

## Detroit Bankruptcy

## Detroit Program

In 2013, Detroit was facing disaster. It was both cash insolvent and service insolvent. It was headed into the largest municipal bankruptcy in American history. Filmmaker **Sam Katz**, the executive producer of "Gradually, Then Suddenly" and founder of History Making Productions, shares his memory of that time.

"The exit from bankruptcy for a cash-starved creditor was made possible through 'The Grand Bargain,' a unique and unprecedented partnership that brought together a huge infusion of cash from philanthropy, arts patrons and the State of Michigan. It was used to fund pensions for 10 years, so the city could divert resources to delivering services. A group of visionary philanthropic foundations spearheaded the entire process. Convened by the Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan at the behest of chief bankruptcy mediator Federal Judge Gerald Rosen, the consortium of foundations resolved to work together.



64

"The Thinker" statue welcomes guests in front of the Detroit Institute of Arts.

Credit: Doug Coombe

"A \$100 million commitment by Kresge was pivotal, representing the largest local philanthropic contribution and the largest in the foundation's history to that point. In all, over \$800 million was raised from national and Detroit-based foundations, private donors, the Detroit Institute of Arts and the state. The result was the transfer of the DIA and its collections to not-for-profit ownership, and funding to mitigate what might otherwise have constituted draconian cuts for pensioners.

"With the funding in place, a unique coterie of political and community leaders, lawyers and judges, retirees, labor and business leaders, and financial institutions of all types came together with the city and its creditors. They did so against all

odds, overcoming cynicism, racism, partisanship and self-interest. Collectively they prevailed over the city's decades of past failures and distrust to create, together, a nearly universally agreed-upon plan to rescue and give rebirth to an iconic American original.

“The alternative to those months of tense, high-stakes negotiations was always clear: years of court battles that would have further undermined the city's stability and quite likely shredded the social fabric. The extent of the city's rebound of the last decade, and its hope of facing its continuing challenges, would be unimaginable in the aftermath of a traditionally fractious and prolonged bankruptcy saga.

“This is a cautionary one for all of America, but also an inspiring one, for in this drama, Americans of all backgrounds came together to find common ground, plant a flag on that ground, and reaffirm our heritage of good citizenship. Hard choices impacting thousands of citizens had to be made in the journey into and out of bankruptcy.

“To kick the can down the road is making a decision not to decide. It is where Detroit found itself after decades. Can our political leaders get out in front of hard and unpopular choices to navigate their communities away from fiscal crises?

“Our film has been presented to civic audiences around the nation as well as to university students – and is now on major streaming services. We hope it serves as a wake-up call to the responsible (those who govern) and to their constituents (those who pay the taxes and receive the services).

“Detroit's story offers insight to all American communities facing economic decline and fiscal distress, and is one that resonates in every corner where faith in democratic government and civil discourse is flickering.

“A \$100 MILLION COMMITMENT BY KRESGE WAS PIVOTAL, REPRESENTING THE LARGEST LOCAL PHILANTHROPIC CONTRIBUTION AND THE LARGEST IN THE FOUNDATION'S HISTORY TO THAT POINT.”



**Sam Katz**  
Filmmaker  
Founder of History Making Productions

65

2013

## Civil Legal Aid

### Detroit, Health and Human Services Programs

Kresge was one of the few national foundations to recognize the critical role that access to civil legal justice plays in removing barriers, providing protections and expanding opportunity. As part of its strategy, each Kresge program made investments to expand access to civil justice to improve the bedrock economic, social, and health conditions for people and communities. Here, former Kresge program staff member **Sandy Ambrozy** shares her reflection.

“The reach of this civil legal aid system is broad and deep with civil legal issues directly impacting 55 million people yearly – equivalent to one out of six people in the U.S. These issues include eviction, debt collection, driver's license restoration, criminal record expungement, divorce, and child custody and support. In other words, life-altering matters that impact people's livelihoods, families, health and homes.

“Kresge grants were focused on sector-level investments to strengthen the civil justice infrastructure, including policies, knowledge, communications, funding and communities of practice.

“Kresge's Human Services Program made sector-level investments to strengthen the civil justice infrastructure. Kresge's Detroit Program made investments with an understanding that neighborhood stability protects housing values, preserves equity for residents and keeps children in their schools. And Kresge's Health Program made grants to address issues that undermine the social determinants of health. To increase sector knowledge, Kresge provided a grant to the Legal Services Corporation to prepare the 'Justice Gap Report,' one of the first analyses in the U.S. to document the unmet civil legal needs of people who have incomes.”

“THE REACH OF THIS CIVIL LEGAL AID SYSTEM IS BROAD AND DEEP WITH CIVIL LEGAL ISSUES DIRECTLY IMPACTING 55 MILLION PEOPLE YEARLY.”



**Sandy Ambrozy**  
Former Senior Fellow, The Kresge Foundation

2014

## Climate Resilience and Urban Opportunity (CRUO)

### Environment Program

This year, Kresge’s Environment Program began to land its climate mitigation and adaptation work in cities, consistent with the foundation’s new focus. It also launched Climate Resilience and Urban Opportunity (CRUO), a five-year, \$29 million initiative to prioritize work led by advocates and organizers in cities facing disproportionate environmental burdens.

CRUO was a new way of working for the team as its first significant multi-year initiative in which a cohort of 15 nonprofit organizations were awarded implementation grants to execute work plans over three years. Each plan focused on influencing local and regional climate planning and policy development to better reflect the needs of low-income communities. One initial CRUO grantee was the Leadership Counsel for Justice & Accountability (LCJA). Founded in 2013, LCJA is a social and environmental justice advocacy organization based in Fresno, California.

“Kresge was the first national funder to provide a grant for us,” said Phoebe Seaton, co-founder and co-executive director of LCJA. “We had just launched LCJA. People said to us, ‘Kresge doesn’t invest in these types of initiatives. You’ll never get the grant.’ But we got it! We also learned that Kresge was shifting its funding model, so our timing was perfect.”

“From an organizational standpoint, the support and partnership with Kresge helped open doors to other funders,” added Veronica Garibay, also a co-founder and co-executive director. “It allowed our team to grow from four people to over 33 and we recently purchased a permanent home in downtown Fresno. Over the last 10 years, we’ve done some incredible work that required big funders to take a chance on us.”

2014

## Social Determinants of Health

### Health Program

Health is about so much more than health care. While hospitals and laboratories are certainly important, health and well-being are influenced by a variety of factors, including housing, education, economic stability and transportation, along with community contexts like civic participation and interaction with the criminal justice system. Access to these social determinants of health is governed by the social determinants of equity – systems of power like structural racism, sexism, nativism, ableism and poverty.



67

Carla Dempsey, a first grader, looks for a classmate to chase down while playing ball tag in the school gymnasium. The ball tag game is one of several after-school activities that make up the Hermosa Vida program from North Country Healthcare in Flagstaff, Arizona.

That's why Kresge, as it was transitioning to being a more strategic, values-driven funder, created a new Health Program with the intention of improving community health and reducing health disparities by addressing the "upstream" factors that influence health, including race, income, zip code, nutrition and air quality.

At the time, addressing what is known as the social determinants of health was considered a non-traditional approach. Over the years, as the team continued to learn from community partners and others in the field, its approach evolved, and its commitment to health equity grew to become part of the program's strategic framework. What stayed constant is a consistent belief in the power of communities and a strong focus on community-driven solutions.

Efforts to help build healthy communities have included countless grant awards and several initiatives advancing housing, climate change and equity, public health leadership, Equitable Food Oriented Development and Fresh, Local & Equitable food efforts, just to name a few.

Throughout, the Health Program maintained its commitment to ensuring that low-wealth areas and communities of color across America's cities have access to locally produced fresh food, safe affordable housing, clean air, safe neighborhoods and economic opportunities.

Today, the program is focused on building equity-focused systems of health that create opportunities for everyone to be as healthy as they can be.

"In far too many communities around the nation, decades of structural inequities and institutional racism have left people of color and people with low incomes with low-quality housing, polluted air, limited access to healthy food and a lack of other resources that contribute to health and well-being," said Health Program Managing Director Monica Valdes Lupi.

To achieve improved health outcomes for all people, it's crucial to thoughtfully and meaningfully engage members of communities around the country whose voices are often ignored. Collaborative, community-led, multi-sector approaches to changing policies and systems can address the conditions that hold disparities in place and create community resilience.

"By changing how we invest in communities and trusting in their power and ability," Lupi said, "together we can create a future where all people can thrive."

68

2015

## Center for Community Investment

### American Cities, Detroit, Environment and Health Programs

In 2010, **Robin Hacke** and Marian Urquilla were working on a program to improve the lives of low-income residents in five cities, including Detroit. That's when they recognized a chicken- and-egg obstacle. Hacke, now the head of the Center for Community Investment (CCI), explains.

"If people don't think money is coming, you don't have the projects ready for investment. Making an investable project takes work, and no one is going to do the work if they don't think the money is coming. We called this the problem of capital absorption, and it led to the creation of the Capital Absorption Framework. The framework is now a key pillar of the work of CCI. Marian and I incubated the work at Kresge in 2014 and, with the help of a Kresge grant, launched in 2017.

"The Capital Absorption Framework sets out what kinds of activities, tools, stakeholders, collaborations and other elements of an ecosystem are needed to lay the groundwork for community investments [to pair with] unmet needs. The idea is to enable underserved communities to draw in the kinds of investments they would not otherwise attract – funding that is essential to tackle everything from lack of affordable housing and disparities in health care access to racial inequity and the impacts of climate change.

"To build the capacity needed, we run leadership training and development workshops in which leaders from around the country not only learn about the framework but learn from each other. We now have over 100 leaders trained to lead capital absorption efforts. They're building the ecosystems that allow money to land."

**"WE NOW HAVE OVER 100 LEADERS TRAINED TO LEAD CAPITAL ABSORPTION EFFORTS. THEY'RE BUILDING THE ECOSYSTEMS THAT ALLOW MONEY TO LAND."**



**Robin Hacke,**  
Head of the Center for Community Investment

69

2015

## New Orleans

### American Cities Program and Others

New Orleans has a syncopated rhythm unlike any other place in the country. Moving beyond the French Quarter and tourist venues, New Orleans is an asset-rich tapestry of diverse neighborhoods with distinct characteristics, passionate residents and dedicated community partners.

Through the capital challenge grantmaking era, Kresge's support in New Orleans was concentrated in higher education, including investments in Dillard University's

library and grants to Tulane, Loyola and Xavier. Dillard and Xavier, the city's two private Historically Black Colleges and Universities, also participated in Kresge's 5-year, \$18 million HBCU Initiative (page 52) in the early 2000s. Other grants supported Methodist Hospital and the New Orleans Museum of Art.

Hurricane Katrina in 2005 also proved a seminal moment for Kresge engagement in New Orleans (page 60). The foundation participated in the first wave of philanthropic support to the city, and its \$12 million in responsive grants helped to re-establish the primary health-care system, rebuild HBCUs, and support neighborhood planning and reconstruction.

69

Kinfolk Brass Band performs for a Kresge Foundation gathering in New Orleans in 2022.

Credit: Jonathan Bachman

Today, engagement in New Orleans, a Kresge focus city, is multifaceted. Since 2015, Kresge’s place-based work has landed more and more in the Crescent City, where similarities to Detroit are ever present and include a shared origin story starting with Antoine de la Mothe Cadillac, a common bond of having lived through catastrophic disasters of economic and natural origin, and a profound similarity in the issues that have shaped the two cities.

“For Kresge, the city offers a chance for each of our national programs – supported by the glue and grantmaking of our American Cities program – to come together and create lasting change in a great American city that is kindred to Detroit,” said President and CEO Rip Rapson.

Kresge has worked to help grantees and partners undertake work related to corridor redevelopment, intergenerational wealth building, cultural preservation, climate change mitigation and green infrastructure, creative placemaking and place-keeping, entrepreneurship and racial justice. Kresge has invested \$53 million in New Orleans since 2005 and is one of the few remaining national foundations still invested in the city.

“It’s a great partnership with a group of people who are very thoughtful, who study, who understand their role and our role, and how we can be change-makers in this world,” said Rashida Ferdinand, the executive director of Sankofa Community Development Corporation. “Kresge is a funder that is not just bringing resources in a funding sense, but they provide information that can help us be our best selves and know that there are other links to groups that are doing similar work that we can learn from. It’s a mission-oriented and mission-aligned approach that we appreciate and respect.”



69

Stilt performers at the 2018 Artspace Grand Opening Event held at the Bell Artspace Campus in New Orleans.

Credit: J.R. Thomason

## 70

2015

## Public Health Leadership

## Health Program

Challenges that public health departments around the country face require leaders to develop new skills and relationships to meet the needs of the people and communities they serve.

While leadership has been woven into the Health Program’s work for many years, two initiatives made it a specific focus.

Launched in 2015, Emerging Leaders in Public Health (ELPH) equipped more than 100 visionary leaders at local and county public health departments around the country with the knowledge and skills to strengthen and transform the role of their organizations, and improve the health and well-being of people in their communities.

Through ELPH, teams of public health leaders were encouraged to think beyond the traditional role of a public health agency and implement approaches designed to enhance organizational and leadership competencies in business, planning and public health systems development.

While ELPH was successful, the rapid shift in and scaling of responsibilities for public health departments during the pandemic dramatically impacted the public health workforce.

“It became evident that the new challenges require new leadership skills and competencies to successfully grow governmental public health leaders for the future,” said Health Program Managing Director Monica Valdes Lupi.

Launched in 2023, PHEARLESS (Public Health Regenerative Leadership Synergy) brings rising public health leaders together with community leaders to co-create sustainable solutions that advance health equity and well-being for all.

“Strong partnerships between government and community are necessary to achieve meaningful community-led change,” Valdes Lupi said. “Authentic community engagement can improve the public’s health for generations to come.”



71

Grantees in Kresge's FreshLo initiative, including Binghampton Development Corporation, visited Knowledge Quest in Memphis, Tennessee to learn about their work to advance equity and food systems change.

71

2015

## Fresh, Local & Equitable (FreshLo)

### Arts & Culture Program, Health Program

Fresh, Local & Equitable (FreshLo) sought to improve access to healthy food, ignite entrepreneurship, spur economic development and integrate arts, culture and community-engaged design to spark neighborhood revitalization in cities around the country. Former Kresge Senior Program Officer **Stacey Barbas** offers her reflection.

"FreshLo provided \$8.4 million in grant funding, as well as technical assistance and learning opportunities, to 23 organizations. [Those] communities came to the partnership with a wealth of strengths and lived experiences used for years to resist and rise in the face of a host of challenges: poverty, insufficient access to fresh and affordable food, and historical and ongoing racism and trauma. Their strategies included everything from sharing cultural traditions, passing down community and family stories, organizing for change, growing and preparing food, starting businesses, and building transformational relationships, among others.

"With FreshLo, Kresge was the first national funder to intentionally integrate food, art and community to drive equitable neighborhood revitalization. The initiative

**"HOW CAN WE BETTER ACKNOWLEDGE AND SHARE POWER AND CENTER COMMUNITIES AND THEIR NEEDS?"**



**Stacey Barbas**

Former Senior Program Officer, The Kresge Foundation

built on and enhanced existing community assets and strengths, and uplifted community leaders to ensure that development is led by and is for its residents. Throughout the initiative, we continually asked ourselves, 'How can we better acknowledge and share power and center communities and their needs?'

"The FreshLo model outlined a path for philanthropy that supports community development without driving displacement, and ensured people in historically under-resourced and marginalized neighborhoods had the support needed to innovate and lift up their neighbors. It laid the groundwork for countless investments into community-driven solutions that center residents in leadership, planning and implementation."

72

2015

## \$350 Million Commitment

### Social Investment Practice

In 2015, the Kresge Board of Trustees committed to assign 10% of the foundation's endowment, totaling \$350 million, toward social investments through 2020. Before then, social investment work was funded annually.

"That solidified what had started as an experiment at the foundation," said Kimberlee Cornett, former managing director of Kresge's Social Investment Practice. "It cemented it as a membrane in how the organization works and achieves its mission."

Foundations that make impact investments employ a range of operational approaches. Some "carve out" resources from the endowment. Some create a team of financing professionals who work separately from the program teams. Others work from one pool of resources, competing for dollars with every grant proposal or investable opportunity.

At Kresge, a distinction emerged to find investments that land in the "bullseye" of the seven program strategies.

"When I joined the foundation in 2016," said Social Investment Practice Managing Director Aaron Seybert, "I learned quickly that we were not trying to do deals for the sake of doing deals; our challenge is to do the "right deals" that advance program strategies in a way that grantmaking alone can't accomplish. We were trying to reach systems, not make stand-alone investments, even if they are highly impactful in and of themselves."

The challenge became finding these investable opportunities for strategies honed to be effective for grants. Every social investment needs a program team's buy-in to proceed. Grants are often layered alongside investments to ensure other complementary work is also resourced.

But, especially since the 2015 milestone, the social investment team has found opportunities to use its tools in groundbreaking ways.

In Detroit, a Kresge guarantee brought together a wide range of actors to attempt to solve the appraisal gap issue in the single-family real estate market. Detroit Home Mortgage ultimately didn't result in as many mortgages as stakeholders hoped. Still, it was successful in other important ways, including receiving an unprecedented ruling from the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency.

“Bank regulators are notoriously unwilling to bend their rules regarding what banks can and cannot do,” said former Social Investment Practice Deputy Director Kim Dempsey. “That OCC letter allowed a bunch of banks to do a kind of lending in Detroit that they would be disallowed from doing anywhere else. That was a huge win.”

On the Marygrove campus, more than a half dozen guarantees have removed risk and summoned tens of millions of dollars in traditional investment to save a college campus from shuttering and to remake it into a beacon of educational opportunity in the surrounding area.

Increasingly, Seybert sees his team as the bridge between critical community-centered work on the ground (policy change, narrative change and power building – things grants are well suited to address) and efforts to bring the capital markets to bear on solutions.

“The full \$350 million commitment included \$150 million in program-related investment loans, \$150 million in guarantees and \$50 million in mission-related investments.”

73

2015

## Healthy Futures Fund

### Social Investment Practice, Health Program

Established by Kresge, Morgan Stanley and the Local Initiatives Support Corp., the \$200 million Healthy Futures Fund leveraged Low-Income Housing Tax Credits and New Market Tax Credits to bolster health and housing for low-income communities. Kresge gave an initial \$6 million in 2012, marking one of the first co-created investments between a Kresge program team and the Social Investment Practice. The fund responded to the passing of the Affordable Care Act and the following uptick in demand for health services in low-income communities. It funded federally qualified community health centers in underserved neighborhoods and new low-income housing developments integrated with health services.

74

2015

## Detroit Future City

### Detroit Program

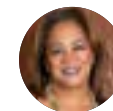
Detroit Future City (DFC) was founded to catalyze implementation of the Detroit Strategic Framework, a 50-year vision for the City of Detroit developed with input from over 100,000 Detroiters. CEO **Anika Goss** shares her view on its impact.

“What happens after you fund the largest community planning process in the United States? That’s the question the Kresge team pondered after launching the Detroit Strategic Framework process, which organized Detroiters to contemplate, critique and envision what [the city] could become in 50 years. What happened next was the birth of a new organization, designed to stay singularly focused on Detroit’s economic, systemic and environmental future while keeping Detroiters informed and engaged: Detroit Future City.

“The fundamentals of the strategic framework process have become the backbone to growing DFC – engaging and informing Detroiters became the imperative for any program, project or publication. It was residents who led the way to the Working with Lots Program, where more than 50 vacant lots were reclaimed [as] gardens and community spaces. It was residents who helped inform the ‘Growing Detroit’s African American Middle Class’ report and helped shape a new perspective on Detroit’s 78% Black population as the economic engine for the city’s regeneration. And finally, all of this culminated in the development of the Center for Equity, Engagement, and Research, designed to track and inform Detroiters on how our city is growing equitably and making sure Detroiters are benefitting.

“This is what happens when a foundation makes an early, transformational investment in the future of a city. This road was not easy, but Detroiters are grateful for the partnership. More importantly, the lessons we have learned from the past have more than prepared us for what’s ahead.”

“THIS ROAD WAS NOT EASY, BUT DETROITERS ARE GRATEFUL FOR THE PARTNERSHIP.”



**Anika Goss**  
CEO, Detroit Future City



75

2016

## Hope Starts Here

### Detroit Program

Hope Starts Here asked more than 18,000 Detroiters what they wanted for young children in the city. IFF President, Core Business Solutions, **Kirby Burkholder** reflects on what the inquiry achieved.

“Hope Starts Here – which began with the leadership of the Kresge and the W.K. Kellogg foundations – set in motion something Detroit had never seen before: a broad, participatory process to create a holistic frame for early childhood education. It engaged the community, from parents to philanthropic funders to corporate leaders. It broke down the silos separating practitioners from one another. It created a consensus that Detroit won’t reach its full potential until its youngest residents reach theirs. It created a determination that this needs to happen and a roadmap that we are still following for how to make it happen.”

# “IT CREATED A CONSENSUS THAT DETROIT WON’T REACH ITS FULL POTENTIAL UNTIL ITS YOUNGEST RESIDENTS REACH THEIRS.”



**Kirby Burkholder**  
IFF President, Core Business Solutions



**75**  
Detroit Mayor Mike Duggan speaks while Kresge's Rip Rapson and W.K. Kellogg Foundation President & CEO La June Montgomery Tabron listen at the kick-off of Hope Starts Here in 2017.



Home to the food production machine feeding America, Fresno is the heart of California's Central Valley. An urban tapestry with lineages that trace around the world. Kresge's total grantmaking in Fresno dates to 1980 and includes \$13 million in grants and \$2 million in social investments.



¿QUÉ PASA?



Fresno Betsuin Buddhist Temple



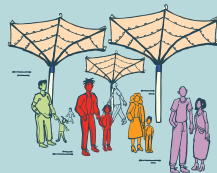
Van Ness Avenue Entrance Gate



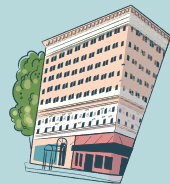
Farmers Market



Fresno Postage Stamp Mural  
by Francisco Vargas



Cultural Arts District Park



T.W. Patterson Building

# CITIES & EQUITY

## 2016-PRESENT

Since 2016, the foundation has doubled down on its work in cities, expanding its focus on three focus cities alongside Detroit: Memphis, New Orleans and Fresno. Kresge also furthered centered equity, the idea that all people and communities should thrive and that systems must change to account for disparities in outcomes along lines of race, income and other demographic factors.

## 76

2016

### Drawing on Detroit

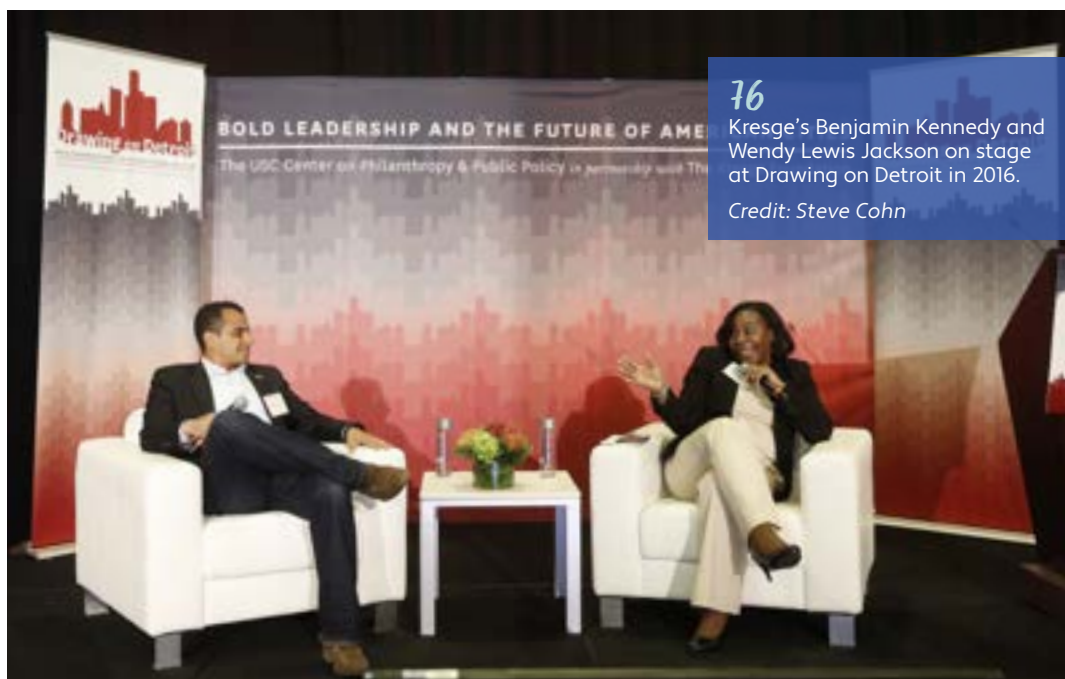
American Cities Program, Detroit Program

Drawing on Detroit was a project that began with a question: Are the revitalization efforts in Detroit, where philanthropy and the private sector have been instrumental, applicable to other cities?

This question manifested a yearlong inquiry undertaken by The USC Center on Philanthropy & Public Policy in partnership with Kresge. Together, they completed an examination of Detroit’s revitalization and the lessons it might hold for driving the next generation of urban policy and practice throughout the U.S.

The inquiry culminated in a day-and-a-half-long program, which started as a national dialogue, that included more than 175 leaders and delegations from 16 U.S. cities. Sessions examined opportunity in urban crisis, the role of philanthropy as a catalyst for positive change, the importance of building economic flywheels, and the role and importance of cross-sector leadership.

“Philanthropy has acted boldly in Detroit in re-imagining the city’s future through a number of catalytic actions,” President and CEO Rip Rapson wrote. “The challenge of revitalizing Detroit has created an opening for philanthropy to step up in a leadership role, making big bets on civic infrastructure. We are thoughtfully marshalling enormous forces and innovative ideas to create a new and better future for Detroit and, in the process, trying to shed light on how other American cities might learn from this work and how to apply these lessons.”



76  
Kresge’s Benjamin Kennedy and Wendy Lewis Jackson on stage at Drawing on Detroit in 2016.  
Credit: Steve Cohn

## 77

2016

### Memphis Riverfront

American Cities Program

Carol Coletta, who spent several years at Kresge as a senior fellow, is now the Memphis River Parks Partnership executive director. She shares her take on the riverfront transformation.

“After Kresge successfully helped transform a small, Confederate-associated Memphis park through the Reimagining the Civic Commons (RCC) initiative, they expanded support to renovating the Memphis riverfront. Kresge provided half the funds for a Memphis riverfront concept in 2016, and the revitalization of Tom Lee Park began.

“Tom Lee Park has been enormously successful since re-opening in the fall of 2023. Our ambition was to build a park that would allow people across incomes to joyfully share public space, and we’ve succeeded. The park gets high ratings, and business in the area is picking up. A lot of people in Tennessee can’t afford to take their kids somewhere like Disneyland, and the park is designed with those families in mind. We’re providing a fun, calm respite for Memphians, some of whom don’t get that in their lives. It’s a haven for pollinating insects, and now kids are learning about ecology in the heart of the city. Teachers are adopting our environmental education curriculum, and we’re using the park to develop internships and apprenticeships for students. Maybe the biggest impact we’re seeing is on people’s psyches. When Memphians started visiting the park, we’d get comments like, ‘I can’t believe that we were able to build something like this in Memphis. How did you do this?’ It helps people believe that we can take on ambitious projects in our city.”

As of April 2024, over **500,000** people have visited Memphis’ Tom Lee Park.

“OUR AMBITION WAS TO BUILD A PARK THAT WOULD ALLOW PEOPLE ACROSS INCOMES TO JOYFULLY SHARE PUBLIC SPACE, AND WE’VE SUCCEEDED.”



Carol Coletta, Executive Director, Memphis River Parks Partnership

77  
The renovated Tom Lee Park on the riverfront in Memphis officially opened in the fall of 2023.  
Credit: Tom Harris



## 78

2016

## Memphis Medical District

### American Cities, Health, Social Investment Practice

Studies determined the Memphis Medical District, a multi-neighborhood area near downtown, could support almost 200,000 additional square feet of retail and restaurant development and up to 2,600 new residential units. Kresge brought together banks and other funders to form a transformational fund to invest in the district, modeled after Midtown Detroit's Woodward Corridor Investment Fund. After years of grant support, the \$30 million Memphis Medical District Investment Fund launched in 2021 with partners including Pathway Lending, Regions Bank, First Horizon Bank and Truist Bank, and a \$6 million guarantee from Kresge. This fund jump-started a new era of inclusive development in the district that continues today.

## 79

2016

## Pivot to Detroit Neighborhoods

### Detroit Program

By the early 2010s, Kresge had made a series of bold investments to revitalize Detroit's riverfront, the adjacent downtown and the city's central corridor, Woodward Avenue. The combined area is referred to as "the 7.2": 7.2 important square miles in a city of 139 square miles. But if the city's beating heart is in the 7.2, its soul resides in the neighborhoods. The foundation soon turned its attention in that direction. Detroit Program Managing Director **Wendy Lewis Jackson** explains.

"Simply put, the neighborhoods called for their own set of bold investments. We answered with Kresge Innovative Projects: Detroit, an unheralded initial commitment in 2014 of \$5 million over three years to support nonprofits in resident-led efforts to transform their neighborhoods. A year later, we announced the Live6 Alliance, a collaboration with University of Detroit Mercy to create a new model for an organization to steward development in this area of Northwest Detroit.

"Those new initiatives set the stage for September 2016 when the Kresge Board of Trustees met in Detroit. They enjoyed an extensive tour of Livernois Avenue, Palmer Park and surrounding areas. They met with Mayor Mike Duggan, members of his administration, with leaders from Invest Detroit, Detroit Future City, Young Nation, IFF and other organizations. They snacked at Good Cakes and Bakes, the award-winning shop of pastry chef April Anderson.

"Our team explained that even though comprehensive revitalization is taking place in Detroit, it is unevenly distributed. We underscored the unacceptable costs the city would bear if it fails to address these disparities and defaults instead to developing along patterns of inequality and segregation that defined the last

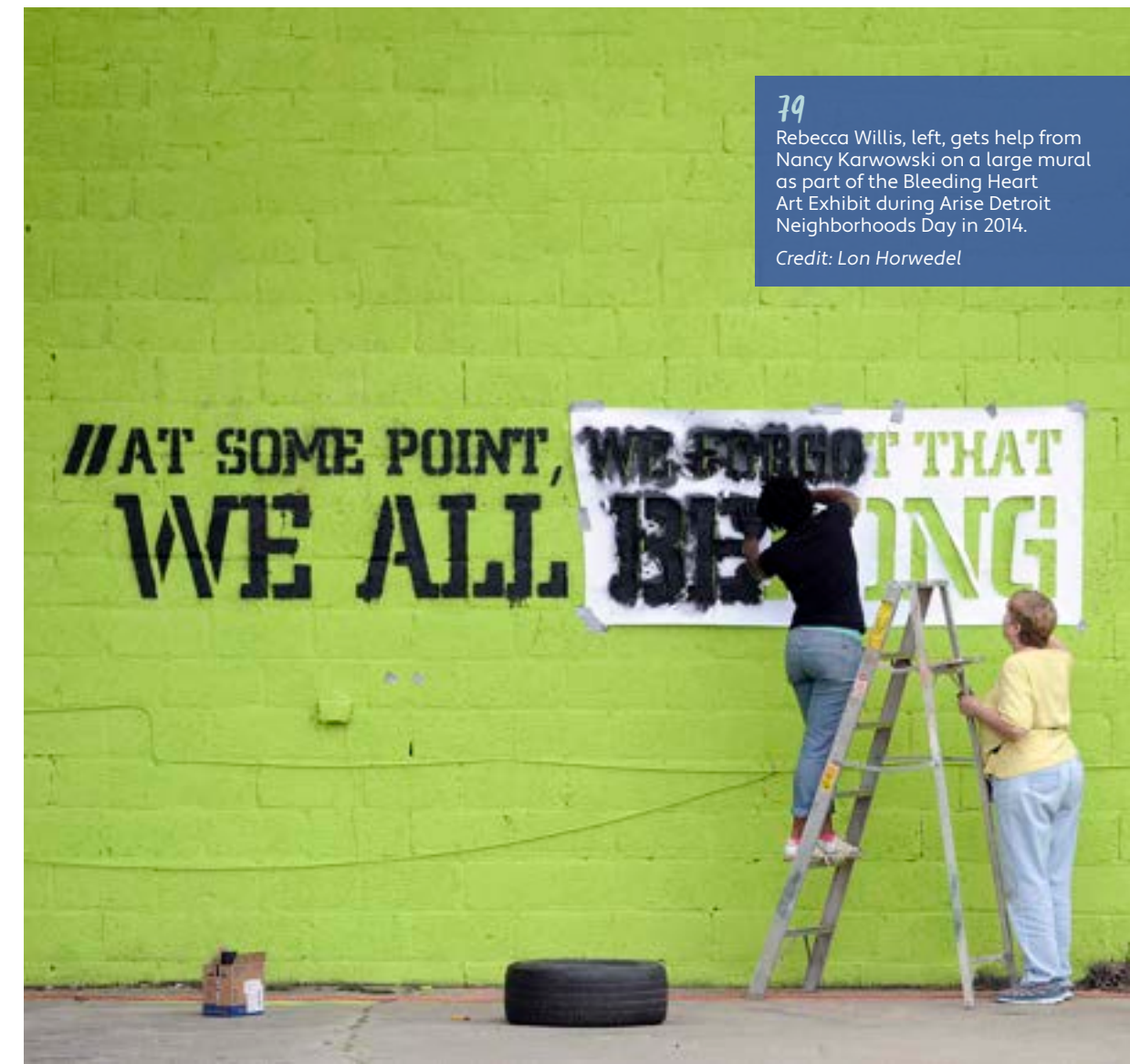
50 years. Before the board meeting wrapped, we had unanimous support for our pivot to the neighborhoods. And eight years on, we find ourselves continuing, deepening that work, learning from our neighborhood partners every step of the way."

**"AND EIGHT YEARS ON, WE FIND OURSELVES CONTINUING, DEEPENING THAT WORK, LEARNING FROM OUR NEIGHBORHOOD PARTNERS EVERY STEP OF THE WAY."**



**Wendy Lewis Jackson**

Managing Director, Kresge Detroit Program



79

Rebecca Willis, left, gets help from Nancy Karwowski on a large mural as part of the Bleeding Heart Art Exhibit during Arise Detroit Neighborhoods Day in 2014.

Credit: Lon Horwedel

## 80

2016

## Climate Resilience and Equitable Water Systems (CREWS)

### Environment Program

The connections between water, climate change and inequity are clear. However, for many years this intersection went unexplored. Kresge's Environment Program set out to change this in 2016 with a \$14 million investment in the Climate Resilient and Equitable Water Systems (CREWS) initiative. **Jalonne White-Newsome, Ph.D.**, senior director for environmental justice at the White House Council on Environmental Quality, reflects on launching CREWS during her tenure at Kresge.

"America's water systems have been in desperate need of repair for decades. As climate change brings more frequent and intense storms, low-income communities and people of color suffer the greatest impacts – as they are disproportionately vulnerable to flooding, urban heat island effects and skyrocketing utility rates.

"CREWS works to transform urban stormwater and wastewater systems to provide reliable, equitable and innovative services to communities. Today, the initiative involves more than 30 organizations including water utility leaders, community-based organizations, environmental justice nonprofits, academic and applied research institutions, artistic and cultural leaders, project developers, and funders.

"The tangled, interconnected history of water access, water infrastructure and water policy in this country has been complicated, and the fractures and brokenness of the system have been amplified by racism. Despite the challenges many inner-city neighborhoods face – from lead and polybutylene in pipes, to flooded homes, environmental injustice, sea-level rise and legacy pollution – the waves Kresge grantee partners are making to fight for environmental justice and water equity through the CREWS initiative can serve as a model for the country."

**"AS CLIMATE CHANGE BRINGS MORE FREQUENT AND INTENSE STORMS, LOW-INCOME COMMUNITIES AND PEOPLE OF COLOR SUFFER THE GREATEST IMPACTS."**



**Jalonne White-Newsome, Ph.D.**

Senior Director for Environmental Justice, White House Council on Environmental Quality



81

The Liberal Arts and Madame Cadillac buildings on the 53-acre Marygrove campus in northwest Detroit.

Credit: Jordan Garland

## 81

2016

## Marygrove Cradle-to-Career Educational Campus

### Detroit Program, Social Investment Practice

Facing significant financial challenges due in part to the low enrollment, Elizabeth Burns, Ph.D, then-president of Marygrove College, reached out to Kresge for help. Eight years later, the results of that simple call are hard to summarize. Marygrove now encompasses a newly built state-of-the-art early childhood center, a high school, an elementary school and college learning for students of the University of Michigan School of Education. **Sister Jane Herb**, chair of the Marygrove Conservancy, shares the story.

"Early in the conversation with Kresge, the topic of establishing a conservancy was raised and researched. The intent of such an establishment was so that some of the operational expenses of the campus would be covered by the newly established Marygrove Conservancy. The articles of incorporation for the Marygrove Conservancy and the by-laws were established in the fall of 2017. The initial Marygrove Conservancy Board was established with an equal number of members appointed by The Kresge Foundation and the IHM [Immaculate Heart of Mary] Sisters, with at-large members also chosen.

"With Kresge's financial assistance, Marygrove College received the technical support to determine how the college could turn the corner and become a viable institution. Unfortunately, with the assistance of various consultants who evaluated the financial position of the college and the enrollment, it was determined in August 2017 to close the undergraduate program. Efforts then turned to 're-opening' the graduate program. Despite tireless efforts, the decision to close the college was made in May 2019. Without the support of The Kresge Foundation, the IHM Sisters would have been faced with an empty campus and a 'for sale' sign on the property.



81  
 Graduates of the 2023 high school class of the School at Marygrove proudly display their diplomas.  
 Credit: Doug Coombe

“Concurrently, through Kresge’s efforts, the dream was born to establish a P-20 cradle-to-career educational program as part of the Marygrove Conservancy. After a good deal of conversation, the joint operating agreement by and among Detroit Public Schools Community District (DPSCD), University of Michigan (U-M), Starfish Family Services and the Marygrove Conservancy was signed in October 2018.

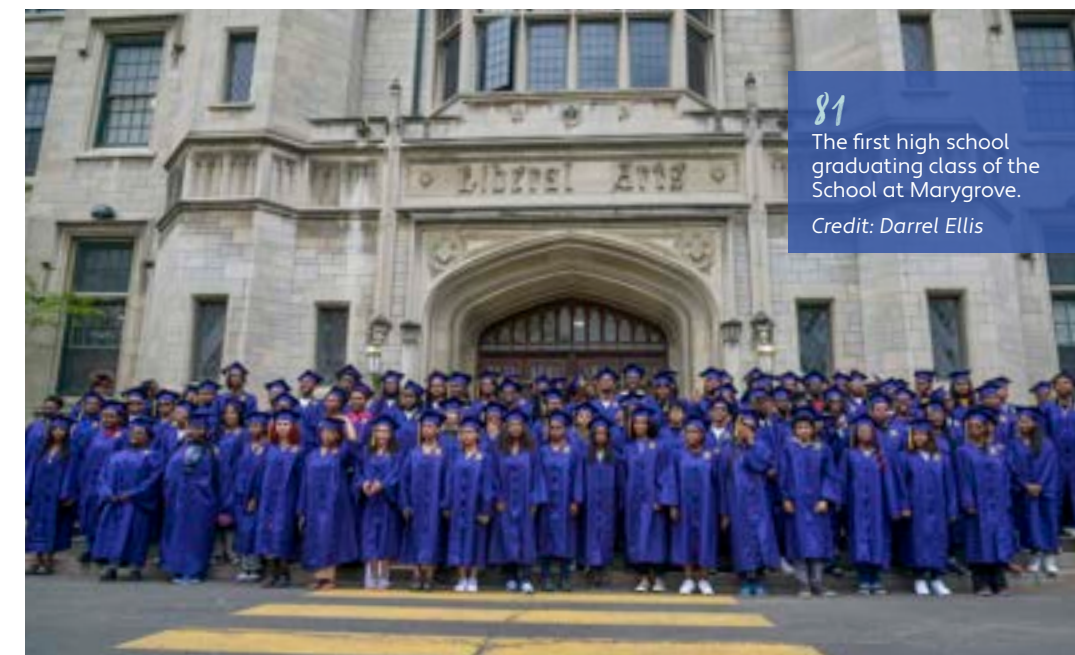
“Visiting the Marygrove campus today, one observes a campus that is alive with an early education center, a DPSCD elementary and high school with a commitment by the U-M to support and resource faculty members, creating an internship program. In the fall of 2024, an innovative program of U-M – Learning, Equity, and Problem Solving for the Public Good (LEAPS) – begins on campus. Various tenants round out the campus with all committed to the mission of the conservancy.

“The IHM Sisters established Marygrove College in 1927 with a focus on education and a commitment to the City of Detroit. The IHM Sisters are grateful to the partnership of The Kresge Foundation for their leadership in establishing the Marygrove Conservancy. In an entrustment covenant that was given to the conservancy, the IHM Sisters state: ‘May each person who benefits from programs and services of the Marygrove Conservancy be inspired to make transformative change in their communities, workplaces, and society through deep learning, creativity and imagination, active compassion for others, and life-long commitment to a just, humane and inclusive world.’”

## “VISITING THE MARYGROVE CAMPUS TODAY, ONE OBSERVES A CAMPUS THAT IS ALIVE.”



**Sister Jane Herb**  
 Chair, Marygrove Conservancy



81  
 The first high school graduating class of the School at Marygrove.  
 Credit: Darrel Ellis



# “ECONOMIC MOBILITY AND SHARED PROSPERITY ARE WIDELY SHARED GOALS, BUT ACHIEVING THEM REQUIRES LISTENING TO LOCAL VOICES.”



**Jennifer Bradley**

Senior Fellow, American Cities Program, The Kresge Foundation

82

2017

## Shared Prosperity Partnership

### American Cities Program

Kresge joined with the Brookings Metropolitan Policy Program, the Urban Institute and Living Cities and created the Shared Prosperity Partnership (SP2). SP2 applied the research, policy development, community engagement and implementation experience of the partner institutions to community-identified goals and challenges in eight U.S. cities.

Kresge Senior Fellow **Jennifer Bradley** shares her reflection.

“This initiative strengthened and accelerated local efforts to expand shared prosperity and increase economic mobility for communities and people of color. This collaboration focused on: engaging with cities to better understand the challenges to building a more inclusive local economy; working with local leaders to collaboratively determine if, where and how SP2 could provide meaningful support to advance shared prosperity; sharing what we learned both locally and nationally, to inform the broader field of urban practice. Participants also had access to national community development networks and Kresge grant dollars. When we saw promising models, we drew attention to them through publications, research, expert commentary and public forums, including a national forum in 2019 in Philadelphia.

“Economic mobility and shared prosperity are widely shared goals, but achieving them requires listening to local voices and delivering the right data and policy ideas for their specific aspirations. The SP2 collaboration challenged national funders, researchers and technical assistance providers to work in a more robust, interconnected way in place, guided by community priorities. We learned to work differently in place, and that new way of working continues to help cities solve big problems and embrace the huge opportunities.”

83

2017

## NextGen

### Human Services Program

Through the Next Generation (NextGen) initiative, Kresge supported cohorts of private nonprofit and public human services organizations committed to person-centered, outcomes-based, data-driven work that centers racial justice to advance multi-generational social and economic success for families and communities. The cohort members invested two years in designing and implementing innovations within their respective organizations, and created a new framework with concrete action steps, insights and ideas to help leaders as they work to amplify the agency, as well as the autonomy and dignity of people, families and communities.

NextGen organizations like Martha O’Bryan Center and Center for Urban Families (CFUF) Legacy Wealth Education have created several innovative initiatives.

“Beyond the Cliff” is a first-of-its-kind national collaborative of nonprofits, state and local governments, and stakeholders. The program helps families achieve economic prosperity and eliminates the benefits cliff, the situation that recipients of public benefits face when they earn a raise or get promoted and subsequently have their benefits reduced.

“As an anti-poverty organization, we believe families can rise out of poverty in one generation,” said Marsha Edwards, CEO and president of Martha O’ Bryan Center in Nashville, Tennessee. “We recognize that that has not been true in all places for all people. Eliminating the benefits cliff is an important step toward expanding the landscape of opportunity for all families.”

In Baltimore, CFUF’s suite of programs helps families build and protect generational wealth. “It is by strengthening families, providing the keys to income security and building intergenerational wealth that we realize a more fair and just society that allows all people to rise above systemic barriers to find success and opportunity,” said CFUF President and CEO Joseph T. Jones, Jr.



## 84

2017

## Opportunity Zones Advocacy

### Social Investment Practice

Opportunity Zones are a federal tax incentive marketed as a tool to drive investment and job creation in economically distressed communities. The tool, created in 2017, permits investors to defer capital gains taxes by investing in certain businesses or properties within a designated Opportunity Zone. Kresge's influence in the Opportunity Zones market came through a willingness to speak up about a lack of transparency and accountability baked into the tax incentive program, including testifying before a congressional committee. It also made a \$15 million guarantee to a socially aligned quality and outcomes framework (QOF) to create a proof point of a fund willing to agree to transparency and reporting measures beyond what the federal incentive required.

## 85

2017

## Urban Higher Education Ecosystem

### Education Program

Today, the idea that student success is underpinned by access to off-campus services such as housing, transit and childcare is widely acknowledged. However, in 2017, when the Education Program introduced a focus area to foster access to these services, it was treading new ground. This area of grantmaking was designed to help educational institutions broaden their perspective on how to support the success of students, particularly those from low-income backgrounds or who were first in their family to attend college.

Strategies included supporting research on how housing instability and food insecurity were affecting student success, and how many students were facing these challenges.

“... STUDENTS HAVE TO HAVE THEIR BASIC NEEDS MET IF THEY ARE GOING TO BE ABLE TO FOCUS WHILE IN SCHOOL.”



**Sara Goldrick-Rab**  
Senior Fellow, Education Northwest

As in so much of its work, Kresge took an ecosystem approach, helping colleges to form new cross-sector partnerships and to tap into the resources of organizations such as public housing authorities, food banks, transportation providers and childcare services.

“The idea is that colleges don't have to be social service agencies – they should be able to work with them,” said **Sara Goldrick-Rab**, a senior fellow at Education Northwest who was a grantee of the program in its early days.

She says that Kresge was one of the first funders to understand the idea that students are “humans first,” as she puts it. “It wasn't obvious to everyone at the time,” she said. “But they understood before most that students have to have their basic needs met if they are going to be able to focus while in school.”



85

Dillard University received a planning grant to lead a partnership of New Orleans-based colleges and transit agencies to identify and address transportation barriers to college student success.

## 86

2018

## Fresno

## American Cities Program and Others

While Fresno may seem worlds apart from Detroit, Memphis and New Orleans, a closer look reveals an unlikely connection forged by shared challenges. Each of these cities is working to address the ripple effect of deep social and economic scars that go beyond single interventions. They are also leaning into holistic approaches that tackle interconnected issues through data-driven strategies, community engagement and a long-term commitment to more equitable transformation.

For those reasons, the city became Kresge's fourth focus city in 2018. Its connection to Fresno began in 2011, when the Detroit Program partnered with Fresno through Strong Cities, Strong Communities (SC2) a multi-city initiative produced by the

86

Fresno residents attend the opening of the St. Rest + Food to Share Hub, a community food partnership that provides access to nutritious food for underserved communities.



federal government to increase coordination across federal agencies and provide technical assistance to help communities better access federal resources and navigate regulations.

“This collaboration laid the groundwork for some of the community development programs we see in Fresno today,” said Kresge American Cities Managing Director Chantel Rush Tebbe. “It transcended mere financial aid. It fostered a cross-city knowledge exchange network and a two-year fellowship program, both supported by Kresge’s Detroit Program. This investment allowed Detroit and Fresno to learn from each other’s successes and challenges. Detroit, with its experience in community development, urban planning and community engagement, shared its expertise with Fresno. In turn, Fresno’s agricultural know-how and focus on environmental sustainability offered valuable insights to Detroit.”

Since then, Kresge’s program teams have invested in Fresno in various forms and methods. In 2014, the Environment Program began supporting the Leadership Counsel for Justice & Accountability through its Climate Resilience and Urban Opportunity Initiative (page 100). A year later, the Fresh, Local & Equitable (FreshLo) initiative (page 108) awarded grant funding, provided technical assistance and convened 23 organizations from around the country.

FreshLo grantee Fresno Metro Ministry designed the “What’s Cooking Fresno?” incubator project along the city’s Blackstone Corridor to develop residents’ food business management and entrepreneurial skills. This project also included initial funds to purchase and renovate an abandoned building, the St. Rest + Food to Share Hub, which opened in May 2024 with development support from the foundation. In 2017, the Education Program and Lumina Foundation jointly selected Fresno to receive \$350,000 as part of a 17-community cohort of Talent Hubs.

The fuller understanding of the need, opportunities and potential partners in Fresno aligned with a desire inside Kresge to diversify the portfolio of places it supports in a deep way. The American Cities Program now maintains a consistent portfolio in Fresno spanning cross-sector planning and collaboration, community and economic development, and community organizing and advocacy. The team has worked to increase the capacity of the local community foundation, strengthen the community economic development ecosystem, layer support from national community development technical assistance providers, and invest in under-resourced, multi-racial base-building organizations.

87

2018

## Equitable Food Oriented Development

### Health Program

Equitable Food Oriented Development, or EFOD, is a community-anchored development strategy. It centers the food and agriculture projects and enterprises of Black, Indigenous and other people of color as vehicles for shared power, cultural expression and community asset building. While conventional food systems may unintentionally cause harm to communities through gentrification, displacement or extraction of local resources, EFOD instead fosters strong social capital networks, equitable asset development, increased civic engagement and decreased displacement. Through multi-year funding to the EFOD Collaborative and Fund, Kresge has helped support a grassroots movement seeking to build community power and bring deep, long-lasting change to the social, health and economic conditions of local communities.

88

2018

## Strategic Neighborhood Fund

### Detroit Program

Detroit's history-rich neighborhoods are filled with families, businesses and community organizations. Their success and vibrancy contribute to the city's resilience and foster a sense of resident pride. In 2016, the City of Detroit and Invest Detroit announced the Strategic Neighborhood Fund, a community-driven initiative aimed at empowering local neighborhoods by providing financial support for projects and initiatives. Kresge's more than \$12 million in contributions since 2018 to the \$130 million fund are focused on the Livernois-McNichols, Jefferson-Chalmers and Southwest neighborhoods. The goal is to ensure neighborhood organizations have the resources, support and recognition needed to be vital partners in neighborhood planning and development.



DETROIT PEOPLE'S FOOD CO-OP

87

The Detroit Food Commons development in Detroit's North End neighborhood houses the Detroit People's Food Co-op, a Black-led and community-owned grocery store that opened in May 2024.

Credit: Darrel Ellis

## 89

2018

## Operationalizing Equity in the Investment Industry

Kresge's Investment Office adopted a three-pronged strategy to ensure the department's alignment with the foundation's commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion. The strategy was developed after taking a close look at barriers confronting the investment industry: white men managed nearly 99% of assets under management while holding 90% of the senior money manager roles in the sector. And institutional investors – those managing the endowments of universities, foundations and pension plans – followed suit.

However, leading research showed that diverse teams made better decisions and that diverse-owned firms performed as well as, if not better than, their counterparts. So, the Investment Office focused its efforts on improving the team's decision-making by purposefully building a more diverse and inclusive staff; improving performance by diligently sourcing and partnering with diverse investment firms; and, advocating for broader DEI measurement and transparency within the investment industry. Over the past five years the team has made significant progress in all three areas, namely:

- **People:** There is significantly stronger gender and racial diversity representation within the Investment team, and pipeline partnerships have produced successful interns and new hires.
- **Portfolio:** The team reached its self-imposed 25% by 2025 goal one year early in January 2024, with 25.5% of US assets managed by firms where women and people of color held majority ownership.
- **Pulpit:** Members of the team have participated in dozens of events and publications advocating for broader diversity and demographic data collection in the industry.

“One of our tactics was to survey our current partners about the demographics of their teams,” said Kresge Chief Investment Officer John Barker. A partnership with the MacArthur Foundation and Lenox Park, a data analytics firm specializing in DEI, led to the development of a survey tool that has become the standard for the industry. In five years, the foundation has doubled the number of diverse-owned firms managing its US assets, and participation in the survey among Kresge investment managers has increased to 93%.

## 90

2019

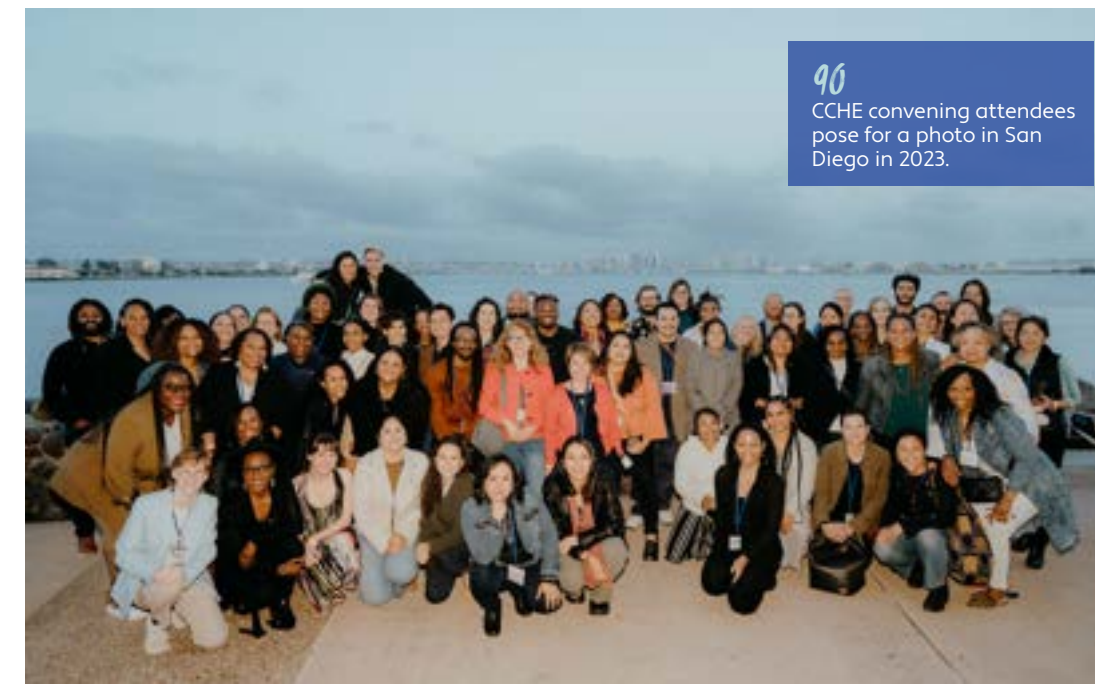
## Climate Change, Health & Equity (CCHE)

### Health and Environment Programs

The opportunity and ability to thrive – as individuals, families, communities and as a country – is in danger because of increasing climate instability. The impact is felt everywhere and is affecting community health in real ways right now. Risks are compounded for people and communities of color that have experienced generations of policies and practices that unfairly expose them to air and water pollution, compromising their health and well-being.

But progress is possible through listening to those most impacted by climate change. Kresge's Climate Change, Health & Equity initiative aims to build the capacity of health care and public health to promote equitable climate resilience practices, mobilize practitioners to engage in climate advocacy, and strengthen community-based leadership to accelerate implementation of policies that advance climate resilience and health equity. During the five-year, \$30 million initiative, partner organizations advanced change through a range of accomplishments, including promoting implementation and funding for climate change, health and equity solutions; advocating for equitable climate resilience policies; and expanding partnerships and collaboration across sectors.

“When we launched the Climate Change, Health & Equity initiative, we did so with the undeniable belief that climate change is the greatest public health threat of this century, affecting the air we breathe, water we drink, food we eat and where we live,” said Shamar Bibbins, a senior program officer in Kresge's Environment program. “The most effective solutions are designed and implemented by those who know their communities best. By working together with those who are closest to the problem, we can build climate resilience and advance policies and practices to proactively tackle this public health threat and improve people's lives.”



90

CCHE convening attendees pose for a photo in San Diego in 2023.

## 91

2019

## Valuing Equity

After long imbuing grantmaking work with the ideals of equity and justice, Kresge formally added a sixth foundation value of “Equity” to its values (alongside Partnership, Respect, Opportunity, Creativity and Stewardship). The foundation shared a statement that said in part: “Equity to us means that all people – regardless of race, ethnicity, age, gender, sexual orientation, religion, ZIP code, health and ability status, or any other consideration – have equal, inviolable dignity, value and opportunity to participate justly, fairly, and fully in all dimensions of civic and economic life ... to prosper ... and reach their full potential.”



91

Kresge's Alisia Taylor wears a T-shirt that includes the six foundation values: creativity, partnership, respect, stewardship, opportunity and equity.

Credit: Ryan Southen Photography

## 92

2019

## Community Investment Guarantee Pool

### Social Investment Practice

Few philanthropic foundations have staff members with experience making financial guarantees. As a tool, a non-cash guarantee can remove some risk in an investment project, allowing traditional investors such as banks to grow comfortable and put their money in. Guarantees can leverage millions of dollars of a foundation's balance sheet, without any upfront (or in many cases, ever) investment.

To encourage more foundations to use guarantees and help community development organizations find willing sources of risk mitigation for projects, Kresge incubated and helped launch the Community Investment Guarantee Pool (CGIP) in 2019. So far, it has unlocked \$237 million in capital for communities. Executive director **Jim Baek** reflects.

“From an investor perspective, having a vehicle like CIGP lift off from concept paper to having 17 guarantors shows what is possible. That we could set up this complicated arrangement with a new product in the form of credit enhancement, and find ways to work together to make good on those commitments, is a data point that shows us the level of collaboration possible between foundations.

“On the community side, we're seeing more supporting partners reach out to community development finance partners to be brave – to be experimental, to innovate and push the envelope in terms of what they can do with a little bit of credit enhancement. They're being more ambitious about what products they're offering. Having a bit of credit enhancement on their side is leading them to say, 'OK, if things don't go our way, we have some downside protection here.' And investees no longer have to go 'door-to-door' and waste time courting many different investors. It's a game-changer.”

“FROM AN INVESTOR PERSPECTIVE, HAVING A VEHICLE LIKE CIGP LIFT OFF FROM CONCEPT PAPER TO HAVING 17 GUARANTORS SHOWS WHAT IS POSSIBLE.”



**Jim Baek**

Executive Director, Community Investment Guarantee Pool

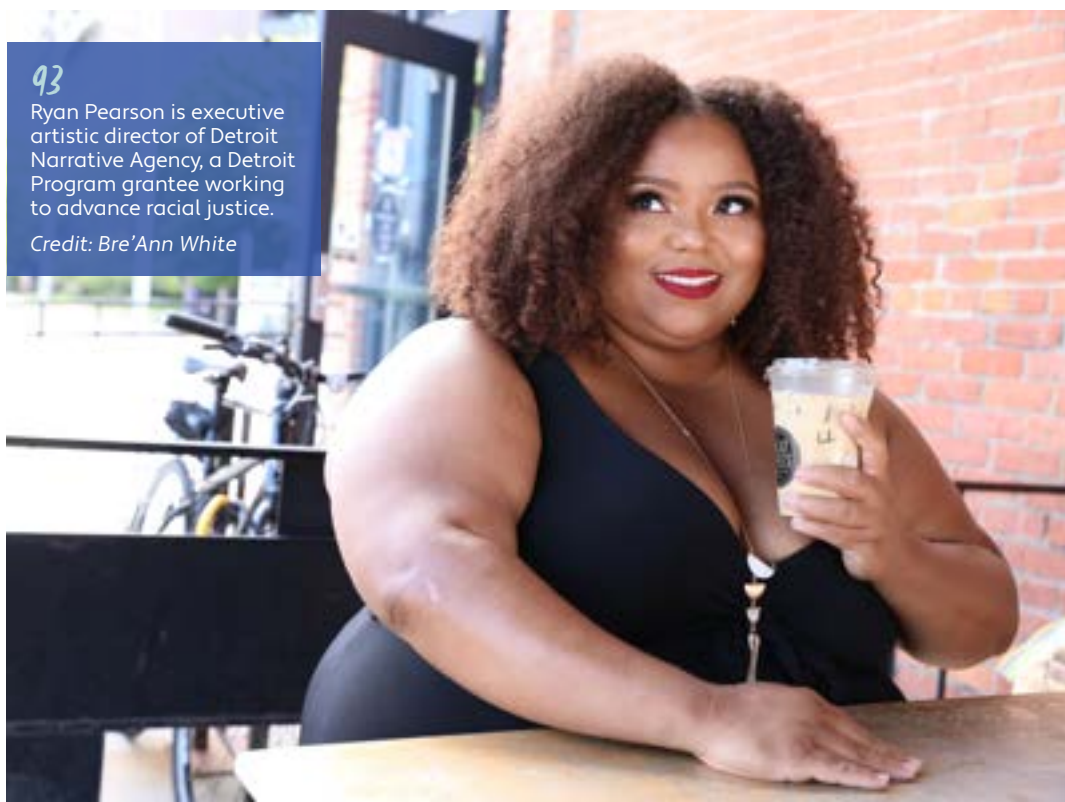
2020

## Racial Justice Response

In a sweeping pledge to advance its long-term commitment to equity and opportunity, Kresge announced in November 2020 a \$30 million grant commitment to support racial justice organizations working in cities across the United States. With investments in nearly 70 nonprofits, Kresge supported national organizations working to advance racial justice and community-led organizations in Detroit, New Orleans, Memphis and Fresno seeking to confront racial inequities in place, and ignite deeper community organizing and engagement. The grant package – a response to the racial justice movement that emerged after the murder of George Floyd – was grounded in four principles:

- Focusing on organizations working on the ground.
- Concentrating resources on organizations led by people of color.
- Supporting wealth creation and small business development in neighborhoods of color.
- Taking a long-term view.

“This [package of grants] marks a pivotal institutional milestone,” Kresge President and CEO Rip Rapson wrote. “The scale and scope of this suite of grants underscore Kresge’s belief that the foundation’s efforts to expand opportunity in American cities require that we directly, unambiguously and strategically address longstanding and insidiously persistent systemic racism and inequality. By adding to the foundation’s existing portfolio of anti-racism efforts – both inside and outside the building – these grants represent a sharpened focus and intensification of Kresge’s longstanding racial justice and racial equity grantmaking.”



93

Ryan Pearson is executive artistic director of Detroit Narrative Agency, a Detroit Program grantee working to advance racial justice.

Credit: Bre'Ann White



93

Remeta Hicks-Montgomery (left) and Farhana Aktar of Detroit Action, an organization fighting for economic and social justice for working-class Detroiters, in a 2022 photo.

Credit: Detroit Action

## 94

2020

## Climate Justice Intermediaries

### Environment Program

One challenge for large foundations is reaching small grassroots organizations with technical support and grant funds. Kresge has found an effective strategy in funding grantmaking intermediaries that have deep accountability to the communities they serve. Environment Program Managing Director Lois DeBacker shares her take on what that has looked like.

“It’s particularly important when it comes to advancing our environmental justice agenda. Organizations that we fund in this mold include Climate & Clean Energy Equity Fund, the Hive Fund for Climate & Gender Justice, The Solutions Project, the Climate Justice Alliance, Community Climate Shift Fund and Collectrify. Many of these organizations were established with an explicit commitment to provide resources to groups working on the frontlines of climate change. They reach smaller organizations that other philanthropies often miss. So, they’re really important players in the landscape.

“In addition to grant dollars, these intermediaries also offer technical assistance to grassroots organizations, whether on communications or policy advocacy. For example, the Climate & Clean Energy Equity Fund, one of the largest, has a policy accelerator. As they’re funding groups that are working on policy change – often at the state level – they’re doing some of the policy analysis work in their own shop. They can provide technical assistance to the groups working on the ground, which is a big help for them.

“Kresge is constantly working to expand its ability to reach these organizations directly. But [intermediary] organizations are critical. They have created a vehicle for funders that have challenges making smaller grants themselves. It lets their money reach the ground.”

## 95

2020

## COVID-19 Response

### All Programs

In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, Kresge swiftly offered grantees unprecedented flexibility and financial support so that national and place-based nonprofits could best respond to community needs. Then, across seven rounds of grantmaking, Kresge invested an estimated \$17 million in total grant support to equip more than 150 national and local nonprofit and government organizations with the resources required to meet the challenges of this unprecedented moment. Kresge also committed a \$2 million program-related investment to support Detroit nonprofit access to Paycheck Protection Program loans, bringing the institution’s total grant and social investments to nearly \$19 million.

95

Cars drive along a memorial route in Detroit’s Belle Isle Park lined with photos of city residents who died of COVID-19.

Credit: Ryan Southen  
Photography



96

2020

## Closing the Women's Racial Wealth Gap

### Human Services Program

Closing the racial wealth gap for women of color is critical to addressing inter-generational poverty. Guaranteed income supports families to build well-being and wealth while centering their ability to make decisions about their money. Kresge was the first national foundation to support Springboard to Opportunities' Magnolia Mother's Trust in Jackson, Mississippi. The initiative provides monthly \$1,000 no-strings-attached cash payments to African American mothers with low incomes in Jackson. Building on the trust's momentum, Springboard recently took several Black mother entrepreneurs on a learning trip to engage with female entrepreneurs globally who have used financial investments to create thriving businesses for themselves and their families.

Currently in its fifth cohort, the Magnolia Mother's Trust is now the

**LONGEST RUNNING**

guaranteed income initiative in the country.

97

2021

## ARPA implementation

### American Cities and Detroit Programs

One way Kresge extends the impact of its grantmaking is by helping cities to harness the dollars available from the federal government through programs such as the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA).

While unprecedented sums of money were available through ARPA – which was designed to address the economic fallout from the COVID-19 pandemic – it was not easy for all cities to access the funds. Government money often comes with complex application processes and strings attached. Even after the money is received, it takes sophisticated implementation infrastructure to ensure it reaches the right places.

It was for this reason that the foundation made grants to help cities identify community priorities, and make plans for absorbing and implementing the dollars. Kresge covered various costs from planning processes, studies and consultations, to convenings of community organizations and federal agencies, as well as efforts to inform local officials of what the funding entailed and who was eligible.

“The enormous amount of funds, the speed with which the money was going to be programmed and spent, and the needs many cities had presented an opportunity and imperative for outside groups to help,” explains Jennifer Bradley, a senior fellow supporting the foundation's American Cities Program.

98

2021

## All in on Climate Equity

### All Programs

By 2021, Kresge had supported efforts to address climate change for more than 15 years. It was around this time that it refined its strategy to help cities combat and adapt to climate change while advancing racial and economic justice.

“The foundation began to explicitly address the inequitable impacts of climate change on low-wealth communities and communities of color,” said Lois DeBacker, managing director of Kresge's Environment Program. “We began to prioritize ensuring organizations that authentically represented the needs, interests and knowledge of such communities had access to and influence in decision-making venues related to climate change.”

Several new initiatives and celebrated key milestones followed:

- Kresge became one of the first national foundations to join the Climate Funders Justice Pledge, a campaign created in 2021 to challenge the nation's top funders to be more transparent and commit at least 30% of funding to Black, Indigenous and people of color-led groups.
- In 2022, the foundation established an “all-of-Kresge” approach to integrate consideration of climate change into all program and operations strategies.
- The Equitable and Just Energy Transition (EJET) initiative launched in 2023, working to facilitate an urban energy transition that eliminates carbon emissions while building power for low-wealth communities and communities of color.

“We recognize that the severity of climate change, and communities' efforts to prepare for its effects, will shape the success and durability of the work we support across each of Kresge's programs,” said Kresge President and CEO Rip Rapson. “As we recommit to expanding equity and opportunity in cities across America, we also commit to elevating and integrating more deeply issues of climate change into all aspects of the foundation's work for decades to come.”

She describes Kresge's strategy as one of providing the mortar in between the bricks. “When ARPA came up, it was clear this money was much needed – but money doesn't spend itself,” she says. “So, we were helping fit these large building blocks together.”

## 99

2022

## CHARGE Partnership and Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund Support

American Cities, Environment and Health Programs, and Social Investment Practice

As billions of dollars funnel into communities through the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund, ensuring communities with low wealth have projects ready for investment is critical. To that end, Kresge has invested millions in organizations that bring technical knowledge and project development capacity to places traditional solar markets overlook. Community Health Access to Resilient Green Energy (CHARGE) helps Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) transition to clean, resilient and affordable energy. Together, the National Association of Community Health Centers, Capital Link and Collective Energy offer education, assessment, design, installation and financing options to make clean and reliable energy easy and affordable for health centers, allowing FQHCs to focus on providing quality care without fear of power outages.



100

Signage welcoming guests to the Detroit Institute of Arts for the Kresge at 100 centennial celebration on June 11, 2024.

Credit: Cybelle Codish



100

The Cass Tech Marching Band kicks off the Detroit & the American City Symposium on June 11, 2024.

Credit: Lon Horwedel

## 100

2024

## Kresge at 100: A Century of Impact, a Future of Opportunity

On June 11, 2024, The Kresge Foundation reached a monumental milestone: its centennial anniversary. This significant occasion was celebrated with a series of events that highlighted the foundation's rich history and brought together partners to contemplate a vision for the future of cities.

### A Night to Remember: The Centennial Celebration

The centennial celebration took place at Detroit's iconic Detroit Institute of Arts and included 500 guests including various dignitaries and foundation partners, grantees, staff and trustees. The event featured President Barack Obama, Detroit Mayor Mike Duggan, and performances from noteworthy local Detroit artists. Obama joined Kresge President and CEO Rip Rapson for a fireside chat about how cities serve as economic engines and what gives Obama hope for the future.

"What I think has been exciting about Kresge is it hasn't always played it safe, because it does have to adapt to new circumstances and new opportunities," Obama said. "I think that too often philanthropies are cautious. In some cases, this is out of good motives – we want to be good stewards of the money that's been bequeathed to us. We want to make sure that it's not wasted. But over time, [a model of giving can] become stale. It becomes brittle. It funds the same things over and over again. What Kresge has been willing to do is to say, we'll take some calculated risks, and we're going to use these resources to jumpstart people coming together to change their surroundings. We need more of that."

"Kresge has had so many seminal chapters in our storied history, but hosting President Barack Obama clearly ranks among our institution's deepest honors," said Rapson. "President Obama has long made the case for cities as engines of innovation and culture ... [He] cares deeply about American cities and their role in our civic fabric, our democracy and our economy. [He] was the ideal honored guest

at an event that celebrated Kresge's history but also the power and promise of our country's cities."

In keeping with Detroit's reputation as a preeminent artistic and cultural center, the event featured an eclectic array of performances by local artists including Thornetta Davis, the Detroit Youth Choir and Marcus Elliot.

### Detroit & The American City Symposium: A Vision for Urban Transformation

Coinciding with the centennial, Kresge also invited 300 guests to a daytime event, the "Detroit & The American City Symposium." The event convened nonprofit leaders, urban planners, policymakers, and community advocates to explore the future of American cities with Detroit serving as a case study. The discussions looked to the past to inform a reimagining of the future, celebrated Detroit's culture, and explored how to invest in access to opportunity for all – collectively painting a picture of joy and healing for Detroit's future.

Panelists included Michigan Lt. Gov. Garlin Gilchrist, Oscar-winning production designer Hannah Beachler, filmmaker dream hampton, and a host of Detroit nonprofit leaders. This was one of several major convenings Kresge hosted to bring partners together to reflect and plan for the next 100 years.

### Celebrating History: The Detroit Historical Society Kresge Exhibit

In May 2024, the Detroit Historical Society unveiled an exhibit showcasing Kresge's century-long legacy. The exhibit, which will remain open through 2024, includes an immersive journey through Kresge's history featuring artifacts, photographs, and interactive displays. The display emphasizes key initiatives and partnerships that have defined Kresge's impact over the years, including investments in community development, higher education, health, human services and the arts.

### An American Philanthropy: Kresge's 100 Years of Service

A short film screened at the celebration and the exhibit chronicles the full history and features more than a dozen partners, leaders and Kresge family representatives.

SCAN THE QR CODE  
TO READ MORE  
ABOUT THE EVENT



SCAN THE QR CODE  
TO WATCH NOW



SCAN THE QR CODE  
TO WATCH NOW



THE  
KRESGE  
FOUNDATION  
EST. 1924

**“KRESGE HAS BEEN WILLING TO ... TAKE SOME CALCULATED RISKS ... USE THESE RESOURCES TO JUMPSTART PEOPLE COMING TOGETHER TO CHANGE THEIR SURROUNDINGS. WE NEED MORE OF THAT.”**

– Barack Obama, 44th President of the United States



100

Kresge's Rip Rapson holds a fireside chat with President Barack Obama at the June 11, 2024, Kresge at 100 centennial celebration.

Credit: Cybelle Codish

# CONCLUSION

Kresge's first 100 years of service to community are only the beginning. With a mandate to exist into perpetuity, the foundation will continue to explore ways to expand equity and opportunity in America's cities for generations to come. In a final letter, Sebastian S. Kresge's great-granddaughter, former Kresge Trustee Cynthia Kresge, shares her family's view on her ancestor's legacy.

## One Hundred Years Later, a Founder's Entrepreneurial Spirit Lives On

By Cynthia Kresge, Former Board Member,  
Great-Granddaughter of Sebastian S. Kresge

My great-grandfather, Sebastian S. Kresge, exhibited many traits that today would likely label him as an "entrepreneur." He was raised with strong convictions for hard work and self-reliance. As a boy, he opportunistically turned his bee-raising hobby into a profitable business with the goal of earning enough money to continue his education beyond the eighth grade, instead of managing the family's eastern Pennsylvania farm.

After business school, he was motivated to work as a teacher, a bookkeeper, an insurance agent, a grocery store clerk and a traveling tinware salesman. He closely observed aspects of the various professions and tucked away the knowledge for the future.

By the time he entered the retail field his good sense for business, coupled with a respect for the average customer as well as his employees, powered his enterprise to be a success. He didn't invent the five-and-ten-cent store concept, but he is widely known for his creativity to perfect it. He brought merchandise out from behind the counter to make it accessible for customers to touch and feel goods before making a purchase. And with savvy marketing skills, he took out playful ads in daily newspapers to lure in customers long before his competition followed suit.

Some would rightfully say that Sebastian was quirky: He was known for his acute thriftiness and as a devoutly religious man; he didn't smoke, drink or play cards; and he fervently supported the prohibitionist movement in the 1920s.

Sebastian seeded his entrepreneurial spirit into the namesake foundation he established in 1924. Similar to his contemporaries in other industries – finance, railroads, steel, oil and even chocolate – who also set up charitable trusts around this time, Sebastian established his perpetual foundation to "promote the well-being of mankind." His desire was that these resources would increase opportunity for his fellow men and women and help improve their lot in life.

Grantmaking in the earliest days was typically directed toward higher education institutions, aid to disadvantaged women and children, and other causes that the trustees supported. But entrepreneurial success typically comes from filling a gap in the market, and The Kresge Foundation began to do exactly that.

As educational, health, religious and cultural institutions sought to serve an expanding American population, the foundation's grantmaking transitioned to help those organizations build and expand their facilities domestically and abroad.

My grandfather Stanley, Sebastian's eldest son, was destined to join both the business operations and ultimately the foundation. He began as a stock boy; after college he served as a loyal S.S. Kresge Company executive for 37 years and a foundation trustee for a whopping 55 years. But there was no expectation for subsequent generations to work for the company or serve the foundation. My father, Bruce, and his siblings freely pursued their own career aspirations. Only after he had a family of his own and an established career as a physician did my father join the foundation as a trustee – the same year that his grandfather Sebastian died at age 99.

As an independent foundation, there was no governance requirement that a Kresge family member stay involved with the organization. But as the end of Bruce's term approached, in an effort to encourage Sebastian's descendants to remain involved, the board chose to reserve one trustee seat for a member of the family. Since 1999, my three sisters and I have sequentially served a term as a trustee; our youngest brother Scott joined the board in 2023 as the current family representative. During these years we have been privileged to help steward the foundation and direct its necessary evolution to confront the issues facing today's society with a sense of urgency, while committing to America's cities for the long term.

In this centennial year, my family is often asked what Sebastian would make of the foundation today. Would he recognize the organization and approve of its grantmaking strategy? Would he see his directive to promote human progress alive and well in its work? Would he be proud of the impact the foundation has made and support its trajectory?

Having had the privilege of a front-row seat to the work and organizational transformation, my answer is a resounding yes. I believe Sebastian would be pleased that his entrepreneurial spirit is alive and well. He would see a creative organization that doesn't shy away from complicated problems or from taking risks. I believe he would fully embrace that everyone, through hard work and perseverance, should have the opportunity to succeed in life. But most importantly, I think he would appreciate that the foundation has adhered to his original commitments, which were to use his wealth to promote human progress and make the world a better place than he found it.



**Cynthia Kresge**

Former Board Member  
Great-Granddaughter of Sebastian S. Kresge

“DURING THESE YEARS WE HAVE BEEN PRIVILEGED TO HELP STEWARD THE FOUNDATION ... WHILE COMMITTING TO AMERICA'S CITIES FOR THE LONG TERM.”

– Cynthia Kresge



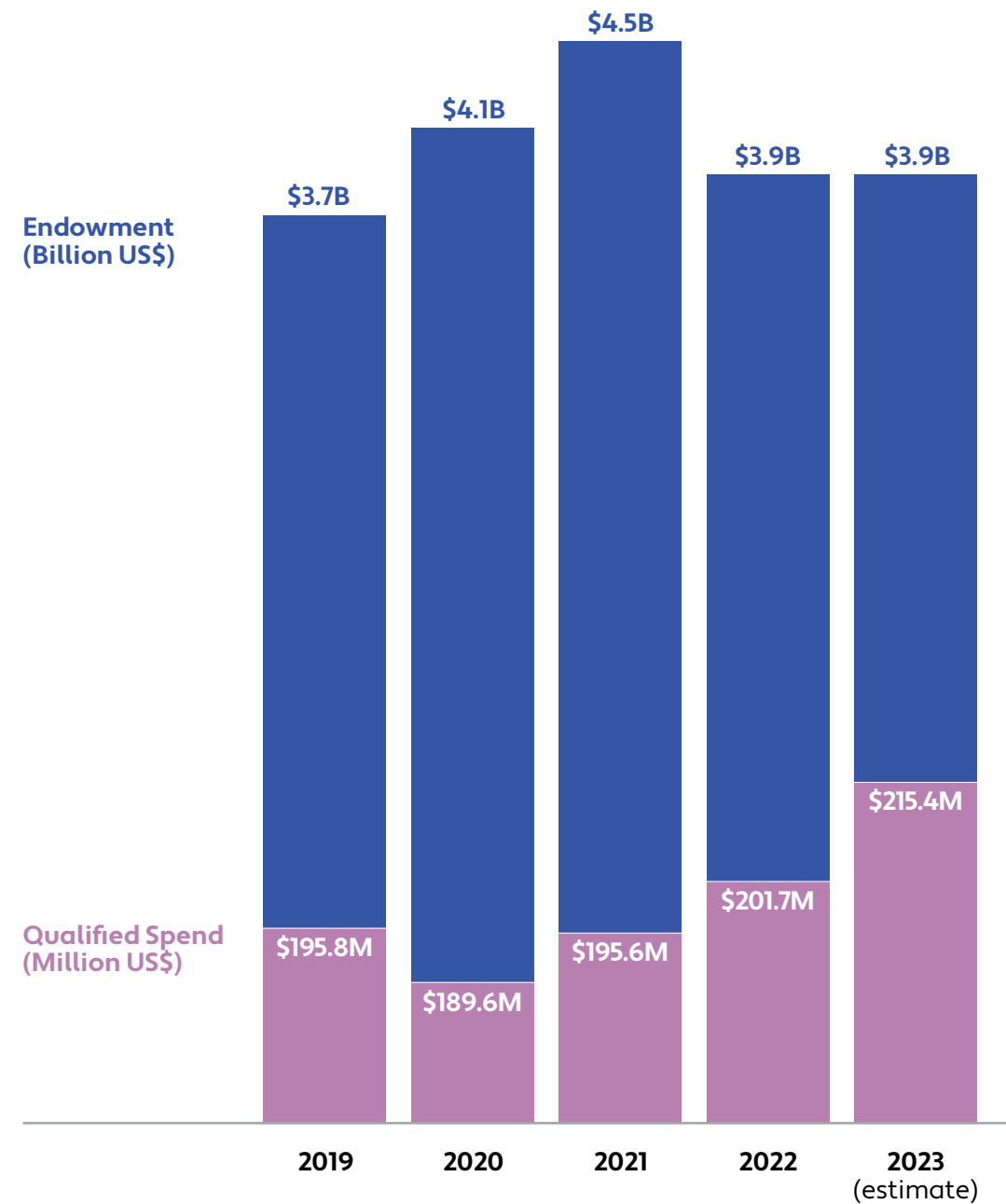
Cynthia Kresge, great-granddaughter of Kresge founder Sebastian Kresge, speaks at the Detroit Historical Museum in May 2024, at the opening of an exhibit honoring Kresge's 100 years.

Credit: Ryan Southen Photography

# 2023 Financials

Our primary investment objective is to preserve and grow our endowment by generating returns greater than our spending on grants, social investments, administrative costs and inflation. We believe measuring our performance over market cycles of at least five years is appropriate. For the five years ending December 31, 2023, the endowment returned 7.4% annually, below our spending plus inflation target of 9.6%.

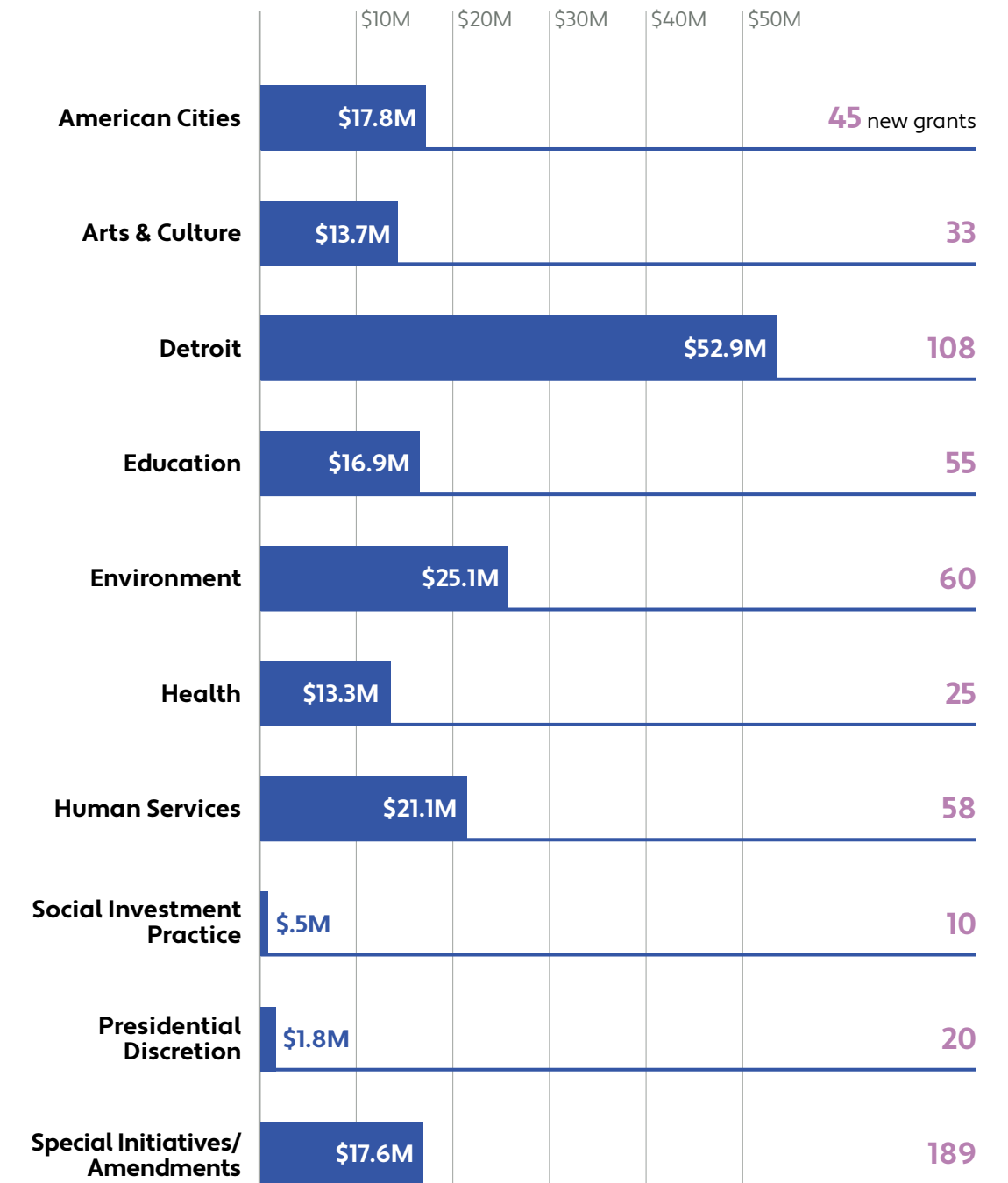
## Endowment & Qualified Spend 2019-2023



SCAN THE QR CODE TO VISIT KRESGE'S GRANT DATABASE



## Total New Grant Commitments



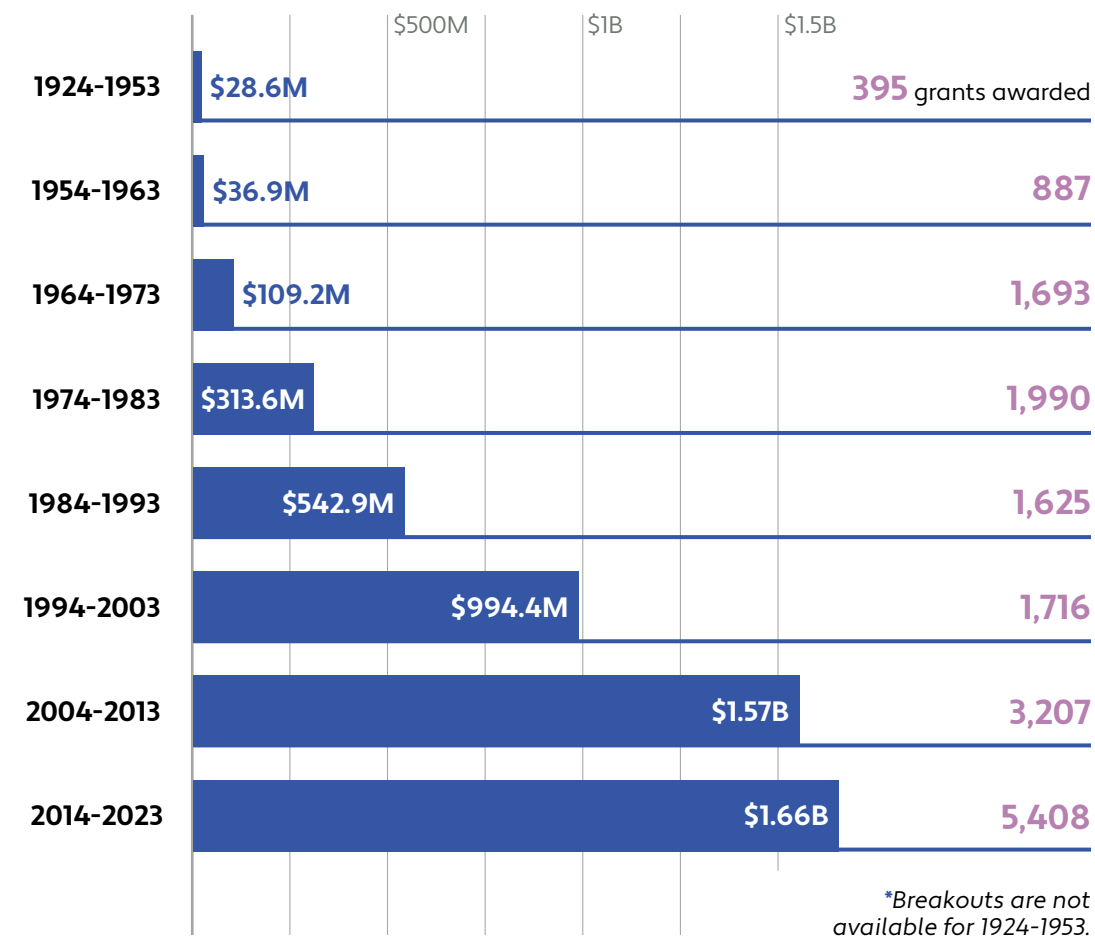
### TOTAL GRANT APPROVALS

\$180,804,374.15

603 grants

# By the Numbers: Historical Grantmaking

## Number and Value of Grants Awarded by Decade\*



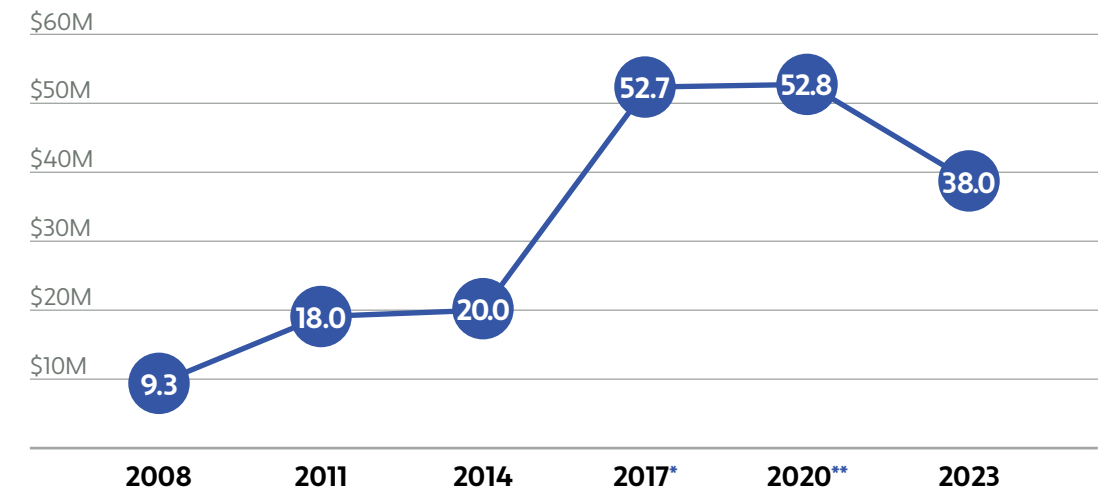
In its first 100 years, Kresge has awarded more than 16,500 grants totaling **\$5.1 BILLION** and has made 152 social investments with commitments totaling more than **\$509 MILLION.**

The charts on the following page show historical activity related to the foundation's social investment work, which uses tools like program-related investments, guarantees and equity investments to advance program strategies. This work was introduced in 2008 and has grown in size as the foundation – and the impact investing field – advanced in sophistication.

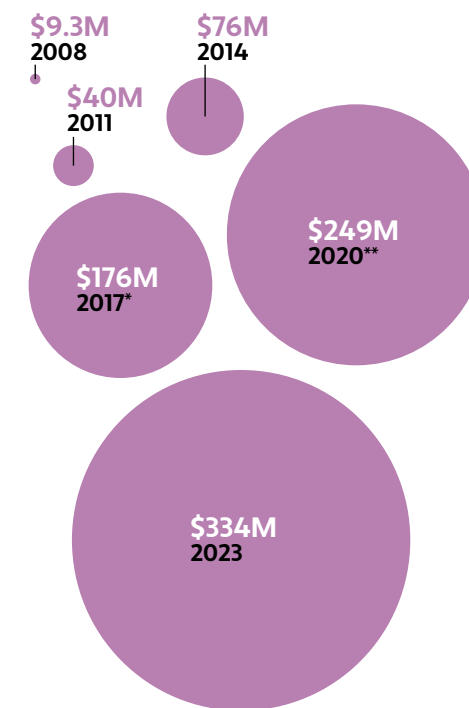
**Yearly Amount Committed** shows the dollar figure of all social investments committed in a given year. When investees draw on those commitments (or if they ever do) varies from investment to investment. **Total Active Portfolio Size** shows how the size and scope of the social investment work and the team's portfolio grew over time, which has likewise increased portfolio management complexity. And **Yearly Leverage**, while an imprecise measure, tries to put a figure on how catalytic Kresge's investments have been by tracking other dollars invested as a result of the foundation's commitment.

## 2008-2023 Kresge Social Investments

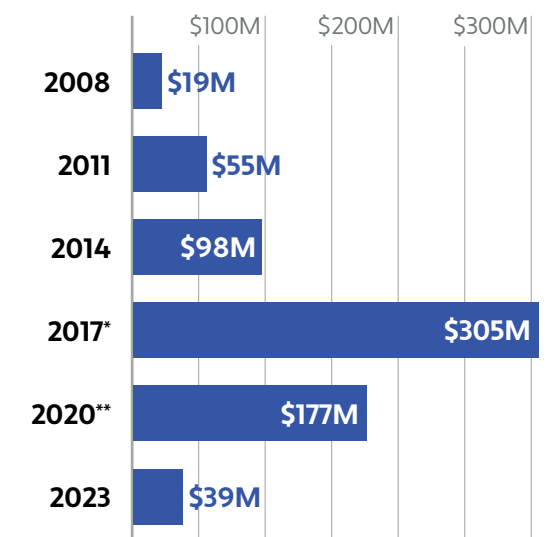
Yearly Amount Committed



Total Active Portfolio Size



Yearly Leverage



\*A special initiative called Kresge Community Finance created a unusually high number of investments.

\*\*Guarantees to the Marygrove Conservancy and the end of the foundation's \$350 million commitment contributed to high volume.

# Credits

**Editor: Krista Jahnke,**  
Communications Manager,  
The Kresge Foundation

**Creative Director:**  
**Alejandro Herrera,**  
Senior Graphic Designer,  
The Kresge Foundation



## The Kresge Foundation External Affairs and Communications Team

**Kate Boswell,**  
Communications Assistant

**David Carrig,**  
Digital Media Specialist

**W. Kim Heron,** Senior  
Communications Officer

**Christine Jacobs,**  
Deputy Director

**Jennifer Kulczycki,** Director

**Kate McLaughlin,** Senior  
Communications Officer

**Tracey Pearson,**  
Communications Officer

**Kaniqua Welch,**  
Communications Officer



## Design and Production Brevity & Wit

**Sophie Greenbaum**  
Senior Visual Designer

**Acacia Betancourt**  
Creative Director

## Art Team



**Simon Arizpe**  
Paper Engineer



**Justine Allenette Ross**  
Illustrator

## Print Team



**ULitho**  
Ann Arbor, Mich.



**Structural Graphics**  
Essex, Conn.

## External Writing Team



**Jen DeMoss**



**Sarah Murray**



**Lindsay Keener**

## Copy Editing



**Jeremy Verdusco**

*All photo credits are denoted on  
their respective pages.*





THE  
**KRESGE**  
FOUNDATION  
EST. 1924

3215 W. Big Beaver Road  
Troy, MI 48084  
[kresge.org](http://kresge.org)