

The Sarah Forslund Fund for Environmental Leadership

December 2, 2020

Dear Friend,

Whew...2020...not what most of us anticipated.

Amidst the range of personal, national & worldwide challenges I have been deeply reminded of our interdependence.

The pandemic alone clarified how we so depend on the folks in our orbit – be it literally in our neighborhood or our larger community. As we lost the benefits of the impromptu gatherings, chit chats with favorite store clerks, office mates, service providers and of course regular face to face connection with our dear loved ones, the value of the others in our life became so vividly clear.

While the stress of the pandemic is evident all around us, at moments it has also brought out the best in us. Folks doing errands for their vulnerable neighbors, investing in local farms & businesses in unprecedented numbers and ringing bells for healthcare workers—so much love shown.

For our small farm, it was the handwritten notes of appreciation that so deeply touched us and buoyed our spirits. That shared sense of purpose, care and understanding that we all need each other helped us push through.

It is that same depth of community care that Sarah embodied and used to inspire so many of us to rise to the needs and challenges of our world.

Those needs are just laid bare it seems this year, in our neighborhoods, states, country and across the world. The scope of need can make it feel overwhelming at times, but remembering Margaret Mead's famous quote, "*Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has,*" reminds us that each action does matter.

The Sarah Forslund Fund for Environmental Leadership is guided not only by the memory and tenacity of Sarah, but also by her local organizing approach. We invest in groups that are making a difference in their community and that our grants will buoy, giving them both a financial boost, but also inspiration from the recognition of their impact.

My Governor just launched a *#Vermont Lights the Way* campaign using holiday lights to remind each other that there are brighter days ahead and that we are here for each other. That sentiment is exactly how I have seen Sarah's Fund over the past 18 years. Out of a terrible tragedy and some very dark days, came the light of not only the grants and support that have been provided to dozens of organizations, but carrying forward within each of us her drive towards a more just world.

We hope you and your family are finding your way through these challenging times and can continue to be part of the Sarah Forslund Fund lighting the way to a just and healthy future.



Contributions to the Sarah Forslund Fund for Environmental Leadership can be made via check using the enclosed envelope. Alternatively, you may go online to the following link and view a short video, donate, and/or easily share the Fund's message with others who may be interested and inspired: www.sierrafund.org/sarah-forslund-fund/donate.

With Appreciation,

Laura Olsen
Sarah Forslund Fund Board Chair
Regenerative Farmer, Green Mountain Girls Farm
Green Corps '93 Alum

About our 2020 Grantees



[Virginia Conservation Network](#) is a resource for over 125 Network Partners statewide, and a constant conservation presence in Virginia's Capitol. The organization and its staff focus on strengthening the conservation community as a whole and winning environmental victories that benefit all Virginians.



[Utah's Place](#) This year, we moved from our usual 100% focus on "environmental" issues to have one of our grants go to Utah's Place, which serves homeless individuals and families, by bringing them into a circle of community caring that offers shelter, sustenance, medical care, advocacy, opportunity, dignity, and hope as we assist them in transitioning from homelessness to housing.

This grant recognizes the extreme challenges this year, Sarah's love for Utah Phillips, and the clear need to help folks meet basic needs before they can have the space to be full participants in their community.



[Green Corps](#) trains organizers, provides field support for critical environmental campaigns, and graduates organizers who possess the skills, temperament and commitment to fight and win tomorrow's environmental battles. This year they have also learned how to adapt with grace, perseverance, and flexibility to this brave new world.