

As Popularity of Giving Circles has Tripled, Historic Gathering of American Giving Circle Networks Co-Designs Vision for Scaling & Strengthening the Movement Further

Seattle, Washington (April, 2019)– Supported by a lead grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and 19 other funders, 82 participants from dozens of American giving circles and giving circle networks came together for a historic gathering in Seattle, Washington to connect with and learn from each other, and to build a vision for amplifying, strengthening and scaling giving circles across the United States.

Recent studies by the Collective Giving Research Group demonstrates that giving circles have [exploded in popularity](#) in America, and that they offer a way to [meaningfully engage people](#) in giving and in investing in their communities. A recent report from the Lilly School of Philanthropy found that giving circles tripled in number from 2007 to 2017, to 1,500, and have donated as much as \$1.29 billion in that time.

“Giving circles are a major part of the future of American philanthropy,” said Marsha Morgan, chair of the Community Investment Network, one of the 5 networks co-leading the initiative. “Neighbors, friends, family, church and synagogue members - these are all ‘everyday givers.’ People are coming together, pooling their money, networks, and expertise, and investing in the change they want to make in the world. Giving circles are democratizing and diversifying philanthropy, and engaging tens of thousands of people in shaping their communities.”

The gathering marked a milestone within a year-long “co-design” process for the giving circle movement, shepherded by five Giving Circle Networks: Amplifier (a network of circles inspired by Jewish values), Asian Women Giving Circle, Catalist (formerly the Women’s Collective Giving Grantmakers Network), Community Investment Network (a network of African American circles), and the Latino Community Foundation (a network of Latinx circles). The co-design process is engaging dozens of giving circle leaders, networks, and stakeholders to collectively design ways to strengthen and expand the giving circle movement.

The process itself reflects the collaborative spirit of giving circles: dozens of diverse stakeholders from across the giving circle movement, from different communities and affinity groups, with different funding areas and approaches, are joining forces to design the common strategy and tactics needed to support the growth and sustainability of giving circles nationwide. Together, participants represented thousands of people already in giving circles who believe in the power of collective giving and are changing the face and the future of philanthropy.

“My favorite part of the gathering was hearing the stories of hope and impact that so many giving circle leaders shared about their communities,” said Paula Liang, Chair Elect of Catalist, a network of 68 women’s funding groups. “There is a rich history of generosity and collective action in all of our communities and throughout American history, and this project can help us move that work forward while opening it up to so many more people. Joining a giving circle makes your giving more informed, more influential, and more impactful.”

Giving Circle membership also leads to greater civic engagement. Dr. Anthony C. Hood, a member of the Birmingham Change Fund giving circle and Director of Civic Innovation at the University of Alabama at Birmingham, told the story of the current Mayor of the City of Birmingham, Alabama, Randall Woodfin who is the youngest mayor in the city in 100 years. Woodfin’s first step into civic involvement was as a member of the

Birmingham Change Fund, which exposed him to the issues facing his community and the civic pathways to addressing them.

Masha Chernyak, VP of Programs at the Latino Community Foundation, shared the story of Martin Vargas Vega, a child of farm-workers parents in Watsonville, California, who joined the Latinos in Tech Giving Circle with his first tech job. Vargas Vega is launching another giving circle with Latino leaders in his hometown. “We are helping to reclaim philanthropy for the Latino immigrant community and grounding the work in love and justice,” said Chernyak.

Over the two-day convening, leaders shared ideas and resources for a field-wide infrastructure that will help inspire more grassroots philanthropy, strengthen communities, and increase American giving overall. The vision includes:

- Launching a major awareness campaign to make giving circles a household name within American communities
- Developing more resources and training programs to diversify and democratize philanthropy
- Creating an innovative incubator program to enable people to create and sustain new giving circles
- Supporting new technology to make it easier for circles to connect with one another and with grantees
- Hosting national and regional gatherings to bring the movement together.

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Participants Included:		
<p><i>Giving Circle Networks:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 100 Who Care Alliance ● Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in Philanthropy ● American Muslim Fund ● Amplifier ● Awesome Foundation ● Catalist ● Community Investment Network ● Dining for Women ● Giving Project Learning Community ● Hmong Impact Giving Circle ● Inspired Women Paying It Forward Network ● Jewish Teen Funders Network ● Latino Giving Circle Network / Latino Community Foundation ● Social Venture Partners International ● Women’s Giving Circles International 	<p><i>Individual Giving Circles:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Arev Fund ● Asian American Impact Fund ● Asian Women Giving Circle ● Birmingham Change Fund ● Denver African American Philanthropists ● For Her: A Black Women Giving Movement for Black Girls ● Full Circle Fund ● Latino Giving Circle San Diego ● Latinos in Tech ● Natan ● Next Generation of African American Philanthropists ● Orchid Giving Circle ● Peninsula Latina Giving Circle ● The Philanthropy Connection ● RadFund ● The SAM Initiative ● Shared Nation ● Women’s Catalytic Fund ● Women's Giving Circle of Howard County ● Young and Dangerous Giving Circle Fund / Mt. Zion Baptist Church 	<p><i>Supporting Institutions & Thought Leaders:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Bank of America ● California Community Foundation ● Civic Spirit ● Collective Giving Research Group / Johnson Center for Philanthropy ● Community Foundation of Greater Greensboro ● Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation ● #GivingTuesday ● Global Impact ● Jewish Community Federation ● Justice Funders ● W.K. Kellogg Foundation ● Learning by Giving ● The Leighty Foundation ● LM Strategies Consulting ● The Lodestar Foundation ● The New York Women’s Foundation ● Oregon Jewish Community Foundation ● The Raikes Foundation

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Charles & Lynn Schusterman Family Foundation ● Schwab Charitable ● Seattle Foundation ● SKR Advisors ● Washington Women's Foundation ● Women's Philanthropy Institute
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20 Funders Co-Invested in this Process:	
<p><i>Institutional Funders:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation ● Bank of America ● Global Impact ● W. K. Kellogg Foundation ● Lodestar Foundation ● Ms. Foundation ● Schwab Charitable ● Delores Barr Weaver 	<p><i>Giving Circles, Networks, and Members:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Asian Women Giving Circle ● Dianne Chipps Bailey ● Kris Barnes ● Virginia Bayer ● Catalist ● Community Investment Network ● Latino Community Foundation ● Paula Liang ● Julia Taylor ● Natan ● Teresa Radzinski ● SAM Initiative ● Courtenay Wilson

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[Photos below]

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