

Reflections from the Table

Thoughts from the 2017 Grantmaking Fellows

When I was a kid, I was disregarded... in many ways, but mostly because of my gender and my intelligence. To know that I was a part of a group of trans folks sitting in conference rooms in a city I couldn't dream of living in (mostly because I don't want to), and given complete faith to be able to decide how to fund the work being done by black, brown, and native trans folks across the country... reaffirmed my faith in myself and our family.

I'm so grateful to have been able to have done this with folks I now know and love! Changed my life for the light!!!

-Wriply Bennet

TJFP: Where Dreams Become Reality!

TJFP has been much more than just a source of developmental funding that enhances the quality of life for Trans people. TJFP has literally been the foundation on which our success as an organization was built. It is a program that is essential to the fundamental growth and sustainability of Trans work because it invests without fear and restriction. Where other organizations place requirements and stipulations, TJFP is breaking down barriers and actively changing the ways we are able to show up and do this work. Where other organizations use difficulty/strain as a tool to minimize and deter applicants, TJFP is determined to bridge the gap between what we have and what we need.

Being a part of the 2017 Half Million-Dollar Grantmaking Panel will always be



TJFP Grantmaking Fellowship Members from left to right: Nina Chaubal, Quentin Bell and Cathy Kapua

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one of my most cherished memories. As both a previous grantee and a panelist, I am humbled and grateful to have had the opportunity to be a part of such an amazing experience and family. I will never forget the feeling of walking into that conference room with so many great and passionate Trans leaders—and the realization of what we were there to do! Just as I will never be able to explain how those moments of power impacted my personal views about goals of leadership. I feel personally indebted to the TJFP team because they provided an opportunity not only for me to follow my dreams and love what I do, but to be able to support others. They made an investment in The Knights & Orchids Society far greater than any numerical value could measure. They invested in the dream and paid upfront in leadership. The relationships/networks we’ve built because of our TJFP connections have become the residual income that keeps that dream operational.

It is because of TJFP that I have a visual and clear understanding of what leadership is, how it works in relation to organizational values, and how it should be shared or passed down through generations, just like folklore and oral traditions. I have never met a more passionate group of individuals willing to give with no regrets. I affirm that a piece of their grace is forever etched into my spirit and that I will always be compelled to act with others as they have with and for me.

-Que Bell



TJFP Grantmaking Panel 2017

Our lives are on the line
but I see each of you
doing everything you can
to pick up the pieces,
make it easier for one more
to get through another day
or empower another to
pursue their greatest dreams
What I want most is
for you to live with the
nicest person you've ever met
the one who validates everything you feel
your true gender, without constraint
your deepest, rawest self
knows your wants
meets your needs
I want you to
know that person, the nicest person
in your very own heart.
You can place your warm healing hand
right on your chest and tell yourself
"I'm here for you, I love you
Right now thousands around the world
share a similar experience as mine.
We may never meet but
we are generating power together
just being willing to love ourselves fully
is full on resistance work right now."
I want the nicest person in your heart
to tell you everyday that
you have a right to go after the life you want
relentlessly, unabashedly, and persistently,
no matter what transphobia tells you,
we love you and want for your happiness.
Empowerment and liberation are your
Birthright.

Suicide and murders, prison abuse
Inadequate mental and physical healthcare
Homelessness, poverty and hunger,
disability and barriers, we won't look away
from what you've endured,
what you're enduring

I want you to know I said yes,
yes in my heart, yes to all you seek to do
yes to your hearts, your dedication, passion
yes to every project, idea, group
that applied, in our hearts, yes.

We weren't able to fund them all,
with the intention to support those
needing it the most.
The applications I read and
shouted Yes! with tears down my face,
were those showing the way, integrating
true leadership from our most marginalized
communities. I'm so hopeful to see the
prioritization of trans women of color in
leadership positions, making access real with
ASL interpreters and accessibility
information, disabled leaders,
getting a little extra food or transportation
money to trans family somewhere
barely getting by.
You all are incredible change-makers.
With great heartache, I read the many
in our communities
grieving losses from this past year
reeling from fighting on the front lines
of battleground states
I wish we could do so much more.
Each of you deserve a million dollar grant!!

This community is so incredibly strong,
so magnificently beautiful
I need each of you to stay so bad it hurts.
The impact of you simply living your life, and
those organizing your communities is
incalculable, vast, powerful beyond measure.
I wish you could see the amount of
resilience and determination you show
all over the country
to create the lives you deserve
Your applications proved that
This community is Unbreakable
I know this year has made us stronger, and
we will only continue to grow
more powerful from here.

From the bottom of our hearts, thank you,
thank you for being you,
and all the work you do.
Please get your much needed breaks
everywhere you can,
keep up the amazing work,
dearest trans family and allies, and
apply again next year!

-Drew Jones