Transparency Builds Trust

A Message from our Executive Director

In our journey to centering equity as a core value in our organization, we are learning and re-learning how essential trust-based relationships are to equity and to sustainable social change. We often get caught up in the urgency of the work and forget to pause, to learn, and share what we learn and do about it. A key piece to building and maintaining trusting relationships is being transparent about our actions. To this end, we are releasing the Sewall Foundation’s first annual report.

We are extremely excited to share our inaugural annual report, where we provide information about our emergent approach and evolving organizational structure, 2020 grantmaking, COVID 19 response and funding, capacity-building efforts, our programmatic focus areas, and some of the lessons we are digesting and incorporating into our processes from 2020. We plan to release an annual report every year from now on and will continue to practice transparency as we commit to building trusting relationships with our partners and communities across the state. A special shout-out to Laura Dover, who in addition to being our Information and Design manager, is beautifying our
Systems Mapping in Lewiston-Auburn

As a first step in putting last year’s L-A Co-Design Report into action, we’ve started a systems mapping process to identify and connect partners in priority areas, starting with health. On February 2, over 20 organizations who work to improve health of L-A residents participated in the first virtual session. They named over 30 non-profit and municipal agencies that address public health, mental health, healthcare, social services, and recreation and wellness issues in L-A. Lisa Attygale from Tamarack Institute is serving as lead facilitator and Susan Foster is helping to shape the work in L-A through an Emergent Learning Framework.

In addition to health systems, mapping sessions will explore the other priority areas identified in the Co-Design Report: affordable housing, workforce and economic development, and equitable systems to support civic participation. (Food systems mapping was already done a couple of years ago as part of the Local Foods Local Places initiative.) One of the goals of these sessions is to build a basis for two more co-design recommendations to be implemented later this year: formation of a community advisory group and drafting of a three-year workplan to advance the work in all five of L-A's priority areas.

Grantmaking Updates
For organizations who are not current Healthy People Healthy Places grantees but whose work aligns with one of our focus areas, we are developing an application process and expect details and guidelines to be available towards the end of March 2021. Please check our website then for more information.

Since 2015, Healthy People Healthy Places grants have supported work throughout Maine to improve the well-being of people and the environment. For the past two years, EBSF has been developing a clearer and narrower focus for Healthy People Healthy Places, identifying the following Focus Areas where our board has approved a longer-term commitment. Community-based work in the Katahdin Region, Lewiston-Auburn, Wabanaki communities and tribal governments, and Washington County, will be complemented by statewide efforts in Food Systems and Nature-Based Education, as well as statewide policy, advocacy, and communications work -- which we are calling Keystone.

Animal Welfare and Legacy grant applications will be available on our website March 15, 2021. The due date for both of these programs is June 15, 2021.

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**Help Improve Broadband Access**

*Take the Broadband Speed Test Now!*

The need for quality and consistent internet access has never been more evident and important than it has been over the past year. The Maine Broadband Coalition is working to improve access throughout the state. You can help improve broadband access by taking the Maine Broadband Speed Test now and encouraging friends, family, and co-workers to do the same.
Independent Media Matters

The stories we hear matter. Stories are a powerful tool for sharing of information and perspective. Independent media sources play a critical role in making visible and increasing understanding of important issues of the day. The Sewall Foundation is pleased to make recent grants to two groups working hard to report important stories on pressing issues in Maine.

Check out the Sunlight Media Collective and the Maine Monitor.

We encourage you to make these independent media sources a part of your regular reading.

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Maine Won't Wait

*Climate Action Plan*

Our collective wellbeing, and that of animals and the environment, is tied together. None of us truly thrives in the face of suffering of others. Climate change is impacting individual and community health, the economy, way of life, and our very lives. No matter where in Maine you are; no matter what sector in which you work; the Maine Climate Action Plan matters. Click here to learn more.

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Upcoming Events

Black History Month:
• [Click here](#) for a virtual exhibition of 28 works that celebrate Black legacy in the U.S., along with discussion question and action items.

• For more complete and accurate history resources, visit [Teaching Tolerance](#)

• Now is a great time for a virtual visit to the [Smithsonian National Museum of African American History & Culture](#)

**Food Solutions -- New England Fridays in February:**

• Join together with others across the Food Solutions New England network to connect, learn, get inspired and launch into the rest of 2021 ready for action! Topics include: The Power of the Network, Racial Equity Leadership, Visionary Regional Policy, and Narrative Strategy. [Click Here for More Info](#)

**The Maine Food Convergence Project:**

• [The Maine Food Convergence Project](#) (February 15th- March 11th, 2021) convenes organizations, networks, groups, and individuals to catalyze collective action towards a thriving Maine food system that is equitable, just, and regenerative. Tracts include From Farm & Sea: Expanding Local Markets; Farming & Fishing: Abundance, Equity and Resiliency; and Healthy Food: Breaking Down the Barriers.

**21-Day Racial Equity Habit Building Challenge:**

• From April 5th to the 25th join together with thousands of people on a shared journey of learning, expanding your knowledge, and charting a course of action to dismantle racism in our food system and our world! [Click Here for More Info](#)

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**Resources & Staff Picks**
25 Amazing Books by African American Writers You Need to Read: In honor of Black History Month!

Driving the Green Book: Award-winning broadcaster and educator Alvin Hall hits the road alongside activist and social justice trainer Janée Woods Weber. They drive from Detroit to New Orleans, collecting powerful, personal testimony about how Black Americans used the historic travel guide The Negro Motorist's Green Book during the height of segregation as a vital resource to quell fears, find safe havens, and travel with dignity. Available at Macmilan or wherever you get your podcasts.

Emergent Strategies by Adrienne Maree Brown: Inspired by Octavia Butler's explorations of our human relationship to change, Emergent Strategy is radical self-help, society-help, and planet-help designed to shape the futures we want to live.

Not Business as Usual: How Managers can Promote Employees' Mental Health: Helpful article with links to tools and resources for supporting employees during these challenging times

Radicalized by Cory Doctorow: This is a collection of four short stories that take on social, technological and economic visions of the world today and its near future.

There There by Tommy Orange: The book follows a large cast of Native Americans living in the Oakland, California area and contains several essays on Native American history and identity. It masterfully explores the themes of Native peoples living in urban spaces, and issues of ambivalence and complexity related to Natives' struggles with identity and authenticity.
You are on this list because you signed up on our website, or you have provided your email address to the Foundation with a grant request.

Our mailing address is:
Elmina B. Sewall Foundation
15 Main Street, Suite 230
Freeport, Me 04032

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