Jeff M. Poulin 00:01

Hey y'all, Jeff here. Before we get started, I want to tell you about a conference happening this coming February. It's the one I'm most excited to attend in 2023. The annual beyond school hours conference. The beyond school hours National Education Conference will be held February 9 through 1220 23. in Orlando, Florida. Foundations Inc. The conference host is celebrating 26 years of supporting education professionals from across the nation, ensuring we help all children thrive in school and in life. This conference brings together thought leaders from across the country to collaborate for a greater impact. I can't wait to meet the amazing speakers like Sonia Manzano, aka Maria from Sesame Street, and the foundation's 2023 champion of children, the award winning journalist Soledad O'Brien, the three and a half days of professional learning provides attendees like you and me with the much needed tools and resources they need in order to provide support for young people in their communities. Learn more at beyond school hours.org Again, that's beyond school. hours.org See you there. This is why change the podcast for Creative Generation. We are your hosts. I'm Jeff.

Karla Estela Rivera 01:15

Well Hola, soy Karla.

Rachael Jacobs 01:17
It's Rachel here.

Ashraf Hasham 01:18

What's good, y'all. I'm Ashraf.

Madeleine McGirk 01:20

And I'm Madeline.

Jeff M. Poulin 01:21

Why change is a podcast that brings listeners around the globe to learn how arts, culture and creativity, especially as applied by young people can change the world, one community at a time. You're invited each week to learn and laugh while exploring the question. Why change? Alright, let's get started.

Ashraf Hasham 01:40

Hello, everybody. This is Ashraf co host of the wide change Podcast coming to you from Seattle. What's up, Jeff?

Jeff M. Poulin 01:51

Hey, Ashraf, it is good to hear your voice and to be on the mic with you yet again. I heard you had a really fantastic conversation with two absolutely bad ass people.

Ashraf Hasham 02:03

Yes, Celeste Smith from the Pittsburgh foundation and Jonathan Cunningham from the Seattle foundation to like you said badass as they are community connectors. They are youth development and arts, arts and culture folks who are killing it in disrupting the philanthropic fields specifically in Community Foundation's. It was it was such a fun conversation. You just listened to it. Jeff, what do you think,
you know, Ashraf, I know both of these people have met them a few times. But was absolutely blown away by the chemistry of their stories and their perspectives. And I can't wait for our listeners to hear but before they do, can you explain? You know, your choice in putting these two folks together in a room for the first time?

Ashraf Hasham 02:59

Yes. Okay. It was pretty obvious. I was trying to let's try to create some, some good like blind date energy. I mean, of course, professional blind date debated this is about people I knew who would get along and people who I knew had some shared history just based on being friends with both of them on the side. And wow, I mean, I couldn't have really imagined how well it would go. This is a fun episode, specifically, specifically because you were hearing two people who will eventually be making waves, informed by each other's insistence on trying new things and doing so in lockstep with community. And to see that happen in two different spaces, but coalesce in spaces like these. I'm just super excited to show the audience how it went.

Jeff M. Poulin 03:52

All right. Well, let's play the interview for them. And we'll come back on the flip side.

Ashraf Hasham 03:58

Hello, hello. Welcome to the wide change podcast, Celeste Smith and Jonathan Cunningham. I'm super excited to introduce you to our audience. You're both senior program officers at the Community Foundation's you both work at Celeste, you're at the Pittsburgh Foundation. And Jonathan, you're at the Seattle foundation. You both come from youth development in arts and cultural backgrounds, and you're both disrupting the field of philanthropy from the inside. And you've also never spoken before. This is your first time meeting. I'm so excited for this audience to be able to witness and be part of this fishbowl conversation. First of all, I'm gonna pass it over to you Jonathan, tell us about yourself. Tell us how you got to where you are and how arts education played a role. Sure.
Jonathan Cunningham, Senior Program Officer currently at Seattle foundation. Been at the Seattle foundation for almost six years. January will be six years from Detroit originally born and raised in the DEA and have a big background in supporting youth work both being a part of various youth programs coming up but then also spent a lot of time working with My first original mentor Grace Lee Boggs was very much an icon in Asian American spaces and just in American history. And she spent a lot of her time in Detroit from the 40s on. And her husband, Jamie Boggs started an organization called Detroit summer in 1992. And I got a chance to work with that organization. After college, I met grace when I was dropped out, I was just like, I just want to work with grace. That was my education, working with Grace was my education and getting a chance to travel with her to different conferences, and really just literally sit at the feet of Grace Lee Boggs in her home and just soak up game and learn from her. And a collective of other folks who did a lot of amazing work in Detroit. So Detroit home, and also have a journalism background in journalism is what got me moving, moving and grooving out of the city and ended up landing here in Seattle, working as a music editor for a newspaper here. And I've been in Seattle since 2009. And you know, the one thing about journalism is, it didn't pay so great. And so I would always have like a second job, even though I was doing journalism and working for a newspaper, and just defaulted to running youth programs and supporting the youth media programs, youth media, literacy programs, after school programs, gardening. Gardening is a big part of my story, a whole nother conversation, but really goes back to Detroit summer and working with grace and all the things that we would do in the cast corridor, because we just have so much land meet the land in Detroit. So gardening, running gardening programs for young folks here and yes, for terrorists, etc, etc. So youth work is very much a part of my story, eventually moved on to work at the Museum of pop culture, which was a Paul Allen Museum, and manage all the youth programs and community outreach for the museum. And it was through working, working that job and doing a lot of grant funded work, that I became interested in philanthropy that a lot of work that was funded through philanthropy and got a chance to just be a part of some conversations and saw, you know, the clear need how much organizations really just need funding. And often when you go into these philanthropic spaces, there's not a lot of people of color, not a lot of black folks, not a lot of black men, and just wanted to be just strategically for me, it was I wanted to get to the other side of the table, so that I could help drive resources to amazing organizations who just need the resources to do what they do. So I jumped into the philanthropy world, and I've been here since 2020 17.

First of all, Grace Lee Boggs What a name drop. I saw a celebrity acting quite a bit. Talk to us.
Celeste Smith  07:28

Yeah, like you can say Grace Lee Boggs. And that's it. You did a whole podcast just being under her tutelage. So thank you for elevating her in this space. I'm Celeste Smith. I'm a wife, a mommy, a sister or daughter. I am an artist, written and visual. And I am a Board Chair for arts organizations. My Side Hustle is Senior Program Officer for arts and culture at the Pittsburgh foundation. I guess, um, you know, when you talk about the trajectory of how I get into philanthropy, I don't even know that I was interested in becoming a program officer per se, until the program officer got, you know, got me interested. I was a I was running a nonprofit wanted media, which I co founded with my spouse that was managing his music career. And that was really like what I was focusing on. I was having a ball. You know, I loved the program. And I love the work. I love the intersection of arts and activism and challenging the system. I love being with the people of color all day long. I love it. It's just you know, fabulous in when the the individual who is just in laying another black man who was a philanthropy and people know his name and be ranking in the streets. He, he said to me, my supervisor thought, you know, asked me to ask you if you'd be interested in my position when I leave, because he knew he was leaving. And I was like, Huh, what are they? And that's, that's how it started in a funny, I don't work for the organization. I got declined for the job that he had. But I work at the Pittsburgh foundation. It was at that time, Jermaine Williams was leaving the foundation and I applied and got his job. Like you brother, I'm not from where I'm working from either. I am from the south side of Chicago. Born and raised wild huts, and you know, a series of different places that I've been been through I used to work at immigration for a number of years, working from anything from a clerical to law enforcement. You don't I was a stay at home mom. There's so many different things that led me to the work that I have now. And that peace with arts education. I want to say dealing with the babies and realize in a nappy and condescending with them when you know during my programming, a lot of what I learned from that hat approach my work now comes directly from the kids that were in my programming. They are unless they know what they want, they know what they need. And they're not afraid to tell you honestly.

Ashraf Hasham  10:07

Beautiful. Both of y'all are writers. Both of y'all are organizers and come from that world of activism. Like you said, Jonathan, what do you think about still has the background? I know you have some connections in Chicago to?

Jonathan Cunningham  10:20
Oh, no, that's good. That's great. That's good to hear. One Celeste good to connect with you. It's nice to be in a format where you can just meet other practitioners in this field. Yeah, and there's other stuff I didn't share, too. It's good to hear what I'm and I'm stuff. So let's, I'm sure there's stuff that you didn't share. Like, there's so many dimensions that bring that go into who we are, at this stage of life and not knowing how old you are so less, which is totally irrelevant. What you're naming is that there's a lot of things that go into who you are, as someone who's hardly like, and it would never fit in a bio, right? Like it would never, never fit neatly in a bio unless the bio itself is a book, then it could fit. But yeah, there's so many other things, right. And it's just good to hear that component. I'm a husband and a father. It's funny like that I am oriented toward like work stuff and thinking about this podcast, and what do we do and how to do this work in philanthropy, like, the biggest thing that I'm doing with my time, realistically, is being a husband and a father. And that's what's most important and what I didn't even mention, right. And so yeah, it's nice to have that humanity aspect brought into that key. That's that, and it's helpful when that's whenever that's present. Conversations are better.

Ashraf Hasham  11:26

Amen. Yeah, y'all are both want to know from both of you. And we all share some histories, each of us individually. That is to say, Jonathan, we've known each other since. Yeah, the early 2010s. You were new to Seattle and got into the arts commission. I think we met in under the auspices of the Seattle Arts Commission, and I came on as a young young member of the Arts Commission back in the day. And Celeste, we met on at the Americans for the Arts Arts Education Advisory Council right before that organization reference for the Arts did not do so great showing up for black communities in in post George Floyd era, which was very disappointing for both of us. So we had, we had organized a little bit on the side there. And it's been so good to get to know you during the pandemic and afterwards. And what I know about you both, too, is that you're showing up for your communities in really big ways. Jonathan, you mentioned you were on the board of an organization called the residency your hip hop education program. And Celeste, you are still running One Hood, tell us about One Hood.

Celeste Smith  12:31

And that's still running it. I am a co founder, and I am the board chair of liquid media. And our mission is building liberated communities through arts education and activism or, you know, social justice. And, you know, the beauty of one hood to me is this evolution that starts it's all men who were standing up against violence towards in an external to our community. It started where we really ramped up with when police pointed a gun in the face of a mother and her seven year old child at a traffic stop. I think it amplifies the fact that and that happened in 2006. And we still dealing with ourselves even to the point of people getting killed with the children in the car, in this day and age. And so that's how we start as
an activist organization. So what you see now and how we evolve, we try to be proactive, but we're also still reactive. And I think you need both. You know, some people try to act like Oh, hang on in the streets, don't me, well, if we wasn't turning up in the streets, I don't think the amplification of the death of our brother George Floyd will be at the point that it is now I don't believe that if we weren't turning up to the streets, the activists that you know, the pieces, like the movement for black lives of Black Lives Matter, wouldn't be having these conversations with philanthropy. And so, you know, our work with One Hood is still evolving. Yesterday, the team was in Philly, doing some voter engagement and amplification with Kerry Washington, you know, then we come right back here. And you know, another member of our team is doing it on the ground. You know, Bernie Sanders is here. So, you know, it's a piece where we are interested in the proactive side of legislation, but nine Good, good and well, that it has always been a ground grassroots effort that leads us to where we need to be now.

Ashraf Hasham  14:20

credible. Now, you talked about the foundation world just now as your as the home base, and place where maybe leveraging some of this work and activism can happen. Jonathan, tell us about what you're up to in the foundation world now that you're as you said earlier on the other side of the table, how are you shifting grant making work, or how did you walk into it and what does it look like now?

Jonathan Cunningham  14:44

Yeah, sure. And this might be a good segue, just thinking through what Celeste shared about founding an organization that she's no longer running but board chair so I really walked into this work is that I've helped found a program called the residency, which is focused on youth Hip Hop development for young folks 16 to 24 that started in 2015, when I was still at the museum. And I'm currently used to run the program now, now that we've got a 501, C three, and I currently serve as board as board chair. But while at Right, exactly connection points, but while doing that work, of course, something like that is grant funding. So it's a party was at the time, it was a partnership between the Museum of pop culture arts core, which is a local art fund, large arts organization, and Grammy Award winning artists and Macklemore and Ryan Lewis. And they approached me just saying, like, if you know, if you had the if you know, if the money wasn't, if money wasn't an issue, what type of youth program which you want to run here at the museum? And I love that question. And I said, Okay, give me two weeks. And I just put together something that just laid it all out. But of course, I didn't have to go into a foundation to get the funding for it. And when we, you know, did all the proof points and all the things went into the meeting. And the program officer was great, and got the funding. And then we had to run the program, right. And I was at a certain point, I just did the juxtaposition. I was just like, because she was like, This is great. I think I think, I think well, this, I think this was a yes. And then I had to run this
program for 40 youth and we fed them we paid and we did all the things. And at 1.1 of those mornings when I was like schlepping food to the young folks, and I was thinking about how we got this funding. I was like, well, we we don't want to do that. I explained that. I want to do that. Because we were just one yes, in a variety of yeses for that particular program officer. And I began to think about impact, right. And so the impact of for the funding that that Foundation gave us was huge. And knowing that we were just one yes, in in a slate of yeses made me think that I wouldn't be able to increase my input, my impact, I should say. So for me being here, I still remain laser focused on wanting to support black Indigenous and People of Color land and serving organizations. I think the main thing that I'm driving right now is a program called is a is called repair, which is racially equitable philanthropy aimed at initiating reparations. And it's a five year $25 million commitment to the black community of the Greater Seattle region. So in the primary architect behind that, of course, that was built with community, not just fortunate minutes. So there's a couple of years of work that goes into that and working with black community leaders, and really wanting to drive more resources to black LED and black serving organizations in this region, looking at the under critical underinvestment in black led organizations, just from the cross the philanthropic sector, nationally and locally. And just recognizing that, while it's very true that many philanthropic institutions had underfunded and black led organizations, we too as yellow Foundation are also guilty of that and having under under invested in black led organizations that we had to put our hand up as well. And and admin. Admit that that's a part of repairing heart. I mean, the name repair was chosen very intentionally. It's about repairing past philanthropic harm. So I feel very honored to be able to lead that work and to have the support of our foundation as we drive more investments into the black community. And it's not just for black LED nonprofits, but it's for black lead is first for businesses as well. So repair looks at all dollars out the door. It's focusing on how are we supporting Black businesses? How are we supporting black or black contractors were we contracting with with food services, lunch, video, videography, retreats, retreat spaces, all the things just moving more resources into the black community where we're in an amazing foundation that has roughly around a billion dollars in assets. And it's important for us to be driving more resources to black led organizations and indigenous led organizations. And, you know, black, like I said, black indigenous people of color LED organizations is very important. But bipoc really is a term and they can get totally watered down without action. And so I've been glad that I'm glad to leave repair. And I can share without sharing too much that we're also in the process of launching an initiative initiative, led by one of our amazing indigenous led team members is focusing on how to drive more resources and support and just be in right relationship with indigenous led communities as well. So really, being able to do that work really warms my heart, and then seeing others to do it as well, because you don't want to do that work in a vacuum. So having the support of the foundation as as we do this work is huge.

Celeste Smith 19:10
You know, I like I'm over here, like I shouldn't be at my mic, because I'm over here catching the Holy Ghost and speaking in tongues. But like, you know, this piece, you know, we have a lot of inner intersections between the work that you and I do. First band for the culture, hip hop, always, you know, that's the one hood is very hip hop based and in terms of arts and culture. I love that, you know, elevated panda babies. Because, you know, my question was always not What do you want to be when you grow up, but literally what you want to be now, right? And it's like, I want I wanted to change your career every three days right and responsibilities, right? So I don't know why we pedal that this you know, what you're doing at five is what you got to do for the rest of your life or what you think you want to do. Right? And so just you know, applauding you I'm supporting the kids and the young people now in their journey, because if they don't see the value in arts and culture, we continue to perpetuate this narrative. That is not a profession, like it's some sad hustle. And it's not these people are ordained to do this work. And they often know when they're young. And then again, even bringing aside to the philanthropic piece, like yes, all of the things you say, if I'm hiring a videographer, guess what, if I'm, you know, hiring a journalist, and I have something to do with it, because you know, we all have, you know, communications department, and you know, the foundations, sometimes it's still catching up with modern day methodologies. But if anything I have to do with it in a huge number of our staff that the foundation writ large is interrogating all of his practices. So what are we investing in? Right? Not only that, but who are we paying to do whatever it is that we're doing? Right. And if it's, you know, we don't, we don't perpetuate that pick your brain mentality. We're paying, you know, honorariums, and stipends. We do a lot of the participatory elements where we bring in, you know, Grant panelists from all the different disciplines, and they don't look like, you know, the usual suspects, responsible for advancing black arts and Pittsburgh, which was founded in collaboration with the Heinz endowments over 40 years ago. And it's the oldest of black specific funding opportunity in the US, right. And so, you know, I don't approach my work, just, you know, like, I'm dope, okay, from activism background, I know what the hell I'm building on what people before me were building on. You know, Justin Lang, who I mentioned before, I've been working in this thing, I'm still continues, even though he's not in philanthropy anymore. I had something that I could come into. And I had a program department at the Pittsburgh foundation that was about they're like, they continue to be.

Ashraf Hasham 21:52

That's incredible. Tell us more about that. The work you're doing and putting money back into black community in the US much and vendors and all those other things, but what kind of programs? Are you running over at Pittsburgh? Putting money back in?

Celeste Smith 22:05
Yeah. Well, just like I just mentioned, advancing black cars in Pittsburgh, and and I'm gonna tell you like, that was probably the, you know, I don't know, Jonathan, this is something that you hear all the time. But like, people always be like, oh, we need people like you in that position. Right? And I'd be like, No, you don't, because I'm gonna quit tomorrow, right. But when I had a conversation and know who I was talking to, but it was with the MacKenzie Scott team, and I had no idea, no idea who I was talking to, if I hadn't known who I was talking to, I would it listed 12 organizations. But you know, they come in to me, and they're talking about another program that I had something to do with and I was one of 17 people. So don't ask me why they picked me. But that, but the white buffalo to universe Avenue, you want to put it, but I ended up in this conversation. And they are considering funding another program. And it did not align with the donors interest. So I said to Oprah, because I knew who I was talking to. I was like felt Oprah that she might want to look at this program that at the time, I was co managing with another black woman program officer from endowments Chanda MacDill. And in that moment, I appreciate it being in the position I'm in because the left side of me was like secured a bag to secure the bag. But the authenticity and the importance of advocating for funding to go to the people who are doing the work, who are, you know, have been historically underfunded, it was important. So in that conversation with the receipts to follow, we were able, you know, to secure a multi year, multi million dollar support from McKinsey sky Foundation, just to support, you know, that endeavor. The other thing that I've been able to do is, within the last couple of years, we've launched an individual artists program. And it's called exposure and I took the name from the artists way, which is a book that many of us know about that started 863 times and never finished it. But I came across this line where she goes, that artists work is to expose the society to itself. And I love that thought about art, showing us who we are. You know, in the other pieces, I will say this, and I probably should get it on a t shirt. I can walk down the street naked and get exposure you got to pay me. And so the idea was about paying people for that work in and the idea was about how can we use the platform that the foundation has to elevate conversations for these different artists that are doing this work at the intersection of arts and activism. So through that program, we were able to explore new ideas. Pittsburgh has never had a $50,000 individual artists grant. We were able to drop three, two of which are interrogating white supremacy and law Are your white LED organizations, one, and then the other one is sort of black led organization, but everybody isn't co fellowship. And again, all that is fabulous. This idea didn't come from me, they literally came from working with an advisory board, who said, let's use a term called fellowship because it was trying to diffuse the power dynamic. So you know, a lot of times the fellowship, the organizations have all the power or the foundation. So what happens if we flip the script, and we flatten that? Right? And so everybody, there's one that is self curated, and that the individual who got that is, you know, doing things at their own pace, but still all at the intersection of arts and activism and interrogating? What does it look like for a smaller black LED institution to be in call fellowship with a larger 150 75? I want to send if I will, oh, whitely at the tuition and there, they are in conversation together, right. And then they're also challenging the foundation, you know, and so it's really interesting. The other thing we were able to do is, I don't know if this is like that they're in Seattle. But a lot of times, if you can't get
out of the city of Pittsburgh, you ain't gonna blow. So we said, well, what would it look like if we can send some artists external to Pittsburgh? So Jonathan, you want to do something where we send a Seattle artists there and bring a Pittsburgh Garcia Hi, let me but we had a donor, who, you know, they aren't artist residency. So I said, Hey, why don't you let me hold that space for a month, and we'll put $10,000 with it, and provide respite, you know, to people that are doing this work. Now, even that is an interrogation of predominately white spaces, because it's in Wyoming. And so, you know, there's been some challenge with that, because as black, you know, black and brown people, we navigate racism, and we have a grocery store, or if we have my own name, but what does it look like to have to deal with that? in isolation, so we learned a lot from that, and still are, and then multi year funding to, you know, black and brown artists, because artists, most artists, I know, don't sit down and be like, You know what, I've got to do this now. Now, it's an iterative process. And so how do we support, you know, in some general operating support type stuff, you know, for artists, and so, you know, playing with a lot of things, playing with the concept of donors, right, because I'm gonna tell you some of the stuff I got, like, pulled back because I just was doing stuff as I'm making it up as a co allow, right. And it's like, no, we have a donor services department. Right. And so you know, some of these conversations they happen, but they yield it fruit, even though there was some difficult conversations to diverse. But now, you know, field of interest funds I used to, that used to just go to predominately white LED institutions from somebody that that 800 years ago, I left them at zillion dollars. Now, a chunk of that is financing of artists of color, because they're still helping that organization. So interrogate their practices. And that's something we hadn't done before. So, you know, that piece of land with that donor money is very interesting, because you have to be aligned with donor intent. And racial justice doesn't necessarily not have to be aligned with donor intent, because it's all conjecture and legalese. Right. And so if you can make the case for there's some interesting things that you can do with it, as long as you honor that intent.

Ashraf Hasham  28:23

Wow. Oh, I love what you just said. Aligning donor intent doesn't have to disclude racial justice. It can be part of the outcomes. Jonathan, I know you deal with a lot of donors and DFAS DFAS donor advised funds. Yeah, after me. Yeah,
transactional. Building relationships is how you go a lot further. And just sometimes you get the African proverb if you want to go, if you want to go fast, go alone. But if you want to go far go together. And so much of my work more recently has been really over the past couple of years. It’s been about not just it’s multifaceted, to be completely honest, right? Like so even the kudos that I may get for leading repair, right that that really comes from being in right relationship with black leaders in the community. It comes from deep community listening. It comes from having a black black led organizations cohort which we call the block, which is a group of 11 black LED and serve black LED serving organizations here in the community that we meet every every six weeks. And it really is a good roundtable community. Think thinkspace where we can just be in community together. Show love on one another. He'll he No harm that's happened. I mean, when you bring together black leaders, I mean, it's it goes back, right? So like, there's just so much to it. And a part of where that name comes from repair, right, like repairing past philanthropic harm. Sometimes there's groups, there were organizations sitting at the table that at one point, like really, really didn't mess with each other. And when you actually begin to interrogate that, just to be in being completely honest, from a space of accountability, one of the reasons why sometimes organizations are have beat for lack of a better term is that they've been pitted against one another having to apply for funding and that harm that through anthropic institutions caused by pitting organizations, particularly black led organizations against one another. And I really do believe that there is a unique level of harm that is caused by pitting black led organizations against one another, yes. And in the philanthropic realm, organizations have to apply for funding competitive funding, some get it, some don't. But when there's a history of pitting black led organizations against one another, where they have to compete for dollars, it creates real harm. And then it becomes far too easy for philanthropic practitioners to come and sit back and go, ooh, that's about it. This one doesn't get along, and they don't get along who that's messy on. It's like, what role might we play in not getting blocked? And how do we name that? How do we just deal with that? How do we acknowledge that then how do we repair past harm. So again, that name repair for this for this initiative is very, very intentional. But when I say it's multifaceted, then of course, you also need to be able to once you kind of get the buy in from community members and have all the proof points and also working with App feet. I'm gonna get app via shout out right now, for anyone that is not aware of the Association of Black foundation executives is the oldest, race specific, like philanthropic affinity group in the country. And they have such good reports, they have so many good proof points, if you're looking for some case studies, etc. Like one if you're a black person who's working, who's working in philanthropy, if there's a budget for it, or not, just join up and just sign up and be a part of appy. The conferences are great. But then you get access to so much material that you can utilize when you're making the case for x y&z and that was definitely beneficial as I was building out repair. Right. So but with that said, you know, bringing the donors along is incredibly important. And I have found and I don't know, if I'm, you know, there's times when there are times when donors are not aligned with racial justice work. And there are times when donors are giving and there's some guilt giving, I think we can all if we're being honest, there was definitely some guilt, giving some white guilt dollars that we're giving them for the murders and
breonna Taylor, and George Floyd and so many others in 2020. And I appreciate the last name and people being in the streets and turning up and amplifying what happened. But you know, and some of that has fizzled out, right, some of that giving has fizzled out. But I like to spend more time and we're really doing some work identifying the donors who really want to go with us on this journey. Because again, we're a community foundation, right. So we're utilizing we have, we have a discretionary grant making budget, which allows us to support organizations directly. But the lion's share of resources coming out of the foundation are really coming out through deaths. That's the thing. And so even if our Community Programs team, which I'm a part of, and our grant making team is laser focused on supporting Black Indigenous and People of Color LED organizations, but none of the DAF holders are and there's going to be a massive funding disparity. And that's it's on us to close that right. So we have an amazing new leader, Alicia Washington, who's our new president and CEO, black woman who came by way of Cleveland. So another midwesterner she's got great vision for the organization for the foundation. But we are Chris Herman's is our chief impact officer, we've been talking about a lot of this stuff about how we bring donors along. And a lot of them want to be brought further along so much. So many times, I mean, conversations like I don't, I don't really like this. There's almost as if there's this conversation around staff, knowing everything, staff of color, knowing everything, and the donors not knowing anything. And that isn't true. It's not healthy, and it doesn't breed good, healthy relationships. That's my odd one be spoken to the Father, if it's my resources, and I'm trying to, you know, I'm here for a reason I could be at Fidelity or Schwab. But if I'm choosing to have my money parked at this foundation, don't treat me as if I don't know anything. And at the same time, you can find that some of those donors, they really want to be brought along, right. And so I'll just share with them the work that we're doing work we're doing wrong, our creative Equity Fund, which is around supporting Black Indigenous and People of Color LED arts organizations, that was the first iteration. And now we're just double down now. We're just funding black and indigenous led organizations, organizations that are using arts and culture as part of their strategy for disrupting structural racism and building racial justice. And we have donors who are supporting that work. That might sound edgy, but it's actually not. And we have donors that are like this is exactly what what we're our adult philanthropic resources should be going. We started a black LED joint wellness Fund, which I have the honor of steering and leading. We started that in 2021. So last year, and of course came from deep community listening, listening to our black led organizations cohort, like I said, we call it the block. And they really named that while the foundation of course supports organizations programmatic work, very important. But the staff at these black led organizations coming through the racial reckoning coming through spikes in gun violence coming through all the things Through happening, and now we're in year one, year two year three into a pandemic, my goodness, the staff are exhausted, the staff are exhausted, sometimes the staff is realistically one paycheck away from being the client base. And how are we showing up for them? You know, smaller grassroots organizations, there's no funding for that paid time off is not the only one staff of one staff of two staff have none. All volunteer, paid time off? Is not there wellness plans? Aren't there reset reimbursement and wellness activities. It's just not there. Some of the perks that come
with, you know, just having full time employment that people realistically take for granted access to a mental health practitioner, what have you. It's not their right, and they need it for some of these folks, it's their second job might be their third job, right. And they need it. And so we launched the black lead join wellness club, to provide resources to organizations to take care of the staff to take care of the team, right? That's it? Yes, we're already probably funding your programmatic work. But either way, you can't even do the programmatic work. If there's if there's constant staff turnover, if the staff is constantly burnt out. It's hard, right? So we launched that last year, and we got $549,000 to 29 organizations, we're doing it again, right now. We're gonna get out a minimum of at least half a million dollars, to small grassroots black led organizations that just need the resources for time off arrests for sabbaticals. We have a couple applications in the hopper right now, where the staff like they're there, they want to go to Africa, they want to go to Ghana, we have so we have a trip to Bali as an in an application, things that we encourage people just dream, we say you work so damn hard. If $20,000 were to fall from the sky, just for you and your team's wellness, how would you use it? And folks are saying we've never been asked that question before they said, if so what do we need to do? You know, what's the reporting like? And it's just like, very minimal, we only have five questions. And the response has been, like, tremendous. Everyone's just like blown out of the water. There were more foundations should be doing this. I really think that funding Black joy should be a funding program at most foundations, right. Like, whether it's a staff person, whether it's just initiative, but just putting an emphasis like this is it's important, you can only fund black trauma without being willing to fund Black joy. And so imagine if we had funding programs where we're funding organizations that are dealing with trauma, and we just want to fund almost just funding black trauma, but when it came to funding Black joy, it was like, Well, I don't know about that. You mean, well, so we're going to fund the staff to go to Ghana, yes, maybe you can just find this staff to go to Ghana, maybe going to Ghana for a month, and after just shutting down, would allow them to come back and do all this amazing programming that you seem to love and write, write about and blog about etc. So that's what we're doing. But on the donor site, and we have donors that are supporting that, right. And so again, what might have sounded edgy, like funding Black joy, we have donors that are like, actually, with my death dollars, I would love to support that, right? And so when you bring people along in the journey, when you don't, when you don't assume that they are just an automatic, no, it's always one it's always know if you don't ask. But if you just assume that donors, and primarily white donors are high wealth individuals, when we want to fund XYZ within you won't get any support. But if you just treat them as regular people and just say, Hey, this is what we're trying to do, we have found that our donors are more than happy to go on that journey with us. And so that approach really worked for us to Seattle Foundation.

Celeste Smith  38:12

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We agree with you I don’t I say the same thing at the amplification of the advice and guests. And then also like anytime we put a call out, a lot of donors be ready to to be supportive to your point is not that hard of a sale? I think like to what you're talking about so beautifully this piece about wanting to fund more than trauma and these systems changes. I was reading an article earlier today about a banker in Chicago is a black man, he was the first banker in Chicago around the time that the depression and he started his work because he realized that we couldn't get funded to buy a house. And so he was flourishing. And you know, it was fabulous because because we you know, we’d always need a place to live. But what happened was when the Depression hit and you know, he used to pay dues and everybody else's banks and they people were okay, but they weren’t right and then took it further he end up getting that's all embezzlement charges and also other kind of stuff. And you think his name was Jesse Binga. But when you talk to him when you talk about like, the systems and the different ways that we impact black and brown it made me think of that story right? Because to your point philanthropy is very you know, has to take some take them somewhere down the line, right in some of these these this systemic past and present harm that's going on and so you know, I'm really interested in the work you're doing around repair. I'm really interested in you know, how you're engaged in people because we try to do the same here, right, we always wait advisory boards. If the artists say yeah, I should do this. That's the That's where I'm taking and what I'm doing. And so instead of we have in the well am I hit the hit you up and asked you to send you a couple of a couple of tidbits, but I'm I'm excited about it. And, you know, I was talking about the field of interest Fund, which is a little bit different than the donor advised funds, because donor advised funds are donors that I live in right now. But the field of interest funds are ones that passed away. And so we had, like 2000, and some change of those. And, you know, and I don't think anybody had begun to look at themselves, because we didn't know they existed. And so you could have somebody that's coming in from the field, I don't even know that that side of the hallway that you could hit somebody up and be like, Hey, y'all got somebody over there is interested in so one of the things that we're trying to work towards is transparency. Right. And it's transparency in terms of all the philanthropic practices, my colleague, Michelle McMurry, who's the Vice President, of program of policy and community engagement, she, you know, is one of my mentors in philanthropy. And she said, One day, she probably hate that she told me this, because I bring it up all the time. She says all made up. Right. And so understanding that it's all made up, gave me a whole different vantage, because then we got the opportunity to make up something else that is more serving to people who have been historically underfunded, and you know, unsupported. So I think, you know, just applauding your work there, brother in the Seattle foundation is quite inspiring.

Ashraf Hasham  41:18

Well, beautiful. I mean, you're so right, it is all made up. And that's something that gives me a lot of heart. And, and a lot of energy from this conversation, too, is that and something I'm learning at the

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City of Seattle, where I do a little bit of fundraise to fund making as well grant making, it's different
different dollars, different color of money and all that. But what comes with it is long as you have a
good idea and lungs, you can make the argument and long as you can show the impacts in any way,
right, there can be a new ways of showing impact. Go ahead, try it, try it, try it, go go for it. That seems
to be something that you both share, and you both are very much ready to take advantage of.

Jonathan Cunningham  41:54

So that's a good point. You know, I was a part of it, I was a part of a trust based philanthropy cohort
that allowed to be Northwest puts on here in the greater Seattle region, but it was the folks all
throughout the northwestern Northwestern states. And one of the things that was brought up, which
was a reminder, right, because we come into this work, green, and you're learning as you go. Right. And
the reality is the actual rules around philanthropy are actually fairly minimal. Right? Like, that's not to
say that there are zero there are actual, you know, on the liberal mean, on the legality side, in Celeste
point is right, a lot of this is just made up like there are there are rules that you have to follow, there are
some legality issues. But once once those checks are met, from there, we're all making it up as we go.
And just doing the best that we can to provide resources to the community in a way that works for our
individual foundations are funding institutions. And so that does give you a lot of like it almost it just it
frees up you know, your sometimes thinking away, there's all these parameters. And once you realize
that even the parameters that you're working with are working with under realistically just made up
and sometimes worked when they worked. But sometimes things no longer work. There's flexibility to
revisit things that's important. We haven't touched on this. But I do feel like good leadership within the
foundation is critical, right? That's critical. Having folks that back you on that is critical. Sometimes
when I'm here, other folks who are in the field, the challenges that they're facing, I feel blessed that I'm
not necessarily facing those challenges, doesn't mean I don't have challenges. But good leadership
within the foundation is critical. Like having forward thinking, individuals putting up some barriers, I
would say for IT staff and board. It's critical, but also bringing the board along like you have to have
folks that are it has to again, we all have to be on that page, we have to be on the same page as much
as possible, where applicable, then you can get a lot of work done. And so I just find that to be really,
really important. Just bring it bring in as many folks along on this journey as possible, as important.
Having good folks who have that vision, whether they're at the C suite level, and below, like and really is
hiring folks. I think that we the field. And what I have found is that there's this field really benefits when
they bring people in, who are not coming from philanthropic institutions, it doesn't mean I'm not trying
to hate on folks trying to get another job if once you're already in philanthropy, by all means, but at the
program officer level, bringing folks in that have two or three different philanthropic institutions or you
know, representations on their resume can be a challenge sometimes, like I still feel like I come in like
an outsider. At almost year six, I still feel like why don't we do it this way? Why should we Why don't we
do some of the same critiques that community members have of the film of philanthropy, I share the same critiques and then I just try to chip away at him right. And so I'm very used to being the conduit like even with with our black led organizations cohort like they that's a that's a meeting for black leaders only. We originally envisioned that as exactly that, but then thought that we would of course bring in at the time maybe the CFO can come and maybe these folks or other folks, maybe other non black, black identified folks would be able to join the block meetings eventually. And so I raised that at our very first block meeting I said you know, we know we want to keep this black, black only with the black staff, staffing it, a black little organization Trying to figure out what's the right cadence bringing on non black folks. And there was this pause. And then they someone just said, can we just keep it on black? Can we just keep it all black? And everybody was like, yes, we want this to be an all black space. And that's critical. And that's really important. And I'm okay with that the foundation is okay with that. But that also means that myself and my colleague, Cedric Davis, who's on our philanthropic services team, we ended up being the have to be the bridge, right? We're the conduit that has to sort of relate things. And there is a burden sometimes that comes with that. But I'm used to it, like I'm, I got broad shoulders, I'm blessed with that. And I, I relish the opportunity, because I take it to heart and I lead with integrity. And I lift up black leaders all the time. And I really try to differ from taking credit for things that have come out of community, right? Because it's just we can do so much work when we're doing work together. And when there's that buy in, when folks are like, yeah, behind this, that's the that's critical. And let's be honest, black folks, people of color, indigenous folks have ample reason to not trust philanthropic institutions, they have ample reason. So when you're doing work on behalf of but not involving those individuals, they ain't gonna be behind it. You might think you had the best idea in the world. But if you ain't consulted a good amount of folks, I haven't brought folks along. And if they're, if they're having given you the thumbs up before you present it to white leadership, it might get approved, but the rollout gonna be messy. But when you have brought folks along, and they're saying yes, this is our idea, this is what we came up with, and those leaders are behind it. The rollout is so much better, and there's broader support. So that's key, that's critical. I like what's the lesson about having Canadian members helped make grant decisions, we've really gotten, we've gotten away from having staff make grant decisions, we really go with almost all of our grant programs, if not all of them. Ensure that we have community members, ideally, people of color, who we pay for their time we pay them a quarterly and honorarium. But yeah, we pay to have community members make grant decisions, right, like this key like creative equity fund that Ashraf and I work on together. funders have their dollars in funders do not make grant decisions, all people of color, make the grant decisions, we pay him for the time they review the applications, just like I would review the application, they're reading just like I would read, they make grant decisions, just like I would make grant like it's totally fine. And getting the foundation to better understand that as a way of being has not been a challenge, because that's just how we tend to do things. And more philanthropic institutions, I would hope approach to do it that way. But I also will name run a community foundation, right? Like sometimes family foundations have a different structure. Sometimes corporate foundations have a different
structure. And so I think when people are talking about philanthropy, or the critiques of philanthropy, is actually worth diving into the nuance of what type of philanthropic institution is it? Right, because that structure works for us just fine. Sometimes a family foundation where it's just, it's literally the family, that their structure is that the family approves grants from the board of progress. That's their structure. Thankfully, that's not our structure. So that gives more leeway and flexibility. But yeah, knowing what type of philanthropic institution we're talking about is always helpful.

Celeste Smith 47:54

I agree with that. Because, again, before working in philanthropy, I didn't understand the nuances of that, and it is completely different, but Community Foundation's have a little bit more flexibility. And at times, we will, you know, work alongside family or corporate philanthropic institutions, just so that they could be able to do the things that they want to do, like we said, partner with a family foundation here, so that we could give grants to individual artists, because a lot of foundations can't do that. But a community foundation can. And just that piece, with Jonathan talking about community, I use this term cloaked within community a lot, because you're right, if you're trying to do something on behalf of the community, and even person that we're community deserves some time to, to be honest. But to try to do something on behalf of black and brown, you got to talk to people, because if you don't you right, it's gonna get messy, it's gonna get real messy. So I did appreciate that. The other part, I think that's important, too, is that the buy in of the board and that the leadership is so important, because it is a nonprofit organization. And the foundation's President serves at the pleasure of the board. And so, you know, some of the same critiques that, you know, we're leveraging against, you know, organizations that don't have diversity in their boards and stuff could be leveled against, you know, the foundation as well. You know, what does our board look like? Who are the decision makers? You know, for us, we're not a specific foundation. But it does help because we have a president, who's the first woman president and 75 years in this foundation, Lisa Schroeder, but she also is a sculptor. Right. The Board Chair of the program and policy committee is also an artist and an arts admin. Right and so, you know, having people in a foundation is not specific, you know, to arts and culture is really a blessing having peels leadership, because we don't have to sell the importance of the arts. We don't have to, you know, convince people that our Swilly has a basic need I don't know if you watch our thinking but it really is and so, um, you know, we keep coasts out of each other back and forth, sir, but I think those pieces that the work is behind the program officer that you're sitting and talking to. And you know, our work, yes, we tried to shift and transform. But if the board in that President eight or more is not, you know, we can't do the work that we're trying to do.

Ashraf Hasham 50:18
Yes, absolutely. And what I love about what you said, Jonathan, right regarding that same sentiment is that flexibility, the rethink comes from the risk tolerance, the change management, the forward thickness of those leaders that you both were talking about. And both fabulous of them black leaders, it sounds like, which is a boon for the for the Community Foundation world. So I'm super excited to, to look into them more, we're gonna put some more stuff in our show notes. Um, in regards to some of the stuff we talked about today, some of the programs that you all manage and are on top of, Wow, what a great conversation where we have to end our time today, because we're coming close to it. But I want to make sure that we finish up like we usually do with a number of lightning round questions. Before we get to the lightning round lightning round questions, though, I want to make sure that I finish up this conversation, I want to ask you both What's one thing you're going to take away from each other's work they're gonna bring back directly to your foundation doesn't have to be today. But maybe later this year, maybe next year? What's one thing that you took from each other, Jonathan,

Jonathan Cunningham  51:20

and I need to get some time on calendar was the last.

Celeste Smith  51:25

Like, I love this concept of repair, because sometimes we do it and the way you break it down is an acronym, because a lot of times things get lost, you got people you never identified as bipoc, or Alana. But because it's a trend, now, all of a sudden, somebody's never identified as bipoc. And, you know, is a plan for that, right? And you can't, you know, you can't tell people how to identify, right? Or we'll put on there more than one race. And you could be, you know, why, you know, Caucasian and you'd go in there and put more than one race, right. And so I think it's really, you know, interesting way of accountability with this repair part. And like, kind of, like you said, kind of getting away from some of these watered down terms, and getting very specific events. And Black Arts was like that, right? Like, not excited about it by mama, this is Black Arts in particular. Right. And so, just revisiting that notion. And seeing you do it. what success is something again, we will follow up on on the fat.

Ashraf Hasham  52:25

Yeah, yes. All right. So I'm gonna start with you, Celeste on these lightning round questions. Number one, who inspires you? Oh,
Celeste Smith  52:37

oh, my goodness, I should have been prepare for that I will say Mickey Shepard is so I'm gonna go with today. And she is the Patriot patron saint of arts administrators and black philanthropist. But not only to because of the heights that she's reached in her personal practice, and also in philanthropy, but her ability to stay true to herself or in our people, and to be able to express and support people freely. I'm super inspired by her today. And that's like off the top of my head.

Ashraf Hasham  53:13

eautiful. Jonathan, what keeps you motivated?

Jonathan Cunningham  53:17

What keeps me motivated. You know, my favorite part of the job is, is making the phone calls and letting folks know that they got the funding. And especially when the funding is really, really needed. And it comes through so clear. Like these black led the black LED joy and wellness, fun phone calls, that keeps me motivated in and of itself. I mean, there's tears, I'll crown on the on the phone calls, being able to just give folks the resources that they need and hearing that appreciation, and then they do the work and they serve community. And when you know that that's happening, like, I know that I know that I'm standing in my purpose now, more than any other point in my career. And yeah, that's what keeps me motivated to keep doing this work.

Ashraf Hasham  53:57

I'm gonna ask you the same, the next question to where are you most at home? Do you Jonathan, at home,

Jonathan Cunningham  54:08

when I'm home at home, when I'm at home with family, my wife and I just bought a house. So we're literally making a house at home. I like working from home, you know what I mean? And I can just be comfortable and chill out that just it works. I know. I'm hearing that it definitely works for a lot of staff of color, especially black folks. And philanthropy, happy to be home. And I can just really drive on so much stuff, but I feel most at home, at home and
so less How do you stay focused?

Celeste Smith 54:39

You know, I think because I realized that whether the work is in activism or philanthropy is all connected. And so like I never lose sight that like the work that we're doing is towards building a better world a better society. And you can't do that without like focusing on the people most is impacted. And so, you know, I think that's that's the answer just remembering that it's all connected. So wherever I show up, whether is that my baby school, or if it's in the boardroom at the, you know, at the Pittsburgh foundation, it's still the same work.

Ashraf Hasham 55:16

I'm gonna ask you both of this, this last question, why change and start with you, Celeste.

Celeste Smith 55:23

And you know, Lisa Yancey was another probably one of my top five beings in the universe that I celebrate, she offers that we're more interested in transformation than change, because change can change back. And I love that that thought. Because, you know, it's like alchemy, you change something to a different thing, right. And even though you're taking elements, right, we're still learning from the past, and we're still building. But we don't want to go back. We're saying what's happening now with different laws being changed and things that are being put on the book to be reconsidered and overturned and things like that. We don't want to go back, right? We want to take the learnings from the past and some innocent Copa style to influence present in the future. But we don't want to go back to a world that is, you know, embedded in imperialist white supremacist, patriarchy and capitalism, you know, it's about all the phrases from anti bail, right? And so that is, is my thought on that, yes, we need to do some incremental changes. But ultimately, the goal is to transform.

Ashraf Hasham 56:28

Beautiful, Jonathan.
You know, love that love that as an answer. And when I think about change, the first thought that comes to mind is Octavia Butler's famous quote, right. All that you touch, she changed. All that you changed changes you. The only lasting truth is change. God has changed. And so that's the first thing that comes to mind. But I'll juxtapose that with Celeste answer. She's absolutely correct. Being able to transform systems, for the long haul is important. And just in general, the read the way in which we as Phillip philanthropy practitioners do our jobs is changing, because all things change Time changes, right. And so we have to be able to do things a little bit different and be both responsive to community needs, but also proactive and getting out in front of things. And that balance is really important. So being able to change the way in which we do things and doing it at the pace of trust, right, like that's so important. I mean, there's so many other folks that I have relationships with Scott Spencer at the Annie E. Casey Foundation is, is my philanthropic mentor, the work of Adrian Marie brown talks about the importance of being in right relationship with folks. And it's just so critical and essential, I find myself very blessed to have these folks as friends and mentors, and folks who I could talk to on the phone and check in with. But yeah, some of their work is very forward thinking. And it reminds me that all of all that's meant for me is already on its way. And things that are meant for me are just aren't meant for me, right. But I just have to remember to just continue to move and not let go just to let go and let God that really just is an ethos that that sticks with me all the time. And when I'm able to do that, then I find I've been relevant right relationship and the changes happening in an organic way. There's times when there's a need to force change. But that's the that first change is a change that snaps back. Right. And that forced change. Sometimes it's actually on the ballot. Right now, as we get press, we're approaching the day before and you know, the elections. This podcast will come out after the elections. And hopefully we'll get some good news. But it forced change. Sometimes it's not lasting change. But when you can you know, when you can bring folks along on the journey, that's always better. That's the type of change that tends to be transformative.

Well, beautiful note to end on. Well, thank you both for being part of the podcast today. I'm so excited to learn what happens from this amazing super friendship that y'all are about to embark on. And yes, until until the next time, we all talk thank you both. Thank you. Thank you. Dude, so what do you think
I should have I, I just want to listen to them talk all the time.

Ashraf Hasham  59:11

We all had meetings afterwards. We couldn't say the whole day. But, you know, we could have you know, I

Jeff M. Poulin  59:16

know you could have especially with these two. Okay, so let me start from the beginning. I love that when you interview anyone you asked sort of about their origin story. And these two together, and the journey they sort of went on over the course of the conversation. It left me so both humbled and inspired about the recognition of their multiple identities and how that influences their work. I mean, first of all, so let's just starting off by you know, I am a mom, I am a partner, you know I am and my side hustle is that a being a senior program officer, like that just gives me so much joy because I think it's such a pervasive problem in our field that People, you know, get their self worth from the work that they do, and certainly not discounting anyone's professional career and the impact it has. And that absolutely contributes to our, our value in the world. But sometimes we conflate it. And we give that too much standing. And I think that the recognition that they bring so much of their personal and professional identities to the impact that they do have in the world is just, I don't know, it's very validating and affirming and, and makes me makes me feel good in the sense that we do this podcast and we do other work. And, you know, I take my dog on a walk every day, you know, and all of those things are part of what we do. I don't know, it just it left me feeling good.

Ashraf Hasham  1:00:47

Yeah, absolutely. I mean, I loved sort of hearing Jonathan go first name drop a little bit about Grace Lee Boggs. I mean, wow, by the way, yeah, both of them, by the way, do the respectful, not quite named dropping name drops, right, you see the reverence for them. And when they when they talk about the people that they were influenced by, so as an aside, but it was great to sort of have him here. So let's go and then go back and say, you know, what, I'm way more than I said, I was more than just by, you know, my professional self. And, actually, that is his values. You know, I know the guy he very much is a father first. And community steward, and even like a writer before, he’s a philanthropist. And these both these folks being writers, I think came out in the conversation, too, you could tell that they had a very strong knowledge of self. Both act, both activists, both artists, both organizers, both board chairs, slash founders. I mean, like you, we talked about a Creative Generation, the multi hyphenate is real.
Jeff M. Poulin  1:01:48

Yeah, absolutely. And, you know, what's interesting, too, is I think, one of the strengths that they have as, as writers, and I might even, like, amend that to say, like, narrative builders, you know, is this idea of like, being able to communicate with people in lots of different ways? And to bring relevance, right, I think, you know, it sort of reminds me of, of the point that was made in the dialogue about you know, how you authentically engage with young people, and also how you authentically engage with like, the Uber wealthy, how to use their money, and like, how that's sometimes the same thing? I don't know, that's really struck me as a very cool skill that perhaps we all should

Ashraf Hasham  1:02:28

have. Yeah, I'd be teaching artists do it well, right. It's, it's the holding of holding of ambiguity, but also the emergent nature of how it comes out. Man, that was, that was a ton of fun to have that conversation with them, in terms of the connection between youth and wealthy people, particularly, like you said, so fascinating. And of course, it is because he's got to treat people like people, it was a good reminder that nobody is above it. In terms of relatability being able to to be talked to, you reminded me my conversation with Darren Easton, a few months ago that was in terms of you know, it's beyond it's we're kind of transcending the idea of of code switching in real time, right? People of Color in philanthropy in spaces of power. They don't need to code switch anymore. Clearly these two are beyond it to and I was a reflection I had after the conversation.

Jeff M. Poulin  1:03:32

Absolutely. And that ability to to like not to code switch, but to crosswalk, right thing, the notion to say like, oh, a philanthropist wants to impact change in their community. Oh, and the way that we do that is through racial justice, you know, like, their ability to like it's an outcome next, you know, the intent. And that outcome within the context of a community is just such a tremendous skill and something that I just I have so much respect for it's incredible and really cool that like they didn't know each other, but both had of the very, very same tactic. With that, like, hyper focus on their Northstar. I don't know I thought that was really impressive.

Ashraf Hasham  1:04:16
100% It brings me back to the Arts Schools Network Conference we were at and we talked about values based leadership and really like how you just just walk with your values first, and that may look different right to use the word crosswalk with what the tactics are. One of the ways that I think it’s a last put it beautifully was cloaked in community, so shout out to Celeste Smith. That's her term. If you're using it, drop that name. But to be able to get buy in before going too far doing the work benefiting one's community but not getting too far ahead of them. Because collective leadership collective action. Another thing we're talking about a lot of Creative Generation Why change podcast So it's coming up here too. I just that's like Ryan's you see them episode over episode

Jeff M. Poulin  1:05:05

100%. And you know, it's interesting too, because I know this year, you've been on sort of a journey of talking to these disruptors in philanthropy and really thinking about how change might be needed or is let's choose some stronger language, their draft, you know, is needed in philanthropy. And as we sort of come to an towards the end of your journey there, you know, we're coming up at the end of season two here. What are your observations with folks talking to folks like Celeste and Jonathan, like? Are you seeing any other big trends like you just mentioned?

Ashraf Hasham  1:05:40

Boy, I totally am. And, you know, I'm going to have to have a conversation with Angelique power at the Skillman foundation. So you'll hear that next later on in the series for the season, I should say. And I'm really excited to talk to her because of all the themes I've been seeing one of them is actually more of a pop culture sensation, right? Like these MacKenzie Scott conversations are happening, along with that show on Apple TV, I think. And I think it's called loot. And so just thinking about, like, how this is actually in the culture of how wealth actually becomes an asset that is a little bit. It's a little It's icky. You don't want it actually, it leads to some toxicity, right? Even even even, I'm gonna connect this even further to pop culture, the HBO Max show, the White Lotus, you know, it's there's classism, there's there's things that that we're seeing here that transcend all sorts of isms, but are just sort of true human nature things. And so in that sense, I see a lot of people in these institutions of power, just trying to bring it back to the human level, deep community listening, thinking about at risk taking in a very thoughtful and yet potentially scary way for people who who carry current power, right, who are the folks who maybe have generated the generational wealth that that folks are not working with, but to see folks being be in a permission based space space, where they're they're make, they’re taking risks that they're they are talking to talk, walking the walk and seeing the support that they get from the folks who are even further up the food chain. It's inspiring, and I hope it's not a flash in the pan. I hope it's not a flash in the pan.
Well, with folks like Celeste and Jonathan, I don't think it could possibly be a flash in the pan. I think it is here to stay and is the new way of philanthropy. So you here to you heard it here, folks, these these folks are absolute stellar rock stars in my opinion. And next up, we're gonna hear from another one Angelique power, I am so excited for that conversation. She is someone who I respect adore, look up to all of the different things so I can't wait to hear that one. Not sure if

I'm stoked. Well, all right. Until then, I will. I'll catch you in the listeners then.

Sounds good. Catch you next time. Peace. I hope you enjoyed today's episode of why change the podcast for a Creative Generation. All sources discussed in today's episode are located in the shownotes. Be sure to tune in next week to see what else is happening around the world. If you haven't already, be sure to follow us on social media, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn. Also, be sure to write us at info at Creative dash generation.org We would love to hear your ideas, the topics you want to learn about and why change matters to you. Our show is produced and edited by Daniel Stanley. Our music is by distant cousins. A special thanks to our contributors, co hosts and the team at Creative Generation for their support.