



# CONCINNITY



Children's Coastal Louisiana Banner that was presented to the U.S. Congress

## *Bringing More Voices to the Table*

### **Surdna's Focus on Civic Engagement in New Orleans**

**By Jennifer L. Kasoff**

The Surdna Foundation has long invested in grantees in New Orleans through the former Arts and Community Revitalization programs. When Hurricane Katrina struck in 2005, Surdna was able to augment grants to existing grantees and stay in close contact. Historically, Surdna has focused on long-term recovery, not immediate disaster relief.

In 2007, with Phil Henderson joining as the new president of Surdna, "we re-visited New Orleans to think about what larger undertaking we might consider to help with recovery. It was also a moment at Surdna where we were very interested in developing more cross-programmatic work. We wanted to make this more intentional. We thought focusing on New Orleans would provide a good center of focus for all the programs," explains Lynn Stern, Program Officer for Thriving Cultures and Co-Chair of the New Orleans Working Group.

Foundation staff and board members took a site visit to New Orleans in December 2007 to assess the work to be done. By February 2008, Surdna formed a Working Group with representatives from each program. "We spent the summer of 2008 hashing out a framework for what we might delve into in New Orleans, taking into consideration key issues for the city's rebuilding, such as the housing shortage, coastal restoration, cultural devastation, and education advocacy. The unifying theme driving all of these issues was civic engagement on the part of New Orleans residents. That became our over-arching strategy. We had experienced this wellspring of citizen engagement while we were down there. We knew this would be an important element for the city's future," says Lynn.

Jee Kim, the new Program Director for Foundation Initiatives, is also a member of the Working Group. He explains that after Katrina, "in a city

marked by torn civic fabric and high levels of disenfranchisement, there was spontaneous interest in engaging by citizens. Our focus is to support this upsurge in residents wanting to become deeply involved in issues. We have taken on multiple issues with the focus that those most impacted by these inequities in New Orleans should play a leadership role in addressing them."

With board approval, the Surdna New Orleans initiative is now a five-year program granting \$1 million each year. Representatives from each program area join a Board liaison - formerly Elizabeth Andrus and currently Kelly Nowlin - to discuss the grantees. Surdna made its first grant from the New Orleans initiative in the fall of 2008. The program representatives cultivate proposals from organizations in New Orleans

*Continued on Page 5, Images on Page 10*

## FROM THE CHAIRS

By Edie Thorpe and Josie Lowman

As we wrote in the last edition of Concinnity, there is a new look, a new feel, and a new mission within the Surdna Foundation. As a result of our new mission, we have three “new” program areas: Strong Local Economies, Thriving Cultures, and Sustainable Environments. In addition, we have added a cross-programmatic research and development program called Foundation Initiatives (FI). FI is staffed by Jee Kim, Stefania Vanin and a new addition to the Surdna staff, Amy Morris. The Board, with strong assistance from the staff, including the FI staff, continues to be busy defining different sub-areas within each program area. For a more detailed explanation of the new program areas and some of the sub-areas, please see the new Surdna website. The staff has organized several meetings to help educate Board members on new areas that each committee might explore. The goal of the Board is to continue to have such learning opportunities so that Surdna is always aware of the latest issues surrounding our mission statement.

In less exciting news, Kim Burnett has left Surdna to pursue opportunities in the Midwest. Kim has been an integral part of the formation of the Strong Local Economies, and we will miss her. On a much happier note, Sharon Alpert, program director of Sustainable Environments, and her husband welcomed their first child, Camilla Rose (Millie), this spring. Millie made her official

Surdna debut at the May board meeting. She definitely stole the show!

Board and staff alike have settled into our re-configured office space at 330 Madison Avenue. The highlight of the 30th-floor reception area is an Andrus family corner featuring a museum-quality case of memorabilia, a portrait of John E. Andrus, and a silent video on his life and philanthropy. This area announces to all visitors that Surdna is a family foundation with a long and rich history—of which all of us can be very proud.

There’s another change at Surdna in the board room, with five Andrus cousins of our fifth generation serving as directors, a real testament to the value of our Andrus Family Philanthropy Program. We ‘older five’ of the fourth generation are happy to see this generational shift and are pleased that our emphasis on Surdna as a family foundation will continue.

New cousins have also joined the boards at Andrus on Hudson and the Julia Dyckman Andrus Memorial. Beth Moon Shogren and Bob Hedlund, both fifth generation, have volunteered their time, talents, and energy to AOH and HABF. JDAM promises to be greatly enriched by the addition of Mary Meador, M.D. and Nancy Spensley to its governing board. It is heartening to the staff at these institutions to experience the



Edie Thorpe



Josie Lowman

ongoing interest and involvement of the Andrus family. In September 2010, Kelly Nowlin and Edie Thorpe made presentations to these boards to update them on the work of the Family Involvement Committee and our overall family program from 1998 to the present.

Reaching down yet another generation, the AYSP continues for a ninth year, with 10 members of our sixth generation engaged in learning about philanthropy and non-profit work. Masiel Rodriguez-Vars (the first AFF program officer in 2000) renewed old friendships at the February 2010 Surdna meeting when she came in her role as AYSP coordinator to share the excitement and value of this program with us. Finally, our new family website officially launched in May 2010! Jen Pakradooni and Thomas Kelly, both fifth-generation cousins, worked diligently to build a great interactive site with many opportunities for us all to learn, grow, and communicate with each other. Over the next few months, we will be designating family branch representatives to keep information and pictures flowing to the site on a regular basis. In the meantime, please visit us at [www.andrusfamilysite.org](http://www.andrusfamilysite.org), and join in the family efforts. We’re pleased with the activity of our AFPP over the past year and look forward to your continued interest and participation.

## From the Executive Director

Steve Kelban

By Steve Kelban

The Andrus family’s narrative has consistently involved service and also has consistently been about an entrepreneurial spirit. The newest example of entrepreneurship is Mexicue. What is Mexicue? On one level, it’s a food truck in New York City. On another level, it’s the entrepreneurial invention of Thomas Kelly (fifth generation, AFF Board member, graduate student at NYU’s Stern School of Business, Marketing Director, Manhattan media, and just married).

Thomas, on his website for Mexicue (<http://www.mexicueny.com>), describes Mexicue as “the sweet, sweet love child of red-hot Mexican cuisine and down-home barbeque goodness, and this week, that little girl done did it. Whether or not she reminded you of childhood memories where everything was as fresh as the bright blue sky, it’s safe to say Mexicue made quite the grand debut.” For pictures, reviews and more see page 4.

In addition to every thing else Thomas is doing, he and Jen Pakradooni have worked so hard for the last two years to create and develop our new, elegant, interactive, and intuitive family website, [www.andrusfamilysite.org](http://www.andrusfamilysite.org) (see article on page 5). This beautiful site represents a huge leap forward from our previous family site. Each of you can now easily contribute to and benefit from the website. And since this fantastic mechanism to communicate and keep up with your family and its philanthropies has been launched, it is up to each of you to visit, contribute, utilize, and

leverage its possibilities. All of us also owe our thanks to the nine family members who personally provided the funds necessary for the site’s creation. Please visit the site and see what the fuss is all about.

On the theme of keeping in touch, I would like to express my gratitude and appreciation to AFPP consultant Jen Kasoff for her unyielding support and her remarkable ability as editor of Concinnity. For the past 6 years, Jen’s extraordinary writing skill and wisdom have been reflected in the 50-plus articles and interviews she has written for the newsletter. Jen makes the newsletter possible and a pleasure to produce each year.

I opened this letter with an acknowledgement of how important service is to the family narrative. The AFF Board exemplifies this commitment to service. I am extremely proud of the AFF Board for committing to a particularly difficult task this year. At a retreat held in September 2009, the AFF Board undertook the difficult but important task of exploring issues of power and privilege and how they relate to AFF. (See article on page 12) They engaged a consulting group, Open Source Leadership, to develop and facilitate a full-day retreat. The day was designed to begin developing a shared understanding of power, privilege and oppression that would inform the mission and work of the Fund as well as internal and external working relationships. It also deepened our awareness, individually and collectively, about how racism and white privilege operate



as a system today, how each of us participates, and choices we can make individually and as an institution to interrupt or resist that system. Board and staff understand there is much more to learn and understand and

have committed to continue this effort.

The AFF Board elected Laurie Stavisky as Chair, Hans Miller as Vice-Chair, Michael Klass as Treasurer, Stephanie Cardon as Secretary and Shanda Lowery-Sachs as Transitions Keeper for the year beginning in September 2010. We are confident they will continue the great work of their predecessors Davis Benedict, Liz Wilson, Thomas Kelly, Rick Boger-Hawkins and Annika Hawkins-Hilke. During the coming year, AFF may add up to four new Board members. If you are a family member and will be between the ages of 25 and 45 by September 25, 2011, please think about applying when the application arrives in the mail within the next few months. If you have any questions, don’t hesitate to call or email me.

Congratulations to the family members who have joined Boards of the following Andrus philanthropies. Beth Moon Shogren and Bob Hedlund, both fifth generation, have volunteered their time, talents, and energy by joining the Boards of AOH and HABF. And JDAM promises to be greatly enriched by the addition of Mary Meador, M.D. and Nancy Spensley to its governing board.

*Kelly*



# YOUTH

## BETS III Update

By Kimberley A. Kaupe

The members of Board Experiential Training (BETS) III—Caitlin Earley, Megan Kelly, Courtney Spensley, Kaitlin Spensley, and Julia Voorhees—along with the facilitating team of myself and our head facilitator, Frank Hartman, are proud of the successes the BETS III funding has had since it was granted in July of 2009. The three hand-picked organizations have been able to make a difference in the fields of foster care and community reconciliation. On the Move (Foster Care to Independence), Active Voice (Community Reconciliation), and Youth Communication (Foster Care to Independence) have all benefitted from our targeted grantmaking.

Our grant to Active Voice allowed the project **Welcome to Shelbyville**, a hard-hitting video aimed at building bridges between long-term residents and immigrant Somali newcomers in this Tennessee town, to be brought to life. Active Voice will partner with high-impact community groups and

organizations to use the film in a variety of educational ways, including professional development settings, new refugee orientations, and study circles. The main content-related themes of the film include language barriers, fears and concerns of residents, economic concerns, and the benefits of learning new cultures. Please view a trailer of this inspiring project and story at <http://vimeo.com/13152216>.

Our support of On the Move allowed the organization to create a peer-mentoring pilot project in the Sonoma County, California area for youth aging out of the foster care system. With the hiring of six peer mentors, between the ages of 21-24, and enrolling twelve youths between the ages of 16-24, the program is now helping these individuals invest in their future through mentorship, employment, and housing. The organization has also made headway in partnering with local businesses to place program participants in jobs. These youth

participants, as well as their peer mentors, have found the Transitions Framework to be a key part of their success.

Lastly, our continued work with Youth Communication has been very well received. Our grant allowed New York City-area youth in foster care to create the first-ever college guidebook for their peers. The guidebook will show students how to prepare for college, get into college, and succeed once there. The book will be marketed nationwide to independent living programs and college support programs for youth in care. As of July 2010, the manuscript has been completed and is being proofed and designed. The final copies of the printed books will start to be distributed by the end of August.

The next BETS program will begin in 2011. We encourage family members between the ages of 18 and 24 who would like to get involved to email the AFF office at



Kimberley A. Kaupe

[info@affund.org](mailto:info@affund.org) and be on the lookout for an announcement after September of this year. If you are interested in hearing from an involved family member about the BETS program, please contact me directly at [KimKaupe@gmail.com](mailto:KimKaupe@gmail.com). I look forward to not only what the BETS board can do in the future but the rippling good deeds that the previous BETS boards have already set forth.

## Andrus Youth Service Program Update

By Masiel Rodriquez-Vars  
AYSP Coordinator

Each year, I am more impressed by the confidence and gusto with which the family's youngest philanthropists approach their grantmaking opportunities. This year's AYSP class – many of whom are first-year participants – has taken firm hold of the philanthropic reins. Here are a few highlights of their work this year:

Fifteen-year-old Sam Downes leveraged his carpool connections to explore local grantmaking opportunities. One of his friend's mothers was the director of his town's United Way Agency and another worked in the local Head Start program. Both turned out to be great resources for connecting Sam to grantmaking interests that he had identified. They also exposed him to new opportunities.

Sam's initial interests focused on environmental initiatives. But after learning about the impact that the Head Start program has on underprivileged youth in his community, he grew more excited about supporting their work. Sam contacted the director of the Head Start program and signed up to spend part

of his summer volunteering at the agency. He will be working directly with the children in the classroom. As a first-year AYSPer, Sam quickly dove right into serving his community!

In her second year of AYSP, Abigail Earley is tackling some challenging philanthropic questions: Should I support large, established organizations or smaller, less-funded ones? How much can/should I direct the use of funds within an organization? Abigail identified two compelling local agencies as potential grantees this year, and after volunteering at both she was stumped about which should receive the award.

Christian Children's Home of Ohio is a tightly organized, well-funded agency that effectively provides a range of services to youth and families, ranging from foster care programs to equestrian therapy and leadership courses for youth. Abigail was impressed by their impressive track record. She was concerned, however, that she would have less of an opportunity to direct a grant to this large organization with multiple programs. Change

through Chance, a local program that uses equestrian therapy to help people with disabilities, is a less-established agency. Abigail was impressed by the staff dedication and the resiliency of the organization. "They really care about the work they do, and the people they serve." Abigail reflected. "One of their buildings recently caught on fire, but they kept going. I think that says something."

Alison Pakradooni shares her cousin's desire to help organizations that do not receive substantial grant support. After researching a few larger organizations addressing both her concern for the environment and her interest in helping struggling families, Alison chose to support the Central Park Food Ministry (CFM) in nearby Reading, Pennsylvania. Alison reports that Reading is one of the country's poorest cities. Through her research, she learned that CFM serves Reading's poorest residents, including a growing number of children. Alison was also attracted to CFM's focused work. Their mission is to feed Reading's poor – and they do it well, day in and day out. "It is hard deciding



Masiel Rodriquez-Vars

which organization should receive a grant," explains Alison. "But, in the end, I realized it was very important for me to help an organization that helps people with basic needs and that doesn't already get a lot of attention."

Fellow first-year AYSPer, Peter Wear, also used his grantmaking opportunity to address issues in his nearby city. Peter, a dedicated artist, researched programs that used the arts to improve the world. Through his research and volunteer work at a local art center, Peter identified a program that combats graffiti in Minneapolis. "It's been great to get the chance to award a grant in an area that you are personally excited about," says Peter.

The 2010 class of AYSP participants also includes: Sam and John Jasper, Zelpha and Wadsworth Williams, and Aedin Wright. AYSP participants will present their grants to the AFF Board via conference call this fall, a wonderful opportunity for the older generation to get a first-hand feel for how this family's philanthropic seeds are blooming.

## Newark Museum Honors David Grant



David Grant

By Jennifer L. Kasoff

David Grant, Surdna board member since 2004, was awarded the Newark Museum Centennial Medal, its highest honor, in May 2010. The next month, he wrapped up his 12-year tenure as President and CEO of the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation.

"I am extremely honored to be included in the small group who have received the Centennial Medal. In a way, I think the award is about a 35-year relationship between the foundation and the museum, one I inherited in 1998. But I think I also deepened the relationship through Dodge's recent emphasis on technical assistance and capacity building. I ended up working in a workshop setting with quite a number of staff of the museum about the lifecycle of nonprofits and assessment. It underscored our sense of partnership," explains David.

David further explains that the context for this award is the Dodge Foundation's response to the attacks of 9/11. "In the days after the attack, we put out a really quick Request for Proposals to allow grantees to respond to this moment in ways that fit their missions. The whole process of RFP, review, and funding took three weeks. It was not business as usual. The absolute star response was from the Newark Museum. They transformed their central courtyard into a 'garden of remembrance' which evoked a time in Medieval Spain when the three great monotheistic religions lived together in harmony.

This became a magnet for the state of New Jersey as a place of healing, coming together to learn, and to find hope for the future. I consider that one of the great moments of our partnership. We were able to make resources available. They

seized the opportunity. Together, we were able to serve the people of our state."

This award capped David's 12-year term at the Dodge Foundation. "It was a great pleasure and privilege to lead the Dodge Foundation. My wife is a deep-rooted New Englander, so when we decided to move to New Jersey, we said ten years would be the limit. I stretched that a bit. But Vermont, more than any other place in our adult lives, feels like home. Our kids were raised here, and we founded a school here. All along, I considered this a move back home. I found a second emotional home at Dodge so I feel lucky to feel that way about two places."

David isn't sure what his next step will be. "I knew I couldn't answer that question while at Dodge because of the demands of the job. I wanted to take a few months off to 'let the tanks fill up,' as Mark Twain said." He is considering creating a persona as The Board Whisperer (with a website of the same name), finding a creative way to be in a teaching role again, and perhaps writing a book. "I would either write a book-length version of my work in assessment, *Measuring What Matters*, or I'm toying with a book called *Ten Metaphors That Could Save the World*."

Whatever comes next for David professionally, he is very much looking forward to enjoying his final year on the Surdna board. "I want to savor this last year because it will be the first year of my tenure at Surdna that I'm not trying to juggle the demands of the Dodge Foundation. I hope to go on trustee learning days and trips. I look forward to the learning that goes with being on the Surdna board."

## Mexicue

During this past summer Thomas Kelly launched a food truck called Mexicue and has had a very exciting first few months of business. See a review in the Gothamist below. Come check it out if you live in NYC. Schedule of locations can be found at [www.mexicueny.com](http://www.mexicueny.com).

**Gothamist - July 29, 2010**

Mexicue: Just when you think there's a food truck for everything, some new food truck has to wheel into town and prove you wrong. Luckily for us, this one means business: Mexicue, opened Monday, is a "sweet, sweet love child of red-hot Mexican cuisine and down-home, barbeque goodness."

On their web site they write: "We've got your deceptively familiar tacos, sliders, quesadillas and tamales but every



A very long line

*Hot off the press of the New York Times' Diner's Journal: Mexicue was named one of the five (5) finalists for the Vendy Rookie Award! Called "the Oscars of food for the real New York" by Chef Mario Batali, the Vendy Awards are New York City's annual competition for the title of Best Street Food Vendor.*

thing's reinvented in tasty and surprising ways. We're big on using local food sources and changing our menu according to what's fresh and available. That means you get new an [sic] ever-changing menu." So far, the food cart offers selections like oak smoked short ribs with salsa verde and aged white cheddar (\$4), fresh house chorizo smoked in alder wood, habanero aioli slaw, goat feta, and fresh cilantro, burnt ends brisket with Mexican rub and arbol BBQ sauce, and BBQ beets with crumbled goat cheese (\$3). "This could be a game changer," writes Midtown Lunch. "Menu looks pretty great to say the least."



Surdna and AFF Staff wait at the end of the line

Better up your social networking game if you want to stay on top of their ever-shifting location via Facebook or Twitter (@mexicue); the cart - painted a flamboyant shade of orange - serves food at 23rd Street and Park Ave on Monday, Bryant Park in Midtown on Tuesday, 52nd Street and Park Avenue on Wednesday, Financial District on Thursday, and 48th Street, Sixth Avenue on Friday and SoHo and Brooklyn on Saturday. But be sure to hone in quick - just one day after opening, Mexicue had already sold out by 2 p.m.!



Continued from cover

that fit within the theme of resident engagement. No unsolicited proposals are considered. In the first year, Surdna made eleven grants of around \$100,000 each. "These are modest-sized grants to local, often small, organizations that are having 'outsized' impact on the ground," explains Lynn.

First-year grantees covered a variety of areas, including the environment, community revitalization, arts programs, and improving economic opportunities. The agencies that received funding in 2008-09 were: Coalition to Restore Coastal Louisiana, Friends of WWOZ, Active Voice, Preservation Resource Center of New Orleans, SEEDCO, Sweet Home New Orleans, Greater New Orleans Afterschool Partnership, Mary Queen of Vietnam CDC, Louisiana Disaster Recovery Foundation, Neighborhood Partnership Network, and Gulf Coast Fund for Community Renewal and Ecological Health.

Sweet Home New Orleans works with artists and musicians to ensure they are paid for their work. Jee describes this group's work as "a blend of advocacy and organizing to ensure musicians are paid for their work." The organization also provides housing renovation assistance and other support services.

Surdna has also supported the New Orleans Youth Organizing Collaborative, building a network of organizations that work with young people in multi-racial communities. Recent campaign work included developing a platform of youth issues that mayoral candidates addresses and debated. "In a city that had no infrastructure for getting young people involved in civic life, this has really grown to true involvement," says Jee. Beyond funding, Surdna also provides support to grantees in the form of relationship building with other funders, exposure to work taking place elsewhere, access to a national network of technical assistance providers, documentation, and convening of grantees to learn from each other. With the newest crisis of the oil spill in the Gulf region, Surdna gave additional funding to two environmental organizations there for rapid response efforts.

Jee and Lynn both pointed to the incredible civic response from local organizations to the oil spill, responses that come directly out of the civic engagement these organizations have worked so hard to achieve since Hurricane Katrina. Five years after Katrina, donors to the area had started pulling out a bit. The oil spill re-focused attention on the area. "It's an important moment for philanthropy to stay invested in this area. We hope Surdna can help amplify these concerns," explains Lynn.

## Family Website Re-Launch

By Jennifer Pakradooni

Our family web site, [www.andrusfamilysite.org](http://www.andrusfamilysite.org), has re-launched!

Several years ago, our cousin, Bob Hedlund, developed our very first family website, [www.andrusfamilysite.org](http://www.andrusfamilysite.org). This site was a fantastic start at putting our family's history online to share. Over time, however, the burden to update and refresh the content became overwhelming for Bob to handle alone. Last year, cousins Thomas Kelly and Jennifer Pakradooni volunteered to work with Bob to preserve the work that had been done on the original site and begin to look at more interactive and less time-consuming ways to involve the wider family.

The idea behind the re-launch has been to encourage as many family members as possible to visit the website on a regular basis to generate more interest in the family as a whole and encourage more people to get involved in our philanthropies. At the end of May, we re-launched our new Andrus family online community website. Family members can contribute content, comment on articles, post family photos, learn about opportunities to get involved with our family's philanthropies, and much more.

Please keep in mind that we do not have email addresses for all family members. If you know of a family member who has not received an email invite already, please send a message to Thomas at [tmkelly3@gmail.com](mailto:tmkelly3@gmail.com) or Jennifer at [pakradooni@hotmail.com](mailto:pakradooni@hotmail.com), and we will send an invite.

## Surdna Hires New Program Officer for Foundation Initiatives

By Jennifer L. Kasoff



Amy Morris

Amy Morris joined Surdna as the Program Officer for Foundation Initiatives in the spring of 2010. This new venture takes the lead on all cross-programmatic areas at the foundation. Amy's varied professional and academic experiences—high school teacher, union researcher, human rights advocate, graduate degree in public policy—provide an excellent background for her in this new role. "In my career I've always wanted to be able to bring together policy and education," she explains. Add her background engaging youth in social change to the mix, and Surdna looks like an excellent fit.

"I had known about Surdna for a long time, especially about the Effective Citizenry program. I was looking for a transition that would allow me to think about issues I care about on a higher level and affect change systemically. I was drawn to the position because of the cross-program work and issue focus. I had a lot of experiences in different fields that can be useful in this role. It's unique to not come out of one specific field," says Amy.

Her first project has been to think through how leadership development and organizing strategies can be infused across the program areas. "I'm really excited about that. Each program area offers unique opportunities to think about ways to build leadership to create much stronger organizing mechanisms within communities."

Amy was particularly impressed by her first few weeks at Surdna. "I have never started to work anywhere where so much thought has gone into my orientation. The thoughtfulness and care with which it was put together was just remarkable. My calendar was full for three weeks out on my first day with people I needed to meet, and I was greeted by a pile of pertinent reading on my desk."

## Surdna's New Program Director for Foundation Initiatives



Jee Kim

By Jennifer L. Kasoff

After seven years at the Surdna Foundation, Jee Kim took the reins of the new Foundation Initiatives when it was created last year. His previous position with the Effective Citizenry program was phased out as part of the mission revision completed last year. "It's a new way of working for the foundation that emphasizes collaboration. We want to do this very carefully, with board and staff involved. It's been a very deliberate process," explains Jee.

Jee came to Surdna after a journalism career, covering mostly urban political issues such as immigration, police-community relations, and education in New York City. He also worked on community building for media companies. Throughout his career, Jee has always worked as a community activist.

With Jee as Program Director, newly hired Program Officer Amy Morris, and Senior Program Associate Stefania Vanin on board, the program is fully up and running. "Foundation Initiatives is set

up to help facilitate thinking within and across programs as a new way to work and create innovative opportunities. In this period of guideline revision for the programs, we have been helping with R&D. We played a role in helping Strong Local Economies look at workforces and economic development. We worked with the arts program on the role of artists engaged in social change. We help wherever we can in the core programs. At the same time, we look at new ideas at the intersection of issues, such as the role of food systems in multiple programs," reports Jee.

An early example of the type of cross-programmatic effort facilitated and managed by Foundation Initiatives is Surdna's New Orleans Fund. For more information about this foundation-wide project, please read the cover story of *Concinnity*.

## Kelly Nowlin Joins Surdna Board



Kelly Nowlin

By Jennifer L. Kasoff

Kelly Nowlin, a founding Andrus Family Fund board member, is the newest member of the Surdna board. She began her twelve-year term in February 2010. Kelly learned about the family's philanthropic activities from her aunt, Edie Thorpe. "She exposed me to information and family opportunities and motivated me to explore it further. The more I learned, the more interested I became," explains Kelly. She joined seven other cousins in 2000 to create the Andrus Family Fund. "It was the richest, fullest experience. I could not have asked for more. I served a seven-year term and got to be a special part of it to formulate the program areas and work with cousins and staff to build a framework and see some success and momentum from it."

One of the reasons for creating AFF was to gauge interest in future family philanthropy commitments. Kelly is very excited to join the Surdna board after her AFF experience, and acknowledges that it is a new level of commitment. "I believe in the work, especially the environmental aspect of it. It is a gift to serve with Aunt Edie on the same board and learn from her experience because she is the inspiration for me." She is particularly excited to join the Board at a time when Surdna has recently re-defined its mission and program areas.

On a personal level, Kelly felt this was the right time for her to take on the new challenge. Her children, Haley, age 10, and Jack, age 8, are no longer the babies they were when she served on the AFF board. She's returned to the business world by launching her own new business this past year. "When I am engaged in the work, it is so magnificent that it's energizing. It's really exciting," she says. She commends Surdna's program staff for sharing so much knowledge in such an engaging manner with the Board.

## DOERS

### Stephanie Cardon's MFA Work

By Jennifer L. Kasoff

After two intense years of work on her Masters of Fine Arts at The Massachusetts College of Art and Design (MassArt), Stephanie Cardon exhibited her thesis work in a polished and well received exhibition in Boston in May 2010. Stephanie received her degree the same month.

Of the MFA program, she says, "It was a lot more intensive than I had even anticipated. There's a critical studies component that includes core classes about the history of contemporary art to deepen your knowledge of art practices and help you figure out your perspec-

tive as an artist, as well as the obvious studio component." In addition to coursework, studio work for various classes, and her own personal art work, she taught an undergraduate class in digital photography during her final semester. Stephanie loved teaching her first class. To prepare for teaching a class in digital photography, she "had to learn the tools forwards and backwards, to know them perfectly and explain them to a group of undergraduates." Half of her students were non-art students (a mix of liberal arts and science backgrounds), and she says they brought a new perspective to the

class. In turn, they learned what hard work is truly required of art students.

Her own hard work paid off in this culminating exhibition. "You start thinking of the thesis show at the end of the first year because that midway summer is a vital time to work. I entered the program with a photography focus, but over that summer I switched to the Studio for Inter-related Media, a much broader department with a conceptual focus. The emphasis isn't on any particular medium, but on developing an idea into a piece and choosing the medium that suits



it best. It was the right decision for me. But I had to learn a lot in the second year: I started with a video-sculpture class, and honed my wood-working and building skills, and it was then that I began work on *Echo's Chamber*."

*Echo's Chamber*—a physical installation that links pre-recorded sound and viewer-created echoes—was one of her three pieces included in the exhibit and links strongly to her first degree in literature and history. "I wrote the text to retell the ancient Greek myth of Echo and emphasize the frustration a creative person would experience were she to lose her voice. The text became an interior monologue in which she plays two characters. She is both victim and bully. She ruminates on past mistakes and memories," explains Stephanie.

While experiencing this artwork, the viewer hears a recording of Stephanie's text, and their presence in the structure generates an echo of its own that mixes with her tale. Microphones in the floor pick up footsteps and creaks in the physical structure as viewers enter the piece.

The final piece, *Landor's Cottage*, footnoted, started with Edgar Allen Poe's last published tale. "It's an often overlooked story because nothing happens in terms of plot. It's about a man who is walking through a landscape in the Hudson River Valley. He sees a cottage and starts to describe the landscape around it in precise measurements and orientations, making a number of references to Picturesque-style landscape gardening. It's a very strange text. He comes to the door and knocks, a woman opens the door, and the story ends."

Stephanie explains that she was fascinated by how little Poe gives away, yet how much detail with which he loaded his language. The artwork she created around this story includes a book, a desk (made of the wood of one of the trees in the tale), a map determined by the language, and 103 detailed footnotes about Poe's life, loves, and her research into the story. "Gradually, the footnotes



Stephanie Cardon's *Echo's Chamber*



Stephanie Cardon's *Echo's Chamber*

"That aspect of the sound work was subtle. I wanted people to second guess what they are hearing. The idea was to alter the visitor's sense of the space around them – make it more confusing," she says.

Stephanie's work pulls strongly from her studies of literature and history and antiquity. Her second piece in the show, *My Dear Tacitus*, is a series of etchings of black floor plans on white paper that unite private homes in Pompeii, destroyed by the eruption of Vesuvius in AD 79, with the eyewitness account of young naturalist Pliny the Younger. "I started this piece in 2008 at the height of the real estate crash, thinking of the idea of domestic space being threatened and how easily these spaces can be lost. I like that the floor-plans remove the immediate evidence of these homes being in ruins and could pass as contemporary spaces."

take on a more fictional tone and re-interpret the story to my own liking, as a murder mystery backed by scholarly fact." Those interested in reading this piece should go to <http://landor.stephaniecardon.com>.

With her MFA complete, Stephanie is ready to embark on the next stage of her art career. Staying in Boston, she is currently looking for a teaching job and preparing for a solo show next summer at the Kingston Gallery, in Boston's South End art district. To learn more about her work, please go to [www.stephaniecardon.com](http://www.stephaniecardon.com).

## Naomi Wright's Global Citizen Year



Naomi Wright

By Jennifer L. Kasoff

Naomi Wright, daughter of Bruce Abernethy and Mary Meador, will be travelling abroad on the Global Citizen Year (GCY) program this fall. GCY is a program for high school graduates looking to take a gap year that combines travel, service work, and cultural immersion. Naomi will be a part of the second year of fellows.

"I had been applying to colleges and took a deep breath and asked what I really wanted to do. My fantasy would be to go to a foreign country, learn the language, and help people there. I talked to my grandfather, David Abernethy, about this over Christmas, and he told me about the program," explains Naomi. She hadn't even been aware that her grandfather, a political science professor, had helped train the first group of fellows the previous year.

Naomi will embark on this adventure in September 2010. The year begins with pre-training in the Bay Area, then off to Senegal (Naomi's destination), Brazil, or Ecuador for eight months, and ends with one month of a capstone project to bring the work back to her home area of Bend, Oregon. "The goal of the program is to train a new generation of leaders. While we're abroad, we blog, make videos, and post photos so that our community at home can be on the journey with us."

To prepare for her Global Citizen Year, Naomi has spent the summer at home sending personal letters to "everyone I know." She helped to create a community art installation in Bend—living trees accompanied by recycled paper leaves that people can decorate with something that represents themselves and what their views of global citizenship are. "Metaphorically, my roots are in Bend, but I will be abroad. It was great to see others' definitions," she explains.

Naomi's family and friends have been very supportive of her choice to join this program for a gap year. With five years of French language instruction under her belt, Naomi has a good language base for living in Senegal, but she also has plenty to learn.

"What scares me the most is being so completely immersed in a foreign culture. We spend the first two months with other fellows and then move into a village to take on an internship—in a health clinic, water safety, teaching, arts education. I'm most excited for the challenge of working with an organization, with new people, and forming new relationships with the local people and other fellows."

To learn more about Global Citizen Year, please go to <http://globalcitizenyear.org/>.

# A Year in Costa Rica



Liz zip-lining

Liz Wilson, her three children, and her 25-year-old niece, Katie Filardo, spent the last year living in Costa Rica. We asked Liz about their experience.

## How did you decide to take a year abroad?

After the death of my husband, John Griffith, in 2007, I began to feel a need to forge new pathways for me and my kids as a family. Since John's death, everything around us had stayed the same—the external aspects of our lives—but, really, everything had changed. I knew I needed to find a way to alter our outward lives to match the difference we all faced internally. I also knew that I wanted whatever we would do to be productive and transformative, not only in a healing sense, but also as a source of indelible life experience and education for all of us.

## How did you decide on Costa Rica?

At the check-in of our April 2008 AFF board meeting, I had shared my thinking with the group about wanting to live abroad. Davis Benedict approached me later and mentioned that her brother lived in Costa Rica and perhaps I could talk to him about life there. Light bulb! Thank you, Davis! Although I had been processing many options for months, I knew at that moment this was the place. Politically stable, no glaring public health issues, good health care, high value on education, potable water—all these satisfied my stability requirements for a single mom traveling with three young kids. I certainly wanted adventure, but I really didn't want danger OR diarrhea. It was important to me that Costa Rica offered the opportunity to live amidst abundant nature and where another language was spoken. Costa Rica and its people with their *pura vida* (pure life) ways, delivered!

## Where did you live?

We lived in Monteverde, a Berkeley-esque town of about 2,400 people, situated at 4,500 feet in the mountains of the cloud forest. You take a curvy, bumpy, dirt road uphill for the final hour of any trip to get there. In 1951, Monteverde was homesteaded by a small group of American-born Quakers who were drawn to Costa Rica in large part because it had recently abolished its army and the death penalty. Sunday Quaker meetings at the Friends School became a spirit-

ual home base for me and a way to help my kids better know John, who was strongly influenced by his 16 years of Quaker education.

## What was life like in Monteverde?

Our form of living was much more tranquilo, for sure. We had no car, no cell phones, no TV, and our home internet was dial-up! On the whole, we spent our year unplugged and on foot. Walking graced us with countless natural wonders of the cloud forest—among our favorites: morpho butterflies, toucans, motmots, monkeys, strangler fig trees, tarantulas, frequent rainbows...it's hard to stop. As well, a simple one kilometer walk could lead to five different conversations along the way. I loved it!

The kids attended the Cloud Forest School, an environmentally-focused, bilingual, year-round school. We were one of seven families from the states who had come for a year. The friendships formed within this group, as well as the presence of my niece, Katie, largely accounted for the ease of our transition. My kids left the house every weekday morning from July through June at 7 a.m. to walk the half kilometer to the bus stop without a fuss—a great indicator of their contentment with their school.

## What were your children's favorite parts of living there?

Henry, age 8, says: "Trees and friends. Climbing the guayaba (guava) tree at school. Luke "treewalker" St. Clair, my best friend."

Anna, age 10, says: "The animals like the scarlet macaws, monkeys, scorpions. Walking with my friends to the Cheese Factory to get ice cream. Running around the forest. Playing soccer in the meadow. Riding horseback because I got to be free on my horse and gallop."

Isabel, age 13, says: "I adored my Spanish teachers and speaking Spanish better than anyone in my family, except Katie. My friends were the best. Having Katie with us was like having an older sister and personal guidance counselor. Vacations."

## Did you have the chance to explore Costa Rica?

We traveled the country extensively. An added factor in choosing Costa Rica was its proximity to the U.S. and the likelihood of attracting visitors. And that we did! We had 10 different groups of family and friends visit us, including Andrus relatives: the whole Larry Griffith family each at different times and Kate and Ken Downes' family. It was a blast to explore and share our space with people. We saw so much. Sea turtles laying eggs, baby turtles going to sea, volcanoes. We swam in hot springs and beaches. We rode horses, zip lines, and white water rafts. We hiked to waterfalls, rappelled down waterfalls—phew—you get the picture.

## What are your take-aways?

Well, we are literally taking part of Monteverde home in the form of a tenth-grade exchange student named Freddy Obando. He is a student at the Cloud Forest School who caught our attention and had a strong desire to live and study in the U.S. I felt like this would be a great way to extend our cultural education by seeing our own lives through someone else's eyes and to maintain our use of Spanish. I also felt a need to mix it up a little on the home front.

## Do you want to go back?

I am working on ways to return regularly! I would like to design unique travel opportunities that focus on sport as the centerpiece for cultural exchange and draw on the United Nations' concept of Sport for Peace and Development. In addition to its known attributes, Costa Rica has a wealth of playing fields, quality athletic facilities, and no shortage of safe and scenic roads to run on, as well as the University for Peace, located just outside of San Jose, Costa Rica's capital. So with the combination of access to the U for Peace and eager partners at the multisport complexes, I'm hoping to generate interest among individuals, small groups, teams, and coaches here in the U.S. and abroad. Stay tuned!



# WHAT'S HAPPENING AT...

## Andrus on Hudson



Bunny with residents in the dining room



Sister Anne Scappini, Head of Resident Council, with Bunny



Anthony Tozzi with Bunny

### By Carol Cardon

Andrus on Hudson, Helen Benedict's "grand ocean liner" sails into the next decade as a fully occupied skilled nursing facility. Major work will start on the exterior of the building starting with scaffolding the A and B wing, replacing the roofs first then continuing down the building to do the masonry work and terraces. Work will commence around August and take appropriately a year to complete. Board members McCain McMurray and Bob Cadoux, have been actively involved in assisting AOH's Director, Betsy Biddle, in launching this crucial restoration program. New board members, Bob Hedlund and Beth Shogren, a professional in the field of construction, are also participating in this ambitious undertaking.

Within the building there are exciting changes happening on the main floor – the huge living room is undergoing a total facelift and will soon meet the high standards of Helen Benedict: restoration of the ceiling, new curtains, upholstery and the floor will be restored. Plans for the creation of an ecumenical place of worship on the main floor proceed, a project of inestimable importance for all who live at Andrus.



Sister Monica Galligan (on left) and Sister Kathryn Fitzgerald (on right)

The grounds are well maintained by George Speno and Bobby Speno. We are sad to report that this past spring, George retired as head gardener after 38 years of dedicated work. He will be sorely missed. With help from others, Bobby will continue mowing acres of lawn, maintaining the putting green, the gardens, the apple orchard and the arboretum. Such maintenance is essential to the well being of all who reside at Andrus. This landscape is such an important asset, one that sets Andrus apart from so many neighboring nursing facilities. We encourage

all Andrus family members to come walk the grounds, breath in the salubrious air of the Hudson River Valley and admire the grounds offset by the majestic Palisades. The site is truly exceptional, and John Andrus was as ever so clever in purchasing these 26 acres of prime real estate.

In the context of real estate, The Helen Andrus Benedict Foundation has given Andrus on Hudson control of Helen Benedict's residence on the property. This building will become a useful extension of the Andrus campus.

Let us now proceed to the heart of the institution: residential life. The census over the past year has remained stable, 193 of our 197 beds were filled all year. Despite increasing low acuity residents remain admirably active. The short-term therapy division is thriving. The physical therapy department on the ground floor is always full and busy – a good sign to see it so well attended. Chair yoga, walking the grounds and other exercises such as Wii Bowling (purchased by residents from their tag and art/craft sale) - all these exercise are well attended.

Weekly art classes continue under the direction of Diane Kreisler with a focus on crafts to be sold at the annual fall holiday bazaar. There is a faithful small group of gifted knitters, sewers who assist in the creation of holiday ornaments used for seasonal decoration at Andrus. An eight-week class on floral fantasy was funded by HABF. Furthermore, the work of the three Andrus residents was selected for the New York Association of Homes and Services for the Aging (NYHASA) traveling art exhibition – an exciting affirmation of their talents.

Music fills the floors once again as Jane has resumed her position as Music Therapist. Outside musicians, choral groups are invited on a regular basis to come and give concerts at Andrus. The highlight of May was "fashion week". The staff resident fashion show was incredibly well attended by everyone and a resounding success to celebrate Nursing Home Week. 13 staff and 13 residents strutted, sidled, glided, and wheeled themselves down the aisle of a packed auditorium. Great fashion commentary and music accompanied the models. The event was

a celebration of the friendships and good relationships that exist between the staff, the residents and their families.

Spiritual life: Mass continues to be celebrated every day. Rabbi Kentner comes once a week to facilitate discussion of comparative religion. This past year Passover was led by Sandy Schrier our Director of Social Work, assisted by her daughter and classmates from her Jewish school.

Community involvement: The Masters School at Dobbs Ferry continues to send students. Juried Art shows take place at Andrus. Hastings PBA remains very active in its support of AOH. In April they hosted a game of Big Bingo, attended by 60 seniors from the community and 30 AOH residents; an apparition of the Easter bunny in March were two of the most popular recent PBA events. HABF continues to host their annual grantee meetings at Andrus. These very lively meetings bring leaders of the Yonkers and Westchester community to Andrus. Elder concerns are discussed and major networking transpires.

HABF funds art shows organized by Elder Craftsmen, and Matters of the Heart, both of which are exhibited at Andrus and throughout Westchester County.

Throughout the summer months there are weekly barbecues. The annual outing to the Travelers Rest took place in May. The outing is financed by a fund that Helen Benedict set up for this occasion. In recognition of her vision and generosity there is an elegant garden party held in her memory every August at the time of her birthday (August 23rd) to which any interested Andrus family member is invited. This years date is Thursday, August 19th.

We all congratulate Josie Lowman, Chairman of the Board and Betsy Biddle, Executive Director, and her staff for ably steering Andrus on Hudson through the "rough seas" created by the Berger Commission. Their professionalism, dedication, and vision ensure the future of this great institution. Andrus on Hudson sails forth, full steam ahead.



# SURDNA AND NEW ORLEANS



Aerial shot of wetlands



Painting on window of house at Ninth Ward



View of Marsh



Columbia Parc, a new mixed-income rental community in the Gentilly neighborhood of New Orleans



Aerial view of wetlands



White House Council on Environmental Quality Chair Nancy Sutley speaks during a visit to the Bayou Bienvenue Coastal Restoration Site in New Orleans' lower Ninth Ward on Thursday, October 15, 2009



Columbia Parc, a new mixed-income rental community in the Gentilly neighborhood of New Orleans





Landfill in New Orleans East



Houses built on 8 feet stilts to avoid flood waters



Cypress trees in Bayou Bienvenue



Some of Surdna's Board and staff members standing on top of levee



# Andrus Children's Center / Julia Dyckman Andrus Memorial



The smiles on the faces of children Andrus serves in our therapeutic nursery programs in Peekskill say it all. We offer similar services in Yonkers and White Plains.

**By Nancy Woodruff Ment, LCSW  
President and CEO**

Last year's update centered on the economic challenges that the Children's Center faced as the Great Recession held us all in its thrall. This year, there are reasons to be hopeful about the economy, but organizations like ours that depend upon public reimbursements and donor support still face at least two to three more years of fiscal constraint.

While careful use of resources continues to be the order of our day, I am pleased to report that our Mission is flourishing as more than 2500 children seek and receive the care and healing for which the Andrus Children's Center is known. As we engage in the exciting work of rebuilding lives gripped by trauma and loss, neglect and emotional illness, we find that both the children in our care and the agency itself have dug deep within themselves to find resources of strength and hope for a brighter future. Founder John Emory Andrus envisioned his wife Julia's family farm as a City of Orphans – 2000 strong. We have realized that goal and continue to grow as new partnerships, creative collaborations, and dedicated stewardship take root on the grounds of the apple orchard and around Westchester County.

In 2007, Board and leadership dedicated ourselves to a process of refining a Strategic Plan to see us well into the 21st century. This plan, with its Mission, goals, and objectives, is a capacity-building plan designed to ensure we have the skills, competencies, and resources to move forward boldly and confidently. Through the dedication of countless hours and meetings, conference calls, drafts and re-writes, we have crafted a Plan that we believe capitalizes on our strengths and steers a wise course around known and unknown obstacles.

We are proud of the revitalized phrasing of our Mission that captures our commitment to bring hope to children not only through direct programs but also through influencing the quality of care in policy and practice far beyond our own walls. Our Mission Statement reads: The Andrus Children's Center nurtures social and emotional well-being in children and their families by delivering a broad range of vital services and by providing research, training and innovative program models that promote standards of excellence for professional performance in and beyond our service community.



The State of New York's Legislature still, even at this writing in early July, has not confirmed the current fiscal year's budget. We continue to plan conservatively and assume the worst in financial reimbursements from the State and County. Certain

State mandates have already been enacted as our Mental Health Division develops a plan of services to meet the requirements under Clinic Re-Structuring, an initiative that will forcibly change how we deliver services to young children and their parents who seek Sanctuary in Andrus programs. We are choosing to think positively about new opportunities for service under this initiative. Good news did come from Albany in June with the announcement that funding for our Healthy Families New York – a home health care worker visitation program – survived draconian cuts and will continue to support and encourage young parents for another year.

COO Brian Farragher and I held a series of meetings with all employees this past spring to explain the Strategic Planning process and engage our 375 front line workers in a dialogue about how we will monitor our progress. In one of these meetings, a social worker asked me directly "Well, how are we doing?" Her question startled me into recognition of how we can be so concerned with how Andrus is doing in a global way that we lose sight of what that question means to people who depend upon Andrus for their income and self-support.

It took me a moment to formulate an answer and then I did, with both confidence and pride: "We are holding our own. In a difficult and unpredictable environment for our country and for agencies like ours, we are doing well because we have worked hard, made tough choices, and pushed forward to keep our Mission strong." Truly, it is the commitment of our employees that keeps us moving forward.

Over the past five years we have been building capacity to increase our financial support from the private sector. The addition of a full-time grants manager in late 2009 has already resulted in new outreach to various funders and foundations, with the happy news of a two-year, \$150,000 grant from the New York City-based van Ameringen Foundation. A goal of presenting the Center's signature Sanctuary Model® training to a greater audience, both nationally and around the world, gained momentum as Andrus staff trained other child care agencies in Australia, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey during the past 12 months. How gratified we are to know that 100 agencies serving more than 10,000 children now bear certification from the Andrus Center for Learning and Innovation. But it is at home that we are most valuable for children in need. With funding from the Westchester Community Foundation and others, Andrus Children's Center has stepped into public schools in the Yonkers and Peekskill City systems to provide social services and mental health counseling.



Foster Hall manager Ty Hodge welcomes two residents back home after the wonderful renovation of the adolescent boys' residence

Maintaining the historic campus and its rolling, rural acreage continues to be a priority. Foster Hall for adolescent boys, located at the north end of the 110-acre campus, was renovated this year to great acclaim by residents and alumni. Close by Foster Hall is our newest campus resource for introspection and peace—the Labyrinth donated by Liz Wilson in memory of her beloved husband, John Gorman Griffith. When the Andrus Family Fund Board members met on campus in September 2009, walking the labyrinth was a key element in their weekend retreat.

We have had the good fortune to have members of the extended Andrus family serve on our Board of Directors, bringing a heartfelt appreciation for the family legacy along with gifts of time and talent to such service. This spring we welcomed two new family members, Nancy Spensley and Dr. Mary Meador, to our Board and their commitment is already bearing fruit for our work. They join longtime family board members David Earley, Larry Griffith, Ham Pakradooni, Rich Thorpe and, returning this fall from a year's sabbatical, Philip Andrus.

The legacy of John and Julia Dyckman Andrus continues to filter down through the generations. On a warm summer day, our founder's great, great, great granddaughter, Lauren Downes of Shelburne Falls, MA, toured the campus with her mom, Kate Earley Downes, who was in town for an Andrus on Hudson meeting. This sweet fifth grader experienced an orientation to what her forebear had created and gained a new understanding of the heritage that is hers. We welcome everyone to visit and join us in achieving our core purpose: "Nurture Hope in a Child and the World Flourishes."



## Surdna

By Phil Henderson

For the past two years at the Surdna Foundation, we've been working hard on turning our new mission – fostering the development of just and sustainable communities – into areas of concrete grantmaking and action. With the completion over the next twelve months of new grantmaking guidelines, the final closing-out of the remainder of our previous programs and strategies, and the maturation of our new research and development and flexible grantmaking mechanisms, we will complete the pivot of the foundation towards this new mission and our exciting new programs: Sustainable Environments, Thriving Cultures, and Strong Local Economies.

Since the announcement of our new mission in October 2009 and the launch of a new, more dynamic website, the staff and board at Surdna have been working to develop specific new grantmaking strategies in each of our three program areas. In two of our programs, Strong Local Economies and Sustainable Environments, guidelines have been completed and are available on the internet, and in the third program, Thriving Cultures, some new areas of grantmaking have been developed and others will be finalized by the end of 2010. Grantmaking guidelines are a critical milestone in the fleshing out of our new program strategies emerging from our mission work. These guidelines represent the conclusion of many months of research and development of new ideas and new strategies.

Some of the exciting areas of work that are emerging for Surdna include: stimulating the green economy and green jobs; examining the impact that artists and cultural movements have on social change and on economic development; and seeing the interconnection between how we use and develop land and economic competitiveness and access to employment and housing for the low-income population.

Surdna has been exploring these and other areas of new work through sponsoring and conducting research, hosting expert roundtable discussions in our offices in New York, and making experimental grants to learn more about a particular field or line of inquiry. We are thrilled with the results so far. Both the board and staff are energized by the work that is the culmination of many hours of discussion and deliberation over the past two years. In the coming year, we will continue to refine our ideas through ongoing research and development.

One important innovation inside the Foundation is our new Foundation Initiatives (FI) mechanism. FI has fueled our research and development into areas such as the role of manufacturing in the new economy or the role of naturally occurring culture districts in the revitalization of our cities. FI will continue to serve as the Foundation's source of flexible funds to pursue new ideas and to respond to external, unforeseen developments such as the impact that disasters like the BP oil spill in the Gulf have on our standing work on coastal wetlands in the Mississippi Delta and in the New Orleans economy. Staffed by a group of three, Foundation Initiatives is designed to be a resource for programs to explore new ideas and as a source of funds for short- and medium-term grantmaking initiatives. We are particularly energized by the use of Foundation Initiatives to spur the many areas of work that intersect traditional program boundaries.

In addition to the launch of new program work, we are in the midst of some other interesting developments at the Foundation. The launch of our new website last fall has allowed us to be much more proactive communicators about our work and our grantees. Once a month, we post a commentary, either written by a guest commentator or by a member of Surdna staff, on timely topic. So far, commentaries have focused on issues including a major summit in Washington, DC on reviving the nation's "automobile cities" like Detroit and Flint, the outcome of the Copenhagen climate negotiations, and the efforts to create jobs in the United States.

In addition to the commentaries, we also have a monthly "Grantee Spotlight" feature, which highlights the work of a particularly interesting organization Surdna funds. We have highlighted groups including Associated Black Charities in Baltimore, Mattress Factory in Pittsburgh, and Smart Growth America in Washington, DC.

Finally, in 2009, as a part of our effort to embrace the spirit of our mission of sustainability and to reflect the forward-looking nature of our new mission, for the first year ever, Surdna published its annual report exclusively electronically. The 2009 report can be found on our website and the 2010 version will be available at the end of this year. All of these items and much more can be found at our website: [www.surdna.org](http://www.surdna.org).

## Andrus Family Fund

By Davis Benedict and Laurie Stavisky

In September 2009, Andrus Family Fund board members and staff held a weekend-long retreat – the first in five years. The impetus for this was multi-faceted, but one goal stood out. Although AFF had reached its ten-year milestone, we were now a "new" board, one without any founding members. We all yearned to feel connected to the work we were doing in the board room. We needed to step away from business as usual and pay attention to our own transitions. This time away proved to be invaluable to the continued work of AFF.

*Are you 25-45 years old? Are you interested in serving on the AFF board? If so, email [info@affund.org](mailto:info@affund.org) to indicate your interest by December 1, 2010.*

We were fortunate to have Dr. Kathy White, someone with years of experience in consulting to organizations and in leadership development, facilitate our meetings. Through Dr. White's leadership and guidance, AFF board members and staff had the opportunity to reevaluate, reenergize, and renew our deep sense of commitment to the work and mission of the Andrus Family Fund. Our time together, coupled with Dr. White's exceptional leadership skills, allowed us to forge a common vision and offered us an opportunity to develop new strategies for the future.

For over a decade, AFF has incorporated William Bridges' Transition Framework into all aspects of our work. (The basic premise is that transition is fundamentally different than change and requires attention to internal process.) Because of our retreat, we have partnered with Community Science, an organization dedicated to developing the knowledge necessary to address social problems in a way that benefits all communities, to conduct an extensive evaluation of the effectiveness of the Transition Framework as it relates to AFF's Community Reconciliation program. With input from grantees, consultants, staff, and board members, Community Science is helping to refine our theory of change in this area. This will allow AFF to better communicate our expectations to applicants and grantees, and to improve our ongoing learning in this program area.

As AFF was designed to be a learning board, another positive outcome of the retreat was the attention paid to board members' individual

### Jon Goldberg of Surdna Promoted



Jon Goldberg was recently promoted to Director of Systems and Communications. Jon has been the Grants Administrator and Manager of Information Systems at Surdna since 1997. All of us at Surdna and AFF congratulate Jon on his new assignment.

### Marc deVenoge celebrates 20 years at Surdna



Congratulations to Marc deVenoge, Chief Financial Officer, on celebrating his 20 year anniversary with the Surdna Foundation.

*Want to keep up with AFF and its grantees? Become an AFF "fan" on Facebook to receive updates and links.*

learning interests as they pertain to AFF's mission. Dr. White guided staff and board members in deep conversations, leading to the charting, grouping, and prioritizing of new learning initiatives. Since the retreat, we have focused on examining issues of power and privilege. At the January and April board meetings, we designed and implemented activities to explore this topic. We are hopeful that this work will lead to a better lens with which to understand and evaluate our grant-making process. In September's meeting, the executive director and a board member

from the Jessie Smith Noyes Foundation (a family foundation that has made a commitment to racial equity) will engage in a discussion with AFF board and staff about the challenges and successes they have had in their learning around issues of power and privilege. Keep an eye out for updates on these efforts.

As a Board, we are grateful to have had the opportunity to attend a retreat together in a neutral environment that was unrestricted by routines. It allowed us more time for reflection and discussion, opening our eyes to new directions, both in learning and procedure. In the hope that members will have more time to work together, learn from each other, and gain a deeper understanding and expertise in AFF's program areas, we decided to extend Board terms from the original two three-year terms to two four-year terms. AFF will be looking for four new members to rotate onto the board in September 2011.

Our retreat was a launch pad for many positive changes. We are all excited by the new opportunities for learning in the upcoming year. We have a new slate of AFF board officers to share with you as well. In September, we welcomed Laurie Stavisky as the new chair, Hans Miller as vice-chair, Michael Klass as treasurer, Stephanie Cardon as secretary and Shanda Lowery-Sachs as transitions keeper.

## Helen Andrus Benedict Foundation



From left to right: Ernie Osborne (from At Home in Somers aging-in-place initiative in Somers, New York), Kate Downes (president of HABF), Lauren Downes (Kate's daughter, who served as a greeter at the reception table), Curtis Au (recipient of a Helen Benedict Scholarship at the school of social work at Fordham University), and Lynn Reichgott (from At Home on the Sound, an aging-in-place initiative in Larchmont/Mamaroneck, NY).

**By Kate Downes and Barbara R. Greenberg**

On behalf of all of us on the HABF board (Colby Andrus, Libby Andrus, Carol Cardon, Kate Downes, Bob Hedlund, Josie Lowman, McCain McMurray, Beth Shrogren, and Michael Spensley), I am delighted to provide an update on our recent activities.

This year brought several transitions within HABF. Fred Moon cycled off the board, and we are grateful for the many years of leadership and wisdom he contributed to HABF in its early years. Also, we were pleased to welcome two new board members, Bob Hedlund, from Boulder, Colorado, and Beth Moon Shogren, from Minneapolis (Fred's daughter!).

### **Aging in Place in the Community**

Nearly everyone wants to grow older in their own home, regardless of physical, cognitive, or economic abilities. HABF is committed to creating good places to grow older in Westchester County, New York. The foundation helped launch a new Yonkers program called Our Folks. Yonkers teens canvassed their low-income neighborhoods, interviewed homeowners, and identified older residents who could use help with yard work and simple home repairs. On work days, teens and older people share lunch together, and then the young people get to work, sprucing up gardens and yards, repairing fences, insulating doors and pipes, and caulking windows.

The biggest surprise to the teens: having the older residents working with them and enjoying the conversation!

Older and younger participants are building special friendships through their visits together. Young people earn small stipends. Older adults save on heating costs and benefit from home repairs and yard work they could not otherwise afford.

Beacon Hill Village in Boston, Massachusetts, is one of the most well-known and successful aging-in-place initiatives in the U.S. This effective membership organization boasts "concierge" services for older adults. A member may call the

concierge and be connected with anything and everything needed—from someone to make household repairs, or install a computer, walk the dog, or provide transportation to the doctor's office. Beacon Hill Village is located within a relatively affluent community which is fortunate to enjoy considerable funding and a large dues-paying membership.

While areas of Westchester are affluent, the challenge in most of the County (and most of the nation) is to pioneer new models for aging in place that are appropriate and affordable for lower- and moderate-income communities.

With funding from HABF, older Westchester adults created a new nonprofit called the Center for Aging in Place Support. Known as CAPS, the Center fosters grassroots efforts by Westchester residents to help themselves and their neighbors' age in place with dignity and independence. Due to CAPS' encouragement of neighborhood groups, Westchester now boasts ten or twelve aging-in-place initiatives scattered across the County. One of these—Gramatan Village in Bronxville—is modeled after Beacon Village. The remaining groups are hybrids, specially tailored to fit diverse communities, urban, suburban and rural, with varying assets and challenges.

CAPS offers the neighborhood groups training and technical assistance, including how to convene community meetings and use surveys or focus groups to assess neighborhood needs. CAPS offers unincorporated neighborhood groups access to liability insurance, and a specialized database to help groups manage their activities and send out mailings. In addition, CAPS makes small grants to aging-in-place neighborhood initiatives to aid them in taking the next steps in their development of informative educational programs, social activities that help neighbors connect with one another, and easier access to the best community services.

Last year, HABF board members visited CAPS' monthly "Village Council" meeting regularly attended by representatives of more than a dozen up-and-running aging in-place neighborhood initiatives, as well as





Our Folks participants, joined by HABF board members. Back row, third from left, Kate Downes (HABF president), McCain McMurray, Carol Cardon, Colby Andrus.

new and developing groups. We had a chance to see in person how CAPS' Village Council fosters information-sharing and problem-solving on common issues.

#### Educational and Networking Meetings for Our Grantees

2009 and 2010 have been difficult years for most Westchester nonprofits given cutbacks in funding from corporations, government, and foundations (including HABF). As we write this article in July 2010, the New York State Legislature has not yet approved the State's budget, which means the County, cities, towns, and nonprofit organizations do not yet know what their income will be for the year. Given this uncertainty, HABF's two educational and networking meetings for grantees this year focused on topics of enduring importance designed to make grantees' work go more smoothly. The November grantee meeting presented effective low-cost marketing techniques for nonprofits, and the June meeting offered grantees practical tools for communicating respectfully in a diverse world. Meeting participants

generally total about 100 people—including our grantees, colleagues in nonprofits and government, and Westchester older adults who are contributing significant time and talent to benefit their neighbors and neighborhoods.

#### Benedict House

As many family members may be aware, the foundation has a residence on the grounds of Andrus on Hudson, previously occupied by its benefactor, Helen Andrus Benedict. Although the home has great architectural significance and beauty, it has, sadly, not been used to its potential. After much deliberation, the Board has decided that the best plan is to transfer ownership back to Andrus on Hudson. We are thrilled to be able to keep the residence in the Andrus family and ensure that it is used to its maximum potential.

As always, we welcome any other family members who are interested in sharing in the Board's exciting and rewarding work.

## Introducing the re-launch of AndrusFamilySite.org!

### What You'll Find:

- a detailed family history timeline
- an interactive family tree
- photos & videos from family members
- info on what's going on with the family philanthropies
- info on getting involved in our philanthropies
- an archive of family publications

...and much more!



Email [andrusfamilysite@gmail.com](mailto:andrusfamilysite@gmail.com) if you did not receive the invitation to join the site.

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## Website Addresses for 5 Family Philanthropies

### Andrus Family Fund

[www.affund.org](http://www.affund.org)  
[www.transitionandsocialchange.org](http://www.transitionandsocialchange.org)

### Andrus-on-Hudson

[www.andrusonhudson.org](http://www.andrusonhudson.org)

### Helen Andrus Benedict Foundation

<http://fdncenter.org/grantmaker/benedict/>

### Julia Dyckman Andrus Memorial, Inc.

[www.andruschildren.org](http://www.andruschildren.org)

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Let us know what you think about our newsletter or submit ideas for the next issue!

**Help us update the family database. Please send your email address to us at [info@affund.org](mailto:info@affund.org).**

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