NEW OPERATIONS MANAGER – RICHARD STULL

Richard joined SAFSF in September. We welcome his experience and expertise in finance and operational management. He loves food and cooking and wants to see that all children have access to healthy food and environments. Richard and his wife have a 13-year-old son, two birds, and a dog. You can contact Richard at the office or by email at richard@safsf.org.

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FOOD AND FARMING IN THE UPPER MIDWEST

April 9-10, 2014

Renaissance Blackstone Chicago Hotel
Chicago, IL

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For more information, contact Karen Lehman at karen@fresh-taste.org

12th ANNUAL FORUM

JUNE 17-19, 2014 in DENVER, COLORADO

STRONGER TOGETHER

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We welcomed four new members to the SAFSF Steering Committee: Stacey Barbas from the Kresge Foundation, Kyle Datta from the Ulupono Initiative in Hawai’i, Livia Marques from the W. K. Kellogg Foundation, and Michael Roberts of First Nations Development Institute. Tim Crosby, Thread Fund, steps into the Co-Chair role as of January 2014.

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Cecily Kihn, Agua Fund, Inc.
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Doris Duke Charitable Foundation
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Our travels this year—both physical and mental—have been extensive. We wandered through little known but gem-like urban gardens in Miami in January, and dished up good food in Memphis style in March. We explored fisheries and culinary training programs among many other things (in Providence in June, and met with food bank leaders in Tucson in September. We closed out the year exploring the overlapping issues of equity, immigration, agriculture, environmental health, and smart growth in communities in the San Joaquin Valley.

My assumptions about what is and what is possible have been blown wide open this year. I have met hundreds of successful, amazing, committed individuals working against huge odds. I am reminded repeatedly that the need for action is absolute and that the need for increased funding is critical. I want us all to celebrate our many efforts and encourage us all to dig deeper and reach higher in the coming months. As the saying goes, “this is not a dress rehearsal.”

Peace and Blessings to each of you,
Virginia Clarke

CREATING COMMON GROUND (CCG) – MOVING FORWARD
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Under CCG, SAFSF took the lead to pull together a rare opportunity for funders to explore the challenges and opportunities of California’s San Joaquin Valley. Entitled Exploring the San Joaquin Valley: A Land of Change and Promise, this event was held December 4-6, 2013 in Fresno, California. Our partners in this important event included CCG partners, Nonprofit Leadership Network, and stakeholders from The Funders Network, the Health and Environment Funders Network, and Grantham Funders Concerned with Immigrants and Refugees. Over the three days, funders were exposed to a vast array of issues. They toured Fresno and surrounding agricultural lands on site visits dedicated to immigration and agriculture, building community leadership, and addressing environmental contamination and health risks in the Valley. The event also included a funder roundtable on philanthropic engagement in the Valley, sessions on some of the critical factors at play in the Valley, and time for sharing reflections, observations, and lessons learned. The more than 40 funders who participated were able to explore the connections between their issues and to engage with other funders in discussions about key opportunities and strategic priorities.

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POLICY BRIEFING – A NEW INITIATIVE
Over the years, SAFSF has explored, discussed, and highlighted aspects of food and agricultural policy by including policy discussions at our annual Forum, facilitating a policy study group, organizing a series of policy-related calls and providing input to help shape policy briefings organized by other agencies and individuals. These efforts have often resulted in effective but singular events. Short-term policy education gains have been followed by little sustained longevity in fostering ongoing communication, collaboration, and competency development around policy formulation.

Beginning in December 2014, SAFSF will host an annual policy briefing designed to promote greater understanding of policy at various levels—local, regional, federal, and international. We hope to have a new cadre of knowledge about different policy, its policies and their potential impact and reach. We expect the briefing series to provide opportunities for sustained coordination and capacity building among philanthropic organizations. An Advisory/Planning Committee is leading the event development, chaired by Carol Pickering at Dieter Partners. We hope you will join us in Washington, DC for our inaugural briefing, December 10-11, 2014. To learn more about how to get involved please contact either pickering@dieterpartners.com or vclarke@safsf.org.

BROADENING THE PALETTE
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STUDY GROUPS
Study Groups provide a virtual meeting space for funders with common interests to collaborate by sharing resources, asking questions, and developing new ideas. There will be four active study groups in 2014: Finance & Investment; Regional Food Economies; School Food; and Urban Agriculture. The study groups have been very beneficial for those who have participated. We will be using Adobe Connect’s online meeting rooms as a new tool to help share information and data in real time. The new technology will make it easier for everyone to participate and stay up to speed on group conversations.

We are pleased to learn these study groups are having an impact: “There was a call about a year ago at the time when I was trying to figure out how our foundation could support and “seed” more community garden activity in our region. I asked the group on the call for input on how to help the gardens connect and build more of a movement, and people had great suggestions. Three people volunteered to have follow-up conversations with me. We ended up making some grants as a result of these calls and the ripple effect from the group and that call in particular is continuing.”

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