



# IGNITING THE SPARK:

## Examples of Next Gen Engagement Strategies

Prepared by the National Center for Family Philanthropy & Youth Philanthropy Connect, a program of The Frieda C. Fox Family Foundation

FRIEDA C. FOX FAMILY FOUNDATION

LOCATED: Studio City, California, with family geographically dispersed

WEBSITE: [www.fcfox.org](http://www.fcfox.org)

MISSION STATEMENT: To maximize the potential of children and youth in Los Angeles and Santa Clara County.

### CONTACTS:

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## Frieda C. Fox Family Foundation

### Who Is Involved:

- Youth Ages 8-17
- Supported by a board member in the role of Junior Board Advisor and the Foundation's Director of Youth Philanthropy

### History of Youth Engagement:

The Frieda C. Fox Family Foundation was founded in 1999, and began formal grantmaking for educational programs in 2003. The youngest family members were always welcomed at board meetings, which were typically held at family residences and often during school vacations. After a few years of informal youth engagement, the family realized that something more formal was needed to engage the growing number of interested youth. The Junior Board was founded in 2006 as a way for the kids to learn about philanthropy and gain hands-on experience in grantmaking.



The newly created Junior Board was initially managed by the then youngest board member, Ingrid Fox, who was attending Stanford University. As Junior Board Advisor, Ingrid was the liaison between the full Board and the Junior Board, offering guidance and a helping hand. The Board allocates \$2,000 per Junior Board Member per year to make one or two grants to a mission-aligned organization of their choice. The member chooses the organization(s) and records a video nomination explaining the organization's mission and the program they want the grant to support. The videos are shown at the board meeting where they can be discussed and affirmed. The Junior Board attends regular board meetings and has a voice at the table, although not a vote. They will typically break out into their own Junior Board meeting for a portion of the afternoon. The inaugural Junior Board was comprised of five members (four family and one non-family) and over the years has grown substantially to include younger members and other nonfamily members.



The Junior Board members are now not only excellent grantmakers in their own right but are developing personal and professional skills that will prepare them for future board service and careers. Today, founding Junior Board members have begun the transition into more adult roles in the



foundation. The Board of Directors is extraordinarily supportive of the youth, always asking for their opinions and valuing their input. They have expressed their delight that this experience has provided the opportunity for Junior Board to not only develop their own talents, but also learn how to help other children who have been less fortunate.

In 2008, the Junior Board presented at the Association of Small Foundations National Conference, and led a Council on Foundations webinar. From these new experiences in the field, the youth began seeking out other family foundations to learn about their work and vice versa. These connections and meetings with other youth culminated in the creation of a retreat bringing other family foundations engaging youth together to share and learn from one another—this effort is now called Youth Philanthropy Connect (YPC). YPC has now expanded to include youth philanthropists from all different types of foundations.



## Current Youth Engagement Strategies:

In 2013, the Junior Board members and their advisor, Katie Marcus-Reker, approached the board of directors with a new idea. The Junior Board requested funding for their own Collaborative Grant so that they would have more chances for grantmaking outside of the Youth Philanthropy Connect conferences. The grant process would be entirely executed by the Junior Board members along with their advisor. The board agreed, and beginning in 2014 the Junior Board was allotted \$50,000 in grant funding. The members decide the grant focus, evaluate the proposals, conduct site visits, and make final grant decisions. Through the Collaborative Grant, the Junior Board has distributed \$110,000 in grants to 24 grantees in the countries of Los Angeles and Santa Cruz.

The Junior Board has expanded their grantmaking skills and leadership through their participation in the Collaborative Grant, Youth Philanthropy Connect, and the Youth Philanthropy Connect Leadership Team. And, in an effort to engage the next generation of grantmakers, they have begun a



Birthday Giving program through which upcoming Junior Board members (those under 8 years old) will receive \$100 on their birthday to give to a nonprofit organization of their choice.

- Junior Board (ages 8-21) – individually allocated \$2,000 to make a single or two \$1000 grants to a nonprofit organization. Youth make a site visit and make a full presentation to the Board to seek approval for the grant.
- Junior Board Collaborative Grant
- Youth Philanthropy Connect Training (ages 8-21)
- Youth Philanthropy Connect Leadership Team
- Committee and Board Eligibility 18+ are eligible for Board of Directors membership or may stay on the Junior Board through college. The youngest Board member typically serves as the Junior Board Advisor.





## Staff/Adult Perspective:

*“As a former classroom teacher and a parent, I knew that we’d need to dial in to the kids’ interests, skills, and values, while making it fun. Because the foundation makes grants to children’s education programs, tapping into their interests was easy. The Junior Board advisor, Ingrid Fox, and I made the mission and family values a point of discussion, and elicited the kids’ ideas and vision for a better future for children. Tapping into skills was similarly easy—for example, we asked the tweens and teens for technology advice! The kids actually infused amazing energy into the family business of philanthropy”*



—Dana Marcus, J.D., founding executive director and mother of a founding junior board member

*“I want to help young kids in our family and the communities we serve because they are the most susceptible to intervention and it lasts longer. Kids have amazing energy and ideas that must be tapped into!”*

—Alan C. Fox, Founder, President

## Next Gen Perspectives:

*“As a current board member who started working as a Junior Board Member at the age of 12, I can whole-heartedly say that I was more prepared, more interested, and more engaged coming from a Junior Board experience. I have always loved that our board meetings and retreats have an open door policy, meaning that no matter your age or position in the foundation you were invited and encouraged to attend meetings and voice your opinions in a safe space. While in my younger years I may not have had much to add, I learned by listening and experiencing our grantmaking process. As I grew up, I was not only more knowledgeable in foundation business, but also more confident in my ability to discuss and understand grantmaking and express my views.”*

—Katie Marcus Reker, Frieda C. Fox Family Foundation, recent graduate of Scripps College '16

*“I initially became interested in my family’s Junior Board from my cousins that attended the first meeting. It all seems so long ago now, but I knew that the foundation was a way for youth to help other youth and I remember that sounding like the coolest thing ever. I love going on site visits and attending events for the nonprofits we have funded to see the truly inspiring work they all do. As a result of my involvement with the junior board, I have learned to always ask for help if I have any concerns because while work on my own may be good, work done with the help and collaboration of my peers and advisors is nearly always stronger. Without my early involvement in the foundation, I most likely would never set a foot in it.”*

—Jamie Semel, Frieda C. Fox Family Foundation, junior in college



## Advice to Others:

1. Promote experiential learning, such as making site visits, encouraging youth to join grantmaking committees within the foundation, or attending nonprofit events. Even if a youth isn't as interested in the grantmaking, the experience can be a terrific connection to family and local community.
2. Help your youth connect with other philanthropically minded youth so they can build a network and know they are not alone in this experience.
3. Respect and listen to the kids' ideas as part of a mutually respectful, professional environment that models good governance, healthy workplace environments, and teamwork—good role modeling for their futures.
4. Think about engaging interested non-family members, such as the children of staff or volunteers. They may bring great motivation with them, and inspire family members, while bringing some diversity and different talents to the table—another great learning opportunity for your kids.



**Frieda C. Fox**  
FAMILY FOUNDATION



Note: Our Junior Board members have a binder to keep track of all of their foundation related documents. This is the current table of contents for the board binder as of June 2016.

### Table of Contents

1. Frieda C. Fox Foundation contact list
2. Junior Board 2016 Plan
3. Important dates (2016)
4. Collaborative and Individual Grants 2014-2015
5. Foundation timeline of events
6. Teen Philanthropy Café Reader: Grantmaking & Site Visits
7. Youth development areas
8. Philanthropy glossary

### Resources to Share Upon Request:

- Junior Board Policy
- Junior Board Contract
- Recorded Webinar, through Council on Foundations
- [News Articles and Features on the Fox Website](#)
- [The Youth Philanthropy Connect Conference](#), and
- [Leadership Team availability to help support your youth boards!](#)