Our Mission
to serve as a means to
improve the quality of life
in the community, to
build on the community’s
strengths and add to its
vitality, and to increase the
capacity of the community
to serve the needs
of all its citizens.
Sixty years ago, Leonard Parker Pool and Dorothy Rider Pool joined their deeply held belief in service to others and to civic philanthropy by establishing The Rider-Pool Foundation. The Foundation’s focused support in education, human services, culture/art, and community development closely mirrored Mrs. Pool, a woman who was foremost a teacher, a musician, and a strong proponent of reacting to the needs of the community around her.

In the diamond anniversary year of The Foundation, we have thought frequently of Dorothy Rider Pool, her devotion to civic betterment, and her legacy. Looking through the stories of impact from grants made in 2017, I believe you will still clearly see Mrs. Pool’s legacy at work for the Lehigh Valley six decades later.

Program highlights discussed herein showcase programs and services carefully selected and approved for funding by The Rider-Pool Foundation Trustees. Common themes of these awards include support for programs that reach children from low-income families, afterschool activities that inspire arts and reinforce learning, programs that teach usable, lifelong skills, and cohesive systems of service delivery that address the total needs of disadvantaged youth and families.

These highlights are about systemic change, focusing on success that can only be measured over a long-term period. That is where The Rider-Pool Foundation has arrived in 2017-2018. We remain committed to the Pools’ four focus areas and committed to finding avenues for the greatest impact in the region right now.

In the last several years, we announced our concentrated areas of generational success in education, community development linked to economic development in the Allentown Neighborhood Improvement Zone, and measurable results. We have also openly discussed our responsibilities as grantmakers to evolve and react to the changing needs of the community.

Our major funding to the Collective Impact Fellowship program, now moving into its fifth year, reflects that evolution. The potential yield of this program remains both immeasurable and limitless. We are finding recognition that a forward-thinking process such as Collective Impact training can ultimately prompt widespread, root-level solutions to challenges in our region.

It remains helpful, then, to look back after 60 years and know we have stayed the course charted for The Rider-Pool Foundation. We also look ahead and believe our future path remains in line with a legacy of innovative, determined service to our community and its residents.

Edward F. Meehan
Executive Director
In 1957, Leonard Parker Pool and his wife, Dorothy Rider Pool, established The Rider-Pool Foundation as a private, general-purpose foundation. Upon her death in 1967, Dorothy Rider Pool left her estate as the principal funder of The Rider-Pool Foundation. Mrs. Pool was a teacher by training, an accomplished pianist and painter and her husband’s valued business partner, instrumental in the growth and development of Air Products, one of the most successful businesses in the history of the Lehigh Valley. Like her husband, Mrs. Pool was deeply driven to help others in need. These values help shape the focus of The Rider-Pool Foundation.

The Trustees of The Rider-Pool Foundation have carried forth Dorothy Rider Pool’s wishes and are particularly sensitive to her interests in education, disadvantaged children and the development of future leadership in our society. Since the Pools resided in Allentown, Pennsylvania, the particular geographic interest of The Rider-Pool Foundation lies within the Lehigh Valley area of Pennsylvania. Consistent with Dorothy Rider Pool’s wishes and in keeping with the interests of Leonard Parker Pool and Dorothy Rider Pool in their lifetimes, The Rider-Pool Foundation’s intent is to serve as a means to improve the quality of life in the community, to build on the community’s strengths and add to its vitality, and to increase the capacity of the community to serve the needs of all its citizens. Within this objective, The Rider-Pool Foundation’s funding program is focused on:

- Education
- Human Services
- Culture and Art
- Community Development

The Trustees have made significant changes in how the organization awards grant monies. Beginning in 2014, The Rider-Pool Foundation, while maintaining a responsive component of support, took a proactive approach in seeking funding opportunities consistent with our mission. The Rider-Pool Foundation’s sharpened focus concentrates on three major topics:

- Generational Success in Education
- Community Development Linked to the Economic Development in the Allentown Neighborhood Improvement Zone
- Measurement for Results

Support is provided to organizations working within the Lehigh Valley region of eastern Pennsylvania.
Grant Awards 2017

Allentown Art Museum $10,000
The Bach Choir of Bethlehem $10,000
The Baum School of Art $3,000
Community Music School $1,000
Da Vinci Science Center $2,000
Lehigh County Conservation District $2,300
Lehigh Valley Children’s Centers Inc. $2,000
The Pennsylvania Shakespeare Festival at DeSales University $2,000
Safe Harbor Easton, Inc. $3,000
Via of the Lehigh Valley $1,000
Bradbury-Sullivan LGBT Community Center $2,000
Center for Humanistic Change Inc. $1,000
Pinebrook Family Answers $2,000
ProJect of Easton $2,000
Touchstone Theatre $2,000
Civic Theatre of Allentown $10,000
Communities In Schools of the Lehigh Valley Inc. $2,000
Third Street Alliance for Women and Children $1,500
YWCA of Bethlehem $1,500
Grace Episcopal Church $2,000
Family Connection of Easton Inc. $2,500
Lehigh Valley Military Affairs Council $2,000
Community Bike Works $2,500
Boys & Girls Club of Allentown $2,500
Girl Scouts of Eastern Pennsylvania Inc $1,000
Allentown Area Ecumenical Food Bank $2,000
SATORI Ltd. $1,500
Wildlands Conservancy $2,000
Meals on Wheels of Lehigh County Inc. $2,000
Operation Warm Inc. $1,000
On June 18, 2018, the fourth cohort of Collective Impact Fellows completed their intensive nine-month training program through the multi-year Rider-Pool Foundation grant directed to create this innovative program. To date, 36 Collective Impact Fellows have learned, trained, and worked toward a vision to build capacity and remove the barriers that hinder true collaboration in cross-sector partnerships.

Lori Molloy, Esq., Acting Executive Director of North Penn Legal Services, completed the program and remarked, “The Collective Impact Fellowship was an extraordinary opportunity to engage with colleagues committed to their work and spend time together learning from experts how to most effectively work toward impactful change. The training and cross-collaboration was so powerful that it has fundamentally changed how I develop projects within my program and consider how to be most effective in community collaborations.”
The Rider-Pool Foundation Program Highlights

Touchstone Theatre: Young Playwrights’ Lab

Amos was a fourth grader in Lincoln Elementary School when he joined Touchstone Theatre’s afterschool Young Playwrights’ Lab in 2014. Recently emigrated from Africa and coming into the theater lab with English as his second language, Amos completed the program with impressive results. His work, a play titled “3 Baby Cheetahs & the Bad Tiger” was selected for inclusion in the program’s annual Young Playwrights’ Festival. The festival would bring his teachers, school administrators, friends, members of the community, and his family to Zoellner Arts Center to watch his play brought to life. After the festival, the Touchstone staff received a note from his father:

Am sorry I didn’t let you know the excitement in our family after the live presentation of Amos’s script. Thank you so much. Fires of determination are now burning in our home.

The Young Playwrights’ Lab was originally developed 13 years ago by Touchstone teaching artists for elementary school children in collaboration with the Bethlehem Area School District. The program has now been expanded to reach grades three through 12 at 10 sites annually across Allentown, Bethlehem, and Easton. Lisa Jordan, Managing Director at Touchstone, says watching the topics that surface through the program evolve through the years has been telling.

“The subject matter is changing. You can see what is going on in the world through the kids’ writing,” Jordan observes. “This year, we saw themes of PTSD and bullying. Some very serious issues are drawn out through this program.”

The eight-week playwriting residency meets biweekly during afterschool hours at select school sites. The sessions are led by a team of two Touchstone teaching artists, with classroom support provided by on-site school staff. Jordan believes community educational partnerships are key to the success of the program.

“We have very strong relationships with the afterschool coordinators at the schools,” she says. “They are tapped in to our work and often help identify students who will benefit from the program.”

Most critically, the program is free to students; 80 percent of which are from low-income families. “Offering a program after school, at no cost to the student, levels the playing field for arts access and provides a safe, supervised place to learn while parents are not at home,” Jordan says.

In addition to the emphasis on the theater arts, the Young Playwrights’ Lab assists student academic success as the program contents are consistent with Pennsylvania arts education standards in arts and humanities, reading, writing, speaking, and listening. And the results can be counted. At Central Elementary School, in the 2014-15 year, the school evaluated the average gain in reading levels and
percentage of students reading at or above grade level. There were significant increases in both categories for the third and fourth grade YPL students compared with school-wide results. Another interesting “side effect” was an increase in school attendance and decrease in office referrals among student participants.

The Young Playwrights’ Lab curriculum was developed from the kinesthetic and improv-based methods used by Touchstone’s company of artists to devise original theatrical works. The sessions introduce the roles of playwright, actor, director, and designer and the fundamental playwriting concepts of setting, character, objective, and conflict. Specific lessons are dedicated to plot development, clarifying central conflict, and shaping text for each student’s original one-act play. Final weeks of the program focus on refining the scripts through peer readings, one-on-one teacher support, and facilitated group critique.

“Our goal isn’t to create the next Broadway legend or Hollywood star. We are trying to build creativity and self-confidence through expression,” Jordan says.

Each school residency concludes with a presentation for family, friends, and school staff, with Touchstone artists and student participants reading and performing each other’s work. At the end of the residency season in April, plays from all program sites are submitted to a judging panel for selection into the Young Playwrights’ Festival. As Amos’s story demonstrated, it is a tremendous honor that offers encouragement and pride to a young student.

In the 2017-18 school year, the Young Playwrights’ Lab served 127 students. As one of the original funders of the program, The Rider-Pool Foundation has now awarded grants totaling more than $70,000 to the program. Jordan says this type of ongoing support can be measured beyond the donated dollars.

“Each year Touchstone applies for a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts for the Young Playwrights’ Lab,” she explains. “The NEA wants to see local community support; so, all funds they supply must be matched. This is how Rider-Pool dollars have been critical to leveraging other funding.”
Lehigh County Conservation District: LCCD’s Conservation 101 Field Experiences for High School Students

On her first day in the classroom, Jolie Chylack was pleased to notice that the students in her Building 21 tenth grade science course had a very good sense of clean water. She wasn’t convinced, however, that they were very familiar with soil and food source issues. Five months later, Chylack pages through photos of those students working in compost bins, watering vertical gardens, cleaning freshly picked greens for a salad, and working in the raised garden beds they built next to the school.

Chylack, Environmental Education & Outreach Coordinator for the Lehigh County Conservation District developed the curriculum for Conservation 101: Diversity of Agriculture in Lehigh County: A Rural and Urban Ag Field Experience. The pilot program matches LCCD’s priority to increase youth education in the local school districts.

The limited understanding of agriculture is not unusual, especially for a city population that may not have routine interaction with growing entities, Chylack says. “At this time, conservation education experiences for high school audiences is limited across the nation. And in Lehigh County, we have a unique opportunity to discuss three different types of land use—urban, suburban, and rural agricultural,” she explains. “The students who participate in this course will be equipped to understand and address future conservation issues that will arise from the rapid economic growth and development across the Lehigh Valley.”

For the first year of the program, LCCD selected Building 21 specifically because the school had flexibility to add the science component. The hands-on methods of the curriculum were also well matched to the school’s approach to real-world learning.

The program brought Chylack into the classroom with a co-teacher two days per week to complete a 20-week seminar of lectures and labs introducing students to agriculture topics and field experiences during which the class designed and implemented several relevant projects. The course offering was developed in line with STEM and PA Science Standards.

During the course, students heard from industry experts including LCCD staff, local farmers, engineers, soil and watershed scientists. The watershed specialist showed them how to make a rain barrel. A local beekeeper explained the importance of bees to the entire food and plant growing process. The students had help creating composting bins complete with their own set of worms. Students took field trips to an aquaponics lab, a dairy farm, hay farm, and flower farm.
While seeing farming practices on a large scale, they also spent time in the classroom constructing vertical growing beds that prove plants can be cultivated in even the smallest of space. The students were charged with figuring out lighting and watering techniques for the beds. When their work paid off, the beds were full of microgreens, which Chylack explains as the initial growth of leaves prior to a plant reaching maturation. “They are full of nutrients,” she says, confirming that the students’ crop turned into lunch salads and green smoothies. In the spring, they were able to construct outdoor raised beds to plant herbs and vegetables. Their projects were presented at a community-wide Celebration of Education at Building 21 in June.

Chylack sees the funding from The Rider-Pool Foundation as critical for this pilot program. With this investment, LCCD was able to bring the program to the classroom and now moves toward a larger goal. The course will be offered in Building 21 for three more years. By academic year 2020-21, LCCD plans to have the curriculum and the corresponding Act-48 credit Conservation 101 Teacher Training Workshop available to all high school science teachers for county-wide implementation.

Late last spring, while out watering the raised bed gardens, a large bee flew by. Chylack remembers one student joked, “Step on it!” But another quickly replied, “No! We need these bees!” In those moments, she knows the investment has potential for great returns.
Community Bike Works: Earn a Bike

After Tami completed the Earn a Bike program at Community Bike Works, she moved on to serve as a youth apprentice for the organization. A few years later, when it was time to consider college, she secured a job as a bike mechanic at Target to help cover the cost of her courses. She is now studying for a degree in Early Childhood Education. A young boy signed up for the Earn A Bike program at the encouragement of his father, a graduate of the program who also now serves on the organization’s Board of Directors. The dedicated staff at Community Bike Works includes two full time employees who were once among the crowd of kids who fill the shop each day.

These are a few of the unique examples of impact that can only be shared after a program has been running long enough to have history. And Kim Schaffer, Executive Director of Community Bike Works, says the popularity of the Earn a Bike program has only grown over two decades.

In this program, youth aged nine to 17-years-old team up with adult mentors for a 12-week course in bike mechanics and bike safety. While repairing and practicing on donated bicycles, students read a mechanics manual, complete journal entries, and write thank you letters to people who have donated the bikes. Once students complete their classes and graduate, they earn a refurbished bike and new helmet.

At 17, Maximo, then an 11th grader at Allen High School, decided to sign up for the program. He still shows excitement recalling that day he picked out his bike and says it was the best part of the program. “I saw this bike in the storage area on the first day,” he admits. “It was all white with a cool design. I really hoped no one else would pick it.” Maximo lucked out and, today, that bike is his.

Junior Earn a Bike follows the same model for seven- and eight-year-olds with a sampling of each of the Community Bike Works core skills: Reading, Riding, and Wrenching, as students read a bike-related story, practice bike riding and learn basic mechanics.

The programs are held at the organization’s downtown location, in Allentown and Bethlehem schools, and at a new East Allentown location. Through these sites, more than 500 young people have the opportunity to earn bikes each year, with a most recent year also tolling 19,700 hours of mentoring services through 9,500 visits by youth to the sites. These powerful numbers are more striking when placed in context of the population being served, as virtually 100 percent of the youth live in families with low incomes.

That’s why Community Bike Works focuses on keeping the young people engaged in other activities even after they have earned their bike. The organization opens its door every Monday through Friday after school for homework space, crafts, and games even before the kids move over to the shop area to work
on bike mechanics. It stays open throughout the summer, when fresh fruit is added to the table every day and reading programs are set up in the library area.

Saturdays offer an opportunity for recreational trail rides. In the summer, teen students can participate in road rides of more than 20 miles with help from the Lehigh Wheelmen Association. Each spring and fall, a Gear Up program working with Lehigh Valley Health Network and the Velodrome gives weekly cycling lessons from professional cyclists. And students recently helped build a mountain bike trail next to the East Allentown location to create a chance for mountain biking.

“The East Allentown location near the entrance to Keck Park allows near-daily bike rides,” Schaffer says. “We opened there two years ago and this has allowed us to build relationships with a whole new group of young people.”

For that reason, she places high priority on sustaining the location after the initial two-year period. All of the programs show marked outcomes for the young participants including the discipline and self-confidence needed to see a program through to the end goal, the healthy lifestyle of owning and regularly using a bike, and the tangible mechanical skills to repair bikes.

The program numbers recently show male youth comprise two-third of the participants. Therefore, this year, a first Girls’ Night for Earn a Bike brought together all women instructors and allowed girls to try out mechanics without feeling self-conscious.

Twelve-year-old Alexis, who has been visiting the East Allentown location regularly since it opened in the summer of 2016 was proud to demonstrate the skills she learned there. “My mom thought I would need help to change my tire,” she says. “But I showed her I could do it!”

The Rider-Pool Foundation was one of the earliest supporters of Community Bike Works and remained so with a grant in 2017 to keep the momentum of the flagship program growing.
Bradbury-Sullivan LGBT Community Center: Youth Poetry Workshop

LGBT youth often feel they don’t have a voice, and at Bradbury-Sullivan LGBT Community Center in Allentown, it’s common to meet youth who feel misunderstood or even pushed aside by family. Through Bradbury-Sullivan’s youth programs, funded in part by The Rider-Pool Foundation, LGBT youth are finding their voice and creative opportunities to express themselves, every day.

The Youth Poetry Workshops launched in November 2017 through Project SILK Lehigh Valley, a collaborative program between Bradbury-Sullivan LGBT Community Center and Valley Youth House. The youth empowerment program is designed for LGBT youth of color aged 14 to 21 and serves a large population of homeless or housing-insecure youth.

The workshop is in line with Project SILK’s goal to involve youth in decision-making around their programs. When the idea of a writing workshop was presented to them, it was the young people who selected poetry as the focus. Even the name of the series, Slam Yo Feelings, was created by the participants.

Executive Director of Bradbury-Sullivan LGBT Community Center, Adrian Shanker explains that LGBT youth are perhaps the most vulnerable members of a historically marginalized and underserved community and face a host of challenges at disparate rates from their non-LGBT peers.

“When they come to us, it’s our job to make them feel seen, heard, and validated. Offering a platform in poetry has had that impact,” Shanker says.

He notes that across the United States only 28 cents of every 100 foundation dollars are directed to LGBT programming. With such limited resources, he extends gratitude to The Rider-Pool Foundation to both notice and respond to this unique need in our community.

The poetry project fits well into Bradbury-Sullivan Center’s youth, health, and arts and culture programs. Bradbury-Sullivan has a full library of LGBT fiction and non-fiction books, CDs, and DVDs. Gallery space is devoted to professionally curated works that celebrate LGBT-themed art. Private rooms are available for HIV testing and conversations about personal health and wellness from trained mentors and professionals. The Cyber Center allows homework completion or online healthcare enrollment assistance. Outside the Youth Lounge, there is an emergency supply closet for basics such as shampoo, toothpaste, and personal items.
There is a sense of urgency to continue building all of the programs for the local LGBT population. In this comprehensive space, Project SILK’s Youth Poetry Program has the underlying effect to help academic challenges and enhance reading, writing, and comprehension skills.

Kim Ketterer, Youth Programs Manager, reports that seven to 10 youth attended each weekly workshop with a total of approximately 20 youth involved in the program. “We saw kids finding a voice,” she says of the noticeable outcomes. “After they started writing, they were able to speak more openly as well.” Themes that have come out of the youth writing include identity and exploring identity, school, friends, and relationships.

A 22-year-old non-binary participant said about the program, “It has encouraged me to write more and figure myself out as a writer. Not everything you write is going to be gold but there are diamonds in the rough. It’s worth searching through the rubble to find the treasure that is my poetry.” Another 15-year-old non-binary young writer said, “It inspired me to come out of my shell about serious topics and anything emotional. I look forward to the workshops and it helps me connect with other people. It brings me joy!”

The Youth Poetry Workshop will culminate with a poetry slam in the fall of 2018. A reflection statement will be collected from program participants at that time to measure the influence of the program on the academic, social, and personal outlook of the participants and help shape future writing programs at Bradbury-Sullivan Center.
Communities In Schools of the Lehigh Valley, Inc. - Integrated Student Supports

Imagine you are a 12-year-old girl in middle school and are tired from helping your mother take care of your younger siblings in the morning. You didn’t eat breakfast and when you sit down to take a math test, the tiredness and hunger cloud your focus. Or maybe you are a 16-year-old father missing an important day of school because you can’t afford child care. When you are back in the classroom, you face failing grades and start to wonder if high school is worth finishing. Finally, consider being a seven-year-old girl who just lost her mother. You feel alone now that your mother’s supportive presence is gone. You can’t explain your angry outbursts and just don’t care about school anymore.

These are real situations that Communities In Schools of the Lehigh Valley addresses every day, demonstrating the invisible baggage young people carry with them to school. Factors including housing moves, poverty, changing family status, hunger, and trauma create nonacademic barriers that lead to under-performance even for kids who are fully capable of succeeding in school.

Timothy Mulligan, Communities In Schools President and CEO, explains, “These nonacademic barriers coupled with the demands of typical academic challenges often trap our community’s youth in a cycle of poor performance that can lead to increased drop-out rates.”

A gap exists between the disadvantages students face and the resources school staff can provide, which is where Communities In Schools steps in with Integrated Student Supports (ISS). The successful implementation of the ISS model begins with the placement of a school-based, single point of contact in the Site Coordinator. Site Coordinators are skilled professionals who leverage relationships with the school, businesses, and community partners to address any unique needs of a student and work to eliminate the barriers to the student’s success. Site Coordinators often eliminate unnecessary duplication of services, create efficiency in existing service delivery, and initiate new services where resources may be lacking.

In the 2017-2018 school year, Communities In Schools of the Lehigh Valley served 22,000 students and their families in 26 schools in the Lehigh Valley and Berks County. Through The Rider-Pool Foundation’s educational focus and priority to serve disadvantaged youth, grants have been awarded to Communities In Schools for more than two decades and have assisted the continual impact of this program in the Lehigh Valley.
Mulligan says the program follows seven specific metrics for success. On a school-level, ISS aims to improve graduation rate, promotion rate, and stay-in-school rate. On a student-level, ISS success can be measured through improvement in attendance, behavior, academics and social-emotional learning.

As Communities in Schools continues to monitor trends and offer flexible educational paths for students, the organization faces the reality that every 26 seconds, a student in America drops out of school. That means every year, 1.2 million young people face uncertainty and insecurity without a high school diploma, which affects an entire community population. In response to that statistic, they worked with the Allentown School District and the Lehigh Valley Workforce Development Board to develop the Allentown Re-engagement Center in 2015.

The Re-engagement Center reaches out to young people aged 17 to 24 who have dropped out of school with a simple invitation – come back. Students can then complete their high school degree either through an in-school diploma, through an online high school diploma program or secure a GED. Again, while returning to education, students are provided any related case management services needed for their success. After two and half years of concentrated outreach, in 2018, the program reached its 100th high school graduate. The work will continue to provide this second chance for young people in the community.
Highlight: Boys & Girls Club of Allentown: Make Your M.A.R.K.™

The Rider-Pool Foundation is pleased to congratulate the Boys and Girls Club of Allentown for recognition of their Make Your M.A.R.K.™ program from the Boys & Girls Club of America. And it’s not just any recognition.

“This is our Oscar,” Deb Fries-Jackson, CEO, says of a national merit award the organization achieved in 2018 for the program, securing one of only two awards presented in the education category. “It’s a very intensive application process, so this is very dear to us,” she explains. The local club received recognition in the past in the categories of arts, and character and leadership skills. This year, however, the honor went to their education category which is the most rigorous of the award’s fields.

Make Your M.A.R.K.™ (Motivated Academically Ready Kids) is an after-school program that runs twice a week in two-hour sessions for the duration of the school year. It is open to students in first through 12th grade from low-income families at 10 city locations and provides an individualized, prescriptive curriculum in language arts/reading/English and math designed to improve areas of academic weakness.

Registration and attendance are strictly voluntary and Fries-Jackson says there is a waiting list for the program. “This is a special opportunity, it is known as prestigious even among the students,” she says. “We have limited spaces so when kids earn their spot, they don’t want to lose it.”

Fries-Jackson also remembers the commitment The Rider-Pool Foundation offered to the Boys and Girls Club of Allentown from the start.

“Particularly in the beginning, The Rider-Pool Foundation was instrumental in providing letters of support as well as grants. They spoke to other funders on our behalf and helped to initiate additional funding for these programs.”
The Rider-Pool Foundation Statement of Financial Position

December 31, 2016 and 2017

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The financial statements for The Rider-Pool Foundation for the year ended December 31, 2017 have been examined by the accounting firm of BBD, LLP. The detailed financial report is available at The Rider-Pool Foundation office upon request.
Leon C. Holt, Jr.
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The Rider-Pool Foundation

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The Rider-Pool Foundation

John E. McGlade
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The Rider-Pool Foundation

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Manager, Finance and Administration

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Program Secretary

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