



**TOTAL GRANTMAKING SINCE  
INCEPTION in 2014: \$8,395,818**

Rooted Philanthropic is proud to provide this brief Impact Report to our community. We remain small but mighty and committed to working with East Side communities to provide resources and opportunities. In 2024, our overall grantmaking increased by \$370,000 from 2023. We spent over \$173,335 on direct program expenses launching the first Small Business Cohort and the East Side Women Leaders Cohort, bringing 15 people on a learning trip to learn from Atlanta's entrepreneurial ecosystem, and engaging Gametime Hero to field test an app for East Side activities and connectivity. After completing community engagement, our Wellness funding pillar priorities are ready for implementation in 2025, and we made our first \$1 million Program Related Investment. We also added Betsy Currie as Operations Associate to our staff team.

This report offers several impact stories from our recent grantmaking and work in the community. Conversations with community members and business leaders have led to grants made and direct programs implemented. And...we're just getting started. Working together with East Side stakeholders we will accomplish remarkable things, making the East Side a great place to live, work, raise a family and manifest their dreams.

Total Grants Paid FY2023: \$2,000,075 ♦ Number of Grants Made: 32 ♦ Organizations Funded: 20  
 Total Grants Paid FY2024: \$2,370,900 ♦ Number of Grants Made: 61 ♦ Organizations Funded: 43  
 ♦ 2024 Program Related Investment: \$1,000,000 ♦ 2024 Direct Program Expenses: \$173,335

## BLACK-OWNED TECH COMPANY GROWS ON THE EAST SIDE

Culture Booster is a pioneering Black-owned startup technology company founded by Stephen Moore in the heart of Saint Paul's East Side. Built from the ground up, Culture Booster is more than just a business—it's a reflection of Moore's commitment to innovation, community development, and improving work culture. Through a unique combination of technology, human resources services, and a deep understanding of workplace dynamics, Culture Booster aims to revolutionize how businesses engage with their employees and foster a culture of recognition and support. The idea for the company was born out of Moore's extensive experience in the automotive industry, where he witnessed firsthand the need for better structure, communication, and employee engagement.

At the core of Culture Booster is its mission to improve human workplace interaction through technological solutions. By integrating science-backed strategies into its platform, the company offers businesses a suite of services to enhance employee engagement, streamline communication, and create an environment where people feel valued. The platform is an all-encompassing solution that includes tools for surveys, praise, recognition, and other key features that help businesses build and maintain a positive and productive workplace culture. Whether it's through real-time surveys, acknowledgment of individual achievements, or celebrating team milestones, Culture Booster ensures that employees feel valued and recognized for their contributions.

The results speak for themselves. One of Culture Booster's clients—a mid-sized company—raised its Employee Engagement Index from a mere 25% to an impressive 49% in less than a year. This dramatic improvement is a testament to the power of Culture Booster's recognition, communication, and engagement strategies. Clients feel more connected to their work and colleagues, and they appreciate the sense of safety, support, and belonging that the platform fosters. This success story helps solidify Culture Booster's reputation as an employee engagement leader, and it's no surprise that the company was recently nominated as a finalist for 2024 Startup of the Year by BETA.MN and has earned a 4.8/5 rating on G2 Business and Software Reviews.

Culture Booster is also having an impact on the East Side. Moore's decision to launch his startup on the East Side is deeply personal. He believes that by nurturing his business in this neighborhood, he can help create a ripple effect that will benefit the local community. As the company grows, it brings new jobs, opportunities for skill development, and an inspiring local presence. Culture Booster's commitment to reinvesting in the community means that as employees work at the company, they also live and spend money locally, further contributing to the area's economic growth.



**Grant Award: \$130,000**  
**Purpose:** *Capacity Building to grow the business on the East Side*

## TERESA LIVING CENTER: 38 YEARS OF HOPE, HEALING, AND TRANSFORMATION

For many, there comes a time when the weight of life's challenges becomes overwhelming, and a helping hand is needed to guide them toward a brighter future. Theresa Living Center (TLC) has been that lifeline for hundreds of individuals and families over the past 38 years. Founded by the School Sisters of Notre Dame in 1987, TLC's mission is to provide a safe space for homeless women and families in crisis. Located on the East Side of Saint Paul, the center is a sanctuary for those facing domestic violence, homelessness, and instability.

Originally founded as a shelter for women experiencing homelessness, TLC has expanded its mission over the years, adapting to changing community needs. Today, TLC operates a variety of programs to empower women and families to achieve self-sufficiency and stability. The center remains in its original location, next to St. Casimir's Catholic Church, where it has welcomed over 830 women and children into its residential program and served more than 612 households through its scattered-site services, reaching over 1,185 individuals with case management and rental assistance since inception.



**Grant Award:** \$120,000  
over two years

**Purpose:** *General  
Operating Support*

TLC's programs provide a safe environment for women who are single, pregnant, or have children under the age of one. Participants receive a comprehensive support system including case management services, assistance with securing rental subsidies, transportation, counseling, medical care, job training, and employment resources. The programs give women and families tools to build a foundation for a stable and independent life. Residents can stay for up to two years, with the goal of transitioning to permanent housing and self-sufficiency.

In 2024, with the support of Rooted Philanthropic, TLC successfully transitioned 18 of 25 residents from the shelter to independent living. This achievement highlights TLC's commitment to long-term solutions that go beyond immediate shelter, helping individuals regain control over their lives and futures.

## SMALL BUSINESS COHORT PROVIDES A PATH TO BUSINESS GROWTH & SUSTAINABILITY



The East Side of Saint Paul is home to a vibrant, diverse community that has long been a cornerstone of the city's culture and economy. Residents have cultivated a spirit of entrepreneurship, providing services and products for their fellow community members. For many, starting a small business has been a way to provide for their families while contributing to the neighborhood's growth and vitality. The foundation is committed to nurturing this entrepreneurial spirit and ensuring that opportunities are accessible to historically underrepresented groups, particularly BIPOC and women business owners.

The Small Business Cohort program includes eight weeks of intensive training and technical assistance. Each week, business owners participated in a workshop designed to accelerate business growth and development. The curriculum covered financial

planning, business operations, marketing strategies, legal considerations, and leadership development. Participants not only gained practical knowledge but also developed the skills and mindset needed to take their businesses to the next level. They were also introduced to valuable networking opportunities, allowing them to connect with other entrepreneurs, share insights, and form lasting relationships. Upon completion, participating businesses received a \$20,000 grant for their business and \$200 for each workshop attended.

**Grant Award:** \$248,400  
to LISC Twin Cities

**Plus:** \$7,800 in direct  
program expenses

Cerresso Fort and Tara Perron are two cohort participants who gained valuable experience. Fort, a former distinguished professional boxer, has transitioned from stepping into the ring to opening Sir Boxing and Fitness, a thriving hub for local residents seeking a positive outlet for their energy. With the support of Rooted Philanthropic and a \$1.2 million investment from multiple sources for renovations, the gym now boasts state-of-the-art equipment and a spacious, welcoming environment for all. The boxing gym's impact has been far-reaching, earning recognition through awards like the Entrepreneur of the Year Award from the Black Business Ball in 2024.

Perron operates the Blue Hummingbird Woman Indigenous Gift Shop on East 7th Street, a business dedicated to preserving and sharing Dakota cultural traditions through the sale of handmade quilts, beadwork, wood carvings, and more. Perron's shop also serves as an education and cultural revitalization space, playing a vital role on the East Side by hosting quarterly markets and Indigenous celebrations where local vendors and artisans showcase their work.

The success of these businesses is a testament to the power of community-driven entrepreneurship and the importance of supporting local talent.

### Participating Businesses

**Cerresso Fort** – Sir Boxing and Fitness

**Georgia Fort** – BLCK Press

**Cheng Lee** – Ethos Film and Photo

**Sabrina Leung** – Sticker Dumpling, LLC

**Tou Lor** – Twin Cities Floral Inc

**Felicia Henderson** – Yoni Treats LLC

**Tara Perron** – Blue Hummingbird Woman Indigenous Gift Shop

**Chaseng Xiong** – Chaseng's Life Insurance Services, LLC

**Terrell Smith** – Gentlemen Cuts.

**Cheryl Smith** – New Life Behavioral Wellness Center LLC

# EAST SIDE WOMEN LEADERS COHORT LAUNCHES WITH 16 WOMEN

**Imposter Syndrome. Work/Life Balance. Unrealistic Expectations. Limited Networks. Lack of Mentors. Burnout.**

Too many women know that these are some of the multiple challenges they face when they step into leadership roles. A plethora of studies confirm this. In 2024, Rooted Philanthropic worked with a consultant to speak with East Side women, in all sectors, listening to their challenges and needs as leaders. What emerged was an opportunity to create a unique, year-long experience that is co-created by the participating women. Co-creation is key to ensuring it meets their needs and addresses the multiple challenges identified earlier. It is not intended to be a leadership training course. The cohort launched in October with 16 women selected through a competitive application process.

The year-long experience includes:

- ◆ Leadership opportunities through a weekend retreat and regular, ongoing cohort gatherings to hone skills and build a strong network of peer support.
- ◆ Financial resources to support each cohort participant's personal leadership development at up to \$3,000 per participant.

When the cohort concludes in late summer 2025, we believe the women will have a stronger sense of and confidence in their leadership journey with a network of other supportive women to cheer them each on that journey.



Courageous Change Collective, a three-woman consulting team, shaped by their experiences as Immigrant, People of Color, Indigenous, LGBTQ people, are the cohort facilitators.

**Direct Program Expense:**  
\$156,875, with \$65,000  
spent in 2024.

*"How can the East Side say thank you to you all for the work you do on the East Side, the heavy lifting you do to undergird programs and businesses and support services on the East Side. Rooted Philanthropic is demonstrating a true investment in the East Side community, and I want to thank you for that."*

— Shateka Flowers, Executive Director, Family Values for Life

Rooted Philanthropic focuses its giving and support on the neighborhoods of Saint Paul's East Side and the surrounding communities. Our focus is to support entrepreneurs, ensure a quality education for our youth, empower women to be their best selves, and engage the community in healthy living.

## MISSION STATEMENT

*Rooted Philanthropic supports the people of Saint Paul's East Side communities to unlock their potential by investing in their capacity, growth, and innovation.*

### ADMINISTRATION

In FY2024, the foundation:

- ◆ Had one 2.25 FTE
- ◆ Incurred \$688,634 in administrative costs, including \$187,363 in direct program expenses.
- ◆ Had \$7,963,366 in total assets at year-end.

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Charles Runyon, Chair  
Shannon Runyon, Treasurer  
Tony Nicholson, Director

### ADVISORY BOARD

Andre Creighton  
Indira Garmendia Alfaro  
Marcq Sung, Chair  
James Terrell  
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## 2023 FISCAL YEAR GRANTS MADE

<u>Organization</u>	<u>Grant Amount</u>	<u>Organization</u>	<u>Grant Amount</u>
Center for Broadcast Journalism	\$79,075	Hmong American Partnership	\$90,000
Catholic Churches of St. Michael & St. Mary	\$5,000	Indigenous Roots	\$100,000
Culture Booster	\$120,000	Latino Economic Development Center	\$151,000
Daytons Bluff Community Council	\$27,000	Minnesota Council on Foundations	\$60,000
East Side Funders Group	\$25,000	New Impact Fund	\$75,000
East Side Neighborhood Development Co.	\$268,500	Payne Phalen Community Council	\$36,000
ESABA Charitable Foundation	\$160,500	Southeast Community Organization	\$15,000
Family Values for Life	\$30,000	Theresa Living Center	\$60,000
Fight For Your Dreams	\$51,000	TurnSignl Foundation	\$1,000
Hill-Murray Foundation	\$606,000	Wakan Tipi Awanyankapi	\$40,000
		<b>2023 GRANTMAKING TOTAL</b>	<b>\$2,000,075</b>

## 2024 FISCAL YEAR GRANTS MADE

<u>Organization</u>	<u>Grant Amount</u>	<u>Organization</u>	<u>Grant Amount</u>
180 Degrees	\$30,000		
Access Philanthropy (Atlas of Blackness)	\$15,000	LISC Twin Cities	\$248,400
Achieve Twin Cities	\$875	M Health Fairview / U of M Foundation	\$50,000
African Economic Development Solutions	\$60,000	The Market Entry Fund	\$2,500
Aliveness Project	\$1,000	Minnesota Council on Foundations	\$2,500
Asian Economic Development Association	\$100,950	Northside Economic Opportunity Network	\$2,500
Basic Needs of South Washington County	\$5,000	Outfront Minnesota Community Services	\$1,500
Camp Odayin	\$40,000	Saint Paul Public Schools ISD#625	\$10,000
Carleton College	\$875	Salvation Army Eastside	\$500
Center for Broadcast Journalism	\$40,200	Sanneh Foundation	\$53,000
CLUES	\$100,000	Springboard for the Arts ( Trilingua Cinema)	\$9,000
Community Blessings	\$1,000	St. Anthony Park Community Foundation	\$250
		St. Paul Chamber of Commerce Fdn (MN Hmong Chamber of Commerce)	\$52,500
DMV Center, Inc.	\$55,000	Storehouse Grocers, LLC	\$72,000
East Side Freedom Library	\$37,500	Theresa Living Center	\$60,000
East Side Funders Group	\$277,000	TurnSignl Foundation	\$1,000
East Side Neighborhood Development Co.	\$70,950	Unity Church-Unitarian	\$500
ESABA Charitable Foundation	\$75,200	Urban Roots	\$65,000
Faith City Church	\$5,000	WomenVenture	\$100,000
Family Values for Life	\$30,000		
Fight For Your Dreams	\$46,000		
Fortis Capital	\$120,000	<b>2024 GRANTMAKING TOTAL</b>	<b>\$2,370,900</b>
Hill-Murray Foundation	\$480,000		
Hmong American Partnership	\$1,000	<b>Direct Program Expenses</b>	<b>\$173,335</b>
Indigenous Roots	\$46,000	<b>Program Related Investments</b>	<b>\$1,000,000</b>
Latino Economic Development Center	\$1,200		
		<b>2024 GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>\$3,544,235</b>