



Sills Family Foundation

2009 Annual Report

History and Mission

The Sills Family Foundation is a family foundation that launched its first formal grantmaking process in 2003. The Foundation is governed by a board of three family member directors and is administered by The Philanthropic Initiative.

The Sills Family Foundation intends to help children from low income families live up to their highest promise by concentrating on the following three areas:

- 1) Comprehensive support for families in crisis, with a special focus on incarcerated parents and their children
- 2) Early and elementary childhood education that includes family supports such as medical care and parent education
- 3) Environmental justice, with a focus on contaminants that harm the developing embryo, fetus and infant.

2009 Sills Family Foundation Grantmaking Overview

The total grantmaking for 2009 was \$645,000. Of this, the Board awarded \$435,000 through its regular competitive grantmaking process, \$150,000 as trustee directed, discretionary grants and \$60,000 through a geographically based, mission driven selection process managed by a group of next generation foundation members. The Foundation made a total of 24 competitive grants in New York, Massachusetts, Vermont, Georgia, Texas, Louisiana, California, and Washington State.

As our investment portfolio was negatively impacted by the economic recession, we have chosen to diminish our average grant size by 20%, thereby allowing us to continue making grants to nearly as many organizations as in previous years. We did not renew any technical assistance grants for the same reason, instead allowing grantees more flexibility in using the grant money in ways that they felt best supported their organization, whether programmatically or structurally. Many grantees requested general operating support.

The Sills Family Foundation's commitment to providing services to children with incarcerated parents has continued to grow in depth and scope. Along side several grantees in our primary geographical areas we are supporting exemplary programs in Atlanta and California. In early 2009 we co-hosted a forum for funders hoping to learn about and engage with this issue. As a result of that convening we were able to identify several New York area funders who are interested in collaborating in some way on funding this issue. We have hosted three follow up meetings during which experts in the field presented on relevant issues, and are currently clarifying how the group will function. We hope to become a meaningful force in effecting change in this arena. To this end, Deborah Larussi was honored to be invited to present at John Jay College of Criminal Justice to public and private stakeholders on the topic of how funders can make an impact in this field. She was also invited to speak on Risk Taking in Philanthropy at the Family Firm Institute conference.

We continue to honor our commitment to grassroots environmental justice organizations as well as organizations doing critical work in providing services to families in crisis and ensuring that the youngest children of families in poverty are receiving high quality early education.

The Foundation is continuing to engage a group of second generation funders. This year grants were made in New York, Washington State and California to programs related to the Foundation's mission, as well as a program related investment in Jamaica, W.I.

This year the Foundation launched its website www.sillsfamilyfoundation.org.

Sills 2009 Grants

Grant descriptions are organized by primary focus areas, with a special subcategory for the area of supporting incarcerated parents and their children.

Families in Crisis

❖ **Battered Women's Services and Shelter Barre, VT**

Battered Women's Services and Shelter was awarded \$20,000 to support domestic violence shelter programming for women and their children. The grant funds will focus on further developing the Shelter Youth Program, which includes supporting and assisting mothers with parenting decisions, working and playing with children to develop and maintain healthy communication and respect, and aiding women to make connections throughout the community. *(Seventh year of funding)*

❖ **The Guidance Center, Inc. Cambridge, MA**

The Guidance Center was awarded a \$20,000 grant for continued support of their *Early Intervention Partnerships Program* (EIPP), which provides crucial extra home visits for at-risk families in Cambridge and Somerville, MA, not covered by public insurance funding streams. Sills funds have been critical to the successful development of EIPP since it began over six years ago, and without which the most at-risk mothers and infants in their community would not receive important checks on health and social/emotional/physical development, crisis intervention and support services. *(Seventh year of funding)*

❖ **Julie's Family Learning Program South Boston, MA**

Julie's Family Learning Program was awarded \$20,000 to support the general operations of their Adult and Children's Services. Julie's is dedicated to helping low-income children and their mothers break the cycle of poverty, and has been providing comprehensive family support and education programs for low-income families in crisis in South Boston for over 30 years. The grant will help support early childhood programming, Montessori pre-school, adult education, and parenting and life skills education. *(Fifth year of funding)*

❖ **St. Mary's Women and Children's Center**

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Dorchester, MA

St. Mary's was granted \$20,000 to continue to support the Women's Learning Center (WLC), an adult basic education program which equips homeless and low-income women and teens with the basic skills they need to pass the GED, get a job, parent their child, and reach their highest potential. Each year the WLC educates more than 50 women and teens staying at St. Mary shelters, other local shelters, and in the community, through two multi-level classes for adult basic education, pre-GED and GED preparation, and group and one-on-one tutoring. *(Fifth year of funding)*

❖ STEPS to End Family Violence/Edwin Gould Services for Children and Families New York, NY

STEPS to End Family Violence was awarded \$20,000 for the *Children's Therapy Program*, which provides comprehensive supportive counseling services to children up to age 14 who have been affected by domestic violence. The program offers a safe place to begin healing from the violence to which they have been exposed and cope with the losses and trauma they have endured. This grant will allow STEPS to continue to provide individual play therapy to 45-50 children per year addressing loss, abandonment, abuse, family relationships and other traumas, family therapy sessions to strengthen parent-child attachment and communication, and two to three cycles of parenting groups. *(Fifth year of funding)*

Incarcerated Mothers and their Children

❖ The Children's Center at Bedford Hills Bedford Hills, NY

The Children's Center at Bedford Hills received \$10,000 for overnight programs transportation. The grant will help finance the cost of transportation for children of women incarcerated at the Bedford Hills Correctional Facility to and from their homes, so that they may participate in overnight visiting programs offered by the Center. The overnight programs work with over 40 children each month and close to 100 children in the summer, allowing mothers and children to spend extended time together and participate in activities that reinforce development of strong parent-child relationships. *(First year of funding)*

❖ Community Works West (SF Children of Incarcerated Parents Partnership) Berkeley, CA

Community Works West/ SF Children of Incarcerated Parents Partnership received a \$20,000 grant to expand the One Family program (formerly Parenting Inside/Out), an evidence-based parenting curriculum designed specifically for jailed parents, to all the incarcerated parents in the San Francisco County Jail system. In the first year of funding SFCIPP purchased a parent education curriculum, trained staff, and piloted

the curriculum in the SF County Jail #8. In this second year of the project, the program will be expanded to the remaining jail population. This parent education program will prepare parents for reunification and successful reentry when they leave jail and help lower rates of recidivism. *(Second year of funding)*

❖ **Foreverfamily**
Atlanta, GA

Foreverfamily was awarded a \$20,000 grant to support the general operations of the Atlanta affiliate. Funds will specifically be used for the organization's most critical needs, including accountancy, information technology, and development. Foreverfamily has been serving children with incarcerated parents and their families for almost 23 years through an after-school program, family visitation, parent education, and Guardian Angels support group. *(First year of funding)*

❖ **Hour Children, Inc.**
Long Island City, NY

Hour Children received a \$20,000 grant for general operating support, which will allow them to continue to work with a changing population of women coming into and graduating from their programs, and employ the multiple strategies they have begun in the critical areas of capacity-building and organizational productivity. The grant will also be used to support the development of an 18-family apartment building that will provide permanent, affordable housing, new executive offices, and additional transitional housing for 16 families. *(Seventh year of funding)*

❖ **JusticeWorks Community**
Brooklyn, NY

JusticeWorks Community was awarded \$5,000 for general operating support to further strengthen their public education, advocacy and grassroots organizing work and to expand the base of citizens and community residents informed about the disease concept of addiction and the effects of the mandatory minimum drug sentencing laws on poor communities of color. JusticeWorks is dedicated to the principle that the humane and civilized response to substance abuse is treatment, not imprisonment, and achieves this mission through education and community organizing, fostering public policies that will redirect money now spent on prison construction and incarceration towards other alternatives, and providing opportunities for formerly incarcerated women to participate in the public debate. *(Fifth year of funding)*

❖ **Northern Lights Program at the Howard Center**
Burlington, VT

The Northern Lights Program at the Howard Center was awarded a \$20,000 grant for general operating support to sustain its efforts to provide housing and support to women transitioning from prison back to the community. Northern Lights houses 11 women at a time for seven to twenty month stays, where they are supported by community providers, service providers, and each other as they develop skills,

reconnect with their children, seek employment, improve their health and make positive connections. *(Second year of funding)*

❖ **Osborn Association – Family Ties Program**
Long Island City, NY

The Osborn Association received \$20,000 for continued support of the *New York City Initiative for Children with Incarcerated Parents*, which is focused on insuring that children feel safe, considered, and supported throughout the experience of a parent's arrest, incarceration, and reentry. Specifically, the grant will be applied to direct service activities with youth, including outreach and the Youth Advisory Board program activities. The board is made up of 10-12 youth, and provides an opportunity for young people impacted by a parent's incarceration to connect with each other, build their speaking and communication skills, and add their voice to practice and policy reform. *(Fourth year of funding)*

❖ **Vermont Children's Aid Society**
Vermont

Vermont Children's Aid Society was awarded a \$20,000 grant to continue to support the *Kids-A-Part Program*, a leader in Vermont with regards to issues faced by children and families affected by incarceration. Using the Sill's funding, Kids-A-Part anticipates hiring additional staff to oversee prison-based programs and provide direct service in the men's correctional facility in Newport, VT. They are also currently building capacity through two AmeriCorps positions in the community, focusing on caregiver outreach and education, and running groups for youth in Chittenden County. *(Fourth year of funding)*

❖ **Women's Prison Association**
New York

The Women's Prison Association received a \$20,000 grant for general operating support, which is critical to their mission of helping women overcome the obstacles to successful reentry and build lives defined by more than their past criminal justice involvement. The grant will support expanded early childhood literacy opportunities in East New York through their Parent-Child Home Program, enhancements to the measurement tools used to evaluate the work they do with families, and their efforts to bring new perspectives to debates on women in the criminal justice system. *(Sixth year of funding)*

Early and Elementary Childhood Education with Family Supports

❖ **Little Sisters of the Assumption Family Health Service**
East Harlem, NY

Little Sisters of the Assumption Family Health Service received \$20,000 for general operating support, in order to further improve the quality of available services and

consolidate current capacity and fund development efforts. LSA provides low-income East Harlem families with an integrated combination of home-based and center-based services in the areas of health, education, and crisis intervention, as part of their mission to help them build on their existing strengths, attain self-sufficiency, and contribute to a vital community. *(Sixth year of funding)*

❖ **Project Hope
Dorchester, MA**

Project HOPE was awarded a \$20,000 grant for continued support of the Children's Center, which offers low-income and homeless children from the Dorchester and Roxbury neighborhoods of Boston the opportunity to receive high-quality education and child care, in line with their mission to promote school readiness and ensure children's healthy development. Specifically, this grant will support the salary of the Literacy Specialist, program supplies, and staff training to help Center staff better evaluate and identify developmental delays in children. *(Sixth year of funding)*

❖ **Riverdale Mental Health Association (formerly Institute for Child, Adolescent and Family Studies)
Bronx, NY**

Riverdale Mental Health Association (RMHA) received \$20,000 to support *Chances for Children: Kingsbridge-Highbridge Project* in the second year of its pilot intervention, with the mission of continuing to increase mental health support and services for young families and children 0-5 years old in two high-risk areas of the Bronx. The two year pilot project involves training RMHA clinicians so that they will be able to provide CFC's evidence-based intervention to 20 families in the community of Kingsbridge, and will also provide direct services to 20 families in the Highbridge community at the Highbridge Community Life Center. Outcomes at these two sites will then be evaluated and compared with those produced originally in the LYFE program of the NYC Department of Education. *(Sixth year of funding)*

Environmental Justice

❖ **Advocates for Environmental Human Rights
New Orleans, LA**

Advocates for Environmental Human Rights was granted \$20,000 for general support. AEHR is dedicated to upholding our human right to live in a healthy environment, holding companies accountable when this right is violated, and advocating for public policy that supports this right. General operating funds will help AEHR advocate for human rights protections within communities suffering the destabilizing effects of toxic pollution and extreme weather events triggered by climate change. *(Sixth year of funding)*

❖ **Alternatives for Community and Environment
Roxbury, MA**

Alternatives for Community and Environment received a \$20,000 grant for continued support of the *Roxbury Environmental Empowerment Project (REEP)*, which nurtures youth development and leadership in Roxbury through an environmental justice curriculum, organizing and membership program, and youth-led campaigns. With funds from the Sills Family Foundation, REEP will support six youth organizers and seven to ten youth member leaders, conduct youth-led environmental justice campaigns, host “teen cafes” where youth can learn about the program and have informal political conversations, and serve 40-50 members annually through their leadership programs. *(Sixth year of funding)*

❖ **Community In-Power and Development Association
Port Arthur, TX**

Community In-Power and Development Association (CIDA) was awarded \$12,000 for general support, to help continue their mission to protect, educate, and alert the underserved communities in Port Arthur, Texas, of the dangers of toxic chemicals being released into their community. Specifically the funds will enable them to pay the office rent for one year in addition to some of their annual utilities, and enable them to continue their work protecting these communities, kids and the elderly from industries that are unconcerned with the environment or their health and welfare. *(Fourth year of funding)*

❖ **Health Care Without Harm
Boston, MA**

Health Care Without Harm (HCWH) was awarded \$20,000 for general support of their efforts to educate the healthcare sector on the importance of the environment in disease onset in the broader world community, help the healthcare sector follow the environmental agenda HCWH has created over the last twelve years, use the enormous purchasing power of healthcare to drive markets and create stimulus for innovation for safer products, and activate healthcare leaders and professionals to advocate for broader societal policies that are more protective of everyone on the planet and will help prevent diseases in the broader global society. *(Sixth year of funding)*

❖ **Mercury Policy Project
Montpelier, VT**

The Mercury Policy Project (MPP) was awarded a \$20,000 grant to continue to support their *Zero Mercury Campaign – Exposure Awareness and Reduction*, which seeks to reduce consumer exposure to mercury from the consumption of commercially caught fish, particularly among pregnant women, young children, and disadvantaged populations who subsist on low incomes. Specifically, the campaign will oppose FDA efforts to weaken or eliminate the fish consumption advisory, conduct mercury fish testing and promote point-of-purchase information, highlight

cases of individuals who have been exposed to mercury, collaborate with allies in responding to erroneous media reports, participate on a VT state mercury advisory committee, and promote policies to reduce exposure to mercury globally. *(Sixth year of funding)*

❖ **Mossville Environmental Action Now
Mossville, LA**

Mossville Environmental Action Now (M.E.A.N.) received an \$8,000 grant for general support that will allow them to further address the health consequences endured by the Mossville residents exposed to the high levels of toxic pollution in their community. To address the growing health concerns, MEAN plans to use funds to support the creation of a series of health fairs and symposiums to raise awareness of the connection between pollution and health, fund the travel of environmental health experts to come and make presentations to the local health professionals in the community, offer free screenings to local residents, provide a means to grow and obtain nutritional affordable food sources by creating organic container gardens, and continue shareholder activism work. *(Second year of funding)*

❖ **West Harlem Environmental Action, Inc.
New York**

West Harlem Environmental Action (WE ACT) was awarded a \$20,000 grant for general support, so that they can continue to enhance the work they do to secure children's environmental health in New York City's low income communities of color and take the environmental justice message nationwide through movement building. WE ACT conducts a range of initiatives designed to bring about positive health outcomes for NYC's most disadvantaged children, and are working on building the capacity of the environmental justice movement on a national level through their technical assistance efforts and various partnerships. *(Fifth year of funding)*

Sills 2009 Next Generation Grants

❖ **Friends of the Children Kings County
Seattle, WA**

Friends of the Children (FOTC) was awarded a \$16,600 grant for general support to continue fulfilling its mission to help children living in seriously high risk environments develop relationships, goals, skills and resources necessary to thrive. FOTC provides one-on-one mentoring relationships for the most at risk children in the Seattle area. Mentors are paid, full-time professionals who are committed to working with a child on an ongoing basis for 14 years, beginning at age five. Part of the mission of FOTC is to identify the bottom 10% of most at risk children. Many of these children have parents who are in prison. *(Third year funding)*

❖ **The Guidance Center
New Rochelle, NY**

The Guidance Center received \$3,000 to continue to enhance its Primeros Amigos program. This is the third year of the program, which is designed to support the younger children of women attending parenting classes by providing an enriched early childhood education experience. While the mothers are attending parenting classes the children (aged 1.5-4) are with an early childhood professional focusing on literacy, socio-emotional learning and problem solving to help ensure their school readiness. The grant funds will be used to purchase appropriate play and learning materials. *(Third year funding)*

❖ **Metta Center for Nonviolence
Berkeley, CA**

The Metta Center received a grant \$5,000 to support its mission of providing inspiration, advice, and educational materials to persons and groups involved in the social change work and the reduction of violence locally and around the world. This grant will enable them to cover some basic infrastructure of the organization and provide support for the the summer Metta Mentors program, which brings twelve college-age young adults to Berkeley each summer to work with local non-profits and explore nonviolence in their internships, their own lives and future careers *(First year funding)*

❖ **Micro Credit Ltd.
Jamaica , W.I.**

Micro Credit Ltd. was awarded \$10,000 to support their growing infrastructure. MCL is a micro financing institution that provides small loans to 2-3 member business collectives in Jamaica that would not normally qualify for a traditional loan due to a lack of available collateral or credit history. MCL is planning on expanding their portfolio to more individual and slightly larger business loans, and growing their business substantially over the next three years, increasing both the number of offices and number of clients served. *(First year of funding)*

❖ **Oakland Unified School District, Office of Alternative Education
Oakland, California**

The Oakland Unified School District Office of Alternative Education received a grant for \$11,700 to support the Oakland Youth Outreach (OYO) gang prevention and intervention program, which provides a broad range of services to gang-involved and at-risk youth and their families in Alternative Ed high schools. This grant will allow them expand critically needed culturally competent case management services and activities for students and their families at Community Day Schools (CDS), the public schools that serves the highest-need student population in all of Oakland. *(First year funding)*

❖ **Westchester Jewish Community Services
White Plains, NY**

Westchester Jewish Community Services (WJCS) was awarded \$13,700 for its Parent Child Home Program. In this program, “home visitors” (employed by WJCS) visit a child in the home two times a week for two years beginning when the child is approximately 1.5 years old. During each half hour session the visitor models verbal interaction and educational play for the child and parent together. The goal is for parents to increase their competency and comfort levels with verbal interaction and literacy based play, and to ultimately take over the sessions. *(Third year funding)*

Sills 2009 Grants Summary

Name of Organization	2009 Program/Purpose	2009 Amount Awarded
Advocates for Environmental Human Rights	General Support	\$20,000
Alternatives for Community and Environment	Roxbury Environmental Empowerment Project	\$20,000
Battered Women's Services and Shelter	Domestic Violence Shelter programming for women and their children	\$20,000
Community In-Power and Development Association	General Support	\$12,000
Community Works West (SF Children of Incarcerated Parents Partnership)	One Family, Parenting Support Infrastructure in SF County Jails	\$20,000
Foreverfamily	General Support	\$20,000
Health Care Without Harm	General Support	\$20,000
Hour Children, Inc.	General Support	\$20,000
Julie's Family Learning Program	Julie's Adult and Children's Services	\$20,000
JusticeWorks Community	General Support	\$5,000
Little Sisters of the Assumption Family Health Service	General Support	\$20,000
Mercury Policy Project	Zero Mercury Campaign – Exposure Awareness and Reduction	\$20,000
Mossville Environmental Action Now	Stop the Toxic Deaths in Mossville!	\$8,000
Northern Lights Program – Howard Center	Northern Lights Program	\$20,000
Osborn Association- Family Ties Program	New York Initiative for Children with Incarcerated Parents	\$20,000
Project Hope	Children's Center	\$20,000
Riverdale Mental Health Association	Chances for Children: Kingsbridge-Highbridge Project	\$20,000
St. Mary's Women & Children's Center	The Women's Learning Center	\$20,000
Steps to End Family Violence Edwin Gould Services for Children and Families	The Children's Therapy Program	\$20,000

The Children's Center at Bedford Hills	Overnight Programs Transportation	\$10,000
The Guidance Center, Inc.	Early Intervention Partnerships Program	\$20,000
Vermont Children's Aid Society	The Kids-A-Part Program	\$20,000
West Harlem Environmental Action, Inc.	General Support	\$20,000
Women's Prison Association	General Support	\$20,000
Total Grants:		\$435,000

Next Generation Grants

Name of Organization	2009 Program/Purpose	2009 Amount Awarded
Friends of the Children Kings County	General Support	\$16,600
The Guidance Center	Primeros Amigos	\$3,000
Metta Center for Nonviolence	General Support	\$ 5,000
Micro Credit Ltd.	General Support	\$10,000
Oakland Unified School District Office of Alternative Education	Oakland Youth Outreach	\$11,700
Westchester Jewish Community Services	Parent Child Home Program	\$13,700
Grants: \$60,000		Total