

THIRD WAVE FUND

English Transcript

Mic Check! Podcast

Episode 05: Making it Through an Economic Crisis

Guest: Rye Young, former ED of Third Wave Fund, with Ana Conner and Kiyomi Fujikawa, current Co-Directors of Third Wave Fund

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Monica Trinidad: You're listening to Mic Check! Podcast. I'm your host Monica Trinidad, Communications Officer at Third Wave Fund. For over 20 years, Third Wave Fund has supported gender and reproductive justice organizations with rapid response grants, long term funding and capacity building support. We do this work because young women, queer, trans, gender nonconforming, and intersex people of color are at the forefront of efforts to transform harmful conditions, but often lack the resources needed to do so. Today I'm happy to be in conversation with Third Wave Fund's former Executive Director, Rye Young, and our new Co-Directors, Ana Conner and Kiyomi Fujikawa. Rye is a cat dad partner, cook and self-identified Jewish trans weirdo, committed to social justice and funder organizing in New York.

Monica Trinidad: Ana is a mixed black, queer, gender nonconforming young person committed to resourcing movements and currently living in Harlem, New York. Kiyomi is a mixed race, queer, trans femme living in Seattle, Washington, who has been involved with movements to end gender and state-based violence since 2001. In this episode of Mic Check, we'll be getting the historical take on what Third Wave Fund experienced during the 2008 economic recession, the lessons that were learned from that time, and how those lessons inform our work at Third Wave today. If you like this podcast and want to show us some love and help our podcast reach beyond our networks, you can do so by subscribing on Apple Podcasts and leaving us a review, following us and liking this latest episode on SoundCloud or by sharing this podcast on social media. Rye, thanks so much for being with us today for your second Mic Check! Podcast episode. We were in a conversation with you in episode three on the

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importance of leadership transitions, and we're going to play a snippet of that right now.

Rye Young: I got brought on as a consultant to help sunset the work, and in that process, I got access to this transition process that was being held by an Interim Director where the task was figure out what to do with our assets, because even though we're not getting any grant funding anymore and we're not getting individual contributions, we had assets. We knew that we had strengths and we knew that we had things to pass on.

Monica Trinidad: Now, before we dive into exactly what happened to Third Wave Fund several years ago, I want to kick this conversation off with Ana. Ana, you just had that brilliant op-ed published in Teen Vogue, and for those who haven't read it yet, check it out now. It's called Big-Money Philanthropy Must Support Grassroots Coronavirus Relief. So Ana, what made right now the right time to publish your thoughts on private foundations and what they need to be doing during this pandemic and subsequent economic crisis?

Ana Conner: Awesome. Yes. Monica, thank you so much for pulling this together. I'm so excited about this conversation, and I think it's super timely. I just want to acknowledge that this moment is really fucked up. We've been doing this work for a long time, and the situation has been dire for so many communities, and now is a time where we're seeing ... Kiyomi said it really nicely, the COVID pandemic, pending economic crisis, and the global response has been a magnifying glass on every systemic inequity that low-income Black and brown communities, trans, gender nonconforming people, sex workers, sick and disabled folks, undocumented folks, incarcerated communities have been fighting against forever. Right? In some ways, the article that we published, it's ... We're in a very new situation, but the response from philanthropy has been...typical to say the least, that is philanthropy has to reckon with the fact that the ways in which money is hoarded is never going to actually allow for real, systemic change.

Ana Conner: At Third Wave, we had already been planning for an economic recession. We had done some work before the pandemic to figure out, okay, what

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would we do if another recession hit, right? We're planning this stuff, and then we're like, "Oh, our grantees, a lot of which don't have 501(c)(3) status or fiscal sponsors are brand new. Their budgets are 250,000 or less." How this moment would impact those organizations is devastating, right? I think this article that I wrote has been written so many times in different forms. I was just looking ... The Revolution Will Not Be Funded, that book by INCITE was written and published in 2007, you all! It was before the economic crisis. So this is not a new narrative, but we're in a moment where the pending recession and the pandemic has really shone a light on wealth accumulation and on the status quo and how we need to reckon with that.

Monica Trinidad: Yeah, absolutely. Speaking of hoarding, in your Teen Vogue article, you mentioned this alarming statistic that according to Funders for LGBTQ Issues, for every \$100 that's awarded by a U.S. foundation to an organization, only four cents supports trans and gender nonconforming people, with significantly less going to trans and gender nonconforming people of color. So can you speak to what's happening there?

Ana Conner: It's exactly what I'm talking about, right? These statistics show how much our people are left out of philanthropy constantly, even though we're the communities that need the most access to these dollars. Not only because folks are disproportionately targeted by all forms of violence from ... have a lack of access to housing, stable housing, job security and healthcare, but because we know that our communities have the brightest and boldest ideas for how to get us out of this mess. It's devastating, I think. Oftentimes we can talk about how disproportionate the funding is, but until folks really see it and reckon with it, the broader folks outside of philanthropy don't understand what we mean.

Ana Conner: So I feel like numbers like that can really highlight what we're talking about when we're talking about wealth disparity and wealth redistribution and how important it is. This is why Third Wave Fund does the work that we do, right? We're trying to move resources where dollars never touch or never ... folks who never get to see philanthropic dollars, and we know at Third Wave that we're never going to be able to fund all the groups. Third

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Wave is a small institution. It's moments like these where we have to work together to leverage philanthropy as an institution to move more resources and to reckon with the status quo.

Monica Trinidad: Rye, can you summarize exactly what Third Wave was facing when you came on board to help sunset the organization? Why did the board at that time decide that Third Wave Fund needed to sunset?

Rye Young: Sure. I decided to leave the organization and was gone for about a year, and during that time, it was just the board and the director and an office manager. At that point in 2012, there were no more grants coming in. Almost every single grant had been either pared down or canceled at that point. The board brought on an Interim Director whose job it was to shut down the organization, and it was in that process that I came back on as a consultant to tie off grants with our grantees, to make sure that they land it on their feet as best we could and that we gave away as much of the remaining assets we had to the organizations that we were in a long term relationship with as a funder. In that time, we convened people who we considered core stakeholders, people who had been on staff over the years, people who had been on the board, founders of course, some key donors.

Rye Young: Those conversations unearthed a lot of perspective about Third Wave's main mission not being finished, and also that, in some ways, philanthropy was not ready for what we were doing before when we were at our peak, before that point. All of a sudden, as we were starting to really get hit by the economic recession and really start to lose commitment from funders, movements were picking up steam, there was a way more belief in the trans community's importance and visibility and movement leadership. At the time that we were having this soul searching sunset moment happening, intersectionality was becoming a commonly understood concept, and also there was a belief that funders should operate this way and a lack of experience doing that, which Third Wave had.

Rye Young: They just didn't have the engine and the vehicle to do that, and so they were starting to reinvest in things like collaboratives, but collaboratives are funder-driven, they're only funders at the table and the leadership comes from foundations. So when they set out to do something like we're

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going to support reproductive justice through our collaborative, or we're going to support trans communities through our collaborative, they're missing that part of there are no trans people at the table because if it's only big private funders that are national and they want to do something here, all of a sudden, guess who's not there? The very people who have the wisdom and the knowledge that they need to pull this off successfully. I think that all of those factors, we saw them play out, but we had no institutional power, right? We had no income coming our way, and as a foundation, you need income, right? Your programs are giving money out.

Rye Young:

I think that because we saw those factors happening, we decided as a group that we needed to give it a shot and take the assets that we had left. We had interviewed all of our grantee partners as well as a part of the process to say, "Do you see value in this work continuing, even if it's a really small shop?" By and large, they said, "We value Third Wave as a partner in the room who can say things to funders that we can't say ourselves because we're not there, and we see other funders saying that they do what you do, but we don't trust them." I think when we move forward and decided to relaunch the work, we had to operate off the mindset that just because you're funded now and just because movements are believed in now and just because people are making space to talk about women of color and young people and trans people now, that is not a permanent state of being and that no money reaches the field without a fight, without leadership, without the strong structures in place to get the money to the field, without analysis that's ahead of where funders are at, but not so ahead that it scares them, right?

Rye Young:

It's a dance, it's like this incredible dance to get any dollar to this work. I was catering at the time. I was a line cook who was trained to do that and not be in philanthropy, and so I felt called to action. I saw maybe what needed to happen with the pieces that needed to fall into place. I saw that there was support for this idea from the people that mattered the most, the grantees, field leaders, people in my network that were encouraging this and the rest is history.

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Monica Trinidad: Ana and Kiyomi, what was your experience during this timeframe that Rye is talking about, between 2008 and 2012, as people doing youth organizing? Did you feel that the economic impact from the recession that Rye is speaking to was impacting you? Maybe we can start with Kiyomi first.

Kiyomi Fujikawa: Yeah. Thanks, Monica. In 2009, I lost housing. I was living in a big collective house that was a lot of organizers doing different projects. Our house had been established in the '70s as a cooperative originally to house some folks that were doing work with United Farm Workers and just had this incredible legacy had been ... We found old photos of Filipino organizers playing cards at the same spots we were playing cards. It was a 100-year old house or whatever. I think for us, it really illustrated what was happening across Seattle, which was how much the housing bubble led to gentrification and displacement and really a loss of organizing physical space that folks can be doing organizing.

Kiyomi Fujikawa: Now in this moment, it's so expensive, it's so hard to just be able to find that space, which I know a lot of other cities are experiencing. But in Seattle it just feels hyper with the tech money that's coming through here. I wasn't on a fundraising level at that time at any organization, but was seeing cuts at the different spaces that I was in and just a lot of organizations that were trying to make it through that moment. I think just the ways that income inequality was exacerbated by gentrification and the housing bubble was just very, very apparent in Seattle.

Ana Conner: Yeah. For me as a youth organizer, I actually felt the impacts a little later. In 2012/13, I believe, I was a lead participant in FIERCE's national program. FIERCE was a queer and trans youth of color led organization that was based in New York City and fighting for anti-policing and anti-criminalization work specifically around the Chelsea Piers area, which has for the longest time been a queer space in New York City and where a lot of queer and trans folks lived and found work and that sort of thing. We received funding to actually do this national program where we were going to bring together a variety of organizations that were working on local, hyperlocal campaign work, so campaigns around

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anti-criminalization, anti-policing specifically led by youth, Black, brown, young people, queer and trans young people, sex workers, undocumented folks.

Ana Conner: We held this convening, we called it the Connect our Roots. It was in 2013. We brought together a bunch of groups and some of you all might know these groups. So some that I remember are Streetwise and Safe, Young Women's Empowerment Project, Providence Youth Student Movement, Black and Pink, Stonewall Youth Olympia, Breakout, and so many others. We had this summit, it was beautiful, it had lasting connections where some of these organizers met each other for the first time and they're still organizing together to this day. That was in 2013. I believe it was 2014 where FIERCE lost funding for that project and just for that project, but also lost other funding. I wasn't all in the weeds on budgeting and balance sheets at that time in my life, but I knew we had lost money. It was also around that time that Young Women's Empowerment Project also announced that they were closing their ... I think they were 501(c)(3) status, and Queers for Economic Justice also closed.

Ana Conner: Then in 2015, Trans Youth Support Network closed, and all this was happening ... Streetwise and Safe also shut its doors, and it was as if the networks that we had been developing and really building were just crumbling and it was devastating to the youth led movement at that time, and particularly for me to see my political home almost have to close was really hard.

Rye Young: Usually foundations get hit in their endowments through the stock market, but then they don't stop ... they don't reduce their giving usually until a year or two after that, because it's all based on these kinds of projections. What was happening in New York City was there were all of a sudden incredible growth of LGBTQ people of color-led, youth-led organizing groups, and in some ways, I think a lot of community collaboration and positive spirit around queer and trans people of color youth organizing in New York City. I would say that that was probably true around 2008 when I started at Third Wave and continued for a few years. Third Wave wasn't

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funding those organizations. Even though that was the epicenter of everything Third Wave envisioned for the movement, in some ways, in terms of community and approach and all these things, the scale, it was operating at such a larger scale.

Rye Young:

Our whole point to funders was you can't hold up a group like FIERCE as a replicable model. If you don't replicate the funding for groups like Tyson and Minneapolis, and if you don't go into rural Washington and support queer and trans youth organizers there that are looking to this model, but the reality is the model depends on the money. It's not just a model, it's the resources to fuel the model and to accomplish what needs to be done in ways that are sustainable. When all of this work was picking up, we were like, "Great. We're so glad that these foundations are finally getting meetings with Ford or with Wellspring or whoever were the big foundations that started to come on board at that time." We thought our role is to make sure that this money proliferates and reaches places that are under-resourced and not taken as seriously as New York City.

Rye Young:

So that was our purpose, was redistribution. But what happened was, in that area, we started to see these organizations that were seen as the beacon in many ways, or this was the peak, this is ... you've arrived if you've gotten to the budget size of FIERCE at that time, even though still that was small, right? It was still a smaller organization. It was just seen as you can't go higher than that, right? When we started to see all of those organizations getting hit really hard, Queens for Economic Justice, Sylvia Rivera Law Project, FIERCE, Safe OUTside the System and Audre Lorde Project, we funded every single one of those organizations in New York City and the aftermath of the recession because we were experiencing such a surplus and such an increase and we didn't realize that when stocks rebounded, it wouldn't go right back into those places that it was taken from before the recession. We naively thought that there isn't a reorganization, right? Of a theory of change, a reorganization of the beliefs in philanthropy.

Rye Young:

We naively thought, "Okay, we're going to cover some ground here. We're going to give emergency funding to Queens for Economic Justice, we're

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going to give some support all bundled up in New York City while funding a lot of the rest of the movement" and watched slowly how much not only did it not go back into those particular organizations, it didn't go back into those movements, and in some ways we had to start over again and reimagine, and I think it led to certainly closures, certainly soul searching around how are we going to make this work without losing ourselves in the process? But I think a similar thing was happening at Third Wave at the time, and we had no answers for how we were going to refuel the work, retool the work in a sustainable model in that moment we were in, and in some ways needed to hit bottom and jumpstart again and have a sort of startup energy, boil ourselves down to the essential components, the essential message, the essential staff, nothing else, but what's essential and then rebuild from that, which is what we did in 2014.

Rye Young:

In 2014, Third Wave moved to a fiscal sponsor called Proteus Fund who gave us a chance to relaunch ourselves paying almost no money to hold all the operating work of an organization, which if people don't know, you should know that a lot of work goes into even the most simple and small organizational model. We had all of this incredible knowledge of how to serve movements well, but we needed to upgrade it for where movements were at right now, and also marry it with what foundations weren't doing well, right? So find that sweet spot. At that time, we landed on, let's start with rapid response funding, right? We can have a big impact with a little bit of money we have. So we started our Rapid Response Fund. That's how the Mobilize Power Fund started. We knew that, in the long term, what was really the most important thing was sustained funding, and so we could only operate that when we ourselves were sustained.

Rye Young:

So we had a plan for, as the budget grew, we were going to slowly introduce six year grants to the field through the Grow Power Fund, and that that was going to be for organizations that were similarly like, "I'm doing amazing work totally out of the limelight of philanthropy." Definitely not on no big foundations radar but all the same having tremendous impact in the local area and the region, and that reinforced optimism around this work, right? That they were doing bold stuff, right? There are so many organizations that are the smallest organizations that

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make me believe again in organizing work, and I'm sure you all are nodding your heads. It is both important that this work happen at a local level, but in terms of supporting those organizations on a national platform, it says this is where we see what it means to be radical, what it means to do grassroots organizing.

Rye Young:

So to lift that work up and to fund it for the long term, it's making a statement. It's not just the money, it's a statement that goes with it and it's the confidence of backing it for six years that I think tells foundations something, right? Like, "Look out for these organizations and look out for this kind of work that's happening and pay attention to places outside of where you're used to thinking impactful organizing is only happening," right? So if we're funding in the South, we're not only funding in Atlanta and New Orleans. If we're funding on the West Coast, it's not only Los Angeles and Seattle and the Bay, right? We're funding the whole country.

Monica Trinidad:

Thank you, Rye. Thank you for naming the Mobilize Power Fund. I just want to quickly say that in the past month alone in April (because we're recording this episode during the midst of the coronavirus pandemic, if you're listening a year from now), in April alone, Third Wave Fund received \$350,000 in rapid response requests ranging from bailing out and housing trans sex workers locked up at Rikers, to healing justice and mutual aid strategies, and this is almost 10 times the amount that we usually get prior to the pandemic and Mobilize Power Fund requests. Actually, \$350,000 is what we budgeted for all of 2020. Now we are committed to resourcing folks fighting for safe, healthy, and thriving communities as best we can, but we really need help to support this work.

Monica Trinidad:

There are some concrete ways you can support our work, which you will find all the links to this work where this podcast episode lives on our website. That ranges from giving directly to any of our grantees that are all doing really amazing work on the ground, pledging your stimulus check through #ShareMyCheck, shout out to Resource Generation, and donating a one time gift to help us meet our rapid response requests or committing to a sustained monthly gift. All of these links will be where this episode lives on our website. Actually, I said \$350,000, but in the past two weeks

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alone, we actually received \$650,000 in rapid response requests. So actually double than what we budgeted for all of our 2020.

Monica Trinidad: It is alarming how much immediate relief is needed, but also thank you, Rye, for noting just how important it is for sustained giving, right? Because we faced this before and we're facing this again now and it's going to continue and we just have to make sure that we are giving in sustained ways. So just wanted to make that note and also wanted to pass it over to Kiyomi. Can you speak to how Third Wave Funds history and this near closure really informed the ways in which our fund operates today?

Kiyomi Fujikawa: Yeah. Thank you so much, Monica, and thanks for uplifting the Mobilize Power Fund. Our staff is working so hard right now. As we know, groups on the ground are working even double that, and it really does feel like it's such an important time to be able to rally around groups and show up with support. That feels really powerful, and also shout out to all the folks that have been able to continue to give, and give whether that's giving their time or giving their cash or whatever ways folks are being involved. Just really want to say we're so eternally grateful for folks through that. It's so interesting. When we came into this organization as co-directors, I was like, "Oh, the 2008 recession and impending disaster that happened after that was really ... really is at the core of where this organization is now, how we think about moving through."

Kiyomi Fujikawa: First off, really what the recession showed us is that philanthropy needs to be different, right? That we need to be uplifting these voices in philanthropy that had been calling for philanthropy to be different since forever. I think by the time I get into rooms usually it's like, "Let's hear from grantees," and we always hear the same things which are like support long term, be in relationship with your grantees, extend with trust and recognize that you're a supporter. You're not hiring these grantees to do a certain set of work, you're actually in the backseat and supporting rather than being the driver of that, and also just to give general operating support. We hear that time and time and time and time and time and time again in terms of just how much general operating support, long term

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general operating support is needed. Being able to just hear that again and again, that came up so much.

Kiyomi Fujikawa: I think we also ... Not all groups are able to do this, but I do think Rye did such an amazing job and other folks that were on the fundraising side of recognizing ... I want to bring it back to Ana's point above that was made in Teen Vogue around there's these numbers in philanthropy and you can break them down for a lot of different demographic groups, and it's always ... For this amount of money in philanthropy, it's so tiny, and I think I've heard Christina from Funders for LGBTQ Issues say if LGBTQ Issues as a whole, which can feel so mega big, sometimes it's getting a quarter for every \$100, and as a trans woman of color or folks of color that are organizing within that, we see even less and less of that. But it's not like our go-to should be like, "Where's our quarter? How do we get from that \$100 to getting that quarter?"

Kiyomi Fujikawa: We really need to rethink the way philanthropy looks as a whole because even if we're just getting ... It would be huge if we were getting 10 times..that's an exaggeration, but so much more to be able to be like, "We're getting a quarter for every \$100 within that foundation giving." But it's really an opportunity to be like, "Listen, we got to do something different." Even just the scope of what we should be playing with in terms of rethinking philanthropy needs to be changed. I think the folks that are doing that on the ground are individual donors. I think what we've seen at Third Wave and what's come out of being able to diversify our funding and be like, "Okay, we recognize we really want young women of color, young queer and trans people to find their place in philanthropy," and be able to find that also through the gifts they're giving, whether that's monthly donation of almost any size, that when we're pooling our money together, we're actually able to shift the way that big philanthropy is looking.

Kiyomi Fujikawa: There's just so much power there, and recognizing that those relationships with donors aren't transactional. I do think we've seen so much generosity of ... cross-class generosity. I think there's so many stereotypes in terms of

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philanthropy and I do think in the DNA of Third Wave since the closure or near closure is really around rethinking how that looks.

Monica Trinidad: Can you explain what cross-class fundraising is, just really briefly?

Kiyomi Fujikawa: In philanthropy, it's really common for folks to have a strategy of, "Hey, if you give over this amount then you deserve a phone call from us, and if you give beneath this amount then we'll ask you to volunteer," and that's the equation that's set up and I think what Third Wave is able to do and I feel like Rye and Ana have so much more experience in the day to day of this, also Nicole, just really valuing folks across the spectrum and recognizing that we need all of us to be able to change, right? Folks that are coming in at higher levels, that's amazing, that's so important, and folks that are doing that monthly gift. It might be \$3 a month or \$5 a month, that's still super powerful and actually really makes a change. I think if we have a minute to talk about, I just love to use the Sex Worker Giving Circle as an example, where I think institutions were nervous. They're like, "What is this going to be? Is this going to be something that gets some energy behind it or not?"

Kiyomi Fujikawa: There's this thing in philanthropy where everyone's waiting to see who's going to put their toe in the water first and report back on how it's going. When we saw such an influx of individual donors who were throwing down their cash being like, "Listen, I know the importance of sex worker organizing and I know the importance of the groups that are doing this and how much they're not only getting not any funding, but also so much funding is getting put into efforts that are really counter to the organizing that they're doing it with a 'feminist lens.'" I think through that, once there was this ballooning of individual donors, then larger institutions were able to be like, "Oh, you know what? That is cute. Actually, I could get behind that." It's just really such an example of the ways that folks who are anywhere across the class spectrum can be making a difference within this system that's not set up for non-wealthy people.

Monica Trinidad: Thank you, Kiyomi, for that explanation. This is a question for everybody, but maybe starting with Rye first. What are some of your hot tips for

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organizations, especially foundations to practice this cross-class fundraising successfully?

Rye Young:

I think a lot of organizations say things when they're fundraising like, "We value gifts of every size, every gift counts," right? But how do you value that gift? Because when you value something that means that you prioritize it and you make an effort, right? Around understanding not just the impact of those dollars, but actually the kind of shift that's happening when donors who are working class and poor and don't have a ton of resources to give are funding the movement. That actually is an important part of the story of giving, and in fact, I think that large wealthy donors are following the leadership of working class donors who give first to movements and demonstrate viability of the work and put all of their momentum and drive and stake in the success of the work. You see that at the beginning stages before there's ever a grant, right?

Rye Young:

It has to come from that place first because major donors don't take work seriously until it's already taken off, right? Until it's already has a kind of bedrock, right? And if you're doing grassroots organizing work, you're not doing it because Daddy Warbucks came in and dropped a stock mouth full of cash on you, right? You're doing it because you have to and you've found the way and somehow the money to do it, right? Because people put in who had less to give. Foundations are never the first ones at the table, and I think that what happens when you value small gifts is you actually tell the story of working class donors and poor donors are leading the way for philanthropy, whether foundations know it and recognize it or not and whether they're willing to understand that there is strategy to where working class donors are putting their money, right?

Rye Young:

That there's incredible rigor and there would be incredible outcomes to see if foundations really took seriously where the money goes for folks who are putting what they have down into that movement work. Building from there rather than saying, "What's already proven impactful, what's already well-funded and then we'll take it from here." I think that that's part of what it means to do cross-class work, is taking those gifts seriously, respecting the people who give it to you, respecting monthly donors,

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calling ... We called every single donor in our first few years and continue to have a practice of calling donors to thank them. That is actually how we found major donors. We didn't have any major donors in the first year. We found major donors because I called everybody who gave any gift, and our first major gift of \$25,000 came from a donor who gave \$25 at a free party that we had.

Rye Young:

I had no idea, right? I had no idea. I just saw that they had checked off that they were interested and we didn't take any gift for granted. Also, do not be afraid of asking people who are not wealthy to give in ways that are meaningful to them and then to lift up that gift. I think that it's really meaningful to meet with people who give. I think [inaudible 00:34:58] I did a major donor with someone who gave \$50 at an event. I had a donor coffee with her and she started crying when we finished the meeting because she said, "I've never been treated like a donor. I give to a lot of movements." She's a Trans Latinx leader in New York and elder. She was like, "I've been giving to movements my whole freaking life and I've never been treated as a donor and asked what I thought as a donor and then asked to inform your organization in the way that donors get asked that all the time." She was crying and she took her \$50 gift and she gave it monthly.

Rye Young:

That gift was one of our first monthly gifts of 2014, right? It came after our relaunch party, which was open to everyone. I think a lot of people wouldn't have come to those events, major donors, monthly donors, any kind of donor, if it wasn't actually accessible, and that's what started. The way that we do fundraising and the way that we reached donors at every level was to have an accessible party where no one was turned away. If you look at philanthropic events where people can come participate at their events, a gala in New York, you can't find a philanthropic gala for less than \$400 a ticket. Third Wave will always have this mentality and this practice of no one turned away, because it's who we are, right? We're a no one turned away foundation and recognize that the most impactful things happen when you don't set up as an elitist institution, right? I'm really excited that that ethos has really continued and in many ways just deepened in this next wave of leadership. Yeah.

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Ana Conner: Yeah. I mean, thank you so much for that, Rye. I second and kudos everything you just said. I often come back to what is the core of the work you're trying to do and who is at the center of that? If for your grantmaking it's about supporting folks that don't have access to dollars, that have often been left out of philanthropy, the ways that you should be fundraising for that should also include the leadership and vision of those same people. I think it just gets to the heart of it, right? What are you doing and how are you including everyone in that? Talking about accessibility of events and that sort of thing, I think is really big because I think back to the ways that I got involved with Third Way from the beginning where I was a part of gender bash planning and help to ... I forget exactly what I did.

Ana Conner: I think I had to do sponsorships or something like that, but I felt so included in the work. Then I went on to be a ... I like bartending and so I was a bartender for a dance party for Third Wave and then I came to Third Wave and I'm like, "Wow, folks have thrown tattoo parties, have donated their art." There's just so many ways that people have engaged in this work that's beyond buying a table at a gala. You know what I mean? It's really beautiful and it actually engages so many more people in the work, and I'm just grateful for that leadership and how we think about this fundraising. Something I learned when I was a part of the Miss Major-Jay Toole Building Giving Circle, which was I mentioned a bunch of organizations earlier that we talked about. So FIERCE, there was Audrey Lorde Project, Sylvia Rivera Law Project and Streetwise and Safe while they were still around.

Ana Conner: We started a giving circle to, in that moment, do cross-fundraising because we recognize that oftentimes because this system is set up so that we have to apply for the same grants and then hope that we get it over another institution, we're like, "Why don't we just go around that whole system, fundraise all of our donors together collectively and think about how we can work together to sustain our organizations." Sometimes I just get reminded of that in these moments where organizations and people are doing this work all the time to figure out how we can make ends meet and

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to be together collectively. I think even though there's scarcity, folks are figuring it out and organizations are going to do this work with or without people, with or without major donors, with or without foundations. So the question is are you going to get behind these organizations to bolster the work that they're doing?

Kiyomi Fujikawa: For both Ana and I who are Co-Directors now, didn't necessarily ever see ourselves in philanthropy and are totally here by accident, and every day, for myself at least, I'm pinching myself being like, "How did I get here?" Joy Messinger, who's our program officer, was the first person that I ever knew that was a program officer in my personal life, that I was like, "Oh, that's a job people have? Where they work for foundations and they redistribute money?" That wasn't something I was aware of. Then my first real entry point was through the Trans Justice Funding Project as one of their fellows, and so just want to give them a shout out for also believing in the power of community and folks that don't see ourselves in philanthropy, who now we're leading an organization, which again, pinch myself. Wow, she's dreaming.

Kiyomi Fujikawa: In terms of hot tips for this moment, I know this has been said a lot and I don't want to say this to sugarcoat this moment, there's such an example here of the world being able to just pivot almost in so many, so many different ways. It's not even 180 degrees, it's just a multi-dimensional pivot at this moment in just a few months. Even that, we felt how slow that felt on a big level. I think we have to come out of this COVID crisis different and that's how our movements are showing up. We're here talking about philanthropy, so let's talk about how philanthropy needs to show up different through this. I do want to give a shout out to folks like General Service, folks like The Libra Foundation who are really showing up differently in this moment. Foundation for a Just Society. So many different groups. That's a limited list.

Kiyomi Fujikawa: There's just so much power of recognizing that in philanthropy we actually do need to approach organizing in the way of like, "Okay, I'm going to call my cousin and talk to them about what needs to be different." Whether that's your colleague's cousin and or whether that's your actual cousin, it's

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up for you to know. But yeah, I do want to just share. I was in a funder briefing the other day and Naa Hammond from the Groundswell Fund who also was formerly on the board at Third Wave shared this quote with me from Just Transitions, which is that "Change is inevitable, justice is not. So how do we make sure that the changes that we're doing right now are the changes that we want to see?" Because it is such a moment where there can be increased border surveillance and border shutdowns, increased attacks on immigrants, on trans people, on sick and disabled people.

Kiyomi Fujikawa: It's also a moment where we can be like, "Hey, actually, everything we're doing right now was built by sick and disabled people and was told it's impossible, your access needs are just an impossible request," and this moment of also knowing that prisons don't need to exist. That's in times of COVID and actually all the time, and yeah, just the work of caregivers and so many other folks in terms of responding to this crisis. Yeah, that's a note I want to leave us on.

Monica Trinidad: Thank you everybody. I'm loving all these shout outs. Can we just take a moment to shout out some of the people who really saw the work through in 2014 at Third Wave? I don't know Rye if you want to give some shout outs.

Rye Young: Yeah. Well, when we just started off in 2014, we had a working board that puts so much labor into getting things done. I was the only staff person at the time and we couldn't have done it without those board members in 2014. Naa Hammond, Wagatwe Wanjuki, Quito Ziegler, Alicia Jay, Samantha Franklin, Katherine Cross, Katie Schaffer and Betsy Edasery. Three of those folks were former interns, so was I. I was a former intern and I think, "Where does that happen?" Right? That people who used to be at the intern level are seen as the essential leaders that you need to guide your organization to success. I think that the list of individuals, they inspire me every day and I love all those folks.

Monica Trinidad: Awesome. Thank you so much. Any last thoughts before we close out this episode? I know that this was a lot of information in one episode and I hope that listeners will take their time and listen to this in parts or listen to

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this on one sitting. I hope that it was informative, especially for any foundations that are listening. But yeah, I just wanted to throw it to anybody if you had any last thoughts you wanted to add.

Rye Young:

I have a thought, which is just an addition to the cross-class giving question, which is I think a responsibility that you have not just to recognize that cross-class fundraising is a powerful way to make money, it's also a responsibility to center economic justice in the work, and I think we also have to, as a foundation, make clear that we can't have movements where middle and upper class people are the only people who can actually be trusted to lead them and who can be given the skills to lead them and who are expected to fundraise in ways that are really designed for that class of people. I think that a lot of harm happens to movement building when we don't name class and when we don't recognize that, in many ways, these organizations are only set up for people with class privilege. We have to be redistributing wealth and we have to be raising money and centering working class donors, but in service to naming that we need economic justice, right?

Rye Young:

We don't just need money for our institutions. We need to be fighting for economic justice every day and we need to be fighting for economically just movements where institutional power building is not separated from the actual support and set up for working class people to lead these organizations themselves, right? I think foundations, they may be willing to say that people of color should be in leadership, but they are not willing to recognize class as a component of that or as something that is not inherently addressed. So as a foundation, we have to trust and support and fund working class leaders and leaders of color and recognize that those two things are not the same, right? And we have to fight for economic justice at the same time that we have these incredible cross-class fundraising strategies.

Monica Trinidad:

I echo what everyone has said in this episode. Cross-class fundraising is critical for our sustainability as organizations, and that our communities are consistently the first to throw down for social justice movements, but that's often not seen as philanthropy both by the philanthropy field and

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ourselves because philanthropy has been a place for the most privileged. The only way that I see Third Wave as meeting the flood of requests that we're receiving right now is if we are all doing what we can to stretch our contributions and double down on our commitments this year, if you can.

Monica Trinidad: If we've learned anything from the 2008 economic crisis, it is that individuals like you listening right now are the lifeboat for many organizations during moments like these. So I want to thank you all, Rye, Ana and Kiyomi, for taking time out of your day to talk about this important and incredibly relevant topic right now, and I hope that these experiences that you shared and all of the hot tips are helpful for folks listening right now. You can subscribe to Mic Check podcast on Apple Podcasts and SoundCloud, and you can listen to any past episodes on our website at thirdwavefund.org/podcast.