

# 2013 Annual Report



*Skees Family Foundation: Family helping families.*

Our mission: to end poverty worldwide by:

1. Partnering with social entrepreneurs scaling self-help models, and
2. Leveraging storytelling for social change.

Our vision: a world in which every global citizen has the opportunity to lead a healthy, productive, peaceful, and self-determined life.

*Below: A few of the clients we call family.*



## Impact Study: Can a Small Foundation Make a Difference?

We wondered if 9 years of effort and investments were getting us anywhere in our mission to end poverty.—So, we spent 2013 on research. Read on and decide what you think. Also, we've updated how we communicate with you. Highlights from the year:

- ◆ New logos designed by artist Ali
- ◆ New website featuring our stories
- ◆ New blog, "Seeds of Hope," that showcases outliers and heroes
- ◆ Impact study on our foundation; strategic plan leads to action plan
- ◆ 4 new family members join board

### PEOPLE ARE SAYING:

"SFF is the little engine that could."

—*Daniel Kaufman, Third Plateau*

"Your story really helped put us out there!"

—*Donna Liette, PBMR peace program*

"We are now reaching 5.7 million women worldwide! Quite a change from 5,113 women when you first partnered with us."

—*Kim Andrup, Freedom from Hunger*

"Great work on the story—my friends and family definitely enjoyed it. We're lucky to have SFF's support."—*Sarah Chow, Vittana*

"We started off as a well-meaning family organization but have transformed into a team of professionals achieving reach and impact.—But we still have the heart of family."—*Jasmine Skees, board trustee*

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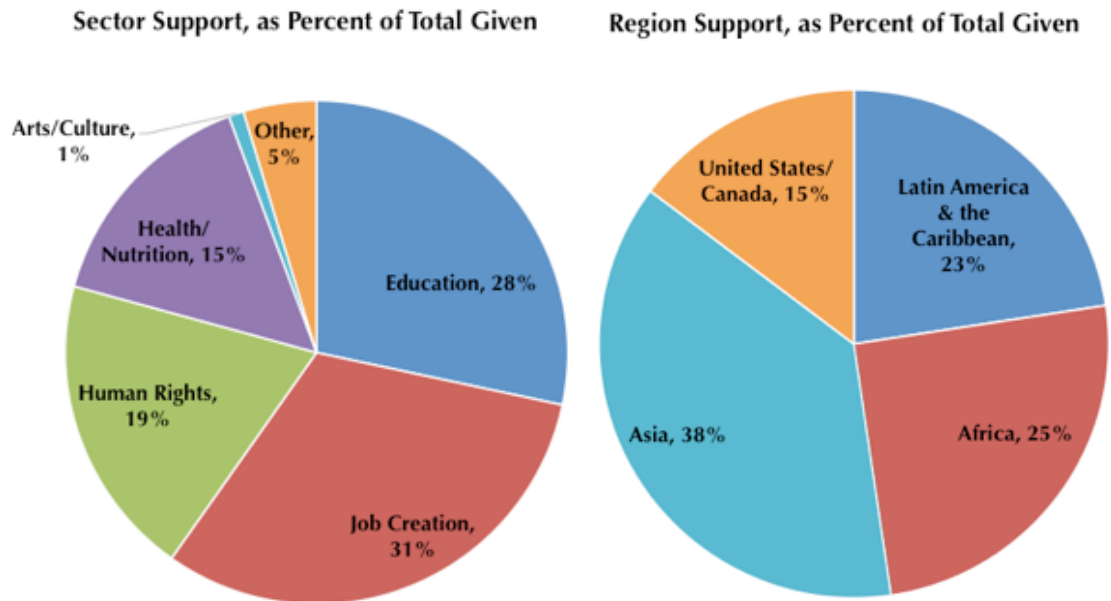
## FAST FACTS, 2005-2013:

Number of grants:  
80  
Total amount granted:  
\$1,398,110  
Average grant amount:  
\$17,476  
Number of people served:  
49,909,152\*  
% Serving Ultra Poor:  
52.4%\*\*

\*Data calculated by Third Plateau as:  
Our grants ÷ grantees' annual budgets x number of clients they serve.

\*\*Ultra poverty as defined by the World Bank as subsisting on ~\$1.25/day.

## Impact: Intention + Investment.



### 2013 FINANCIALS AT A GLANCE:

<i>Board discretionary grants:</i>	
Catholic Committee for Appalachia	\$4,000
Cooperative for Education	6,000
PBMR Peace Program	10,000
<i>Family discretionary grants:</i>	
Local2Global/Family Grants	8,770
<i>Mission-related grants:</i>	
Freedom from Hunger	25,000
The School Fund	5,000
Upaya Social Ventures	25,000
V-Day V-Peace Scholarships	10,000
<b>Total:</b>	<b>\$93,770</b>
<i>Social-Impact Investment:</i>	
Vittana College Loans	50,000
<b>Total:</b>	<b>\$143,770</b>
<i>Expenses:</i>	
Accounting and legal	\$2,634
Financial management	24,277
Foundation memberships	1,225
Strategic & action plan	24,236
Taxes/excise and foreign	400
Website redesign/hosting	3,390
<b>Total:</b>	<b>\$56,162</b>
Grants—% of corpus	3.6%
Expenses—% of corpus	2.2%
Corpus at yearend	\$2,592,052

## Impact: Possible Through People.

### Family update:

This year, our family really stepped up:

Logos and website: Alexandra got creative in her kitchen art studio in Kentucky, designing two botanical elements—a sunflower and its seedling—and worked with [Angela](#), our graphic designer at [Consulting Within Reach](#), to develop two new logos: one for Skees Family Foundation, another for our blog, “Seeds of Hope.” She also advised the redesign of our [website](#).

Board grants: Jasmine and Hugh (our first-generation models of “philanthropy of the hands”) visited a few of their board grantees: [Cooperative for Education](#) (working in Guatemala), the [Dayton Christian Center](#) in Ohio, and [Praise Laundromat](#) in Kentucky.

Role modeling: Hugh continues to volunteer every Saturday at the [Dayton International Peace Museum](#), whose work in mediating, meditating, and building peace at home and abroad remains dear to his heart. Come visit Hugh if you’re in Ohio on a weekend!

Family programs: 3 families directed Family Grants, and 9 people used our family’s volunteer-service-becomes-grants [Local 2 Global](#) program: Connor, Bridget, Griffin, Kris, and Tony in South Carolina; Ali and Shelly in Kentucky; and Mary and Sandy in California.

### Board update:

Lisa and Greg: Having donated hundreds of hours to SFF since 2004, are stepping aside to accommodate our new family board but remain as trusted advisors and friends.

Director: Suzanne donated 2,683 hours to [SFF](#) and nonprofit organizations this year.

New Board: 4 family members have been elected to join our SFF’s board: Brienne, Elisabeth, Sally, and Shelly. See page 3.

### Building Our Team:

Foundation Source: Ryan DeMaria serves as far more than our back-office advisor: He helps with grant research, family engagement, and philanthropic education, in ways that have become invaluable to us.

Third Plateau: The two-brothers-and best-friend, who named their firm after a childhood summer-camp mountain, advise both foundations and nonprofits. They’ve added two talented associates, produced a strategic plan to gauge our impact and guide our work. They’ve launched SFF into our next stage of smart grantmaking, family team-building, and visionary storytelling.



Third Plateau Team (L to R): Daniel, Anchal, Whitney, Mike, and Jonathan.



Ryan, our Foundation Source right-hand man.

## A Warm Welcome to Our New Board Members!

We are very excited to welcome four new board members whose terms will begin January 1. They balance fulltime jobs with family and friends, travel and learning—and they've committed to putting family philanthropy at the top of their list for volunteer service! They'll join [Jasmine](#) and [Suzanne](#). We now represent 6 of our 30 family members in all three generations.

From the top—meet our social-justice warriors:

1. Brienne Nicole Skees (23) grew up in Kentucky and double-majored in economics and peace and conflict studies at Guilford College. She's studied Spanish in Costa Rica, worked with African refugee children in South Carolina, and taught healthcare and environmental preservation in Malawi. She currently teaches English with [EF English First](#) in Indonesia.
2. Elisabeth Skees Deogracias (23) grew up in California and tackled environmental and urban studies at New York University. She's studied in Costa Rica and Argentina and has worked in media and operations for environmental and fair-trade nonprofits. She currently works in corporate development for [Venture for America](#), a jobs-creation and entrepreneur-training nonprofit in New York City.
3. Sally Skees-Helly (49) grew up in Ohio and pursued international affairs and economics (Xavier) and law (DePaul). Settling in upstate New York with her husband and two daughters, Sally has managed a [divorce mediation business](#) and helped launch an e-commerce [home-décor business](#).
4. Shelly Shepard Skees (52) grew up in Indiana and studied French in Paris and health sciences at California College. Working as a [respiratory therapist](#), Shelly married Ron and moved to North Carolina and then rural Kentucky, where her four daughters grew up with plenty of land, air, and horses—along with a strong passion for human rights.



*A special tribute to our legacy and founding board directors: Hugh, Lisa, and Greg paved the way for our work in the world. They will continue to serve as advisors.*



[Hugh Benedict Skees](#) grew up on a farm in Kentucky. First in family to college, he earned a BSCE and MSCE, worked as a chemical engineer, and served as devoted husband and father, church and peace volunteer. [Lisa Intriери Caputo](#) works as a tax and estate attorney and partner at her law firm in San Jose, CA and cherishes time with her husband and two young children. [Gregory Snow](#), founder and partner of Snow Bittleston in Los Gatos, CA, serves on several nonprofit and for-profit boards and devotes his time to family, friends, travel, and the Lions Club.

## Top 5 “Seeds of Hope” Stories from 2013

1. ["Gun Laws Won't Impact Us Here" in the Line of Fire, Say Peace Workers: 4-Part Series:](#) In Chicago, the U.S. city that suffers the highest rates of gun violence and murder, a small team of unlikely adults employs a surprising technique to try to keep their kids alive. Working to transform intergenerational poverty, they bring victims and perpetrators, gang and family members, together to create restorative justice.
2. [Romance in the Rainforest: Microentrepreneurs Make Time for Love:](#) Dalia runs a tiny grocery stand in the a village near Iquitos, Peru, and her partner Walker drives a three-wheel mototaxi. They work hard from 3a.m. through long days to put their three kids through school—but they still find time to keep the sparks flying between them.
3. [India: My 5-Star Experience in Uttar Pradesh:](#) Blistering sunlight beats down in a rural village, where we've come to visit ultra-poor women employed by our local partner, a social-venture dairy firm. Far from plumbing, electricity, or comfort, we share an experience that far surpasses our expectations. Sometimes, travel brings the happiest surprises.
4. ["The People's Chef" Launches Nutritious Cooking Classes for Low-Income Families:](#) Chef Anthony Head teaches parents in Dayton, OH how to spend less on healthy groceries than fast food; how to braise and sauté even if they have just one burner; and how to “have fun and make one healthy choice each day.”
5. [Politics and Philanthropy in Bed Together:](#) Congress, paralyzed by partisanship, halts the economy, healthcare, and the government itself. So why in the world would social-change agents want to pursue a political avenue to try to advance our causes? SFF studies advocacy for nonprofits in Washington, D.C.

Get hope in your inbox: subscribe [here](#).



## Analysis to Action: What's Next?—note from the director

*Philanthropy* means love of humankind; altruism; generosity. It has its dark side, too: It exists because of imbalances of power and resources, often operates as a tax shelter and ego booster, and includes absolutely no checks and balances—unless self-imposed.

It's also shifted 180 degrees within my lifetime, from people throwing coins into the "Poor" box in church, to global billionaires publicly signing a "Giving Pledge", earning and sharing massive fortunes within their lifespans. I, too, have shifted. As a young woman and quiet mother, I hid my giving, known only as "Suzanne" at the soup kitchen and signing checks with "must remain anonymous." The deep social justice values of my Catholic upbringing included extreme modesty—a comforting cloak of invisibility. Later, I learned the Jewish concept of Eight Levels of Giving (Maimonides) that praises knowing and partnering with the one in need, and the Islamic insistence that to give first to family and friends—those who know us—is of the highest order.

SFF launched in 2004, began grantmaking in 2005, and truly "went public" with our website in 2011. Now, our tiny finances, grantee lists, and heartfelt stories are posted for all to see. We've funded some of the most innovative yet practical programs in the U.S., working here and abroad to extend education, jobs, health, and peace. We've shifted away from throwing dollars at causes to investing in systems change. Meanwhile, we make some audacious claims on our website:

- ◆ Intention matters;
- ◆ We all can make a difference with a dollar or an hour; and
- ◆ Every small act ripples our far beyond what we can see.

So this year, we decided to self-impose some checks and balances. We hired a smart, objective, data-digging firm, Third Plateau Social Impact Strategies to conduct an impact study, to test our intentions against outcomes. They've helped us uncover such internal issues as: overly broad mission, unscientific grant process, underutilized stories, etc. Being the one behind much of our day-to-day work, I embody most of these organizational weaknesses.—But the good news is:

- ◆ We're building a team (see page 2) to fill talent gaps and strengthen capacity.
- ◆ Our partners are having indisputable impact in ending poverty, and the data prove this:

Our grantee partners have taken the **\$1.4 million** we've invested in 9 years and used it to reach **49,909,152** clients at an average cost of **2.8 cents per client**. More than half (**52.4%**) of our funds have directly served the **poorest of the poor**, in the U.S. and around the world. (See page 2)

We've just begun: In 2014, we plan to mobilize our new board to work in unison, modeling how ordinary middle-class folks can "do" philanthropy. We'll work with our research team and create a scientific system of grantmaking to small nonprofits and social enterprises working to end poverty through self-help. We'll work closely with a few storytelling partners to dig out their most compelling stories and share them with a broader audience. And maybe not by next year this time—but someday, we'll work ourselves completely out of a job.

—Suzanne



*These students in Tanzania just want a chance to live and learn, NOW.*

*Photo by Suzanne Skees.*

## Triangle of Intention:

30-member,  
3-generation  
**Family engagement**  
through online programs  
and board service



Early-stage  
**Seed-funding**  
of innovative nonprofits and  
social entrepreneurs

**Storytelling social change**

Sharing true stories of hope about program managers and clients  
doing the real work to end poverty worldwide

Check out our stories on **SEEDS OF HOPE**. Get hope in your in-box. [Skees.org](http://Skees.org).