



Thank you so much for that warm welcome, David, and thank you Steve and Jesse. Hello, everyone! I am honored to serve this dynamic community that you have built together, and I am so happy to be with you here today at my first, and San Diego Grantmakers 16<sup>th</sup>, Annual Conference.

If my Midwest accent didn't give me away, I am not from California. I grew up in a small rural town of northern Michigan and trailer park near Gary, Indiana. As an adult I lived and worked in urban centers across 40 countries. As a result, I've spent a lot of time thinking about the importance of feeling you belong. Belonging in your community, your work, . . . . and in the rooms in which you want to be seen. I'm sharing this as context for my deep gratitude to everyone for the very warm welcome I'm receiving here and the sense of belonging you're instilling as you reach out to include me as part of the community, region, and state.

Our experiences shape who we are so as we begin to get to know each other, I'd like to share a bit about mine. For me, being the first generation in my family to graduate from high school brought experiences central to my core. Building upon that, I've been fortunate that through my personal and professional experiences, people trusted me with their stories to help me learn and understand the much deeper, higher and wider barriers that stand in the way of many reaching their full potential. This, together with education and practical experience, guides my actions in working to overcome barriers so **every** person has the opportunity to achieve their full potential. San Diego Grantmakers' vision is of a place, our region, in which the systems are equitable and improve the lives of all its residents. I'm here because I believe deeply in the importance and urgency of acting on this vision.

In my first weeks I've been listening and learning a lot. I have a deep appreciation for the tremendously dedicated, authentic and sustained efforts I'm seeing that confirm what I believed I would find here. People have also been very honest in sharing the gaps and barriers, old and emerging, and trends that are standing in our way of achieving a thriving region with great opportunities for all.

We live in very dynamic times. To rise above, we must take collaboration even further, building more diverse and deeper cross-sector relationships. We must also challenge ourselves to be even more innovative, adaptive and courageous in the solutions we seek. I've already seen these characteristics in our region's nonprofit, philanthropic, business, government and community sectors. What I've realized is everyone knows everyone, not because we are small, but because that is how you get the best and hardest work done, by learning and acting together. This, together with a "stickiness" I'm seeing to stay with the very real and hard job of collaboration, creates a unique environment with excellent potential.

Our board and staff are about to begin planning for San Diego Grantmaker's next cycle of innovation, seeking new ways we can think about the strengths of our organization to amplify and accelerate progress in achieving our vision.

Each of you is trusted and treasured in our San Diego Grantmakers' community. We need you as thought partners, champions and collaborators as we design and implement this next chapter of our work.

Our next chapter of innovation isn't written yet. But with all I'm learning, the unique environment I'm seeing, and the sense of belonging I'm feeling, I've got confidence we will unlock new ways to amplify our impact.

And, as the 8<sup>th</sup> largest city in the country, with characteristics that make us unique yet also approachable, we have the opportunity to lift up our work across the nation as we deepen our

impact. Our story is powerful today and can be transformational tomorrow if together we continue to craft the roadmap to take us there. So, I look forward to our journey together!

And now, let's talk about today. As we seek ways to navigate and innovate in these dynamic times to grow our impact, it's critical to examine our power and its use. Throughout the day we'll unpack our conference theme, the Power in Philanthropy, from field-level research and thought leadership to practice. We'll unpack how power - in all of its forms - explicitly and implicitly- affects every aspect of our work and consider how we can think intentionally about power to maximize positive outcomes from the power in philanthropy.

The National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy Power Moves framework was developed from and by the field and is being utilized around the country in this examination and use of power. We wanted to bring this resource to life by having its CEO share insights from this body of work to help guide our time today and thinking beyond, therefore I'm very pleased to kick off our mainstage, with my friend and colleague, Aaron Dorfman, CEO of the National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy. Following his opening remarks, Aaron will be joined by peers we'll introduce at that time for a dynamic group discussion. Aaron's extensive and impressive experiences and accomplishments, as well as those of the colleagues joining him, are listed in the program for your review.

Please give a warm welcome to Aaron Dorfman!