

MEDINA FOUNDATION

801 SECOND AVE., SUITE 1300 • SEATTLE, WA 98104 • FAX (206) 652-8791 • (206) 652-8783
EMAIL: info@medinafoundation.org • www.medinafoundation.org

Pacific County Youth Initiative

Recognizing that Pacific County is a high-need area that was underrepresented in Medina's grantmaking, Trustees decided to focus on making a positive impact in this region. In order to ensure this investment was community-driven, Medina staff and Trustees travelled around the county to hear from residents. We held listening sessions and spoke with leaders in the community to identify what they viewed as the areas of greatest need. Attendees at these meetings included representatives from local government (including a Pacific County Commissioner, city and port employees, and staff from the Pacific County Health Department), nonprofits (including the Boys & Girls Club, YMCA, Big Brothers Big Sisters, and Wellspring Community Network), local funding intermediaries (United Way of Pacific and Grays Harbor and the Grays Harbor Community Foundation), and local business leaders. The overriding theme we heard was the need for more youth programming focused on youth success. Locals indicated that there was little youth programming in these areas, and what existed was limited even further by transportation challenges for youth to actually get to the programming.

Working in close partnership with community leaders and the Ben B. Cheney Foundation, Medina helped fund a new, community-led group, the Pacific County Youth Alliance (PCYA). The PCYA works with existing youth-serving organizations in Pacific County to identify needs and gaps in services to strengthen the impact of the programs that currently exist. The ultimate goal of this work is to increase coordination among and between the youth-serving agencies, maximize existing resources, and improve those programs dedicated to youth success. Together, the Medina and Cheney Foundations provided a two-year grant for the staffing of the PCYA. One of PCYA's first opportunities to make an impact was to coordinate a county-wide non-profit board training. By leveraging funds provided by other foundations, PCYA managed to reach and provide essential training to over 60 people. Additionally, the PCYA was also recently awarded 12 AmeriCorps volunteers to support this work. These volunteers will work across the county, helping a number of youth-serving organizations increase their reach and efficiency. Many of these organizations would have been unable to access an AmeriCorps member without the assistance of the PCYA.

Medina staff also worked with colleagues at the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to help facilitate a Building Community Philanthropy grant of more than \$350,000 to the Grays Harbor Community Foundation (GHCF) to support work in the region. Input from Medina was particularly key in designating \$60,000 of the grant to go to Pacific County. Staff is working with GHCF and will play an advisory role in determining where the Pacific County money goes, in the hopes that it might best align with our youth success work. The GHCF is also reaching out to the Advisory Board of the PCYA for input. This work with partners and outside opportunities has leveraged Medina's initial grant for even greater impact.

*Medina Foundation
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2015 Update*

Jessica Case, Program Officer
Jessica@medinafoundation.org
206-652-8782