

# Next Generation Leadership: Exploring Transition

By Deanne Stone

To Edie Thorpe, founding Chair of the Surdna Family Involvement Committee.

With deep appreciation for valiantly leading Surdna through the change process when designing The Andrus Family Philanthropy Program and the Andrus Family Fund and for elegantly guiding The Andrus Family Fund's Board and Staff through all the stages of Transition.

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## FOREWORD by Edith D. Thorpe

In 2008, the Andrus Family Fund completed its eighth year as a grant making foundation. Typically, foundations wait until their 10th year to mark that milestone anniversary with a publication. The Andrus Family Fund, however, has built its grant making philosophy and culture around the theme of transitions, and its eighth year marked a major transition: the rotation off the board of the last two original board members. It seemed like the appropriate time to commemorate the achievements of the original board members and, at the same time, share with our colleagues the story of our fifth-generation fund and why, we believe, it has succeeded.

To understand why the Surdna Foundation created the Andrus Family Fund, it's important to know something about the Andrus family. The first is that it is large—very large. At last count, the family database listed 419 family members, spanning four generations. Most of us live in the States, but we also have cousins living in Canada, Australia, and Europe. As you can imagine with a family this size, we are a pretty diverse group. But, no matter how different our political and religious views or ways of life, what we all have in common is a connection to John Andrus, the creator of the family's wealth.

John Andrus, a businessman and investor, was born in 1841. He amassed a fortune primarily by buying and selling undervalued land across the continent. While he regarded making money as "man's duty," he also believed he had a responsibility to help others. When he was in his sixties, he was elected mayor of Yonkers, New York, and later served four terms in the US Congress. He devoted the remainder of his life to charitable endeavors, establishing the Surdna Foundation in 1917; and an orphanage, the Julia Dyckman Andrus Memorial, in 1928, in honor of his late wife. Since then, the family has established three additional philanthropies: Andrus on the Hudson, the Helen Andrus Benedict Foundation, and the Andrus Family Fund (AFF), the subject of this publication.

John Andrus cast the mold for the family's participation in philanthropy and public service, but it took a leap of imagination to find a way to connect a clan as big as ours around those core family values. In 2000, the Surdna Board launched the Andrus Family Philanthropy Program, a major effort to increase family involvement in the family's five charitable institutions, forge deeper connections among extended family members based on our shared history, and provide philanthropic and educational opportunities for family members of all ages. (For more information on the development of this program, see Stone, Deanne, *Sustaining Tradition: The Andrus Family Philanthropy Program*, Washington DC: National Center for Family Philanthropy, 2001.)

The Andrus Family Philanthropy Program (AFPP) has succeeded well beyond our initial dreams. More and more family members are engaged in philanthropy and volunteerism, and cousins are getting to know one another through their participation in the various AFPP programs described in this booklet. Not only has AFPP greatly enriched our family, but it has stirred considerable interest within the field of family philanthropy.

Many new and existing family foundations are eager for tips on how to engage the younger generation in the family's philanthropy. As word has spread about our programs, we have received a growing numbers of requests to share what we have learned—and we do so with a mixture of pride and humility. While we are delighted by the success of our programs, we also recognize that the Andrus family is unusual in its size and resources. We certainly do not expect other foundations to copy exactly what we've done but, based on the feedback we've received, we feel confident that the design and principles of our programs—and the many innovative ideas the Andrus Family Fund has introduced—can be adapted to fit the needs and circumstances of many families.

In that spirit, we decided to present a detailed account of the first eight years of the Andrus Family Fund. The board of the Surdna Foundation laid the preliminary groundwork for launching the Andrus Family Fund, but the hard work of defining and shaping the foundation was done by the young board members and their able staff—and that, we believe, is what makes its story so instructive for others. Readers can follow the evolution of a new foundation as its young board members learn the lay of the land, confront and overcome various dilemmas, and mature into confident grant makers. They can also anticipate some of the challenges they are likely to encounter in preparing young family members for their new responsibilities.

We hope that reading this booklet spurs you to find ways to interest your younger generations in the family's philanthropy. Speaking for the older generation of the Andrus family, I can say that this has been an enormously exciting and mutually beneficial adventure. We have had the opportunity to pass on what we know to the younger family members and, in turn, to learn from them. We are delighted to share our experience with you.

# CONTENTS

Foreword	3
Introduction	7
<b>Part 01:</b> The Andrus Family Philanthropy Program	8
<b>Part 02:</b> The Andrus Family Fund	14
<b>Part 03:</b> Assessing Progress	48
The Andrus Family Fund	
The Andrus Family Philanthropy Program	
<b>Appendices</b>	60
A : Andrus Youth Service Program	
B : The BETs (Board Experiential Training)	
C : AFF Statement of Culture	
D : AFF Core Values	
E : Measuring the Impact of the Transition Framework in Foster Care to Independence Projects	
F : Indicators of Success	
G : Youth Experience Of Transitions (YET)	



# INTRODUCTION

## **THE ANDRUS FAMILY FUND**

A Fifth-Generation Family Foundation

The Surdna Foundation is one of the oldest and largest family foundations in the country. In 1998, when the fourth-generation trustees began thinking about how to include more family members in the family's philanthropies, the extended family numbered 343. How to involve a family that size was daunting enough, but the trustees faced another hurdle. Historically, the seats on the family boards had been filled by a handful of family members from a few family branches. The fourth-generation wanted to have a more democratic selection process, but could they suddenly and convincingly open the doors to the family's philanthropies after decades of exclusion? This booklet, *Next Generation Leadership: Exploring Transition*, recounts how the Surdna board, led by its Family Involvement Committee, arrived at an imaginative solution to the challenges it faced. In February 2000, it inaugurated the Andrus Family Philanthropy Program, an innovative, inclusive, and flexible program that offers opportunities for family members of all ages and interests to get involved in the family's philanthropies and in public service. The fifth-generation Andrus Family Fund was created as one of those opportunities.

PART

# 01

# The Andrus Family Philanthropy Program

# THE ANDRUS FAMILY PHILANTHROPY PROGRAM

**In 1998, the Andrus family had four family charitable institutions:**

- The Surdna Foundation (Andrus spelled backwards), founded in 1917;
- The Julia Dyckman Andrus Memorial, established as an orphanage in 1928 and later became a treatment, educational, and research facility for vulnerable children and their families;
- Andrus on Hudson (formerly the John E. Andrus Memorial), a retirement home for the elderly established in 1955; and
- The Helen Andrus Benedict Foundation, founded in 1997 to promote elder-friendly neighborhoods and the engagement of older people in their communities, particularly in Westchester County, New York.

John Andrus, the founder of the family fortune, was survived by eight children. Yet, from the start of the family's formal philanthropy, only a few of the eight family branches were represented in the Andrus charitable institutions—and those individuals served on multiple boards. The fourth-generation trustees of the Surdna Foundation believed that this tradition was not only unfair, but unwise. The continuity of the philanthropies depended on engaging future generations, so why was the family ignoring the many educated and talented extended family members who had so much to contribute?

The Surdna Board recognized it was time to design an assertive and comprehensive plan for reaching out to the extended family. Its main target was the fifth-generation, but it also wanted to invite the participation of fourth-generation cousins. The board created the Family Involvement Committee to lead the way and, with the guidance of consultant Judy Healey, it developed a far-reaching plan. The result was the Andrus Family Philanthropy Program, a network of educational opportunities that also includes a Web site and family newsletter. Completing a plan of this scope and detail in 18 months was a tribute to the Family Involvement Committee's strong leadership, careful planning, and follow-through. Complex and admittedly ambitious, the Andrus Family Philanthropy Program's design met all the board's goals: involving more family members on the boards, encouraging community service, and strengthening family ties and pride in the family's tradition of philanthropy.

While the Family Involvement Committee was selecting applicants to fill seats on the various boards, it hired a search firm to scout the country for candidates for the dual position of executive director of the Andrus Family Fund (AFF) and the Andrus Family Philanthropy Program. The Committee recognized that finding the right person would not be easy. Besides having the creativity and management skills to simultaneously launch AFF and the Andrus Family Philanthropy Program, the executive director would have to possess the personal skills to navigate among the chairs of the Surdna Foundation, the Family Involvement Committee, and the AFF.

The Surdna Board's unanimous choice for the position of executive director was Steve Kelban. A lawyer, he had served as executive director of the Public Interest Law Center at the New York University of Law and directed the university's prestigious Root-Tilden Scholarship Program. While at NYU, he created Pro Bono Students America, an organization that matched law student volunteers at 120 law schools with more than 8,500 public interest organizations around the country. Besides his impressive professional credentials, Kelly—as he is

known—had just the right personal qualities for the job. Warm, extroverted, and a natural mentor, he relished the opportunity to work with young family members in shaping a new foundation and with the larger Andrus family in implementing the Andrus Family Philanthropy Program.

### **Selecting Board Members**

The Surdna Board agreed that membership on the AFF board would be limited to direct descendants of John Andrus and their spouses or partners between the ages of 25 and 45. During the planning process, the Family Involvement Committee mailed surveys to over 60 family members within that age category to assess their interest in serving on the AFF board. In addition, the survey offered family members a chance to express their interest in serving on the other family boards. Although the pool of eligible family members was relatively large, the Committee expected that many who would like to serve would have to decline because of family, work, and school obligations. The 25 cousins who responded were invited to attend an informational meeting in January 1999 to learn more about the individual boards and the commitment required to be a board member. The cousins came from 12 states and, for many, it was the first time they had met.

After meeting the young family members and reviewing their written responses, the Family Involvement Committee nominated fourth- and fifth-generation family members for service on existing family boards. In addition, it selected eight others who, they thought, would bring a variety of talents, interests, and expertise to the new AFF board. Edie Thorpe, Chair of the Family Involvement Committee, followed up with phone calls to be sure they understood what board service entailed. The AFF board members represented six of the eight family branches of the Andrus family and included one spouse. By design, the AFF Board would have twelve seats; over the next two years, four more cousins would be added to the board, ensuring that all eight branches of the family were represented.

## **Motivations to Serve**

The original eight AFF board members ranged in age from 29 to 44. Most had careers and young families and two were pregnant. Despite their busy lives, they understood that creating a foundation from the ground up was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. Having a hand in shaping a new foundation was reason enough to jump at the chance to serve on the AFF board. An added bonus was working with cousins who, in many cases, they barely knew.

For Ken Downes, a spouse and ordained minister, the timing was perfect. He was in his late thirties and thinking about big questions like mission and purpose in life. "Besides being a fantastic learning opportunity, board service was a good fit for my stage of life and a natural extension of my training."

Caitlin Boger-Hawkins was tempted by what she had heard at the January meeting, but she worried about the time commitment. Over the next few weeks, she had several conversations with Edie Thorpe, the chair of the Family Involvement Committee, about the new foundation. "Edie was so warm and encouraging," she says, "She convinced me that I could handle it, even though I worked full-time and wanted to start a family."

Ann Williams had worked for nonprofit organizations and was excited about the possibility of working on the other side of the nonprofit fence. "I doubted that I would be picked because my parents weren't part of the family inner circle," she says, "but my mother encouraged me to apply." Not only was she chosen, but she was the first member of her family branch to serve on an Andrus family charitable board.

Peter Benedict traced his interest in serving to his great grandmother, Helen Benedict. "She was an important part of the family's history," says Peter. "Serving on the AFF board was my way of honoring her."

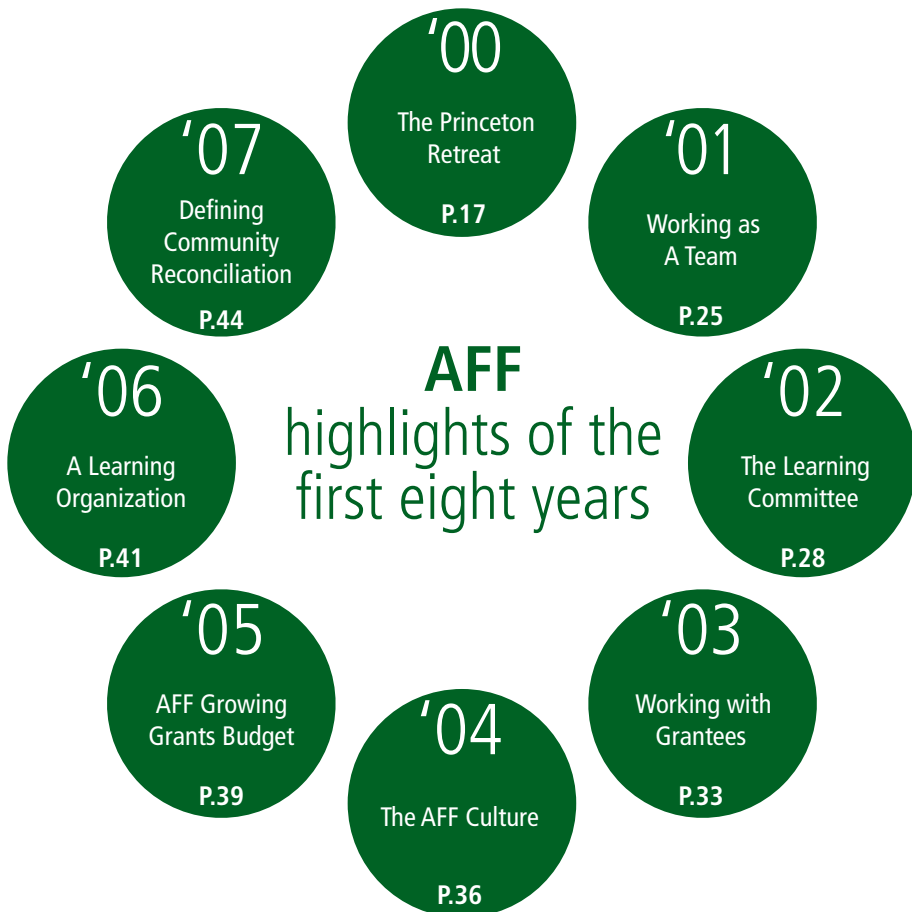
PART

# 02

# The Andrus Family Fund

# THE ANDRUS FAMILY FUND

This section traces the progression of a fledgling board, guided by an innovative and inclusive Executive Director, as it formed and shaped the foundation's distinctive culture and grantmaking practices. The purpose is not to describe the outcome of every issue raised during that time, but rather to present the highlights of the first eight years of the Andrus Family Fund.





The first AFF board meeting was a facilitated retreat held at Princeton University in March 2000. Over the weekend, the cousins had a chance to get to know one another in a safe and relaxing environment and consider the kind of foundation they wanted to create. Caitlin Boger-Hawkins, unable to travel in the last stages of her pregnancy, participated by phone.

Ann Williams remembers the first time the cousins sat down together at the Friday night dinner. “It felt awkward; we were like strangers engaging in small talk.” That changed quickly the next morning when the cousins were asked to talk about their personal histories, why they wanted to serve on the board, and what issues mattered most to them.

Whatever barriers existed at the start of the session vanished as the cousins began revealing themselves to one another. Shari Wilson credits Cameron Griffith for setting the intimate tone of the discussion. “He was the first one to speak,” she says. “He talked so eloquently about the issues he cared about, relating them to his personal life. He opened the door for everyone to follow him.”

“It was a surprisingly personal and intimate discussion,” says Cameron. “I didn’t anticipate that we’d all be so forthcoming about ourselves and our families.” Tim Thorpe doubts that the bonding would have occurred so quickly had the cousins not been related. “Even though most of us didn’t know one other, we had a shared family history that made it more comfortable for us to talk openly about ourselves and our families. We had to dig pretty deep, and that brought up a lot of raw emotions and tears. The experience changed us.” Ann Williams agrees. “The retreat set the stage for the kind of relationships we would have as board members and gave us an emotional depth that we carried over into our work.”

Having bonded quickly, the new board members turned to the hard work of defining what they wanted to accomplish. As they talked about what issues excited them, the facilitator and Kelly organized their concerns into “passion clusters.” Those clusters would guide the board in choosing its funding areas and formulating a mission statement that, they unanimously agreed, would emphasize their desire to promote social change. To prepare the board members

for their new roles, the facilitator reviewed governance issues and grantmaking responsibilities, underscoring the difference between “doing good” and “doing something significant.”

### **AFF’s Legal Status**

AFF is not an independent foundation; it is a sub-fund of the Surdna Foundation and bound by its bylaws. Its grants budget is allocated from the Surdna budget, and its grants, once approved by the AFF Board, must be confirmed by the Surdna Board. On paper, Surdna has the authority to determine the scope of AFF’s powers; in practice, it gave the new board wide leeway in making the foundation its own.

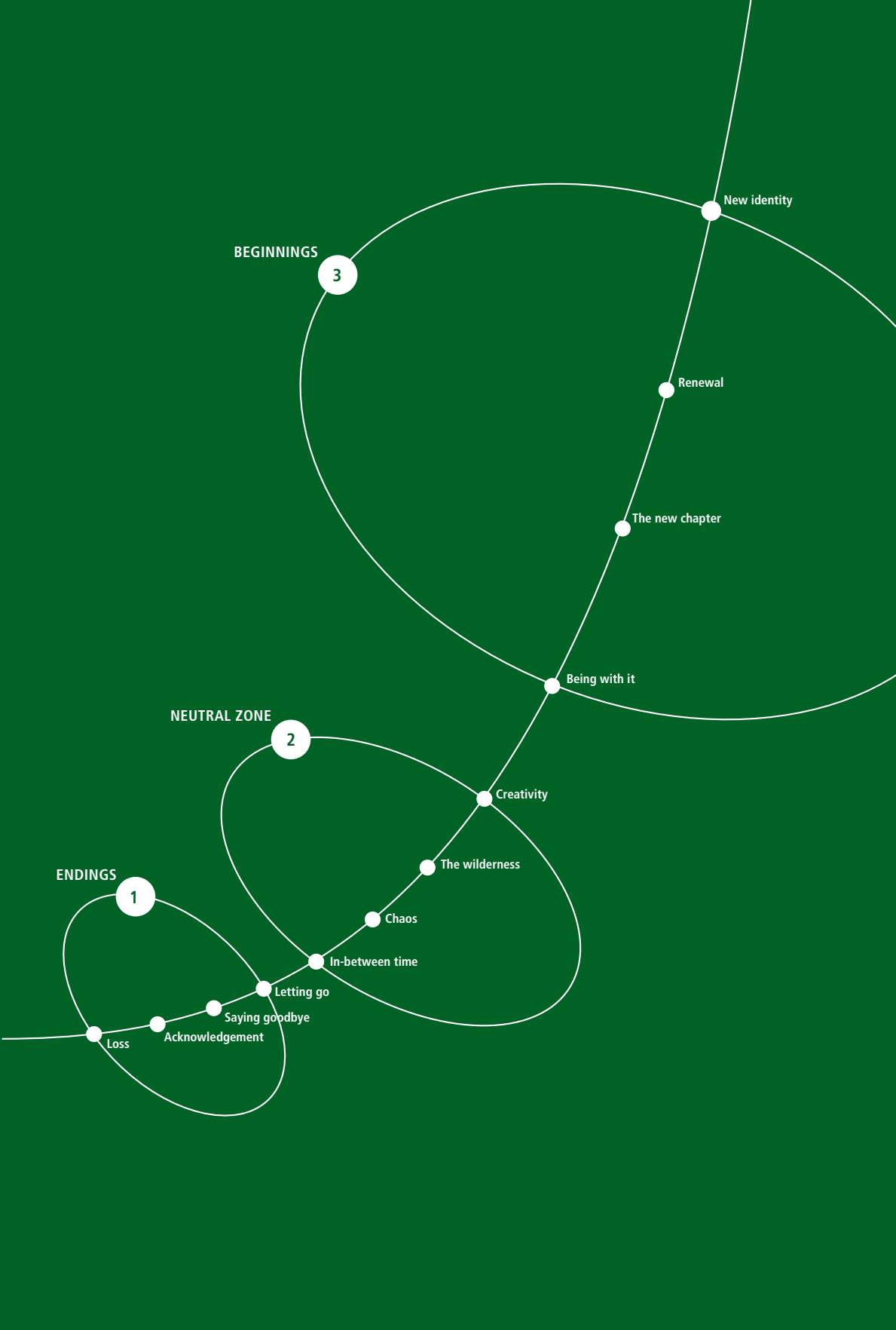
That point was driven home by Libby Andrus, then the chair of the Surdna Board, in what has become a legendary message to the new board: “The Surdna Board wants you to make us uncomfortable. What’s exciting about the Andrus Family Fund is that the board members can create their own culture and determine their own direction. We don’t want them to do things exactly as the Surdna board does. If they simply followed in our footsteps, we wouldn’t succeed in our mission. We want the young family members to challenge our thinking, to make us look at our own process. We want to learn from them.” With an initial \$1 million grantmaking allocation from the Surdna Foundation, the young board embarked on its journey of discovery.

### **The Transitions Framework**

Before Kelly assumed his new position as executive director, his wife had given him a gift of William Bridges’ book, *Managing Transition*. The book spoke to him not only about his own professional transition but also about the transition of the new board members. He sent copies of the book to each and asked them to consider the idea of thematic grantmaking, that is, having the Transitions theory serve as an overarching framework that could be incorporated into any grantee program.

Bridges, an international management consultant, developed his model to help organizations and individuals deal more productively with change in the workplace. His major insights were distinguishing between change (an external event) and transition (the emotional and psychological stages individuals pass through as they confront change) and his understanding that transition takes much longer to achieve than change.

Briefly, Bridges defined three predictable transitional stages that individuals experience as they adjust to change: Endings is the period when people are



letting go of their old ways of thinking and behaving, experiencing the loss, and mourning its passing; Neutral Zone is the uncomfortable, confusing, chaotic but sometimes creative in-between time when the old is gone but the new way is still unclear; New Beginnings marks the point at which people are emotionally prepared to do things in a wholly new way. According to Bridges' theory, individuals who understand and anticipate the feelings that arise in each stage are more likely to succeed in navigating change. By contrast, those who ignore their feelings or don't understand them are likely to get mired in the Endings or Neutral Zone, hampering their abilities to move forward.

Bridges' model had proven successful with corporate change. If adapted for use with nonprofit organizations, might it result in their becoming more productive, too, and, perhaps, more likely to sustain social change? That was a hypothesis that Kelly and the AFF Board would test.

"Bridges' theory is one of many theories of change," says Kelly. "What distinguishes it from other theories is how it presents ideas in a clear, concise and accessible way that enables people to connect more readily to their personal feelings about a particular change—something that's often overlooked in social change work."

At its second meeting, the AFF Board voted to adopt Bridges' Transitions Framework. It was a bold decision, and one that would require AFF to make a major commitment in time and money to implement. For one, the staff would have to educate the grantees about Bridges' theory and work closely with them on incorporating it in their programs. For another, AFF would have to test its hypothesis that the Transitions Framework made a significant difference in the outcomes of its grantees' programs. As the first foundation to apply this theory to social change efforts, AFF would have to invest substantial funds in developing reliable instruments to measure the results.

"The Family Involvement Committee wanted AFF to be a training ground," says Caitlin Boger-Hawkins. "They encouraged us to experiment, and adopting the Transitions Framework was definitely a risk."

## **AFF Mission Statement and Governance**

After much discussion the board members approved a mission statement, stated as challenges to themselves:

- As leaders in a next generation family fund, we challenge ourselves to respect the tradition and philanthropic values of our family as we explore new perspectives and innovative models for giving;
- As individuals who have come of age in a world still unsafe for many, we challenge ourselves to collaborate with those working to create safer environments, whether physical, emotional or psychological;
- As board members of the Andrus Family Fund, we challenge ourselves to contribute to the body of knowledge and experience about what is necessary to create and sustain effective social change. We will do this by focusing on Transitions, those critical junctures in time and process that, if properly attended to, effect positive change.

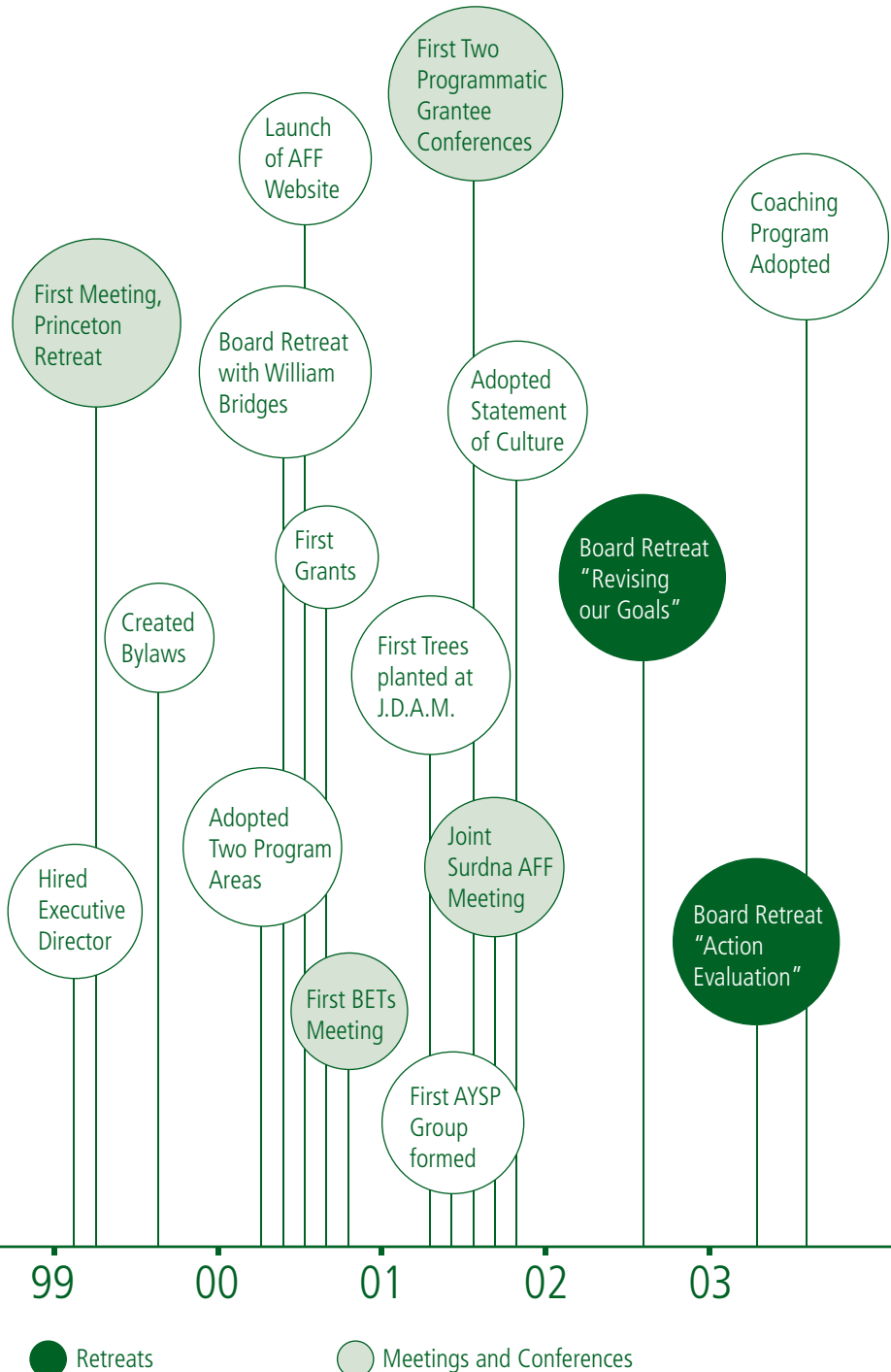
The Surdna Board intended AFF to be a “philanthropic training program.” To ensure broad family participation, it set term limits of three years with a maximum of two consecutive terms. Terms for the first eight board members, however, were staggered over five, six, and seven years to avoid having all of the original members rotate off the board at the same time.

Although AFF operates under Surdna’s bylaws, the board wanted to write its own rules of governance; the AFF Guidelines it developed are comparable to foundation bylaws. In addition to the standard foundation committees and officers, the board created a special position, the Transition Keeper. The holder of that position would be responsible for noting behaviors that surfaced during board meetings related to Transitions that should be discussed and for developing ceremonies or rituals marking endings and beginnings on the board, e.g., when members rotate on and off the board or when they experience significant changes in their personal and professional lives.

### **Identifying Program Areas**

Immediately after the Princeton retreat, Kelly and his assistant began researching topics that fell within the passion clusters he had identified. After talking with 50 community activists and experts working in those fields, Kelly honed the clusters down to four program areas. The board spent several months debating them before picking two topics that engaged them all: young people’s transition from foster care to independence and community reconciliation.

# ANDRUS FAMILY FUND 2000 - 2008





Recognizing that truth and reconciliation was a less defined program area than foster care, Kelly invited Dr. Alex Boraine, the founder of the International Center for Transitional Justice, to speak to the board. In 1995 Dr. Boraine had been invited by Nelson Mandela to serve as the Deputy Chair of the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission under the chairman, Archbishop Desmond Tutu. Kelly had met Dr. Boraine in South Africa and worked with him at the NYU School of Law. After learning about his work with the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission, the board sought Dr. Boraine's opinion about community reconciliation as a program area. Ken Downes summed up Dr. Boraine's cautionary advice: "There are no traditional end results in this type of work; the journey toward reconciliation is as important as the outcome. A partial goal of the community reconciliation work may be to raise awareness and support for the unacknowledged need for community in the U.S." Those truths would be brought home to AFF many times over the next years.

### **Educational Programs**

As executive director of both AFF and Andrus Family Philanthropy Program, Kelly was responsible for developing philanthropic and educational opportunities for the extended family and, in particular, youth. In 2000, he proposed a learning experiment he called, The BETs (Board Exploration Triads). Each triad or study group was composed of an AFF board member, an expert in different aspects of AFF program areas, and an extended family member. Over nine months, the triads conducted in-depth investigations into topics related to AFF's program areas and presented their final reports to the AFF Board. As one measure of the BETs' success, four of the six extended family members who participated in the program were later selected to serve on family boards.

Simultaneously, Kelly and his staff began planning the Andrus Youth Service Program (AYSP), a mini-grantmaking program to instill a philanthropic ethic in the family's teenagers. The youngsters, coached by both AFF staff, board members and, in some cases, parents, would research local nonprofit organizations, write brief reports on the organizations, and submit their grant proposals to the AFF board for approval. Besides giving the teenagers hands-on grantmaking experience, AYSPP would also connect them to their older cousins on AFF. "Just as the fourth generation was investing in us," says Shari Wilson, "we wanted to invest in the next generation. That seemed natural for a foundation focused on Transitions."

Both the BETs and AYSPP programs have evolved over the years. (For more detailed descriptions of the programs today, please see Appendices A and B.)

## Staying in Touch

The Family Involvement Committee never expected that every family member would have the time or interest to serve on the family's philanthropies. Rather, it designed the Andrus Family Philanthropy Program to offer family members a continuum of opportunities that ranged from a major commitment (board service) to a short-term commitment (BETs and AYSP); or, if they preferred, they could simply sign up to receive information about the philanthropic and educational programs. To reach the latter group, Kelly began work on an annual newsletter and sought out family members to work on creating an Andrus Family Philanthropy Program Web site. The newsletter would include information about the family's philanthropies, individual family members' public service activities, and historical information about the family. The Family Involvement Committee named the newsletter, *Concinnity*, "a skillful, harmonious arrangement of parts," which is also the name of the Andrus family's reunions.

In December 2000, the AFF board and staff looked back on their first year with a bit of wonderment. They could hardly believe how much they had accomplished since the March retreat. Says Kelly, "The excitement about what we were creating energized us all. We just hit the ground running."

'01

Working as  
A Team

From their first gathering at the Princeton retreat, the board members established an atmosphere of warmth and intimacy that they wanted to preserve. After a year of working together, however, they became aware of their different ways of communicating and how those differences could lead to misunderstandings and frustrations on the board. To fend off possible tensions before they began, the Communications Committee suggested that board members take an abridged form of the *Myers Briggs Type Indicator*. The test identifies a person's type based on a combination of four basic preferences: Extraversion-Introversion, Intuition-Sensing, Thinking-Feeling, and Judging-Perceiving. Board member Ken Downes, who had been trained to administer the Myers Briggs instrument, interpreted the results. The board members agreed that the exercise gave them a new appreciation for the different ways individuals take in information and express

themselves and how an understanding of those differences could strengthen their working relationships.

### **Institutionalizing Transition Rituals**

According to plan, the Family Involvement Committee completed its search for two more fifth-generation family members to join the board. It selected Peter Voorhees, a lawyer, and Mary Lowman, a teacher, raising the number of board members to 10. In keeping with the board's attention to transitions, Kelly created a ritual to welcome new board members. He asked each to write words or short sentences on large paper leaves telling why they wanted to serve and their hopes for AFF's future. Afterwards, they hung the leaves on a small tree in the conference room. Kelly concluded the welcoming ceremony by giving the board members glass paperweights with a tree motif and their names and date of board service engraved on the sides.

AFF adopted the symbol of the tree to represent the roots and branches of the Andrus family. In spring 2001, the board created a new ceremony that moved beyond symbolic trees to living trees. It started an orchard on the grounds of another Andrus family philanthropy, the Julia Dyckman Andrus Memorial in Yonkers. Board members planted 10 apple trees: one for each founding member and two for the founding staff members. With this groundbreaking ceremony, the board initiated a ritual that would become an AFF tradition—planting a tree for each new board and staff member.

To invite visitors to relax and enjoy the new orchard, an anonymous family member donated a stone bench to commemorate the creation of AFF and the board's connection to the Julia Dyckman Andrus Memorial. The bench bears the inscription, "Looking Back, Looking Ahead, In Celebration of the foundation of the Andrus Family Fund 2000."

"The apple orchard is a place of tradition, ceremony, and transition that so beautifully reflects the culture of the Andrus Family Fund," says Kelly Nowlin. "I hope my children will carry on the tradition of family service and one day have apple trees planted in their names."

### **Launching the AFF Grantmaking Program**

After months of planning by the staff and the Communications Committee, AFF launched its Web site. In addition to introducing AFF to the philanthropic community, the Web site explains why AFF adopted the Transitions Framework and what it means for prospective grantees.

“If you choose to apply to AFF for support, you can expect us to talk with you not only about the project but also about the interventions you propose to develop and how these interventions will help people successfully get through the endings, neutral zones, and new beginnings. We believe the pay off will come from the way in which your efforts, and the efforts of the communities that you serve, will move beyond the resistance that so often undermines efforts at change.”

Applicants are required to submit a Letter of Inquiry stating their willingness to learn about Bridges’ Transition Framework and to work with the AFF staff to integrate the transitions theory into all levels of their programs and among all stakeholders.

The board decided to award grants year-round and, just four months after approving its two program areas, it awarded its first grants. As new grantmakers, they felt a responsibility to deepen their knowledge of AFF’s program areas. The staff suggested creating an Andrus Fellowship Program to educate the board members and, at the same time, assist grantees. According to the plan, AFF would choose two organizations, one from each program area. The AFF grant would allow the organizations to hire a Fellow knowledgeable in AFF’s program area. For the next two years, the Fellows would bring a “transitions lens” to their respective program area and provide technical assistance and support to the grantees. Meanwhile, the Fellows would share with the board, staff, and other grantees what they had learned.

The board was also excited by the concept of collaborative grantmaking, but it recognized that it was too soon to leap into a collaborative venture. Instead, it gave a “planning grant” to a foster care agency in Massachusetts to assess a possible collaboration with AFF. This grant later matured into a three-year partnership.

Over the remainder of the year, the board members encountered and wrestled with familiar grantmaking dilemmas. Deciding on what percentage of the grants budget should be committed to multiyear grants was complicated by their requirement that grantees incorporate the Transition Framework into their work. Understanding that the Transitions process could take a long time to complete, they agreed that AFF had to award multiyear grants, although they weren’t ready to specify just how long they should run.

Tim Thorpe was also nudging the board to start thinking about ways to evaluate the success of their grants. “I work in marketing and advertising,” he says. “I was used to measuring results quantitatively in business, and I carried those concerns to the board.” In response, the board formed an Evaluation Committee

to work with the staff in evaluating the degree to which grantees accomplished AFF's goals and incorporated AFF's transition strategies. Over the next months, the Evaluation Committee developed a common language for reviewing grant proposals and measures of success. The process, they discovered, helped the Committee and the board think more broadly about the resources invested in the projects and the indicators of success along the way.

### **Publication of the Concinnity Newsletter**

After a year of planning, the first issue of Concinnity arrived in family members' mailboxes in the fall of 2001. Although aimed primarily at family members, the Andrus Family Philanthropy Program intended the newsletter to serve the overall field of family philanthropy. To that end, it also mails copies to interested family foundations and national philanthropic groups.



In Year Two, the Evaluation Committee had developed a simple framework for assessing grant proposals. In Year Three, its focus shifted to thinking about how to evaluate grants after they were made. Beside the standard evaluations of grantee outcomes, the AFF staff and board felt a duty to affirm or disaffirm its Transitions hypothesis. Moreover, at a recent grantee conference, foster care participants had asked AFF for standards for measuring how, and if, the Transition Framework leveraged their work. In response, the staff convened a group of foster care grantees to develop methods for measuring successful transition from foster care to independence. This turned out to be a more useful, complex, and intense effort than they had originally thought. (For a description of the process, please see Appendix E)

To reflect its emphasis on learning about grantmaking, the Evaluations Committee changed its name to the Learning Committee. "We thought learning was different from evaluation," says Kelly. "We still wanted to know outcomes of the grantees' newly designed interventions, but we were just as interested in what we could learn from their work and how we could use and share that information. Renaming the committee was our way of acknowledging that we would always be grappling with these questions."

## **Balancing Program Areas**

The board had originally decided to divide the grants budget evenly between the two program areas, but at the April board meeting Cameron Griffith pointed out that, in fact, three-quarters of the grants had gone to foster care programs. Moreover, given the number of multiyear grants the board had awarded to foster care grantees, he was concerned that there wouldn't be sufficient funds left for the community reconciliation programs—an area the board was trying to develop. One option was to allocate a specific grants budget for community reconciliation; another was to free up money from the current docket for the next round of grantmaking. Not ready to act on either option, the board asked the staff to find supports and interventions to aid it in building up AFF's community reconciliation portfolio. Doing so would require the specific attention of board and staff over the next few years.

## **Discovering the Challenges of Grantmaking**

As a vote of confidence in the AFF Board's hard work and level-headedness, in 2002 the Surdna trustees raised AFF's grant budget to \$2 million. Although appreciative of the increase, the board and staff agreed that they shouldn't rush to award more grants. "We adopted the motto, 'Go slow in order to go fast,'" says Ken Downes. "We were still figuring out how to incorporate Bridges' Transition Framework into the grantees' work."

A top priority for AFF was educating grantees about the Transition Framework. It had already held its first Grantee Transitions Conference, bringing together William Bridges and the grantees to consider how the Transition Framework could increase the effectiveness of their organizations. From the start, however, the board realized that the Transition Framework was a more natural fit with the foster care program than the complex community reconciliation program area. Besides having large and varied stakeholders, the community reconciliation groups moved through the Transition stages at very different paces, making it difficult for AFF to assess the impact of the framework on these organizations.

The board confronted other grantmaking dilemmas. One of its grantees abruptly ended its project in midstream. Now it wanted to use the remaining monies for a new project. Admittedly, the grantee had a good reason: The attacks of September 11th had altered the project's priorities. Nonetheless, the board debated at length whether to allow the grantee to keep the money or rescind the grant. It made the tough decision to rescind the grant. Caught off guard by this turn of events, the board agreed that it should set a policy that anticipated these situations, including whether discretion for rescinding grants should rest solely with the board or with board and staff.

The board also wrestled with the question of how to handle a large multiyear grant awarded to another grantee. Everyone agreed that the organization was worthy of the investment, but the grant constituted a significant portion of AFF's grant budget. What accountability measures could AFF put in place to ensure that the grantee was working toward meeting its goals each year? The board agreed that the grantee needed more time to achieve its objectives, but it wanted to add safeguards. It informed the grantee that the staff would monitor its progress and that midway through the second year it would decide whether to continue funding the project. That would allow AFF to give the grantee ample notice should the board not release the money, and it would also provide the board with an exit strategy should it need one. This experience taught the board a valuable lesson. From now on, it would insert a contingency clause in all letters regarding multiyear grants; grantees would be informed that second and third year funds would be disbursed only after the grantee submitted a satisfactory status report.

### **Grantee Conferences**

As newcomers to grantmaking, the AFF Board members and staff put great stock in education—in their own and in their grantees'. Since its first year of grantmaking, AFF had convened annual conferences in each of its program areas. It also added a category it called "Learning Partners," referring to select organizations invited to attend the grantee conference, even though they were not official grantees. "Learning partners can fit various categories," explains Kelly. "Some are promising organizations that didn't submit strong applications; others haven't applied but interest us. Many become grantees, but even those who don't often end up working with us in other ways. We see Learning Partners as a small investment that can enlarge our circle of allies in our program areas."

The board members agreed that AFF and its grantees benefited from the conferences: The grantees swapped useful ideas, information, and resources, and board and staff got a better sense of how they could assist the grantees. Still, some board members questioned the cost of holding annual conferences. Given that the grantees were still in the learning stage in applying the Transition Framework, one board member wondered whether it wouldn't be better to hold the conferences every other year. Another raised concerns about taking money from the grants budget to fund the conferences.

"The staff worked hard to strike a balance between keeping down costs and providing grantees with a well-run and useful conference," says Kelly. "In addition, we believed that hiring experienced professionals to design and facilitate conferences was necessary for the first few years. This boosted the cost, but it also increased the quality of the experience."

## The Action Evaluation Process

As a young and conscientious board with a bent toward self-reflection, AFF was attracted to the work of the ARIA Group. It had developed an intensive process called Action Evaluation to help groups identify shared goals, the values and beliefs that underlie them, and strategies for attaining goals.

The board set aside time from its fall retreat for a one-day immersion in the Action Evaluation process. At the end, it had identified five major goals to guide their work over the coming years:

- Maintain commitment to defining, encouraging and assessing success of transitions in foster care and community reconciliation.
- Seek and maximize partnerships, collaborations, and visibility to strategically foster social change.
- Jointly clarify and enhance AFF's relationship with Surdna.
- Nurture passions and transitions of board members.
- Better define AFF board and staff roles and relationships.

These goals would provide guideposts for the AFF board in the coming years. Using the model worksheets provided by ARIA, the board would revisit its goals annually, assessing its progress and determining whether the goals it had set should be revised or refined. "The Action Evaluation Plan is a living document," says Kelly. "It evolves as the board evolves."

## Reassessing AFF's Relationship with Surdna

It's noteworthy that one of AFF's Action Evaluation goals was to clarify its relationship with Surdna. As a sub-fund, AFF's hybrid status could be confusing at times. On the one hand, Surdna was a generous benefactor that largely left AFF to itself. On the other hand, AFF had enough freedom to easily forget that it was not completely independent.

AFF's reassessment of its relationship to Surdna represented the predictable developmental struggle of the younger generation to define itself vis-à-vis the older generation. As the AFF board became more experienced and self-assured, its relationship with Surdna would inevitably change. By choosing a goal to "jointly clarify and enhance AFF's relationship with Surdna," however, the board indicated that its desire was not to rebel against the older generation, but rather to recognize their evolving relationship as colleagues.

In that vein, the AFF board began raising questions about how much say it should have in matters related to AFF. Shouldn't the AFF board represent itself at Surdna board meetings and committee meetings when issues related to AFF are discussed, including evaluating AFF's executive director? And shouldn't an AFF delegate be part of Surdna's new Strategic Planning Committee when that Committee's work affects AFF?

One sensitive area was Surdna's authority to nominate and select AFF Board members. The Family Involvement Committee had selected two more fifth-generation board members, Carra Cote and Mark Bradley, to fill the last two remaining seats on the AFF board. The number of board members now stood at 12. Admittedly, the Committee had invited AFF's input on the selection and appointment of the last four members selected, but the AFF board believed it was ready to take complete charge of the process. "We wanted to pick our own members," says Peter Voorhees. "We'd feel like kids if we didn't."

Recognizing the younger generation's show of independence as a natural step in AFF's development, the Family Involvement Committee relinquished its control over the nomination process to AFF. It would, however, continue to send out letters to the extended family announcing board vacancies on all the family boards, including AFF. The Surdna Board made another concession to AFF's wishes to be treated as colleagues. It invited the chair of the AFF Board to participate in the next annual evaluation of its executive director. It should be remembered that Kelly was also the executive director of the Andrus Family Philanthropy Program and, therefore, subject to an independent review by Surdna and the Family Involvement Committee.

'03

Working with  
Grantees

The work of educating grantees in the Transition Framework and helping them integrate it into their programs fell to the small AFF staff. While time-consuming, the close contact had the advantage of breaking down barriers that often separate grantors and grantees. "It was characteristic of AFF to choose an engaged style of grantmaking," says Ken Downes. "We didn't want to just write checks; we were committed to shared learning. The staffs of nonprofit organizations are

starved for time for self-reflection. The Transition Framework provides that and helps staff to do a better job.” Peter Benedict agrees. “The Transition Framework creates a deeper involvement between the foundation and the grantee. That contact starts on day one, and that in itself is important.”

### **Training Transitions Coaches**

As the number of grantees increased, however, the staff was approaching overload; they could no longer work as closely with new grantees as they had in the past. They would have to find a new approach to educating grantees about the Transition Framework. The staff recommended creating a network of trained coaches to serve as a long-term complement to AFF’s work, but they did not have the resources to do it on their own.

Kelly had developed a connection with Vanderbilt University through a prior AFF grantee, and he approached the administration with his proposal. The university agreed to administer the Transition training pilot project, which would train a cadre of 10 Transition coaches from around the country to work with grantees in their geographical location. The coaches would provide each new grantee—and when appropriate existing grantees—with three to five days of education and support in managing Transitions. Additionally, the coaches would teach the grantees how to train their own staff in Transition theory. At the end of one year, the AFF board and staff would assess the results. To monitor the project, the staff would stay in close touch with the coaches and grantees by phone and require them to submit written reports after six months.

The development of the Vanderbilt Coaching Project presented the board with a new dilemma. On the one hand, it believed in the project and wanted to continue supporting it. On the other hand, the annual grant for the coaching program was one of the Fund’s largest. If AFF were to continue funding the coaching program at its current level, it would have less money to award to grantees in its program areas.

Uppermost in the minds of the board members was giving grantees the best chance to effect social change in the two program areas. After a lengthy discussion, they concluded that they were more likely to reach that goal by, in their words, “going deep rather than wide.” The decision to allocate one of its largest annual grants to the coaching program marked a major turning point in AFF’s grantmaking philosophy: From now on, AFF would make fewer grants to individual organizations and spend more resources on supporting its grantees.

For Ken Downes, the Vanderbilt pilot program was an irresistible opportunity to do the work he loved. “The Transition Framework summarized everything

I had been doing in my community work and counseling for 25 years,” he says. “But staying on the board and being a Transitions coach would be a conflict of interest. I had to make a choice.”

Ken formally announced his resignation in June. The board members supported his decision to continue the work of the foundation, but they would miss his contributions to their discussions. “Ken had a very significant presence on the board,” says Peter Voorhees. “He was thoughtful, reflective, and an exceptionally good listener, so what he said influenced us a lot.”

### **AFF Takes Charge of Nomination Process**

Ken’s resignation put pressure on the Nominating Committee, now fully in charge of the selection process, to fill his seat before the September board meeting. It sent out an announcement to family members soliciting interest in serving on the board, and six family members responded.

The Nominating Committee had developed a thorough recruitment and nomination process, identifying four criteria for selecting new board members: background and expertise not currently represented on the board, family branch representation, gender, and ability to make the time commitment. In choosing these criteria, the board wanted to put family members on notice that being a direct descendant of John Andrus did not automatically qualify them to serve on the AFF board.

“It’s difficult to judge your cousins, especially when you know their families,” says Carra Cote, “but that’s part of having full control of the nominating process. We felt confident that we understood our culture and who would best fit in, and we developed a fair and transparent process so that no one could say we were playing favorites.”

“We’re dealing with family,” adds Kelly Nowlin, “so we owe candidates a serious interview and, if they’re not accepted, a conversation telling them why. We explain AFF’s policy of choosing the person who has the skills the board needs now, and we encourage them to apply again later.”

The board selected Liz Wilson, a spouse, to fill Ken Downes’ seat. Having successfully completed its first nominating process on its own, the Nominating Committee informed the Family Involvement Committee of its choice.

### **Attending to Board Rotations**

Looking ahead to the first rotation of two members off the board, the Transitions Committee reviewed its approach to orienting new board members. The original eight had had the advantage of joining the board at the same time and

experiencing the intense bonding at the Princeton retreat. The board members who joined in 2001 and in 2002, however, entered a board that was already cohesive. The board members agreed that newcomers' biggest challenge was the personal one. Even though they are cousins, most don't know one another. The new person can still feel like the outsider on a family board that has already formed close working relationships. The Transitions Committee agreed that board members should make a greater effort to reach out to new members by phone and in person to offer reassurance and answer any questions before they came on board.

### **Co-chair Experiment**

Both Caitlin Boger-Hawkins and Kelly Nowlin wanted to serve as board chair, but each had small children and Caitlin worked full-time. Recognizing their time constraints, they proposed serving as co-chairs. "We didn't want one of us to be the vice-chair," says Caitlin. "We felt strongly that we should be equals."

Their request raised the concerns of some board members. Would that arrangement add to the staff's workload? And would it set a precedent for others who wanted to have a joint ticket? After much discussion, the two women succeeded in persuading the board that they could work together as seamlessly as one chair. On occasions when one might not be available, the decision of the other would be binding.

After checking that AFF guidelines didn't prohibit co-chairmanships the board approved the arrangement, and Kelly and Caitlin were elected. "We spent a lot of time on the phone when we were co-chairs," says Caitlin. "Not only did we do a good job, but we also became close friends." Kelly agrees. "What could have become chaotic for the staff," she added, "turned into a fabulous staff and chair partnership."

### **Cultivating AFF/Surdna Relations**

AFF Board members' growing sense of themselves as serious grantmakers again stirred their desire to be on more equal footing with the Surdna trustees. What steps, they asked, could both boards take to reflect their status as real colleagues? The Surdna board responded by inviting the AFF chair to attend a Surdna board meeting to talk about AFF's accomplishments. In return, the AFF chair invited the chairs of Surdna and the Family Involvement Committee, as well as other interested trustees, to attend the next AFF board meeting. As a further gesture, the AFF board invited the Surdna trustees to attend future AFF grantee conferences and board Transition training sessions.

## Joint Meeting of the Andrus Philanthropies

In September, the Andrus Family Philanthropy Program held a historic joint meeting at the John E. Andrus Memorial in Yonkers. For the first time, board members from all the family's philanthropies—Surdna, Andrus on the Hudson, the Julia Dyckman Andrus Memorial, the Helen Benedict Foundation, and the Andrus Family Fund—came together to discuss family history and values, explore cross-cutting themes, and exchange best practices among the organizations. Afterwards, the 30 cousins joined in conversation to share their pride in and enthusiasm for their family's work.



The Transition Framework not only influenced AFF's grantmaking philosophy and practice; it also shaped board members' concept of who they were and how they worked together. "Without the burden of organizational history," says Ken Downes, "the original board members had the freedom to establish a culture and style of governance suited to our age group. The Transition Framework spoke to our personal lives and helped us make sense of our work." Caitlin Boger-Hawkins concurs. "Had our executive director had a different personality and had we not been starting from square one, it probably wouldn't have happened that way. But we were all in transition, so it made sense to us."

Kelly also influenced AFF's culture with his predilection for rituals and celebrations. "They're important," he says. "Besides helping individuals become more deeply involved with their peers and the work of the organization, they fit in perfectly with the Transition Framework." Not all the board members are equally comfortable with these practices. Those with a psychological bent are the most enthusiastic, while the more task-oriented say that some of the practices go a bit too far. Tim Thorpe, for one, embraced the rituals. "I'm an introvert," he says. "My safety zone is putting numbers on spreadsheets, so using the right brain was good for me. I loved the rituals and celebrations. They tapped a side of me I don't often exercise."

## **Remembering Mary**

In October, the AFF board was hit hard by the shocking news that board member Mary Lowman had died suddenly at age 35. Mary had worked in elementary education and cared deeply about the welfare of children. Gentle and thoughtful, she brought her expertise and compassion to her work on the AFF Board.

At the January board meeting, the board and staff held a ceremony to share their memories of Mary. They recalled her love of gardening and, in particular, her favorite flowers, Sheer Bliss roses. To honor her, Kelly suggested bringing a vase of Sheer Bliss roses to every meeting for the remainder of her term.

Mary had participated in the first BETs project, and her group's assignment was to think about AFF's program areas as they pertained to the Gay, Lesbian Bisexual, Transgender, Questioning (GLBTQ) community. Mary had developed a strong interest in issues affecting that community and, as a lasting tribute to her, the board endowed the Mary Lowman Internship Fund at the Child Welfare League of America (CWLA). The interest from the endowment will support a summer internship for a graduate student to work on GLBTQ issues with CWLA. In addition, the board voted to create a Mary Lowman Peace Garden and wishing well at the elementary school where she taught.

"We experienced such grief and turmoil over Mary's death," says Carra Cote, "but we were able to talk so openly and comfortably about our sadness because we had paid so much attention to transitions." Peter Voorhees agrees. "The Transition Framework allowed us to acknowledge Mary's death and talk about it in an authentic way. Her death brought us closer together as a board."

## **Filling Board Vacancies**

The board debated whether to honor Mary by leaving her seat open until the end of her term. In the end, it decided she would have wanted her seat filled sooner rather than later. Mary's seat, plus the two opening up in September, put pressure on the Nominating Committee to activate its search quickly.

The AFF board and the Family Involvement Committee had increased its efforts to recruit qualified candidates. And while they had never failed to fill open seats, they were puzzled why only a handful of the 98 eligible family members responded to the announcements of vacancies on the board. AFF Board members speculated that family members unfamiliar with formal philanthropy might assume they didn't have the knowledge and skills to qualify. And those

with some knowledge of philanthropic boards may have unrealistic expectations about the workload and time commitments. To correct those misperceptions, a board member agreed to write an article for the next issue of Concinnity that offered a realistic and inviting picture of her experiences serving on the board. Board members were also encouraged to call family members to discuss the personal impact of their AFF Board work.

As it was, five candidates responded to the letters that the Andrus Family Philanthropy Program had sent to eligible family members earlier in the year. The Nominating Committee vetted their applications and selected three new members: Laurie Stavisky, Davis Benedict and Angela Earley.

Aware that future board members would not know many of the previous board members, the Transition Keeper started a scrapbook in an expandable notebook. Each board member is asked to contribute a page expressing in words or pictures who they are and what is important to them. Today, the scrapbook, 20 pages long and growing, gives newcomers a quick and friendly introduction to their predecessors on the AFF Board.

### **Expanding the Transitions Coach Program**

Since 2003, AFF had been matching each new grantee with a Transitions coach. As the number of grantees continued to grow, the staff began looking for a more cost-efficient approach to providing Transitions training. Working with the coaches, they developed an AFF Transition curriculum to use with grantees. In addition, they designed a “train-the-grantee” module for coaches to use in training grantee staff who, in turn, could train their own staff and clients in managing transitions.

### **Tools for Evaluating the Transition Framework**

As mentioned earlier, in 2001 AFF awarded a grant to the Oregon Social Learning Center (OSLC) to design instruments to assess the impact of Transition training on foster youth aging out of the system. In Phase One of the project, the Center developed The Youth Experience of Transition (YET), a questionnaire to determine whether a youth exposed to the Transition Framework understood it. For Phase Two, the Center identified the Child Behavior Checklist (CBCL), a tested and reliable instrument to measure long-term outcomes in youth leaving foster care. In administering these two instruments to youth in their foster care programs, grantees will gather data to test the hypothesis posed by AFF: Youth who understand and internalize Transitions concepts fare better on the life skills outcomes instrument and have a greater chance of living successfully as independent adults than those who don't understand the framework.

To bring the same rigorous testing to its other program area, AFF engaged the services of one of its community reconciliation grantees, the NYU Center for Violence and Recovery. The Center will look into developing an instrument, similar to the YET, to assess stakeholders' and participants' understanding of Transition concepts and the impact it has on their community reconciliation projects.

To demonstrate the benefits and challenges of using the Transition Framework, AFF hired a journalism student to attend the foster care and community reconciliation grantee conferences. Her assignment was to capture the "Aha moments," those revelatory instances when grantees grasped what Transitions theory was all about. These stories, now part of AFF's Knowledge Bank, can be accessed at [www.transitionandsocialchange.org](http://www.transitionandsocialchange.org).



In another vote of confidence in AFF's handling of its responsibilities, the Surdna Board notified AFF that its grants budget would rise by \$500,000 a year, until it reached \$4 million in 2009.

### **Application Process for New Members**

The Nominating Committee had received six applications for the three board seats opening in September. Choosing among six highly qualified candidates would have been even more difficult had the Nominating Committee not instituted new application requirements. In addition to providing three references, applicants now had to submit personal statements explaining how their experiences and interests have prepared them for board service. "When all the applicants are qualified," says Caitlin Boger-Hawkins, "the distinguishing factor is how well they articulate the connection between their experiences and interests and those of AFF. That's why we ask for personal statements instead of resumes." In the end, the board invited cousins Thomas Kelly, Annika Hawkins, and Michael Klass to join the board.

## **Fine-tuning the Orientation Program**

The board continued to think about ways to improve its orientation process and to solicit suggestions from new board members. Early board members like Carra Cote and Mary Lowman credited the BETs program for giving them a jumpstart on learning about the program areas and grantmaking. In addition, Carra says, the experience also allowed her to see how she would fit in on the AFF board. Unfortunately, the BETs program was too labor intensive and costly to continue in its original design and would later be redesigned.

To ease new members' entry onto the board, the board decided to offer half-day trainings on the Transitions Framework and to invite new board members to attend grantee conferences before their term started. To further assist newcomers, the board recommended that the last members to join the board should act as mentors to the new members, contacting them by phone or e-mail in the months before their term started to answer questions and allay any concerns.

The staff also responded to new board members' complaints about the hefty information packets they received. They preferred to get only the most important information in hardcopy and read the rest on a CD. What newcomers found most helpful were the information meetings with staff before they attended their first board meeting.

## **Community Reconciliation Parity**

AFF's early grantmaking tipped decidedly in favor of foster care grantees over community reconciliation grantees. To correct that bias, the staff began tracking spending on a pie chart and networking within the field. As a result, this year the grants budget was equally divided between the two funding areas. Moreover, AFF had begun to invest more heavily in developing measurements to assess the impact of the Transition Framework on community reconciliation grantees.

## **Grantee conferences**

From the start, the AFF staff has worked hard to assure that the annual grantee conferences were educational and enjoyable. This year William Bridges and his wife Susan were keynote speakers. They also facilitated some workshops, giving grantees the chance to question the ultimate expert on Transitions theory.

### **AFF listed four goals for attendees at the conference:**

- Continue to learn from each other's work and build connections where that makes sense.
- Hear and explore each other's stories of where and how the Transition Framework can lead to lasting social change.
- Shape and get feedback on the resources and tools that you asked for at the last conference.
- Identify any "take-aways" from the event (any new tools and resources) that could help make our work more effective going forward

### **AFF's Ever-Evolving Relationship with Surdna**

In a move toward greater inclusiveness, the Family Involvement Committee expanded the size of its committee to include representatives from all the family charitable institutions. The board nominated Kelly Nowlin, one of the original AFF board members and former board chair, to be AFF's first representative on the Committee. It also agreed that in the future, the AFF Board chair would serve as the liaison between AFF and the Family Involvement Committee.

In the past, AFF staff reported to the Surdna Board on different aspects of AFF's work. This year the board members took a confident step forward and began making the presentations themselves. Board members agreed to take turns in making presentations until each one had had a chance to speak to the Surdna Board.



The Family Involvement Committee envisioned AFF as a learning experience, and the original members, all novices at grantmaking, approached their new responsibilities as eager students. Indeed, the view of AFF as a learning organization has become part of the board's identity. Tim Thorpe, among others, credits Kelly with creating and perpetuating the learning environment. "Kelly is a teacher, but not in a hierarchical way. He wants the board and staff to be partners in figuring things out together."

Ann Williams remembers how thrilled she was when Kelly brought in experts like Dr. Alex Boraine and William Bridges to talk to the board. “We were a bunch of beginners in philanthropy, so having people of this caliber come to talk to us made us take ourselves more seriously.” Peter Benedict recalled the first years of AFF and how engaged the board members were in the work of the foundation. “Yes, we had moments of frustration, but I liked that we hung in together until we reached consensus. Each time I flew home from a board meeting, I thought about how much I had learned and how energized I was from the experience.”

AFF’s adoption of the Transition Framework and its focus on internal processes also fostered an atmosphere of self-examination and reflection. “We talk openly about what worked and what didn’t,” says Kelly. “If it hasn’t worked, we don’t think of it as a failure but rather as an opportunity to talk about what we can learn from the experience.”

### **The Knowledge Bank**

In the six years since adopting the Transition Framework, AFF and its grantees have accumulated a wealth of practical tools and resources to help individuals, organizations, and communities navigate the three stages of Transition. AFF, in partnership with NYU’s Center for Violence and Recovery and William and Susan Bridges, created the Knowledge Bank of Transition Resources, to make these materials accessible to practitioners doing social change work. Housed at its own Web site, [www.transitionandsocialchange.org](http://www.transitionandsocialchange.org), it provides information and resources categorized under four headings: Understanding, Applying, Teaching and Assessing the Transitions Framework. “The Web site has already helped us communicate with potential grantees about how the Transition Framework is used by other grantees,” says Kelly, “and to help them imagine how it could be used in their own programs.”

### **Redesigning Grantee Conferences**

For six years AFF had organized annual conferences, either one for each program or one joint conference. Planning and holding annual conferences were expensive; they also gobbled up staff time, especially the program assistant’s. This year the staff recommended an alternative plan: holding mini-conferences for grantees in each program area. It would invite grantees with shared interests to gather for more informal exchanges. At the first mini-conference, Transitions in Remembering History, a group of community reconciliation grantees came together in New York City to explore the role that a collective understanding of history plays in community reconciliation efforts.

## **Multiple Tools for Measuring Success**

Since adopting the Transition Framework, the AFF staff and board have initiated multiple methods for measuring its hypothesis that attention to Transitions leads to long-term sustainable change. Besides the anecdotal reports collected from informal conversations with grantees and the “Aha” stories, an AFF Fellow spent several years conducting case studies of community reconciliation grantees. Currently, AFF is simultaneously funding two control group studies, one in each program area. In addition, a professor at the University of North Carolina recently completed his pre-and-post telephone surveys of the Greensboro post-Truth Commission. (Please see Appendix B, “AFF Components for Evaluation and Learning.”)

## **Who’s Family?**

With three more board seats to be filled this coming September and with half the board composed of new members, the question of spouses resurfaced. In the last round to fill a vacancy, a spouse who had applied was eliminated because the board was currently at its maximum of four spouses/partners serving on the board at one time. One board member suggested that the board move away from the definition of family as a direct descendant, arguing that family was far more than bloodlines. Moreover, by not distinguishing between direct descendants and spouses, AFF would have a larger pool of applicants to draw from. Others countered by reminding the board that the Surdna Board had created AFF to give family members educational opportunities that would foster their desire to carry on the family’s tradition of public service. In the end, the board amended its bylaws, simply stating that a majority of board members must be direct descendants. The motion was accepted, allowing another spouse to fill the vacant seat in September.

## **Supporting Liz**

In 2005, the AFF board suffered the shocking loss of board member Mary Lowman. Now, two years later, this young board was struck by a second tragedy. In July, John Griffith, the husband of Liz Wilson, was killed in an accident. John was the brother of former board member Cameron Griffith and the son of Larry Griffith, a member of the boards of Surdna and the Julia Dyckman Andrus Memorial. The AFF board, along with friends and family, contributed to a fund in John’s memory. Liz chose to use the funds to build a memorial labyrinth on the grounds of the Julia Dyckman Andrus Memorial Children’s Home.

“Kelly and the AFF board were a huge support to me after John’s death,” says Liz, “but as the September board meeting drew nearer, I was apprehensive about attending. I didn’t want to take away from our work at the meeting.” To support Liz and mark a huge ending that would have been hard to mark in the time available at the meeting, Kelly arranged a gathering at his house on the night before the board meeting. Ken Downes brought a basket of odds and ends and led the group in a silent ceremony, building a group sculpture to honor John and mark the endings everyone was experiencing. “There were tears, but laughter, too. The next morning when we arrived at the meeting, everyone was emotionally ready to do the work,” says Liz.

“In many organizations,” says Ken, “people close their eyes to what is painful, but ignoring feelings doesn’t make them go away. AFF places importance on ceremonies and rituals because significant endings need recognition. Doing the group sculpture allowed us to express our love for Liz and John and enabled the board to move ahead.”



Over the years, AFF has funded community reconciliation projects as diverse as conflicts over fisheries management in the Northeast, clashes among African immigrants from rival tribes living in the Northwest, and troubled relations between police and minorities in the heartland. Still, AFF’s efforts to integrate Transitions theory into community reconciliation programs proved challenging: the stages of Endings, Neutral Zone, and Beginnings were not as clear-cut in community reconciliation as they were in foster care.

Jill Williams, AFF’s new program officer for community reconciliation, was the former executive director of the Greensboro Truth and Reconciliation Commission. She suggested that before AFF could test the impact of the Transition Framework on its grantees, it had to develop a specific AFF definition of community reconciliation. At a May meeting of community reconciliation grantees, the staff, Transition coaches, participants and a few board members worked together to refine the definition of community reconciliation and its stages drafted earlier by AFF staff.

“We asked them to define community reconciliation for the purpose of AFF’s grantmaking,” says Kelly. “We’re hoping that the new language gives applicants and grantees a better idea of what we’re asking from them. We’re still figuring out how, and if, the Transition Framework applies to the communities we hope to reconcile and how to evaluate it.” When the final definition is ready, the staff will post it on AFF’s Web site; it will also include a list of how grantees have used the framework in their work. Meanwhile, the staff will continue exploring the best methods for measuring the impact of Transition Framework on the grantees’ programs.

### **Joint Annual Grantees Conference**

In August, AFF held its seventh annual grantees conference. This year it asked participants to focus on exploring in what circumstances and under what conditions the Transition Framework leads to sustainable social and personal change. Besides the interactive workshops led by coaches, the conference scheduled concurrent “Live Labs” facilitated by Transitions coaches. In each lab, a grantee organization presented a specific challenge it had confronted in using the Transition Framework and turned to participants in the workshop for ideas and suggestions on how to tackle it. The Live Labs demonstrated how working together to solve real problems can energize participants. Besides learning from one another, they also build connections they can draw on long after the conference has ended.

AFF awards grants across the country, so few board members have a chance to join the staff on site visits. The annual conferences are the rare occasions when board members and grantees can meet face-to-face, and this year seven AFF Board members and one Surdna director took advantage of the opportunity. For AFF Board member Peter Voorhees, who famously commuted to board meetings from the Netherlands, it was also a time to see the fruits of AFF’s labors. “The conferences bring our work alive,” he says. “It’s very reaffirming to hear grantees talk about the Transition Framework and the difference it’s made in their programs.”

### **The Last of the Original Board Members**

The September 2008 board meeting marked a major transition in AFF: the rotation off the board of the last two original members, Carra Cote and Peter Voorhees. As is customary for AFF, the board set aside time to honor their service. Kelly also brought a vase of Sheer Bliss roses to remember Mary Lowman who, had she lived, would have rotated off the board with Carra and Peter.

Liz Wilson, the Transition Keeper, reminded the board that while endings are a time for saying goodbye and acknowledging loss, they are also a time for celebration. That sentiment was reflected in Carra's farewell words. "At first I felt a sadness and loss at leaving the board. But now I feel excited that another family member will have the same amazing opportunity to serve on AFF that I had."

Liz gave each board member a piece of paper on which to draw pictures or symbols they associated with Carra and Peter. Then, one by one, the board members tacked their pictures on the wall and talked about what they had drawn. By turn playful and serious, their expressions of praise and appreciation for Carra and Peter generated laughter and tears. Yet even for AFF board members accustomed to talking openly about feelings, the outpouring of affection and appreciation at the ceremony was a lot to take in. "It was pretty overwhelming to hear people talk about me like that," says Carra, choking back her tears.

Since the first board retreat in March 2000, Kelly has made a practice of taking snapshots of board members at meetings and conferences. By the time board members are ready to rotate off the board, he has accumulated enough photos to present personalized photo albums to retiring board members at their final board meeting. The hardcover copies of the albums, printed by an Internet printing service, have the name of the board member on the cover and a different set of photos inside.

Ever mindful of transitions, the AFF board welcomed its newest member, Stephanie Cardon, at the same meeting at which it was saying goodbye to Carra and Peter.

### **Transitions' Influence Beyond the Board**

By the time members rotate off the board, they have become accustomed to looking at the world through the Transitions lens, and they take it with them into the world. Peter Benedict, a school headmaster, taught teachers how to use the Transition Framework with students transitioning from middle school to high school as well as in an Experience at Sea program for adolescents in foster care. "The Transition Framework makes them more aware of what's going on around them. It changes how they think about change and makes them better at executing it. I apply it in my own life, too."

Since leaving the board a few years ago, Shari Wilson says that the Transition Framework is what she uses and relies on most in her work and in her personal life. “When something new is introduced at work, it helps to recognize that you’re going through a period that’s unsettled and chaotic and to understand why it’s happening. Understanding Transitions also helped me tremendously when my younger brother died two years ago. Everything is different without him and that’s difficult, but I understand that my family and I are in transition and that we will, in time, move out of the place we’re in now.”

For Kelly Nowlin, the Transition Framework has influenced her behavior as a mother. “It changed how I think about my life and how I parent. I use Transitions theory with my kids all the time. I’m much more empathic toward them now because I understand better what they’re going through.”

Since joining the board in 2006, Thomas Kelly, too, noticed changes in himself. “I’m more attentive to what’s going on than I used to be. I’m more sensitive to others’ feelings now and more understanding of the changes they’re going through, and that’s helped me in my personal and professional lives.”

PART

03

# Assessing Progress

The Andrus Family Fund  
The Andrus Family Philanthropy Program

# THE ANDRUS FAMILY FUND

Since 2001, AFF has awarded 240 grants totaling \$21,712,156, impressive numbers for a young foundation. It's true that AFF was privileged to have a generous benefactor, the Surdna Foundation, but money alone cannot explain the dedication and enthusiasm with which the fifth-generation board members have carried out their responsibilities. What accounts for AFF's success? The AFF board members are the best ones to answer that question.

## **The Surdna Foundation and The Family Involvement Committee**

"AFF succeeded from the start because of the careful planning done by The Family Involvement Committee," says Caitlin Boger-Hawkins. "They laid the groundwork and then gave us the freedom to do what we wanted to do."

"We took to heart the invitation from Libby (Libby Andrus, former chair of Surdna) to challenge Surdna's thinking," says Ken Downes. "She gave us permission to look at what our parents' generation would not have done and to try it. It was an amazing deal; we could discover new things and not be afraid of making mistakes."

"We were guided by family history," says Cameron Griffith. "Those who came before us had set a high bar, and we wanted to match it."

## **The Choice of AFF's Executive Director**

"The Family Involvement Committee made a brilliant choice in selecting Kelly as our executive director," says Ken Downes. "He has just the right personality for a new board. He's like everyone's lovable uncle, but an uncle who also brings the knowledge and life experiences a young board needs."

"AFF has succeeded because of Kelly," says Kelly Nowlin. "He's a born mentor and gentle leader who takes time to get to know us individually and as a team. He has just the right temperament to work with a big family."

Kelly is a visionary who paired himself with program officers who are implementers,' says Shari Wilson. "He, Masiel (Rodriquez-Vars), and Sabena (Leake) had different skills and a perfect combination of the expertise we needed."

"Kelly is an idea person with a great grasp on how to get things done," says Liz Wilson. "He's good at identifying what will work and who's the best person to do it."

## **A Learning Culture**

“The theme of learning permeates everything we do,” says Caitlin Boger-Hawkins. “It wasn’t only about developing a knowledge base in the program areas; it was also about becoming critical thinkers.”

“We were a blank slate when we started,” says Kelly Nowlin, “We wanted to learn, and Kelly wanted to be our teacher. He set the stage for AFF’s learning culture.”

“Kelly brought in high-quality people to help us think about our program areas,” says Liz Wilson. “He organized the BETS, educational seminars and conferences and provided us with the best resources. He never skimmed when it came to setting high standards.”

## **Genuine Passions**

“The program areas we chose were deeply connected to our passions,” says Ann Williams. “It also seemed right that we chose foster care because it was aligned with our family’s interest in helping children; the Julia Dyckman Andrus Memorial was originally an orphanage. The community reconciliation program spoke to our wanting to effect social change, something we all felt so passionately about.”

“AFF has been really creative in finding areas in which to apply community reconciliation,” says Peter Benedict. “I’m so proud of the Greensboro grant we gave for the first Truth and Reconciliation Commission in the U.S. Who else would have taken that risk?”

## **Transition Framework**

“Transitions is essential to who we are,” says Cameron Griffith. “It’s a little quirky, but it’s shaped our culture and made AFF what it is today.”

“The attention we pay to the internal process affects our relationships as a board and our relationships with grantees,” says Liz Wilson. “I appreciate being part of an organization that cares about balancing the intuitive and linear worlds.”

“I’ve seen the effect of the Transition Framework on our board,” says Thomas Kelly. “I know it’s good for bonding because I’ve experienced it.”

"Few theories understand the emotional transitions experienced by people caught up in social change," says Ken Downes. "As a Transitions coach I can tell you that this model speaks to them. I've seen the light bulbs go off in their heads when they make the connection between what they're feeling and the external changes they're going through."

### **Family Legacy and Family Bonds**

"I grew up in Florida and in a small branch of the family," says Shari Wilson. "I was not connected to the extended family. I knew family stories but I didn't know my cousins before joining AFF. Now I'm close friends with several."

"One of the most valuable experiences of serving on the AFF board," says Peter Voorhees, "was meeting my family. I've really enjoyed the contact with my cousins. We felt connected from the start, even though many of us had never met before."

"Serving on the board reinforced our sense of family service," says Carra Cote. "It was a fantastic experience working with my cousins to put our family's values into practice."

### **Opportunities for Personal and Professional Growth**

"I wanted to join the board for the intellectual challenge and to make a contribution to the community," says Liz Wilson, "but I was quickly overwhelmed. I often left meetings questioning whether I had anything to offer. I had a long talk with Kelly who convinced me that I did. At the next meeting, I volunteered to be the Transitions Keeper. It was one thing I did get and could contribute to. That encouraged me to push myself out. I started attending every grantee conference, pow-wow on community reconciliation, and extra-curricular activity AFF offered. Now I participate more in the meetings and feel more confident when I speak up."

"As a board member, I learned about everything from little skills to running a meeting to the value of friendships," says Carra Cote. "I served as the board treasurer and then as board chair. Learning about budgets and the inner workings of organizations was a terrific education."

"Serving on the board changed me," says Kelly Nowlin. "When I joined the board, I was cautious, guarded, fearful of taking risks, and always worrying that the projects we funded wouldn't succeed. Hearing about the staff's hands-on involvement with grantees and reading their reports gradually reassured me."

Now I know that even when the grantees don't meet all of our goals, we can still learn from the experience. Taking more risks has matured me. I've loosened up and have moved beyond seeing things in black and white."

"I got to see and experience how boards work," says Peter Benedict. "As board chair I got a clear understanding of the roles of the board, chairs, and staff and their boundaries. I'm a lot smarter now than I was before joining the board."

### **The Family Involvement Committee Looks Back**

The original members of the Family Involvement Committee—Surdna trustees Edie Thorpe, Peter Benedict, Sr., Larry Griffith, and Sam Thorpe—took the lead in planning a fifth-generation foundation with open minds. With no existing models of next-generation foundations quite right for the large Andrus family, they were free to invent one. They didn't know exactly what form it would take, but they agreed on the essential ingredients: The new foundation would encourage learning, responsibility, independent thinking, and closer ties among younger family members. The committee members had no doubts about the fifth-generation's abilities to meet those standards. Their only nagging question was whether, given career and family demands, they would have the time.

Asked to comment on AFF today, the committee members echoed one another's words. Their unanimous assessment: The younger generation's commitment to AFF has far exceeded our expectations.

"We underestimated how much work the younger generation was willing to do," says Larry Griffith. "They've taken on a lot more than we ever thought they could handle. Besides their board responsibilities, they're now making presentations to the Surdna Board and to other foundations interested in what they're doing. Their willingness to go the extra mile tells me how much pride and enjoyment they take in their work."

"We knew we were starting an organization that had the potential to involve the whole extended family," says Peter Benedict, "so it was exciting from the get-go. It's been a marvelous experience for the younger generation to take real leadership roles in philanthropy. I admit to taking a special pride in the work of AFF; my son was one of the original members and later its chair and now my daughter-in-law is the chair."

"AFF shows that family members don't have to wait until they're in the 50s or 60s to earn the right to serve on a foundation board," says Sam Thorpe. "We've learned that we have a lot of talented young family members who can run their

**Fellow:**

Community Reconciliation Case Study Project

**Grantee Conferences:**

Direct observation of and engagement with grantees for Board and Staff

**Control Group Studies:**

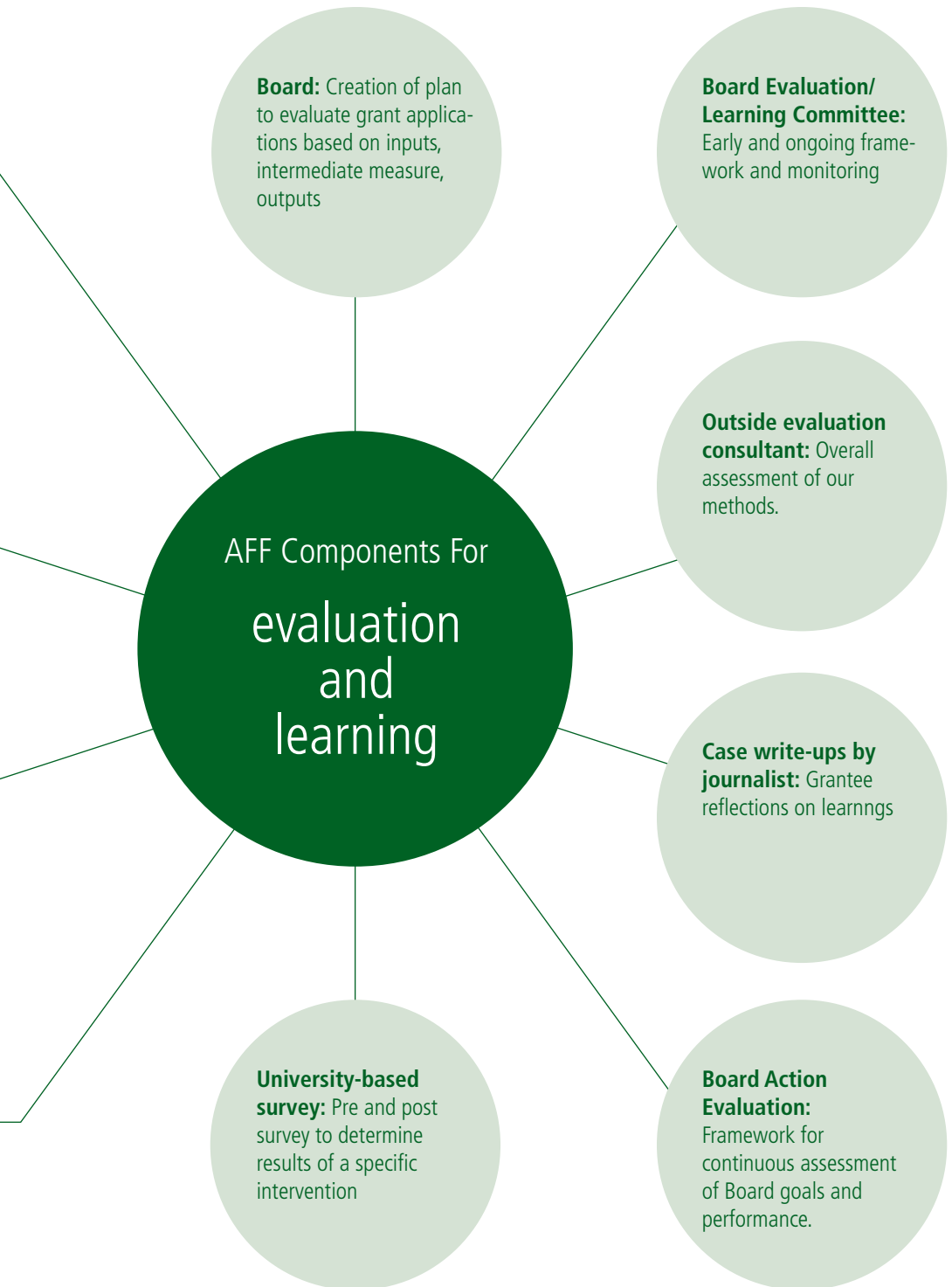
Does our intervention make a difference?

**All Foster Care Grantees participate in measuring success:**

Scientifically validated instruments

**Staff/Board/Grantee/Researcher Collaboration:**

Creation of Theoretical Model of change for Foster Care Program



own ship - and do it professionally. They just don't call up cousins and invite them to serve on the board as used to happen in this family. Now the young people have to apply and explain why they should be on the board, and that's a wonderful new direction. They've got a real sense of fairness and that makes their working together so enjoyable."

"We are so proud of the young family members who have served on the AFF board," says Edie Thorpe. "Many had to make sacrifices to do so. It's hard to hold on to a sense of family unity into the fifth generation of a large family, but AFF is connecting family members to one another and to their family history and legacy exactly as we hoped it would."

Judy Healey, a family foundation consultant based in Minneapolis, worked closely with the Family Involvement Committee throughout the 18-month planning process that created the Andrus Family Fund and the Andrus Family Philanthropy Program. While Judy had received a copy of the Concinnity newsletter every year, she hadn't had direct contact with the Andrus Family Fund since it was established. This past February, she caught up with them when she attended AFF's presentation, "Empowering the Next Generation of Giving: From Tradition to Passion to Impact," at the annual Meeting of Family Foundations in Indianapolis.

"Imagine my delight," she says, "when I heard the presentation given by the three young Andrus Family Fund members and their staff and mentor, Steve Kelban (aka Kelly). This was no ho-hum younger generation. They were energetic and filled with excitement about the innovative activities of AFF. What's more, they were now introducing their younger cousins to philanthropy through the BETS and Andrus Youth Service Program. I felt proud to have been associated with the ideas that created this board. It's the best model I've seen for a multi-generational family wanting to promote and expand philanthropy beyond its formal foundations."

# THE ANDRUS FAMILY PHILANTHROPY PROGRAM

While guiding AFF, Kelly was simultaneously tending to the Andrus Family Philanthropy Program. As executive director, his charge was to carry out the goals set by the Family Involvement Committee: increase family involvement in the family's philanthropies and public service, provide education, training, and promotion of philanthropy, unite the growing Andrus family through expanded communication, and deepen family relationships. Eight year later, Kelly and the Family Involvement Committee can bask in their achievements.

## **Involvement in the Family's Philanthropies**

In 2000, when the Andrus Family Philanthropy Program was launched, 14 family members served on the boards of the family's charitable institutions, most in multiple board positions. By 2008, 31 new family members had participated in board service at the five organizations.

## **Contact among the Family Philanthropies**

In the past the family's philanthropies were institutions unto themselves; today the boards invite exchanges of information about their work. AFF board members make presentations to the Surdna board, some Surdna board members have attended AFF board meetings, grantee conferences and participated in AFF Transitions training and, in 2004, family members attended the first joint meeting of all the family boards. And in another effort to link the philanthropies, AFF created an orchard on the grounds of the Julia Dyckman Andrus Memorial and has continued planting trees for each new AFF board member and staff.

## **Education, Training, and Promotion of Philanthropy**

AFF has offered the Andrus Youth Service Program (AYSP), the mini-grantmaking experience for high-school age family members, for the past seven years and is planning the third BETs program for college-age family members in January 2009.

The Family Involvement Committee and AFF have made presentations at national and regional conferences about AFF and the Andrus Family Philanthropy Program. In addition, individual family foundations have invited them to talk about AFF's success in involving the younger generation in philanthropy in AFF, the BETs and AYSP programs.

In creating AFF, the Family Involvement Committee hoped that board service would lead to public service in members' home communities. Despite having families and demanding careers, many AFF board members have done just that.

After rotating off the AFF Board, Peter Benedict went on to serve on five boards in his community. Tim Thorpe says that his service on the AFF board encouraged him to stay involved with philanthropy. He currently is chair of the James R. Thorpe Foundation in Minneapolis and a member of the Youth Frontiers board. Caitlin Boger-Hawkins is a mother and full-time administrator at a community college. Still, she offers strategic planning assistance to two local nonprofit organizations, serves on church committees, and teaches Sunday school. AFF board members who have children are all actively involved with their children's schools. These are just a few examples of how AFF service has enhanced the work of its past and present board members in their home communities, fulfilling one of the original goals of AFPP.

### **Uniting Family Through Improved Communication**

The newsletter, *Concinnity*, has been published annually for the past eight years. Seven family members contributed to the first issue. By 2007, 71 different family members had contributed articles about their work on one of the family philanthropies, and other cousins have been featured in a "Doers" column describing their volunteer service in their local communities.

The Family Involvement Committee still sends annual letters to the extended family members describing opportunities for involvement in the family's philanthropies and encouraging family members to contact the Andrus Family Philanthropy Program, but the Internet is definitely the preferred and most efficient way to communicate with the younger generations. The Andrus Family Philanthropy Program also has a private Web site to encourage family members to communicate with one another, and the family database is growing each year.

### **Stronger Family Ties**

All of the AFF board members reported that working with and getting to know their cousins was the biggest bonus of their board service. Many have formed close friendships, and those who live far apart say that even if their paths don't cross again, they are inextricably linked for having shared the board experience.

Serving on the board also gave AFF board members a chance to become acquainted with the members of the older generation, many of whom they knew only by name. "When I was board chair, I got to know the members of the Family Involvement Committee," says Cameron Griffith. "Through my contacts with them and other Surdna directors, I developed a stronger feeling about

family. That's when I started pushing to have another Concinnity (Andrus family reunion)." Cameron and his fellow fifth-generation cousins Josie Lowman and Angela Earley picked up the mantle. "Working on the Concinnity was a way for me to continue my involvement with the family after rotating off the AFF board," says Cameron. "It was a great success; 170 family members attended the Concinnity."

On the occasion of the 75th anniversary of the founding of the Julia Dyckman Andrus Memorial, Larry Griffith, a member of the Surdna board, took a group of fifth-generation family members to visit the Andrus gravesite. There, John Andrus honored his parents with a monument on which he inscribed the words, "They built more than they dreamed." John Andrus died in 1934. Imagine what he would say were he to see what his descendants have accomplished since then.

# APPENDICES



## The Andrus Youth Service Program

The Andrus Family Youth Service Program (AYSP) was designed to guide high-school age family members through their first experience with grantmaking and community service. Since it began in 2001, 32 Andrus family members have awarded grants of between \$500 and \$1,000 to nonprofit organizations in their local communities. The funds for the grants are allocated from AFF's grants budget.

Each year the Andrus Family Philanthropy Program mails letters to Andrus family members in grades 9 through 12 explaining how the program works. Originally, the program invited 13 year olds, but the coaches decided that youngsters needed an extra year of maturity to benefit from the experience. Currently, 20 Andrus family members are eligible to participate in the program that runs from January to September. Many, however, are so busy that they have difficulty fitting one more activity into their packed schedules. Others just need a nudge to complete the application and return it to the office. "I make follow-up calls to everyone who has received a letter," says Masiel Rodriguez-Vars, the AYSF coordinator. "I've learned that it's better for me to talk to the kids about AYSF than their parents. Otherwise, some may feel that this is one more thing their parents want them to do."

Once the teenagers sign up for the program, Masiel sends them a handbook that includes a short biography of John Andrus and encouraging messages from AFF board members. The core of the handbook consists of work sheets to guide the youngsters through the steps of identifying their passions, researching local nonprofit groups, making site visits and, finally, making the grant.

Because the young people are geographically dispersed around the country—one even lives in Australia—Masiel communicates with them by phone or e-mail. "After I help them get started on their projects," she says, "we arrange a conference call so that they can tell one another what they're working on."

The participants begin by identifying three areas that interest them. After selecting the one program area that matters most to them, they must research three organizations working in that field. They are also required to do at least one site visit and Masiel helps them prepare questions to ask the staff and coaches them before they go. Once they've chosen the organization they want to fund, they fill out a grant proposal application and make their pitch to the AFF board to fund the grant.

First-year participants can award a \$500 grant to the organization of their choice but if they do 16 hours of volunteer work, they can earn an additional \$250 toward their grants. Second-year participants can award \$750-\$1,000.

“Recently, more kids say that they don’t want to just send checks,” says Masiel. “They want to volunteer or develop their own projects.”

One 2007 participant who took off like a thunderbolt was Wadsworth Wilson, now 16 years old. A talented baritone player, he wanted to share his love of music with children whose school didn’t offer music and whose parents couldn’t afford to pay for lessons. In conducting his research, he learned of a neighborhood center serving low-income families; it had a new music room, but no instruments or teachers. Wadsworth had found his cause.

He researched the costs of instruments and chose recorders as the least expensive. By volunteering 16 hours in the center’s meal program, he increased the grant he could award to \$750. That was enough to buy the recorders, but who would teach the class? Who else? Wadsworth. In October 2007 he rounded up 20 students in grades 3 through 5, and they met every other week for 1-1/2 hours through June. This past November, Wadsworth and his students gave their first public concert.

Now in his second year in AYSF, Wadsworth’s current effort is to expand the music program he started. The past summer, he began recruiting music teachers from high school and honor societies to donate their time at the center. “My organization and communication skills have grown a lot doing this project,” says Wadsworth, “but what I like best is touching kids’ lives. They love the class.” How does Wadsworth have time his AYSF project? “School is only six hours a day, plus a couple of hours of homework,” he says, “so I have lots of free time.”



## BETs

How could a new foundation with a small staff get a head start in deepening its understanding of its program areas and defining its grantmaking strategy? Kelly found the answer in an ambitious experiment he designed, the BETs, or Board Exploration Triads. The BETs combined the educational goals of AFF with the goals of the Andrus Family Philanthropy Program to involve extended family members in philanthropy and public service and create a pool of family members knowledgeable about AFF’s funding areas.

At the time, the AFF board had eight members. Kelly’s idea was to create eight triads, or study groups, composed of a board member, extended family member, and outside expert in AFF’s program areas. The Family Involvement Committee sent letters to extended family members 20 years and older; it selected eight, who ranged in age from their early 20s to mid-50s and who came from diverse backgrounds. Picking the experts took extra care; they not only had to have the desired expertise but the right personalities to work with the teams.

The first BETs' participants met in January 2001 and were given three main tasks: to research topics that would add to the AFF's knowledge of its program areas, assess the applicability of incorporating the Transition Framework into grantees' programs, and refine AFF's grantmaking strategy. The triads set to work, choosing their own topics and action plans and, finally, submitting a written report. In September, the BETs teams reconvened in the AFF offices to share their findings and the key lessons learned.

Participants agreed that the BETs had been a valuable educational experience. Besides acquiring information about their particular topics, they sharpened their analytic skills. And, as an added bonus, they discovered an array of community resources and how to access them. "The BETs succeeded," says Ann Williams, "because it was a real research project with real consequences."

In 2001 when AFF instituted the BETs, the new foundation needed a crash course in its program areas. Six years later, when it revived the BETs, it had a different goal. The Andrus Family Philanthropy Program had been looking for ways to reach out to family members between the ages of 18 and 24 who had not been as active in the Andrus Family Philanthropy Program as other age groups. And who was better to advise them than the young people themselves? In response to their suggestions, the staff redesigned the BETs as a hands-on grantmaking program and renamed it Board Experiential Training. The program was scaled down to five participants, and instead of a team of experts, Frank Hartmann, a Harvard University professor, acted as facilitator.

AFF had set aside \$25,000 from its grant budget to support the BETS II. Under Professor Hartmann's guidance, participants would design a grantmaking process, which included identifying organizations within AFF's program areas they wanted to fund and together selecting a few grantees. The grants, ranging between \$5,000 and than \$10,000, would have to be approved by the AFF board. The participants had nine months to complete the process, although most of the work would be done during the summer when the students were on vacation.

The project was launched with a weekend orientation during which participants observed part of an AFF board meeting to see how grantmaking is conducted and to receive a half-day training in Transitions. With guidance from Professor Hartmann, the group decided to focus on foster care and to research agencies in their local communities that might be prospective grantees.

At home they ran into unforeseen obstacles. Foster care organizations were in shorter supply than they had imagined. Moreover, their plan to volunteer "undercover" to learn the inner workings of the organizations backfired. "The organization I volunteered with didn't look so good up close," says Kim Kaupé, "so I had to start all over from scratch." Dan Thorpe made a different choice.

He decided that the organization he volunteered with wasn't ready for a grant either; instead of trying to find a replacement, he joined the organization's board to help it raise money.

In January 2009, AFF will offer BETs III, and once again it has been substantially redesigned based on the feedback of BETs II participants. "They told us that it was too hard and took too long to find organizations to fund," says Kelly, "so we decided that it made more sense to have them select organizations from among the AFF grantees." Nine participants have signed up for BETs III, and Kim Kaupe, a BETs II participant, will serve as co-facilitator with Professor Hartmann.

This time participants can award grants ranging from \$25,000 to \$45,000 to a minimum of two or a maximum of four AFF grantees. After defining the type of projects they're interested in, they will create and disseminate to all AFF grantees a Request for Proposals (RFP). Participants will develop criteria for evaluating proposals and together have responsibility for selecting organizations and determining the size of the grants. As in the past, they will need the approval of the AFF board.

The staff has notified all AFF grantees of the BETs III program. In February 2009, they will receive RFPs from the BETs. Those interested in applying will be asked to respond by a specific deadline and grants will be awarded in September.



## **Andrus Family Fund Statement of Culture**

We have respect for one another and for one another's rights as a Board member.

We value honesty and truthfulness. We go beyond niceness, politeness and avoidance to niceness, politeness and directness. We owe each other constructive feedback with specific examples and details, allowing for group process and growth.

We value due process. We seek a process on the Board that will mirror our intention of personal empowerment. Just as we seek to empower others through our grant making, we wish our own process to empower ourselves and serve as a model for foundation governance.

We acknowledge that differences can be energizing and lead to learning. Collaboration and conflict go hand-in-hand.

We seek to work together as a team, with shared sense of purpose and inspiration. After bringing our unique insights as individuals to our collective process, we will endeavor to support decisions taken by the whole.

We will seek consensus first. After airing disagreements, we will use voting as a fallback technique to permit us to move forward.

We value Board leadership and staff guidance which facilitates our process and helps bring us to a consensus.

We encourage Board members to commit fully to making the Andrus Family Fund the best it can be.

All Board members share responsibility for facilitating our process and resolving conflict. We are committed to improving facilitation skills and sharing leadership roles.

We value and respect tradition while also accepting and encouraging individual initiative, innovation and risk taking.

We will remain mindful that our preferred styles of deciding, learning, and communicating may be different from others.

We recognize and embrace transition as it applies to our work and we respect its impact and meaning in the process of our development as a Board.

We challenge ourselves to learn from our joint participation.



## **Andrus Family Fund Core Values**

As Board Members and Staff of the Andrus Family Fund:

We seek to sustain the legacy of family members, with direct remembrance to Julia Dyckman Andrus and John Emory Andrus. We bring the context of history and the texture of meaning to our AFF work.

We value our connection to our passions and to remain true to ourselves.

We recognize words which reflect the qualities and values we practice in our work: Compassion, Trust, Risk-Taking, Adventure, Giving, Passion, Heart, Listening, Family, Diversity, Learning, "Beginner's Mind" or "Surfacing the Wisdom," Communication, Service, Being Close to the Experience, Finding and Feeling the Impact in a Meaningful Way, Shrewd and Quirky, Practical, Inquisitive, Curious, Storytelling.

We remain open to change as seen through the lens of Transition in order to remain true to the authenticity of our work.

We facilitate process by nurturing relationships and continuing to challenge and evolve the AFF model of change.

We value the importance of making time for shared experience, e.g. retreats, enrichment and personal time outside of Board Meetings.

We value our emerging culture—comprised of Self, Board, Staff and Grantees—through our AFF work, carried through nurturing and questioning, thereby creating safe, if not sacred, space.

We are aware of the ubiquitous nature of process as it exists in ourselves, in our work as Board and Staff, and amongst our Grantees as a whole, inspiring a cross-pollination which generates new levels of understanding, skills, ideas and resources.

We continue to ask questions—more direct and more informed—and continue to learn and evaluate with more focus, as the Self, the Board, the Staff and the Grantees.

We recognize and honor changes in Board Members and Staff as an opportunity for Transition to re-examine with integrity the authenticity of the work of the Andrus Family Fund as a whole, as it is comprised of Self, Board, Staff and Grantees.

We recognize the value of process, even when we do not understand its deeper meaning, while we are in the process of Transition.

The legacy of our work—Self, Board, Staff and Grantees—lives on through the process inherent in the integrity of the work itself and in every individual.



## **Measuring the Impact of the Transition Framework in Foster Care to Independence projects**

### **Storytellers:**

Steve Kelban, Executive Director, Andrus Family Fund

Sabena T. Leake, Program Officer, Andrus Family Fund

Patti Chamberlain, Executive Director, Oregon Social Learning Center

### **Background**

From its inception in 2000, the Andrus Family Fund (AFF) has incorporated William Bridges' Transition Framework (TF) into all the projects it funds, guided by the firm belief that an understanding of the TF will improve the chances of these projects' long-term success.

The TF works on the principle that any external change a person goes through needs to be accompanied by an internal change process. S/he first has to give

up old ways or ideas (Endings), move through an in-between phase (the Neutral Zone), before s/he is finally ready to adopt a new way of life (a New Beginning).<sup>1</sup>

Bridges' TF was initially used to help for-profit corporations deal with large-scale change. No one had tried to apply the TF to the non-profit world, with communities in need of reconciliation or with youth moving out of the foster care system to independent living. However, AFF staff's faith in the framework led them to require their grantees to incorporate it in their programs. They decided that they would try to quantify the usefulness of the TF in their grantees' programs only after there were sufficient grantees applying it in their work and producing data that could then be analyzed. Two years later, that time had arrived.

In 2002, during the Foster Care Grantees Yearly Learning Exchange, various grantees raised the question of TF effectiveness, asking for tools to concretely measure and articulate the usefulness of the TF in helping their youth transition from foster care to independence.

With this mandate, in December 2002, AFF Executive Director Steven Kelban and Program Officer Sabena Leake asked Patti Chamberlain from the Oregon Social Learning Center (OSLC) if she would be willing to head a project to measure the effectiveness of the TF in the foster care program.

The OSLC has two arms: one involved with direct social services and the other, a research arm that is also well respected in child welfare circles. Patti was heavily involved with both arms of the OSLC and the year before, AFF had awarded her a one-year grant to implement TF-enhanced services for a select group of young foster women at the center—the Women in Transition group—and then compare this group's progress with a control group receiving 'regular' non-TF-enhanced support, to evaluate the effectiveness of the TF in foster care. Since Patti was already involved in an evaluation of the TF, she was a natural choice to head the new project.

In April 2003, the AFF Board approved a two-year grant to the OSLC to look for ways to evaluate the effectiveness of the TF on foster youth and Patti got to work immediately. The following month, she and the AFF staff met with four Foster Care to Independence grantees<sup>2</sup> who had been invited to be part of a 'Measures Working Group' (facilitated by Patti) to discuss possible ways in which to measure the impact of the TF on foster youth.

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<sup>1</sup> For more information on the Transition Framework, visit [www.affund.org](http://www.affund.org) & [www.transitionandsocialchange.org](http://www.transitionandsocialchange.org)

<sup>2</sup> The grantees were the Oregon Social Learning Center, the Independent Living Research Center (in New York City), First Concern (in New Jersey) and Berkshire Farms Center and Services for Youth (in upstate New York).

## Developing a Theoretical Model of Change

From the group's discussions, the following hypothesis was agreed on: The more a youth understands the TF, the greater the likelihood that s/he will successfully be able to live on his or her own, independent of the foster care system.

To prove this, the first question the group had to tackle was: How do you define a 'successful' transition from foster care to independence?

In trying to answer this question, the group looked at what existing grantees were doing to measure the success of their youth's transition to independence. During a break-out session at the 2002 AFF Foster Care Learning Exchange, a few grantees (including Patti) arrived at three measures of success: Safety, Independence, and Productivity.<sup>3</sup> However, these 'distal' outcomes could only be measured in the long-term; the Measures Working Group also needed more immediate indicators of a successful transition.

To develop a list of more 'proximal' or short-term outcomes, the Working Group looked to Berkshire Farms, an AFF grantee that had developed a comprehensive model consisting of 14 criteria (such as increased self-esteem, increased social skills, etc.) to measure the development progress of youth in their program. This 14-point model had been jointly developed by staff and youth, and reflected not so much the hard skills needed for independent living but the more intangible, psychosocial skills needed for the internal wellbeing of the youth.

The Measures Working Group noticed that Berkshire's 14 criteria could be grouped into five broad areas of development: Social Skills, Social Supports, Internal Resources, Relationships, and Planning/Decision-Making. Success in these five areas, they decided, would imply initial success at transitioning to independence. The group then defined specific indicators of success within each of these five areas to help flesh out what each construct meant. (See Appendix F for the list of indicators.)

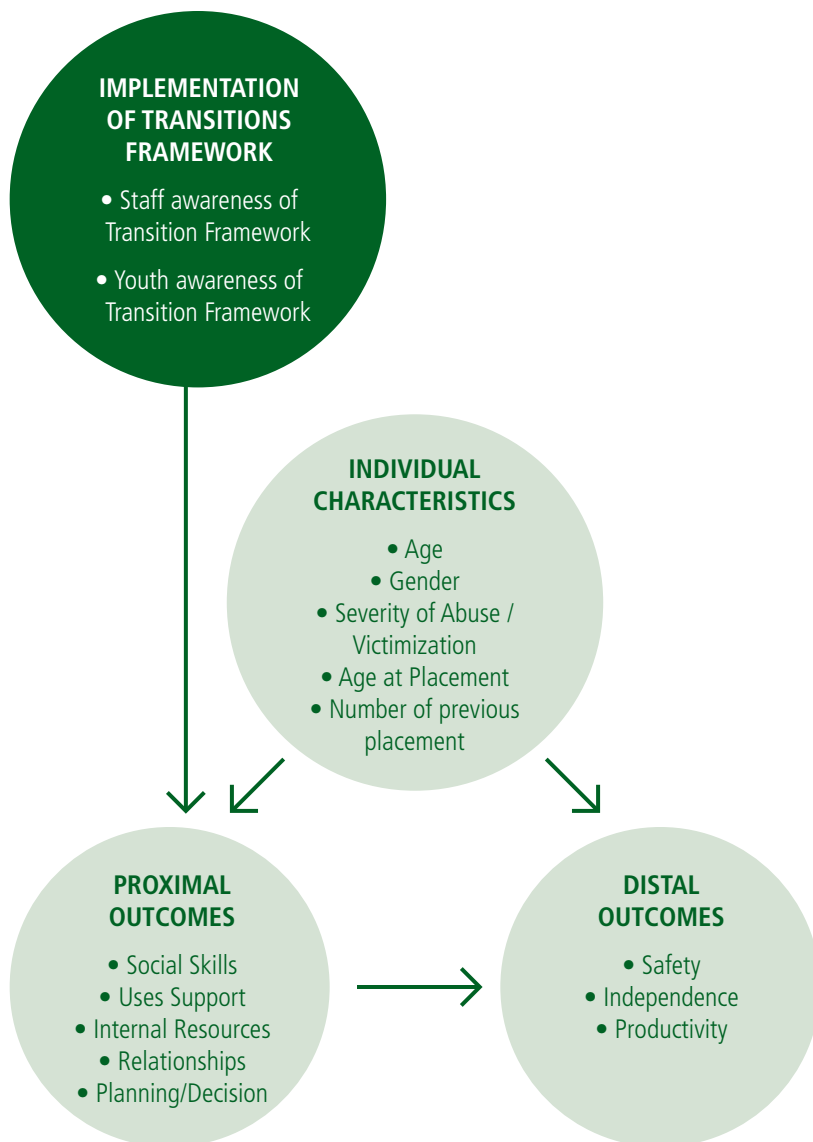
After the meeting, Patti created a model she called the Theoretical Model of Change, a pictorial representation of the group's hypothesis. (See the diagram on the next page.)

As she explained it, certain personal characteristics of foster youth can affect their proximal and distal outcomes. A youth with a more severe history of abuse/victimization, for example, would be expected to have poorer proximal

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<sup>3</sup> Safety included access to housing and freedom from substance abuse. Productivity meant stable employment and a continuing investment in education. Independence meant freedom from state dependence and acquiring self-advocacy skills.

## Theoretical Model of Change for the Foster Care to Independence Program



and distal outcomes, and so on.<sup>4</sup> But independent of personal characteristics, the implementation of the TF in foster care programs should also have an effect on a youth's proximal outcomes. This in turn should have an effect on distal outcomes. The greater a youth's understanding of the TF, it was hypothesized, the more successful his/her proximal outcomes should be.

### **Measuring Understanding**

Kelly and Sabena asked all the foster care grantees to forward whatever tools they were currently using to measure the successful transition of their foster youth. An overwhelming number of grantees responded sending survey tools, questionnaires, etc., that they had developed or used to measure various aspects of the transition to independence.

Among the many tools received from grantees, was a survey questionnaire developed by Dr. Robert Arendt, the Research Director at the Buckeye Ranch, to evaluate how well their foster care youth "got" the concepts behind the TF. This survey had 10 questions and did not specifically quiz the youth on the terms used in the TF; rather it assessed their thoughts and behavior as it related to any change or transition they were going through. The survey contained statements like "It is o.k. to feel uncomfortable learning a new way to deal with an old problem" and "You feel there are periods of your life where you had to end an old way of behaving and begin a new way of behaving." Youth were asked to select a response out of a five-point scale from "Strongly Agree" to "Strongly Disagree."

Using this questionnaire as a starting point, Patti developed a measure called the Youth Experience of Transitions Questionnaire (YET). The YET contained 16 statements with which foster youth had to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement. Each item was scored on a 5-point 'Agree-Disagree' response scale with 3 being a "Not Sure."

Some of the items were reverse-worded to assess a single concept from multiple perspectives and increase the accuracy of the results. For example, item 9—"I have learned a lot about myself by reflecting about my life"—was the opposite of item 15—"I think it is a waste of time to sit around and think about the past."

The draft YET went through three rounds of verification and modification with staff and youth, before it was finally considered both accurate and reliable. The final version of the YET questionnaire (see Appendix G) was approved by the Working Group and is now a mandatory requirement for all new AFF Foster Care grantees. In their award letters, new grantees are asked to administer the YET to their youth both before and after they run their TF-enhanced programs.

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<sup>4</sup> These relationships have been validated by extensive research in adolescent development.

Existing grantees are not required to administer the YET since it wasn't part of their original grant agreement. However, many volunteered to do so and have provided the data they have gathered to Patti for her analysis.

### **Measuring Success**

While the effort to find a measure of understanding was ongoing, the working group was also trying to choose a tool to measure the success of a youth's transition to independent living. The working group could have decided to develop and validate a range of specific psychometric tools that would measure each and every individual indicator of success they had earlier identified (see Appendix F). Instead, the group decided to look for a general outcome measure with good psychometric characteristics (reliability and validity) that had already been developed and was in wide use in child welfare. This approach had a number of advantages. Firstly, it would be less of a burden—in terms of both cost and time involved—for grantees to apply in their programs. And secondly, it would be generally applicable across all of AFF's grantees.

The group evaluated the Child Behavior Checklist (CBCL), the most widely used measure in the United States to assess child development. After researching if the tool measured the characteristics the group had previously identified and if it was extensively used with the child welfare population, the checklist was recommended by the working group.

All new foster care grantees will be required to administer the CBCL to their youth at the end of their TF-enhanced training. Similar to the YET, existing grantees will not be required to administer the CBCL but they can volunteer to test this outcome measurement tool in their programs if they wish to do so.






### **Next Step**

Parallel to the YET is the SET—the Staff Experience of Transition Questionnaire—that needs to be developed to measure how well grantees' staff members understand and appreciate the TF. Since staff have direct contact with foster youth during their preparation for the transition to independent living, their knowledge of the concepts behind the TF can help in their counseling and mentoring of the youth. The hypothesis is that the better the staff's understanding of the TF, the better the youth's success at transitioning. To test this hypothesis, the SET will be developed in the months to come.

AFF staff believes that by using the YET and the CBCL (and eventually, the SET as well), the foundation and its grantees will soon be able to answer the question: "Does the incorporation of the Transition Framework improve the chances for youth who leave the foster care system to lead a safe and productive life?"

# F

## Indicators of Success

Broad Areas of Success	Indicators of Success
 <p><b>SOCIAL SKILLS</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Responds to authority</li> <li>2. Has greeting/departure skills</li> <li>3. Uses tact in dealing with others</li> <li>4. Makes eye contact</li> <li>5. Actively expresses him/herself</li> <li>6. Fluent in verbal and nonverbal communication</li> <li>7. Expresses gratitude freely</li> </ol>
 <p><b>SOCIAL SUPPORTS</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Asks for help when needed</li> <li>2. Identifies and uses community resources</li> <li>3. Identifies positive peers/adults</li> </ol>
 <p><b>INTERNAL RESOURCES</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Has self-esteem</li> <li>2. Has self-confidence</li> <li>3. Has the ability to reflect (introspection)</li> <li>4. Has an internal locus of control (internal motivation)</li> <li>5. Possesses Determination</li> <li>6. Possesses Resilience</li> </ol>
 <p><b>RELATIONSHIPS</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Trusts others</li> <li>2. Forms positive peer relationships (with the same &amp; opposite genders)</li> <li>3. Forms relationships with helpful adults</li> <li>4. Shows interest in and cares for others</li> <li>5. Shows empathy</li> <li>6. Can heal from damaged relationships</li> </ol>
 <p><b>PLANNING / DECISION MAKING</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Willing to try new things</li> <li>2. Practices critical thinking (explores outcomes before taking action)</li> <li>3. Differentiates between wants and needs</li> <li>4. Has problem-solving skills</li> <li>5. Sets goals for self and moves toward them</li> <li>6. Delays gratification and waits for resultst</li> </ol>

