“Community organizing is one among several strategies for influencing public policy and building social capital. It is the only strategy that can simultaneously develop local assets, strengthen relationships between diverse groups, and empower people to actively and effectively participate in the civic life of the larger society.”

- Marilyn Gittell*

former Foundation Board Member & past professor at City University of New York Graduate Center

*1931-2010
2015 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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SAGE Publications, Thousand Oaks, CA

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FORMER BOARD MEMBERS

George D. McCune **  
Marilyn Gittell **  
Cathy McCune Sarvat Ohlson  
Daniel Thursz **  
Susan Watt **

**Deceased
Our Mission is to be an agent of productive change in society by supporting the growth of social capital in communities.

Sara Miller McCune and George D. McCune* founded the McCune Foundation in March 1990 with the hope of impacting the communities around the world where SAGE Publications had its offices at the time. In the early years, the family foundation supported a range of philanthropic projects in the United States, the United Kingdom, and India. Grants were made to provide books for university students in India and London, and funding was provided to establish medical clinics and dig wells in rural India.

In 2001, the Foundation’s Board of Directors shifted its focus to concentrate on initiatives by community-based groups in Santa Barbara and Ventura Counties that build social capital and give voice to new participants in the democratic process. This significant re-orientation was influenced by early Board Member and political science professor Marilyn Gittell. Fellow Board Member and professor, Sandra Ball-Rokeach, was also a strong advocate and provided additional insights.

By 2002, the Foundation was no longer directing funds toward charity and services, but was instead funding projects that developed community capacity to solve problems. Immigrants, youth, farm workers, and other residents were given support to mobilize in pursuing policies that addressed their particular needs. It was the role of the Foundation’s first Executive Director, Pam Maines, to seek out groups that matched the new focus. “We were able to find groups organizing around issues such as fair wages, farm worker housing, immigrant rights, discrimination, empowering youth, and homelessness,” she says. “With each successive grant cycle, our network of contacts expanded and our mission became better understood.”

Many examples abound of how both youth and adults have developed their social capital and taken their place at the decision making table in Santa Barbara and Ventura Counties.

*1924-1990

1990 | Foundation founded by George and Sara
1995 | George D. McCune Dissertation Fellowship established at UCSB
2001 | Foundation changes focus to growing social capital in Santa Barbara & Ventura Counties
2004 | First Executive Director Pam Maines is hired
2008 | Board of Directors conducts two-day bus tour of Ventura & Santa Barbara Counties
2011 | Claudia Armann is hired as Executive Director and Foundation office is opened in Ventura
2014 | Foundation adopts a Socially Responsible Investing policy
2015 | Foundation makes its first Program Related Investment to the Ventura County Housing Trust Fund
2015 | Foundation celebrates its 25th anniversary
“Inequality continues to be a problem, but citizens can play key roles in creating more equitable communities. Our grants help parents and youth have a stronger voice at schools and help engage immigrants, farm workers, and homeless persons in improving local services.”

- Sara Miller McCune, Foundation President

The McCune Foundation funds projects that address critical issues in Santa Barbara and Ventura Counties by empowering and mobilizing excluded populations. Grants have supported teams of Latino parents, farm workers, gay youth, bus riders and other concerned residents in creating beneficial changes in their communities.

The Foundation’s philosophy is to assist groups which are “doing with others” rather than “doing for others” – grassroots, bottom-up organizations in which “clients” are initiators and involved in decision making. Dozens of organizations in the region have adopted this approach to making systemic change and shaping public policy.

What’s been accomplished over the years? Living wage laws, new bus routes, interpreters at clinics and schools, more street lights in high-crime neighborhoods, better access for Latino students to honors and GATE programs, and much more. Perhaps less tangible has been the growth of social capital and leadership among those who don’t often have a voice. Across Ventura and Santa Barbara Counties for just a few examples, teens and Latino parents are confidently addressing School Board members with their priorities for school budgets, and undocumented immigrants are speaking out about the need for immigration reform.

Each year, the Foundation awards nearly $850,000 in grants, with much of the funding for infrastructure and core support.

THE MCCUNE FOUNDATION IN ACTION

Press conference organized by Families ACT.

Sara Miller McCune and Claudia Armann on a site visit to COAST.
2015 GRANTS COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Laura Espinosa
Santa Paula

Cesar Hernandez
Oxnard

Monique Limón
Santa Barbara

Gaby Rodriguez
Oxnard

Ray Segura
Santa Maria

FORMER GRANTS COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Sue Broidy
Joyce Howerton
Bob Ornstein
Felipe Rodriguez Flores

We also gratefully acknowledge CPA David Peri who serves on the Investment Committee.

Technical support provided to Foundation grantees by LoaCom.

MOBILIZING FOR SYSTEMIC CHANGE...

Affordable Housing
Disability Rights
Economic Justice
Educational Equity
Farm Worker Rights
Food Justice
Foster Youth
Gay Rights
Homelessness
Immigration Reform
Juvenile Justice Rights
Language Justice
Mental Health
Pedestrian & Cyclist Safety
GRANTEES

TESTIMONIALS

“The McCune Foundation support of Future Leaders of America was extremely important, especially in our early years. Our program was growing alarmingly fast and we needed the help and recognition.”

- Gil Cuevas, Founder, Future Leaders of America

“Immigrants, youth, and low-wage working families have discovered and used their own power to make social justice a reality -- not just a dream -- because of the McCune Foundation’s support of CAUSE’s community organizing work.”

- Maricela Morales, CAUSE Deputy Executive Director

“Our impact on the rights of Ventura County’s indigenous immigrant community has been transformed and is much stronger thanks to McCune Foundation support. Indigenous people’s voices have started to be heard not only at the local level but also statewide and nationally. Together, we are creating social justice.”

- Arcenio Lopez, MICOP Executive Director
MCCUNE FOUNDATION GRANTEES HAVE HELPED CHANGE THE LANDSCAPE...