Solving the problem of the thirsty juniper

Early ranchers shared the wide-open lands of Central and Eastern Oregon with about 1 million acres of native western juniper. Today, because of a combination of factors including fire suppression, grazing practices and climate change, biologists estimate that juniper stands now cover more than 9 million acres. The thirsty trees suck up precious water resources and crowd out other plants and wildlife.

That’s not good. High desert ecosystems suffer greatly from the invasion. One juniper can suck up to 40 gallons of water a day, water that could be nourishing grasses, wildlife and cattle. In fact, a quarter of the region’s grasslands are considered lost to the expansion of juniper, which is relentlessly expanding at about 1.5% each year.

Here’s what is good: A collaboration of state and federal agencies, business leaders and nonprofit groups is working hard to create a market for the species, which would slow the spread of juniper while injecting a dose of badly needed vitality into the region’s cash-strapped economy. It’s a rare win-win proposition: restoration of degraded acres resulting in jobs for rural industry.

The Western Juniper Alliance was created in July 2013 by then-Gov. John Kitzhaber with the goal of restoring ecosystems in Eastern Oregon through economic development. It’s not the first time such efforts have been launched — it’s more like the third.

“People have been trying to figure out juniper for 20-plus years,” says Dylan Kruse, policy director for Sustainable Northwest, which is leading the effort. “But now, for the first time, we have the full network in place to do this work.”

It’s the “new natural resource economy,” a phrase

Continued on page 12
Broadband comes to Willamina

Dave Buswell knows a golden opportunity when he hears one. OnlineNW, the primary Internet provider for rural communities in the mid-Willamette Valley area, came to Willamina last year to invite the community to partner with it in building a new high-speed fiber Internet network.

The infrastructure would be combined with a 7%-15% revenue-sharing program that would bring learning opportunities for students and community members and create possibilities for economic prosperity. The only catch? Willamina needed to demonstrate its commitment by getting 40% of area households to pre-register for the service before another community did.

Buswell and other volunteers grabbed their clipboards and started knocking on doors. “They wanted to install it on their dime, wanted to bring this innovative design thinking into our community and teach us how to think outside the box,” Buswell says. “It was fairly easy to see it was a special deal!” The community effort was successful, and OnlineNW started installing fiber in January 2018, making Willamina the fourth 10-gigabit city in the nation.

Continued on page 5

Volunteers bring old school to life

New community center unites Sheridan, Grande Ronde, Willamina

The West Valley Community Campus buzzes with activities. Serving the communities of Willamina, Sheridan and Grand Ronde, it’s home to a variety of regular events for the public, from belly dancing classes to music performances, dog obedience sessions, and creating a center for the region. It was a vision shared by a host of community volunteers, who immediately went to work rehabilitating the aging structure. “It had been empty for eight years, and in that eight years it had suffered from a lot of disrespect,” says Marian Lucas, who serves as vice chair of the campus’ board of directors. She works at the campus organizing the busy program calendar. “The roof was leaking, and lots of rooms were severely damaged.” It took months of volunteer work time and donations from the community, in the form of dollars and materials, to get the building open for business. “We had regular, well-attended work days, with 20 to 30 people a couple of times a month,” remembers volunteer Dave Buswell. “It was just really a cool thing, the West Valley Community Campus, a way to unite Sheridan, Grande Ronde and Willamina.”

The first area of the building to be finished was a wing that included the auditorium, two classrooms and a bathroom complex. “As we restore, we expand our available space and expand our activities,” Lucas says. She estimates 30% to 40% of the 42,000-square-foot building is functional right now, including four classrooms, the auditorium, the gym and office space. “Every room in this space has a little dream associated with it,” she says. Volunteers continue to steadily work their way down

They wanted to...
Building economic resiliency

Solar eclipse, fires offer researchers study opportunities

Forest fires. Floods. Earthquakes. Ice storms. There’s no way to predict when potentially catastrophic events will test the economic resiliency of a community. But as astrophysicist Carl Sagan once put it, “the more you know about the past, the better you are prepared for the future.”

That’s the intent of several studies being done across Oregon right now that measure the impact of recent real-life events, with an eye toward producing data that will aid long-term economic recovery while also identify strategies to help mitigate future events.

“We are learning how to build economic resiliency tools for state economic development agencies to use for major events that may impact our communities,” says Kathleen Flanagan, The Ford Family Foundation’s senior program officer for Community Economic Development.

At the University of Oregon, the Institute for Policy Research and Engagement (formerly the Community Service Center) is halfway into a two-year economic resiliency study measuring the impact of the 2017 summer solar eclipse to the Central Oregon area.

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The biggest takeaway for Bruce so far in his eclipse research? There is a clear advantage to bringing economic development professionals to the table.

“There’s always a lot of times we talk about resiliency, the focus is on emergency management, which tends to be focused on preparation and response,” he explains. “But business represents a huge amount of post-event recovery that needs to be taken into account.”

SEE THE ALL-AMERICAN TOTAL SOLAR ECLIPSE FROM MADRAS, OREGON

The next stage of the research will focus on developing resiliency tools that can be shared with communities around the state.

“Biggest takeaway is putting the training to use,” says Sam Baugh, SCDC’s executive director. “We also want to develop strategies on moving forward, how to prevent it from happening again, and, if it does, what to do differently.”

What’s in it for OnlineNW? “It’s a critical piece of Innovate Willamina,” says Bowman. “It was to reimagine the town, figure out how to create the culture of innovation that will allow us to teach differently and build a future for students in their own communities, where they can connect to global markets but still live down the road from their aunts and uncles.”

Innovate Willamina now the ultra-fast infrastructure is a critical piece of Innovate Willamina, a collaboration between local teachers, students, community members and businesses. The initiative creates a new model of hands-on education that fosters innovative thinkers. OnlineNW works closely with Willamina schools and Stanford University’s design school to bring training on ways of problem-solving and teaching.

“This is not about technology, it’s about opportunity,” Morrison says. “Technology is a piece of the puzzle but if you don’t look at this holistically you could put a fiber network in and people would do nothing with it, or they would just stream Netflix.”

The Innovate Willamina team is putting the training to work with a real-world project — an event focused on the possibility of a Cascadia earthquake that will engage community groups in identifying challenges the community might face and then creating solutions. Students and teachers will work with first responders and other organizations.

The school is continuing to develop teaching methodologies using a learning approach focusing on speed, flexibility and collaboration. It has launched a Career Development Academy, for example, and is piloting its first after-school team focused on building and using autonomous drones.

“Of the greatest challenges we have is a country that is we are no longer working together,” Morrison says. “Opportunity has been concentrated in certain areas and rural communities have been left behind. We have the opportunity in Oregon to figure out how to build a model for the rest of the country on how to bring everyone on board and build opportunity for all.”

Learn more at innovatewillamina.org

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The fire burned 192,000 acres in the Brookings area, with economic consequences that went far beyond suppression costs or loss of timber.

Hotels, restaurants and golf courses went empty, with resulting job losses. Recreation trails (almost 50 miles of them) were destroyed. Many Brookings residents, of which more than half are retirees, left the smoky area for health reasons; a lot of them are not coming back.

“We need to be able to show how devastating the fire was on a local, regional, and state level,” says Sam Baugh, SCDC’s executive director. “We also want to develop strategies on moving forward, how to prevent it from happening again, and, if it does, what to do differently.”

The next stage of the UO eclipse research will focus on developing resiliency tools that can be shared with communities around the state, such as business recovery centers that provide advice and resources to get storefronts quickly reopened.

“It’s been refreshing; we’ve been at this work a long time and the emergency management angle hasn’t gotten us very far in terms of improving economic resiliency,” Bruce says. “I’m bullish looking forward about aligning economic development, tourism and business in collaboration with emergency management.”

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Two Scholars excel after graduation

Ford ReStart Scholar, once homeless, now working on his doctoral degree

F
ord ReStart Scholar Joseph Foley is in his first year in a demanding doctoral program in Virginia. Eleven years ago, he was in a very different place. “I’m a recovering alcoholic,” 35-year-old Foley says freely. “In my early 20s, I was homeless and going in and out of rehab. When I was 24, before I won the scholarship, I got into recovery and got healthy.”

After a few successful years in the corporate world, Foley decided to go back to school at age 31. “I was in love with history and knew that teaching was going to be the calling for me,” he says. “I was going to give it my very best attempt, but everything, especially books, was so incredibly expensive. If I was really going to pursue becoming an academic, I needed to focus on school. Working full time was not a possibility.”

That became possible after the spring of his first year at Lane Community College, when he won a Ford ReStart scholarship. He went on to complete a bachelor’s degree in history from University of Oregon in 2017. The Ford ReStart Scholarship Program is need-based and is for adults no more than halfway through their degree program who are seeking an associate or bachelor’s degree. “My vision for my future really opened up after I won the scholarship,” Foley says. “It’s not just the confidence the Ford group had in me but with the financial support, my goals could change.”

Today, Foley is a doctoral fellow in history at the University of Virginia and is deep into research on the prison-industrial complex. He and his wife of three years, Billie, live in downtown Charlottesville, a town he describes as very similar to Eugene. And, as he did when he lived in Oregon, Foley quickly plugged into community service work. “Service work has been a big part of my life since getting healthy,” Foley says. “I did a lot of outreach to the unhoused in Eugene, and I picked that up again in Charlottesville.”

Foley’s ultimate goal is to teach American history at the university level, where he is confident he can connect with students. “Over 11 years ago, I was homeless,” he says. “Coming back as a nontraditional student, I share a lot of those same fears as other students, about life and returning to college. The most important thing is just the fact that if you believe in yourself and have good support, anything is possible, no matter what the situation you’re in.”

The Ph.D. program here is incredibly challenging,” he says. “But I’m just kind of shocked that people will pay you to learn. I just have to pinch myself every day. I can’t believe that this is my life.”

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Ford Scholar chosen for prestigious Fulbright award

H unter Briggs, a Ford Scholar, has been selected for the prestigious Fulbright U.S. Student Program. A 2018 graduate of Oregon State University, Briggs will study at the University of Leicester, United Kingdom, during the 2018-2019 academic year.

The Eugene native majored in Ethnic Studies at OSU. For his Fulbright year, Briggs will pursue a master’s degree in Criminology in Practice at the University of Leicester. After he returns to the United States, Briggs intends to pursue a joint law and Ph.D. program in preparation for nonprofit and advocacy work. He plans to incorporate arts-based programming into prison reform.

“We are all incredibly excited for Hunter and this amazing opportunity,” says Denise Callahan, the Foundation’s director of Postsecondary Success. “He earned this honor through hard work and dedication to his academic path. His future is bright, and we look forward to seeing where his path takes him.”

Briggs is one of more than 1,900 U.S. citizens who will study, conduct research and teach abroad for the 2018-2019 academic year through the Fulbright U.S. Student Program, which is administered by the U.S. Department of State and the J. William Fulbright Foreign Scholarship Board.

“No matter how desolate you are—no matter how broken you are—people will pay you to learn,” Briggs says. “My family and friends, the Fulbright Commission, and all of the amazing supports at The Ford Family Foundation are to thank for this award, for I would not be where I am today without any of them. Thank you for everything, from the bottom of my heart.”

Briggs will pursue a master’s degree in Criminology in Practice at the University of Leicester.
New report spotlights data

Charts, infographics make numbers easy to digest, compare

"Our ability to do great things with data will make a real difference in every aspect of our lives."

—Jennifer Pahlka
founder of Code for America

Good data contribute to good decisions. The ability to access, analyze and act on data is critical to the health of organizations and communities across Oregon. This proves especially true in rural areas where geographic isolation and smaller populations require additional resourcefulness. High-quality data help communities uncover needs, reveal trends, track progress and identify successes. Without it, decision makers should resort to best guesses.

The report features compact county portraits for all 36 Oregon counties as well as corresponding measure profiles, with rankings whenever possible. The report contains charts and infographics. It features compact county portraits for all 36 Oregon counties as well as corresponding measure profiles, with rankings whenever possible. The report includes charts and infographics.

Oregon by the Numbers pulls together a suite of community measures and displays them in an easy-to-digest format that includes charts and infographics. The report contains charts and infographics. It features compact county portraits for all 36 Oregon counties as well as corresponding measure profiles, with rankings whenever possible.

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Defining equity locally

When the Malheur Education Service District gathered a cross-section of the community together to explore the readiness for work around equity, organizers were surprised at the results. “More people showed up than we were prepared for and the energy in the air was just intense,” says Kelly Poe, the ESD’s director of Community Based Services. “We had discussions around racism, discrimination, hardships and people on the margins.”

Similar meetings were taking place in Baker and Wallowa counties, supported by a technical assistance grant from The Ford Family Foundation, and soon Eastern Oregon Equity for Common Good swung into action. The collaborative effort seeks to advance equity, values, and soon Eastern Oregon Equity for Common Good swung into action. The initiative looked around equity, organizers were prepared for and the energy in the air was just intense,” says Mary Sue Gonzalez, ESD’s director of Community Based Services. “We had discussions around racism, discrimination, hardships and people on the margins.”

The Malheur Equity Team chose “hope for all” as its theme, after identifying a lack of hope in their community.

The Malheur Equity Team chose “hope for all” as its theme, after identifying a lack of hope in their community. “There were 18 of us, and we didn’t lose anybody,” Poe says, reflecting on the importance of the issue to the community. “The thing that was so impressive about our first group was the differences in age, in gender, in economic status, in ethnicity.” The cohort’s monthly meetings were facilitated by consultant Bill Grace, author of Sharing the Rock: Shaping our Future through Leadership for the Common Good (see Select Books, page 11).

The Malheur Equity Team decided in July 2017 to address the issue of the well-being of newcomers to the Ontario area, which is a substantial number of refugees and immigrants. Poe says, “We created safe and courageous space where diverse voices were welcome and prepared to explore the complex issues of our day — like equity.”

A book to help you be a better parent. A book to help you understand your community. A book to help you build leadership. These are just three of the more than 70 books available from the Ford Family Foundation Select Books Program — all free to residents of Oregon and Siskiyou County, Calif. Keep them, share them. The only requirement is providing us with your feedback on the publication ordered.

The Abacus Project: Numbers, Shapes, Patterns, Measurements is a three-hour workshop in April 2017 which identified personal and group core values, how to create gracious space, and defined equity. The group met four more times, and 14 people have committed to a 2018 book club which meets monthly to dig deeper into values-based leadership and equity. In Wallowa County, four workshops occurred in Enterprise, with the group identifying positive ways to support groups who typically are not supported, such as people who identify as LGBTQ. Another effort, led by Northeastern Oregon Economic Development District, is sponsoring a series of roundtables about diversity.

“Built trust in Communities of Practice so people could get to know each other at a human level, and as they did, walls came down and bridges were built,” Poe says. “We created safe and courageous space where diverse voices were welcome and prepared to explore the complex issues of our day — like equity.”

Refugee and Immigrant Funders Collaborative.

The Equity Team also held several community events, including a forum on immigration, and created an Equity Compact, inviting businesses and organizations to commit to advancing equity. Part of the commitment was dedicating a person to participate in the second cohort, which began in January.

Values-based leadership

The initiative looked different in the other two counties, reflecting the specific issues relevant to each community. Baker County held a three-hour workshop in April 2017 which identified personal and group core values, how to create gracious space, and defined equity. The group met four more times, and 14 people have committed to a 2018 book club which meets monthly to dig deeper into values-based leadership and equity. In Wallowa County, four workshops occurred in Enterprise, with the group identifying positive ways to support groups who typically are not supported, such as people who identify as LGBTQ. Another effort, led by Northeastern Oregon Economic Development District, is sponsoring a series of roundtables about diversity.

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Resources offer insights

We’re making it easier than ever to access the resources on the Select Books list. Traditionally, we’ve offered readers our list of approximately 70 titles in print format. We now offer versions in Kindle e-book and audio CD, and also provide Spanish translations when available. To access the book list, go to the Select Books website (www.tfff.org/select-books), click on “Browse Books” and choose your preferred method of delivery. We will add more titles in all categories when they become available. All titles are free to residents of Oregon and Siskiyou County, Calif., in return for your book review.

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“Rather applicable to the line of community building work.” See the complete list of Select Books: www.tfff.org/select-books/

Select Books in new formats

We’re making it easier than ever to access the resources on the Select Books list. Traditionally, we’ve offered readers our list of approximately 70 titles in print format. We now offer versions in Kindle e-book and audio CD, and also provide Spanish translations when available. To access the book list, go to the Select Books website (www.tfff.org/select-books), click on “Browse Books” and choose your preferred method of delivery. We will add more titles in all categories when they become available. All titles are free to residents of Oregon and Siskiyou County, Calif., in return for your book review.

Oregon By the Numbers: Key Measures for Oregon and its Counties is by The Ford Family Foundation and Oregon State University Extension Service. 131 pages. ©2018.

Knowledge is power, and this report packs a wallop. The report is comprehensive, offering facts, economic data, and education and health insights are all revealed, as are the ways in which the data compare to the state as a whole.


This book provides a practical model for integrating ethics into everyday life and how to make choices based on concern for all. “Powerful, and full of wonderful insight,” says one of our Select Books reviewers.

Community Vitality is online: www.tfff.org/cv

Receive email notifications when a new online issue is available. Sign up at: www.tfff.org/cv/subscribe
I really wanted to take on the challenge," he says. "Two-thirds of the issues facing the juniper market two years ago have been successfully addressed, Sheld says, but one remains — building a cadre of loggers willing to harvest juniper. Juniper has to be felled and limbed by hand, an increasingly rare practice as loggers turn to mechanized equipment.

“It’s a change in mindset,” Sheld says, “and many of these folks just don’t want to revert to hand-felling and hand-delimbing. We just might have to grow our own loggers.”

The appeal of juniper

The attributes that make juniper so difficult to manage also make it a great green product. Juniper is durable, rot-resistant and can handle extreme weather conditions. That means juniper works as well or better in applications that traditionally use cedar or pressure-treated wood, such as landscape timbers or fencing. It’s also a bit more gnarly and its knotholes and odd grain make rustic-looking paneling and flooring that appeals to a lot of people.

Juniper's unique coloration makes a statement whether in a deck or a cutting board. Juniper is durable, rot-resistant and can handle extreme weather conditions. (Photo by the author)

Even the color of juniper is appealing to sustainability. A mill in Fossil, Oregon, is one of those businesses. Last winter, owner Kendall Derby kept five workers busy. Depending on log supply, he’s had as many as 11 on payroll. “There are only 1,200 people in the whole 100-square-mile area,” Derby says. "My sweet spot is about seven people, but the trick is finding those seven people.

It’s a challenge like these that keep Sustainable Northwest and the lumberyard busy. "We spend a lot of time helping to cultivate this growing industry," Temple says. "We’ve provided advances to allow them to acquire logs. I spend a lot of time giving them whatever support they need.”

So far, four years into the effort, the Western Juniper Alliance can point to 45 direct jobs for loggers, millworkers, and processors. "We’re happy to pay them. It’s other people who have increased prices, and people are happy to pay them. It’s other things — last year it was the log supply. But I can sell everything I can mill, and that’s a good problem to have." Kendall Derby knows juniper. He studied the species as a research technician while he worked to get a degree in range management from Oregon State University.

Real opportunity

“The good news is the environmental community is on my side, and the business development community is on my side. I have a pretty good crew, and I’m experienced, and I think there’s real opportunity here,” he says. derby knows juniper inside and out. He spent a year and a half studying the species as a research technician while he worked to get a degree in range management from Oregon State University.

His demand goes something like this. “I work for free and work hard, I can stay in business. I want to repair equipment and pay crew, I have to put out more volume. The lumber industry is all about how much you can produce.”

A year ago, he ran out of logs for a while and had to lay everyone off. "We got our feet back under us and did great for the last 10 months,” he says, “and now I’m back down to a couple of guys.” Finding the right guys is also an ongoing challenge in a county where the entire population is about 1,200 people, only 450 of them in the Fossil area.

Transportation also poses a problem, especially when dealing with truckers who really hate to haul empties. "If it stands now, they have to make the trek to Fossil empty, get the lumber and then go home, many of them amazed at the twisted, windy roads. They believe in the product. He mills blue pine and fir, mostly for corral boards, but his bread and butter is juniper. He does a lot of 6x6s and 2x6s for boards like this, as well as some higher-end products such as 1x6 boards for paneling, as consumers that unique juniper look.

Kendall Derby

Kendall Derby started out with a pickup truck and a chainsaw. “Now I’m at the point where I buy log-truck loads and ship the boards out by semi.” He says. “It’s not a slam dunk. Living in sparsely settled Eastern Oregon brings its own rural challenges. "If I work for free and work hard, I can stay in business. I want to repair equipment and pay crew, I have to put out more volume. The lumber industry is all about how much you can produce.”

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He sees demand going up. "The problem is not the market — the market is wonderful. We have increased prices, and people are happy to pay them. It’s other things — last year it was the log supply. But I can sell everything I can mill, and that’s a good problem to have.”

An encouraging development happened recently when, for the first time, his mill received a shipment of logs from a Forest Service timber sale. Almost all sales are encouraged to sell the juniper rather than leave it or burn it, supply issues could ease.
"Crow’s Shadow Institute of the Arts at 25" opened at the museum in September 2017. The Crow’s Shadow studio focuses on contemporary fine art printmaking.

The exhibit, supported by a grant from The Ford Family Foundation, features 75 prints drawn from the Crow’s Shadow print archive; a full-color, hardbound catalog complements the exhibit.

It is a coming together of two significant institutions combined with the talent of dozens of the most esteemed artists of our time,” says Kandis Brewer Nunn, senior advisor to The Ford Family Foundation’s Visual Arts program.

The featured prints are the work of artists who have visited Crow’s Shadow over the past 25 years to work with master printer Frank Janzen, who retired last year. The new master printer is Judith Baumann.

Crow’s Shadow was founded in 1992, with a mission of providing educational, social and economic opportunities for Native Americans through artistic development. “We quickly grew beyond our borders,” says Karl Davis, the Institute’s executive director, “and today we are bringing the world to the reservation and the reservation to the world.”

The studio’s remote, serene location, coupled with 24-hour access to a world-class print facility, draws visiting artists in a variety of mediums. The artists work with the master printer to translate their vision into prints. They leave a proof of their work when they complete their residency.

The exhibit traveled to the Whatcom Museum in Bellingham, Washington, in summer of 2018, and will continue on this September to the Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art at Washington State University in Pullman.

A full-color, hardbound catalog complements the exhibit, which is supported by a grant from The Ford Family Foundation.

Boise Art Museum will welcome the exhibit in March of 2019. “The show was a real hit, and the opening was attended by people from all parts of the state,” says Brewer Nunn. “And the catalogue remains long after the exhibition comes down, as a celebration of the life of these two organizations.”

Three Hallie Ford Fellows recognized

Three Hallie Ford Fellows in the Visual Arts received prestigious awards for their work this year, bringing national recognition for their artistic talent and helping bolster Oregon’s place as a preeminent artistic venue.

Guggenheim Fellowship

Portland artist Stephen Hayes (2011 Hallie Ford Fellow) is a new Guggenheim Fellow joining a diverse group of 172 scholars, artists and scientists. The highly competitive Guggenheim Fellowships are intended for individuals who have already demonstrated exceptional ability to contribute significantly to the arts. Hayes was one of nearly 3,000 candidates who competed for the prestigious award.

Fellowships are intended to help further the development of scholars and artists by assisting them to engage in research in any field of knowledge and creation in any of the arts, under the freest possible conditions and irrespective of race, color, or creed. The amount of the grants, which are unrestricted, vary.

“This fellowship is a very humble validation for decades of focused work,” Hayes says. “The award will be used to help fund my current project titled In the Hour Before. My hope is that having an Oregon artist receive this award helps shine a bright light on the excellent art and artists that come out of here.”

Hayes has been exhibiting his paintings for more than 30 years in solo and group exhibitions across America, in the Middle East and Japan. In addition to teaching and the practice of art, Hayes is actively engaged in the Oregon arts community, serving on advisory panels, curatorial committees and as a visiting artist and juror.

The Tiffany Awards

Two Oregon artists were among the 30 winners chosen to receive $20,000 grants from the Louis Comfort Tiffany Foundation to help them in producing new work. Both are Hallie Ford Fellows in the Visual Arts: Ellen Lesperance (2012) and Wendy Red Star (2016). Their artwork will be documented in a catalogue published by the foundation.

The recipients were chosen from 156 artists who were nominated anonymous by artists, critics, museum professionals and Tiffany Foundation trustees. About half of the 30 winners came from the Northeast. Ellen Lesperance has soloed and been included in group exhibitions for the past 15 years in Portland, New York, Boston, Seattle, London, Miami, Los Angeles, Santa Fe and Kansas City. She works in painting and mixed media.

Wendy Red Star, a multimedia artist, was raised on the Apsaalooke (Crow) reservation in south-central Montana; her works explore the intersections of Native ideologies and colonialist structures. She has exhibited in the United States and abroad.
Fun with everyday math

Most parents are aware of the need for developing reading skills in their young children. But a growing body of research is highlighting the need for children to hone their math skills. If you think your infant or preschooler is too young to learn math, you might want to reconsider.

Math skills at kindergarten entry can predict later success in school — even more so than reading abilities or socioemotional development.

“Children are born ready to learn both concrete and abstract math skills,” says Christy Cox, senior program officer for early childhood development at The Ford Family Foundation. “They notice quantities and are tuned in to different shapes and sizes even before they can talk.”


Two editions, one for birth to age 3, and one for ages 3 to 5, offer simple, brightly colored and illustrated activities printed on kid-friendly heavy card stock. The books provide ways for parents and caregivers to find math in everyday routines so that children of any age can hone their skills.

Each book is divided into four skill areas: numbers, shapes, patterns and measurements. Each book also contains suggestions for a low-

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