



1000 Cordova Place #351 Santa Fe, NM 87505
kindleproject.org

2025 Stars and Seeds Fund – Annual Report

Dear friends,

We have prepared this report for the Stars and Seeds Fund to capture updates, lessons learned, and insights from 2025. With a wonderful group of 11 funders, this fund has become a magnet for foundations and donors who share our passion and commitment for women, land, regenerative agriculture and New Mexico. We are honored to be joined by all of you and are grateful for your generosity.

As always, we welcome the opportunity to speak by phone or Zoom with any of you throughout the year to answer questions or provide additional information.

We also want to extend a big thank you to the fund's co-creator, the Kalliopeia Foundation. This organization is not only the anchor donor to this fund, but through our collaboration with Program Officer, Hilary Hart, we've created something powerful that is making a profound impact on the women and land of New Mexico. We're grateful to be working together for another year and hope that this fund will continue beyond 2026.

With gratitude and wishes for happy reading,

Arianne Shaffer, Director of Programs, and the Kindle Project and Stars and Seeds team

Supplemental materials (all of which are linked throughout this report):

- [Stars and Seeds Flow Funds Bios](#)
- [2025 Stars and Seeds Regenerative Agriculture Call for Applications](#)
- [2025 Stars and Seeds Regenerative Agriculture Awardees](#)
- [2025 Stars and Seeds Collective Fund Grantees](#)
- [Letter from the Flow Funders to their Collective Fund Grantees](#)
- [Session 3 Recording of our Kindle Project 2025 Webinar Series: Women's Stewardship – Practices from the Frontlines of Participatory Grantmaking \(featuring Hilary Hart\)](#)
- [Stars and Seeds Feature in the Taos News](#)



Stars and Seeds Background

In 2023, Kindle Project and the Kalliopeia Foundation launched *Stars and Seeds*, a participatory grantmaking fund that supports women in New Mexico reconnecting with spirit, community, and the Earth. The fund is guided by women community-based decision-makers, known as Flow Funders*, who direct resources to local leaders and projects.

The goals of the Stars and Seeds Fund are to:

- Identify, celebrate, and support women working through deep connection to New Mexico's natural systems;
- Engage in reciprocal learning and relationship building to amplify the work of grantees and Flow Funders;
- Create a space for visionary and imaginary experiences;
- Support self-determination within communities; and
- Remind the Earth that She is loved and cared for.

We're proud to share that these goals are being met with care and creativity. The circle of Flow Funders has been remarkable in their ability to dream, collaborate, and implement in alignment with both their values and the fund's vision. They've embraced magic, ceremony, and dream work as essential elements of their decision-making and storytelling processes.

As a result, \$465,625 has been distributed to women-led initiatives in New Mexico (including \$360,000 in grants and \$105,625 in honoraria for the circle members) since we launched in 2023. Additionally, in 2025, we began creating a dynamic website that will serve as a home for the collective and individual stories of this transformative philanthropic journey.

Our original partnership with Kalliopeia envisioned 2025 as a year dedicated solely to storytelling. However, thanks to additional support from your foundation and a small group of donors, 2025 became both a storytelling and grantmaking year. In 2025, Stars and Seeds moved \$160,000 to support women-led projects and organizations across New Mexico. An additional \$15,000 from the 2025 process will move in 2026 at the request of the grantee recipient. We are proud to share that the program will continue for at least another year, with funding secured for programmatic activities and grantmaking in 2026.

We are grateful to all the donors who have seen impact, promise and inspiration in this special fund. It is because of you that we get to continue this important and beautiful work. Thank you!

This report offers both a reflection on what has happened in the fund over the past year and our plans for its future. We hope you enjoy this update, and we thank you for your support, partnership, and commitment to the women and land of New Mexico.

Stars and Seeds Circle

The Stars and Seeds circle started in 2023 with four members: Virginia Necochea, Eliza Naranjo Morse, Margaret Garcia, and Pilar Trujillo. At the end of each year of circle programming, we check in with members to reflect on their capacity and interest in continuing.

In 2024, Margaret chose to step down due to other commitments. Because 2025 was planned as an active storytelling year, we collaborated with her in a reduced capacity, allowing her to stay involved with storytelling while honoring her time. The other three circle members remained fully engaged.

In October 2025, core member Virginia stepped down to accommodate the demands of her role as Executive Director of the New Mexico Environmental Law Center. With 2025 grantmaking decisions having already been made, we were grateful for her contributions during her time in the circle and for the way the group continues to evolve to meet both individual needs and the collective vision.

Looking ahead to 2026, we are excited to welcome Margaret back as a core circle member and to continue working with Eliza and Pilar. You can read more about each of the circle members [here](#).

**Flow Funding places power where it belongs: with those who are from recipient communities and who can be in community with each other (the circle). Flow Funders decide where money is allocated, reshaping how resources move and thereby setting in motion a powerful alternative to the standard top-down approach of conventional philanthropy.*

Regenerative Agriculture and Stars and Seeds

In 2025, we were fortunate to receive a \$100,000 grant to support 10 women farmers in New Mexico practicing Regenerative Agriculture, with \$10,000 awarded to each farmer. This led to another creative opportunity for the Stars and Seeds circle to design and articulate what this meant to them under the umbrella of our fund's goals. The application drew 35 responses from women farmers across the state. We used a word-of-mouth open call process for this [invitation](#), and the quality of applications we received was tremendous. This led to a challenging but enlivening decision-making experience for the Flow Funders.

The circle made their decisions about who to choose for this special opportunity during our fall 2025 retreat. Circle members considered each farmer's geography, diversity of regenerative farming practices, age, experience, and resonance with the open call invitation in the selection process. Their consensus process was beautiful to witness, and ultimately, the 10 farmers chosen felt right and mission-aligned.

As we reached out to both the 10 women who received the good news that they had been accepted and the 25 women who did not, we received several emails of gratitude and reciprocal witnessing. To our surprise, those who didn't receive the award wrote to us to thank us and express joy for the invitation and the process as a whole. This was an incredibly affirming experience for the Kindle Project and Kalliopeia teams, as well as for the Flow Funders themselves. It exemplifies the impact of this kind of community-led grantmaking, as the flow funders wrote the invitation letter and the 'rejection' letters, adding heart, wisdom, and care to each communication.

"Thank you for your kind words and for letting me know the outcome. I appreciate how difficult it must be to choose and read all the selections. I feel grateful to have had my name suggested in the first place, and look forward to celebrating those who were selected for all that they do for their communities."

In keeping with our commitment to storytelling, each of the 10 selected farmers has been asked to submit a short story for our website, which will launch in mid-2026. We are looking forward to sharing the work of these regenerative agriculture practitioners as a part of the overall Stars and Seeds story. As you are our close collaborators and funders, we are thrilled to share the 2025 list of the farmers chosen with you:



Betty Ojaye



Camilla Trujillo



Tiana Baca



Donne Gonzales



Heidi Brandow



Melanie Kirby



Reisha Lewis-Adams



Reyna Banteah



Sunny Dooley



Valerie Jack

To read more about the farmers, see [here](#). Once our website launches with the farmer's stories, we'll be sure to let you know so you can explore further. We are so blessed to be supporting land through the fervent and deep work of these 10 remarkable women.

2025 Stars and Seeds Resource Allocations

The Stars and Seeds Collective Fund's 2025 grantmaking budget of \$75,000 enabled deeper investment in women-led, place-based initiatives across New Mexico, rooted in care for the Earth, community self-determination, and visionary leadership. At the fall 2025 retreat, the cohort completed their decision-making process for their Collective Fund (\$75,000) and the Regenerative Agriculture call for applications (\$100,000). Both of these areas required them to make decisions by consensus. They held talking circles, journaled, reflected, shared stories, and challenged one another with mutual respect and deep listening, before finally arriving at their decisions unanimously.

Grantee Organization	Amount
BEN Initiative	\$10,000
Breath of My Heart Birth Place	\$5,000
Laguna-Acoma Coalition for a Safe Environment	\$10,000
Sovereign Energy	\$25,000
Tierra Sagrada	\$5,000
Tularosa Basin Downwinders Consortium	\$5,000
Empowerment Congress (PENDING)	\$15,000
TOTAL	\$75,000

To read more about the Collective Fund grantees, see [here](#).

The circle's funding decisions reflect not only the fund's goals but also its North Star, which they articulated beautifully in letters shared with their 2024 and 2025 Collective Fund grantees. You can read one of those letters [here](#).

2025 Stars and Seeds Storytelling

With the support and vision of Kalliopeia Foundation, a significant focus of Stars and Seeds has been on creating, curating, and sharing the stories of this fund – echoing the spirit of the fund’s goals to be more than the money. As such, we’ve been creating a bespoke website that the circle has been co-designing with our Kindle Project Communications team. The images, colors, content and vision were all designed by the circle, including a logo for the fund that was created by one of the circle members which you can see below.

While we had originally envisioned a website launch in 2025, with more donors joining the fund, we can now continue the fund for another year and be more flexible about the launch date, giving everyone more time to work on stories.

The stories the circle members are currently working on focus on site visits and interviews conducted with 2024 Stars and Seeds Collective Fund grantees. With a relationship-first approach, the women of Stars and Seeds have been working on their storytelling with care, creativity, and the utmost respect for the groups and women they speak with. The website will also be a place for the circle to share who they are and their individual and collective stories of coming together for this work. Additionally, the Kindle Project and Kalliopeia teams (Arianne, Hilary, and Sadaf Cameron, Kindle Project Co-Founder and Executive Director) are working on their own stories and interviews with each other to capture what our collaboration, passion, and work mean in the Stars and Seeds context.

This aspect of the fund has paved a new way for how we think about storytelling and even reporting our funds at Kindle Project. It also inspired another participatory fund at Kindle, the New Standard Fund, to create a website to share its outcomes and vision. Both sites will launch mid-2026.



Field Building

Environmental Grantmakers Association

Hilary, Sadaf, and Arianne collaborated on a proposal to offer a session at the 2025 Environmental Grantmakers Association (EGA) conference titled "Rooted Giving: Stories of How Joy, Care, and Imagination Transform Environmental Grantmaking." While we weren't picked for a concurrent session, we were chosen to give an hour-long mainstage presentation to 300+ funders. It was an exciting step to share the Stars and Seeds model and stories with such a large audience, and for the circle to invite funders into an experience that reflected the values at the heart of their work!

During our October 2025 retreat, with this new opportunity to present at EGA we spent an enlivened day brainstorming ways to share our circle's story that not only felt motivational to a room of 300+ funders, but also invitational for them to experience some of the Stars and Seeds magic for themselves.

“In my nearly 15 years of funder organizing, I have sat with countless community groups and grantee circles and asked them about what core messages they wanted to share with funders. The answers are almost always the same: more general operating support funding, multi-year commitments, less arduous reporting and application processes and the ability to speak with program officers more freely and often. I have never seen a group answer this question first with deep consideration and an invitation for funders to really feel that they are part of the land, part of something bigger, magical, and more powerful than themselves and their role. This was the most important thing for the women of Stars and Seeds – they wanted to make sure everybody in the room felt like they belonged.”
- Arianne



Left to right: Arianne Shaffer of Kindle Project, Hilary Hart of the Kalliopeia Foundation, Pilar Trujillo and Margaret Garcia of Stars & Seeds Fund

EGA staff and member reflection of our mainstage session:

“Relationships are critical to impactful grantmaking: We are in relationship with each other and the Earth. Care is the foundation for creativity and innovative thinking.”

“Lean into innovative ways to connect: Meet in a body of water or another creative location rooted in your work with a facilitator. Then, make sure that you discuss things that you need to talk about in a fun way.”

Kindle Project Fall Webinar Series

We had 400+ people register for our first-ever four-part fall webinar series! The third session in the series, Women's Stewardship—Practices from the Frontlines of Participatory Grantmaking, featured Hilary as a key speaker, sharing her experience with the Stars and Seeds program. The session recording is available [here](#) (Hilary's segment begins at 21:34). It was so meaningful to have her powerful voice be a guide for others in the sector looking to add depth and rigor to their women's funding work.

Press Release and Spotlight in the Taos News

Hilary was inspired to spearhead a press release to get a broader audience for Stars and Seeds stories, and the local Taos News picked up a story on the fund, published in December 2025 - see [here](#) for the article.

Looking Ahead

Stars and Seeds has the potential to grow beyond its initial three-year timeline if new resources are secured. Additional funding for 2026 and beyond would not only help sustain Stars and Seeds but also deepen its impact, making room for more grants, more stories, and more opportunities for women to nurture connections between land, community, and heritage. With more resources, Stars and Seeds can:

- Expand its grantmaking pool to support more women-led projects rooted in New Mexico
- Continue to capture and share stories that can impact the philanthropic sector and help to make the case for place-based participatory grantmaking.
- Offer more opportunities for new women to join the Flow Funding circle.

We are so fortunate to have raised all programmatic costs and honoraria for 2026. We are still actively fundraising to expand our grantmaking for this year and to continue and expand the fund into 2027. The circle members have become seasoned experts in resource allocation, and they could easily and joyfully reallocate any amount of grantmaking dollars should the opportunity arise.

The Stars and Seeds website is set to launch later in 2026. This unique site will capture the stories of the whole ecosystem, including stories from Kindle Project, Kalliopeia Foundation, the Flow Funders, and the grantees. This dynamic space has been co-created by the Flow Funders to share what we've learned, how we've grown, and who has been impacted by this Fund. It also serves as an example of how power shared in a philanthropic context can have an impact with reach far beyond the money.

Looking ahead to 2027, we currently have a \$50,000 pledge from Kalliopeia that we plan to use to host a celebration and wrap-up of the program if no further funds are raised. However, we see tremendous potential for this fund's growth and would be happy to discuss this with you at any time.

About Kindle Project

Kindle Project aligns bold donors with inspired communities to forge resilient futures. We join forces with partners who know that investing in community self-determination is not only the right thing to do, it's also the most effective. For more than 15 years, we have innovated strategies to move money differently – creating funds that resonate beyond the transactional and weaving partnerships that build the world we urgently need. You can read more about Kindle Project [here](#). See attached for a list of the Kindle Project staff members involved in the Stars and Seeds program.

About Kalliopeia Foundation

Kalliopeia Foundation's mission is to cultivate connections between ecology, culture, and spirituality. We engage this work through a multi-media magazine (Emergence Magazine), educational resources (Global Oneness Project), and a grantmaking program. Kalliopeia's grants are dedicated to US-based leaders and programs. You can read more about Kalliopeia [here](#).

