

DEMOCRACY IS

60 Years of Grantmaking to Veatch Visionaries

Unitarian Universalist Veatch Program at Shelter Rock Newsletter 2019

Let's begin with a now iconic image, taken during Brett Kavanaugh's confirmation hearings to the Supreme Court in which multiple credible accusations of sexual assault emerged against him. In the picture, a woman confronts former Senator Jeff Flake, demanding he listen to the stories of assault survivors like her. With news cameras nearby, the incident quickly went viral. While it didn't derail the nomination, it riveted the nation for days, bringing much needed attention to the experiences of survivors.



Ana Maria Archila, co-director of Veatch grantee Center for Popular Democracy, demands Senator Jeff Flake pay attention to assault survivors.

While the media reported the event as spontaneous, the real story is more interesting. The woman pictured, Ana Maria Archila, is the co-director of Veatch grantee **Center for Popular Democracy**, a group that led nearly 100 hours of protest throughout the Kavanaugh hearings, including an act of nonviolent civil disobedience in which nearly 200 of the group's members were arrested.

This is what long-term investment in leaders can produce. Veatch has funded Ana Maria's work for years, starting when she co-directed Make the Road New York. Tapping into her decades of organizing and leadership

experience, Ana Maria seized an opportunity when she saw one. "I can't imagine that for the next 50 years [my children] will have someone on the Supreme Court accused of violating a young girl," she told the Senator, with cameras rolling nearby. "What are you doing, sir?"

This year, Veatch is celebrating six decades of partnering with leaders like Ana Maria. With a vision grounded in love and a commitment to forging a more just future, Veatch grantee organizations are building the power of everyday people to change policy, confront exploitation, and innovate new ways of organizing. These Veatch Visionaries are on the ground every day, putting Unitarian Universalist values into action.

In our 60th anniversary year, we want to celebrate a sampling of our nearly 200 grantees. Veatch has supported each of the groups highlighted in these pages for a decade or more. This support has allowed them to take risks and wage decades-long fights for lasting change. Grantees tell us the consistency and freedom Veatch provides is more important in today's political climate than ever before, where vulnerable people are under attack, and organizers must respond to crises in a moment's notice.

The leaders and communities you will read about here are in this fight for the long haul.

This is what democracy looks like.



In solidarity,

Joan Minieri
Executive Director

Carole Alexander
Chair, Veatch Board of Governors

Democracy Is Galvanizing a New Generation of Leaders

The United Students Against Sweatshops (USAS)

A grantee since 2012, USAS is one of several student-run organizations supported over Veatch's six-decade history. Since 1997, USAS has advanced fair labor practices at corporations around the world. Today it has 150 affiliates at campuses across the country. One of the organization's most consistent targets is Nike—the largest collegiate licensee in the United States and one of the most instantly recognizable brands in the world—for their long history of providing low wages and unsafe working conditions. "Nike gains billions in revenue while exploiting the labor of women in the Global South," said Yvonne Nguyen, USAS Coordinating Committee Member. "This sets a precedent for other garment brands that we won't let stand."

Decades of Sustained Student Organizing

2001: Nike rehires fired workers in Pueblo Mexico and establishes a union contract after years-long USAS campaign.

2010: "Just Win It" Campaign wins \$1.5 million in back pay for workers.

2019: USAS is fighting Nike in Indonesia where the company is attempting to end its relationship with 17 local suppliers that employ roughly 30,000 workers.

"We need students now more than ever—we are fighting for our future while greedy politicians and legislators are gambling with it." —Leigha Ellis, USAS Southern Regional Organizer



2019 USAS Coordinating Committee



USAS Protest Against Nike. USAS targets Nike because of its status as a leader within the garment industry. Veatch's long-term support helps USAS aim high.

Training Future Generations

USAS is more than just a list of impressive policy wins; it is also an ascending movement of young people leveraging their education for the benefit of us all. This past year alone, USAS trained over 635 students from 75 universities and colleges—one in every four USAS student leaders goes on to pursue a career in the social justice movement.

Go Big or Go Home

USAS targets Nike, a corporate behemoth, for the impact it has on the larger garment industry's labor practices. But as a result of aiming high, change doesn't come overnight. Between the wins and amid shifts in USAS's student-led leadership structure, Veatch funding serves as a stabilizing force, ensuring impact for the long term.

"USAS has been around for over two decades in part because the Veatch Program recognizes the role general support plays in helping us assess our own work, shift resources and efforts when needed, and keep our eye on the long haul." —Sameerah Ahmad, USAS Development Director

Democracy Is Building Women's Power

Restaurant Opportunities Center United (ROC United)



Saru Jayaraman, Co-founder and President, ROC United.

A grantee since 2009, ROC United is one of many Veatch Visionaries leading transformational, nationwide movements on behalf of workers in industries dominated by women. Founded to assist Windows on the World restaurant workers traumatized and displaced after 9/11, ROC United's coalition of 130,000 restaurant workers, employers, consumers, and advocates are shifting the power dynamics in our nation's restaurants, an industry whose primarily female workforce is among the fastest growing and lowest paid in the nation. Co-founder Saru Jayaraman is leading a campaign to raise the current federal minimum wage of \$2.13 an hour for tipped workers to the full minimum wage. "Tipping continues the legacy of slavery," Saru said. "The early restaurant industry in the U.S. didn't pay newly freed slaves anything, forcing them to live on customer tips." Seven states have eliminated the two-tier wage system and ROC United continues to keep the pressure on others.

"The core support Veatch provides not only solidifies our infrastructure; it allows us to be innovative, flexible in our decision-making, and nimble when opportunities arise." —Saru Jayaraman, Co-founder and President ROC United

Decades of Organizing for Women:

2013: Launched "One Fair Wage" campaign to require restaurants to pay living wages to workers, instead of forcing them to rely on tips.

2018: Waged highly publicized "One Fair Wage" campaigns in Michigan, New York and Washington, DC.

2019: Recognizing the electoral power of its massive base, ROC United is encouraging restaurant workers to turn each other out to vote for the 2020 elections through innovative techniques like "peer to peer" text messaging campaigns.



ROC United Protest. Restaurant workers are campaigning for an increase in the \$2.13 federal minimum wage for tipped workers, a practice that has its roots in slave labor, to the full minimum wage.

Creating Harassment-Free Workplaces:

ROC United views their work through multiple overlapping lenses, including race, gender, and class. Balancing these perspectives takes time and resources, but is critical to creating meaningful change. ROC United was one of many Veatch grantees to ensure the #MeToo and #TimesUp movements—efforts that began in Hollywood to draw attention to sexual harassment of women in the media—included industries with fewer cameras pointed at them. Through the group's intersectional approach, Veatch recognizes that seizing opportunities such as these is critical, not tangential, to the organization's overall mission.

Democracy Is Organizing in the Heartland

Iowa Citizens for Community Improvement (Iowa CCI)



Through decades of sustained organizing, Iowa CCI has successfully prevented over 120 corporate factory farms from operating in the state.

One of our longest standing Veatch grantees, Iowa CCI has been building the power of communities since 1975. It began when a handful of clergy at the St. Joseph's Catholic Church in Waterloo responded to the deteriorating conditions of the surrounding neighborhoods. Through decades of sustained organizing, Iowa CCI has turned itself into a political force within the state. Today, their members number in the thousands, who wield their collective power to fight the proliferation of corporate factory farms in the state, and stop their negative impacts on public health, clean water, and family-run businesses. "We bring urban and rural folks together to build relationships and break-down issue silos," said Hugh Espey, Iowa CCI's Executive Director. "We've been doing this for over four decades—and we'll keep doing it."

Decades of Organizing in the Heartland:

"Iowa is on the national political stage right now because of the Iowa Caucuses that'll be held in February 2020. We want to use this incredible opportunity to advance our top-tier issues."—Hugh Espey, Executive Director of Iowa CCI.

1995: Stopped five hog factories from being built in northwest Iowa. The group has since prevented over 120 agribusinesses from being built in the state, keeping 80 million gallons of toxic manure out of our waterways every year.

2009: Won state legislation to protect Iowa's waters, preventing factory farms from spreading manure on frozen and snow-covered ground.

2019: The group's political arm, Iowa CCI Action Fund, will host presidential forums leading up to the 2020 elections to help ensure the candidates for the Democratic nomination are responding to the needs of working people.



Hugh Espey, Executive Director of Iowa CCI

Forging Multi-Racial Coalitions:

Iowa CCI is one of several Veatch Visionary organizations creating roadmaps for how rural organizing groups, even those with predominantly white, working class memberships, can partner with immigrants and other multiracial communities. Along with other racial justice groups in the state, Iowa CCI is fighting to ban racial profiling, which is still legal in the state. The organization also held three "Keep ICE out of Iowa" events this past year, attended by over 400 people, which led to the development of a toolkit to help communities prepare for and respond to immigration raids.

"Veatch helps us build the power and clout we need to make a lasting difference. It also helps us raise money from other sources." —Hugh Espey, Executive Director of Iowa CCI.

Democracy Is Faith in Action

Faith in Action

A Veatch grantee for the past 13 years, Faith in Action is a grassroots, faith-based community organizing network. Founded in 1972, Faith in Action galvanizes more than 54 multi-faith, multi-racial organizations across the country, including Unitarian Universalists. Organizing in 25 states and Washington, D.C., Faith in Action activates communities of faith to create meaningful change—by expanding and protecting the right to vote, reducing homicides due to gun violence, and fighting for families being torn apart by the federal administration’s aggressive immigration tactics. “We believe that our best device is our unity,” said the group’s Executive Director, Rev. Alvin Herring. “We intend to use it.”



Faith in Action members meeting with Senator Elizabeth Warren. When Hurricane Maria hit Puerto Rico, Faith in Action affiliate Pioneer Valley Project worked with hurricane survivors who had been displaced to Massachusetts. “We reached out to Veatch and within a few days had a \$10K commitment for much-needed funds,” said Denise Collazo, Senior Advisor for External Affairs.

“Veatch funds us to do the work that our people feel is most urgent. They provide general support for people-led organizing.”—Denise Collazo, Senior Advisor for External Affairs

Decades of Faith in Action:

2016: Affiliate POWER partnered with the “LIVE FREE” campaign, which successfully worked with the Philadelphia City Council to end cash bail—a system that favors the wealthy who can buy their freedom—for low-level offenses in the city two years later.

2018: Affiliate Faith in Florida partnered with the Florida Rights Restoration Coalition, which included several Veatch grantees, to pass Amendment 4—restoring voting rights to 1.6 million formerly incarcerated people in the state.

2019: The group’s political arm, Faith in Action Fund, is intentionally reaching out to regularly ignored voters of color in communities across the country in the 2020 elections and beyond.

“We are restoring our tattered democracy by expanding the precious right to vote for which so many fought and died.”—Rev. Alvin Herring, Executive Director

Leaders in Direct Action Organizing:

Faith in Action is an example of direct action organizing furthering social progress. They played a critical role in organizing large-scale demonstrations aimed at retaining health coverage for the roughly 30 million people who depend on the Affordable Care Act. Faith in Action made headlines last year when dozens of faith leaders were arrested protesting congressional efforts to repeal the Act. With sustained support from the Veatch program, this Veatch Visionary is bringing faith communities forward to fight for our democracy.



Rev. Alvin Herring, Executive Director of Faith in Action

Highlights From Veatch Weekend

The Rev. Starsky Wilson of the **Deaconess Foundation** gave the Sermon on Veatch Sunday this year on the theme: *Toward Democracy, Our Struggle to Create Community*. Rev. Wilson shared how his leadership of the Ferguson Commission, formed by Missouri's Governor following the tragic death of Michael Brown Jr. in 2014, led him to emphasize the importance of inclusive democracies. He encouraged all of us, in our own work, to do the same. Veatch grantees Mary Hooks, from **Southerners on New Ground**, Zachary Norris, from the **Ella Baker Center for Human Rights**, and Jessica Juarez Scruggs, of the **People's Action Institute** also joined us as part of a panel discussion. Mary spoke about SONG's "Free From Fear" campaigns, which are fighting to create community-led systems of police accountability. Zachary spoke about the Center's work fighting the criminalization of low-income communities,



Mary Hooks (Southerners on New Ground); Zachary Norris (Ella Baker Center for Human Rights); Jessica Juarez Scruggs (People's Action Institute); Rev. Starsky Wilson (Deaconess Foundation)

such as their success in helping close five youth prisons in California. And Jessica spoke of the Institute's work at the border this past year, fighting back against the administration's inhumane child separation policy.

Site Visit to Florida

Each year, we bring representatives of the Veatch Board of Governors and the UUCSR Board of Trustees to visit grantees in a given area to better understand the type of social change community organizing Veatch funds. This year we went to **Miami, Florida**, where we witnessed the powerful civic engagement and leadership development grantees are doing in their communities. We visited with: **Florida New Majority Education Fund, Miami Workers Center, Florida Immigrant Coalition, Central Florida Jobs with Justice, Faith in Florida**, and the **Coalition of Immokalee Workers**.

We also visited Miami's major Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) office in Miramar, Florida. Discreetly, volunteers with the **Circle of Protection** took small groups of us across the street to witness the incompetence, inhumanity, and outright mean-spirited policies of our country's broken immigration system. Hundreds of immigrants were lined up, some under tents to keep out of the sun, others in pens with their children, with no access to bathrooms, waiting hours for their appointments. ICE has no concern for what families must go through to get to the facility, nor do they acknowledge the consequences of disrupting people's lives in this way. One of the volunteers told us her husband was taken into custody from the line and deported without warning. This experience made real for us the human cost of the administration's policies,

and helped us appreciate the organizing efforts of grantees like **United We Dream** and **Florida Immigrant Coalition** who are fighting to close the facility and end these inhumane ICE "check-ins".

Our delegation this year included, Mark Hartman, Jana North and Bob Nuxoll from the Trustees; and Carole Alexander, Andy Greene, Patti Paris and Cheryl Schwab from the Governors.



The Circle of Protection volunteers outside of the Miramar ICE facility, where hundreds of immigrants come each day to renew and process paperwork and stand in line for hours. Some are subjected to unexpected deportation.

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Our delegation of Trustees, Governors and staff at the Coalition of Immokalee Workers in April.

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The Veatch Program is the social justice funding program of the Unitarian Universalist Congregation at Shelter Rock and a leader in progressive philanthropy since 1959.

The Unitarian Universalist Veatch Program at Shelter Rock provides support for efforts within the religious and spiritual mission of the congregation where their purposes are best served by outside agencies acting under the Veatch Program and the congregation



Unitarian Universalist

Veatch Program at **Shelter Rock**

Human. Kind.

48 Shelter Rock Rd, Manhasset, NY 11030

Unitarian Universalist Principles

**The inherent worth and dignity
of every person**

■ ■ ■

**Justice, equity and compassion
in human relations**

■ ■ ■

**Acceptance of one another and
encouragement to spiritual growth
in our congregations**

■ ■ ■

**A free and responsible search
for truth and meaning**

■ ■ ■

**The right of conscience
and the use of the
democratic process
within our congregations
and in society at large**

■ ■ ■

**The goal of world community
with peace, liberty and
justice for all**

■ ■ ■

**Respect for the interdependent
web of all existence of which
we are a part**

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