

Fund for Social Change

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The Trude Lash Fellowship Program

The Trude Lash Fellowship Program was designed to support individuals who follow her example to expand their own creative activities in projects that address the most critical social problems affecting the lives of low-income children in New York City. A one year, one time \$10,000 grant was awarded to two individuals to perform innovative activities that would not otherwise have been possible within the day-to-day framework of their work.

About Trude Wenzel Lash

Trude Lash was an activist for social change throughout her life. As a young woman in the 1930s she left Germany on her own for the United States as a protest against Nazism. Both before and after leaving for the U.S. she used every available tool to personally rescue victims from its many horrors. As a teacher, wife and mother, she later became a close friend and colleague of Eleanor Roosevelt with whom she, Ruth Field and Adele Levy founded the Citizens Committee for Children of New York (CCC). In her 27 years of leadership at CCC she developed groups of informed civic leaders who devoted themselves to the cause of children in poverty. Under Trude's leadership these groups provided New Yorkers with avenues for directly observing, investigating and reporting on how major public and private institutions respond to the needs of the city's poor children. Reports on day care, foster care, mental health facilities and services, juvenile detention, family court, welfare, school lunches and homeless services were circulated to the media and the public as the basis for working for social change. Speaking truth to power was Trude's strategy. Challenging allies and adversaries alike, under her guidance, the Citizens Committee for Children became the authoritative source of the action and information needed to address the suffering of the city's most vulnerable children and their families. CCC's work became a citizens' action model for the entire country.

Trude became a Program Officer of the Foundation for Child Development (FCD) when she left CCC in 1972. There she developed innovative ways to support and encourage research and community leadership that illuminated the causes and conditions of the symptoms of poverty. She liked being the champion of individuals struggling to effect social change in their neighborhoods where she enjoyed nothing more than being there with them.

At FCD Trude initiated an annual report entitled "The State of the Child." Each year it summarized the relevant data on the status of New York's children. Again her passion for

combining data collection and analysis with advocacy was to become the model for other efforts both locally and nationally.

In her steadfast, persistent way, Trude contributed to almost all the positive changes that over more than half a century affected the lives of the City's poorest children. Her powerful eloquence was born of a command of the facts and a deep commitment to the rights and values she sought to protect. This Fellowship Program will celebrate her memory by enabling a number of gifted individuals to pursue her example of combining facts and public advocacy as the most effective way to achieve progressive, lasting change.

The Trude Lash Fellowship Recipients

The Trude Lash Fellowships were awarded in 2006. We are no longer awarding Fellowships.

**The Trude Lash Fellowship Recipients are:
Régine Romain and Kallen Tsikalas**

Régine Romain: Urban PhotoPoets

Régine Romain is a photo-anthro-journalist. She sojourns through a Haitian-American identity of hybrid languages, customs and traditions. Her transcultural worldview has influenced her life path as a woman, photographer, and teacher. Her interests in traditional cultures, social justice and personal transformation, stimulate passionate photographic journeys. Régine is honored to share her photographic imagery of local and international marginalized communities through exhibitions, lectures and workshops at museums, galleries and other venues to create dialogue leading to awareness and social change.

When not traveling, Régine produces documentary/editorial and event photography. She teaches young people photography, multi-media studies and poetry, and seeks to stimulate critical inquiry and to offer insight to her students. In September 2006, Régine will start an MA program in Photography and Urban Cultures at Goldsmiths College, University of London. Please view some of her photographic work at www.lightstalkers.org/gigiromain.

Urban PhotoPoets fosters self-expression and promotes social awareness among low-income immigrant youth ages 11 – 14 in the Cypress Hills community in Brooklyn, NY. It fuses photography, poetry, and discussion into a learning format that explores interactive artistic mediums as a tool for self-empowerment and social change. Participating youth observe the social dynamics that affect their community and record, reflect and present their discoveries to family, school, community members and policy makers. The goal is to generate dialogue and action about urban issues. A series of ten workshops were held between March 2006 and June 2006 with a culminating exhibition and poetry reading at a local public library. From September to December 2006, the Urban PhotoPoets Anthology was distributed throughout New York City schools.

Kallen Tsikalas: Family Literacy Kit

Kallen Tsikalas has 15 years of experience working with children and technology in New York City. She is presently the Director of Research and Learning Services at Computers for Youth (CFY) – a non-profit organization that helps low-income children succeed in school by improving their learning environments at home and by supporting their families as partners in education. She is also studying for a Ph.D. in Educational Psychology at the CUNY Graduate Center and has a Master's degree in Instructional Media and Technology from Teachers College, Columbia University. Kallen is a native of Mexico, Missouri and has lived in Brooklyn for the last 12 years. She enjoys outdoor activities, live music, cultural experiences and the diverse friendships afforded by city life. Kallen is especially grateful for the inspiration and encouragement of her family, friends, colleagues and academic advisors.

With support from the Trude Lash Fellowship, Kallen took time off from her job to research and develop a computer-based **Family Literacy Kit**. This kit is aimed at helping families to grow closer, learn together, reflect upon their beliefs about education and intelligence, and enhance their chances to succeed. It will be disseminated widely to families throughout the city through CFY's program. Kallen's project will build upon children's roles as technology experts in their homes as well as their playfulness, empathy, and social inclinations to bring about positive change for their families. In particular, her project will explore how computer-based "life simulators" and cross-age tutoring can strengthen family ties and deepen home learning experiences for the city's underserved children.

Governance of the Fellowship

A Steering Committee set policy for the Fellowship program and provided fiscal and programmatic oversight. The Committee included members of the Lash and Pratt families, colleagues and friends of Trude Lash, activists fighting for children and families, and representatives of major donors to the program. They are: Anna Lou Dehavenon, Sister Mary Paul Janchill, Jonathan Lash, Anne McCormick, Richard Murphy, Ann Pratt, Laura Roosevelt, Nancy Rudolph, John F. Sears, Joan Swan, Marcia Thompson, and David Tobis.

Sponsorship of the Fellowship

The Trude Lash Fellowship Program was supported by the Fund for Social Change, the Annie E. Casey Foundation, the Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt Institute, the Jane G. Dustan Fund of the Foundation for Child Development, the Olive Bridge Fund and individual donors.