



**The Board of Directors of  
The Heineman Foundation for Research,  
Education, Charitable and Scientific Purposes**

August 13, 2018

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The Drugs Peace Institute,  
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As the former president of the Heineman Foundation for Research, Educational, Charitable and Scientific Purposes, Inc., currently serving on its board of directors, and now current president of the Rose Family Foundation, it is my honor and pleasure to recommend Susana Valadez for this well-deserved prize. The Heineman and Rose Family Foundations combined provide an average of \$1 million in grants annually. These grants are typically \$60,000 and support a wide array of projects. Over the last twenty years, both foundations have approved funding grants to the Huichol Center varying from \$40,000 to a \$300,000 multi-year grant.

As someone who is in the fortunate position to enable the gifts of meaningful sums of money, I always feel that these grants are a form of investing in the future. Investing in the Huichol Center has given returns on our investment beyond our expectations.

The first Heineman Foundation grant was in the fall of 1997. The principle purpose of the grant was to provide general funding to help sustain the many ongoing projects at the Huichol Center. These projects included bringing right livelihoods to Huichol artisans, who celebrate their cultural patrimony by conveying their story through bead and yarn art. Funding also helped found a school for Huichol children that exists to this day. The school offers the children mental, physical and spiritual sustenance through a carefully hand-crafted curriculum in Spanish and Huichol, a nutritional lunch program of Huichol farm to table foods, and a full immersion in Huichol identity. Heineman Foundation grants also helped with the purchase of valuable arable land for the Huichols to farm. Finally, the early Heineman Foundation grants provided funds for the digital archiving of Huichol myths and symbology, which were in danger of being lost to time. I remember how impressed I was at how Susana early on had the presence of mind to tediously transcribe Huichol designs onto graph paper, and also spend hours of audio recording the stories of a beloved Huichol shaman. I have since noted with pride and pleasure how these early attempts at preserving the Huichol culture have evolved into a digital encyclopedia that can be openly accessed. And through this archival work the school curriculum could be printed.


The Rose Family Foundation has been focused on environmental sustainability for the Huichol homeland as that is in keeping with the Foundation's mission of paying special attention to the preservation of potable water. Water is central to all humanity's survival, but is a particularly critical need in Huichol daily life. With Rose Family Foundation funds, water catchment systems were constructed, cisterns were dug, and dry composting toilets were built. Natural drainage areas were physically enhanced to catch rainwater, and in those areas, fruit orchards, irrigated with low flow drip systems, were planted. Along with the water conservation projects, tilapia ponds were constructed, seamlessly blending centuries old Huichol aquaculture practices with the most successful methods in use today. All of the above mentioned projects not only offer proud employment for Huichol men, women and youths, but provide them with a balanced nutritional diet. Susana has ensured that all of these model projects that occur at the Huichol Center in Huejuquilla can be duplicated in the Sierra Madre, the mostly difficult to access regions where the Huichols identify as their ancestral home.

None of these projects can take place without expertise in the various fields entailed, and Susana has done a remarkable job of engaging with academics from as close as a local university, to the far-flung corners of the globe. In many regards, the Huichol Center has become a network for scholarly studies in sustainability.

Susana has shown unflagging dedication and unique resourcefulness in her fixed endeavors to provide the Huichols with a dignified and sustainable path forward in the face of a slew of modern day pressures. Rather than come up with expeditious and compromising solutions, she has always used her great intellect, skills and passion to sparingly employ 21<sup>st</sup> century methods that ingeniously blend with centuries old Huichol traditions. It is this convergence of ideas that give me hope that there is a way out of the morass we find ourselves in today. We are rapidly heading toward the cliff of extinction through our profligate waste of resources spurred by our abandonment of a true spirituality that connects us to our home. While most of the developed world wages war with nature, the Huichols show us the path to peace with our natural world that they venerate.

It is all too often that we look at peace through the lens of human relationships, whether they are between individuals, tribes or nations. Nonetheless, the lesson of peace also pertains to the respect and dignity we give our planet and her vital natural systems. Susana's work and dedication to preserving the Huichol culture recognizes that the most important gift the Huichols have for humankind is their example of how to nurture the life affirming forces that inhabit our common universe.

Sincerely yours,



Simon Rose, President

The Rose Family Foundation