

listening & learning toward a child-centered future



The intersecting crises and traumas of the past few years demanded more resources and support for communities as children, families and communities of color were hit the hardest by inequities in health care, food and employment systems. This annual snapshot highlights what we're *learning* from how our grantees responded and how they needed WKKF support, through stories of impact highlighting WKKF's social bond grantmaking in 2020-2022. Equally important, we designated 2023 a year of listening – *deeply* listening – to grantees, partners, vendors, community leaders and others, who sit at a critical vantage point of what's happening now and what's ahead. Through listening we see the power of harnessing our collective imaginations to envision the future we want for our most treasured asset, our children.

2023 annual snapshot



WKKF President and CEO La June Montgomery Tabron and our 2022-2023 Board Chair Dr. Cathann A. Kress each reflect on the foundation's enduring commitment to listening and learning in community.

[la june's letter](#)

[cathann's letter](#)

[meet the trustees](#)

Engage in encouraging stories from communities across the U.S., Mexico and Haiti, reflecting extraordinary, hope-fueled efforts to overcome and thrive in the face of failing infrastructure. Learn from the children and families most impacted by the intersecting crises that kicked off in 2020, while reflecting generations of systemic inequities.

[read all stories](#)

leadership reflections

inspiring stories





sharing ideas & resources

We're committed to sharing the expertise and knowledge of grantees, partners, communities and the field, so individuals, leaders and communities can take meaningful actions on these ideas and apply the knowledge in their own work. From racial healing and DEI in corporations to investing in the U.S. South and our partners' strategic communication efforts, take advantage of these resources and those created by WKKF grantees in the past year.

[learn more](#)

by the numbers

Don Williamson, chief financial officer and treasurer, reviews this year's financial highlights.

[learn more](#)



\$467.5M

total new commitments



\$8.8B

total assets



1837

active grants per day



1532

grantees



803

new grant commitments

A Year of Listening and Learning with Children at the Center

 [wkkf.org/news-and-media/article/2024/03/la-june-montgomery-tabron-letter](https://www.wkkf.org/news-and-media/article/2024/03/la-june-montgomery-tabron-letter)

*Reflections by La June Montgomery Tabron, president and CEO,
for the 2023 Annual Snapshot*



2023 Annual Snapshot

As the leaders of today, we have an obligation to do everything we can to ensure the children of today and tomorrow have the opportunity to reach their full potential, no matter where or to whom they were born. Meeting that sacred obligation, in partnership with communities, has always been central to our mission at the W. K. Kellogg Foundation. Now in our 93rd year, this work and child-centered approach to philanthropy remains as important as ever as we labor alongside families and communities to reform the systems, infrastructure and institutions that surround us so that children are served first, and not as afterthoughts.

The theme of our annual snapshot this year is “Listening and Learning Toward a Child-Centered Future,” reflecting our journey of this past fiscal year. We’ve intentionally focused on listening, both to communities themselves and the experts within them, and imagining the future of children and communities to develop a shared understanding of research-based forecasts and possible actions that could spark the kind of positive social and systemic transformations our children need and deserve.

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We’ve learned from the turbulence served up in the world these past few years. Starting in 2020, during the early days of the pandemic, the foundation committed additional resources to support the needs of children, families and communities through an innovative social bond and provided greater flexibility to grantees in how their grants delivered what was needed most during these crisis years.

The longer-term impact of our \$300 million social bond grants are still being evaluated, but we're pleased to provide some stories of the impacts that kept children learning in early child care centers, made communities healthier by removing obstacles like language or transportation barriers to vaccinations and provided healing support to teachers dealing with the strains of teaching during a global pandemic and the trauma and community impact of racially motivated violence.

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*La June Montgomery Tabron, president and CEO,
W.K. Kellogg Foundation*

To have the greatest impact, it's critical to do more than respond to the headlines of today, we need to confront the deep, structural issues children face. This is not to say that the political turmoil and polarizing elections we will see in the months ahead will not be difficult for children and families – they will. But our job is to focus on long-term, community-led actions that will provide lasting, positive transformation.

In the past year, the Kellogg Foundation has done just that, through grants and programs that are geared toward meaningful, long-term change – while nevertheless addressing present-day needs. Among the many highlights of our initiatives:

- **Supported the dreams of higher education and career training for more Battle Creek students with the Legacy Scholars and Bearcat Advantage scholarships.**
- **Four WKKF grantees were invited to collectively launch the National Early Care and Education Workforce Center through the U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services.**
- **Showcased the importance of early child care and teachers of color during Essence Festival.**
- **Supported connections between a school system and local food producers of the Rio Grande Valley to procure locally-grown fruit for its students.**
- **Announced the Racial Equity 2030 awardees receiving \$90 million to five global partners to drive a more equitable future for children around the globe.**

- **Launched the Global Fellows Network, a web of change agents, thought leaders and influencers, many of whom are working to transform systems, policies and practices that create conditions for all children to thrive.**
- **A program-related investment in Navajo Power provides patient capital for changing the inequities in access to energy and water that challenge children and families in Tribal communities.**
- **Leveraged public and private partnerships to expand the reach of Michigan's Child Care Innovation Fund to support 10 additional communities to pilot an apprenticeship program to help solve their early care and education workforce challenges.**
- **Harnessed more funders through the Pockets of Hope campaign, to invest in Haitian innovation where locally-led organizations are driving systemic change and building a better future for the children of Haiti today and tomorrow.**

This year, we've worked internally at the foundation to develop greater foresight skills and capacity. This reframing has us more confident that our skills, thinking and actions will further cement our commitment to meeting the needs of the communities we serve for generations to come.

While we are one of the largest philanthropic organizations in the U.S, our work is, ultimately, quite personal.

A boy in Battle Creek, Michigan, participating in a new academic program tailored to his interests. A pre-school-age girl in Jackson, Mississippi, who is preparing for kindergarten through a new early learning program. An impoverished family in earthquake-ravaged Haiti with access – for the first time – to high-quality nutrition and child health care.

These and countless other stories showcase the impactful work our grantees are doing with targeted funding from the Kellogg Foundation. As our founder, Mr. Kellogg, said soon after forming the foundation at the height of the Great Depression, the purpose of WKKF is to help “children face the future with confidence, with health, and with a strong-rooted security in the trust of this country and its institutions.”

As you'll see throughout this snapshot, Mr. Kellogg's vision of a world where every child can thrive, safe in the knowledge that her community and the institutions she must rely upon are committed to her success and continue to drive our work today. While we still have far too much to do to realize Mr. Kellogg's bold aspiration, I am incredibly proud of the work we have undertaken at the W.K. Kellogg Foundation to realize it over the past year, and I am honored to continue striving toward it in the year ahead.

Explore other leadership letters in this year's snapshot

Reflections by Dr. Cathann A. Kress, chair of the board of trustees

By the Numbers by Don Williamson, chief financial officer and treasurer

Prioritizing Children's Futures: A View from Our Board Chair

 [wkkf.org/news-and-media/article/2024/03/cathann-a-kress-letter](https://www.wkkf.org/news-and-media/article/2024/03/cathann-a-kress-letter)

*Reflections by Dr. Cathann A. Kress, chair of the board of trustees,
for the 2023 Annual Snapshot*



2023 Annual Snapshot

Last fall, in a highlight of my two-year term as board chair of the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, we had the pleasure to meet with several of our grantee leaders during our board trip to New Mexico, one of the priority places where we are committed for a generation to move the needle on behalf of children.

Listening to and learning from the stewards of our grants and feeling the optimism and passion they bring to their work in addressing the needs and opportunities for all the children they serve in New Mexico's diverse communities, reinforced for me that our purpose and direction are spot on.

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As Mr. Kellogg realized when he launched his eponymous foundation over 90 years ago, its mandate must be to prioritize the needs of children above all others, putting them first so that all children – everybody's children – may thrive. And during these troubled times, when wars and environmental crises put millions of children in danger, our founder's call to precisely focus WKKF's work continues to guide our strategic approach to promoting children's health, happiness, and well-being.

For me, 2023 reinforced the importance of not only **doing** the work but truly **listening** to those we serve across the United States, in Michigan, New Mexico, Louisiana and Mississippi, as well as in Mexico and Haiti. Our staff held coffee chats, virtual discussions, in-person meetings, three regional gatherings and conducted an online survey to listen deeply to the wisdom, experiences and insights about our shared future our grantees have drawn from their frontline work on behalf of children.

During our visit in New Mexico, we met many of the latest class of Community Leadership Network (CLN) fellows that the foundation announced this year in partnership with the Center for Creative Leadership. Talking with these local, diverse and intergenerational leaders

demonstrated to me the important role the CLN program plays in nurturing the talent and commitment of those who lead in the communities we serve. Philanthropic organizations like ours can pour money into programs, but dollars alone may add up to nothing without effective local leadership.

Our commitment to these bold and resourceful people has reinvigorated our foundation and given countless local leaders the tools, relationships and know-how to optimize their impact. While we evolve to meet today's realities, what isn't changing is that children will always be our sole focus – and that the governance oversight provided by the board emphasizes ongoing reviews of our grantmaking and evaluation of their impact on the lives of the children we serve.

The experience our board members had in New Mexico reminded me of when I joined the administration at The Ohio State University in 2017. While I knew the inner workings of academia, having spent several years already in education, I didn't know the nuances of how Ohio State operated. It's critical to be able to step back and keep learning and recognizing the uniqueness of what is in front of us.

As a board member at WKKF, I think the same is true of the communities we serve – understanding the nuances of how a community works is critical to ensuring we can deliver the resources and support they need to create an environment where every child can thrive. While each of us sees the world through our own lens, we must set aside our viewpoints to listen, learn and appreciate the insights of others. On our New Mexico trip, we had the chance to listen and explore the critical nuances of the challenges and opportunities facing these local communities – something we must continue to practice as we carry on the important work of helping children flourish.



Dr. Cathann Kress, Chair of the board of trustees, W.K. Kellogg Foundation



WKKF Listening Session

While each of us sees the world through our own lens, we must set aside our viewpoints to listen, learn and appreciate the insights of others.

As my term as chair ends, I am delighted to support Dr. Khan Nedd, the CEO of Answer Health in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Dr. Nedd has dedicated his career in medicine to making lives better. And, as board chair, I know he will bring his zeal and vast experience to improve the lives of the children we serve worldwide.



Dr. Khan Nedd, Dr. Cathann Kress and La June Montgomery Tabron

Dr. Nedd is precisely the kind of thoughtful, mission-driven individual we need as a leader. I'm confident that his dedication to Mr. Kellogg's legacy will serve the board – and the foundation – in instrumental ways during his tenure. I look forward to supporting his leadership as I continue to serve as a board member.

I know that I speak for the entire board when I say that as proud as we are of the work the foundation's staff has been able to accomplish under the leadership of President and CEO La June Montgomery Tabron, we're equally excited about the work on the horizon for the children, families and communities we serve. As always, our foundation will relentlessly focus on supporting impactful outcomes that will enable children everywhere to reach their full potential.

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By the Numbers by Don Williamson, chief financial officer and treasurer

By the Numbers - W.K. Kellogg Foundation

wkff.org/news-and-media/article/2024/03/by-the-numbers

By the Numbers by Don Williamson, chief financial officer and treasurer, for the 2023 Annual Snapshot



2023 Annual Snapshot

For the fiscal year ended Aug. 31, the W.K. Kellogg Foundation made new grant commitments totaling more than \$467 million. Of this total, nearly 56% benefited WKKF's priority places of Michigan, Mississippi, New Mexico and New Orleans in the United States, and internationally in central and southwest Haiti and in the highlands of Chiapas and the Yucatán Peninsula in Mexico. The majority of the remaining new grant commitments impact all 50 states in the U.S., supporting organizations working at the local, state, tribal and federal levels.

Our continued fiscal responsibility and focused management of market risk, including adjustments for our core holding of Kellogg Company stock, remained central to our investment and financial planning strategy. The investment portfolios for the foundation and Trust combined were valued at \$8 billion, providing coverage for spending on grants, program-related activities, administration costs and inflation.

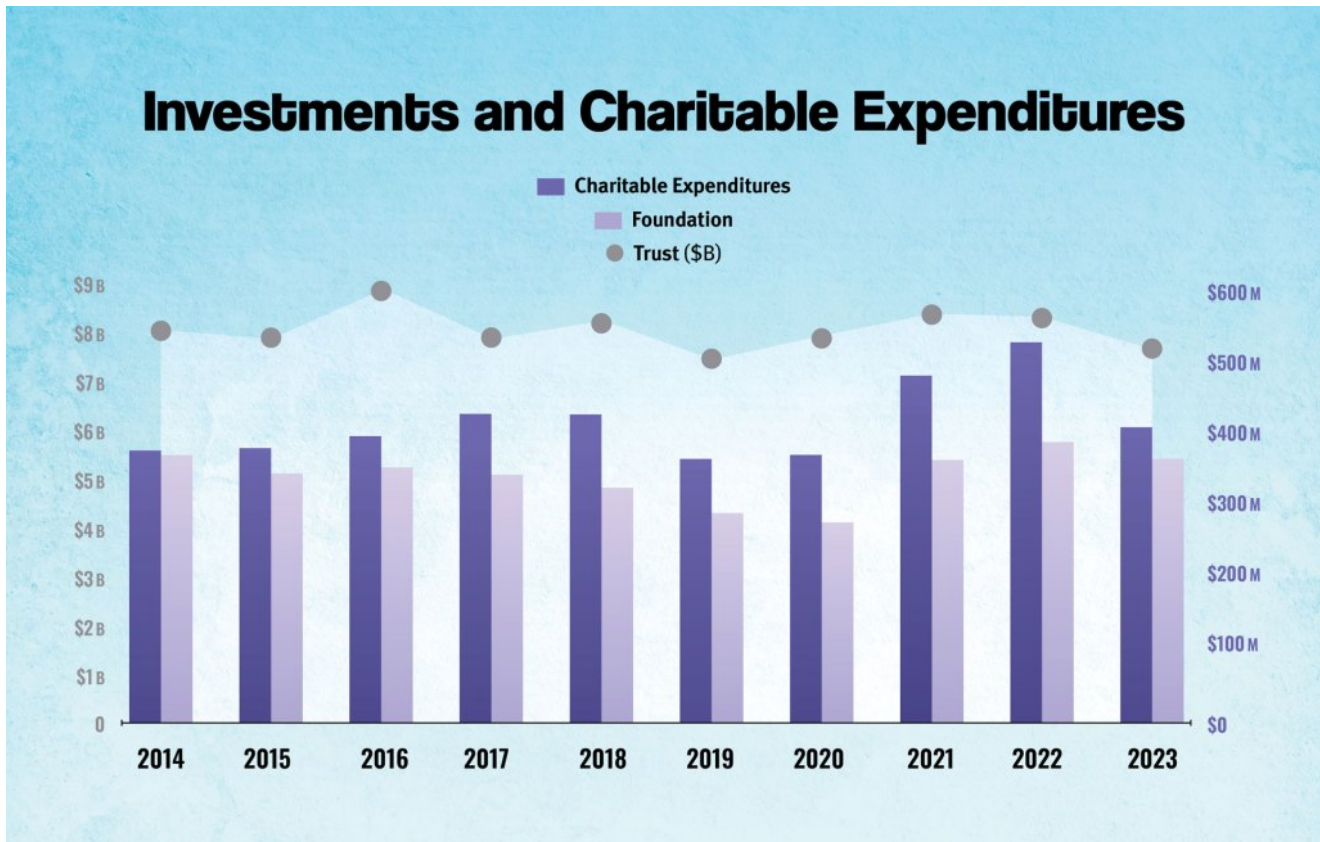
In October 2023, the Kellogg Company completed a tax-free spinoff that resulted in two independent public companies, Kellanova and W.K. Kellogg Co. The foundation and Trust continue to be governed by their own independent boards of trustees and are not managed or directed by either Kellanova or W.K. Kellogg Co.

The foundation's Mission Driven Investments portfolio, valued at \$101 million of cash equivalents, fixed income and private equity, seeks to provide social impact in support of our mission, as well as achieve market-rate returns.



Don Williamson, chief financial officer and treasurer

Another tool the foundation uses to support grantmaking is program-related investments (PRIs), which are strategic investments that align with our mission and are typically below market-rate loans to organizations or charitable equity investments. As of Aug. 31, 2023, the foundation had \$59 million in PRIs on our balance sheet, an increase of approximately 21%.



The foundation’s trustees are provided bimonthly financial statements and reports on achieving key performance indicators. Annual fiscal operating plans prepared by management are reviewed and accepted by our board. Results of the examinations by independent accountants and the foundation’s internal audit office are reviewed and accepted by the full board. Mitchell Titus, LLP serves as the independent accountant for the foundation and the Trust. For tax technical expertise, advisory services and return filings, the foundation and Trust utilize Crowe LLP.

The W.K. Kellogg Foundation and W.K. Kellogg Foundation Trust’s consolidated financial statements are audited by Mitchell Titus, LLP. A full set of the [2023 audited financial statements](#) are available and the [990-PFs](#) will be available by summer 2024.

Don Williamson

chief financial officer and treasurer

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