



# Funds Distribution Report

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**Recipient Organization:**  
**Freedom Project**

**Address:**  
918 S Horton St, Suite 1015  
Seattle, WA 98134

**Contact:**  
(206) 325-5678  
<http://freedomprojectwa.org>

**Organization's General Goals:**  
Our mission is to support healing connection and restorative communities both inside and outside prison through the strategies of nonviolent communication, mindfulness, racial equity, and anti-oppression.

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<b>Date of Award:</b>	<b>Level:</b>
2018 Q3	\$2,501 to \$5,000

For more information, please read the attached report from Freedom Project.

8802 27th Ave NE  
Tulalip, WA 98271  
**TulalipCares.org**

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December 17, 2019

Marilyn Sheldon  
Tulalip Tribes Charitable Contributions Fund  
8802 27th Avenue NE  
Tulalip, WA 98271-9695

Grant Code: Q3 2018 14.2  
Charity URL: <http://freedomprojectwa.org/>

Dear Marilyn Sheldon and Tribal members:

Thank you for your generous contribution of [REDACTED] in December 2018 to support our Inside Prison and Reentry programs! We are so grateful to partner with the Tulalip Tribes Charitable Contributions Fund once again this past year.

With your support we have been able to continue offering weekly classes and monthly workshops in Nonviolent Communication (NVC) and mindfulness inside Washington State prisons. We have also expanded our reentry support for people when they are released from prison as they navigate the impacts of trauma, reestablish support systems, and meet basic needs such as employment, housing, and healthcare. **We supported 1013 participants in all of our programs** during this grant cycle (December 1, 2018 – November 30, 2019).

#### **Inside Prison Programs: NVC and Mindfulness Classes**

Through our Inside Prison program, we reached a total of 571 participants in 6 prison or jail facilities in Benton, Clallam, King, Pierce, Snohomish, and Spokane counties, with the following outputs:

- 23 class series (12-15 weeks)
- 12 two-day workshops
- 10 inside prison volunteer facilitators
- 54 outside prison volunteer facilitators
- 8,309 program hours

Through our feedback process, participants expressed that NVC and Mindfulness classes inside prison supported their healing process, fostered self-compassion and self-empathy, and helped participants connect with one another and feel supported in an environment that is often traumatic and dehumanizing:

- ❖ "Understanding myself better puts my mind at ease and lets all the negative talk quiet down. I use to think that my fears and the way I viewed life was unique, but came to find that I am not alone."

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- ❖ “[The biggest impact of this workshop was] being treated like a normal, non-incarcerated person.”
- ❖ “This program helped me feel ... that it’s okay to be vulnerable, empathetic, and to love myself.”
- ❖ “It has given me a new way of living! It has given me the chance to regain myself and find my freedom. I am so thankful for the past 4 years of my life I have spent in Freedom Project classes!”
- ❖ “After a weekend workshop or a Wednesday night class when the sponsors and volunteers leave, we in the NVC community have no doubt how much those sponsors care about us, and also about the work that [they] come in here to do.”

Additionally, as currently incarcerated facilitators (“mentors”) inside the Twin Rivers Unit at Monroe Correctional Complex reflected on their programs in 2019, they indicated that they experienced more opportunities for leadership and personal growth as they collaborated with outside volunteers to redesign an NVC class series. Mentors reported feeling more space to be creative, as well as the ability to teach NVC in a way that better connects with individuals in the prison environment.

### **Reentry Programs: Building a “Safe Return” Community**

In our Reentry Program during this grant period, we provided 83 participants with light-touch support and 75 participants with high-touch support. Light-touch support includes responding to phone calls and JPAY requests for immediate support, while our high-touch support offers ongoing support for longer periods of time, with personalized systems navigation support, emotional support, and trauma recovery strategies.

We are excited to have launched a critical aspect of our high-touch support this past year: picking people up as soon as they are released from prison and providing shoulder-to-shoulder support to help establish stability through the first 72 hours and the following months of the reentry process. As we build on this work, we are working toward being more accountable to the reality that the mass incarceration system disproportionately impacts Black, Indigenous, and People of Color -- through deeper relationship-building and more focused support with communities most impacted by mass incarceration.

We have also laid the groundwork this year to redesign our Community Circles as Reentry Circles and Family Circles, in response to a need our community has identified. Family Circles will be led by and serve people with loved ones currently or formerly incarcerated. Reentry Circles will be led by and serve formerly incarcerated people at all levels of reentry, navigating the emotional landscape and sharing resources and strategies for success.

### **Community Programs and Volunteer Training**

Our core programs are an extension of the commitment and dedication of our volunteers, who embrace our mission of healing the trauma and dismantling the stigma of mass

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incarceration. To support our volunteers in this work, our Community Programs help people examine the implicit biases and structural barriers that contribute to the stigmatization and discrimination of people who have been incarcerated. Our trainings focus on mindfulness, Nonviolent Communication, racial equity and anti-oppression, in order to foster empathy for self and others. We connected with 284 individuals through the following workshops and trainings, for a total of 280 training hours:

- 12 monthly racial equity and anti-oppression workshops in Seattle
- 2 weekend workshops in Compassionate Communication (NVC) trainings in Seattle, and Spokane
- 1 additional training for volunteers in giving & receiving feedback

Additionally, in this past year we have been responding to the feedback that Nonviolent Communication (NVC) has historically not been inclusive for Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC). To address this, we started an 8-month collaborative leadership series to unpack and reframe NVC so that it can respond to the needs and values of all communities -- especially those who have been undervalued in our society. The collaborative leadership series included:

- 8 weekend "NVC for You & Me" workshops for Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) (25-40 participants attended each weekend).
- 7 day-long workshops in "Decentering Whiteness in NVC" for volunteers, staff, and board (10-20 participants attended each workshop).

This work will continue through 2020 as we collaborate with participants to bring this critical reframe to all of our programs.

\* \* \*

As we reflect on the past year and gear up for the year ahead, we have so much gratitude to the Tulalip Tribes Charitable Contributions Fund for partnering with us in our work. On behalf of the community inside the prison, the folks returning home after incarceration, the families and children of those impacted by incarceration, our volunteers, staff, and board, we thank you for your generous support!

Sincerely,

David Heppard, Executive Director,  
On behalf of the Freedom Project Family

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