

Dear Friends and Supporters,

Welcome to the Spring 2026 edition of the Bill Anderson Fund newsletter. This issue highlights the publications, awards, and milestones from our community that continue to push the boundaries of hazards and disaster research. From honoring the diverse scholarly contributions of our fellows to gearing up for our annual Disaster Dash in Colorado, the energy in our network is high, and I'm excited to tell you all about it!

SPRING *newsletter*

MAY 2026

Off to the Races

Registration is officially open for the 12th Annual [Bill Anderson Fund Disaster Dash 5K!](#) Whether you're a marathon pro or a casual walker, we invite you to join us in supporting the next generation of hazards and disaster professionals.

This year's race runs in tandem with the 51st Annual Natural Hazards Workshop in Broomfield, Colorado. Departing from the Omni Interlocken Hotel at 6:30 A.M. on June 17, it's the perfect way to swap the conference rooms for some Colorado sunshine.

Not headed to Broomfield? Our **virtual registration** ensures you can participate from anywhere in the world through the end of June. [Register today](#) and secure your spot! Participating in the Dash is a great opportunity to:

- *Support Student Success*: Proceeds fund professional development and research awards for our doctoral student fellows.
- *Build Community*: Connect with researchers, practitioners, and policymakers in a fun, high-energy environment.
- *Flex Your Pace*: Whether you're a sprinter, a casual stroller, or a virtual participant, everyone is welcome.

If you're not looking to hit the pavement, you can still make an impact! We invite you to [sponsor a participant or a team](#) to help them reach their fundraising goals and support our

mission.

REGISTER HERE



Cascadia Connections

The 2026 Spring Fellows Workshop, hosted in April at the University of Washington (UW), was an invigorating gathering that brought the fellows together in sunny Seattle! We are incredibly grateful to the **Center for Disaster Resilient Communities**, the **Cascadia CoPes Hub**, and the **NHERI RAPID Facility** for their support and for creating such a welcoming environment for our fellows to learn and grow.

The week kicked off with a focus on community-centered research, as fellow Amina Meselhe shared her work modeling the impacts of geohazards on coastal infrastructure with the CoPes Hub and discussed how the Hub's collaborations grounded the project in community priorities. These insights transitioned into sessions on participatory research that highlighted approaches to building trust, sharing power, and co-producing knowledge with communities.

Beyond the classroom, a visit to the RAPID Facility allowed fellows to explore state-of-the-art equipment used in RAPID's field deployments, sparking new ideas for their own research. We also visited Public Health–Seattle King County for a panel on equity in disaster preparedness and a dynamic session on systems thinking in which fellows learned how to identify leverage points for more equitable climate resilience. Ultimately, the workshop was as intellectually stimulating as it was genuine fun, leaving our fellows with much stronger ties to the vibrant UW community.

RESEARCH SPOTLIGHT

Making Research Count

Equity and Inclusion in Disasters, a [special collection](#) of the Natural Hazards Center's Research Counts series that features articles from Bill Anderson Fund Fellows and Alumni, has published an explosion of new articles in the past few months!

Shedding light on low-attention disasters, fellow [Esther Oyedele's](#) article discusses the unequal consequences of groundwater depletion, while Drs. [Benika Dixon](#) and [Alexa Riobueno-Naylor](#) respectively examine issues of disappearing data for disaster mental health research and the intersections of gender inequity and extreme heat in carceral facilities. Contributions from Drs. [Maggie León Corwin](#) and [Amy Takebe](#) explore equity and inclusion across the disaster cycle through the lens of inclusive multilingual tsunami warnings and research partnerships for incarcerated people. A piece by Dr. [Yajaira Ayala](#) explores how poor Black women in Lake Charles, Louisiana drew upon lived experiences to navigate the compounding impacts of COVID-19 and Hurricane Laura, emphasizing the strengths and capacities of marginalized groups. And fellows [Kayode Nelson Adeniji](#) and [Ibrahim Nureni](#) speak to issues of social marginalization and inequality through their works on housing tenure in the context of long-term recovery and the use of poetry to bear witness to marginalized voices in disaster.

Each of these pieces presents compelling, data-driven insights about overlooked issues and underserved communities. Read them all to see the unique perspectives that members of the BAF community are bringing to disaster research. This collection is made possible by support from Margaret A. Cargill Philanthropies.



GRADUATIONS

The Doctor Is In

Several fellows successfully defended their dissertations this spring and are now transitioning into their careers. They will become the newest members of the BAF Alumni Network, which is now more than 70 members strong! Please join us in congratulating these emerging professionals:





The BAF Fellows and Alumni received a slew of awards, accolades, and recognitions in the past few months. The list is far too long for this newsletter, but here is a selection of highlights:

- BAF Fellow **Najma Akpanoko** was recognized as a Regional I-Corps Cohort Microgrant Recipient by the Vanderbilt University Ideator and Builder Program. This microgrant was awarded in support of a smartwatch-based heat-stress mitigation system for construction and maintenance workers. Additionally, she was accepted for an internship and assigned the role of Design-Build Construction Project Manager with ARCO Design-Build.
- In April, BAF Fellow **Annika Doneghy** received two competitive awards from Case Western Reserve University (CWRU), including the Richard A. Zdanis Research Fellowship, which is bestowed by the School of Graduate Studies to help PhD candidates complete work on their dissertations, and the CWRU College of Arts and Sciences Dissertation Fellowship, which facilitates the transition from field work and accelerates the process of writing dissertations.
- Two BAF Fellows—**Jessica Nwafor** and **Temidayo Popoola**—received the 2026 Empowering Community Resilience award from the National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters. The award supported their attendance at the organization’s annual conference in Reno, Nevada.
- BAF Student Council Chairperson and current fellow **Carlo Chunga Pizarro** was recently recognized at the Latine Excellence and Achievement Award Dinner (LEAD) by the UC Irvine Office of the Vice Provost and Dean. LEAD is the only awards ceremony in the University of California system that elevates graduate student success, supporting the Hispanic and Latine/x communities. Additionally, his lead-author article, [Air Quality Monitoring and the Safety of Farmworkers in Wildfire Mandatory Evacuation Zones](#), was recognized as one of the top articles cited in the Journal of Geohealth.
- BAF Fellow **Ibrahim Nureni** has received several awards for his poetry recently. He was jointly [awarded](#) the prize for the 27th Haiku International Association contest, alongside Canadian poet Chen-ou Liu. He also had a separate haiku selected as a winner for the 8th Basho, an International English Haiku Competition.
- BAF Fellow **Jessica Nwafor** has received a number of awards and recognitions this quarter. From the Department of Anthropology at the University of Kentucky, she has received the Adelski Endowed Fellowship Fund, the Summer Dissertation 2026 Research Award, and the Department Legacy Fund Award. Additionally, she received the Minorities in Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Related Sciences 40 Conference

Gold Scholarship, which is awarded to outstanding student members of the organization to support attendance at its national conference and career expo.

- In March, BAF Fellow **Esther Oyedele** received the 2026 Virginia Tech Graduate Student Teaching Excellence - Assistant Award, a university-level recognition that honors outstanding graduate teaching assistants. She was also recognized with the GS(art)S Photography Award at the 31st Geosciences Student Research Symposium for excellence in visually communicating scientific concepts through photography.
- Also in March, BAF Fellow **Michelle Ruiz** received the Little Family Student Fellowship Award, which recognizes a graduate student who exemplifies the three pillars of academia: research, teaching, and service.
- In April, BAF Fellow **Issa Belmond Thullah** received the Outstanding Doctoral Student Award from the L. Douglas Wilder School of Government and Public Affairs, Virginia Commonwealth University. This award is bestowed upon student(s) who display exceptional academic performance and dedication toward their field of study. Issa was the sole recipient in 2026.

As we look ahead to a busy summer, I want to thank you for being a core part of this community. Whether you are hosting, mentoring, or simply sharing our fellows' research, your support directly empowers the next generation of leaders in disaster science. We can't wait to see you—virtually or in person—this June!

Sincerely,



Nnenia Campbell, Ph.D.

Executive Director

The William Averette Anderson Fund



SUPPORT THE BAF

Thank you for being part of this journey. Together, we continue to grow, learn, and create positive change in the nation's efforts to address environmental hazards and extreme events.

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The Bill Anderson Fund

hello@billandersonfund.org

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