

Dear Friends and Supporters,

Welcome to the Winter 2026 edition of the Bill Anderson Fund's quarterly newsletter. This edition celebrates the sustained curiosity, dedication to equity, and academic excellence that define our network. From publications that challenge and advance traditional disaster frameworks to interdisciplinary projects rooted in environmental justice, our fellows and alumni are not just participating in the conversation—they are driving it. As we celebrate new PhDs, new leadership, and new research, we invite you to explore the diverse ways our network is contributing to equity and resilience nationwide.

WINTER *newsletter*

FEBRUARY 2026

A Vision for Leadership

In case you missed it, we recently shared a [blog post](#) written by Carlo Chunga Pizarro, the recently elected BAF Student Council Chairperson! In this post, Carlo reflects on their new role, discusses the power of community, and outlines their strategic vision for leading the Student Council throughout this year. We look forward to seeing all that will unfold under their leadership!



HOT OFF THE PRESS

New Read: Predatory Loans and Flood Recovery

BAF Fellow Lucas Belury, a doctoral candidate in geography at the University of Arizona, recently authored "[Survival, Not Recovery: Predatory Loans and Flooding Along the Texas-Mexico Border](#)." This article explains how worsening floods and policies that deny aid to residents who cannot afford to repair their homes have created a gap that predatory lenders have jumped in to fill, often trapping borrowers in perpetual debt and compound disaster

impacts. The article represents the latest installment of *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. This collection is made possible by support from Margaret A. Cargill Philanthropies.

Bright Ideas

[“Using Critical Perspectives to Explore Disasters Through Shifting Climates,”](#) a special issue of the journal *Disaster Prevention and Management* that was inspired by Bill Anderson's intellectual legacy, has now been published! BAF alums Felicia Henry-Conteh and Yajaira Ayala initially proposed the issue as students grappling with social vulnerability as a conceptual framework in their dissertations. They ultimately recruited and coordinated a team of guest editors from the BAF community, including fellow alumni Nancy Rios Contreras, Maggie León Corwin, and Nnenia Campbell, and longtime mentor and collaborator Kathleen Tierney.

The issue features contributions that highlight critical approaches in disaster research, demonstrate how current policies and practices reinforce environmental injustice, and center underserved and minoritized communities that continue to resist these inequities. In addition to an array of other authors, ten current fellows and alumni contributed to the issue. Our special thanks go to DPM editors JC Gaillard and Emmanuel Raju for their encouragement, guidance, and support.



Midwest Tribal Engagement

In early February, current fellow and 2024-2025 BAF Student Council Chairperson Judanne Lennox Morrison of Texas A&M University was featured in a webinar for members of the National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (NVOAD). During this event, Judanne discussed her work on a [collaborative effort](#) between the Bill Anderson Fund and NVOAD that focused on strengthening how disaster organizations engage with Tribal Nations before, during, and after disasters. She shared key findings and insights from research on effective, respectful, and sustainable Tribal engagement and previewed a Tribal Engagement Toolkit that she developed for the NVOAD community under the mentorship of BAF Alumna Maggie León Corwin. The conversation explored what meaningful partnership with Tribal Nations looks like in practice and how National VOAD members can strengthen their approaches to relationship-building, preparedness, response, and recovery in Tribal communities.



A ROUND OF APPLAUSE

AWARDS | ACCOLADES | RECOGNITIONS

Congratulations to our Fellows and Alumni!

BAF Fellows have received a variety of awards, accolades, and recognitions in the past few months! Here is a selection of highlights:

- In December, BAF Fellow **Maribel Sandoval Contreras** successfully passed her dissertation proposal defense and advanced to candidacy in the Urban and Environmental Planning and Policy program at the University of California, Irvine.
- BAF Alumna **Dr. Asia Downtin** and colleagues were recently [featured](#) in the *Engaged Scholar* newsletter for their interdisciplinary project, the Green New DEAL (Detroit Ecological Arts Leaders). This initiative brought together college students from Michigan State University and high school students in Detroit and Costa Rica to explore ecological issues through a lens of science and the arts. Through this collaboration, students made art together, researched issues related to pollution, and envisioned environmental solutions for their local environments.
- BAF alumnus **Dr. Marccus Hendricks** was [featured](#) in *People Behind the Plans*, a podcast series by the American Planning Association. Drawing on his research, lived experience, and time in the Biden administration, Marccus discussed what it means to remain grounded in truth, community, and professional integrity during a moment of uncertainty for planning, science, and public service.
- Recent grad **Dr. Joseph Karanja** started a new position as a Postdoctoral Research Associate in the Center for Policy Research on Energy and Environment at Princeton University.
- In November, BAF Fellow **Esther Oyedele** received a travel award from the Kasahara Pathways in Science Fund to attend the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Belém, Brazil. You can read her reflections on the event [here](#). Additionally, Esther recently began hosting PEAS Talk, a storytelling science podcast that uncovers the hidden connections across Planetary, Earth, and Atmospheric Sciences (PEAS). Blending narrative and research, the show makes complex topics accessible, engaging, and relevant, reminding us why it's time to give science the microphone. The podcast was made possible through generous support from the Geological Society of America's E-An Zen Geoscience Outreach Grant and the American Geophysical Union's Voices for Science Fellowship Award.
- The [most recent issue](#) of *Juxtapositions*, the research and scholarship journal of the Haiku Foundation, featured an in-depth interview with BAF Fellow **Ibrahim Nureni**. The interview celebrates the evolution of Ibrahim's work as an internationally recognized award-winning poet as well as his intellectual contributions as an emerging scholar.

The progress we celebrate today is only possible because of the collective strength of our

supporters, mentors, and partners. We are incredibly proud of the milestones reached this winter and even more excited for the "bright ideas" yet to come. Thank you for your continued belief in our mission and for standing with us as we work toward a more resilient, equitable future.

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

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