



Dear Friends and Supporters,

This season has been full of major milestones, vibrant gatherings, and remarkable achievements across our community. From showcasing the incredible work of our emerging disaster scholars at the Natural Hazards Workshop to launching the full Research Counts special collection featuring work from our community, the leadership of our Fellows and Alumni continues to drive the field forward.

Inside this issue, you'll find highlights from our summer convenings and partnered programs, celebrations of prestigious awards, and a look at our newest BAF Alumni. Thank you for your continued support as we build on this powerful legacy together!

SUMMER *newsletter*

AUGUST 2026

Building on a Legacy

The 2026 volume of *Legacy Magazine*, a publication written and produced by Bill Anderson Fund Fellows, has been released! This year's magazine features poetry, reflections, and brief research narratives that reveal what's on the minds of our emerging disaster scholars. It also includes profiles of fellows who are currently on the job market. Thanks to generous support from the Natural Hazards Center, printed copies were made available to attendees at the Natural Hazards Workshop.

[CLICK HERE TO READ THIS YEAR'S EDITION!](#)

BAF at the Annual Natural Hazards Workshop

In June, we continued our tradition of participating in the Natural Hazards Research and Applications Workshop. Observing this year's theme of *Stronger Together: Building Coalitions*

for Disaster Risk Reduction, Bill Anderson Fund Fellows and Alumni led [networking roundtable](#) and [training](#) sessions that emphasized partnerships and collaboration to support underserved communities.

The annual BAF Lightning Talks session featured presentations by current fellows Nelson Adeniji, Denise Chavez Reyes, America Gaviria Pabón, Maribel Sandoval Contreras, and Issa Thullah. The session was moderated by BAF Alumna Dr. Melissa Villarreal. The presentations focused on issues such as extreme heat, risk communication, water reuse technology for drought resilience, housing recovery, and the impacts of disaster assistance programs on recovery trajectories. You can view the recorded presentations [here](#)!

In total, more than 20 BAF Fellows and Alumni participated in either the Workshop or the subsequent Researchers Meeting, sharing research insights, moderating sessions, and facilitating conversations about how the field can better learn from and serve communities that are disproportionately burdened by disaster risk, loss, and suffering.

Our sincere gratitude goes to the Natural Hazards Center for providing this platform to showcase research insights from the BAF community, and to the Margaret A. Cargill Philanthropies for supporting the fellows' participation in the Workshop!



Photo courtesy of Van Zandt Visual

A Dashing Good Time

This year's Disaster Dash 5K race was a roaring success, with participants rising bright and early to walk, run, and build community among Workshop attendees. We are deeply grateful to all who registered for the Dash, sponsored participants, and cheered us along the way. Thanks to your support, we surpassed our fundraising goal and raised a total of \$23,823!

Congratulations to this year's winners:

- **First Place:** Lucas Belury
- **Second Place:** Jonathan Burg
- **Third Place:** Jeffrey Gunderson
- **Final Finisher:** Alka Sapat



New Read: Research Counts

If you've enjoyed the articles linked in our past several newsletters from [*Equity and Inclusion in Disasters*](#), the special collection of the Natural Hazards Center's Research Counts featuring the work of Bill Anderson Fund Fellows and Alumni, we've got great news for you: The full collection is now available! The broad themes explored include low-attention disasters, social marginalization and inequality, equity and inclusion throughout the disaster cycle, best practices for community-based collaborations, and the strengths and capacities of marginalized communities. Spanning 24 articles, the collection showcases the diversity and breadth of research being led by the BAF community. Read the full collection online, or download the PDF booklet below!

DOWNLOAD THE PDF BOOKLET HERE!

An IDEAAAL Convening

In July, the third cohort of the [*Investigations in Disasters and Emergencies: Advancing Applied Learning in Disaster Research Response*](#) (IDEAAL DR2) initiative launched with its signature weeklong in-person short course. This program is being offered through our partnership with the Center for Disaster Resilient Communities at the University of Washington and is funded by the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences. The 25 participants engaged in a highly interactive, weeklong

CHEERs to Another Year

This summer, three members of the BAF community traveled to eastern North Carolina to participate in the [*Summer Scholars Program*](#) offered by the [*Coastal Hazards, Equity, Economic Prosperity and Resilience*](#) (CHEER) Hub. Current BAF Fellows Elvis Effah, Christopher Ihinegbu, and Teye Yevuyibor spent six weeks broadening their knowledge of coastal hazards, conducting fieldwork, and taking part in interdisciplinary, community-based research. The program culminated in

intensive set of five training modules and activities. Over the next year, they will attend monthly workshops to further expand their training and advance the development of their public and environmental health disaster research topics. Three current BAF Fellows, Christopher Alegbeleye, Denise Chavez Reyes, and Yvonne Dadson, participated in this cohort.

a [showcase event](#) in which each student gave a presentation based on their respective lines of inquiry that extended from their experiences in the field. Stay tuned for insights and reflections from the fellows in the coming months!



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

- In June, BAF Fellow **Maribel Sandoval Contreras** received the Community Builder Award from the Urban Planning and Public Policy Department at UC Irvine. This award recognizes the service provided to the department for the school year as PhD Student Representative.
- BAF Fellow **Yvonne Appiah Dadson** was recently awarded the Benevolent Association Research and Creative Activity Grant by the University at Albany.
- In June, current Fellow **Christopher Ihinegbu** received the Switzer Environmental Fellowship from the Robert & Patricia Switzer Foundation. His was one of only 20 awards granted from a pool of more than 300 applications.
- First-year Fellow **Amina Meselhe** was [featured in an episode](#) of Inspiration Dissemination, an award-winning radio program that invites graduate students from Oregon State University to talk about their lives and passion for research at the university.
- BAF Fellow **Jessica Nwafor** received the William Y. Adams Award for Excellence in Teaching by the Department of Anthropology at the University Of Kentucky. This award recognizes exceptional and superior teaching of Anthropology by a graduate student. Additionally, Jessica was selected for a research award from the University of Kentucky's Tracy Farmer Institute for Sustainability and the Environment to support her dissertation research on risks associated with spaceflight activity, wildlife conservation, hurricanes, and flooding. Last but not least, she was also selected as the recipient of the competitive 2025 Disaster Dash Research Award!
- Last spring, BAF Fellow **Esther Oyedele** received the Outstanding Graduate Service Award and the Aubrey & Eula Orange Endowed Award in Geophysics from the Virginia Tech Department of Geosciences. She also received the Graduate Student Teaching Excellence Award from the Virginia Tech Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning, and the 2026 Harriet Evelyn Wallace Scholarship from the Association for Women Geoscientists. In June, Esther received the Robert "Bob" Moses ETS

Scholarship Award, and the Society of Exploration Geophysicists David Worthington Scholarship. Additionally, she received the Graduate Student Research Grant from the Geological Society of America for her research examining the hydrometeorological drivers of groundwater variability across major principal aquifers in the United States.

- This spring, current BAF Fellow **Issa Belmond Thullah** successfully ran for the position of Vice President/President-Elect with the Graduate Student Association at Virginia Commonwealth University. Issa will take on the role of Vice President during the 2026-2027 academic year and then serve as President in the 2027-2028 academic year.



GRADUATIONS

The Doctor Is In

Five BAF fellows successfully defended their dissertations this summer and are now transitioning into their careers. Please join us in congratulating these emerging professionals and newly minted BAF Alumni:

- Joshua McDuffie - Vanderbilt University
- Ruby Hernandez - Texas A&M University, College Station
- Nicholas Humphrey - North Dakota State University
- Judanne Lennox-Morrison - Texas A&M University, College Station
- Anthony Wilson - University of California, San Diego

From our newest PhDs embarking on their careers as alumni to our community of current fellows preparing to welcome the next cohort, the strength of the Bill Anderson Fund lies in our collective commitment to equity, justice, and research that makes a positive impact.

Thank you for investing in the next generation of disaster scholars. Together, we continue to honor and expand upon a powerful legacy.

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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