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Nation's First Private Reparative Justice Fund Awards Inaugural Down Payment Grants

Washington, D.C. -- birdSEED Foundation's Housing Justice Fund announces \$40,000 in grants to Black and Brown first time home buyers. These "no-strings" awards are given to accelerate the home buying for community members that have been largely excluded from ownership pathways.

"Thank you, to the birdSEED Foundation, for allowing my family and I to express our experiences with purchasing a home and providing us with funds to maximize our budgets. Please continue your growth to share wealth and provide support to Black, low income families by planting SEEDs and harvesting our communities" said Tasharn Richardson, one of four Washington D.C. area residents to receive \$10,000 toward their down payment. Funds will be released at closing and grantees are given 120 days to find and close on their home with extensions offered as needed.

Anthony R. Keith Jr., Harry Christian III had this to say after learning of the award: "There are two words that we think best describe how we feel: grateful and affirmed. For we now know our path towards homeownership in DC is possible because of support from birdSEED."

"The real estate industry has played a significant role in the suppression of intergenerational wealth building for the BIPOC community. We can and must do what we can to right this wrong and create a more just and equitable future in housing." said Lisa Wise, CEO of Flock DC which launched the birdSEED fund in February of 2021 in response to the ubiquitous inequity in ownership and and deep interest in working toward an anti-racist future as a family of real estate management companies. "We funded and released birdSEED to advance home ownership for Black and Brown first time home buyers. We hope this work is trend setting and leads to a reparative justice movement in the real estate industry across the country. Anything less is not enough."

The birdSEED fund is managed through a partnership with the Greater Washington Community Foundation. “We are proud to partner with Flock and welcome birdSEED into The Community Foundation family. This program comes at a time when our region, and our nation, is reckoning with its past and searching for solutions to address the history of discriminatory policies that Black and Brown folks have endured in our communities. We look forward to working with our community to grow the seed of this work to a scale that matches the disparities we see and the aspirations we share for a racially equitable and just region.” said Tonia Wellons, President & CEO of The Community Foundation. Community representatives from Washington D.C. selected the four grantees from a pool of 40 applicants. “Systemic racism and discrimination creates home buying hurdles for people of color,” says Natasha Bonhomme, birdSEED Advisory Board member. “It’s way past time to address these issues head on with policy change and financial help.”

Winners Katherina Ntiamoah and Marco Martinez Ruiz say, "For us and our new family, becoming homeowners is more than just owning a home. It is laying a foundation for building generational wealth and financial security."

birdSEED will continue grantmaking until the initial investment of \$215,000 and additional donations are fully expended. Applications are accepted on a rolling basis and are intentionally simplified. A handful of questions, a one page essay and a follow up interview are a few of the requirements. Applications are reviewed based on impact since the Advisory Board understands home ownership should be a basic human right.



Lisa

Lisa Wise
Founder

birdSEED Foundation makes grants four times per year ranging from 5k- 15k per grant. For information on the fund visit www.birdseedfoundation.com