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Iconic activist, scholar Angela Y. Davis to headline Holyoke event celebrating 30 years of support for “the children of resistance”

March 1, Easthampton, MA: Since its founding in 1990, the Rosenberg Fund for Children – a public foundation based in Easthampton, MA – has awarded over $7.3 million in grants to help thousands of “children of resistance,” kids and youth across the U.S. whose activist parents have been attacked, or who have been harmed themselves, because of their organizing for racial, economic and environmental justice, and the rights and well-being of immigrants, workers, queer folks, prisoners and others whose lives are under threat.

On May 9th, 2020, iconic activist, scholar and RFC Advisory Board member Angela Y. Davis will headline a celebration at Gateway City Arts in Holyoke, marking the RFC’s 30th anniversary by exploring the challenges activists and their families face, and the support systems and strategies that help them survive and thrive.

The centerpiece of the evening will be a conversation between Angela Y. Davis, and former RFC grant recipients Leah Grady Sayvetz of Ithaca, NY and David Morales of San Diego, CA (both activists in their own right), moderated by RFC Board of Directors member José Ayerve.

Davis, Distinguished Professor Emerita of History of Consciousness and Feminist Studies at UC Santa Cruz who helped popularize the concept of the “prison industrial complex,” urges her audiences to think seriously about the future possibility of a world without prisons and to help forge a 21st century abolitionist movement. Sayvetz, whose mother is facing prison stemming from a nonviolent, symbolic disarmament action at King’s Bay Naval installation, grew up in a family of activists and has been involved with peace, environmental, and racial and economic justice movements. Morales, who was targeted as a teenager when he organized against the militarization of his high school and the marginalization of working class students of color, is now teaching Spanish plus “culture, critical thinking and rebellion,” in the same district where he was barred from his own graduation ceremony. Ayerve is a musician, producer, translator and former Valley resident now living in Ecuador.

The program will also include a short film, a reading by the noted poet and RFC Advisory Board member Martín Espada of Amherst, music by western MA-based folk rockers The
Nields (whose new CD *November* tackles immigration, climate change and other pressing issues), and remarks by the RFC’s founder and its executive director, **Robert and Jenn Meeropol** (the son and granddaughter of Ethel and Julius Rosenberg).

The event begins at 7:00 pm at Gateway City Arts (92 Race St., Holyoke, MA). Tickets ($30 general admission, $130 Anniversary Circle including preferred seating and more) and information are at [rfc.org/30event](http://rfc.org/30event).

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**For information or interviews** contact Amber Black, (413) 529-0063, **amber@rfc.org**.

**For downloadable, high-resolution photos** visit [rfc.org/pressreleases](http://rfc.org/pressreleases).

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### Meet the Participants

**RFC Advisory Board member Angela Y. Davis** is a scholar, activist, writer, and Distinguished Professor Emerita of History of Consciousness and Feminist Studies at UC Santa Cruz. Her work as an educator – both at the university level and in the larger public sphere – has always emphasized the importance of building communities of struggle for economic, racial and gender justice. Having helped to popularize the notion of a “prison industrial complex,” she now urges her audiences to think seriously about the future possibility of a world without prisons and to help forge a 21st century abolitionist movement.

**Leah Grady Sayvetz and David Morales** are former RFC grant recipients and have been peer mentors for younger RFC grantees.

**Leah** lives in Ithaca, NY, where she grew up in the Catholic Worker Community which follows Dorothy Day's call to follow the works of mercy and resist the works of war. Her education took place in courtrooms supporting civil resisters, at the White House, Department of Energy, Pentagon, and School of the Americas to protest US imperialism, making protest art and puppetry in the streets, visiting her mom in federal prison during a six-month sentence for protesting the Iraq War and in the garden growing food to share with neighbors in her low-income neighborhood. As an adult, Leah has carried on her connection to the land and to her family's tradition of activism, participating in a wide range of movements for justice.
David lives in his hometown of San Diego, CA. As a teenager he was banned from his high school graduation after organizing against the militarization of his school and the marginalization of working class students of color. He’s now an educator in the same district, teaching culture, language, critical thinking and rebellion (via 9th and 12th grade Spanish), while continuing to be active with immigrants’ rights work and organizations like Project YANO (Youth and Non-Military Opportunities) and Colectivo Zapatista.

RFC Advisory Board member Martín Espada has published more than twenty books as a poet, editor, essayist and translator. His many honors include the Ruth Lilly Poetry Prize, the Shelley Memorial Award, the Robert Creeley Award, the National Hispanic Cultural Center Literary Award, an American Book Award, an Academy of American Poets Fellowship, the PEN/Revson Fellowship and a Guggenheim Fellowship. His book The Republic of Poetry was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize. A former tenant lawyer in Greater Boston’s Latinx community, Espada is a professor of English at the University of Massachusetts-Amherst.

Western MA-based folk rockers The Nields (sisters Nerissa and Katryna) have been lighting up the indie circuit with their sibling harmonies and generous and warm performance style since 1991. They’ve produced 20 albums, scored major and independent record and publishing deals, and shared the stage with 10,000 Maniacs, The Band, James Taylor, and the Indigo Girls, among many others. Their latest album, November, tackles issues including the climate crisis, the situation at the border, and the fragility of our democracy with messages of hope that pulse like a strong and steady heartbeat.

About the RFC

The Rosenberg Fund for Children (RFC), named after Ethel and Julius Rosenberg, is a public foundation that aids kids in the U.S. whose parents have been attacked because they’re struggling to combat racism and police brutality, safeguard the environment, wage peace, preserve civil liberties, and organize on behalf of immigrants, workers, political prisoners, queer folks and others whose lives and rights are under threat. The RFC also supports youth activists targeted for their own organizing.

The RFC (rfc.org) was founded in 1990 by the Rosenbergs’ younger son, Robert Meeropol, and is led today by Robert’s daughter Jenn Meeropol. In its 30 year history, it has awarded grants totaling more than $7.3 million to help thousands of children and youth in the U.S.