



FILM

***Son of Monarchs* Awarded 2021 Sloan Feature Film Prize at Sundance**

[*Son of Monarchs*](#) has been chosen as the Sloan Feature Film Prize winner at the 2021 Sundance Film Festival, to be awarded in January at this year's virtual festival. The feature film, directed and written by filmmaker and scientist Alexis Gambis, follows a Mexican biologist who studies butterflies at a NYC lab as he returns home to the Monarch forests of Michoacán. The film was cited by the jury "for its poetic, multilayered portrait of a scientist's growth and self-discovery as he migrates between Mexico and NYC working on transforming nature and uncovering the fluid boundaries that unite past and present and all living things." This year's Sloan jury included MIT researcher and protagonist of the new Sloan documentary *Coded Bias* Joy Buolamwini, Associate Professor in Chemistry at CUNY Hunter College and the CUNY Graduate Center Mandë Holford, and Sloan-supported filmmakers Aneesh



Chaganty (*Searching*), Lydia Dean Pilcher (*Radium Girls*), and Lena Vurma (*Adventures of a Mathematician*). *Son of Monarchs* will be included in the 2021 Sundance Film Festival program and will be recognized at the closing night award ceremony as the Sloan winner. The Sloan Feature Film Prize, one of only six juried prizes at Sundance, is supported by a 2019 grant to the Sundance Institute.

***Ammonite* Wins Sloan Science in Cinema Award at SFFILM**

This year's SFFILM Sloan Science in Cinema Prize, which recognizes the compelling depiction of science in a narrative feature film, was awarded to [*Ammonite*](#). The film is based on the life of pioneering paleontologist Mary Anning (Kate Winslet), who hunted fossils in Jurassic marine beds on the English Channel and, among other trailblazing contributions, discovered the Ichthyosaurs and Plesiosaurus, despite the challenges she faced as a woman in science. The film explores the importance of Anning's scientific work and her speculative romantic



relationship with an upper-class woman (Saoirse Ronan, pictured left with Winslet). In celebration of the award, SFFILM and Sloan will host a virtual screening and panel discussion. *Ammonite* has received positive reviews from outlets such as [The New York Times](#), [The Wall Street Journal](#), and [Entertainment Weekly](#), among others. It is currently available for rent via streaming platforms. The award is part of a 2019 Sloan grant

to SFFILM to develop and champion films that explore scientific or technological themes and characters.

Sloan-Supported *Coded Bias* Released in Over 70 Virtual Cinemas in all 50 States

[*Coded Bias*](#), a feature-length Sloan-backed documentary about the bias encoded in automated decision-making and machine-learning algorithms, is now available to stream at over 70 virtual cinemas in all 50 states. Directed by Shalini Kantayya, *Coded Bias* features the work of MIT Media Lab Researcher Joy Buolamwini, who found that facial-recognition software is often unable to recognize darker-skinned faces, especially women. This discovery inspired her to create the Algorithmic Justice League and to become an advocate for the regulation of facial recognition software. Other leading women in the field are also highlighted in the film, including mathematician Cathy O’Neal, Big Brother Watch’s Silkie Carlo, and technologist Zeynep Tufekci. The film has won multiple awards – including the NYWIFT Award for Excellence in Filmmaking at the Hamptons International Film Festival, the Grand Jury Prize



for Best International Documentary at the Calgary International Film Festival, and the Filmmaker Award at the GlobeDocs Film Festival – and has garnered positive coverage from outlets such as [The Los Angeles Times](#), [The New York Times](#), [Variety](#), and [The Hollywood Reporter](#). Coolidge Corner Theater hosted a virtual Q&A as part of the Sloan-supported Science on Screen effort with the filmmaker and

technologists, which can be viewed via [YouTube](#). *Coded Bias* was supported by a 2019 production grant to Women Make Movies.

New Sloan Documentary *In Silico* Premiered at DOCNYC

In Silico, a new, Sloan-backed documentary about efforts to create a simulation of the mammalian brain, premiered at DOCNYC – the largest documentary film festival in the U.S. – in November. The film, directed by Noah Hutton and shot over 10 years, documents the work done by neuroscientist Henry Markram to fulfill his bold promise of mapping and simulating



the brain for the first time. It features interviews with other prominent neuroscientists such as Christof Koch, Jeremy R. Knowles, Jeff W. Lichtman, Idan Segev, Cori Bargmann, Torsten N. Weisel, and Anne Churchland. It has received early press from outlets such as [Nature](#), [Vice](#) and [Inverse](#), among others. *In Silico* was supported by a 2018 Sloan grant to the filmmakers via the Jacob Burns Film Center.



Sloan-Backed Film *Adventures of a Mathematician* Acquired by Samuel Goldwyn Films



Sloan-supported feature [Adventures of a Mathematician](#) was acquired by Samuel Goldwyn Films in November. The film, directed by Thor Klein, stars Philippe Tlokinski (pictured below) as Stanislaw Ulam, a Polish mathematician who made major contributions to the development of nuclear weapons through the Manhattan Project. The film explores Ulam's relationship with his younger brother Adam, his courtship of his future wife Françoise Aron Ulam, and his friendships with other distinguished scientists of the time, including John von Neumann. *Adventures of a Mathematician* has received early coverage from [Sloan Science and Film](#), [The First News](#), and [The Hollywood Reporter](#).

Sloan-Backed Feature *Tesla* Now Available on Major Streaming Platforms

[Tesla](#), a feature-length, Sloan-funded narrative film about inventor Nikola Tesla, best-known



for his contributions to the design of the modern alternating current (AC) electricity supply system, is now available to rent or buy on [Amazon](#), [Hulu](#), [YouTube](#), and other streaming platforms. *Tesla* was directed by three-time Sloan-supported director Michael Almerayda, stars four-time-Academy-Award nominee Ethan Hawke (pictured left) and features an A-list supporting cast including Kyle MacLachlan, Jim Gaffigan, and Eve Hewson.

NYU/Sloan-Winning Film *Radium Girls* Opens in Select Theaters and Virtual Cinema

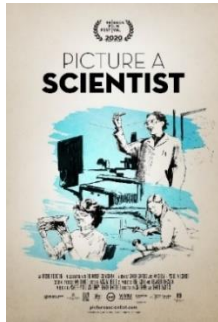


[Radium Girls](#), based on the true story of young women in the 1920s who were poisoned while painting luminous watches at the U.S. Radium Factory, opened in select theaters and via virtual cinema in October. The film, directed by Ginny Mohler and Lydia Pilcher, stars Joey King (pictured left) as one of the women who watches her sister and friends develop illnesses from radium and fights to expose the truth about radium's dangerous effects. It has received positive press from [The New York Times](#) and [The Hollywood Reporter](#), among others. A Q&A with the filmmakers and scientists, conducted as part of the Coolidge Corner Theater's Sloan-backed Science on Screen initiative, is available to watch [via YouTube](#).



Sloan Doc about Sexual Harassment of Women in Science Continues Making Impact

[Picture a Scientist](#), a Sloan-funded documentary about sexual harassment of women scientists, has continued to attract audiences and spark thoughtful discussion. The film, directed by Sharon Shattuck and Ian Cheney, follows three women scientists: MIT biologist Nancy Hopkins, American University chemist Raychelle Burks, and Scripps Institution of Oceanography geologist Jane Willenbring. The U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Science, Space and Technology recently hosted a screening and discussion about *Picture a Scientist* for House and Senate members and staff engaged with legislation to combat sexual harassment in science ([H.R. 36/S. 1067](#)). The film has been screened at over 300 universities worldwide, as well as many prestigious science and women centered organizations.



Sloan-Funded Documentary *Oliver Sacks: His Own Life* Enjoys Successful Digital Run

[Oliver Sacks: His Own Life](#), a Sloan-backed documentary on the world-renowned neurologist, clinician, and writer, has continued to garner attention and views during its nationwide digital run. Upon receiving a fatal diagnosis in 2015, Sacks (pictured left) invited award-winning documentary filmmaker Ric Burns and his team to record his final days. The finished film draws on eighty hours of this unique footage, in addition to telling the full story of Sacks' remarkable life and career, and has received positive coverage, including a [New York Times Critic's Pick review](#), a [segment on Sloan-supported podcast Science Friday](#), and articles from [The Hollywood Reporter](#), [Variety](#), and [Vice](#), among others.



TELEVISION

Sloan-Funded NOVA Documentary *Secrets in our DNA* to Premiere January 13

[Secrets in our DNA](#), a new NOVA documentary produced by the award-winning team at Kikim Media, will air on PBS on January 13. The film explores the value of genealogy research along with the risks of entrusting our most private data to commercial enterprises and online databases. With over 30 million people already having submitted their DNA to large testing companies such as 23andMe and AncestryDNA, this topic is an important and timely one. *Secrets in our DNA* was supported by a 2019 grant to the WGBH Educational Foundation.





American Experience's Sloan-Supported Film "The Codebreaker" to Air January 11

["The Codebreaker,"](#) the most recent documentary in the Sloan-supported *American Experience* series, will air on January 11 on PBS. The film tells the little-known tale of Elizabeth Smith Friedman (pictured left), Cryptanalyst-in-Charge for the U.S. Treasury Department, whose codebreaking skills helped bring down a Nazi spy network in South America during World War II. Together with her cryptographer husband, Friedman's contributions to the science of cryptology helped lay the foundations for the National Security Agency. This show is the latest of four produced through a major Sloan production grant to *American Experience*, which has also supported projects including "The Poison Squad," "The Man Who Tried to Feed the World," and "Mr. Tornado".



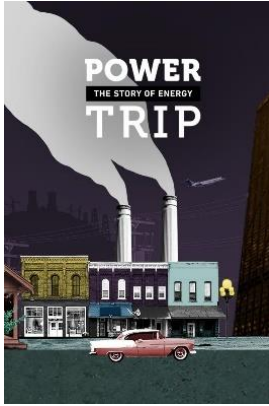
PBS' *The Open Mind* Spotlights Sloan Grantees

The Open Mind, a Sloan-funded television program hosted by journalist Alexander Heffner and airing on PBS, recently released four episodes featuring Sloan grantees. In "[Our Genes in the Pandemic](#)," Johns Hopkins University neuroscientist David Linden discusses his new Sloan book *Unique: The New Science of Human Individuality*; in "[Our Brains on Totalitarianism](#)," Northeastern University neuroscientist Lisa Feldman Barrett discusses her new Sloan book *Seven and a Half Lessons About the Brain*; in "[Chinese Hegemony](#)," Center for Strategic and International Studies fellow Jon Hillman discusses his new Sloan book about the Belt and Road Initiative, *The Emperor's New Road: China and the Project of the Century*; and in "[The Flight of Humane Poetics](#)," University of Arizona scholars Julie Swarstad Johnson and Christopher Cokinos discuss their new poetry anthology *Beyond Earth's Edge: The Poetry of Spaceflight*. These interviews, as well as others featuring Sloan grantees, are free to view on *The Open Mind's* website. The show is supported by a 2020 Sloan grant to The Open Mind Legacy Project.





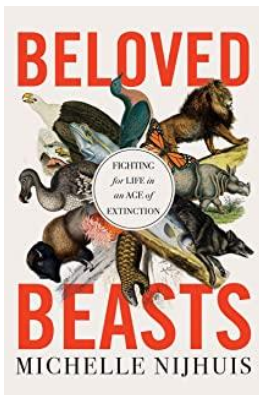
Sloan-Backed Series *Power Trip* Launches on Digital Platforms



[*Power Trip*](#), a six-part Sloan-backed television series about energy, launched on digital platforms including Amazon Prime, Comcast, Apple TV, and iTunes. The series is based on the Sloan-funded book *Power Trip: The Story of Energy*, by author and professor of mechanical engineering at the University of Texas Michael E. Webber, which examines how harnessing energy has shaped global history and how it continues to shape our world today. Each episode focuses on energy's impact on areas of life such as water, food, wealth, cities, transportation, and war. The production of this series was supported by multiple Sloan grants.

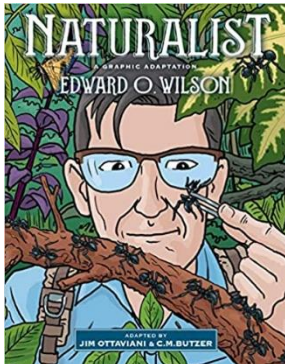
BOOKS

Beloved Beasts: Fighting for Life in an Age of Extinction by Michelle Nijhuis to be Published March 9



[*Beloved Beasts: Fighting for Life in an Age of Extinction*](#) by science journalist Michelle Nijhuis will be published March 9. The book tells the history of the modern conservation movement, illuminating the contributions of scientists and activists such as Aldo Leopold and Rachel Carson and detailing the efforts of organizations such as the Audubon Society and the World Wildlife Fund. Nijhuis received a 2018 Sloan grant to support the research and writing of this book.

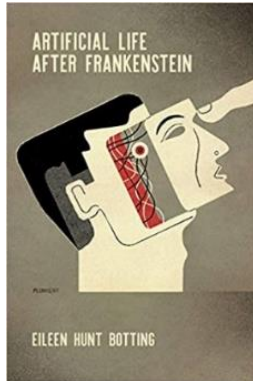
Sloan-Supported Graphic Novel *Naturalist* Published November 10



[*Naturalist*](#), a graphic novel adaptation of famed biologist E.O. Wilson's classic autobiography by the same title, was published on November 10. The book was produced by Island Press and was adapted and illustrated by Jim Ottaviani and C.M. Butzer, with E.O. Wilson's participation. Vivid illustrations tell the story of Wilson's life from his childhood in Florida and Alabama to his travels through the Pacific and the development of his then-controversial theory of sociobiology to his coining of the term biophilia. An excerpt of the book is available to read via [Publishers Weekly](#). Island Press received a 2019 grant to produce this graphic novel.

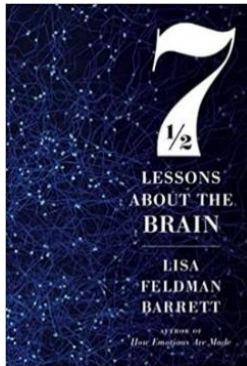


Artificial Life After Frankenstein by Eileen Hunt Botting to be Published December 18



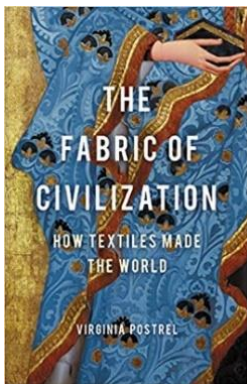
[Artificial Life After Frankenstein](#), by Eileen Hunt Botting, Professor of Political Science at the University of Notre Dame, will be published on December 18. The book will show how classic author Mary Shelley's novels – such as *Frankenstein* and *The Last Man* – became a prototype for a new genre of political science fiction that looks at the ethics of making artificial life through science and technology. The book has received early positive press from [Publisher's Weekly](#). Botting received a 2019 Sloan grant to support the research and writing of this book.

Seven and a Half Lessons About the Brain by Lisa Feldman Barrett Published November 17



[Seven and a Half Lessons About the Brain](#) by Lisa Feldman Barrett, Northeastern University Distinguished Professor of Psychology, was published on November 17. The book, made up of seven and a half short essays, will teach readers about the brain using the latest research in neuroscience, exploring topics such as the truth behind popular brain myths and how brains evolved. It has received positive press from [GO](#) and [Business Insider](#), a [starred Kirkus review](#), and a [New York Times op-ed](#) penned by Barrett on its publication. Barrett received a 2019 Sloan grant to support the research and writing of this book.

The Fabric of Civilization: How Textiles Made the World by Virginia Postrel Published Nov. 10



[The Fabric of Civilization: How Textiles Made the World](#) by journalist Virginia Postrel, whose work has appeared in *The Wall Street Journal*, *The New York Times*, and *The Atlantic*, was published on November 10. The book looks at the history of textiles from ancient civilizations to today, combining scholarship from diverse fields such as archaeology, genetics, economics, technology, and history. The book has received positive press from [A16 Podcast](#), [Jezebel](#), and [The Wall Street Journal](#), among others. Postrel received a 2018 Sloan grant to support the research and writing of this book.



RADIO

L.A. Theatre Works to Release Three New Sloan-Supported Science Radio Dramas

L.A. Theatre Works, the nation's leading producer of audio theater, announced that [three new science radio plays will be released](#) in the next few months as part of the Sloan-supported *Relativity* series. *Life on Paper* by Kenneth Lin, an Ensemble Studio Theatre/Sloan commission about “a forensic economist who butts heads with a small-town actuary over the exact value of one man’s life,” will be released on December 16. *Extinction* by Hannie Rayson, a Manhattan Theatre Club/Sloan commission about “a zoologist in Australia who gets funding



to save an endangered species from the very company that threatens its existence,” will be released January 27. Finally, *Bump* by Chiara Atik, the 2018 Sloan/EST Mainstage Production (pictured left) “based on the true story of Jorge Odón and the birthing device he invented in his garage,” will be released March 10. The production of new science radio dramas as part of the *Relativity* series, which reaches millions of listeners across the world, is part of a 2019 Sloan grant to L.A. Theatre Works.

THEATER

EST Hosts Virtual Artist Cultivation Panel for Sloan Theater Program

To publicize the popular annual Sloan/Ensemble Studio Theatre (EST) commissioning program, EST hosted a [Sloan Artist Cultivation Panel](#) at the end of November. At the event, moderator and actress Naomi Lorrain (*Orange is the New Black*) discussed what makes a great science play with Sloan-supported playwrights Charly Evon Simpson (*Behind the Sheet*) and Carla Ching (*Fast Company*) whose plays were EST/Sloan Mainstage productions in 2014 and 2019, respectively. The panel also included scientists Danielle N. Lee, Southern Illinois University Edwardsville, and Brian Nord, Fermi National Accelerator Laboratory, as well as host and creator of *Radiolab* Jad Abumrad. The event was free and open to any playwright interested in writing a science play. EST is supported by a 2019 Sloan grant to commission and develop new plays about science and technology.





MTC Hosts Virtual Reading of Sloan-Supported Commission *Ball Change*



As part of its annual Ted Snowden Reading Series, on December 1 Manhattan Theatre Club (MTC) hosted a virtual reading of MTC/Sloan commission *Ball Change* by playwright Brittany K. Allen. Set at the switchboards of an elite celebrity answering service, the play looks at how communication technologies become obsolete. In March, MTC will hold another virtual series reading of an MTC/Sloan commission *The Collapse*, about a research assistant sent to work with a premier entomologist specializing in bees. MTC/Sloan commissions are supported through a 2019 Sloan grant.

NEW MEDIA

Pioneer Works' *The Broadcast* Releases a Wide Range of Virtual Science Content

[Pioneer Works](#), a creative hotbed for art and science in Brooklyn, launched its multimedia online platform, [The Broadcast](#), earlier this year. Led by Barnard College Professor of Astronomy and Physics Janna Levin, this new website brings Pioneer Works' original and in-depth science content to a new global audience. New science content available on the site



includes [“Trip Out on Time Travel with Sean Carroll,”](#) [“The Soundtrack to the Universe: An Interview with Nobel Laureate Rai Weiss,”](#) and [“The Plague: Siddhartha Mukherjee and Janna Levin in Conversation”](#) (pictured left).

Launch of *The Broadcast* was supported by a Sloan planning grant in 2019, and a new grant was made in 2020 to expand and enhance the project.

UNIVERSAL ACCESS TO KNOWLEDGE

DPLA in Talks with Amazon Publishing about Sharing Exclusive Content with Libraries

The [Digital Public Library of America \(DPLA\) recently confirmed](#) that they are in talks with Amazon Publishing about a partnership that would enable libraries to loan out exclusive

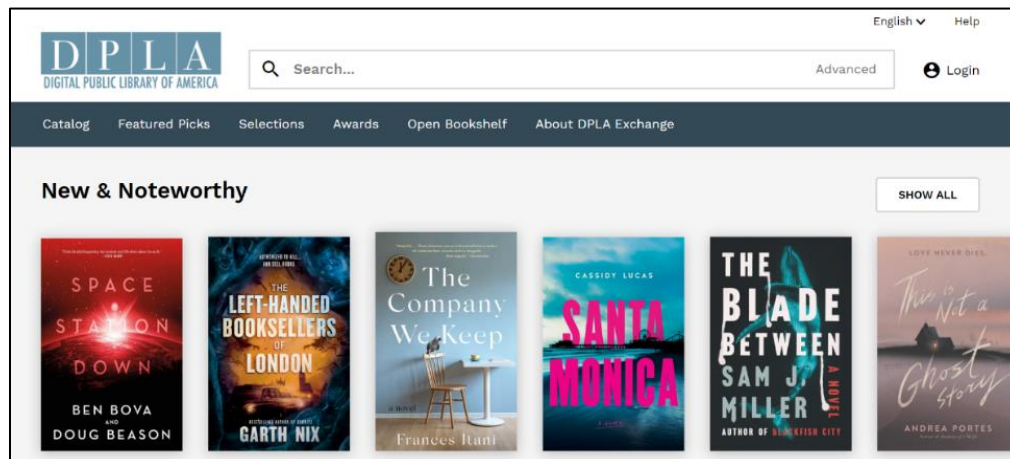


Amazon content through the DPLA Exchange ebook marketplace. Currently, there is no method for libraries to provide their patrons with Amazon's millions of exclusive ebooks and audiobooks, so this would be a major step in DPLA's effort to maximize access to information, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, where digital lending is up significantly. The news was covered in a recent

article by [Publishers Weekly](#), which wrote, "The deal would be a major coup for SimplyE and the Digital Public Library of America's growing e-book platform, the DPLA Exchange." DPLA's The Exchange and SimplyE are supported by 2019 and 2020 Sloan grants, respectively.

DPLA Launches Redesigned Ebook Marketplace with Improved Usability

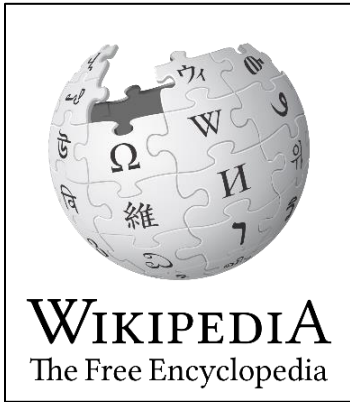
This fall, the Digital Public Library of America (DPLA) [introduced a redesigned version of its Sloan-supported DPLA Exchange ebook marketplace](#). In addition to a fresh look (pictured below), the latest version also includes new features to improve usability. Updates include a more robust advanced search criteria and search-result filters and improved integration with the Sloan-supported Open Bookshelf, a collection of more than 8,000 free ebooks. DPLA also announced that it will be adding new titles from the more than 60 publishers that have newly signed on to the DPLA Exchange. The Exchange and Open Bookshelf are supported by a 2019 Sloan grant to DPLA. A new grant was also made in 2020 to support a suite of COVID-19 response activities and evaluations.





Wikipedia Helps Public Identify Credible Information during the 2020 U.S. Elections

Sloan-supported Wikipedia [launched new initiatives](#) this fall to remain a trusted source of credible and timely information during the 2020 U.S. elections. New efforts and safeguards included the creation of an internal (anti) disinformation task force and a suite of new research projects that examine how disinformation could manifest on the site. "If it's wrong



on Wikipedia, it can be wrong everywhere," said chief of staff at the Wikimedia Foundation Ryan Merkley as reported by [CNET](#), "That's an enormous public trust." These efforts to combat disinformation were also covered by news outlets including [Cheddar](#) and [Reuters](#). Initiatives such as these are why major companies are relying on Wikipedia as their go-to source for factual, trusted information, including YouTube's planned integration of Wikipedia to combat disinformation and extremism in its videos. Wikipedia is supported through multiple Sloan grants to the Wikimedia Foundation, including the most recent 2020 grant to support the extension of structured data from Wikimedia Commons across all Wikimedia content.

Knowable Magazine Hosts Sloan-Funded Virtual Events on COVID-19

As part of its new Sloan-funded COVID-19 focused reporting effort, "[Reset: The Science of Crisis & Recovery](#)," Annual Reviews' *Knowable Magazine* has produced virtual events covering a wide range of pandemic related topics. On October 15 at "[The Science of Sourdough](#)," scientists discussed the chemistry behind a very popular quarantine hobby, baking bread. At "[Covid-19 and the Immune System: The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly](#)" on November 18, scientists talked about how the immune system responds to viral threats and what that means for vaccine development. "[Stress and Resilience in the Pandemic and Beyond](#)" took



place on December 8 and looked at the science of stress, coping, and resilience. The next event, scheduled for December 18 will be "[Preventing the Next Pandemic: Exploring the Origins and Spread of Animal Viruses](#)" and is free for all who register. All past events are available to view on the *Knowable Magazine* website, along with news articles and other information also funded by a 2020 Sloan grant to Annual Reviews.

Program Team: Doron Weber, *Vice President, Programs and Program Director* | Ali Chunovic, *Program Associate* | Delia DiBiasi, *Senior Program and Investments Assistant*