



WALTERS
FOUNDATION

The Cutting Edge

Fall 2026 Edition

Walters Foundation Celebrates America 250 With Leadership Summit

By Tamberly Couch, Executive Secretary/Treasurer

The Walters Foundation Leadership Summit celebrated our country with our community nonprofit partners. The Board Meeting and Leadership Summit were



Tamberly Couch



*Cliff Walters with Sarah Wells, Dianne Duva,
Tamberly Couch, & Randall Unterseher*

held at the Embassy Suites in Portland, Oregon. The event featured festive decorations, flowers, cake, and red, white, and blue attire.

The day opened with an inspiring video celebrating our nation and natural resources, overlaid with American-themed musical performances that touched the hearts of everyone in attendance.

Nineteen different organizations joined together for inspiration by two guest speakers, Dianne Duva and Sarah Wells. Dianne, who is from Santa Barbara's Arlington Financial Advisors as a managing partner, started off describing conflict, what purpose it serves, and how to



Dianne Speaking



Sarah Speaking

manage it. Each of us experiences conflict in our organizations, do we manage it correctly? Dianne walked the guests through steps on handling conflict and different approaches that are valuable.



Noting each situation may have differing approaches that are appropriate or necessary to have healthy working atmospheres.

Olympian and national keynote speaker, Sarah Wells led the team through leadership resilience. She was energetic, inspiring, and reignited a spirit of comradery in our united goals. She shared times when she had failures and how these times have created strength and resilience. Sarah shared how her successes would not have occurred without failures. She encourages individuals to look at difficulties as opportunities. Failure is not the end of your story.

The Leadership Summit had an impact on our speakers with the following quote from Sarah Wells, *"Some organizations create impact. Others help make it possible for even more organizations to do the same. What I love about the Walters Foundation is that their impact*



Dianne & Sarah Comparing Notes

does not stop with their own work. By supporting and investing in other nonprofits, they are helping create more opportunities, strengthen more communities, and amplify excellence far beyond their own walls."

Dianne Duva from Arlington Financial Advisors expressed this:

"Congratulations on an impressive Leadership Summit and

Board meeting. The thoughtfulness, preparation, and care that went into both events were evident throughout. Your hard work and dedication to making a positive and lasting impact in the Portland area are truly inspiring. The most inspiring part of the day was watching all the different nonprofit leaders fellowship together, with shared purpose and goals. Inspiring and encouraging one another with the words and ideas that were left for them to contemplate."



The Walters Foundation aspires to invest in our nonprofit partners in many ways, including celebration, education, inspiration, and investments.

Fall 2026 Award Winning Nonprofits

By Tamberly Couch, Secretary/Treasurer

In August of 2026, the Walters Foundation board gathered to review the summer applicants for the recipients of grants. The criterion includes reviewing each applicant's mission, financial statements,



Walters Foundation Board & Guests



Tamberly Couch

and nonprofit eligibility. We look to see if these nonprofits match our giving guidelines as listed on our website, which include focusing on women and children at risk in the State of Oregon. When done well, giving the foundation's money is only a small part of its activities. To give is not the end game. Then why does the Walters Foundation exist? TO EFFECT CHANGE and create future leaders in the state of Oregon! Site Visits, executive coaching, and conversations emphasizing the mission of the organization are all tools that we use to create even better products for effective and positive changes. We think that the answer to many of Oregon's problems is to develop proper leadership. From where does that leadership come? Is it only political? Or can your organization become an effective leader for positive change? We look carefully at all the grant applicants for not only their financial need, but their ability to effectively lead in Oregon's bigger picture!

Congratulations to the following nonprofits who received grants this Fall!

Tucker Maxon School

This great organization provides wraparound services to deaf and hard of hearing children, including speech-language pathology, clinical audiology, and teachers of the deaf. In 1947, teacher Alice Maxon declared "deaf people can learn to talk," and with a financial investment from philanthropist, Max Tucker, she and five families established a school teaching exactly that. These students are integrated into the which works superbly to the desire those with deafness.



dear deaf hearing population of students to teach talking in a new way for



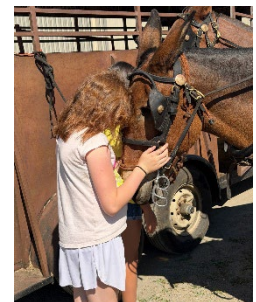
For just two years, from 2023 -2025, Tucker Maxon was able to offer elementary students the benefit of a dedicated science teacher at school. They saw improved science test scores and increased scientific curiosity in our students. Unfortunately, due to a decline in enrollment in the 2025-26 school year, they were not able to accommodate this position. The Walters Foundation is assisting in reintroducing this important role, which will cultivate greater educational outcomes for these students. Perhaps you would join us in assisting the education of children, including the deaf by visiting the website of the [Tucker Maxon School](https://www.tuckermaxon.org/) to learn more about how you can assist in their program. <https://www.tuckermaxon.org/>

Reach Northwest

Reach Northwest is a community-based nonprofit serving Polk and Yamhill Counties. Working alongside Child Welfare, community partners, volunteers, and foster and kinship families. They provide practical resources, meaningful connections, and relationship-based support that strengthen foster and kinship families and assist in improved outcomes for children in foster care.



Our work in the Walters Foundation commits to improving the lives of children and families throughout Oregon. We are honored to partner with Reach Northwest through the Coordinated Foster Support Initiative to ensure more foster and kinship families receive the right support at the right time, so children can experience greater stability, healing, and hope.



Join us by reviewing the [Reach Northwest](https://www.reachnw.org/) website to see how you can bring stability, healing and hope for children who experience foster care. <https://www.reachnw.org/>

My Father's House

My Father's House is a nonprofit organization established in 2001 in response to the critical shortage of *family* shelters in Oregon. The families they serve have often been



affected by childhood trauma, abuse, addiction, and the generational impacts of poverty. All programs at My Father's House emphasize responsible living and empowered decision-making. Staff walk alongside families with support, guidance, and training, while ensuring residents retain full ownership of their progress.



The Walters Foundation aims to help renovate the living spaces used by the families participating in **My Father's House** program. Families in their shelter are actively working toward lasting stability. With this support, this program can provide housing that is safe, comfortable, and well-maintained. Creating a condition that supports positive change will promote positive outcomes for both parents and children. Please join us in supporting the

My Father's House renovation by visiting their website. <https://familyshelter.org/>

Maurice Lucas Foundation

The work of the **Maurice Lucas Foundation (MLF)** is guided and inspired by the legacy of its namesake, the legendary Portland Trail Blazer who, alongside friend and teammate Bill Walton, carried the city to its only NBA title in 1977. Born and raised in Pittsburgh, Maurice came to love his adopted city of Portland and cared deeply for the community. He sought to empower youth by creating opportunities, especially where little existed.

Today, His son, David Lucas serves as the Executive Director of his father's Foundation. Along with MLF partners including families, teachers, coaches, schools, organizations, and funders, they continue to create a community of champions who provide transformational opportunities and experiences for youth through a flagship Academy Program. The Walters Foundation is investing in their Workforce Readiness Program. Please join us in supporting **Maurice Lucas Foundation** by visiting their website. <https://ml20.org/>



Tamberly Couch Visits the ML Foundation Team

Golden Road Arts

Golden Road Arts was founded in 2019 by Barbara Maxon



*Cliff Walters &
Barbara Mason*

to help fill a gap by providing sequential arts education opportunities that foster creativity, skill development, and academic enrichment for elementary students. Research consistently demonstrates that students who participate in visual arts education show



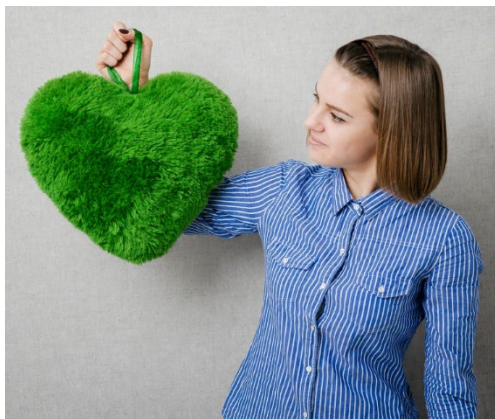
Golden Road Arts Staff

stronger academic performance, improved attendance, and increased engagement in school. Arts education also strengthens creativity, critical thinking, and self-confidence—skills that help young people succeed both academically and personally.

The Walters Foundation is thankful to partner with **Golden Road Arts** to assist them in continuing their mission. Help us to support the arts and the subsequent kid excellence in school by visiting their website at: <https://www.goldenroadarts.org/about-golden-road-arts/>.

Congratulations to the **2026 Fall** Award Winners!

*Tucker Maxon School
Reach Northwest
My Father's House
Maurice Lucas Foundation
Golden Road Arts*



What Do Foundations Do Besides Give Money?

by Clifford Walters, MD

Foundations are generally set up by older folks with funds that they wish to donate



to other nonprofits often in perpetuity after they have passed. This fulfils a need to keep helping beyond their lives. However, not everyone has huge sums of money like some of the billionaires who also create foundations. So, the fund from which to draw is often small. Those sitting on the board may wonder why our organization is still functioning when the financial help is so minimal or so it seems.



Clifford Walters

However, I submit for your consideration that regardless of financial size, a good foundation does way more.

Foundations do more than just give money. They convene partners, build nonprofit capacity, encourage innovation, share expertise, and help strengthen other organizations for long-term impact.

Some of the common roles in which foundation can engage include several activities such as:

1. Foundations support nonprofits not only through funding, but also by convening partners, strengthening leadership, encouraging innovation, and sharing strategies that improve long-term impact.
2. Convening nonprofits, government researchers, and community leaders will help focus on a specific issue.
3. Assisting nonprofits with general activities of fundraising will point out how to do things better or more effectively.
4. The support of nonprofit staff training, leadership development, governance, and infrastructure will lead to better outcomes.
5. Investing in innovation among many nonprofit activities opens the new opportunity for nonprofit growth.
6. Working on attracting attention legitimacy will help develop additional funding from other organizations.
7. Spreading successful practices to other nonprofits will open new thinking.



These are, but a few ideas that foundations can do. Nonprofit Executive Directors can easily get caught up in the busyness of their work and miss the mission for which they were hired. It is easy to fall into the trap of just seeking new sources of money. But we contend that if you

do a good job, stay mission focused, create awesome communication, the money will often follow. So, foundations can do a lot to help nonprofits excel at what they do.

The Walters Foundation mantras have sought to highlight these factors. Our mantras have included:



Think Differently

Be the Change

Mastering Change

The Art of Influencing

Seek Greatness Over Good

Move to Think

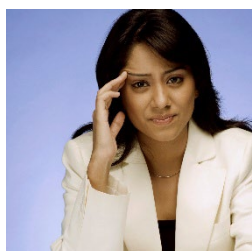
All these short ideas have helped keep the Walters Foundation focused. We share them with our nonprofit partners in the hope they will also be helped by such ideas.

Our board will continue to push the envelope to be innovative, creative, and even controversial at times if it stimulates other nonprofits to reach to new heights of excellence in the work of helping other people.



Foundations can:

- Convene nonprofits, government agencies, researchers, and community leaders around shared concerns!
- Help organizations strengthen leadership, governance, and infrastructure.
- Encourage innovation.
- Share ideas that improve effectiveness.



In many cases, a foundation's guidance, credibility, and relationships can be just as valuable as its grants in helping nonprofits achieve lasting impact.

In summary, a foundation can act as a partner, strategist, convener, advocate, and investor - not just a source of money.

Oh, by the way, do you have a **MANTRA**?

Turning Friction into Fuel: What Our Opening Speaker Taught Us About Conflict

By Randall Unterseher

When Dianne Duva took the stage at the Walters Foundation Leadership Summit, she wasn't afraid to start with a word most executives try to avoid - CONFLICT!



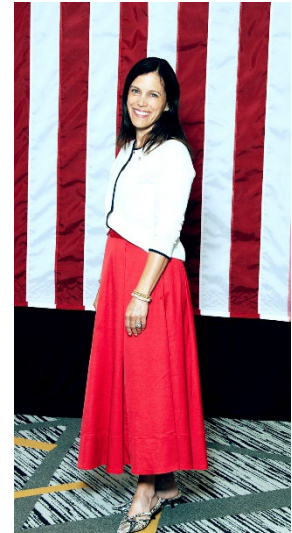
Randall Unterseher

Duva, a Managing Partner at Arlington Financial Advisors, overseeing more than \$1.5 billion in client assets, has spent her career navigating the kind of complex, emotionally charged situations most people sidestep. When you're guiding high-net-worth families through major transitions and business owners through existential decisions, you learn something corporate training modules often miss. Conflict isn't a bug. It's a feature.

Why We Get Conflict Wrong

We're conditioned to see conflict as damage control, a sign something's broken. But Duva offered a different definition. Conflict is simply any situation in which your concerns differ from someone else's. In ambitious organizations where people care about their work, conflict becomes a mathematical certainty. It's not a failure. It's inevitable.

The real question isn't, "How do we eliminate conflict?" It's, "What do we do with it?"



Dianne Duva, CFP

The Attitude That Changes Everything

Duva grounded her answer with William James: *"Whenever you're in conflict with someone, there is one factor that can make the difference between damaging your relationship and deepening it . . . and that factor is attitude."*



Dianne Duva Presenting

Leaders who excel don't view disagreement as a threat to authority. They see it as a signal that someone has an insight worth considering, or a blind spot the team should address. This pivot is the difference between organizations that stagnate and those that innovate.

Healthy Conflict vs. Toxic Conflict

Healthy conflict is disagreement in a supportive environment where people push back on ideas and work through problems together.

Toxic conflict is personal - featuring name-calling, disrespect, cliques, and silence. Workplace friction typically stems from different perspectives, proximity, interdependence, and unmet expectations. The biggest mistake leaders make? Avoiding the conflict. That sounds peaceful, but unaddressed friction festers and becomes part of your culture in invisible ways.



Dianne Engaging Leadership Attendees

Five Ways to Engage

The Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument offers five approaches. The skill is knowing which to use when:

- **Avoiding:** Step back, buy time. Risk – You might fester problems.
- **Accommodating:** Yield, maintain perspective. Risk - You could lose influence.
- **Compromising:** Split the difference under time pressure. Risk - You lose the big picture.
- **Competing:** Stand firm on vital issues. Risk - You stop learning, end up with "yes people."
- **Collaborating:** Dig into underlying concerns. Risk - It takes time.

The power move? Flex between these modes.

What Managers Often Get Wrong



Audience

Many tell themselves: "It's their problem. I shouldn't get involved." That's a failure of leadership. When you stay on the sidelines, teams fracture, morale declines, and what started as hurt feelings becomes an operational or even a legal disaster.

If you're managing people, managing conflict is your job. Use this three-question framework:

1. **Identify** - What is the real conflict underneath this?
2. **Select** - Which approach fits this situation?
3. **Initiate** - What's your opening sentence?

The Real Goal Isn't Winning

The goal is to protect the relationship, the team, and the outcome.

Keep doing these:

- Understand conflict
- Address it quickly
- Listen actively
- Focus on the problem, not personality

Stop doing these:

- Don't interrupt or attack
- Don't ignore feelings
- Don't impose your values

The Challenge Ahead

Duva left everyone with a reflection: *Is the conflict on your team a good thing? Is it a bad thing?*

Your answers reveal whether you're building your team up or silently breaking it down. The organizations that thrive aren't the ones without conflict! They're the ones where leaders have learned to turn disagreement into insight, and friction into fuel.



Dianne Making Final Key Points

WALTERS FOUNDATION BOARD AUGUST 2027



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