For the Love of Radical Giving

GIA Reader Podcast Miniseries

Episode 5: Appalachian Futurism

Full Episode Transcript

segment 1

take a roadtrip with me

narrated by your host, **Tom Tamayo Young**
feat. the song "Marching to the Freedom Land" by Will Boyd feat. Kelle Jolly

[*jazz music playing*]

Kelle Jolly

[*singing*] I ain't gon' to let nobody turn me around,
turn me around, turn me around.

I ain't gon' to let nobody turn me around.
I'm gonna keep on walking, keep on talking, marching to the freedom land.

[*music fades out*]

Host

[*overlapping with music*] **For the Love of Radical Giving**, you are tuning into a GIA Reader miniseries that deconstructs traditional philanthropy and celebrates the joy and power of giving out of love. I'm your host, Tom Tamayo Young. I'm a proud co-founder of Vital Little Plans and Artist Giving Circle and Flannel & Blade, a queer-owned communication shop for good. Take my hand as we jog through some incredible interviews with radical visionaries who are actively working on reshaping this philanthropic landscape towards a more just and equitable future for all.

[*jazz music fades in*]

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[*music fades out*]

Host

Appalachian Futurism. While it sounds like some rad sci-fi book, it's far from fantasy. This vision is about reclaiming Appalachian identity, reclaiming a narrative forced onto these hills and hollers for generations. It's about resilience, interconnection, and the collective power to shape what comes next. Appalachia with

its deep and complex history is finding new ways to build a future from its roots. A future that remembers what was lost and what must be protected.

So why Appalachia? Why am I taking our journey here? As we explored back in episode one with Michele Kumi Baer, American philanthropy has its roots in extraction. Wealthy industrialists like Andrew Carnegie built empires by draining Appalachia of coal, iron, and labor, fueling economic growth while leaving behind scarred landscapes and vulnerable communities. Those same fossil fuels that made fortunes are now driving the climate crisis, producing carbon emissions that contribute to rising sea levels and increasingly severe storms. Hurricane Helene, which recently tore through this region, is a stark reminder. Rising ocean temperatures from fossil fuel emissions intensify storms, flooding communities and destabilizing soils already weakened by generations of mining and deforestation. And its Appalachia's most marginalized communities that bear the heaviest burdens. Black Appalachians whose ancestors were brought here as enslaved labor. Indigenous communities fighting for stewardship of their own lands. And queer and trans Appalachians navigating rural isolation and violence all face the compounded effects of economic hardship, environmental degradation, and targeted marginalization.

Yet these same communities are at the forefront of resilience and renewal. Crafting a future built on mutual aid, cultural reclamation, and collective care. As we return to Appalachia, we're also revisiting philanthropy's legacy built on the very industries that continue to harm this region. In our last episode, we challenged philanthropy to be accountable for its roots in this system of extraction and exploitation.

Today we'll see how radical collective giving can do what traditional philanthropy has not, restore, empower, and finally give back to the community's long asked and forced to sacrifice. This is Appalachian Futurism, a tribute to the past and a blueprint for a new way forward.

Let's get started, shall we?

[*theme music transition*]

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segment 2

lay of the land

with guest **Joe Tolbert, Jr.**, *Waymakers Collective*
begins at 4:10

Joe

I think it's paramount that we support artists because they are the keepers of radical dreams.

Host

This is Joe Tolbert, organizer minister, cultural strategist and executive director of the Waymakers Collective, hailing from Knoxville, Tennessee.

Joe

People practice self-determination in the mountains and the valleys in our region every day. They must for their survival. We fit into the work of generations and generations of Appalachian people.

Host

Take us back so we can better understand how this region got to where it is today.

Joe

Like many places in what is now known as the United States, it began with stolen people on stolen land, with the displacement of indigenous people from our region and how enslaved Africans were exploited. And we know that a lot of the titans of industry benefited from that exploitation.

Host

Typical narratives of Appalachia are associated with mountains, mining and poor white folks.

Joe

I see that being perpetuated in current media landscapes because I feel like the people who control the media control the narrative, and it's often one that has benefit to perpetuate it as being this monocultural white poor space. And I think that does us a great disservice because then we aren't talking about immigrant populations that are moving into Appalachia and the resistance of indigenous people and Black people finding ways to create a region where they can live.

Host

Similarly to the Philadelphia Assembly, remember our friend Wit? And the Waterers with Holly and Joua. The Waymakers Collective grew out of a $4.5 million gift from ArtPlace America to support an equitable, healthy and sustainable Appalachian future. How do artists factor into this vision?

Joe

I think it's important to support BIPOC artists and creatives and cultural workers, particularly because they can help us envision the future. Using the arts and creative endeavors can also help us vision and move forward to what repair can look like.

Host

The Waymakers boldly and beautifully hold this term Appalachian Futurism at the core of your vision. Where do you see this in action?

Joe

Appalachian Futurism for me in practice is people literally creating the alternatives on the ground and life-affirming culture. For example, when the historic flood hit Eastern Kentucky and West Virginia, so many people rallied together to not only address the needs of people who were impacted by the loss of their homes and property. People also started to talk about what does climate resilience look like in our region? Because all of these things are tied back to those colonial things around exploitation of land and people.

Host

These interconnected challenges call for interconnected solutions.

Joe

And that practice of interconnectedness I think is something that I hope is a part of our Appalachian future. And how through this horrible moment, that traumatic moment that many people experienced, new discussions were birthed about how to be climate resilient and what does it mean to be climate resilient and prepared for the next disaster.

Host

I'd like to pause here and note that this interview was recorded a week prior to Hurricane Helene, which has similarly devastated parts of Appalachia, most notably Asheville, Western North Carolina and Eastern Tennessee. This flood, much like the one in 2022, has once again displaced families, destroyed homes and ravaged communities already grappling with economic hardship and environmental degradation. As Joe's alluding to, the 2022 floods birthed critical discussions about climate preparedness that feel all the more urgent now as we once again see the region rallying together in the face of climate catastrophe.

Joe

But all of that for me hinges on a practice of interconnectedness. Everybody collective work and responsibility. All of those things are concepts that I see being seeded now in our current conditions that we're facing so that we can embody something different that leads to different outcomes in the future.

Host

And as you navigate towards those brighter futures, how do you nurture the present to get us there?

Joe

We try as best we can to fund the whole person. If people aren't worried about how they're going to make ends meet, what art and what creative bandwidth and power that they can have as individuals and organizations when they know that these things are taken care of?

Host

What does funding a whole person look like in practice?

Joe

There was one collective member who was like, "I was able to fix my car with the general operating grant because now I can get to my gigs and I can tour the region more." Again, how do we fund the whole person and know that the art can grow and become stronger once we alleviate some of those pressures that are a result from those very same systems and structures related to extraction of people and resources.

Host

The cyclical nature of this is insidious and still you're equipping and connecting those most impacted to tackle these complicated challenges.

Joe

I feel like part of that for us as a region is how do we practice community determination? That to me is the next level from just thinking about the individual self, allows people to be in conversation with us and flow the resources to the places that need it the most. Hopefully through that part of our work, it can lead to

different outcomes for the future of our region because people can begin to network and bring that interconnectedness to a different scale so that we can begin to envision on the macro level the best of what our region can be.

Host

What can funders do to support the actualization of this vision?

Joe

Where have you not been looking? And where can you look to see the innovation that's happening? Because a lot of the people that we've been fortunate enough to fund are visionaries, are doing things that our region isn't known for because of the dominant narratives that control the way people see us as a region and people.

Host

What strategies can the philanthropic field adopt to better equip those most affected by these layers of challenges to realize the futures that they see?

Joe

Collective governance I think will become more and more of a needed thing the deeper we get into this poly crisis of climate, economic and all the things. And so I think that's how we are challenging traditional philanthropy in showing that if you trust the community, they can be trustworthy and give the best of themselves in service of a greater good.

Host

And where do you find inspiration and joy in this work, to continue the great responsibility forward?

Joe

We are the movements we seek to make. And so if we are well resourced emotionally, spiritually, that is what gives me joy. Just seeing the seeds, I may not ever see the crop grown to fruition, but just seeing maybe a sprout starting to break through in the way that people are forming community across difference, across geographies. We are staying on that track of what communities are needing.

[*theme music transition*]

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segment 3
rematriating the land
with guests **Tiffany P.** and **Taysha D.**, *Appalachian Rekindling Project*
begins at 12:05

Tiffany

Rematriation is about restoring things and also honoring that indigenous women have always been land defenders, have always been water protectors. And that as we're looking for solutions to the many problems that we have, we should look to indigenous women to lead that work.

Host

This is Tiffany P.—artist, writer and co-executive director of the Appalachian Rekindling Project.

Taysha

I see it as original instruction as well. This is what we're asked to do while being here. It's not living on the land, it's living with the land. And that's a value in what does that look like in principle and then in action?

Host

This is Taysha D.—activist, organizer and co-executive director with Tiffany. The two founded ARP to, among other rematriating efforts, create, build and fund an Inter-Tribal Center in Appalachia. The project stands as a testament to the Land Back movement.

Tiffany

For us, land is a relative. Land isn't a resource that you sit upon. Land is, and I like to explain it to people as a relation that you don't want to be far away from your relative, you don't want to not have access to it, you don't want to not be able to take care of it. The land is this relative that we deserve to take care of because the land deserves to be taken care of.

Host

So what is it about this land in particular, Appalachia I mean, that's resulted in such hardships over generations?

Tiffany

Land has always been power. Our colonizers dreamed big and land was their first grand dream for their use of Appalachia. And it was so resource rich. So as the removal of our people opened up the way for the slave trade and plantation usage of the land, and that would later transfer into the use of extraction as those industries opened up.

Host

As we talked about in our last episode, these horrors are all a part of an interconnected system of oppression that you all are actively fighting against.

Taysha

Some of the things that we tell folks is that a decolonization of Appalachia will happen when people see it. And that is what's going to happen through our project. And that it is also very important as we're dealing with the impact of extractive industries and the impact of the environment, that this is a regenerative solution.

Host

So where does the Inter-Tribal Center fit into all of this?

Tiffany

Appalachia has always been essentially hot real estate. The Land Back movement does necessitate that land be returned. The thing is a lot of people will say, "But there weren't native people in Appalachia or those connections are so distant now." Regional repair happens intertribally. Regional repair happens in us sharing territory and accepting land as a gift.

Host

[*ding sound effect*] The land as a gift!

Tiffany

And in holding that well and holding it together and creating a resource for our people. I think it builds power to create spaces for indigenous people to be in the region and also be in the region at no cost to them. That's a feature of our project is that this Inter-Tribal Center that we're building can be reserved by communities for extended periods of time. We can provide that. We can say, "Come, we'll leave the porch light on for you," essentially. And that plays into Appalachian hospitality.

Host

This radical generosity is at the heart of your work—at the heart of this podcast! You're healing the land from all its intersectional wounds against these overlapping systems of oppression.

Taysha

The Liberation Movement of Black folks and of abolition as a movement. We have to have that solidarity with the indigenous sovereignty and the rights to stewardship and land. And that right there, like Tiffany said, is threatening. The moment that we really come together and make that commitment without any conditions.

Host

And when we think about these commitments in practice, one of the deepest expressions of solidarity is in giving people access to their own resources and home.

Tiffany

It's inherently powerful to allow people access to their homelands. I know that something I dreamed about for a long time was, what would it be like to have the permission to take care of my homelands? And people used to tell me, "You shouldn't have to ask for permission." But the sad reality is that many people do have to ask for permission. I believe I was born for this place and it's my obligation to care for it, but it was always this wild dream.

Taysha

We're breaking reality, we're breaking those chains of even when we started sometimes this project, people would try to tell us how we're supposed to do this. So we built power within ourselves as individuals to come together and not ask permission to move this work.

Host

For those of us at home who might not feel these barriers as directly, there are still ways for us to support this work. One of these is through a voluntary land tax in which you gift a small portion of your income to a local tribal government or indigenous, such as ARP for our listeners who live in or fund in Appalachia.

Tiffany

Ultimately what the land tax is is a way for people to be good guests on the land. Ultimately, we're not asking people to leave indigenous land, but we are asking for something beyond an acknowledgement.

Host

Beyond an acknowledgement. See, participating in land tax connects us non-indigenous folk directly to critical work happening on the ground.

Tiffany

It is a way to be in right relationship with indigenous people, to acknowledge that native people should be in Appalachia. It's troubling that there aren't more native people in Appalachia. It's troubling that people talk about the region and say that it has always been white.

Host

That's exactly the narrative that this Inter-Tribal Center and your other land rematriating projects dismantle. You are reclaiming a future for Appalachia that's grounded in truth and real presence.

Taysha

We're talking about for the future of Appalachia and we're talking about wanting people to really be rooted in what that means outside of this national narrative that gets pushed on us, has been exciting for folks.

Host

The risk of following this white-dominated narrative and ignoring the root issues goes beyond hurt feelings. Convenient narratives fall short in the face of crises where collectivism and mutual aid become essential. How does the project put this into practice?

Taysha

There's so many people who are flocking to come buy up land because they're running from the wildfires in California or from the rising sea levels in Florida. And as part of that mutual aid is protecting this land so that if there is those major disaster that the folks that are going to be able to respond are going to be folks that will be able to respond and be your neighbor in those situations.

Host

It should be noted that we also recorded this interview just days before Hurricane Helene hit. Now some might picture Appalachia as a place of rugged individualists. Everyone fiercely independent and separate. But what I'm hearing from recovery stories on the ground is quite the opposite.

Tiffany

There is a narrative about Appalachia that everyone has to be alone and separate and deeply individualistic because we're really operating from this place of scarcity and there's not enough to go around, so you really have to defend what you have. And we are very much challenging that narrative and saying, "No, the way that you have what you need is to be together." But ultimately the narrative of this place has stripped us from the land because putting us on the land changes how people have to interact with it.

Host

Is that why storytelling is so integral to Appalachia's DNA?

Taysha

Storytelling will first bring us together to let us know that we're a lot more alike than what is being told to us. And then using that to tell how and to show how. Us physically being there is going to be a catalyst for those things to happen.

Tiffany

Our presence and the increase of indigenous people as they will filter through the center, hopefully using the space, using the land, being in relationship with that place, challenges people's concept of why did they have to create the barrier to begin with? And what do those things mean? And that upends a lot of systems of oppression. And I can't wait. I can't wait.

[*theme music transition*]

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segment 4

rural queer stories

with guest **Rae Garringer**, *Country Queers*
begins at 21:10

Rae

I grew up on a farm an hour outside of a town of 3,000 people. We didn't get internet and very slow dial-up internet. And so books I think, as a country kid on a farm in the Allegheny Mountains of West Virginia, books were my exposure to the world off the farm. It makes me so happy to imagine other isolated, rural queer and trans people having something to hold in their hands that's not a screen, that's full of our stories. You know what I mean?

Host

This is Rae Garringer, oral historian, author, goat farmer and founder of Country Queers, a multimedia oral history project documenting LGBTQIA2S+ experiences.

Rae

I drove 7,000 miles in 30 days and did 30 interviews and it was wild with a flip phone and a paper atlas. And I stayed with complete strangers in their houses, which I think to some people sounds dangerous, naive, sketchy. And people took such good care of me, fed me, sent me with food, just that hospitality of country people and of queer people combined. And at the time, in 2014, people were like, "What? Yes, we need this. Come to Texas. Come to Mississippi. Come to Oklahoma."

Host

Rae recently published their book, Country Queers: A Love Letter, which is a beautiful tome of full color photos and interviews with rural folk from West Virginia to Mississippi to New Mexico.

Rae

I want rural people. I want rural queer and trans people. I want rural youth. I want our communities to be places where media makers and creators and artists can stay and can thrive and can have the support that I know if I was willing to move to New York or LA and could afford it, the funding opportunities for this kind of project are drastically different than what they are in Southern West Virginia.

Host

So where did you come up with this idea to elevate rural queer voices?

Rae

I'd been lied to by omission about the fact that there were queer people where I grew up. But then also in this national context in any kind of mainstream media or even national queer organizing spaces, I think rural queerness had been completely erased from those spaces as well.

Host

Ironically, while queer folks play huge roles behind the scenes in making media, we rarely see ourselves depicted in the content, or at least until very recently. And when queer folks do show up, they're often marked by tragedy.

Rae

In Brokeback Mountain, which came out in 2005 when I was in college. And I will say I love that movie, I'm really into a butch for butch gay cowboy romance. But one of them is murdered in the end. And so the only stories that were available about rural queerness were first of all about white masculine people and second of all, someone is killed in the end for their queerness or their transness. And so that's the landscape of rural queer media in a mainstream sense when this project started.

Host

Is that what drove you to starting this project?

Rae

I was like, "Well, that doesn't seem like enough to me." That isn't the experience that everyone that I know now that I've moved home and I'm meeting young people through the STAY Project is having. This is definitely not representative of all of the layers of intersections of identities that rural queer and trans

people across this country are navigating in addition to different geographies and climates and political realities and economic realities.

Host

And as we know, this isn't just about representation, it's about who writes the story and who's listening.

Rae

There's so many communities, marginalized communities, that have such a long history of being documented and studied from the outside. It's definitely something that Central Appalachia has a long history and experience with what can happen when people from a really different place come in with a pre-existing set of stereotypes about the place and not a lot of curiosity. And then make media or stories for the audience back home and that becomes the mainstream narrative of a place absent from any actual engagement or agency or decision-making or autonomy of the people who are being documented.

Host

This type of outsider storytelling has real consequences. It skims over the true complexities and rich diversity within communities like Central Appalachia, especially in narratives that make up election coverage when every nuance gets flattened into one oversimplified story.

Rae

There's no time like a national election cycle to see the ways in which rural communities get completely flattened into this monolith of Trump country. It's like this flattened very white, very Christian, very conservative, broad strokes depiction of a huge, widely varied, incredibly diverse, vast majority of the so-called United States.

Host

This oversimplified portrayal doesn't just distort the public's view, it fuels a sense of isolation within these communities. When everything is boiled down to a single narrative, the feeling of being misunderstood or entirely unseen becomes all the more real.

Rae

There can be some really extreme feelings of and realities of isolation, I think, for rural queer and trans people, especially in spaces where you're really far from a major city with a thriving scene. Like in a state like West Virginia that doesn't have a city like that in the whole state.

Host

So what are some ways that we can bridge this gap? How do we start seeing the change that connects rural communities to essential resources and networks?

Rae

I want high-speed internet for rural people everywhere so that we can actually engage in all sorts of things. Educational opportunities, employment opportunities, community building options, political

education. I mean, so much happens online and when you can't get internet, you're just automatically cut off from so much of the world.

Host

Despite our country's failing and mostly inaccessible infrastructure, you've managed to successfully create connections to isolated folks across both space and time.

Rae

So it is really about documenting our present but also our past. And I do think a lot about the past and I think a lot about the elders I have been able to talk to and have a lot of grief about how many rural queer elders we just will never know.

Host

It's heartbreaking to think about how many rural queer elder stories have been lost. Voices that carried wisdom and resilience, but maybe never found the space to be heard.

Rae

I think there are so few rural queer elders that I've gotten to know in my lifetime, even with this project. And I hope that's not true for the queer and trans babies in this county right now. You know what I mean? And I know it's already different. There's small town pride festivals happening in the past five years across Central Appalachia that weren't happening 10 years ago. So I do think and I hope that there's so many more opportunities for them throughout their life.

Host

Do you have reason to believe we'll see the change needed to make those opportunities real for young queer and trans people?

Rae

I feel like queer time moves really fast in some ways. And so in 2013, marriage equality hadn't passed yet. And now in 2024, we've had over 580 anti-trans bills introduced in this year. And then here we are in this really pretty intense and terrifying particular moment I think for trans youth especially. And I think rural areas and small towns are the new front lines of queer and trans liberation movements in these times.

Host

It's a daunting reality, but moments like this show the potential for connection to carry this movement forward.

Rae

Every once in a while, there's a moment where I can feel that hopefully this project is really bridging generations of rural queer people.

[*Marching to the Freedom Land instrumental music transition*]

segment 5

place justice in knoxville

with guests **Ty Murray** and **Kalil White,** *The Bottom*
begins at 29:25
feat. the song "Marching to the Freedom Land" by Will Boyd feat. Kelle Jolly

Ty

André 3000, one of my favorite artists, said, "The South got something to say." We do and I hope that we are heard and I hope that our stories are amplified and I hope that Appalachians have a seat at the table. And if not, I hope that we have the resources to build our own table and that we have room to invite others to take a seat.

Host

This is Ty Murray, activist, photographer, radio DJ and director of art and communications for The Bottom, a cultural organization that houses a Black empowerment bookstore and a community art space in Knoxville, Tennessee.

Kalil

So having these unique experiences where people can deal with clay and understand what an underglaze is or for them to try to make candles or to decorate a cake. Having those experiences to not think about the financial barriers of how am I going to purchase these items or how am I going to sign up for this class that I can just sign up and not give a cent, but know that my community is going to support me to bring this creative aspect to me.

Host

This is Kalil White, community development organizer, environmental steward and operations director for The Bottom.

Ty

A lot of our work now is two-fold. It is to make sure that that history still lives on and it's to make sure that we are doing what we can to reclaim Black place, Black safety and Black space.

Host

The Bottom was founded in 2019 by Dr. Enkeshi El-Amin, with their flagship programming engaging youth at the intersection of entrepreneurship and sewing. It has since grown into community-owned space with programs for Black creatives. So where's the name come from?

Ty

The Bottom is named after the first Black neighborhood in Knoxville that was destroyed by urban renewal. We were founded by a sociologist studying Black race and place in Appalachia. She discovered the history of The Bottom throughout her research. And a lot of her participants had feelings of

displacement, like an overwhelming amount of displacement, and she was trying to uncover why is this, why do Black people not feel like they belong in Knoxville?

Host

This history highlights a pattern we've seen in so many places. Knoxville, like many cities across the US, faced waves of urban renewal that disproportionately uprooted Black communities, often under the guise of progress. It's not just about the physical destruction of homes, but the deep, lasting impact on people's sense of belonging.

Kalil

I think the unique challenges that Black Appalachians face is really around place justice. When we think about how place and having a sense of place and a sense of home and belonging is so important to building a community around. And a lot of communities throughout Appalachia has faced that ripping of their place being from them. So where they were either forcefully pushed out, homes were destroyed, or just environmental conditions provided them that they had to leave. Not having that sense of place was difficult for them to figure out how they can build upon or build anew.

Host

This idea of place justice is so central to the work being done at The Bottom. So how do you turn that idea into something tangible, especially when it comes to arts and culture?

Ty

So year round, our bookstore is utilizing literature as a tool for education and liberation. And our permanent studio spaces serve as long-term investments into Knoxville's creative ecosystem. I think all of that is how we preserve our identity, but also give space for folks to grapple and transform what our identity can mean in the face of erasure.

Host

It's more than just keeping history alive. It's about creating space for Black folks to imagine what their identity could be moving forward.

Ty

We're coming from a history where our humanity as Black communities has been physically denied and also socially diminished. So a lot of our work within our space, it starts with affirming our community, letting them know that they are human, that we see them. So sentiments like, "I see you. You are welcome here. You can take up space here. Your artwork is amazing. Your business is needed." That has been transformative.

Host

That affirmation piece is so crucial, especially when it's happening in a space where folks can feel truly seen and valued. But it's not just about acknowledging someone's presence. It's about actively creating room for Black stories and perspectives to thrive.

Ty

With having a Black empowerment bookstore, that was a very intentional choice. Within the narrative of US history, I think Black narratives have always been othered or pushed aside. And that is just from the origin of our country, which had been on the labor of slavery and chattel slavery, even how a lot of Black Americans got to the Americas.

Host

So it's not just about reclaiming history, it's about making sure these stories are accessible, especially now when so much is being erased from public education.

Kalil

There was people doing the work in the Appalachian regions that are notable and should be recognized that it's not being taught in schools, when we think about critical race theory and banned literature. So having access to knowing about the freedom fighters and knowing about the history before us is so important, especially when we think about this next generation. If they don't see how someone else before did it, how would they feel like they have the power to be in to take those steps?

Host

Your work stands at the intersection of place and narrative. You're literally using storytelling as a way to fight rapid urbanization.

Kalil

So when we think about gentrification, it comes with this sense of erasure. It's erasing not only a physical space, but people, stories, livelihoods, laughter. It's removing a culture of people out of a space. The existence of our organization addresses that historical idea of erasure throughout American arts, culture and narrative storytelling and the way that we share the kinship in our Black expression with others.

Host

Your presence is a testament to the resilience of this work in practice. How have you managed to make it through the challenges of the last five years?

Ty

The Bottom is not the first community organization in Knoxville who set out to do good work. However, there's not many spaces that could have autonomy to own their space. A lot of spaces, a lot of these organizations were booted out because they couldn't pay their rent. And knowing the changes of gentrification, there's a baseball stadium being built, and that is also coming with some larger changes for our communities, is knowing that we need to share space.

Host

Owning your own land and property is a critical foundation for building a sustainable future. But sustainability isn't just about financial independence, it's also about how we take care of each other in times of hardship.

Ty

When we speak about mutual aid, that's an Appalachian legacy. Because this region had been historically underfunded by the government, everyone had to take, you have three eggs, I have a bag of flour, they have a gallon of milk. We're combining all that we have together to create this bread. And I think we learned that in the pandemic, we actually have enough to care for ourselves if we really think about it. And if we all got in the spirit of sharing is caring, we would all be able to sustain ourselves and our communities a lot more than if we just tried to compact and compile all of our resources as an individual. So much more goes if we are coming together as a collective,

Host

[*ding sound effect*] *For the Love of Radical Giving!* Mutual aid isn't just a concept, folks. It's a long standing practice in Appalachia and across the world where communities have relied on each other to fill in the gaps left by systemic neglect. But here's the challenge for us listening in. Grassroots organizations like The Bottom don't just need our admiration, they need tangible support. This is where as allies, we step up.

Kalil

I say, if anything that I want them to take away from this call is to open your purse to grassroots orgs. Open your purse, don't ask questions about how it's getting gone, but let the community make the decisions.

Host

And the best way to ensure your gift goes as far as it can is to invest in communities for the long haul.

Kalil

The idea of actually doing multi-year commitments and funding a generation. Not funding a concept or a hot topic for the moment, but really funding a generation to move on to the next step. We're seeing what's happening of years and years in generational impact and trauma that's come through a lot of different communities. And if we want to make some real change, it has to be done on a generational scale.

Host

And as we look to the future generations in Appalachia, what's the lasting message that you carry with you? How do you hold on to that vibrancy, that unwavering light, even in the face of so many challenges?

Ty

I think gentrification comes with an element of erasure. And what we're doing is saying, "We're still here. And you might try to hide or whitewash, but we are still here. We're vibrant and our light has not been dimmed." And once you come and see how vibrant and how beautiful and how vast we are and how vast our culture has been and how vast and beautiful our culture will remain to be.

[*jazz music playing*]

Kelle Jolly

[*singing*] I ain't gon' to let nobody turn me around,
turn me around, turn me around.

I ain't gon' to let nobody turn me around.
I'm gonna keep on walking, keep on talking …

[*music fades and overlaps with host*]

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segment 6
wrap
narrated by your host, **Tom Tamayo Young**
feat. the song "Marching to the Freedom Land" by Will Boyd feat. Kelle Jolly
begins at 39:05

Host

We covered a lot of miles today. How's everybody feeling?

Before we wrap, I wanted to take a moment to acknowledge the Hood Huggers who were originally slated to join us from Asheville, North Carolina. They're among those hit hardest by Hurricane Helene and our hearts go out to them and the community in their recovery efforts. You'll find links to donate to local mutual aid organizations in our resources section on the GIA Reader website. If you're able, please consider supporting their journey back to stability.

We began with Joe who reminded us of the power of Appalachian artists as keepers of radical dreams and the legacy of self-determination that flows through these hills. We heard from Tiffany and Taysha who are leading the Appalachian Rekindling Project to reclaim land as a relative, bringing indigenous stewardship and rematriation back to the region. Rae shared the importance of rural queer storytelling, showing how telling our stories preserves Appalachia's past while making a space for a more inclusive future. And finally, Ty and Kalil shared their story of The Bottom, as they continue to celebrate and honor their home story to establish a regenerative home for generations. I hope you take their gifts with you today.

Throughout these conversations, one thing is clear. Appalachia's future lies in the hands of those who understand and honor its past. Storytelling and especially oral histories have always been central to Appalachian culture. A way to pass on wisdom, preserve resilience, and ensure that no one is erased from this place's legacy. Radical giving then isn't just about wealth, it's about restoring power and memory to those who continue to shape their liberatory futures. So if you're feeling inspired, you can support this work through mutual aid organizations and setting up your voluntary land tax. Of course, I hooked you up with links and resources to get you started in the website.

In our next and final episode, we'll dive even deeper into the power of narrative, how stories, art and activism shape the world around us, break down the constraints of capitalism and inspire collective action.

You are not alone in your radical pursuits and I hope you find community at GIA or in other spaces to support you in making necessary changes to your actions within philanthropy. Check out the GIA Reader website for resources and more information about this episode's guests. I want to take a moment to thank all of our guests for their contributions, to GIA for hosting and producing this miniseries, to Flannel & Blade for your ongoing support, and to Nadia Alokta for your friendship, guidance, wisdom, and wealth of knowledge. And thank you for listening!

This has been **For the Love of Radical Giving.**

Give often. Give lovingly. Give radically.

[*jazz music transition*]

Kelle Jolly

[*singing*] Keep on singing. Keep on preaching. Keep on singing.

Keep on teaching. Keep on praying. Keep on teaching. Keep on praying.

Keep on walking. Keep on talking. Marching to the freedom land.

[*music ends*]