

The Heinz Endowments have teamed with a secretive left-wing group

CHICAGO

Pittsburgh is home to a new liberal funding organization that lists its priorities as the local environment, land use and "sustainability." However, its affiliations raise questions about its real purpose.

Known as the Tides Center for Pennsylvania, formerly the Tides Center for Western Pennsylvania, it is a creation of the Tides Foundation and Center, headquartered in San Francisco, and two Pennsylvania-based foundations — the Vira Heinz Endowment and the Howard Heinz Endowment — chaired by Teresa Heinz Kerry, heir to the Heinz food company fortune and wife of Democrat presidential contender Sen. John Kerry of Massachusetts.

What makes the pairing with Tides troubling is that organization's secretive funneling of cash from private foundations — such as Heinz, the Pew Charitable Trusts and many others — to extreme left-wing activist groups whose interests include exclusion of humans from both public and private lands, anti-war protests, opposition to free trade, banning of firearms, abolition of the death penalty, unlimited abortion rights, gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender advocacy, and environmental extremism.

How it's done

Tides works like this: When a high-profile donor wants to give money to a group with an extreme agenda but doesn't want its fingerprints on the donation, it simply gives the money to The Tides Foundation in the form of a "donor- advised donation." Tides then passes that money on to the desired recipient, masking the real source of the cash. As anti-war activist Drummond Pike (who set up the Tides Foundation in 1976 for the express purpose of keeping donors' identities unknown) told the Chronicle of Philanthropy, a publication for the nonprofit world, "Anonymity is very important to most of the people we work with."

And, the amount of "hidden money" handled by the Tides Foundation is considerable. Since its founding, the relatively little-known foundation has made more than \$300 million in grants. In 2002 it amassed assets of \$139 million and had an income of \$59.3 million. Between 1995 and 2001, \$4.3 million of that money came from the Howard



Vira I. Heinz



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Howard Heinz

Heinz Endowment. In 2002, it and the Vira Heinz Endowment blessed The Tides Center, a San Francisco spin-off of the Tides Foundation, with another \$190,000 while the two endowments gave \$1.6 million to the new Tides Center for Western Pennsylvania.

If all this movement of money between the Tides Foundation, Tides Center, two Heinz Endowments and Pittsburgh's new Tides Center for Western Pennsylvania has you shaking your head, let's talk about your money. You, the taxpayer.

Public underwriting

Nearly \$8 million in taxpayer money flowed into the Tides Center in the form of federal grants made by eight different agencies between 1997 and 2001. They include the Environmental Protection Agency, the Department of Housing and Urban Development, the Department of Agriculture and the Department of Energy. Does this mean your tax dollars also are going to fund the Tides Center for Western Pennsylvania, a creation of the Howard Heinz Endowment, which in 2001 was worth a breathtaking \$788.6 million in 2001? With the Tides Center for a partner, we will likely never know.

What we do know is that, with Tides as a partner, the Heinz Endowments now keep interesting company.

Friends of Heinz

The Tides Center also manages the Youth Gender Project whose goal is to "empower and

support transgender, gender-variant, intersexed and gender-questioning youth and young adults." I freely admit, not all of these terms are in my spell-checker.

Grant recipients also include the Iraq Peace Fund that has so far granted \$489,000 to 27 groups to promote anti-war marches and their coverage by the news media, as well as the mission of one of those groups, *MoveOn.org*, whose purpose is to defeat George W. Bush.

While groups such as these and dozens of others organized and/or financed by the Tides Foundation and Center are relatively recent in their origin and transient in their nature, many are more established and pervasive in their influence.

The Ruckus Society, which received more than \$200,000 in Tides money between 1999 and 2002, was begun in 1995 to train activists in violent protest against biotechnology, globalization and the World Bank. It incited property destruction in the Seattle riots of 1999 and Washington, D.C., the following year. However, Ruckus director John Sellers didn't see the wanton destruction of property as being violent at all. He told *Mother Jones* magazine, "I make a distinction between violence and destruction of property. Violence to me is against living things. But inanimate objects? I think you can be destructive, you can use vandalism strategically. It may be violence under the law but I just don't think it's violence."

The Natural Resources De-

fense Council, another Tides project, destroyed many apple farmers in Washington state with its phony Alar pesticide scare.

It "leaked" a false report that Alar, used by the state's apple growers there, caused cancer, particularly in children. Even movie stars signed onto the hoax, testifying before Congress about Alar's dangers. Sales of apples plummeted before the hoax could be debunked.

Finally, the American Medical Association concluded, "The Alar scare of three years ago shows what can happen when science is taken out of context or the risks of a product are blown out of proportion." Unfortunately, that conclusion came too late to save the livelihoods of many growers.

Unfortunately, too, it came too late to prevent NRDC from cashing in to the tune of \$700,000 from a book on the bogus scare.

But that seems to be what Tides and its dozens of its related organizations are about: money, a flagrant disregard for the truth, and even disdain for the law.

Those capitalistic old American entrepreneurs Howard and Vira must be spinning in their graves.

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