

Chicken & Egg Pictures Announces ‘AlumNest Relief Fund,’ in Partnership with Women Make Movies, Offering Over \$230,000 in Grants to Women Documentary Filmmakers Impacted by COVID-19; New Board Members Also Announced

NEW YORK, NY (Aug. 25, 2020) — **Chicken & Egg Pictures**, a leader in supporting women and gender non-conforming nonfiction filmmakers, announced today that they have launched the [AlumNest Relief Fund](#) to offer support to their alumni filmmakers going through financial hardship due to the effects of COVID-19.

Since its inception in 2005, Chicken & Egg Pictures has awarded over \$8 million in grants and provided creative mentorship to over 320 talented, diverse women and gender non-conforming nonfiction directors from around the world. The **AlumNest Relief Fund** was established as an emergency response initiative following Chicken & Egg Pictures’ spring survey of grantees in their AlumNest alumni program to determine how the pandemic has impacted their lives. From the survey, they found that 64% of their global filmmaker respondents have experienced loss of jobs such as permanent employment, gigs, and work for hire at the start of the pandemic; and 60% have indicated the crisis has had an impact on their emotional and mental health. Many filmmakers lost all or nearly all their sources of income and indicated that the professional and personal issues they are facing are interrelated, with one issue triggering or exacerbating another. Over **\$230,000** has been raised for the Relief Fund thus far, which will provide grants of \$1,000 to Chicken & Egg Pictures supported filmmakers from around the world who have been financially impacted due to COVID-19.

To disburse the grant funds, Chicken & Egg Pictures has partnered with **Women Make Movies (WMM)**, which provides distribution, production assistance and fiscal sponsorship to women filmmakers. Grants to the first round of eligible applicants were distributed in July with another round to take place this fall.

“It has meant a lot to our team to have been able to create this Relief Fund for the hundreds of filmmakers who are dedicating their lives to making films that address injustice and inequity,” said Chicken & Egg Pictures Executive Director Jenni Wolfson. “We know that artists’ lives have been upended as a result of this global pandemic, and even more so for women and marginalized communities. At Chicken & Egg Pictures, we highly value and nurture our community, and this was a clear moment to come together and provide additional financial and moral support.”

As a further gesture to help alleviate financial pressures on filmmakers, Chicken & Egg Pictures waived the entry fee for its **(Egg)celerator Lab** open call for emerging documentary filmmakers program, where ten directors receive specialized mentorship and \$30,000-\$40,000 toward their first or second feature-length documentaries.

The organization made another recent move to help serve its community of filmmakers during this challenging time. The **Project: Hatched** completion fund, originally designed as a program that supports women nonfiction directors as they prepare for a festival world premiere of a feature-length documentary and develop a strategic engagement campaign, was reshaped to support impact-driven filmmakers whose festival premieres were canceled and who plan to launch their films and impact campaigns in new ways. The program's latest [slate of projects](#) was announced in July.

Project: Hatched recently received a \$100,000 grant from the New York Community Trust from their Elizabeth Meyer Lorentz Fund.

Finally, Chicken & Egg Pictures announced the addition of three new members to its 11-member **Board of Directors**:

Meredith Chin is a first-time documentary producer (*Duty Free*). She began her career as a communications leader at Facebook and led communications for Instagram after it was acquired by Facebook in 2012. Meredith has consulted for several early stage start-ups to develop company narratives and support in growth and social strategies and currently also invests in and advises startups led by women and people of color.

Kit Crawford is an owner and board member of Clif Bar & Company, a leading maker of nutritious and organic foods and drinks. Additionally, she is president of the Clif Bar Family Foundation and serves as a strategic advisor to LUNAFEST®, a national traveling film festival of short films by, for, and about women that has raised \$5 million for grassroots women's organizations.

Nancy Stephens is an actor and president of the Rosenthal Family Foundation. Nancy is an advocate for both environmental sustainability and justice, as well as advocating arts for all. She and her husband, filmmaker Rick Rosenthal, have supported socially relevant documentary films such as the award-winning film *The Square* and the Oscar®-nominated short *Open Heart*, as well as being Executive Producers of *Won't You Be My Neighbor?*, *Dark Money*, and *Always in Season*. Nancy is a political fundraiser in Los Angeles for Progressive Democrats and serves on the boards of the Union of Concerned Scientists, Americans For The Arts and the LA Arts for All Pooled Fund.

ABOUT CHICKEN & EGG PICTURES

Chicken & Egg Pictures supports women nonfiction filmmakers whose artful and innovative storytelling catalyzes social change. We envision an inclusive media industry in which women filmmakers, representing a range of experiences and backgrounds, are fully supported to realize their artistic goals, and to build sustainable and fulfilling careers. Chicken & Egg Pictures was founded in 2005 by Julie Parker Benello, Wendy Ettinger, and Judith Helfand. Since inception, the organization has awarded over \$8 million in grants and thousands of hours of creative mentorship to over 320 filmmakers. For additional information please visit: <http://chickeneggpics.org/>.

PRESS CONTACT

Susan Norget | susan@norget.com | 917-833-3056
Jenni Wolfson | jenni@chickeneggpics.org | 718-619-4155