



## News Release

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## **New Board Members, Staff and Donor Help Grow the Sun Valley Institute**

*Institute ensures lasting quality of place by advancing solutions for  
economic, ecological and social resilience*

- **Jeffrey Hogue, Chief Sustainability Officer of C&A Global, joins the Sun Valley Institute Board of Directors**
- **SVI has received a transformative grant from the Heinz Family Foundation**
- **SVI Advisory Board adds five new members: Steve Meineke, Kristin Hull, Katherine Himes, Harry Weekes, and Andy Castellano**
- **Mike Gordon and Lexie Praggastis grow the staff of SVI**

*Ketchum, Idaho -- [The Sun Valley Institute](#) is expanding its impact with the addition of new staff, advisory board and board members, and a significant gift from a new donor.* New board member, Jeffrey Hogue, has years of global sustainability strategy experience and passion for place as a fourth generation cabin owner in the area. A donation from the Heinz Family Foundation will launch SVI to its next level and provide catalytic funding to the Sun Valley Youth Forum, organized by and for high school-aged leaders to build new initiatives for impact. Mike Gordon joins the SVI staff as Events and Communications Manager and Lexie Praggastis will now run SVI's Finance and Operations. Finally, five new Advisory Board members expand the wealth of knowledge Sun Valley Institute can tap into as it continues to catalyze change for a better future locally and globally.

“With these powerful resources, the Institute is growing to meet ever-increasing needs for greater resilience in our community and far beyond. We founded the Institute in the wake of the 2013 Beaver Creek Fire realizing that we must turn our risks into opportunities to become a model and resource to others in our rapidly changing world,” said founder and Executive Director, Aimée Christensen, just-named an *Idaho Business Review* 2020 “Woman of the Year.” “Expanding our capacity for building resilience as a strategic convener, provider of expertise and carrying out vital programs in local food and energy, is vital to our community’s well-being, with our annual Sun Valley Forum catalyzing projects around the world.”

“SVI’s Local Food Alliance continues to support the growth of a resilient food and farming system for the region with our \$5 for Farmers campaign and supporting the development of local cold storage and food processing,” said board member, Scott Lewis. “This growth is vital to benefit farmers and the food industry, and food buyers and consumers, through our region.”

“SVI’s energy program is building resilience by supporting more local energy production and developing backup systems for critical infrastructure such as fire, police, communications and medical. SVI’s global reach and partnerships including with energy companies and Idaho National Laboratory is bringing technologies and capital to our region to benefit our economy, environment and security,” said board member, Wendolyn Holland, author of Sun Valley: An Extraordinary History.

As Chief Sustainability Officer of C&A Global, Europe’s largest retailer with 2,000 stores in 21 countries worldwide, Mr. Hogue is responsible for heading up the global development, coordination and delivery of C&A’s sustainability strategy worldwide. “Jeff’s inclusion on the Sun Valley Institute board lends a wealth of experience to our systemic approach of addressing risks and building circular solutions for our future. His work on the Gold Cradle to Cradle standard for C&A products is a game-changing example for the kind of solutions we need to scale up,” says Christensen. “His multigenerational connection to our region drives Jeff’s passion to help preserve our quality of place.”

New staff members Mike Gordon and Lexie Praggastis add needed capacity to further SVI’s mission. “I am thrilled to be a part of the Sun Valley Institute,” says Events and Communications Manager, Mike Gordon. “I look forward to helping the Institute continue to implement their ambitious vision and working with this dedicated and talented team.”

The addition of five Advisory Board Members continues to deepen the knowledge and resources of Sun Valley Institute. Steve Meineke is the President of the Board of Camber Outdoors, whose mission is “Equity for all from the Backcountry to the Boardroom” in the outdoor industry and Operating Partner at Roundhouse Collective. Kristin Hull, Ph.D. is founder and CEO of Nia Impact Capital, a women-led Registered Investment Advisor leading the charge to change the face of finance by hiring and training women and people of color in sustainable and transformative investing. Katherine Himes, Ph.D. directs the James A. & Louise McClure Center for Public Policy Research at the University of Idaho. Harry Weekes is Head of School and Founder of The Sage School in Hailey, Idaho, an independent, grades 6-12 school dedicated to honoring adolescence and the role they play in constructing thriving communities. Andy Castellano is transitioning from his role as a founding member of the SVI board to an advisory role. Mr. Castellano’s primary focus is on clean energy, where his background in electrical engineering intersects his passion for protecting our environment.

Finally, Sun Valley Institute has received an impactful grant from the Heinz Family Foundation to support the 2020 Sun Valley Youth Forum and general operating expenses. In its inaugural year, the Youth Forum attracted young activists and leaders to Sun Valley for three days of learning and action. Participants worked alongside global leaders and visionaries attending the Sun Valley Forum to “Claim Our Future.” The Sun Valley Youth Forum was founded and organized by high school-aged leaders working urgently to improve the world of their future.

“The generous donation from the Heinz Family Foundation supports the growth of SVI in its work to build resilience in our very special part of Central Idaho, and critically, the grant will grow the reach and impact of the Youth Forum at a time when youth around the world are showing the way to a better future,” Christensen emphasized. “We can’t wait to see what our Youth Council leaders will do in the Youth Forum’s second year, and are excited for 2020 to be our best year yet!”

## **About the Sun Valley Institute**

*The Sun Valley Institute builds lasting quality of place through resilience, making our region a model, catalyzing action here and far beyond. Sun Valley leaders founded the Institute in the spring of 2015 to protect and enhance local quality of place for future generations of residents and visitors alike, and to serve as a resource for communities everywhere. From the original Native American inhabitants to the miners and ranchers of the valley's early days, from the Union Pacific engineers who built the world's first chairlift to those who challenge themselves in its mountains and rivers today, Sun Valley is about history and tradition, grit and perseverance, well-being and quality of life. The risks, assets and values of Sun Valley make it the perfect home for an institute dedicated to resilience. For more information, please visit: [www.sunvalleyinstitute.org](http://www.sunvalleyinstitute.org) and follow the institute on Twitter @SunValleyInst and Instagram at @SunValleyInstitute and Facebook at facebook.com/sunvalleyinstitute*