



## The Story of the Gray Family Foundation Fir Cone

It's a story that Oregon children can hold in the palm of their hand: the story of the mice and the Douglas fir cone. As the tale goes, a great fire scorched the forest, and the mice needed a place to take cover. The Douglas fir took the mice in, providing protection and seeds for food. Today, children can still see tiny "mice tails" poking out from the fir cone and learn to identify a Douglas fir tree—an early connection to this place we call home.<sup>1</sup>

Like the forest, the Gray Family Foundation continues to grow and evolve. We felt it was time to update our branding and mark to reflect where we've come from and where we want to be in the future, as we continue to advance John and Betty Gray's belief that understanding and appreciating our natural world is a crucial part of a child's education.

### Enter the Douglas fir cone.

A shift from our previous mark, a fir tree, the cone represents a new beginning, and one full of promise. Just as the cone protected the mouse and the seeds within, we seek to support and lift up the knowledge, creativity and inspiration of communities across Oregon. We strive to do that work for and with communities who face systemic policies and practices that result in disparities. With its cultural significance for tribal communities, the fir cone also acknowledges that we are doing this work on the land of those who have cared for it since time immemorial.

Beyond the trees, the cone is a visual reminder that the real strength of the forest ecosystem comes from how each of the parts—the cones, the seeds, the mice, and the trees—work as a collective. Nothing could be truer of our diverse Oregon communities. We recognize the role philanthropy can and should play as part of the larger ecosystem is to address the assumptions and practices that reinforce inequities in these communities. At the Gray Family Foundation, our commitment is to acknowledge and remove barriers and work with communities to create supportive frameworks for ideas, innovations, and opportunity.

Held in a young hand, the fir cone is ultimately a seed of hope for a future in which, working in synergy, we may support every Oregon child as they connect with, learn in, and care for this beautiful place we call home. Together, may we sink our roots down, extend our limbs out, shelter one another, breathe the clean air, and tap into our deepest strengths and creativity—not alone, but as an ecosystem.

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<sup>1</sup> Some versions of this story are attributed to native peoples of the Northwest, but no specific source could be identified.