



## Background

Carson Barnett's fund at MCF lives up to its name. The Scout Fund seeks opportunities to provide seed funding to new organizations with innovative approaches to existing problems. MCF's Venture Impact Program (VIP) allows her to do this, by providing a vehicle that enables impact investing through philanthropy. Her support of fledgling company, Sway, is a great example of VIP in action.

## Story

Carson is connected to **Berkeley SkyDeck**, the startup accelerator of UC Berkeley. It's through this connection that she was introduced to Sway. Sway describes itself as "a design-driven materials lab on a mission to replenish the planet with the regenerative power of seaweed." It had recently been announced as a winner in Ideo's "**Beyond the Bag Challenge**", an initiative sponsored by Target, Walmart, CVS, and others, to reinvent the experience of getting goods home. As a person who cares deeply about the environment, Carson was intrigued.

Upon investigation, Carson discovered two things: Sway's packaging solution has the potential to harness the power of seaweed to create compostable replacements for single-use plastics and eliminate plastic-based pollution - and that they urgently needed start-up capital to prototype and test their ideas.

Carson saw that this is an opportunity tailor-made for VIP. So she made a \$100,000 seed investment in Sway. Sway's *first* investment.

The impact was immediate. Sway was able to leverage this investment as a sign of confidence in the organization, and pitch it to other potential investors. VC firm **FutureProof** signed on for another \$250,000 and the pipeline looks promising.

## Outcome

Carson's hope was that her investment could serve as a catalyst for Sway and it has done just that. She's also happy that her fund was able to perform "double-duty": support an organization with enormous potential, and, in time, have the investment returned to her fund for future deployment.

