



## 2009 Public Policy Platform MAKING CHANGE ON A STATEWIDE LEVEL

Grantmaking helps some women deal with today's issues, but our Public Policy reform work is vital to preventing every Colorado woman from encountering the same problems tomorrow. In 2009 The WFCO and its Women and Family Action Network will focus on Public Policy reform in the following areas:

### Colorado Benefits Management System

The Colorado Benefits Management System (CBMS) is the computer system used by the state and county human services agencies to determine an applicant's eligibility for public assistance in a number

of programs, including but not limited to the following:

- Food Assistance
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families
- Aid for the Needy and Disabled
- Old Age Pension
- SCHIP
- Medicaid

The CBMS is currently a barrier for low-income families seeking temporary public assistance. The database has not functioned correctly since its implementation and there are many negative outcomes, including poor customer service, long delays

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### MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

#### Weathering the Storm

*During this time of economic uncertainty, we thank you, our supporters, for your continuing support of the women and girls of Colorado. Thanks to your generosity, the Foundation is well positioned to weather the storm and continue to serve the needs of women and girls throughout our state. We are realistic about affecting public policy change during a time of severe state budget cuts, and also deeply aware of the sharp increase in basic needs such as food and housing. We are thoughtfully investing*

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**PLEASE HELP** us update our mailing list! If you get more than one newsletter delivered to your home or office, or if they are addressed to individuals who are no longer at that location, please contact Susan Walters at [susanw@wfc.org](mailto:susanw@wfc.org) or 303-285-2965, so we can update our records. Each edition of the WFCO newsletter is available on our website, at [www.wfc.org](http://www.wfc.org). If you are interested in helping us transition from printed to electronic newsletters, please contact Susan with your email address. You'll be helping us conserve resources, as well as reduce our costs.

**WFCO**  
newsletters.

## Message from the President

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*your dollars to impact the greatest number of women and girls. We are hopeful for a future for our state and country that reflects a return to prosperity. And we are deeply grateful for the opportunity to help shape that future.*

*Thank you for your passion for our work. We couldn't do it without you.*

## Junior League partners with WFCO to educate on the Cliff Effect

*A grassroots education program about the Cliff Effect in Colorado was recently launched, a product of the strong partnership between The Junior League of Denver and The WFCO. Junior League members are now prepared to take the message about the Cliff Effect out into the community.*

*Thanks to a generous \$15,000 grant from JLD, staff from The WFCO provided a 'train-the-trainer' session. Junior League members were provided with a Party-In-A-Box toolkit, stocked with tools necessary to throw a successful Cliff Effect Education house party. House parties are an effective way to spread the message of the Cliff Effect and prompt people to take action to mitigate its effects.*

*If you'd like information about holding your own house party, please contact Rowena Naidoo at [roweenan@wfc.org](mailto:roweenan@wfc.org).*

## 2008 ANNUAL DENVER LUNCHEON RAISES \$850,000!

Laughter, joy and giving echoed through the walls of the Colorado Convention Center on November 13, 2008, as approximately 2,400 donors, friends, community leaders and corporate sponsors came together for The Women's Foundation of Colorado's annual fundraising luncheon with keynote speaker comedienne and co-host of ABC's *The View*, Joy Behar. The 2008 luncheon was co-chaired by **Arlene Hirschfeld** and **Caz Matthews**.

Honorary Trustee Merle C. Chambers made a generous gift announcement during the luncheon to match every gift or new pledge at the luncheon to the *Fill the Purse* Campaign, up to \$50,000. Chambers is a former WFCO board chair and longtime supporter of The WFCO, and has included The Foundation in her enduring philanthropic legacy to help support the organization's mission to improve the lives of women and girls in Colorado.

"We are thrilled with the turnout and success driven at our annual luncheon," said Gretchen Gagel McComb, President & CEO of The WFCO. "From Joy's humorous keynote of a woman on a mission to success to Merle's incredibly generous matching gift offer, we are so pleased with the entire event. Through the money raised we are able to continue to fund programs and research to help create positive change for women and girls in Colorado and guide them on a path to economic self-sufficiency."

Many thanks to our sponsors that helped fuel our success: Co-presenting spon-

sors were **Bank of Choice** and **Holme Roberts & Owen LLP**, and the Corporate partner was the **Gay & Lesbian Fund for Colorado**. Our media partners are **Comcast**, **CBS4**, **Post-News Community** and **Denver Woman**. The speaker was sponsored by **Aetna** and the VIP reception was sponsored by **Anthem Blue Cross Blue Shield**.

In addition to the keynote and speakers at the luncheon, we announced the **Fill the Purse** campaign to raise money and awareness to help reduce the Colorado high school girls' dropout rate and continue to support research and advocacy efforts. During the luncheon, ten candy-apple red purse sculptures made out of fiberglass and resin, representing different communities in Colorado, were unveiled and will be roaming throughout the state over the next six months, to be filled with donations at regional events and outreach programs.



*2008 Board of Trustees Chair Mary Stuart introduces Honorary Trustee Merle Chambers at the 2008 Denver Luncheon, in front of the purse sculptures.*

## Fill the Purse / Power The Change Endowment Campaign

The goal of the *Fill the Purse* campaign ([www.fillthepurse.org](http://www.fillthepurse.org)) is to raise \$1 million by July 2009; this \$1 million will be a part of The WFCO's larger *Power the Change* endowment campaign, which aims to raise a total of \$15 million by July 2009. To date over \$10 million has been raised. The endowment campaign will:

- Provide funding so The WFCO can support research pertaining to why girls drop out of school.
- Increase grant funding for both women and girls.
- Sustain and increase awareness around the state about the pressing needs of women and girls.
- Assist in public policy pertaining to issues affecting girls.
- Improve financial stability for research, education, public policy and grantmaking. Suffragette Elizabeth Cady Stanton once said, "A woman will always be dependent until she holds a purse of her own." The WFCO is working to *Fill the Purse* to help build a better future for Colorado's women and girls.

Visit [www.fillthepurse.org](http://www.fillthepurse.org) for more information.

## Mark Your Calendar



### WomenGive Luncheon

- February 19, 11 a.m.-1 p.m.
- Fort Collins Country Club

WomenGive is our partnership with the United Way of Larimer County. Members, friends and prospective members, come celebrate our success, revisit our mission, enjoy the company of like-minded philanthropists! Get more info at [www.uwaylc.org](http://www.uwaylc.org).

### 2009 Legislative Breakfast

- March 3, 7:30-10 a.m.
- Chambers Center, Denver

Learn more about our 2009 Public Policy Platform at our Second Annual Legislative Breakfast, featuring guest speakers Rich Jones, The Bell Policy Center; Linda Meric, 9 to 5 Association of Working Women; Tracey Stewart, Colorado Center on Law and Policy. For more information or to RSVP please visit our website: [www.wfco.org](http://www.wfco.org).

### WFCO Annual Meeting

- March 19, 5:30-7 p.m.
- Chambers Center, Denver

Hear an overview of 2008 and our plans for 2009 and beyond. RSVP on our website: [www.wfco.org](http://www.wfco.org).

### Grand Junction Luncheon Honoring Women

- April 23, 11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m.
- Two Rivers Convention Center, Grand Junction

Watch our website for details about the program, and tickets and sponsorship information: [www.wfco.org](http://www.wfco.org).

### Equal Pay Day Rally

- April 28, Noon
- Capitol Building steps, Denver

If we're going to be "in the red," we might as well wear it proudly to show our determination to end the wage gap. Join us on the Capitol Steps at noon!

## CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

Through different award programs, The Women's Foundation of Colorado honors the work of three individuals who demonstrate a commitment to Colorado's community of women and girls. Nominations are currently being accepted for both programs.

### Dottie Lamm Awards

The Dottie Lamm Award was created to engage young women in philanthropic work, to honor their academic and community service efforts and to foster future leaders in our community. Current high school sopho-

mores are eligible for this 2-year program. Nomination and application forms are available for download from our website: [www.wfco.org](http://www.wfco.org). Nominations are due not later than **5:00 p.m., March 2, 2009**.



From left: Dottie Lamm, with 2008 awardees Emily Marquess & Marissa Shevins

## TIDBITS TIDBITS

### Welcome New Board Members!

The Women's Foundation welcomes six new members to its Board of Trustees in 2009: **Wade Buchanan**, Denver; **Kelly Condon**, Denver; **Cile Chavez**, Littleton; **Gail Kellogg**, Steamboat Springs; **Lynda McNeive**, Englewood; and **Pam Smith**, Cordillera.

We also offer a fond farewell to **Kathleen Eck**, **Lee Everding**, **Joanna Little**, and **Dean Prina, MD**, who have all completed their terms of service with our board. We'll miss you!

**Congratulations** to **Jody Camp**, Director of Programs, and **Kelly Fox**, Development Manager, who recently gave birth to charming baby boys. **Brody Camp Shepherd** was born on December 12, and **Shaun Thomas Fox** was born on December 20.

### Unique Woman of Colorado Award

Nominations are also being accepted for the Unique Woman of Colorado Award. This award is presented annually to one living woman who has left her indelible mark on the community; she has demonstrated leadership and used her influence and example to create a more equitable society for Colorado's women and girls. The Unique Woman of Colorado award is a collaboration between the Denver Post, Lockheed Martin and The Women's Foundation.

For more information and nomination forms please visit our website: [www.wfco.org](http://www.wfco.org). Nominations are due **April 24, 2009**.

## WFCO Empowerment Council Launched

The Women's Foundation is pleased to announce the formation of the Empowerment Council, a committee of young and energetic professional women interested in the fundraising, policy-making, research and development activities of The WFCO. Founded in September 2008, the Empowerment Council's mission is to effect change and contribute to the empowerment of Colorado's girls and women through economic self-sufficiency.

The Empowerment Council is chaired by WFCO P.E.P. Club member Kelley Bergelt, and is comprised of 13 women working in a variety of professions throughout the Denver metro area. The committee will participate in fundraising and informational events for women interested in contributing their time and resources to the mission of The WFCO. If you are interested in learning more about the Council, please contact Kelly Fox at [kellyf@wfco.org](mailto:kellyf@wfco.org).



# WFCO 2009 Public Policy Platform Issues

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in processing applications, inaccurate notifications to clients regarding their status, high turnover of county staff and denial of access to basic goods such as food and health care.

These work support benefits are critical to Colorado families living below the self-sufficiency standard and they supplement the high costs of a household's basic needs. Chief among a family's needs is food. Per the Denver Post, 258,000 households across Colorado use food stamps (October 22, 2008). Nationwide, Colorado is 48th in funding for the food stamp program, yet the state's outreach efforts target less than 50% of the eligible population (USDA, July 2008). The State has asked food stamp advocates to postpone any outreach campaigns because the CBMS is not functioning well enough to handle what would be a significant increase in new applications (Burton, August 2008). Member organizations of the CBMS Coalition, as well as partner organizations of the Colorado Anti-Hunger Network and the Rocky Mountain Food Bank, have been actively seeking solutions to this unacceptable result.

## Pay Equity

The WFCO continues to support the 14 recommendations for

the Pay Equity Commission and will participate and elevate the Equal Pay Day activities in April 2009. Equal pay for equal work is a key strategy in increasing a woman's wages and enabling her on the path to economic self sufficiency.



*2008 Equal Pay Day Rally on the steps of the State Capitol building.*

## Pay Day Lending Restrictions for the State

Predatory lending costs Colorado consumers tens of millions of dollars a year in stripped home equity and excessive interest. It also traps families in a cycle of debt that can be devastating. Part of the problem can be attributed to Colorado's lax standards for the payday loan industry and loose regulation of mortgage brokers who cater to borrowers with spotty credit histories.

Sources both inside and outside the industry suggest that payday lending impacts women disproportionately. In a Utah survey, 62 percent of respondents were women. An industry newsletter describes the customer base as being over 60 percent women. And one payday lender's business

plan blatantly states that "welfare-to-work mothers [are an] excellent opportunity for check cashing and cash advance businesses." Women are particularly vulnerable to this form of economic exploitation.

## Earned Income Tax Credit Reinstatement for the State

As a tax credit and wage supplement for low-income workers, the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) plays a critical role in providing resources to low-income families to make work pay, and to help them make ends meet. Research has shown the EITC to be an effective poverty alleviation tool that can help low-income families to offset short-term difficulties due to job or income loss or more generally as they work to meet financial obligations. It also acts as a substantial economic stimulus for the communities in which these low-income working families live, particularly in those that have high concentrations of EITC recipients.

If you are interested in learning more about our 2009 Public Policy Platform, join us for The Women's Foundation of Colorado's **Second Annual Legislative Breakfast: Tuesday, March 3, 7:30-10 a.m.**, in The Garden room of The Chambers Center. For more information or to RSVP, visit our website at [www.wfco.org](http://www.wfco.org).

## DOUBLE THE POWER OF YOUR GIFT!

Thanks to a generous matching grant from the **Gay & Lesbian Fund for Colorado**, P.E.P. Club members have a special opportunity to double the power of their gift for Colorado's women and girls! For a limited time, all new or increased P.E.P. Club pledges will be matched for the first year. P.E.P. Club members' multi-year support allows us to make better plans, fund more powerful projects and make a sustained difference. Contact Eve Powell at [evewp@wfco.org](mailto:evewp@wfco.org) for more information about how you can take advantage of this match!

## Volunteer/Internship Opportunities with WFCO

We have immediate openings for interns to work in our Denver office on several projects within the Program department. This is a challenging, inspiring work environment with opportunities for interns to explore their own strengths and interests. Please send a current resume with cover letter to [roweenan@wfco.org](mailto:roweenan@wfco.org).

The Development department seeks volunteers to assist in general office work and mailings throughout the year. Please e-mail [susanw@wfco.org](mailto:susanw@wfco.org) if you are interested in assisting.