

Mission Driven.

Vol. 1, 2016

Catching Dreams and Building Them

Photo by Kit Williams



Storytellers of the Ojibwe speak of the Spider Woman who took care of the children and people on the land. Based on their narratives, when the Ojibwe Nation grew, the Spider Woman couldn't reach all the children, so she needed mothers and grandmothers to weave magical webs for them using willow hoops. The "dreamcatchers"

would filter out bad dreams, allowing only good thoughts to enter.

This past year, I traveled the state to connect with the legacy of The Women's Foundation of Colorado (WFCO) through generous donors and impactful programs. I visited the Vail Valley region and spent time with our community partner Girl PowHer. Girl PowHer's mission is to empower young women mentally, emotionally, and physically to ensure each girl graduates and reaches her full potential in life. The program works with more than 100 girls annually, almost half of whom are English Language Learners (ELL).

When I arrived, a dozen junior high girls were making dreamcatchers. They patiently explained the process to me through language and laughter and then gently helped me make tiny knots. As we worked together, Indian Country's multigenerational and cultural traditions seeped into the



Lauren Y. Casteel and participants of Girl PowHer build dreamcatchers together in Eagle, CO.

spirit of the room where we sat in a circle creating, bonding, and supporting.

Why do I share this story? As 2016 begins to unfold it could become challenging to keep negative thoughts out of our minds. Every day our news feeds are saturated with concerning issues and images from around the globe. Through all

of this, we must hold on to our dreams of what's possible for women and girls and filter out what we find discouraging.

For many single mothers within our state, normal challenges that come with providing for families are exacerbated – by limited access to jobs that provide a living wage or tentative capacity to secure stable and affordable housing, food, or high-quality child care.

*I will look beyond the problems to the solutions
I will look beyond the obstacles to the opportunities
I will look beyond the impossible to the possibilities
I will look beyond the darkness to the light
When others doubt, I will provide courage and inspiration
When others quit, I will demonstrate strength
and determination
I cannot do everything, but I can do something
What I can do, I must do
What I must do, I will.*

-Mychal Wynn, National Black Child Development Institute

Our partnership with the Colorado Center on Law & Policy in 2015 produced the *Self-Sufficiency Standard for Colorado 2015*. This report tells us that in Grand Junction, a single parent with one pre-schooler and one school-aged child, and who makes minimum wage, must work 106 hours per week to meet her family's basic needs.

We must hold tightly to the dream that child care in Colorado will become more accessible and affordable so that single mothers can reach economic self-sufficiency while their children are given opportunities to learn and grow. We must hold tightly to the dream that job training and education for single mothers will become more attainable so they can find higher-paying jobs. And we must remain steadfast in our commitment to turn these dreams into realities.

As we embark on a new year, we can't magically eliminate all barriers, but we can work together as a community of giving to ensure that regardless of backgrounds or circumstances, women and men can collectively build a web of resources necessary to address immediate and long-term needs and ultimately prosper. Together we can catch dreams and build them.

Lauren Y. Casteel
President & CEO

GLC Leads the Way in Colorado and Beyond

Each summer, the Girls' Leadership Council (GLC) brings together 20 diverse and talented high-school junior girls across the state to help them build leadership skills and create change for women and girls. We are inspired by updates from several GLC alumnae on the differences they are making in their own communities, in Colorado, and across the globe.

Brigitte Nguyen traveled to Florida for the service project Give the Kids the World.

Ayushi Kaul won the Rotary Club award for service and began a neuroscience internship at Colorado State University.

Crystal Perez volunteers at Garden Place Academy to help improve literacy rates among low-income elementary school students.

Briana Makumbi spends up to 18 hours per week teaching Sunday school, doing peer tutoring, and leading her youth ministry.

Kiera Armintrout donates her time to First Tee of Denver, which educates and inspires under-served youth through the game of golf.

Naitra Ramchander joined the board of Zonta Z, a women's empowerment club at her high school, and is spearheading an anti-bullying event for the Youth Advisory Board of Fort Collins.

Sarah Bachar was inspired, in part, by GLC to create equal opportunities for girls across the world. When volunteering for the nonprofit Africa School Assistance Project (ASAP) that her mother founded to build primary schools in Tanzania, Sarah became hyper-focused on increasing the secondary education graduation rate for girls, which is approximately 5 percent.



Girls in Tanzania who obtain secondary education have higher family incomes, marry later, have fewer children (and at an older age), invest in their children's education, and immunize their children more.

Sarah and her mother are developing a secondary school leadership program for Tanzanian girls, called the Kupanda Project, which

will launch this year. The 96 participants will learn about sexual health, nutrition, women's rights, and more, while pursuing job skills training. They will live on campus in order to eliminate barriers to graduation, such as unsafe journeys to school and limited access to water and electricity. The beta program will be evaluated by graduation rates in three years, and if successful, replicated at more schools.

"GLC sparked in me the motivation to make a change, taught me the skills to do so, and instilled in me a real understanding of what it truly means to make that difference in the lives of others," said Sarah.

The GLC Class of 2016 participants will be announced in May 2016.



Patti's Post

With the appointment of a new president and CEO last year, 2015 was a year of transition for The Women's Foundation of Colorado. And 2016 is no less significant.

While we continue to pursue research and education, public policy and advocacy, and grantmaking to help women and girls reach economic self-sufficiency, we'll also develop our 2017-2021 strategic plan.

As 2016 board chair, my goal for the strategic planning process is to build upon the legacy of WFCO using best practices, timely research, feedback from diverse communities and constituents, and a shared passion for leading systemic change.

In the coming months, we'll evaluate which issues impact women and girls most deeply, which populations are most vulnerable, and where opportunities exist for advancement. We'll look at our resources and determine how to maximize their value and our stewardship. The outcome will be a clear, intentional, and aligned roadmap to our destination.

I look forward to what the future holds for WFCO and I look back on 2015 with gratitude. Thank you:

- Generous donors for enabling WFCO to invest more than \$1.2 million in community partners statewide
- President and CEO Lauren Y. Casteel for her vision, passion, and ability to connect people to our work
- Past Chair Anahita Kemp for her humor, optimism, and invaluable history with WFCO
- WFCO staff for their commitment to the mission and moving the needle for women and girls
- Christine Chin, MaryAnn Franklin, Cathy Hart, Dick Kelly, and Deb Luginbuhl for their contributions of time, talent, treasure, and testimonies as past trustees

I'd also like to welcome our newest trustees (listed below). WFCO is thrilled have your voices and diverse experiences to inform and enrich our work.

Patti Klinge
Chair, Board of Trustees

Welcome

New 2016 Trustees:

Susie Davis
Kimberly Desmond
Kami Guildner

Adrienne Mansanares
Joyce A. Vigil
Carol Wolf

A Guide to the 2016 Colorado Legislative Session

Why Do We Engage in Public Policy?

Since 1987, The Women's Foundation of Colorado continues to be the only community foundation in our state dedicated to the economic self-sufficiency of women, girls, and their families. In accordance with our status as a 501(c)(3) public charity, we engage annually in non-partisan public policy to create systemic change for women and girls by monitoring legislation, sharing research, and taking positions on select bills.

The State of the Session

With the exception of a few bills impacting the economic status of women and girls in Colorado, the majority of bills WFCO and our partners supported in 2015 did not pass. In fact, only 53 percent of all legislation passed in 2015. *The Denver Post* named poor women one of the "losers" of the session.

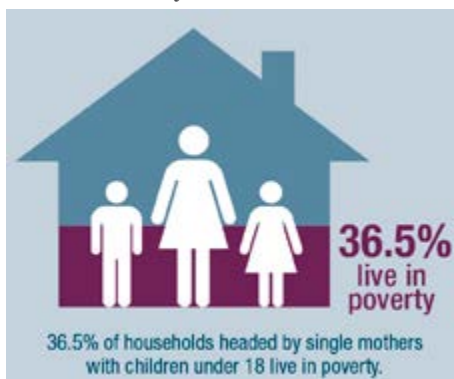
We expect a challenging legislative session again in 2016 with the state facing a budget shortfall that will limit lawmakers' flexibility and create more competition for state funding. Additionally, with split control of the House and Senate, we likely will see fewer bills passed than in recent years.

1 ROOTED IN RESEARCH

WFCO invests in and uses research as a compass for establishing public policy priorities and an educational tool for the public and our work. We have partnered with several agencies recently to share research, including:

- *The Economic Status of Women in Colorado 2015* with the Institute for Women's Policy Research
- *The Self-Sufficiency Standard for Colorado 2015* with the Colorado Center on Law & Policy
- *The Affordability of Child Care in Colorado* with the Colorado Children's Campaign and Qualistar Colorado

The research reinforced that single mothers face hurdles in meeting the basic needs of their families.



In fact, according to *The Economic Status of Women in Colorado 2015*, more than one-third of households headed by single mothers in Colorado live in poverty. We use data such as these to steer our advocacy efforts and help us determine the legislation we support.

2 PASSING THE TEST

When considering supporting legislation, we ask if it:

- Addresses root causes of poverty and promotes self-sufficiency
- Promotes pay equity and civil rights
- Expands access to work supports
- Expands access to training and education
- Improves the nonprofit sector

3 TAKING A STAND FOR WOMEN & GIRLS

Once it is determined that a bill meets our criteria for support, we act. We have elected to support legislation to address the Cliff Effect by eliminating the 10-county limit in the Cliff Effect Pilot Program, improve access to CCCAP for teen parents and survivors of domestic violence, and establish a task force to evaluate the best way for state agencies to address child care needs for low-income parents as they pursue education and training.

Additionally, WFCO has elected to support legislation that will strengthen the nonprofit sector by incentivizing contributions to endowment and institutional funds, which ensure sustainability and longevity of nonprofit organizations.

WFCO also will back a line item in the Governor's budget to support continued access to long-acting reversible contraception through the family planning program. Women who can plan their pregnancies have a better chance for greater career stability and earning potential, thus creating greater economic stability for themselves and their families. The Governor's budget will be submitted to the Joint Budget Committee for approval.

The Women's Foundation elects to submit a 501(h) form to declare our activities related to lobbying to ensure that we are within IRS guidelines.

WFCO would like to acknowledge the continued support of The Chambers Fund at The Women's Foundation of Colorado, WomenGive, and all of our public policy partners. Their commitment to our work enables us to continue our long-term goal of creating systemic change.

Announcing Our Q4 2015 Grantees

Thanks to generous donors, in the fourth quarter WFCO granted \$802,200 to community partners that support work in our impact areas. Through these community grants and grants from donor-advised, group-advised, and legacy funds, WFCO invested more than \$1.2 million in community partners statewide last year.

Girls Graduate Initiative

- Boys & Girls Clubs of Pueblo County
- Bright Future Foundation
- Colorado Youth for a Change
- Denver Kids, Inc.
- Florence Crittenton Services
- Full Circle of Lake County
- New Legacy Charter School
- Passage Charter School
- Red Ribbon Project
- Soccer Without Borders
- The Cycle Effect
- The Youth Foundation
- Victim Offender Reconciliation Program of Denver
- Women's Resource Agency
- YWCA of Boulder County

Single Moms Succeed

- Aims Community College
- Center for Work Education & Employment
- Colorado Mountain College – Rifle
- Community Partnership for Child Development
- Durango Education Center
- Emergency Family Assistance Association
- Partners in Housing
- Project Self-Sufficiency
- Warren Village

STEM

- Colorado Education Initiative
- Community College of Denver
- Girls Inc. of Metro Denver
- Open World Learning
- Walking Mountains Science Center

Public Policy

- Colorado Center on Law & Policy
- Colorado Children's Campaign
- Colorado Fiscal Institute
- Colorado Succeeds
- The Bell Policy Center
- 9to5 Colorado

Boosting Self-Sufficiency from Larimer to La Plata Counties

Melanie sought the help of **Larimer County's Project Self-Sufficiency** in 2009 so she could pursue her dream of becoming a nurse. Her attempts to go back to school had been met with obstacles, such as not being able to afford child care.

Project Self-Sufficiency, a long-time WFCO grantee, augments case management with innovative resources and partnerships that remove barriers to education and employment for single parents. The organization partnered with Melanie to help her accomplish her educational and career goals. She received help with child care, education, and living expenses, which allowed her to focus on the demands of school. Today, Melanie has her bachelor's degree in nursing and is economically self-sufficient.



Shanna, a single mom of two, is earning her GED with the help of Durango Education Center's BOOST program.

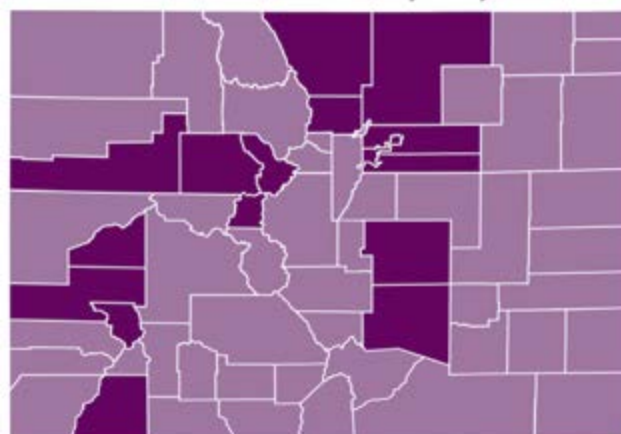
Now, single moms like Melanie will be able to pursue their dreams in La Plata County, too. A generous donor asked Project Self-Sufficiency to find a way to replicate its success in Durango. So it connected with the **Durango Education Center (DEC)**, which works to fill educational gaps by equipping adults, children and families with the skills and knowledge necessary for 21st century careers, post-secondary education, and social and economic mobility.

After many meetings, tours, and inspired learning between the two organizations, DEC launched its BOOST program in July 2015 and WFCO awarded a grant to DEC in December 2015.

"The Women's Foundation of Colorado invests in what works for women and girls, which is why we've supported Project Self-Sufficiency's effective programming for many years," said Louise Myrland, WFCO vice president of community initiatives and investments. "With expert guidance from Project Self-Sufficiency and DEC's commitment to applying research-based best practices locally, we are confident BOOST will improve economic opportunities for single mothers in Southwest Colorado."

BOOST features a full-time career advisor who works with single parents to obtain their education and may expand to provide resources such as housing in coming years. DEC Executive Director Teresa Malone confirms that Project Self-Sufficiency continues to be a valuable resource as the program grows.

The Women's Foundation of Colorado's Statewide Footprint
Locations of 2015 Grantees by County



Good News & Thank You!

Several WFCO supporters released books in 2015: Trustee **Natalie Lynn Rekstad**, with her daughter Sophie, wrote "The Adventures of Anonymouse." Honorary Trustee **Kelly Condon** authored a children's book, "I Love You... Unconditionally." And, Honorary Trustee and former WFCO President & CEO **Gretchen Gagel** wrote "8 Steps to Being a Great Working Mom."

WFCO was pleased to sponsor Impact Investing With A Gender Lens, an educational event in November 2015, with **Beyond our Borders** and **Capital Sisters**.

Zayo Group, a STEM Coalition member, received the Corporate Citizenship Award from Colorado Gov. John Hickenlooper. Thank you for your commitment to Colorado communities!

Trustee **Dolores Atencio** will receive the Colorado Hispanic Bar Association's Lifetime Achievement Award, which is presented annually to an attorney over 55 who has made significant contributions to the Hispanic community.

Beyond Our Borders member **Patricia Foley Hinnen** has been awarded the Global Purpose Prize for Financial Inclusion by Encore.org for her longstanding work to promote economic justice for women.

Empowerment Council member **Gillian Bidgood** was awarded the 2015 Denver Bar Association's Young Lawyer of the Year in 2015.

Judith and Joe Wagner, longtime supporters of The Women's Foundation of Colorado, were honored together as Outstanding Philanthropist on National Philanthropy Day in November 2015. Honorary Trustee **Mary Sissel** received the Outstanding Volunteer Fundraiser award.

Honorary Trustees **Anna Jo Haynes**, **Sister Lydia Peña**, and **Judith Wagner** have been announced as inductees into the Colorado Women's Hall of Fame in 2016.

Longtime WFCO community partner the Bell Policy Center has announced its president, **Wade Buchanan**, WFCO honorary trustee, is stepping down after 15 years at the helm. Thank you for your service, Wade!

To report good news about WFCO supporters, please email Lisa Christie, director of communications, at lisac@wfco.org.

An Unexpected Philanthropist

When you hear the word philanthropist, who comes to mind? Oprah? Melinda Gates? We hear their names a lot, but as we explore in the Girls' Leadership Council, philanthropists aren't always who you expect.



Lee Chong Hurley is one such philanthropist. Born in Korea in 1947, Lee grew up with very little. When she was a toddler, her mother brought Lee and her siblings to New York to find their G.I. father, but the search led nowhere and Lee's mother had to leave her at a convent. She was raised there where she learned to cook and clean.

Lee never received a formal education and housekeeping became her trade. In her 20s, Lee moved west to Vail after a difficult marriage. She couldn't read, but with the help of friends, Lee started a housekeeping business. While running her business, Lee made a comfortable, mostly solitary, life in Vail.

Lee continued housekeeping for more than 40 years until a long struggle with rheumatoid arthritis forced her to stop working. In 2015, she was still living in her beloved, small townhouse in Vail when she fell in a parking lot. She was hospitalized, but compounding health issues ensued and she declined rapidly over several months. Her neighbor, Pastor Ethan Moore, and his family, had become well acquainted with Lee because their son carried Lee's groceries for her. Pastor Moore's wife, Lisa, was at the hospital with Lee the night before her passing, but when he arrived the next morning, she had just passed.

Lee had a difficult life, and when she left this world, she left behind no family and just a few friends. Her will directed that any remaining value of her small estate would go to help women and girls who were less fortunate than she had been, but the executors of her will had also passed away. So Pastor Moore petitioned the court to take over as executor to ensure her last wishes were respected. With assistance from a friend of Lee's, Pastor Moore learned about The Women's Foundation of Colorado, and designated \$12,000 from Lee's remaining estate to help women and girls reach economic self-sufficiency.

We at The Women's Foundation admire Lee's tenacity, spirit, and altruistic intention of leaving the world a better place for others. Her gift to WFCO will make a perpetual impact on women and girls in Colorado.

Planned giving enables individuals who feel passionately about the success of women and girls to create a powerful legacy. A \$1 million gift received 15 years ago has funded more than \$845,000 in grants while the original gift has nearly tripled. A charitable bequest in your will is a simple way to support WFCO beyond your lifetime and to alert your family about your wishes. Donors may also name WFCO as the beneficiary of real property, marketable securities, qualified retirement plans, IRA accounts, and life insurance policies.

If you have left WFCO in your will, or would like information about our planned giving options, please contact Renee Ferrufino, major gifts officer, at renee@wfco.org.

The IRA charitable rollover is now permanent. Taxpayers aged 70 ½ and older can make up to \$100,000 in tax-exempt distributions to charity from an IRA each year. For more information, please contact Lynda Ricketson, WFCO vice president of philanthropy, at lyndar@wfco.org or 303-285-2966.

Together. We are powerful.

www.wfco.org wfco@wfco.org 303-285-2960

THE WOMEN'S
FOUNDATION
OF COLORADO

Regional Events

June 26

Pueblo Summer Soiree

July 14

Women Powering Change

August 3

Annual Vail Valley Luncheon

September 21

Annual Denver Luncheon

October tbd

Annual Colorado Springs Luncheon

2016

WFCO thanks our 2015 volunteers, sponsors, and donors for making our regional events a success. To learn how you can become involved with our 2016 fundraising events, please visit wfco.org.



www.wfco.org

THE WOMEN'S
FOUNDATION
OF COLORADO

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