

Vail Daily

'BRINGING COMMUNITIES TOGETHER'

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Tax question to go to voters

Avon voters will have final say on \$12 million plan to expand town's rec center, council members decide Tuesday. **A3**

MENTORING TOMORROW'S LEADERS



Former president of the WNBA and the keynote speaker for the annual Women's Foundation of Colorado luncheon, Donna Orender, right, talks to Vail Christian's Baylee Wiemer, 16, center, and Battle Mountain's Tabor Whitney, 16, during a Women's Foundation VIP reception Tuesday at the Timber Hearth Grille in Cordillera. Wiemer and Whitney both participated in the Women's Foundation of Colorado Leadership Council.

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Women discuss their 'place at the table' at annual luncheon in Vail

Event set for today at Vail Marriott

By **Melanie Wong**
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VAIL — There's good news and bad news when it comes to the state of women in Colorado, said Louise Atkinson, president and CEO of The Women's Foundation of Colorado.

According to findings by the women's nonprofit, called "The Status of Women and Girls in Colorado — 2013 Report," the good news is that during the past 12 years, the gender wage gap has shrunk, women are more likely than ever to receive bachelor's degrees or more, increasing numbers of women are in management positions and political positions, and the teen birth rate is declining.

But there's bad news, too. In the state, about 500,000 women still live near or in poverty. Women still make on average 80 cents for every dollar a man makes. Three out of 10 girls are still not graduating from high school, compromising many aspects of their future. Also, sexual assault, human trafficking and domestic violence were still top problems named among women.

Those are all topics that will be touched on at The Women's Foundation's Vail Valley luncheon and silent auction fundraiser, held today at the Vail Marriott Mountain Resort. The sixth annual event will feature keynote speaker Donna Orender, the former president of the WNBA and advocate for women's leadership.

GAME CHANGERS

The event is an opportunity to hear

from Orender, who besides heading up the WNBA was also a professional basketball player and spent 17 years working on at the PGA Tour. She was named among Newsweek's "Top 100 Most Influential People in Sports," and she'll be speaking to Vail audiences about leadership and sports through the gender lens.

"I'll be speaking on the power of the ball, and how sports is such an important, vital element in helping foster leadership, confidence and mentoring," Orender said.

In addition to her sports accomplishments, Orender also participated in the international mentorship program Vital Voices. Through the program, she is helping mentor a woman entrepreneur in India. In addition, she launched Generation W three years ago. The program organizes annual conferences that bring a number of accomplished women to the stage to talk with attendees. The conferences now draw upward of 1,000 women.

VALUABLE LESSONS

As Orender sees it, sports, whether on a professional level or in little league, can teach girls and women a number of valuable lessons.

"I was always one of those kids who loved sports as a young girl, and found it to be a beacon and guiding light for me," Orender said. "I think it's applicable for every stage of life. I think it's helped me develop confidence since I was a young girl, and it's helped me learn about teamwork and to stand shoulder to shoulder with guys."

Aside from speaking at the luncheon, Orender will also meet individually with 20 local girls to talk about their leadership track.

IF YOU GO...

What: The Women's Foundation of Colorado Vail Valley Luncheon.

Where: Vail Marriott Mountain Resort.

When: Today. Silent auction from 10:30 a.m. to noon, with lunch beginning at noon.

Tickets: A limited number of tickets will be sold on the day of the event. Tickets are \$75 per person.

The Women's Foundation will also recognize a number of Vail Valley partners and standouts in the field of women's leadership. The annual Women and Girls Outstanding Work award will be presented to Eagle Valley High School track coach Jeff Shroll for creating leadership opportunities for the girls on his team.

While The Women's Foundation is a statewide organization, it partners with regional programs that target some of the top problems facing women and girls. Four local organizations will receive grants from the foundation at the luncheon, including The Youth Foundation's Girl PowHer program, Red Canyon High School, The Bright Future Foundation and Walking Mountains. The grants come from part of the proceeds from last year's luncheon event.

Beyond the luncheon, there are plenty of opportunities to get involved with the work of the Women's Foundation of Colorado. The organization will host a community conversation at the Colorado Mountain College campus in Edwards on Sept. 17, as well as a screening based on their latest findings called "Losing Ground: The Cliff Effect." For more information, visit www.wfco.org.