



LEAVE YOUR MARK...

WESTERN COLORADO COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

Charitable Funds for Community Good

2016 Highlights

2016 was another year of tremendous growth for our regional Community Foundation!

Highlights from our year:

Over **\$10 million in new donations**

\$2.5 million in grants and scholarships awarded - a 20% increase from 2015

15 new funds established

Almost **\$60 million in total donor fund assets under management** - a 28% increase from 2015

A big thank you to our donors and friends for their involvement and confidence in our Community Foundation! Together we make a big difference in improving the communities we live in and call home.

Christmas Came Early
\$50,000 for Chromebooks for Elementary Schools in December

Paying it Forward Community Foundation Receives Generous Legacy Gift to Promote Animal Welfare, Help Kids in Need



Several humane societies and animal sanctuaries are designated organizations to be supported by a new endowment fund.

Last summer we received an unexpected phone call from one of the attorneys we work with on a regular basis. One of his clients had passed away and was leaving his entire estate to our Community Foundation. The anonymous donor had no living family and WCCF was to be involved in settling the estate. This donor had a number of unique assets, all of which required time and expertise to appraise and sell.

The new endowment fund that is being set up now with proceeds from the estate will support the donor's favorite animal welfare organizations and a field-of-interest fund to help kids in need, with some emphasis on children who have medical needs.



Lincoln Orchard Mesa Elementary students check out their new Chromebooks presented by WCCF and D51 Foundation.

Our Community Foundation recently partnered with the D51 Foundation to present \$50,000 worth of new Chromebooks to four Mesa County District 51 elementary schools in support of the District's Performance Based Learning (PBL) initiative. Several donors from our Community Foundation directed \$30,000 and the D51 Foundation raised \$20,000 to provide 147 Chromebooks - the technology needed to support individualized student-directed learning.

"Dear WCCF, thank you so much for the Chromebooks. I hope to do very, very well with them. I can look up facts and do practice tests and not have to wait to use the group computer."

- LOM Elementary Student

The four schools who received Chromebooks were Lincoln Orchard Mesa, Chipeta, New Emerson and Broadway Elementary. This is the second round of Chromebook donations. Last March, WCCF and D51 Foundation teamed up to fund Chromebooks for Grand Mesa and East Middle Schools. The Chromebooks will allow students

Our donor was a private and quiet man who does not want recognition. His generosity will allow our regional Community Foundation to identify current and emerging needs for economically disadvantaged children and provide funding to support basic needs, health care and education. Grant funding will begin in 2018.

Notes Anne Wenzel, "This surprise gift was very generous and will greatly benefit our community. Many of our donors have clear and specific directions for their charitable legacy donations while others, like this donor, leave broader directives. ***We so appreciate discretionary funds like this legacy gift as it allows us to respond to current unmet needs in our communities now, and address future needs that are unknown.*** While we didn't have a chance to thank our donor in his lifetime, we very much appreciate what his generosity will mean for future generations."

Intergenerational Commitment to Public Education Serra Family Fund Benefits Montrose Elementary School



Mike and Gwen Serra raised seven children in Montrose who have now established a fund to honor their parents.

to track their own learning and utilize the tools and technology that will be critical to their success in middle and high school.

Read the Daily Sentinel story [here](#).

View the KREX story [here](#).

New Staff Spotlight Felicia Baker joins WCCF as our new Executive Assistant



A big welcome to Felicia Baker who joined WCCF in late November. Felicia is a 2014 graduate of CMU with a degree in Sports Management and a minor in Business Administration. She brings a wealth of diverse work experience to our organization, from running her own small business to being part of the criminal justice team for the Mesa County Sheriff's Department.

When she is not at work, Felicia stays busy running her own farm with her twin sister and raising a beautiful three-year-old daughter. She also enjoys outdoor adventures with her husband.

A number of years ago, long-time Montrose residents Mike and Gwen Serra celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary. The Serras have long believed in the importance of education; all seven children are college graduates. On the occasion of their milestone wedding anniversary, their children decided to establish a trust account to provide funds in the Serra Family name to the grade-school that all seven of them had attended: Northside Elementary School in Montrose. When Mike passed away, memorial donations were made in his honor.

Recently, the family moved the trust account to our Community Foundation for management, and plan to grow the balance in coming years. Funds will continue to support extra equipment and materials the school might need and cannot afford in its basic budget.

Daughter Monique Serra commented on what this means for her mom, her sister and five brothers. "We see how tight the school budgets are these days and our family is delighted to be able to provide support to Northside Elementary. The Community Foundation will be able to continue this funding in our family's name for many decades. This school is something our whole family cares about and wants to support."

For more information about supporting your favorite organizations or causes with an endowed fund, please contact our office at (970) 243-3767.



All seven of Gwen and Mike Serra's children attended Northside Elementary School in Montrose CO.

Contact Felicia at
fbaker@wc-cf.org.



Online Scholarship Application Now Open

*Students can access 32
different scholarship funds
through one application*

The application process is now open for 32 scholarship funds managed by our Community Foundation and available through one on-line application. Scholarship awards range from \$500 to \$5,000+ and many are renewable for up to four years. In 2016, WCCF committed over \$700,000 in scholarships to be paid out over four years to 95 students.

For more information or to apply, visit:

wccf/students/scholarships



The Western Colorado Community Foundation is confirmed in compliance with National Standards for U.S. Community Foundations by the Council on Foundations.

Reflections from the Executive Director

January 2017. A new year begins. But 2017 is not just any new year for our Community Foundation. We will be celebrating our 20th anniversary this year - with a special luncheon in Grand Junction in May and other luncheons and receptions across the region we serve. We are in the process of developing plans and designing some special initiatives to showcase our mission of promoting charitable legacy donations and connecting people who care with causes that matter.

And for me, a personal celebration. October 2016 was my 15th anniversary running Western Colorado Community Foundation. When I started with the foundation in 2001, we were about \$1 million in assets and had a part-time director and part-time book-keeper. Our Community Foundation is now pushing towards \$60 million in assets, distributing \$2.5 million a year in grants and scholarships and organizing its own initiatives to address unmet needs in the community. Lots to celebrate! And I have to say, even after 15 years (which is a long time in one job for me), I am still very excited about this organization and look forward to coming to work each morning. There is so much potential to make a huge difference in Western Colorado.

So let 2017 be a year of celebration!

- Anne Wenzel

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