



LEAVE YOUR MARK...

WESTERN COLORADO COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

Charitable Funds for Community Good

2019 Scholarship Update \$810,500 in Scholarship Funds Awarded

It's back-to-school time and many students from across western Colorado are starting their college careers with scholarships from our Community Foundation. A total of 113 high school seniors who graduated this spring have been awarded \$810,500 in financial support over the next four years to help them fulfill their dreams of attending college.

Our Community Foundation manages 37 different scholarship funds across our seven counties, including several scholarships for non-traditional students returning to college, or entering other educational training programs.

For more information on our scholarship program, contact Deirdre McLoughlin at dmcloughlin@wc-cf.org.

Grants to Protect and Enhance the Environment \$100,000 in Community Grant Funding Distributed



*Children from the new
Delta County Farm-to-School program show off their first
harvest from their school garden.*

Community Grants for the Environment was our board's designated theme for competitive grants this year. The focus of funding was to encourage recycling and reuse of materials, increase composting, decrease food waste, and engage young people in learning and leadership projects.

We are pleased to announce funding for 15 local projects to protect and enhance our environment in Western Colorado. These grants are part of our Community Foundation's commitment to expand funding for conservation, outdoor recreation and the environment (CORE) issues.



Scholarship awards being presented to students from Hotchkiss High School.

CyberStrong Mesa County Keeping Kids Safe Online

CyberStrong Mesa County is an initiative launched in 2017 with funding from our Community Foundation's 20th Anniversary Impact Grants.

Local counselor Elizabeth Clark developed presentation materials and handouts to provide parents and teens tools and tips to navigate in the new age of cyber relationships. She talks about not completely eliminating daily internet exposure, but the components of a healthy "cyber diet". Over 750 people have attended her presentations.

We are now providing additional funding to expand CyberStrong to elementary schools. The program hopes to reach an additional 700 to 800 parents, children, and staff this year.

As a natural storyteller and long time Spellbinder volunteer, Elizabeth is using her skills to help our younger generations and their parents understand how to stay safe and strong online.

Grants include:

Blue Star Recyclers - expand recycling in the Roaring Fork Valley

Citizens for Clean Air Grand Junction - ozone monitoring devices

Clean Energy Economy for the Region - renewable energy projects

Colorado Canyons Association - expand Nature Knowledge Days for 3rd graders

Eureka! McConnell Science Museum - youth leadership and stewardship initiative

Friends of Youth and Nature - Farm to School - Reduce, Reuse, Recycle program

Grand Valley Audubon Society - wetlands improvement and education project

LIFT-UP - composting program

Mesa County Libraries Foundation - Discovery Garden bioswales

Mesa County Valley School District 51 - pilot project to reduce food waste

North Fork Friends of Montessori Foundation - solar panel for Grannynomics

North Fork Valley Community Rights - reusable bags to reduce plastic bag use

R-5 High School - develop youth leaders through aquaponics and agriculture projects

Solar Energy International - energy efficient equipment to reduce energy consumption and education

Valley Organic Growers Association - agriculture education and community outreach

Our leadership work on the environment will be ongoing as we identify strategies and projects to address these important issues in our communities. For more information on our CORE Initiative, contact Chris Herrman at cherrman@wc-cf.org.

At the Intersection
of Food Waste
and Hunger

Grant Funding for
Pilot Project with
School District 51



New healthy snack fridges will be filled with healthy food in five elementary schools.

Our Community Foundation has awarded School District 51 Food and Nutrition Services a grant to provide healthy snack foods to children in between formal meals and to decrease food waste in five elementary school cafeterias. Children currently can place untouched or unopened food items that they don't want to eat on a Share Table in the school cafeteria, but those foods get thrown in the trash after a short amount of time because of lack of refrigeration.

Dan Sharp, Director of Food and Nutrition Services, has long partnered with our Community Foundation with the Lunch Lizard Mobile Meals program. He is now making sure children have access to healthy foods during the school day when breakfast and lunch are not available.

Glass door refrigerators, or

Grantee Spotlight:
Social Worlds and Youth Well-Being Research Project

Young people struggling with mental health issues and suicidal thoughts has been a heartbreaking challenge for our community. Many individuals and groups in Mesa County have been trying to identify ways to better support our youth.

With funding from several generous donors, our Community Foundation is providing \$75,000 in funding for the first phase of a multi-year research project, "Social Worlds and Youth Well-Being". The goal of the project is to identify how schools and communities can build a better mental health safety net for our youth. Dr. Anna Mueller of Indiana University is the principal investigator and Sarah Diefendorf and Seth Abrutyn will conduct on-the-ground research for the project. The study will utilize observation, focus groups and interviews in this community-based approach to help strengthen suicide prevention and youth support efforts. Research findings and action steps will be made available to the community as the project progresses.

To donate to this ongoing project, contact Kristin Lynch at klynch@wc-cf.org.



Dr. Anna Mueller (left) and Dr. Sarah Diefendorf (right) will spend time in the community to learn how young people seek help when they need it.

Read the Daily Sentinel article [here](#).
Read the Daily Sentinel editorial [here](#).

merchandise, will be purchased for five elementary schools with high numbers of students qualifying for free/reduced price lunch. Foods including milk, juice, fruits and vegetables that have not been opened or sampled will be diverted from the trash and made available to students.

We are pleased to support this innovative project that not only rescues edible food from being thrown in the trash but provides another opportunity to feed children who may otherwise be hungry and not able to fully concentrate on learning in school.

Did You Know....

A study conducted by a volunteer group, Great Old Broads for Wilderness, last December found that 68% of what goes into the Mesa County Landfill is divertible, and 12.6% of that is food waste.



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

[Visit our Website](#)



Reflections from the Executive Director

Back to school is an exciting time of year for our children and young adults, parents, teachers and staff who are all involved in education efforts.

Beyond the classroom, our Community Foundation is supporting some amazing community and school-based projects that engage our youth with leadership opportunities and projects to reduce, reuse, recycle, and compost. Instilling environmental awareness leads to individual behaviors and hopefully a lifelong commitment to appreciating and caring for our limited natural resources.

But back to school isn't always such a positive experience for some youth. Some struggle with fears of bullying both on school grounds and online, not belonging, and possibly thoughts of suicide. Our donors care deeply about these issues and are helping to fund innovative projects like CyberStrong and the Social Worlds and Youth Well-Being study highlighted in this e-newsletter to better understand the challenges our youth are facing and what can be done to help them stay strong, safe, and resilient.

-- Anne Wenzel

View our videos on 
