Just Look Up!

Educational Spot Highlights the Importance of Eye Contact and Engagement with Kids

"Just look up!" That is the lesson of our new “Kids in the Know” spot, a PSA running now on Rocky Mountain PBS Kids. This 60 second spot shares a simple but profound message: put down your phone and engage with your children. Be present and aware of how technology impacts your relationship with your kids. The production is part of our CyberStrong project to help address the negative consequences of technology-distracted, plugged-in relationships. Read the RMPBS interview with Elizabeth Clark, CyberStrong expert, on the importance of helping our kids and their parents navigate the cyberworld [here](#).

Responding to Needs Across Our Region

Local Community Funds Award $114,640 to Help Communities Through COVID

Our Local Community Funds (also known as Geographic Funds) have grown over the years and now include six funds serving specific towns and counties in our region. While our organization manages the back office functions and administration for these grant funds, local community leaders raise funds, review applications, and distribute grants to benefit the place they call home.

This year, our LCF steering committee volunteers were busier than ever, reviewing record numbers of applications and identifying highest needs to receive funding support. COVID increased community needs but also presented unique challenges to the committees who typically organize fund raising events and hold check presentations. Our committees rose to the occasion by creating fun, alternative ways to celebrate the work of local nonprofits and the impact of the funding (see Ouray County Community Fund Award Celebration video).
Supporting Those Who Served

Trutta Fund Awards $56,000 to Veteran Programs

Now in its second year of grantmaking, the Trutta Fund for Veterans awarded $56,000 to organizations providing assistance to veterans and their families. Grants include Roice-Hurst Humane Society to provide pet vaccinations and pet food through their mobile clinic, Colorado Discover Ability for outdoor recreation for veterans and their families, and Harmony Acres’ equine therapy program. The Trutta Fund was established in 2019 by our donor, a veteran who served in the U.S. Navy and who wants to help others who have served.

Caring for Our Home Community

Bray Cares Helps with Housing and More

The newest of these funds is the Surface Creek Community Fund. Established in 2019, this fund made its first round of grants in October, distributing over $10,000 to eight local nonprofits in the Cedaredge area.

Several steering committees, including those in North Fork and Glenwood, chose to grant a portion of their available funds in the Spring to support emergency food and shelter needs in response to the COVID pandemic. All of the grant committees saw high requests as nonprofits struggled with increased needs and an inability to hold events and fundraisers.

Notes Doris McGuire, a founding member of Surface Creek Community Fund, "This competitive grant process really shows that funding is needed for so many worthwhile projects in our area. The selection committee received over $23,000 in requests and we had a thoughtful and deliberate discussion in selecting these awards for the funding we had available. We are working to build this fund to create permanent support for the nonprofits who work to improve the quality of life for our communities."

To learn more about supporting a geographic fund in your community, contact Kristin Lynch at (970) 243-3767.

Grantee Spotlight:

Families Plus Serves Delta Youth and Families

above).
The Bray Cares Foundation recently awarded $20,000 to address housing needs in Mesa County. Bray Real Estate established this fund to help seniors, veterans, and other vulnerable populations with housing-related needs.

When the COVID pandemic hit Mesa County in March, the Bray team quickly launched their Caring for Our Home Community initiative to raise and distribute nearly $50,000 to help feed families and support local restaurants struggling to stay open. For more information visit wc-cf.org/donate/cfohc.

Families Plus has been serving at-risk children across Delta County for over twenty years. Services include therapy, mentoring, and opportunities for families in poverty and crisis to overcome challenges and engage with the community.

Needs this year are great as many families experienced increased financial and other pressures related to the COVID pandemic. Both our West Elk Community Fund (serving Paonia, Hotchkiss and Crawford) and the Surface Creek Community Fund (serving Cedaredge and surrounding communities) provided grant funding to Families Plus to support services in their geographic areas.

Notes one grandparent who is raising her grandchild, “Families Plus is more than a plus for my family! They are so supportive. They help us to reach goals that our family needs to be successful and help us keep our kids on track. Their services are so much appreciated. Raising kids with them on our side makes life a little easier, knowing that I’m not alone and that they truly care!”

To learn more visit Families Plus.

---

Colorado Gives Day
Thank You for Your Support Getting Everyone Outside!

Despite the pandemic, Colorado Gives Day broke records this year, raising $50
million in one day of online giving - up 25% from total giving across the state in 2019!

Colorado Gives Day was a big success locally as well. Our Community Foundation is grateful for the generosity of our donors who raised funds for our program focus this year - getting people outside and benefiting from the physical and mental benefits of outdoor recreation and being in the great outdoors.

Thank you!!

Happy Holidays
from the Western Colorado Community Foundation Staff Team!

Building CORE Strength

Update on 2020 Environment Grantmaking

Donors who are involved with our CORE Fund supporting conservation, outdoor recreation and environment grantmaking in western Colorado met via Zoom for their annual meeting earlier this month. Our Community Foundation is proud to count 27 individual and donor couples as CORE Fund founders.

Five projects were approved for funding this year:

Colorado Canyons Association for a Leave-no-Trace training workshop for organizations working to instill an environmental stewardship ethic in their programming.

Colorado West Land Trust for its Monument Corridor restoration work with volunteers, community and youth organizations.

Eureka Math and Science Center for a boys cycling club comparable to the new Cycle Effect club for girls.

West Middle School for a student-led solar cell phone charging station.

BlueStar Recyclers' e-waste recycling program for security improvements in their new western Colorado facility in Basalt.

Our Community Foundation is on track to distribute almost $300,000 in total funding this
year to preserve and enhance our open space and outdoor landscapes and promote responsible outdoor recreation. Our funding also supports traditional environment projects like clean air/water and recycling.

---

**Reflections from the Executive Director**

Newsmakers on TV and in print and online talk about the “dark dark winter” we now enter, late in a year that has been unlike any other in recent history. COVID cases surge in Mesa County and across our state. Community contagion spreads and hospital beds and ICU units face maximum capacity. While there is great hope for the new vaccines loaded on FedEx and UPS trucks making their first deliveries this week, it will be months before the majority of the public will be able to get vaccinated. Our community leaders - public health officials, elected city and county officials, business leaders and school district administrators - have done a remarkable job this very difficult year managing a complex array of needs, with no roadmap or crystal ball as to what the future holds. Our community has responded generously - with people giving as much as they can in terms of funds and volunteer hours to so many important causes.

December holidays and year-end giving both contribute to “the season of light” so many of us enjoy. Now more than ever, in these dark and cold days, a sense of hope and spreading some light are in order. As we approach this year end, a year end like no other in memory, we are so very grateful at our Community Foundation to work in partnership with our donors, nonprofits and community leaders to do what we can to spread some light.

-- Anne Wenzel