**Word of Thanks**

9News' Kyle Clark raises over $55,000 for Western Slope TRY (Together for Resilient Youth)

9News viewers across Colorado responded generously by raising over $55,000 through Kyle Clark's *Word of Thanks* to benefit our Community Foundation's TRY (Together for Resilient Youth) campaign. Friends of Youth and Nature, Eureka! / Gear Up Cycle Program, and YouthZone will receive $19,000 each to help at-risk youth build confidence and resilience. A total of 1,870 people responded with donations ranging from $5 to $1,000. One of our generous donor kicked off the campaign with a $5,000 grant.

Our Community Foundation extends its own *Word of Thanks* to Mr. Clark, 9News viewers, and everyone who donated to the campaign!

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**A Family Affair**

Conrado Family Looks Back On a Decade of Local Giving

Joe and Kelly Conrado have deep roots in northwestern Colorado. Both of them were born and raised in Meeker, and come from multi-generation local families. They run a successful family business, Meeker Sand and Gravel, which Joe has now handed over to his daughter, Katie, and son, Dan, to run.

Joe Conrado had heard about our regional Community Foundation from long-time friend and former WCCF director, Verne Smith. Joe and Kelly set up an endowed donor-advised fund in 2009. "We were so inspired with the passion Verne and Anne have for supporting the communities here in western Colorado. We knew immediately that this was the kind of philanthropic organization we wanted to be a part of."

Like the family business, the Conrado Family Fund is very much a family affair. Family members make annual year-end donations to build the fund. They work together each year to decide where to distribute their grant funding, which has included the Meeker Art and Cultural Council, and their family church, St. James Episcopal, for various
Grants for Hunger Relief

#GJStrong Fund Awards $250,000 To Help Allieviate Hunger

Our Community Foundation is pleased to announce that grants totaling $250,000 have been awarded to 12 organizations to help with ongoing hunger relief for Grand Junction residents. The City of Grand Junction allocated the funds in February and WCCF managed the process through the #GJStrong Fund for Hunger Relief.

Grants include support for expanded operations at food banks and pantries in response to the ongoing pandemic, covering higher food and operating costs, and meals for seniors and families. For a full list of organizations receiving funding, click here.

The Conrados have made a tremendous impact in their home community. Over a ten-year period, they have distributed $91,000 in local grants. Notes Katie Conrado, "It really is very exciting to see how this works and be part of such a great organization that helps families like ours with giving back in our communities."

Endowed donor-advised funds managed by our Community Foundation are frequently described as "the gift that keeps on giving, the gift that keeps on growing" - through new donations, strong investment management, or both.

Donor-advised funds are a great way to involve family members from multiple generations in philanthropy. To learn more about setting up a donor-advised fund with the Western Colorado Community Foundation, contact Kristin Lynch, klynch@wc-cf.org.

Members of the Conrado Family present a donor-advised grant to HopeWest (Meeker) in late 2020.

Grantee Spotlight:

Karis/The House Teams Up with Local Church to Shelter the Homeless
We’re Growing!
Welcome Renee to our Staff Team!

We are pleased to welcome Renee Smith as our Marketing and Development Associate, a new position for our Community Foundation. Renee has over eight years of experience working for nonprofits, and her diverse background and many skills are a welcomed asset as she supports our marketing and development teams.

Renee grew up "all over," but is excited to call Grand Junction home. Away from the office, you'll find her spending time with her baby girl, Charlie, or on the trails running and biking with her husband and friends.

To contact Renee, please email rsmith@wc-cf.org

Temporary bunkbeds have been set up in the social hall of American Lutheran Church

Karis/The House is well-known in the community for providing temporary and permanent supportive housing for homeless youth through a number of small home-based programs and the new Laurel House apartments for homeless teens. Executive Director John Mok-Lamme saw a pressing need for temporary housing and COVID relief services for the homeless population that camps down by the river. At the same time, American Lutheran Church has a big church complex, complete with a social hall, kitchen, bathrooms and a small laundry room. But like so many congregations during COVID, church services had gone online and no one was coming into the building. The social hall had not seen a coffee hour or game night in months.

In mid December, a true Christmas story started to unfold. The church realized it could offer its unused building as a temporary shelter. Karis entered into a rental agreement and put together the program that provides not just housing but case management and support services.

John Mok-Lamme, Executive Director of Karis/The House, commented, "We so appreciate the funding the Community Foundation provided for this essential project. The homeless people who live in tent camps down by the river are some of the most vulnerable and challenging to serve. Between COVID and winter, it has been really rough. Karis has been able to provide residential staff, case management, hot meals and comfortable sleeping accommodations... as well as hope and compassion in these tough times. Thank you for helping to make this possible."
This year's Inspire Impact event hosted by the Community Impact Council will be held on **Tuesday, March 30th at noon.** The event will be virtual and our Community Foundation is once again proud to sponsor this annual celebration of the work and impact of Mesa County's nonprofit organizations.

The Shine On! keynote speaker Reggie Rivers, former running back for the Denver Broncos, will share inspiration on staying focused, energized, and aware of the value of our work. The Living Legacy Award will be presented to the Women's Giving Club. Renny Fagan, retiring CEO of the Colorado Nonprofit Association, will be recognized for his many years of leadership and service on behalf of nonprofits across our state.

For more information and to register, click [here](#).

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**Interested in Our Hunger Work?**

**Hunger Matters Launching Soon!**

Join our mailing list!

Our Community Foundation is excited to launch the first edition of our *Hunger Matters* Enews on April 6. If you are interested in receiving information on our regional hunger relief efforts and how to get involved, please subscribe to our Hunger Matters Enews by clicking below.

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**Reflections from the President**

What a difference a year makes...

Almost everywhere you go, the topic of conversation seems to be COVID related... how are you and your loved ones coping? Got vaccine? If so,
when, where, what kind, any reactions? And, as we approach the one year anniversary, the look-back reflections... where were you when the Governor announced the stay-at-home orders and the economy started closing down? How did COVID affect your job and family? How are you managing?

The *Daily Sentinel* ran an extensive and fascinating set of stories: COVID One Year Later. All that has happened, all we have weathered. And now, the proverbial light at the end of the tunnel. Mesa County and other communities in western Colorado rolling back social distancing and capacity requirements for businesses, schools and places of worship. Greater availability of vaccines, smooth-running group vaccination sites and large portions of the population getting vaccinated. Infection rates and hospitalization numbers decreasing rapidly. A return to a greater semblance of normal. Soon. Almost.

The board and staff of our Community Foundation are interested in all of these questions. What does "returning to normal" look like in our communities here in western Colorado? After a year of "emergency response," what does regroup and rebuild look like? How do we support increased mental health needs and build on the resiliency that was tapped to get through the pandemic? What do our nonprofit organizations need to stay strong and emerge from COVID relatively intact? Or do the new business models developed during the pandemic hold interesting promise for the future? (One example is food assistance. We know hunger relief organizations developed new models of drive-through pick up and home delivery of food supply boxes, and a network of "pop up" and mobile pantries deployed during COVID. These new models of system delivery are nimble and flexible to respond to changing needs. Should we maintain some of these service models in our post-COVID future?)

How can our staff team, our board, and our donors help?

We look forward to the coming months with cautious optimism, and open hearts and minds for how to best serve our communities in this new day.

-- Anne Wenzel

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