

National Funders Join Foundation in Boosting Education Initiatives

Denver is getting noticed for progress in K-12 education reform, and it's attracting national attention and funders as a result.

Two such funders, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and Ford Foundation (Ford) are investing in education in Denver. One way they effectively leverage their investments is by partnering with Rose Community Foundation.

Both national foundations came to us citing our reputation as a trusted partner in the Denver community and our leadership in education reform. Each created sizeable designated grant funds at Rose Community Foundation, which we manage and administer to grantees throughout Greater Denver.

"We have long been impressed with the credibility and reputation of Rose Community Foundation, and there were significant areas of alignment between Ford's values, strategies, and approaches in education and those held by Rose," says Dr. Jeannie Oakes, director of educational opportunity and scholarship programs at the Ford Foundation.



Students from West Generation Academy (a Generation School) spending the day at the Denver Workforce Center learning about job opportunities, résumés and applying for jobs.

Generation Schools Network is a Foundation grantee that is successfully using an expanded learning opportunity model to shrink achievement gaps.

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Donors Helping Close Achievement Gaps

The Rose Community Foundation Education Committee recently approved a portfolio of Foundation grantees that offer mentoring, after-school and summer programs that demonstrate academic achievement improvements for low-income students. Donors interested in joining us to support impressive community programs like these that are successfully helping close education achievement gaps are encouraged to contact the Philanthropic Services team at **303.398.7459** or **donors@RCFdenver.org**.

Students working at The Bridge Project, a Foundation grantee, which strives to help children and youth living in Denver's public housing neighborhoods achieve their academic potential.

Photo by Kevin Von Qualen



"Rose's deep connections to the local community provide us with unique insights and information about how to connect the dots across issue areas and funders so that our work is nested in – and contributing to – broader efforts at educational improvement, access to opportunity, and community change in the region," added Dr. Oakes.

Expanded Learning Opportunities: A Shared Focus

Ford is partnering with Rose Community Foundation to manage more than \$1 million in support of efforts around expanded learning opportunities (ELO) in Denver. "ELO practices examine how to expand and deepen learning opportunities for all students," explains Dr. Janet Lopez, Rose Community Foundation education program officer. "Extending the hours in a school day or year, blended learning (technology in the classroom), and competency-based progression (when students progress based on mastery of information) – are all examples of ELO models."

Rose Community Foundation has been tracking and supporting ELO efforts for several years. "It's a strong fit with our priority on systemic change to reduce the achievement gap in K-12 schools," says Dr. Lopez. The concept is still in its infancy, but successes are emerging. "We know of 60 schools in the Greater Denver area that we believe are doing some element of these strategies," explains Dr. Lopez. In fact, Rose Community Foundation Network was instrumental in bringing one successful organization, Generation Schools, to Denver.

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Advancing the Cause by Working Together

We spoke with Julie Shaffer, executive director of the Oreg Foundation, about the benefits of collaborative funding. Oreg is a long-time funding partner with Rose Community Foundation, having joined us in supporting several strategic initiatives. Our two organizations also partner to fund many programs and nonprofit organizations, and regularly engage in conversations about enduring community issues.

Who is the Oreg Foundation?

The Oreg Foundation supports innovative organizations and initiatives to enhance Jewish life, assist in meeting basic needs and protect the environment. Oreg is based in Boulder.

Explain the importance of collaboration to the work you do as a foundation.

The Oreg Foundation places great value on collaboration. Wherever possible we try to find others to partner with on projects or to make our grants in a way that we leverage our giving to further support the missions of the nonprofits with whom we work.

As a foundation, have you found that partnering can help advance a cause better than working on your own?

We definitely find it can advance a cause. For example, when we partner with Rose Community Foundation, one of the things we really appreciate is that Rose has a wide reach, lots of resources, and name recognition in the community that allows it to do very significant things. When we partner it allows some of Oreg's smaller grants to have a much broader impact. All of our interests are further advanced when we work together; there's no question about it.

Can you share an example of a successful collaboration?

The Oreg Foundation partnered with 18 Pomegranates and Rose Community Foundation to create an initiative that was intended to attract young people to Jewish life through an interest in food, healthy living and the environment. A collaborative grant to Hazon has allowed us to send local residents to Hazon's national food conference and then to create the Rocky Mountain Food Festival here. Jewish community-supported agriculture organizations have proliferated as a result. Many

local Jewish institutions have participated in Hazon's food audit and many people are participating in community gardening efforts and food justice programming. We are pleased that many people of all ages are participating in programs that heighten awareness about our food and healthy living while engaging people in Jewish community.

Where do you see philanthropy and collaboration going in the future?

The conversations in the philanthropic community are very much oriented toward working together. Oreg and Rose Community Foundation are both participating in a national conversation to identify common goals that we can all get motivated around and toward which we can pool our resources or agree to make philanthropic investments.

Are there opportunities for others to get involved?

We are eager to bring other individual and Foundation funders into our collaborative grantmaking. There's room for different types of funders to collaborate and we're always striving for ways to bring more in to participate. Not only are we involved in the business of grantmaking, but we're very engaged in creating new opportunities and new ways to invite others – large and small – to partner, no matter what size the investment.

About Julie Shaffer



Julie has been involved in Colorado's nonprofit world for 20 years. She has served as the Foundation's executive director since 2004. She serves on the Boards of Joshua Venture Group, Judaism Your Way, Encounter, and was a founding Board Member of the Boulder Jewish Community Foundation. She also serves on committees for the Boulder JCC and Post Holocaust American Judaism at the University of Colorado, and is a partner in Social Venture Partners of Boulder County.

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Educator Effectiveness: Aligned Interests

The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation also selected Rose Community Foundation to administer grants in Denver based on our experience in educator effectiveness. The Gates grants will support grassroots outreach efforts to parents regarding Colorado's new ground-breaking educator evaluation law and the state's new academic standards. This effort, called the Colorado Civil Rights and Equity Alliance Project, includes the following grantees:

- Colorado Latino Leadership, Advocacy & Research Organization (CLLARO)
- Denver Urban League
- Great Education Colorado
- Padres y Jovenes Unidos
- Together Colorado

We're very encouraged by our partnerships with prominent national funders and to see Denver and the reform efforts supported by the Foundation earning national acclaim as we work to ensure all our children get the very best public education.

Generation Schools Network: Bringing K-12 Innovation to Denver

Generation Schools Network is one example of an expanded learning opportunities (ELO) model having success in the Greater Denver community, and a grantee benefitting from the Ford Foundation and Rose Community Foundation partnership. The national nonprofit is dedicated to whole-school and systemic innovation in urban education.

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Generation Schools Network is helping Denver's West High School (now West Generation Academy) implement an expanded learning time model where students get 20 more days of instruction, and teachers have smaller class sizes and more instructional planning time, all under a cost-neutral model. West High School had been struggling for more than a decade with a graduation rate that hovered around 53%.

Upon completion of its inaugural school year this year, West Generation Academy is already

seeing strong progress. A student survey indicates improved attitudes towards school, greater motivation to attend class and an interest in college and careers. Student reading and math skills are on the rise too. According to Kathryn Harris, senior associate for development at Generation Schools Rocky Mountain Region, "In one year we have decreased the number of students who were 5+ years behind in reading fluency from 80% to 40% – a 50% decrease. Now, almost 20% of our kids are within two years of grade level proficiency. The generous support of Rose Community Foundation and national funding partners is making this substantial progress and our shared vision of classroom reform possible."



Michael Rudnick, associate executive director at the Robert E. Loup Jewish Community Center in Denver.

“Without Rose Community Foundation, the JCC would not have an organized bequest program.”

– Michael Rudnick

Endowment Services Strengthen Nonprofit Organizations

Rose Community Foundation has been working for many years to help make nonprofit organizations more sustainable. One way we do that is through endowment fund services.

Almost all nonprofits are under stress to meet their annual fundraising needs year after year. For many organizations, a reliable source of income from a designated endowment fund lightens their fundraising burden on an annual basis. For individual donors, supporting an endowment fund is a chance to be part of an organization's long-term vision and help favorite charities live on for future generations. At this time, Rose Community Foundation invests and administers more than \$33 million in endowed funds for 27 different nonprofit organizations.

As Don Mares, president and CEO of Mental Health America of Colorado, describes, “We're mental health people, not investment people. An endowment at Rose Community Foundation helps us ride out ‘roller coaster’ economic cycles and it demonstrates our stability as an organization.”

Through the comprehensive endowment planning and administrative services offered by our staff, Rose Community Foundation has been helping nonprofits and donors work together to ensure future stability for nonprofit organizations for more than 15 years. Through two successful initiatives, The Endowment Challenge, and *Live On: Build Your Jewish Legacy*, we've helped over 30 nonprofits establish and build endowments, and many are now benefitting from the resulting distributions. This year marks the tenth anniversary of endowment distributions to the 19 organizations that participated in

The Endowment Challenge, which ran in 1999-2002, was an effort that promoted a culture of endowment building in the Jewish community through training and challenge grants provided by Rose Community Foundation in partnership with Allied Jewish Federation of Colorado. Despite the tough economic climate of this past decade, Rose Community Foundation has distributed \$10.4 million from these funds to the participating organizations. The current value of those 19 endowments is more than \$21 million.

In 2005, the Foundation initiated *Live On: Build Your Jewish Legacy* to encourage endowment growth through bequests and planned gifts. *Live On* has provided incentive grants, marketing resources and training to 31 organizations, and raised awareness throughout the Jewish community of the benefits of agency endowments and charitable gift planning. Through three phases of *Live On*, which ran from 2005 through this year, the initiative has resulted in the training of 160 lay and staff leaders who have conducted close to 3,000 solicitations resulting in 855 secured legacy gifts valued at approximately \$51.5 million. Participating organizations have already benefitted from more than \$5.1 million of matured legacy gifts.

“Without Rose Community Foundation, the JCC would not have an organized bequest program,” explains Michael Rudnick, associate executive director at the Robert E. Loup Jewish Community Center. “Rose provided the framework and foundation for this crucial effort, including extensive expertise that armed us with a highly effective cultivation and solicitation ‘tool kit.’ As this initiative matures, it will become an invaluable financial resource that will help sustain the JCC for generations to come.”

A new two-year phase of *Live On* begins in October 2013, offering an opportunity for newly invited participants in the Jewish community to get involved, and for previous participants to continue with the program.

And, because *Live On* has been so successful, Rose Community Foundation will begin offering training and an incentive grant program based on the *Live On* model to nonprofits in the Greater Denver/Boulder metropolitan area that house or open an endowment fund at the Foundation.

Training in the ABCs of building a successful planned giving program is one of the most valuable benefits of the program. The Foundation guides nonprofits through all the steps from donor solicitation and stewardship to creating and implementing a plan of action. We offer incentives of up to \$8,000 to encourage the accomplishment of the plan's goals. Vicki Dansky, the Foundation's gift planning officer says, “It is a recipe for success because the program creates a sense of urgency that encourages a nonprofit's staff and board to make the ‘asks’ and the donors to agree to leave a legacy gift.”

Nonprofits interested in establishing an endowment fund at Rose Community Foundation can learn more by contacting Vicki Dansky, gift planning officer at vdansky@RCFdenver.org or **303.398.7422**.

Collaborative Giving Groups Making a Difference



Tracy Reinhard, president of Rose Women's Organization

On a May morning, the Rose Community Foundation offices are abuzz with 30 women meeting in the Foundation's boardroom. The women's backgrounds are varied and their ages range from 30s to 80s, yet philanthropy unites them.

The women belong to Rose Women's Organization (RWO), one of several collaborative giving groups supported by Rose Community Foundation. RWO raises money and awards grants to improve the health, education and welfare of women, children and families in Greater Denver. RWO is the successor organization to the Rose Medical Center women's auxiliary, a charitable organization that was directly affiliated with the hospital. Following the sale of the hospital in 1995 – which led to the creation of Rose Community Foundation – the auxiliary transformed into Rose Women's Organization and its mission expanded. (The hospital and Rose Community Foundation share a common history and heritage though we are no longer affiliated.)

“Rose Community Foundation supports several additional giving groups, including Roots & Branches Foundation and Rose Youth Foundation, each with its own specific

purpose and members” says Sarah Indyk, philanthropic initiatives manager. “We provide these groups with guidance, philanthropic advising and a collaborative setting where donors with shared interests work together to make a greater difference.”

In their May meeting, the women of RWO awarded \$58,500 to 11 nonprofits serving seniors and their caregivers. As Tracy Reinhard, RWO president describes, “Together, we chose a grantmaking focus that every member could personally relate to. We have all cared for, or known someone who has cared for, aging family members and loved ones. By working together and with Rose Community Foundation, we were able to identify and support nonprofits making significant strides in that area.”

But the collaborative giving experience extends beyond the dollars given. “We also help people have meaningful philanthropic experiences and ensure that their grantmaking will make a difference,” explains Indyk.

“Our board learns and grows through a process of culling, researching and ultimately making informed grants to nonprofit organizations working to address the issue we've identified,” explains Reinhard.

“Philanthropy has always been at its best when engaged in collaboration,” says Reinhard. “Partnerships with our members, Rose Community Foundation and the community at large provide us with expertise and resources to achieve our shared objective of building stronger and more effective nonprofits and supporting complex issues.”

RWO's grantmaking funds come from fundraising events, earnings from an endowment fund at Rose Community Foundation, member dues, donations and proceeds from Rose Medical Center's gift shop, a nonprofit social enterprise, at which the RWO members actively volunteer.

Since 1996, RWO has invested more than \$1.6 million in grants to benefit the community. Learn more about RWO's long history at RCFdenver.org/rwo. Learn more about other Rose Community Foundation collaborative giving groups and how to get involved by contacting the Philanthropic Services team at **303.398.7459**.



Sheila Bugdanowitz
President and CEO
Rose Community Foundation

One of Rose Community Foundation's guiding principles is the belief that working in collaboration with others can have much greater impact than by working alone. The most obvious way we deliver on this is through the partnerships we have with our grantees and the funding support that helps them do the amazing work they do in our community. But our work extends much farther than our grantmaking.

What may not be as obvious are the many other ways we bring people together for the greater good of the community. Our efforts are successfully uniting and aligning individual donors, nonprofit organizations and even national funders to affect greater impact. Two such examples are collaborative giving groups at the Foundation that help individuals leverage their giving, and expert philanthropic services that help nonprofits build endowments for their long-term sustainability. The work we do in helping organizations grow their endowments has been so successful that we're reaching out to many more nonprofit organizations across the Greater Denver area to

help them take advantage of these services. If a nonprofit you are close to wants to learn more about this exciting opportunity, please call me at 303.398.7401 or Vicki Dansky, Rose Community Foundation gift planning officer at 303.398.7422.

In this issue, we highlight several significant collaborations with other funders, both local and national. We're proud to be working with the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and the Ford Foundation to systemically improve K-12 education in Denver, and with the Boulder-based Oreg Foundation to support Jewish and other community initiatives.

Thank you for the opportunity to share with you the great work that the Foundation, our partners, donors and staff are doing together to continue to make the Greater Denver community a better place for all people.

Rose Community Foundation News

RCFdenver.org

Governor Signs ASSET Tuition Equity Bill

Near the close of the recently completed Colorado legislative session, Governor John Hickenlooper signed SB13-33, the ASSET tuition equity bill, into law. Rose Community Foundation has worked with a coalition of funders and other supporters for more than seven years in support of in-state tuition for undocumented students to attend state colleges and universities so we are happy to celebrate this important milestone of progress for Colorado.



In recognition of this major victory, Rose Community Foundation made a contribution to the Invest in the DREAM Fund at Together Colorado, which will help students who are eligible to file for "deferred action for childhood arrivals" (DACA) status. The application costs each student \$465. DACA gives students the federal paperwork necessary to be eligible for some scholarships and employment opportunities after college.

Staff News



Holguin Reappointed to ECLC Commission

Elsa Holguin, a senior program officer at the Foundation, was recently reappointed by Governor Hickenlooper to the Colorado Early Childhood Leadership Commission (ECLC).



Whitney Connor was recently promoted to senior program officer for health.

Opportunity Youth Incentive Fund

The Aspen Institute's Forum for Community Solutions recently announced 21 grants to founding partners of the Opportunity Youth Incentive Fund in communities across the United States to support cross-sector collaboration. Rose Community Foundation is honored to be among the prominent national grantees. The goal is to work with "opportunity youth," defined as young people between the ages of 16 – 24 who are neither enrolled in school nor participating in the labor market. Investing in these young people will have a positive impact on both our economy and future generations of low income children and families.

Redesigned MazerTot.org Site Launches

Jewish parenting just got a little easier thanks to a newly-designed website from MazerTot.org Connecting Young Families to Local Jewish Life, giving families an easy way to connect Jewishly in Denver and Boulder.



MazerTot.org, an initiative of Rose Community Foundation, is known as *the* resource for Jewish life for families and kids, prenatal to preschool. Since 2009, families with at least one parent who identifies as Jewish, and at least one child under the age of five, are able to take advantage of free events and programs as well as big discounts on Jewish preschools, camps and more.

Rose Youth Foundation



ROSE YOUTH FOUNDATION

JEWSH YOUTH MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Apply Now! Rose Community Foundation is looking for a diverse group of Jewish and interfaith-Jewish youth, in grades 10 through 12, who want to make a real difference by learning about philanthropy and becoming grantmakers as part of Rose Youth Foundation for 2013-14.

Visit RCFdenver.org/RYP for more information and to download the application, including a detailed description of Rose Youth Foundation and a full list of meeting dates.

Did You Know?

More than 60 families and individuals are legacy donors to Rose Community Foundation.

Visit RCFdenver.org/livinglegacy to learn more about legacy gift planning and how you can make a difference in the community and around the world today and into the future. Contact Vicki Dansky for more information at vdansky@RCFdenver.org or 303.398.7422.

Colorado Latino Age Wave Grants Awarded to Expand and Improve Services for Aging Latinos

Colorado Latino Age Wave, a partner project of Rose Community Foundation, has awarded grants totaling \$200,000 to five organizations to improve access, quality and cost-effectiveness of services to Greater Denver's growing population of older Latinos. Colorado Latino Age Wave invests in and advocates for innovative services and programs that support the well-being of Metro Denver's Latino older adults. Learn more about Colorado Latino Age Wave at RCFdenver.org/agewave.