

# The Community Foundation: For good. Forever.



MICHELLE MALLOY DILLON

# Information + Inspiration = Transformation

There are several avenues through which The Community Foundation is building programs and engaging residents to transform Boulder County.



**1 Community-driven Grantmaking:** The Community Foundation is unique because county residents serve on committees (Arts, Civic Engagement, Health & Human Services, Education, and the Environment) to review proposals from local nonprofit organizations, make site visits, and finally recommend grants to the Foundation's Board of Trustees. This process not only engages the voices of numerous community members, but also educates them about trends of need, while introducing many of the cutting edge programs nonprofits provide right here in our community.

**2 Early Childhood Initiative:** Among pressing community issues, the achievement gap of Boulder County students has risen to the surface for The Community Foundation. A new multi-year initiative has been launched to amplify local programs and efforts working to increase early school readiness.

**3 Culture of Giving Movement:** The Culture of Giving is a movement to increase philanthropy and volunteerism in Boulder County by exposing residents to the work of local nonprofit organizations and making involvement easy. It shares its message through the media, community events, and the Vision of Giving Youth Art Contest. [www.cultureofgiving.org](http://www.cultureofgiving.org)

**4 Leadership Programs:** The Expanding Leadership Program seeks to increase the level of diversity and inclusiveness in Boulder County nonprofits through leadership development opportunities for people of color. The goal of the Boulder County Leadership Fellows Program is to build networks of trust between our communities and across sectors to meet the communities' changing needs.

**5 The Boulder County Civic Forum:** The Boulder County Civic Forum is the research arm of The Community Foundation and informs, educates, and advocates for a healthy community. The Civic Forum produces Boulder County TRENDS, this biennial community indicators report about quality of life in Boulder, facilitates community workshops and forums, and partners with the University of Colorado on the Civic Blast Project.

The Civic Forum has been tracking trends and indicators of a healthy community for over 12 years. Nationally and locally there is an increasing need for opportunities to engage in informed discourse on issues affecting quality of life. Studies published by Duke University and the University of Arizona found that the percentage of people who say they only talk to family members about important matters has risen from 57% to nearly 80% in the last several years. Boulder County TRENDS is a tool to initiate conversations between friends, families, neighbors, and colleagues, about how we all play a role in building community.

To learn more about The Community Foundation and to view this report online along with the Civic Forum's new interactive database, please visit [www.commfound.org](http://www.commfound.org).

# Guiding Your Philanthropy

There are two key ways The Community Foundation can help you make a meaningful impact: The Community Trust and Donor-Advised Funds.

**ESTABLISHING A DONOR-ADVISED FUND** More than 220 individuals, families, and businesses have set up Donor-Advised Funds that work much like private foundations—but offer distinct benefits.

**COMMUNITY EXPERTISE** Draw on our years of experience and our intimate knowledge about the needs and trends of Boulder County, and the work of local non-profits.

**BROAD CONNECTIONS** Rely on our networks locally and nationally - and even internationally - to learn about wise and strategic philanthropy.

**FREEDOM** Let our professional staff handle the administrative tasks and due diligence of your grantmaking, and provide you with simple financial statements to support your planning and tax returns. Check your fund balance, review pre-screened grant proposals, and recommend grants online through [www.edonorcentral.com](http://www.edonorcentral.com).

**CONFIDENCE** Depend on solid investment strategies and local governance and oversight. Take advantage of maximum tax benefits.

**PERSONALIZED SERVICE** Work with us to devise a plan suited to your goals and areas of interest. Contact your donor advocate to learn more about organizations (perhaps schedule a site visit) and ask questions about the findings of this report to strategize your giving.



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## CONTRIBUTING TO THE COMMUNITY TRUST

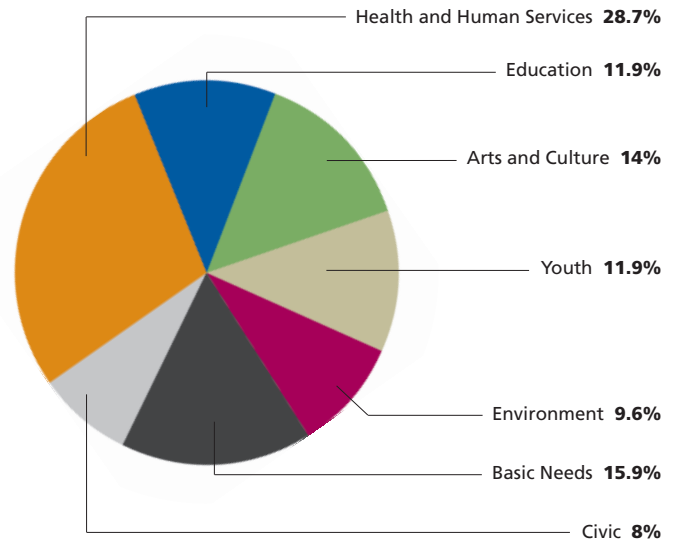
The Community Trust is the ideal way to give back. As the permanent grantmaking fund of The Community Foundation, the Community Trust addresses hundreds of needs throughout Boulder County across issue areas. It's flexible, responsive, and directed by members of the community who evaluate proposals and conduct site visits to determine where the greatest needs are. Gifts of any size are welcome.

In 2008, The Community Foundation set a goal to raise \$4 million for The Community Trust by 2012. Initial success allowed The Community Foundation to nearly double funds granted in January 2009. Continuing success is making it possible for The Community Foundation to focus on how best to help reduce Boulder County's achievement gap, through early childhood school readiness.

Let's look after each other. Be a part of it and make a gift to The Community Trust this year.

To learn more about investing your philanthropic dollars with The Community Foundation, visit [www.commfound.org](http://www.commfound.org) or call 303-442-0436 today.

THE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION  
2008 GRANTS BY PROGRAM AREA



# Strategic Choices

## Donors and Volunteers Making an Impact

Regardless of your experience with giving or volunteering, you want your contributions to make a difference. Data can help identify needs and opportunities, but personal investment in the outcomes is the key to a sense of satisfaction. Starting with the issues you care about most and knowing what you want to achieve makes giving meaningful. Once you've determined what you want to focus on, the following tips can maximize the effectiveness of your giving.

**Stick with it** Keep an eye on the ultimate goal you are working to achieve. Positive movement toward that goal often comes in a series of small steps. For example, if your goal is to close the achievement gap in middle and high schools, you can choose to support early care and education opportunities for low-income families or programs that engage parents in schools, among other efforts that help build toward your desired outcome.

**Think Outside the Box** The best solution to a problem may lie outside the parameters people typically discuss. For instance, one way to help improve birth status might be to fund oral health programs for pregnant women, because women without gum disease have fewer low-birth weight babies. And while you may start out working on one issue, a strong solution may end up having positive effects that carry over to other areas. For example, a youth arts program may not only provide supervised out-of-school experiences for a child, but also improve that child's self-esteem and school attendance.

**Determine at What Level You Want to Make an Impact** As a donor or volunteer, you may want to help individuals in need or improve the lives of a certain group of people. You may want to strengthen the programs and institutions serving the community. Perhaps you want to change the social environment through policies that affect the community more broadly by focusing on issues such as greenhouse gas reduction or culturally inclusive programming. Many donors work at multiple levels simultaneously.

**Find a Solution and Fund It** Commit your support to an effective solution or a new approach to a problem you care about - ideally one backed up by research and outcome evaluation. You could take this idea and run with it in a couple of ways. You could support its replication in other places. Or you could support other organizations that are implementing it.

**Consider Nonprofit Infrastructure and**

**Administrative Needs** While it is important to keep a sharp eye on administrative expenses, investing in a nonprofit's infrastructure - from technology and staff training to planning, research, program development and evaluation - provides the strong foundation necessary for getting results.

**Work Together** Many individual givers find satisfaction in working and learning with others and in pooling resources for increased impact. The Community Trust and Social Venture Partners are examples of opportunities The Community Foundation offers for leveraging resources. One of the most valuable attributes of a vibrant community is people's willingness to join together for the common good. With a modest amount of support, a small group of committed community members can clean up open space, increase safety in a neighborhood, or improve their children's school. Some



VOLUNTEER CONNECTION



innovative programs have harnessed the power of trusted family, friend and neighbor relationships and used them to reach disenfranchised populations, ease cultural transitions, and build collective action. They also connect through networks to coordinate their activities, enhance cooperation and smooth the way for collective action to solve complex problems and create community resources.

**Ask Questions** Very few of society's tough challenges have simple solutions. Most persistent issues are the result of a long and complex set of factors and circumstances. Asking questions about the root causes of issues, as well as about a given organization's approach, can provide critical insight into a problem and its potential solutions.

**Support the Nonprofit Sector** Grants to specific organizations and programs can make an immediate impact on the community. Less recognized and equally important to long-term health are investments in organizations that strengthen nonprofits and allow them to do their work. Intermediary organizations, such as The Community Foundation, play a host of invaluable roles in helping groups of nonprofits with related missions build linkages, develop partnerships, increase advocacy and undertake joint planning. These groups also provide training, management assistance, and technology support.

**Give During Good Times and Bad** During tough economic times Boulder County's non-profit organizations see increased demands for services (e.g., food, shelter, job, health care, and mental health assistance) and often decreased levels of financial support. Let's all remember to keep giving for the good of the whole and because there's always someone who needs a boost just a bit more than we do.

# Knowing What Works

The Community Foundation uses a range of criteria to identify effective programs and organizations. Donors and volunteers may wish to use the same standards for their own evaluations, or they can view proposals vetted by our grant committees. The Community Foundation grant committees are made up of volunteer readers from all over Boulder County. Though the Foundation staff offers guidance and expertise, the committees read proposals, go on site visits, and eventually make recommendations to our trustees for funding. We are truly a foundation by the community for the community. [www.commfound.org](http://www.commfound.org).

## WE BELIEVE EFFECTIVE PROGRAMS:

**Address** an identified community need within the Community Indicators framework.

**Use** a methodology that makes sense and takes into account accepted or best practices in the field.

**Build** on a thoughtful, practical plan that outlines specific outcomes.

**Explore** innovative approaches, participants and partnerships.

**Are delivered** by an organization that is knowledgeable about the issue and the people it serves.

**Engage** the skills, abilities and experiences of community members in creating effective change together.

**Take advantage** of opportunities for coordination with other programs and avoid duplication.

**Are organizationally** inclusive and are working toward leaders, staff, and volunteers that reflect the community they serve.

**Are responsive** to the people they serve and respectful of communities' dignity and need for hope.

**Are delivered** in user-friendly ways and locations that overcome barriers to participation.

**Respond** to the diverse needs of constituents and offer resources or referrals to other programs when needed.

**Foster** civic engagement.

