I knew my donation could make a difference.

— Gale Kunkel
You want your donations to make a difference, and you know they do when you give through The Community Foundation.

How do you know? We have conversations with you, host public forums, survey community members, and compile research in our TRENDS Report. By listening and studying, we learn about our community’s potential and gaps. And the more we know? The more The Community Foundation—together with donors like you—makes informed investments in Boulder County.

Your gift to The Community Foundation is a smart investment.

— Danny Hassan
The Community Foundation Trends Report taught me where the biggest needs are in our county. The staff helped me get connected fast so I didn’t waste any time finding where I could contribute.

— Deborah Simmons

Since EKS&H got involved with the foundation in 2008, I’ve always thought that there’s not a penny wasted in support of all they do.

— Hy Harris, Principal, EKS&H
We all know someone—maybe even more than one—still recovering from the September 2013 flood. We all saw the damage the rains inflicted: from water in crawl spaces, to homes and businesses swept into creeks, to the loss of lives. Those of us who could help knew we needed to, and as fast as the rain fell, we mobilized to help our neighbors. People shared their time, tools, homes, elbow grease, and money.

More than $1.9 million in donations for flood recovery passed through The Community Foundation.

The Foundation’s board and staff knew that part of our role needed to be responding to recovery needs that were not being addressed by anyone else. We knew our donors wanted to support individuals and small businesses directly with flood relief dollars. Although, not a story that got a lot of news, flood victims included local farmers whose homes and livelihoods were affected. We knew we wanted to partner with a local group to provide relief for farmers.

Chet and Kristy Anderson established The Fresh Herb Company in 1983. What started with culinary herbs grew into a thriving organic herb and flower business. Their home, soil, machinery, greenhouse, water sources, irrigation system, barn, roads, and crops were all damaged or destroyed during the flood. Despite being fully insured, they received little assistance and are still navigating the complex web of government grants and loans.

“We’ve been in triage since September 2013. Grants from The Community Foundation and fundraisers held by business colleagues and friends got us from November to March,” said Kristy. “We want to grow our way out of this, but we’re still trying to recover. We’ve learned it will take a long time to recover the soil, the plants, and the water. Our needs were immediate and long-term.”

“What The Community Foundation did was take the lead and make tangible connections to needs. They made community real; they became a place where our community could contribute their support. That’s the difference, and we’re so grateful!”

— Kristy & Chet Anderson
We know one of Boulder County’s gems is our vibrant, creative, and big-hearted start-up community. When those local startups designate early equity to the Entrepreneurs Foundation of Colorado (EFCO) and have a successful event—such as an acquisition or an IPO—a portion of that success is invested in our community. In other words, the community is a shareholder in every EFCO company.

“EFCO is an incredible synergy between leaders from Boulder County’s entrepreneurial sector and The Community Foundation. When EFCO member companies win, everyone wins,” said Josie Heath.

More than $2.8 million has been realized for community support because of EFCO—the majority through The Community Trust. Those dollars build the resource that responds to community needs year after year. And member companies don’t stop with financial support. They’re on track to contribute nearly 600 volunteer hours in 2014.

“It’s hard to see it up front, but it’s 10 times more joyful than I could have imagined,” said Jud Valeski, Boulder native and Gnip founder. Gnip was an EFCO member and made a huge splash when, after being acquired last summer by Twitter, gave 1 percent of the company to the Foundation. “At the time, it was a methodical decision that just felt right... but now, a piece of paper has been transformed into real community impact.”
What did we know in 1999? We knew that no one could possibly know what the future would hold, in terms of needs and opportunities in Boulder County. **But we knew it would be a good idea to be ready.**

More than 6,200 of you agreed, and helped fund The Millennium Trust in 1999—inspired by the creative opportunity of a new century and what we can all do to make Boulder County a better place. **This year we’re celebrating a milestone—more than $1 million total granted from The Millennium Trust.** The Community Foundation knew such a fund could make a difference, and we’ve made smart investments from it over the years, such as an $11,000 grant in 2001 to Intercambio: Uniting Communities. Intercambio strives to bridge communities by teaching English classes for adult immigrants and offering training on life skills and citizenship.

“The grant from the Millennium Trust was a game-changer for Intercambio. We had just started the program about a year earlier and had served 150 students in the first year, but finding funding for a new program was extremely challenging and frustrating. We knew that the potential for growth was tremendous, but with no funding the potential was squashed,” said Lee Shainis, Co-founder.

“I remember seeing the RFP, and it was something about building bridges in our community, and I thought it was written for us! **Getting that funding helped us gain the ability to grow our program.** It was a shot of confidence for me and our other co-founder, and it strengthened our financial statements and made us less risky for other funders. Since then, we’ve raised around $6,000,000 and served 13,000 people in Boulder County.”

— Lee Shainis
Long ago The Community Foundation joined forces with passionate business leaders and volunteers to turn Boulder County’s mediocre culture of giving into one the community can be proud of. We knew Boulder County could be more generous, and so did you. Together, we’re making change. A recent survey of local residents shows that average donation levels have almost doubled since 2008.

But, like us, you probably know the community is capable of more. And so do Phil and his dog, Thropy! Phil-and-Thropy are the spokespeople (and spokes-dog) for the Culture of Giving Movement. Thanks to the Foundation and a number of integral community partners, they get a lot of air time during the holiday giving season, urging everyone in the county to give to the nonprofits that inspire them.

Phil makes a habit of visiting and helping local nonprofits, as well as chatting with everyone he meets about the importance of giving. He’s made it his mission to get Boulder County to be one of the most generous places in the country.

“I feel grateful to live here. It’s beautiful. There’s so much fun stuff to do. And, I give back whenever I can,” said Phil. “Plus, I tell friends and co-workers about what I give and where I volunteer. I hope they’ll be inspired to give too. It’s really important to me to live in a generous place. I just think everyone benefits that way.”
Believing in the power to change lives for the better is something we, as The Community Foundation, know we owe the community. And your support of our work to help every child be ready for school and to thrive has leveraged millions in funding for both school districts. Now, it’s also making a difference in the homes of the children who need it most.

Mercedes Ruiz, who does school readiness outreach for The Community Foundation, meets with local Latino families, some of whom struggle to navigate the school system. After repeated attempts with the same frustrating results, many of the families feel a lack of confidence and hope. Luckily, they are open when Mercedes urges them not to give up.

“I see their faces light up during our visits, because the other coordinators and I speak their language and have been in their situation. We know they want to see their children’s school experience be different and for the whole family to be part of the community. Their opinion counts with us,” said Mercedes.

Parent leaders are also meeting to discuss the biggest issues they face, and a peer training program is being developed. It will focus on such topics as understanding the path from pre-Kindergarten through college and how to find the right people and most effective ways to communicate when advocating for a child.

Mercedes says the pressure is on to deliver the right tools for families who have tried before and were left disappointed.

“If in 15 years I see one of the families I worked with and they tell me our program gave them the tools they needed and their kids went to college, I will feel so satisfied. Also, I want to see the Latino community integrate more with the community as a whole. I tell my families it’s not just about what we can get to make our lives better. We have things to give that will improve the whole community too.”
You told us that action was needed to make local boards and commissions representative of who lives in Boulder County, and data corroborated that need. We learned that more skills-based training programs were not the answer. We knew we needed to find a way for emerging leaders to broaden their networks and think differently about whom to include. Knowledge in hand, and in partnership with the Boulder Chamber of Commerce, we set out to expand the pipeline and idea of leadership for Boulder County.

Forty-seven percent of last year’s participants of The Community Foundation’s Leadership Fellows Program have already joined a community board or commission and an additional 20% have applied for one. Here’s what graduates of the Leadership Fellows Program say about the impact of the program on their work:

“One of the things I learned in the Leadership Fellows program is to be inclusive of all the different passions and perspectives at the table, and peoples’ different backgrounds,” said Eliberto Mendoza, Leadership Fellows Alum and Interim Director of Boulder County Community Action Programs.

Tiernan Doyle, Executive Director of Boulder Flood Relief and a current Leadership Fellow said, “The program helps build connections where they didn’t exist before. We have the opportunity to make new connections and rethink strategies, keeping the larger community in mind.”

Meca Delgado, Program Specialist with the Boulder County Community Services Department and Board Chair of the Longmont YMCA, said, “The Leadership Fellows program gave me the opportunity to really think about who I wanted to be as a leader, and how I want to carry my voice – not just as a woman, or in the Latino community, but for anyone who needs a voice at the table.”

“The virtues of the Leadership Fellows program can’t be overstated,” said Eliberto. “If you’re interested in becoming a leader in Boulder County, if you’re interested in having a significant role in the crucial conversations that are happening, if you want to really understand what’s happening outside your own office and your own passions, and if you want to learn what it means to achieve true inclusivity...this program is the conduit.”
The Community Foundation is in the business of using what we know to improve the community. Our expertise means your donation is a smart investment.

Please support the work of The Community Foundation and make a gift today.