MEDIA RELEASE

2016-17 Leadership Fellows inspired to ignite change in Boulder County
Fourth class of merged leadership and networking program graduates

Boulder (July 20, 2017) – Boulder County is a community of trailblazers and influencers. That’s why the Community Foundation and Boulder Chamber of Commerce bring together leaders and experts across sectors to build networks and advance inclusivity countywide.

“The program instills a broad understanding of Boulder County’s economic, civic, and cultural drivers,” says Elvira Ramos, the Community Foundation’s Vice President of Programs and Inclusive Leadership. “We aim to offer participants a deep appreciation for the social, environmental, and economic interests that our leaders must balance in their decisions.”

Additionally, the program is heavily focused on transformational and inclusive leadership practices, and supports the Community Foundation’s 2017 Statement of Affirmation, which positions the foundation’s countywide leadership during these especially challenging socio-political times:

2017 Statement of Affirmation
The Community Foundation Boulder County is committed to being a community catalyst for good, alongside donors and partners like you. We believe our community is stronger when all people – women and men, children, older adults, immigrants, people of color, LGBTQ individuals, those with varying abilities and from all faiths – are respected, welcomed, and invited to share their assets and contributions in community building.

We stand with others, in Boulder County and beyond, who courageously strive to build more inclusive communities rather than walls of division. We remain wholeheartedly committed to social justice for our most marginalized and vulnerable people and for the care of threatened environments. We believe in the power of art and music to improve our lives and community. Now, more than ever, we seek opportunities for local action and invite you to join us in our ongoing leadership work that includes grantmaking, outreach, and advocacy. We can accomplish more together than alone.
“Leadership Fellows Boulder County is one of the primary ways in which we embody our values,” continues Elvira. “In partnership with the Boulder Chamber, we’re committed to dedicating resources that promote inclusive leadership countywide.”

Specifically, the 11-month curriculum emphasizes building networks and knowledge for local leadership roles. Curriculum topics have included Boulder County economics, Local Government 101, inclusive leadership, planning and development, critical human needs, health, education, the arts and culture, and selling your vision – as well as roundtable discussions on a range of timely issues, from affordable housing to immigration and criminal justice.

As the 2016-17 Leadership Fellows Boulder County class wrapped up this week, the Community Foundation invited some of the 32 participants – representing a diversity of backgrounds, professional experiences and affiliations – to share their thoughts and reflections.

“Leadership Fellows has been an extremely eye-opening experience for me, regarding issues impacting the Boulder community beyond the work I’m doing,” says Juan Moreno of Out Boulder County. “I loved having such fantastic community leaders come in month after month and share their work and experiences with us.

“Speakers like Dr. Johanna Maes, Mardi Moore, and much more have continued to fuel my desire to improve my community and work toward a better and more diverse Boulder County.”

Adds Charles (Will) Cooper of LFP Broadcasting: “Since I have aspirations to hold local office, being a Fellow was a first step to introduce me to the community, community issues, and how I can advocate for change and make a difference.

“On meeting the other Fellows, I was humbled to have been chosen to participate in this program that brings together Boulder County’s best leaders from diverse social backgrounds.

“I learned more about Boulder County, and how to collaborate with others on possible fixes for the challenges we face, to make our county more open, accessible, and receptive to all who live here.”

Other Fellows shared these observations at their 2016-17 graduation ceremony on July 17:

“Leadership Fellows Boulder County forced me to step up my game. I’m inspired, knowing you’re all out there [the broader alumni network]. I plan to tap into that, and into the passion in this room.” ~Bart Miller, Western Resource Advocates

“I came into this program expecting more of a career advancement opportunity, but was humbled by the other Fellows. As a native of this community, I’m full of gratitude to take what I learned, and to know where to start, to address community challenges.” ~Matthew Jensen, Boulder Collegians

“I didn’t realize all the issues we have as a community. I learned that we all have issues we’re passionate about – and that we’re all going to need to tackle them together.” ~Mark Griswold, Eide Bailly, LLP
“I realized that I take so much. This program is a continual reminder that I need to give back — especially in this political climate.” ~Laura Levesque, Aztech Energy

“Leadership Fellows Boulder County broadened my horizons and way of thinking, and boosted my self-esteem.” ~Shanan Collins, Boulder Outreach for Homeless Overflow

“I learned that you have to be the change. And that people like me can make a change.”
~Shiquita Yarbrough, League of Women Voters of Boulder County

Graduates of Leadership Fellows Boulder County are expected to take on a local leadership role (i.e., join a nonprofit or government board/commission, work on a candidate or initiative campaign, lead a neighborhood or school association, or run for office) within six months of completing the program. Since the program launched in 2009, respondents to a recent survey showed that 81% of Leadership Fellows have joined a nonprofit board; 26% have joined a government board or commission; 13% have worked on a local campaign for a candidate or issue; and 32% of participants have been offered a career promotion within a year of graduation.

2017-18 Leadership Fellows will be announced in August, with the ninth cohort and fifth year of the merged leadership and networking program kicking off on September 12. For more information about Leadership Fellows Boulder County – as well as other programs and initiatives of the Community Foundation – please visit commfound.org.

Community Foundation Boulder County
For 26 years, the Community Foundation Boulder County has been a community catalyst, responding to immediate needs and anticipating future challenges. Through informed decision-making, we inspire ideas, ignite action and mobilize resources to improve the quality of life for all. Advancing inclusivity and providing leadership and on key issues, the foundation collaborates with community-minded individuals and organizations that want to make a difference, accomplishing more together than we do alone. Since its founding in 1991, the foundation has granted more than $75M to nonprofits focused on health and human services, basic needs, children and youth, education, civic engagement, arts and culture, and animals and the environment. commfound.org/news-media

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