



NEWS FOR DONORS

Noteworthy



The Denver Foundation



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MISSION

The mission of The Denver Foundation is to inspire people and mobilize resources to strengthen our community. We envision a Metro Denver that is racially equitable in its leadership, prosperity, and culture.

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Access to a quality education has shaped my life in numerous ways, ultimately leading me to the position I am in today. Not only have I prioritized this value in my personal life, but it has been a priority here at the foundation — and it has the power to change the future for entire generations.

Today, our educational landscape provides students with resources that go well beyond schooling: Mental health services, access to meals and health care, even crisis response supports for families experiencing emergencies. Many people center their community around their school. However, inequities remain for many people in Colorado, both in K-12 and higher education, which is why our work in this area takes on many forms.

Whatever your own style of giving, The Denver Foundation offers many ways to help you support education initiatives. You can give to our permanent endowment, the Fund for Denver, which supports our Community Grants Program, the most direct way for us to help drive real change in K-12 settings. We also administer scholarship funds for donors who want to provide pathways to higher education in ways that are important to them. Many of our fundholders have donor-advised funds that grant money to their alma mater or programs in their districts. By creating any of these funds as endowed funds, you can ensure your impact into the future.

The Community Grants Program funds organizations that focus on school reform and prioritize racial equity. It is the quintessential example of The Denver Foundation practicing our values. The organizations we fund are improving our neighborhoods and addressing the core issues facing families and communities all around Denver.

In this edition of Noteworthy, we'll explore some creative and impactful ways we can address these challenges together to shape a more equitable and accessible world. As lifelong learners, we grow together, and we're happy to share some examples with you.

Thank you for your continued support.

Javier Alberto Soto, President and CEO

ON THE COVER Candice Bataille, founder and executive director of Glowmundo, a partner of The Denver Foundation.

YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT



Colorado youth are facing a mental health crisis, which was accelerated by the pandemic. For many young people, school has become the only place where they can find the support they need. Unfortunately, our K-12 environments typically lack funding and resources to provide this care. The Denver Foundation is working to change that.

The Colorado Health Access Fund is a field of interest Fund managed by The Denver Foundation. Established in 2014 with an anonymous gift of \$40 million, the fund is dedicated to improving health outcomes for Coloradans without adequate access to health care. The fund distributes grants to increase access to care and improve health outcomes for populations with needs across the state.

In 2023, one of those grants went to the TRAILS to Wellness program to support immediate school needs and the organization's continued expansion in Colorado. TRAILS has created best-in-class professional materials

and equipped school staff to deliver and sustain multi-tiered mental health supports that meet the needs of all students. The vision is for more than a one-time investment. This partnership is fueling the development of critical local infrastructure and positioning TRAILS' for a leap forward. TRAILS' goal is to secure public funding to scale and reach 25% of all students statewide. The future is bright for this innovative project.

This is one of the many ways our generous donors are helping students in K-12 schools.

Are you interested in creating your own fund to focus on education issues that matter to you? Contact us today to discuss the many ways we can support your goals.

Call us today: 303.300.1790



EXPANDING POSSIBILITIES

The Reisher Scholars Program is one of Colorado’s premier scholarship opportunities. While many scholarships help students start college, the Reisher Scholars Program supports students midway through college to help them complete their undergraduate degrees.

Through a partnership that began more than 20 years ago, The Denver Foundation and the Reisher family have collaborated to develop this vital scholarship program — which will be one of the largest in Colorado after a major expansion this year. This is a story about one family’s impact on their community to provide opportunities for generations to come.

Roger Reisher and the Reisher family

Roger Reisher came from modest beginnings. He grew up in a sod house in Nebraska, served in the Army during World War II, then became the first in his family to attend college, graduating from the University of Colorado with the help of the GI Bill before starting his finance career.

Roger was the founding president of FirstBank in Colorado and worked there for 36 years. His success

allowed him the opportunity to give back. In 2001, Roger and his family started the Reisher Scholarship Program at The Denver Foundation.

“He was interested in a solution that moved money into students’ accounts as quickly and efficiently as possible,” said Jack Czarniecki, senior scholarships officer at The Denver Foundation. “They could have started a private foundation, bought a building, and hired staff, but he was more interested in using all that money to give back right away. He saw the value in how the foundation can handle the operations and logistics of it all.”

Despite beginning on a small scale, this program has now grown to be one of the most impactful scholarship funds in Colorado. Since it began it has provided \$39.3 million in scholarships and helped nearly 2,500 students complete college. The program is now set for a major expansion.

Planting the seeds and watching them grow

The program’s success inspired the Reisher family to contribute more resources. When it started, the program supported roughly 40 students per year.

“THE REISHER BRIDGE SCHOLARSHIP AIMS TO CREATE A MORE ROBUST PIPELINE FROM TWO-YEAR TO FOUR-YEAR COLLEGES.”

Now, that number is more than 500 students annually at nine schools across the state. The Reisher scholarship has grown by adding more schools and creating a new partnership for community college students attending any of the 13 Colorado Community College System colleges.

The Reisher Bridge Scholarship aims to create a more robust pipeline from two-year to four-year colleges. The program began awarding scholarship dollars to students in the fall 2023 semester before they transfer to a Reisher partner school in the 2024 academic year.

“The community college expansion is us pulling every lever we can,” said Czarniecki, who has 10 years of experience in the scholarship space. “More schools, more students, and more money. It’s a massive increase for any scholarship program, and we still have ways



PICTURED Jack Czarniecki, senior scholarships officer at The Denver Foundation

to grow. It’s an investment and our way of telling students, “We believe in you.”

The impact of the expansion on Indigenous students

A school new to the Reisher Scholars program is Fort Lewis College in Durango.

“We’re really trying to make our school a place where there are no barriers for any students, and Reisher is helping us close the gap for some of those students and pay for their education,” said Fave Johnston, Fort Lewis College’s Reisher Scholars coordinator and assistant director of Financial Aid.

“What’s really special about the expansion, particularly with Fort Lewis College, is that they also allowed us to include our students who are eligible for the Native American Tuition Waiver, even if they come from out of state,” explained Johnston.

Fort Lewis College offers a tuition waiver for enrolled citizens or the child of an enrolled citizen of an American Indian Tribal Nation or Alaska Native Village recognized by the U.S. federal government. The waiver covers tuition costs for undergraduate, graduate, and non-degree-seeking students. Students are responsible for paying other costs associated with attendance, like books, student fees, housing, and meal plans. This Reisher Scholars expansion helps students cover those additional costs.

“A lot of those students are high-need students, so it’s the difference between them wondering if they can afford to go to school and having that security of knowing everything is covered,” said Johnston. “They all work really, really hard, and they all are very humble, and they all want to help others.”

Interested in starting your own scholarship fund? The Denver Foundation will meet with you to discuss your goals and vision, and help you achieve it. [Contact us today to start the journey: 303.300.1790.](#)

INVESTING IN THE COMMUNITY



PICTURED Candice Bataille, founder and executive director of Glowmundo. Glowmundo has been a grantee of The Denver Foundation since 2018.

The Denver Foundation believes that access to a well-funded and racially equitable K-12 education system is critical for communities in Metro Denver to thrive. Many of our grantmaking priorities focus on organizations that are transforming those communities. Using resources from our permanent endowment, the Fund for Denver, we support organizations that can immediately impact the lives of Colorado youth. One great example is our partnership with Glowmundo, a Community Grants Program grantee.

Glowmundo collaborates with educators, families, and community leaders. It works to educate and build practices that champion equity, social and emotional learning, community engagement, and academic achievement to better support our students. This nonprofit has been a grantee of the foundation and its donors since 2018, receiving support from multiple funding sources over the years. Our stories of success are best told from the voices of

the individuals impacted by our funding. Leah Larson is one individual who experienced this impact and will carry this positive momentum forward.

Battling burnout

After teaching for more than a decade, Leah Larson wasn't sure it was sustainable. Larson, a second-grade teacher in Aurora Public Schools, was exhausted and overwhelmed by the evolving responsibilities of her job. Larson cared deeply for her students but felt stuck; she was concerned about her ability to overcome some of the challenges she faced in the classroom.

It wasn't until school administrators introduced Glowmundo that she saw a way to move forward. Larson participated in a Glowmundo teaching program that equipped her with tools to use with students and their families. Re-energized and inspired, Larson was ready to engage with her students in new ways.



PICTURED Leah Larson, second-grade teacher, Aurora Public Schools

"It really shifted my practice, and it changed the way that I saw education," said Larson. "I'm able to take the stress of my day and not bring it home. My classroom feels different. There are so many moments where I can be inside my own head and be all over the classroom and remain calm, focused, and attentive to all my students and what they need."

Larson said the program helped her dig into her personal biases, be mindful of when she sees them in play, and understand how to navigate them. The effect is rippling throughout the school.

"With the help of Glowmundo, I continue to improve my practice, which impacts my students, then reaches out and impacts more students, more families, and the bigger community," said Larson. "It has shifted everything that I do and keeps me excited year after year to get back into the classroom and continue to do that important work." Larson added, "I don't want to leave the classroom now."

Expanding the scale

Candice Bataille, founder and executive director of Glowmundo, created the organization because she saw many people experiencing the same things Larson did.

Bataille knew there were opportunities to improve conditions for everyone involved.

"Our mission is building resilience in children and youth, and we do it by connecting them with their inner strength to overcome difficult situations they face in life, whether within their family, their school, or the community where they live. And we do that in connection with their parents and their teachers," said Bataille.

Glowmundo's training, coaching, and curriculum offer awareness, knowledge, and skill-building that lead to systems changes in classrooms, schools, families, or communities. This is done through a variety of transformative social-emotional learning curriculums designed for K-12 educators.

"We teach journaling, breathing techniques, expression through art or movement. We nourish the child's social and emotional development, and we understand the neuroscience of the brain to make a more effective education process in school," said Bataille.

While the results have been outstanding, Bataille hopes to expand the scope and scale. She sees a bright future for the program and the organization.

"We will be able to eliminate bias barriers in the classroom and reduce teacher burnout and desertion. We'll increase the pro-social behavior of children and youth affected by trauma and increase parental resilience, with the hope of helping families whose lives are in distress," said Bataille. "With the support of The Denver Foundation and its donors, we will be able to reach many more schools, many more children, many more teachers, and many more families."

"WITH THE HELP OF
GLOWMUNDO, I CONTINUE TO
IMPROVE MY PRACTICE, WHICH
IMPACTS MY STUDENTS."

PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES FOR A BRIGHTER FUTURE

There are many ways for our fundholders to support education initiatives, but the most direct and effective way to expand access to a quality education is through our Community Scholarship Fund.

The Community Scholarship Fund supports first-generation college students of color pursuing post-secondary education. We select 20 students every year to receive a one-time \$5,000 scholarship. Awards can be used for tuition, fees, books, room and board, and additional expenses.

The Denver Foundation is committed to racial equity and believes in the power of education to change students' futures.



The Denver Foundation

**WANT TO CHANGE SOMEONE'S
LIFE? START WITH SCHOLARSHIPS.**

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