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Four generations of the Perlmutter family gather to celebrate Thanksgiving in 2015



## This Thanksgiving, make gratitude a habit

By Vicki Dansky

I recently participated in a training by an organization called 21/64 ([2164.net](http://2164.net)) to prepare me to be more effective at facilitating conversations across generations about values and philanthropy. One of the exercises we did was about growing goodness in children. I was struck by many of the tips, but one in particular stood out. It was how to make gratitude a habit. Research shows that gratitude leads to greater happiness and can be cultivated through modeling and practice.

Thanksgiving provides a moment in time when we can all stop and acknowledge the things for which we are grateful. In my family it is the one time of year when four generations

gather from near and far to be together and celebrate by giving thanks.

Last Thanksgiving was a typical one for the Perlmutter family. We all gathered at Jay and Lisa's home with our usual assigned dishes in tow. Our parents transported Mom's delicious stuffing and turkey, which Dad expertly carved. After capturing a new family photo, we sat down at the table to have our Thanksgiving meal.

For as far back as I can remember, our tradition has always been to take a turn reflecting on gratitude and how our experiences of the past year have impacted our

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## Our Mission

**Rose Community Foundation works to enhance the quality of life of the Greater Denver community through its leadership, resources, traditions and values.**

## Our Vision

**The Foundation uses leadership, grantmaking and donor engagement to invest in strategic and innovative solutions to enduring problems and emerging issues.**

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## A message from our CEO

**A**s we near the end of another year we can consider how far we have come in 2016, and look forward to the ways our community and our work will change in coming months and years. Chances are that many things about our community and our world will be different next year — and five years from now, and ten years from now — than they are today. We can anticipate some changes thanks to research and trend lines; others will take us by surprise.

As a community foundation working to make the Greater Denver community a better place, we work diligently to make life better today. We also look forward and make investments through our grantmaking and leadership that will continue to make a difference in years to come.

This year, our Committee on Aging identified the troubling fact that demand for home-delivered meals for older adults will increase at the same time that funding for these services is shrinking. So, the Committee decided to make one-time grants available to grantee organizations alongside regular grants to help these organizations make investments that will help them meet growing demand with diminishing resources. The committee also partnered with a private family foundation to expand the size of these grants.

The Health Committee is also working to invest in the future based on emerging but increasingly clear research about the importance of monitoring and treating young children's mental and social-emotional health with the same attention – and often in the same settings – as their physical health. In 2016, many of the Health Committee's large grants in this area are bearing fruit, from the integration of early childhood mental health care in many large pediatric networks, to increased visibility for this work in both policy and funding arenas. These developments should have long-ranging payoffs in children's emotional and physical health as they grow.

2016 was the second year our Innovate for Good initiative worked to find and fund new ideas to make our community better. We focused this year on empowering youth to be agents of change, and so the program awarded \$250,000 to youth projects and youth-adult partnership projects which will bring new and innovative ideas to life to make the Greater Denver community a better place. We have included a brief update about these inspiring efforts in these pages, but I encourage you to take some time to read about them at [rcfdenver.org/IFG](http://rcfdenver.org/IFG). These grants are one way we are investing in this community's leaders of the not-so-distant future.

All of these investments grow out of the values that have grounded us and served us so well since our founding twenty-one years ago. So, in this season of thanksgiving and transition from fall into winter, from one year to another, we give thanks to those who had the foresight to hold up those values that continue to serve us so well.

**Sheila Bugdanowicz**  
President and CEO  
Rose Community Foundation

# Committee on Aging funds meal delivery for today and for the future

**I**t really is as simple as this – food equals health, healing, security and well-being. For many older adults living alone, having a meal delivered can also provide personal contact and connection. As the population ages, more people live with chronic and life-threatening illness, and people are more distant from family and friends, the demand for home delivered meal programs grows.

Even as the need for these services increases, funding for them is shrinking. In coming years the organizations that provide this service will need to do more with less. So, as Senior Program Officer for Aging Therese Ellery approached her 2016 grants for these organizations, she and the Committee on Aging arrived at a new approach. They reviewed the organizations' requests for ongoing funding, but they also invited them to apply for a one-time grant to fund innovation and/ or investment in their operation. They did this to help ensure that each of the nonprofit organizations is prepared to meet the challenge of the coming years. Ellery and her committee also reached out to partner with a family foundation – the Paige Family Foundation in Broomfield – to make the one-time grants even larger. Of the seven applicants for grants to support home-delivered meals, six of them applied for one-time funding.

Longmont Meals on Wheels which is located in Longmont's Senior Center delivered more than 100,000 meals in 2015, and is on track to deliver 110,000 in its service area of Longmont, Niwot and Hygiene. The organization also prepares meals for the town of Lyons, and sells them to a local agency well below cost. Longmont Meals on Wheels does not accept any federal or state funding, so that it can take food donations and serve an expanded population.

"Our biggest need right now is continuing to respond to our growth," says Karla Hale, executive director of Longmont Meals on Wheels. The organization used the one-time grant to streamline and update their current equipment so that their operation can continue to grow and serve more people.

Hale is quick to point out that her organization provides much more than a meal. "All of our meal deliveries also provide wellness checks," she says. The delivery drivers can contact emergency personnel if they cannot make contact with a client. "Many of the people we serve don't have anyone," she says.

Project Angel Heart, which operates in Denver and Colorado Springs, also took advantage of the one-time grant to develop the infrastructure to launch a new program. The Meals for Care Transitions program is a partnership with healthcare providers to provide medically tailored meals delivered to patients who have recently returned home following a hospital stay. Having good nutrition significantly reduces rates of readmission to the hospital. "Clients also tell us that they are better able to keep up with their care regimens," says Erin Pulling, president and CEO at Project Angel Heart. The grant allowed the organization – which serves 1,200 clients each week – to purchase a large cooler, meal racks, a sink and establish other infrastructure to support this particular program as well as overall capacity.

The program serves clients like Joe, who is 60 and suffers from end stage renal disease, congestive heart failure, and several other debilitating conditions, all while he cares for his own mother. Although Joe's doctors gave him strict dietary guidelines to help manage his health conditions, cooking was difficult due to his fatigue and difficulties standing and walking. He often just asked a family member to pick up fast food for him. As a result, his health was declining.

After being referred to Project Angel Heart by his dietician, Joe began receiving kidney-friendly meals low in acid, sodium, phosphorus, and potassium. "Recently, my blood test results came back normal, which is unheard of for me and I know it's because of [Project Angel Heart's] food," said Joe.

"This program has really changed my life," said Joe. "I don't have to worry about counting nutrients or food values. I have something good to eat now and I don't have to feel guilty about eating it. This has really changed my whole life."



Thanks to meal delivery from Project Angel Heart, Joe can eat well according to his doctor's directions



## Early childhood mental health care work gains momentum

**P**icture a four-year-old child coming with his mother to the pediatrician's office for his annual well-child visit. In the course of the health check-up, the mother asks the care provider to speak to someone in the office about her son's behavior, which is causing problems in preschool. As part of this conversation guided by basic screening questions, the provider learns that the parents are recently divorced, that there is a history of domestic violence and that the child's behavior issues include tantrums, difficulty sleeping, hitting and refusing to leave his mother. The mother is worried that the child will be expelled from preschool and then she will have to leave her job to care for him.

This scenario reflects how the difficulties a young child faces can affect that child's experience and behavior in school and other environments, and how a routine well-child visit can be the time when a parent seeks help for these issues. Research in this area shows that stressors like

the ones experienced by this child can affect not only behavior and school readiness, but physical health – including cardiovascular disease, diabetes and infectious illness.

About five years ago, Rose Community Foundation's Health Committee, along with the Child and Family Development Committee, began to explore the topic of mental health for very young children. Early childhood mental health is also sometimes referred to as children's social-emotional development. Both committees believed it important to understand what early childhood mental health is, how a child's mental health can affect his or her life and future, and how to build prevention and early intervention into existing systems. Both committees also understood that collaborating with other funders interested in this area could make progress happen more quickly than if each funder worked in isolation.

Now, five years and several grants into this learning process, the issue of early childhood mental health is gaining momentum locally and nationally in both health and funding communities. "We can see that awareness of early childhood mental health is growing," says Whitney Connor, senior program officer. "You can find TED talks about the issue online, and terms like 'toxic stress' are gaining wider understanding." Toxic stress is used to describe the kind of stress the child in the earlier example is suffering. Just like other environmental toxins, the stress builds up with long-term consequences for the child's health and wellness. Connor goes on to say "My hope is that we continue to make the right investments along with our partners to sustain this momentum, both here in Colorado and nationally."

Research is also increasingly clear that mothers' mental health during pregnancy and children's early years is important. A recent two year grant to Colorado Access is one example of how research about mothers' mental and social and emotional health is now becoming implemented in primary care settings. Colorado Access is a nonprofit health plan that administers children's



Parents spend time with their babies at a Children's Hospital pediatric practice

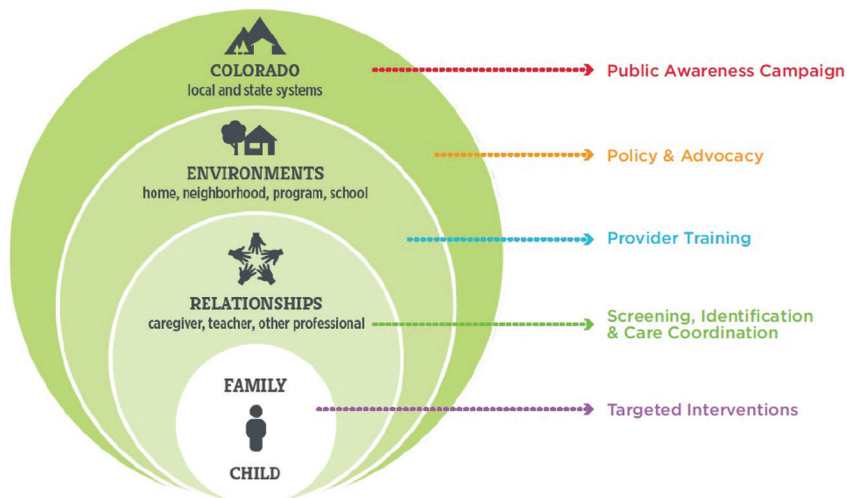
and pre-natal coverage for Medicaid patients. A Rose Community Foundation grant will fund a pilot project to implement a telehealth-based integrated care model for pregnant and post-partum women at risk for depression. Telehealth delivers health care services through video-conferencing and other tools, which allows patients to receive high-quality comprehensive care and monitoring at potentially lower costs. So, mothers-to-be who might not otherwise have access to mental health screening and monitoring will have regular access throughout their pregnancy and after, thus helping their babies come into a safe and healthy environment.

Rose Community Foundation also recently made a grant to the Children's Hospital Colorado Foundation to support the First 1,000 Days initiative, which is concerned with prenatal mothers and children from birth through age two. This comprehensive effort focuses on improving health outcomes for young children and families by screening regularly for mental and social stressors and then providing appropriate support and care if their personal circumstances are negatively affecting children's health and well-being. The initiative is intentionally working and measuring change on five fronts: public awareness; policy and advocacy; provider training; screening, identification and care coordination; and targeted interventions.

Psychologist Ayelet Talmi serves as co-leader of the First 1,000 Days initiative, and has spent most of her career working as a provider and as a leader in the effort to make mental health care more available and accessible. She says that First 1,000 Days strategies (see diagram) have internal and external implications. Some of the work is grounded in hospital-based and network of care pediatric practices that are part of Children's Hospital Colorado, and it has intentional links to external initiatives and partnerships. There is the potential to inform the care community around the state, not just at Children's. "Alignment of this work is both a challenge and an opportunity," she says. "Each of the five strategies overlaps and influences the others. It is complicated but it is transformational, systemic change."

She goes on to say that the partnership of foundations and other funders has been critical to being able to take on this systemic

#### ALIGNMENT WITH THE EARLY CHILDHOOD COLORADO FRAMEWORK



A diagram which shows how the First 1,000 Days strategies reach different groups who care for children

change. "The funding community in Colorado has invested deeply, and over a long period of time, so we could be creative and innovative, and work towards sustainability," she says. "Members of the philanthropic community have been partners all along the way. Their collective investment in infrastructure for early childhood is the envy of other states and sets a high bar for national efforts."

Both of these projects reflect the intentional integration of mental and social-emotional health screening and intervention into regular preventive health care both for mothers and young children. Both organizations – Colorado Access and the Children's Hospital Colorado network – also have the potential to identify the most successful practices in this area and replicate them more broadly.

Just as these efforts are spreading in the medical community, they are also gaining visibility both with funders and in the medical community. Connor recently co-authored an article about the collaboration of Denver funders in this area for *The Foundation Review*, a quarterly publication of the Johnson Center for Philanthropy. This article will help raise visibility both for the importance of early childhood mental health, and for the effective collaboration of funders in the Greater Denver community to address it.

## Joanne Posner-Mayer helps organizations she loves get to the next level



Philanthropist and donor-advised fundholder Joanne Posner-Mayer

**J**oanne Posner-Mayer has found many ways to be philanthropic, using her time, her money and even her credit to help organizations she loves.

Posner-Mayer's philanthropic journey starts with a childhood rich in experience and relationship if poor in financial resources, then takes a sharp right turn when she became an entrepreneur in the fitness market and made a successful investment. Now she travels down roads based on a mix of serendipity, curiosity and the things she cares about most.

"I found out we were 'low-income' when I applied to go to college," says Posner-Mayer, who grew up in Denver. Her father was a Polish immigrant who owned a hardware store, and her mother was a Holocaust survivor. "But," she remarks, "I felt spoiled because I always had ballet lessons." After becoming a physical therapist, she developed the use of what at the time was a little-known physical therapy tool – a large exercise ball. By authoring books, videos and starting her own company, Fitball™, she pioneered the use of the now ubiquitous exercise balls in physical therapy and the fitness industry.

Following a successful investment, Posner-Mayer had extra money in the bank for the first time in her life. A financial advisor recommended she put money into a donor-advised fund, and suggested Rose Community Foundation. As she researched donations to make through her fund, Posner-Mayer connected with nonprofit organizations that reflected things she loved in her own life – her past as a dancer through the Colorado Ballet, her love of art and culture through the Denver Art Museum and her Jewish roots through JEWISHcolorado. She has also established an endowed scholarship for the physical therapy program at the University of Colorado's School of Medicine, and funded a teaching garden for elementary school students in Ramat Negev in Israel in honor of her mother's memory.

"A benefit of getting involved is meeting wonderful and like-minded people," she says. As a board member of the Colorado Ballet, she understood that the organization really needed a new facility. It occurred to her that one way she could help

was to use credit she had available to loan the Ballet money at her very low interest rate. The loan would help the organization to secure a building while they were still raising the money they needed. Thanks in part to this transaction, the Colorado Ballet was able to purchase its own building for the first time in its history.

She was able to facilitate a similar transaction for the Rose Andom Center, an organization which works to improve the lives of domestic violence victims by providing access to services and staff of community organizations and government agencies in a single, safe location.

Another opportunity presented itself when Posner-Mayer heard Andrew Romanoff, a Denver civic leader, share his vision for opening an internationally-oriented nonprofit and workspace in the Curtis Park neighborhood. This is the neighborhood where Posner-Mayer's father's hardware store had been located. "That neighborhood fed my family growing up," she says. The opportunity to help give back resonated immediately. She made a donation to the organization large enough to meet its capital campaign goal, and was able to name the facility the Posner Center in honor of her parents. The center now houses a number of nonprofits and nongovernmental organizations working in different ways to end poverty around the world.

Posner-Mayer has also worked alongside these organizations to provide for their long-term sustainability. She seeded endowment funds for the Colorado Ballet and the Posner Center at Rose Community Foundation, and made it possible for them to participate in Rose Community Foundation's Endowment Building Cohorts. This program supplies participating organizations with information and infrastructure to build an endowment fund, which can then provide investment income and stability for nonprofit organizations over the long run. She is also working with the Rose Andom Center to begin their endowment over the coming year.

"It is fulfilling to me to be able to help these organizations in a significant way," says Posner-Mayer, "since I have been so fortunate myself."



# Innovate for Good 2016 awards \$250,000 in grants to youth, youth-adult partnership projects

**A**t a September awards celebration at the University of Denver's Cable Center, Rose Community Foundation announced the winners of Innovate for Good 2016, created to empower youth to be agents of change in the Greater Denver community. More than 250 people gathered to watch videos and hear a series of pitches from each project. The audience then voted to determine which projects would receive funding. The Foundation awarded a total of \$250,000 in grants and support to six Youth-Adult Partnership projects as well as four Youth-led projects.

The awarded projects differ in many ways, from population and neighborhoods served, to focus,



Awardees for Innovate for Good 2016 following the live vote

approach and audience. And yet all of the winning projects promote human connection and in-person interaction, making a powerful, unexpected statement about how young people

from a "digital generation" view giving back to the community.

For a full list of awardees, go to [rcfdenver.org/IFG](http://rcfdenver.org/IFG).

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## Gratitude

perspectives. During the last few years, this process has taken a while because our family has grown to 27 members. I was sitting next to Dad that night and I saw how intently he listened to each of us as we took our turn. It was easy to see both of our parents' delight. I will never forget the way they each spoke about their appreciation for each other and their lives during their nearly 63 years of marriage. Dad also expressed his gratitude for having had the opportunity at the recent annual dinner of the Robert E. Loup Jewish Community Center to personally convey his love to the Denver community in which he lived his entire life.

Later that night, Dad suffered a severe subdural hematoma and never regained consciousness even after an emergency operation to relieve the pressure.

This Thanksgiving is going to be one of those "firsts" for my family. It will be the first Thanksgiving without cherished

parents: my father, Jordon Perlmutter, and mother-in-law, Helen Dansky, who passed away just last month. Both parents were incredible role models in how to make gratitude a daily practice and how to find extraordinary meaning in ordinary moments. What better gift to give a loved one than the roadmap to happiness! May your Thanksgiving be filled with meaning and happiness.

*Vicki Dansky, Senior Gift Planning Officer, at Rose Community Foundation, works with individuals and families to help them determine and meet their current philanthropic goals and plans for the stewardship of their future planned gifts. She is certified as a 21/64 multigenerational philanthropic facilitator. She also supports legal and financial advisors with their clients' charitable strategies. In addition, Ms. Dansky coaches and leads group trainings on endowment building and planned giving programs for staff and board members to strengthen the capacity of their nonprofit organizations.*