

impact

Three Years Later: BOOST is a Success

In 2004, Rose Community Foundation began a three-year initiative to strengthen 10 nonprofit organizations in the Denver metro area. The initiative was called Building Organizational Operating Strength Together, or BOOST, and it was designed to do what its acronym suggests – to assist the participants in reaching their goals. Before those goals were determined,

though, each of the BOOST participants went through a formal self-assessment process.

Having the Right Problems

The first part of the self-assessment asked each organization to look at itself in terms of lifecycles defined by BOOST designer Susan Kenny Stevens: startup, growth, maturity or decline.

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Paying Attention to What Matters

Center for African American Health – caahealth.org

"The help that was provided by BOOST couldn't have been more timely or critical for the stage we were in," says Grant Jones, founder and executive director of the Center for African American Health. "The process helped us to ask tough questions of ourselves."

When the organization was selected to participate in BOOST, it was then called the Metro Denver Black Church Initiative. Its mission at the time included helping churches operate several types of social and health programs and services. "We had become the go-to organization for a lot of others in the community." But the organization was stretched too thin.

"We had already been exploring the feasibility of doing all health work," says Jones. "What we learned is that we had to refine our focus and develop greater clarity. BOOST gave us the tools and technical assistance we needed to address our governance, budgeting processes and management team issues...all of the things that are really important to our future. BOOST helped us pay attention to what matters most in our organization."

Three years after beginning the BOOST process, with a redefined mission, a name change and a staff that has nearly doubled in size, Jones reports, "I couldn't have imagined the level of excitement that our organization has now."

Felicia Hilton of the Center for African American Health addresses health liaisons from local churches.



Photo by Chris Takagi

Mission Statement

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

We value our Jewish heritage and our roots in Jewish traditions including charity, philanthropy and nondiscrimination.

We value excellence and uphold the highest standards in the pursuit of our mission.

We value the trust and respect of the community and continually strive to earn and sustain that trust by consistent and disciplined adherence to our mission.

Rose Community Foundation's support for the Greater Denver community is focused in five program areas: Aging, Child and Family Development, Education, Health and Jewish Life. In addition to grantmaking, Rose Philanthropic Services is available to assist individuals and families in their philanthropic activities.

Message from Arlene Hirschfeld

Chair, Board of Trustees

BOOSTing Nonprofit Success



Where would we be without our community's nonprofit organizations?

From the smallest volunteer group working out of a community center basement, to the well-known institutions that put our city on the map, our lives are enriched daily by

organizations with a bottom line that is not about money. Nonprofit organizations measure success by helping people and making our community a better place.

To do their work well, nonprofit organizations need stable finances, good management, strong board leadership and smooth-running administrative systems. Often without realizing it, nonprofit organizations lack one or more of these components of success. By their nature, they tend to focus more on their mission and programs than on the details of running a business. And they should.

But these underlying business factors determine whether an organization is poised to grow, adapt and reach for new opportunities, or whether it is consistently vulnerable to crisis, decline and even extinction.

When we love what an organization does, we challenge it to do even better. When we see an organization serving people's needs in important ways, we challenge it to do more.

I recently had the honor of presenting awards to 10 Rose Community Foundation grantees that completed our three-year BOOST initiative. BOOST, (described throughout this newsletter), stands for Building Organizational Operating Strength Together. In a nutshell, the Foundation selected these organizations to receive training, consultation and grants to plan and implement

significant changes in their business operations in order to better support their mission and programs.

As I listened to these organizations' leaders tell their stories, I was greatly inspired by the risks they had taken to become stronger. For some, it meant finding better messages to describe their work. For others, it meant building a stronger board of directors. And, for almost all, it meant taking a hard look at the real costs of their programs relative to the services they provide.

BOOST has helped set these 10 organizations on a path toward greater success. It is one example of Rose Community Foundation's efforts to build the capacity of our grantees. And there are others:

- For the fourth consecutive year, our 19 Endowment Challenge grantees will receive more than \$1 million in distributions, thanks to an endowment campaign in the Jewish community that finished in 2002.
- Currently, more than \$15 million in bequest pledges have been made in the Foundation's *Live On* initiative (visit liveonlegacy.org).
- In partnership with Hispanics in Philanthropy, the Jay and Rose Phillips Family Foundation and the Western Union Foundation, we are working with Latino donors to create a \$1 million fund to strengthen Latino organizations.

Success depends first and foremost on great ideas and caring people. But, to have *enduring* success, the infrastructure needs to be solid. We congratulate our BOOST participants, along with our many other grantees who have received support to become stronger internally and, therefore, are in a better position to strengthen our entire community.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Arlene Hirschfeld".

Arlene Hirschfeld
Chair, Board of Trustees

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Eight of the organizations were in the growth phase, and two were in the startup phase.

Then each organization took stock of its specific strengths and weaknesses. “Self-assessment was the key,” says Stevens. “They needed to claim where they were, warts and all, before they could move forward.”

Knowing that different lifecycles bring predictable challenges made the process easier. “When I began to see our organization in the framework of startup/growth, it depersonalized any of the problems we were experiencing. Our problems were the right ones we were supposed to have,” says Linda Loewenstein, executive director of the Boulder Jewish Community Center.

Outside Resources Helpful

Rose Community Foundation granted nearly \$1.9 million over the course of the BOOST initiative. In addition, the Jay and Rose Phillips Family Foundation provided substantial financial support for Metro Volunteers’ participation. Part of the total funding went

to hire consultants to help create and implement a business plan. Universally, the BOOST participants report that the consultants were a vital part of the process.

“We never would have been able to afford consulting of this quality on our own; we were able to get some really good training for our staff and board,” says Howard Yeoman of The Senior Hub.

Jacki Paone, who started as executive director of The Alliance for Quality Teaching two years into the BOOST process, says, “Our consultant had met with our board and gotten a really good sense of direction about where the priorities and goals were for the organization. It was great for me to come in and have that on paper in front of me.”

Most of the organizations worked with the same consultant(s) for all three years. “They got to know us really well. You didn’t have to worry about starting from scratch,” says Elisabeth Arenales, cofounder and former board chair of the Colorado Consumer Health Initiative.

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Lifecycles and Susan Kenny Stevens, Ph.D.

BOOST was built on ideas developed and articulated by Susan Kenny Stevens, lead consultant and designer of the initiative. Some of the premises:

- Organizations go through developmental lifecycles ranging from startup to growth to maturity to decline.
- The ideal stage is a combination of growth and maturity; the organization is strong and stable, but also self-renewing and adaptable to change.
- Each lifecycle stage presents predictable leadership and management challenges requiring different strategies and investments.
- Organizations that understand the challenges associated with each stage of development are better equipped to find solutions and more successfully fulfill their missions.

Dr. Stevens is a nationally recognized consultant, author and lecturer on financial, management, and organizational issues pertaining to philanthropy and the nonprofit sector. Author of *Nonprofit Lifecycles: Stage-based Wisdom for Nonprofit Capacity*, she is executive principal of LarsonAllen in Minneapolis. larsonallen.com

BOOST Participants

Growth agencies:

Boulder Jewish Community Center
Center for African American Health
Colorado Agency for Jewish Education
Colorado Bright Beginnings
Hillel of Colorado
Metro Volunteers
The Senior Hub
Women’s Bean Project

Startups:

The Alliance for Quality Teaching
Colorado Consumer Health Initiative

BOOST Consultants

Bourge Hathaway, Ordinary Magic
Gail Hoyt, Financial & Accounting Support Specialists
Gurudev Khalsa, Trilight Development
Richard Male, Richard Male & Associates
Sharon McClew
Karla Raines, Corona Research
Patricia Sterner, JFB & Associates
Susan Kenny Stevens, LarsonAllen
Catherine Sunshine, The Sunshine Consultancy
Janine Vanderburg, JVA Consulting

Solidifying Identity

Boulder Jewish Community Center – boulderjcc.org

When the Boulder Jewish Community Foundation was founded in the mid-1990s, one of its goals was to create a place where Boulder's Jewish community could "meet, engage in study and worship, exchange ideas, celebrate and grow together." In 1999, the organization purchased property at 3800 Kalmia Avenue in Boulder, which became the Boulder Jewish Community Center (BJCC).

By the time the organization was selected to participate in BOOST, "We were really struggling with our identity," says Linda Loewenstein, BJCC executive director. "Were we just a JCC? Or were we bigger than a JCC?" Partway into the second year of BOOST, the Boulder Jewish Community Foundation and the BJCC decided to split into two separate entities. "BOOST helped us understand that separating was a positive step that was totally necessary for both organizations."

As the BJCC continued with the BOOST process, "It became clear that we were really a startup organization on the cusp of the growth phase," says Loewenstein. "We were freed in a way that opened us up. We have been able to use our BOOST funding to increase our offerings, and we know who we are as an organization."



Photo by Chris Takagi

It's cupcake time at the Boulder JCC Preschool.

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"The discipline of having to do a business plan and learning program-based budgeting was so helpful," says Metro Volunteers' Jackie Norris. "That was a really positive change for us."

Another element of BOOST that was appreciated by the organizations' leaders was the chance to share ideas and bounce strategies off one another. "It was invaluable to see other non-profits up close, and to be able to learn from each other," says Pat Blumenthal, executive director of Hillel of Colorado.

Change is Good...for Others

Still, BOOST was not easy. One executive director estimates he spent 20 to 30 hours per week on BOOST activities, many of those hours in addition to his regular duties. Each organization was also required to assemble a leadership team at the beginning of the initiative. Susan Kenny Stevens explains why: "We took some of the onus off the executive directors. There is a shared ownership that comes with board members and other

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Narrowing the Focus

The Alliance for Quality Teaching – qualityteaching.org

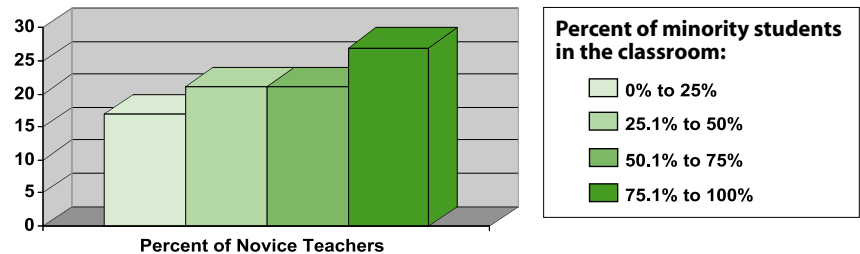
Established as a coalition in 1998, The Alliance for Quality Teaching (AQT) was one of two BOOST participants in the startup phase. "We've had a very clear mission from the start – to ensure that Colorado children have a quality teacher in every classroom, every day," says Jacqueline Paone, executive director. "But how do you achieve quality teaching? What constitutes a quality teacher? BOOST helped us narrow down our focus."

Data-gathering became one priority, which led AQT to release a report, *Shining the Light: The State of Teaching in Colorado 2006*, available online at qualityteaching.org. In addition, Paone reports that the organization has reworked its bylaws; developed policy, such as more clearly defining the role of its board; and has started looking at the potential of membership.

From 2002 to 2006, AQT operated under the umbrella of the Colorado Nonprofit Development Center, which helps startup nonprofits find their footing. In Fall 2006, AQT received its own 501(c)(3) status from the IRS. "BOOST made it more possible for us to get things done," says Paone.

Minority Students and Novice Teachers

Existing research shows a link between novice teachers, defined as those with two or fewer years of experience, and student learning. For example, 2004 math ACT scores were lower in Colorado high schools that had a higher percentage of inexperienced teachers. One of the findings reported in *Shining the Light: The State of Teaching in Colorado 2006* is that minority students in the state are more likely to have novice teachers in their classrooms than non-minority students.



An Outside Perspective

Metro Volunteers – metrovolunteers.org

Metro Volunteers, like the other BOOST participants, benefited from the services of an outside consultant throughout the three-year process. "She always kept us on top of things and offered us perspective," says Jackie Norris, Metro Volunteers executive director. "The consultant was a critical part of the process for us."

In addition, Metro Volunteers used some of its BOOST funds to conduct market research, a luxury for most nonprofit organizations. "That was very informative, and helped us to make better decisions," says Norris. "We are much more thoughtful about how we budget and manage our finances, resulting in a positive bottom line."

There has also been a shift in the organization's internal perspective. "Everybody has finally learned – you don't get to make a change and then sit back and watch it," she says. "Change is always occurring."



Metro Volunteers organizes an annual volunteer fair in downtown Denver to help match volunteers with volunteering opportunities.

Photo by Chris Takagi

Smoothing Transitions

Colorado Bright Beginnings – brightbeginningsco.org

Colorado Bright Beginnings focuses on supporting very young children in order to give them a strong foundation for the future. As a BOOST participant, Colorado Bright Beginnings focused on planning for its own future.

"Nonprofits tend to be sort of reactive," says Valin Brown, the group's executive director. "What the business plan is allowing us to do is ask ourselves where we want to be in three years." The plan was developed during the first year of BOOST and implemented at the start of the second year.

"The challenge for us is to translate the facilitated BOOST process into a rolling process that we carry forward into the future," says Brown. "We know where we're going through 2007, but where do we want to go through 2010? We're starting those important discussions now."

Bright Beginnings' programs are offered at no cost to any interested family with a child prenatal to age three in Colorado.



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executive leaders all being part of it. Also, over three years, people may move on. This encouraged institutional knowledge and memory."

Several organizations lost long-time staff members as their focus shifted or programming changed. "We found that people like change when it's happening to somebody else," laughs Daniel Bennett of the Colorado Agency for Jewish Education. "When it's going on in our own backyard, that's much more challenging."

Grant Jones at the Center for African American Health reports some "pushback" from those outside his organization. "The areas of discomfort are around saying no to things I wouldn't have said no to before. BOOST has helped us to stay mission-driven and mission-focused."

Evaluating the Initiative

While a formal evaluation will be finished in April 2007, overwhelmingly, the leaders of every organization that participated in BOOST have given the initiative high marks. "Rose Community Foundation set up a process and a structure that really was ambitious and long-term," says Valin Brown, executive director of Colorado Bright Beginnings. "Foundations don't often take a long-term look at their grantees like Rose did."

"I think the challenge for a foundation is that in order to justify such a large expenditure, you have to get a measurable result," says the Women's Bean Project's Tamra Ryan. "But how do you measure a mentality change? How do you measure the fact that now everyone in our organization knows exactly what our primary goal is? Those things have just as much impact on an organization. I think it's a different kind of giving, and I think it's valuable."

Developing Tools for Growth

Hillel of Colorado – hillelcolorado.org



Photo by Chris Takagi

Hillel of Colorado's new facility on the University of Denver campus offers students a comfortable alternative to working or relaxing in a dorm room or apartment.

Hillel of Colorado has facilities serving Jewish students on three campuses in the state – Colorado State University, the University of Colorado at Boulder and the University of Denver (DU). In 2006, a new 8,000-square-foot facility was built at DU, replacing an older 800-square-foot building.

Pat Blumenthal, executive director of Hillel of Colorado, credits BOOST with enabling the organization to handle such a large transition. "Our financial management system was transformed. We hired a bookkeeper through BOOST, who then became our operations manager. We never would have been as successful at fundraising. We learned how to budget differently. We were able to be very clear with cost projections for the building and costs to run the building," she says.

With demand growing steadily – total student turnout for Hillel events more than doubled from 1997 to 2006 – Blumenthal feels that BOOST has given the organization the tools it needs to handle more growth well.

Building Confidence

The Senior Hub – seniorhub.org

Howard Yeoman, executive director of The Senior Hub, credits BOOST with creating a more confident organization. He says the agency, which serves seniors in the north metro area, Aurora and some rural communities east of Aurora "was pretty fiscally conservative before. Creating a new staff position – a development and community relations director – was a bold step for us. BOOST allowed us to do that for a time until the position supports itself."

In addition, most of the organization's services had always been free to clients. The Senior Hub now offers for-pay services for those who can afford it, which has helped to diversify income. "That took additional administration but it has paid off for us," says Yeoman.

There is also a more cohesive approach among the organization's staff and board members. "When we first did our BOOST business plan, there were no surprises," says Yeoman. "But when it's in



Photo by Chris Takagi

Seated exercise helps participants at The Senior Hub's adult day services program maintain physical strength.

writing, it carries more weight. Now everyone shares the same information, sees the same goals, and it is agreed to by all. We have the same guide to work from."

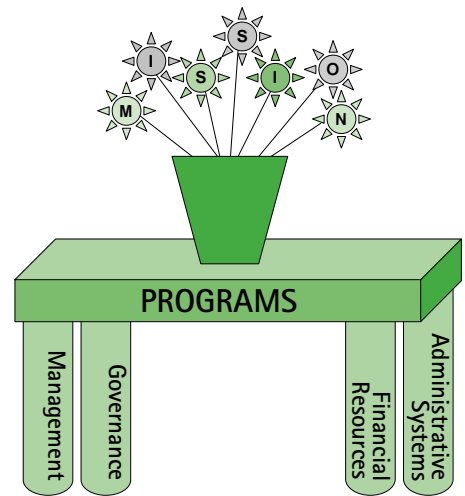
A BOOST from You?

Rose Community Foundation is proud to support the work of our BOOST grantees, and we invite you to do the same. To make a contribution to one or more of the organizations featured in these pages, you may send your check(s) in the postage-paid envelope that is inserted in this newsletter. We will forward 100 percent of your contribution(s) according to your direction.

Dede de Percin, executive director of the Colorado Consumer Health Initiative, also points out, "It was an investment in more than just our organization. Our board members and staff have taken what they have learned to other groups that they are involved in. It goes beyond these 10 organizations." Rose Community Foundation also views BOOST as a success, and is developing plans for a second BOOST initiative.

Susan Kenny Stevens, who has been involved in numerous similar projects around the country, sums up BOOST like this: "A lot of organizations realized they had come a lot further than they realized. They worked through things together instead of just the executive director doing it alone. The more they did this, the stronger the organization became. They've learned to speak with one voice."

Susan Kenny Stevens uses a tabletop analogy to describe nonprofit organizations: "The stronger the legs are, the more you can concentrate on the tabletop. Our goal was to strengthen their legs through BOOST."



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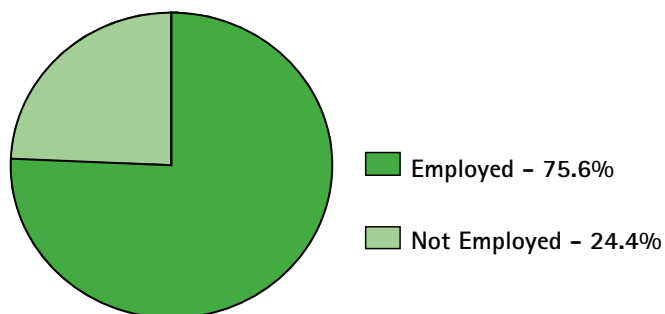
Smoothing Transitions

Colorado Consumer Health Initiative – cohealthinitiative.org

Advocating for the Uninsured

The Colorado Consumer Health Initiative (CCHI) focuses on three activities: community organizing, education and influencing policy. One way CCHI tries to help those without health insurance is to help policymakers understand that the uninsured population is largely composed of the "working poor".

Colorado Uninsured Working Age Adults 2002-2004



When the founder of a nonprofit leaves the organization, it can be a shaky time. "It's not because of lack of ideas or vision, it's usually lack of infrastructure," says Dede de Percin, executive director of the Colorado Consumer Health Initiative (CCHI).

In CCHI's case, two cofounders left within months of each other. Executive Director Lorez Meinhold left in late summer 2006, and Elisabeth Arenales, cofounder and board chair, stepped down at the end of the same year.

Far from failing, though, CCHI is thriving. "BOOST had us in such good shape," says Arenales. "We had already thought about transitions – we had steps outlined and structures in place." According to new leader de Percin, "Windows for health care reform don't come along very often. We have one now in Colorado, and CCHI is ready to take advantage it. BOOST has brought us to that place."

Re-Creating a Vision

Women's Bean Project – womensbeanproject.com

The Women's Bean Project (WBP) employs women who come from backgrounds of chronic unemployment and poverty, and helps them develop work and interpersonal skills. When BOOST began in 2004, WBP Executive Director Tamra Ryan describes the organization as having a certain level of self-doubt. "BOOST was significant for us because it gave us a platform for getting a group of people together to create a vision for the future of the organization," she says.

One decision was to become more streamlined. WBP had been running two businesses – a food-packaging and sales operation, and a catering company. The latter was shut down. "By focusing on one business, in just one year we replaced all of our catering revenue," says Ryan.

Other specific changes were also made, but Ryan reports that the most important take-away from BOOST was intangible. "The BOOST initiative was a shot of confidence," says Ryan. "It made us feel like we could get things done. It took us out of the

mindset of 'How do we stay afloat?' and gave us the ability to imagine what we could become."



Photo by Chris Takagi

The Women's Bean Projects teaches women skills so that they can function independently in the workplace and the community.

Dealing with Change

Colorado Agency for Jewish Education – caje-co.org



Photo by Chris Takagi

Students at CAJE's Hebrew High are pumped up after practicing Israeli dancing.

Like many of the organizations that participated in BOOST, the Colorado Agency for Jewish Education (CAJE) has dealt with a lot of change in the last three years. The organization, which promotes lifelong Jewish learning, chose to focus exclusively on some of its signature programs, finding new homes for others. Staff positions changed, leading to the departure of some long-term staff members. Management positions changed, with a new operations director position allowing Executive Director Daniel Bennett to focus less on daily operations. And the nature of board involvement changed. Says Bennett, "Our board is taking more and more ownership of the agency."

Although BOOST was time-consuming and challenging, Bennett says for CAJE, change was good. "Our organization would probably have drifted along without ever directly addressing some of the things that a mature organization needs to address. But we jumped in feet first and never looked back," says Bennett. "We came out with an organization that has a very clear programmatic structure, and a solidified position in the community."

Community Updates

Foundation Honored by Hispanics in Philanthropy

Hispanics in Philanthropy (HIP) presented Rose Community Foundation with its “Emerging Leader” Award at its 2007 Leadership Conference in Los Angeles on February 4. Board Chair Arlene Hirschfeld accepted the award at a celebration honoring individuals, corporations and foundations “for outstanding service and charitable contributions to the Latino community...”

From 2002 to 2005, the Foundation partnered with HIP and several local and national foundations to support the Colorado Funders Collaborative for Strong Latino Communities, and more recently joined forces with the Western Union Foundation, the Jay and Rose Phillips Family Foundation and HIP in a new initiative focused on Latino donors. More information: hiponline.org

New Chair-Elect and Board Appointments

Scott Levin has been named chair-elect of Rose Community Foundation’s board of trustees. He will begin a two-year term as board chair in January 2008. A trustee since 2004, Levin formerly chaired the Foundation’s Child and Family Development Committee, and is currently a member of the Audit Committee and the Jewish Life Committee. Levin serves on the boards of the Anti-Defamation League – Mountain States Region, Denver Campus for Jewish Education and the Regional Council of the American Israel Political Action Committee. He is a senior partner at the law firm of Fisher, Sweetbaum, Levin & Sands, P.C., and a graduate of The George Washington University and the University of Denver College of Law.



Scott Levin

Five more community leaders have joined Rose Community Foundation’s board of trustees; each has been elected to a five-year term.

In addition to joining the board, Jennifer Adler is the new chair of the Foundation’s Health Committee. She previously served on the Foundation’s Jewish Life Committee, and is a founding member of the Jewish Women’s Fund of Colorado, a charitable fund of the Foundation. Adler is executive director of Invest in Kids, an organization that works to improve the health and well-being of young children through programs that have been proven to work. She is also an attorney, and formerly practiced at Holland & Hart.



Jennifer Adler

Dori Biester, Ph.D. served as president and CEO of The Children’s Hospital from 1998 to January 2007. Biester has served on numerous local and national boards, including the Children’s Miracle Network, Denver Metro Chamber of Commerce, Downtown Denver Partnership, the National Association of Children’s Hospitals and Related Institutions, and Urban Peak. She has degrees from the University of Iowa, the University of Wisconsin and the University of Colorado Health Sciences Center. Biester is the recipient of several awards, including being named Healthcare Executive of the Year by the *Denver Business Journal*.



Dori Biester, Ph.D.

Walter Isenberg is a co-founder of Sage Hospitality Resources, a company specializing in hotels and hospitality real estate. As president and CEO, he directs the company’s operations, including hotel development, asset

management and property management. Isenberg currently serves on the boards of The Children's Hospital Foundation, Colorado Concern, the Denver Metro Convention and Visitors Bureau, Downtown Denver Partnership and Mountain States Employers Council. He is a graduate of the Cornell University School of Hotel Administration.



Walter Isenberg

Rob Klugman has been a member of Rose Community Foundation's Jewish Life Committee since 2003. Klugman is a business consultant for companies in the beer industry including Molson Coors, from which he retired in 2005 as global chief strategy officer. He is



Rob Klugman

currently chair of the Anti-Defamation League – Mountain States Region, and is co-chairing a 2007 survey of the Denver/Boulder Jewish population conducted by the Allied Jewish Federation of Colorado, and funded by Rose Community Foundation.

Dean Prina, M.D. is a pediatrician and general partner in private practice at Partners in Pediatrics. Prina has chaired and served on numerous boards, including: College Summit, Colorado Public Radio, Denver Film Society, The Denver Foundation, Jewish Family Service of Colorado, Judi's House, Planned Parenthood of the Rocky Mountains and The Women's Foundation of Colorado. He also frequently serves on fundraising and event committees. Prina was previously a member of Rose Community Foundation's Child and Family Development Committee from 2000 to 2003.



Dean Prina, M.D.

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The Boulder Jewish Community Center (BJCC) and nine other Denver/Boulder nonprofits are stronger than they were three years ago after their participation in Rose Community Foundation's BOOST initiative (see cover story.) Here some of the BJCC's preschoolers supervise a hungry bunny.



Photo by Chris Takagi

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