

In August of this year, Maryo Gard Ewell, our Director of Community Impact, retired from CFGV. She shaped CFGV's community involvement in many ways. The Resiliency Project (in partnership with the City of Gunnison and the Gunnison Country Chamber of Commerce) was started to spread joy during COVID and continues to nurture community ties.

Spreading Joy in the Gunnison Valley

Looking back at the March 26, 2020, edition of the Gunnison Country Times, two things are very clear. **COVID had arrived in a big way in the Gunnison Valley.** We were in our second week of lockdown and community members were grappling with how to survive an extended shutdown. **And, the Gunnison Valley was already coming together to tackle the challenges brought by the pandemic.** Gunnison County had launched an economic recovery task force and we had just announced the Gunnison Valley COVID-19 Recovery Fund.



Sunny Downpour played the first music cruise of 2023.

All this turmoil inspired Russ Forrest, then City Manager of Gunnison, to call together Ginny Baylor, Gunnison's Recreation Supervisor, and Maryo for a meeting on March 27. He asked them to brainstorm ways to connect our community and spread joy. Maryo had already connected with Joellen Fonken and Maryo, Ginny, and Joellen started work on what became "The Resiliency Project." That summer, Faith Saltmarsh from the City joined along with Celeste Helminski from the Chamber.

Maryo approached the challenge of spreading joy in a pandemic with her trademark wisdom and creativity. "As she discussed the state of the community during

those first two weeks of COVID mayhem, I was brought to tears," Ginny recalled. "Times were hard, and she was elbows deep in how we help, how we connect, how we recover. She is the best mentor and friend. I giggle now thinking back at how intimidated I was when Russ first asked me to collaborate with Maryo."

The Resiliency Project now includes four signature programs designed to create new connections in the community: winter solstice luminarias, downtown hearts (a Valentine's Day celebration), music cruises, and community-building micro-grants. While the Resiliency Project is anchored in Gunnison, the luminarias have been embraced by the entire Gunnison Valley. Residents everywhere from Mt. Crested Butte to Gunnison light hundreds of candles to spread light on the shortest day of the year.

These programs were developed during the pandemic, but they continue to evolve to nurture community ties. Last fall, Ricardo Esqueda, Gunnison's Community Outreach Liaison, joined the group to build a stronger bridge to the immigrant community. This summer's music cruises were the most popular yet, with dozens of people turning out on their bikes to follow the bands through downtown Gunnison. **When asked if the Resiliency Project will still be around in ten years, Joellen Fonken replied, "The Resiliency Project will sustain for years to come as long as the world is hungry for connections."** As Maryo passes the Resiliency baton to Jessica Wurtz, CFGV's newest team member, we're confident that Joellen is right. The Resiliency Project is a collaboration that will continue to adapt to spread joy.

New STEP Advisors Join CFGV's Diverse Pool of Experts and Mentors

Since 2012, our STEP Program has supported nonprofits to be "sustainable, tough, efficient, and purposeful" by connecting nonprofits in pivotal moments with expert advisors for one-on-one support. This summer, 14 new STEP Advisors joined the group including Lisa Yeh, senior vice president of development and alumnae relations of Barnard College, and Jake Jones, executive director of the Crested Butte Land Trust.

Lisa Yeh, senior vice president of development and alumnae relations, Barnard College
Why did you sign up to be a STEP Advisor?



I love the Gunnison Valley!

Both my parents were born and grew up here and while I have never lived here permanently (except during the pandemic), I have been coming here all my life. I love the beauty, the amazing hiking and skiing, and the connection to my family's history. I have benefitted from learning many fundraising and board development best practices over my 20-plus year career in higher education fundraising and I have enjoyed brainstorming informally with a few of the organizations here. I was approached by CFGV and asked to join as a STEP advisor and thought it was an easy way to get more involved in the Valley given I do not live here full-time.

What's your favorite Gunnison Valley event? Why?

I love anything that calls for a costume but that doesn't exactly narrow it down much. Probably my favorite is the 4th of July parade in Crested Butte. I have so many memories through the years of attending it with my grandparents, parents, aunts, uncles, cousins, and my own family. I remember when Elk Ave was unpaved, and also when the parade was smaller. Once they reached one end of Elk, they would then reverse course and come back down again!

Through August 2023, CFGV has received 23 STEP applications this year. STEP Advisors have already donated over 200 hours of time to support Gunnison Valley nonprofits in 2023.

Jake Jones, executive director, Crested Butte Land Trust

Why did you sign up to be a STEP Advisor?

I moved to Gunnison County in the early 90s to take a year off college and be a ski bum for a season. I ended up finishing my degree at Western and building a life, family, and career here in the community. Having lived



and worked at both ends of the valley, I really care about the community as a whole and believe our nonprofits elevate the quality of life for all residents. When our nonprofits work, our community works.

What's your vision for the future of the Gunnison Valley? How does a resilient nonprofit sector contribute to that?

My vision for the Gunnison Valley is to be a model of rural civility and collaboration, where we can achieve more by working together than we can by working on our own. I've watched Gunnison County, local municipalities, businesses, and nonprofits work successfully together for many years. Much of that success has been through intentional efforts to promote civility, communication, and collaboration. We have a lot of differing viewpoints in our community, and we've been able to do hard work, disagree at times, and still look each other in the eye at the grocery store or post office.

Please join us in welcoming Lisa, Jake and 12 additional new faces as STEP Advisors!

For more on the STEP program, head to cfgv.org.



Pam Montgomery Fund Empowers Nonprofit Leaders

The Gunnison Ranchland Conservation Legacy (GRCL) has a very straightforward mission: conserve ranchlands, preserve ranching. Since its founding in 1995, the GRCL has primarily focused their expertise around supporting the first part of their mission: conserving ranchlands in the Gunnison Valley. GRCL serves local ranching families, supporting them in long-range planning, working with land trusts, raising funds, and completing the legal and technical aspects to establish conservation easements on working ranches.

To date, GRCL has helped area ranchers conserve over 60,000 acres. Conserving local ranchland offers many benefits to the entire Gunnison Valley, including supporting the health of our local landscape, maintaining important water rights, keeping the agricultural industry viable, and preserving open spaces that are treasured by the entire community.

In 2021, the Trampe family donated the entirety of their ranch to GRCL, giving the organization a unique opportunity to pursue the second part of their mission: "preserve ranching." While Bill Trampe still operates the ranch, GRCL executive director Stacy McPhail has been developing plans to conduct research on the ranch in addition to normal operations. As Stacy and the GRCL board were pondering the next steps for Trampe Ranches in 2022, Maryo Ewell, CFGV Director of Community Impact, contacted Stacy about a professional development grant opportunity through the newly created Pamela G. Montgomery Nonprofit Leadership Fund. Stacy submitted a proposal to take a trip to Buck Island Ranch (BIR) and Archbold Biological Station (Archbold) in Lake Placid, Florida to learn how they conduct research on a working ranch. The Nonprofit Leadership Fund provided a grant matched by GRCL, and Stacy planned her trip.

Archbold has been operating the 10,500-acre BIR since 1988. Visiting BIR gave Stacy an inside look at the infrastructure and logistics involved in operating a ranch of that size as a research institution. In one week-long visit, Stacy was able to meet with each



Stacy with a Florida Scrub Jay on her head, a bird species classified as "threatened" that has been studied at Archbold for 30 years. Photo courtesy of Stacy McPhail.

department head at BIR, building the start of a professional network to offer ongoing advice. Her week at BIR helped shape GRCL's vision for the future of Trampe Ranches, offering concrete examples of the type of research they'd like to pursue and narrowing their focus away from things that wouldn't be a good fit for the operation in the Gunnison Valley.

When she returned to the Gunnison Valley, Stacy was able to quickly develop a plan with her board. They decided to pursue research focusing on soil health that could potentially include a carbon tower to be installed on the property. This narrowed the list of potential research opportunities for Stacy to investigate, leading her to a Noble Research Institute study in the planning phases and Stacy applied to be a research site. In September of 2023, less than a year after Stacy's trip to BIR, the Noble Research Institute installed a carbon tower on the ranch as part of a 22-site, \$18.5 million study.

The Nonprofit Leadership Fund was established in honor of Pam Montgomery's many years of service as the Executive Director of CFGV. Grants from the fund support professional development of nonprofit leaders in the Gunnison Valley whose organizations have opportunities to grow and transform.

You can make a gift to the Pam Montgomery Fund by scanning the QR code.



Want to Magnify Your Impact? A Donor Advised Fund Could Be a Good Fit

Steve Bolton and his long-time partner, Bob Valentine, first found Crested Butte for the skiing. As a community, we're fortunate that they made Mt. Crested Butte their primary residence in 2016. They are deeply engaged with the nonprofit sector in the Gunnison Valley, volunteering their time and expertise with many organizations including Adaptive Sports Center and Center for the Arts. They also both volunteer their time with CFGV (Steve serves on the board and Bob on the investment committee). This summer, they made an additional commitment to the Gunnison Valley Community: establishing a new Donor Advised Fund (DAF) with CFGV.



Bob and Steve enjoying an event at the Center for the Arts in Crested Butte. Photo courtesy of Steve Bolton.

Steve and Bob first became aware of DAFs when they started making long-range financial and estate plans. Generosity was always part of their plan; they intended to leave a portion of their estate to charity. An advisor introduced them to DAFs and they realized that a DAF provided the unique opportunity to start to see the impact of their legacy while they were still alive. As a bonus, they would also have the chance to engage more deeply with nonprofits and their supporters, finding a community of individuals passionate about the same issues.

As an avid investor, Bob immediately recognized the tremendous benefits offered by a DAF. For one, funding the DAF with appreciated securities would provide tax benefits to the two of them, but also to their heirs and the charities they cared about. Secondly, once the money is in the DAF, you must give it away. In some ways, it's like the giving version of a health savings account: you get an immediate tax benefit the year you contribute and then

you have funds set aside outside of your normal budget that need to be given away. Funds in DAFs also get invested and appreciate tax-free, meaning your "giving account," and your impact, grows over time. **"Having a DAF enriched our lives in a lot of ways," Steve shared. "It's altered the trajectory of our philanthropy and connected us to so many opportunities to volunteer with organizations doing important work."**

While Steve and Bob have used their earlier DAFs to support nonprofit organizations in the Gunnison Valley for years, this summer they decided to establish a DAF with CFGV. This was important to them for a few reasons. Steve observed that, "If part of your heart is in the Valley, the Community Foundation knows where the needs are. It's the way to have a local impact." Bob also acknowledged that he enjoys directing investments but knows that is not for everyone. "When you establish a DAF with the Community Foundation, the investment committee manages that money for you, pooling community members' investments and diversifying holdings to help your DAF grow."

If you're ready to start seeing the impact of your charitable legacy and would like to speak to someone about establishing a Donor Advised Fund with CFGV, please call 970-641-8837 or email lauren@cfgv.org.

Nonprofit Infrastructure Grants

The Department of Local Affairs selected CFGV as a regional partner to administer their Nonprofit Infrastructure Grant Program for Delta, Gunnison, Hinsdale, Montrose, Ouray, and San Miguel Counties. CFGV received 75 applications from our 6-county region requesting a total of \$5.6 Million before the August 31 deadline. After local review, funding recommendations will be sent to DOLA on November 1 and grant awards will be announced at the end of the year.