

Creating Futures

School of Education
UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO BOULDER



WISE—Women Investing
in the School of Education

Giving More Together

Throughout history, people have come together to make life better in their communities. Today, a growing number of philanthropic-minded individuals are discovering they can have greater impact by pooling their money, energy, and ideas through giving circles.



In simple terms, giving circles bring together people who pool their money and decide as a group where to give it. In this way, giving circles are similar to investment clubs, but they differ in that funds are invested in worthwhile charitable causes.

The School of Education at the University of Colorado Boulder is embracing this way of giving with its Women Investing in the School of Education (WISE) giving circle.

Much More Than Simply Writing a Check

There are good reasons why giving circles like Women Investing in the School of Education (WISE) are popular. “The educational and social aspects of giving circles are important. WISE members value the opportunity to connect with the faculty and others who care about the same issues,” says Lorrie Shepard, dean of the School of Education. “They are deeply committed to education. Some are teachers or involved in education in other ways; a few were career educators before retiring. Everyone wants to be involved and make a difference.”

“Once a teacher, always a ‘learner’—that’s me. With research and technology, there’s always something new in education. WISE has helped me stay connected and learn a lot, too.”

Arlene Heinz
WISE member

“This project impacts a wide array of constituents—the young people who are changed by the experience; the graduate student summer coordinator who develops a new skill set; and the teachers, counselors, and admissions officers who learn from the youths’ research.”

Ben Kirshner
Assistant Professor

WISE supports educational research

Student Voice and Access to College (Fall 2011)

The Critical Civic Inquiry Summer Institute at CU-Boulder, funded in part by WISE, is giving high school students from low-income families a voice on subjects that affect their lives. Through a participatory research project where students share their findings with relevant audiences, students develop their leadership and critical-thinking skills.

The subject for summer 2012—access to and preparation for higher education—is very relevant to these students, many of whom may be the first in their families to pursue college. As part of their research, students will write their family history of education. Besides helping these students understand their resources for and barriers to higher education, the essays can be used to fulfill a college application requirement. Findings will also be shared with teachers, counselors, and college admissions officers in order to improve pathways to higher education for first generation college students.



"This is a perfect example of using technology to serve a purpose. The images and interactive nature of the boards helps teachers assess whether students understand complex concepts."

Julie Andrew
CU Teach Master Teacher

Members In Charge of Their Own Philanthropy

WISE members commit at least \$1,000 per year for three consecutive years and meet annually to decide which innovative projects to support with their pooled funds. After reviewing proposals and hearing presentations on faculty projects, members determine their strategic emphasis, vote on the projects, and allocate their resources according to group consensus. Through this direct involvement, members also learn about innovative projects in K–12 education, educational research, and outreach initiatives in their early stages.



Each fall, WISE members meet to determine which faculty projects to support.

There Is So Much Yet to Do Together

Since the giving circle was started three years ago, WISE membership and grant support has doubled. The group has provided more than \$100,000 to fund innovative initiatives that wouldn't have been possible otherwise—from engaging local high school students in designing the classroom of tomorrow using iPads, to fostering the academic and personal development of promising college-bound children of migrant workers.

But the needs are far greater than current funding can support...

WISE supports K–12 education Interactive Technology Integration (Fall 2009)

Technology is changing education. Today, Smart Boards—interactive white boards—are commonly used in schools because they help students interact with and grasp concepts. Unfortunately, local K–12 schools often have technology that teacher education candidates at CU lack.

Imagine the unexpected learning curve for CU student-teachers who stepped into their student-teaching assignments unfamiliar with an essential part of the classroom. At the very time they were eager to demonstrate their classroom skills, they found themselves at a disadvantage.

Thanks to an initial WISE grant that funded the first Smart Board in CU's School of Education, other donors were inspired to help. Today, the School of Education is equipped with Smart Boards and has integrated interactive technology into the curriculum.

"Students suddenly realized that their art, writing, or poetry has power. We are all artists in the sense that what we write or draw tells the story of our lives. We are all involved in the composition of our lives and community."

William McGinley
Associate Professor

WISE supports statewide outreach

Memoir, Performance and the Poets of Nature Project (Fall 2010)

Stories are the way we make sense of our lives. They can inspire people to act and create a sense of shared community. Through a WISE funded year-long project and summer program called Tell Your Story, Casey Middle School students were encouraged to tell their own stories through creative writing, art, digital media, and the performing arts. By focusing students' expressive skills on community issues on which they would like to take action, students grasped how expressive art can translate values and beliefs into action. The project culminated in an art show, yet the lasting outcome is that students now realize that their stories have the power to create change.

"With WISE, you have the opportunity for direct interaction. You go beyond paper proposals and hear the passion behind an idea. It's a very personalized way to give."

Marty Coffin Evans
Charter WISE Member



The opportunity to directly connect with faculty gives members a unique understanding of the changing educational landscape. (Left to right: Mary Ann Looney, Mary Steinbrecher, and Associate Professor William McGinley)

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University of Colorado
Foundation

WISE Members Invite You to Join

If you...

- support the core values and beliefs of the School of Education and believe in the power of education to change lives
- Want to be personally involved with a cause about which you are passionate
- would like to support School of Education teaching, research, and outreach initiatives that would otherwise go unfunded

...please join with these friends and alumnae in "giving more together" with a three-year commitment to WISE.

Current WISE Members (as of March 2012) Members do not need to reside in Colorado.

Anne Arnold
Tommie Atanasoff
Linda Caldwell
Judy Charles
Ann Chrisbens
Ruth Cline
Carol Coburn
Donna Copeland
Jane Daniels
Melissa DeKieffer

Yvonne DiStefano
Jean Engebretson
Marty Coffin Evans
Pat Hagerty
Arlene Heinz
Phyllis Herrin
Suzanne Hoover
Patty Hueni
Sue leuter
Jo Kearney

Jacquie Kilburn
Norma Klein
Paula Klein
Mary Ann Looney
Susan Marine
Janet Orton
Barbara Quinlan
Judy Rimple
Mary Sander
Karen Shay

Mary Steinbrecher
Micky Stevenson
Eloise Timmons
Cris Tovani
Mary Tyler
Nancy Wittemyer
Celeste Woodley