



NEWS from the FOUNDATION

Statewide Meeting 2020: Highlights from El Pomar's Virtual Event

Maureen Lawrence, Senior Vice President, General Counsel and Director of Community Partnerships

Each year, El Pomar Foundation and the Regional Partnerships program convene regional council members, statewide funders and additional key stakeholders at our Statewide meeting to network and discuss key issues affecting communities across the state. Through this event, El Pomar seeks to thank its regional council members for the insights and perspectives they bring to the Foundation's grant making process, honor excellent nonprofit organizations for their dedication to their communities and offer meaningful dialogue that enhances our collective knowledge on how to effectively serve the people of Colorado. Given the unique challenges of 2020, El Pomar Foundation held this annual event in a virtual format on October 30, 2020. As El Pomar adapted the event, we remained focused on achieving our key goals while providing content relevant to issues facing the nonprofit sector.

This year, the Statewide program focused primarily on various perspectives of COVID-19's impact on our state and the inspirational work of the nonprofit sector to meet the increased needs of Colorado's communities. In this spirit, the Foundation highlighted the 2020 Awards for Excellence recipients, three organizations that have continued their impactful work since the onset of the pandemic. This year's awardees of the \$30,000 grants were Gold Crown Foundation (Lakewood), Loaves and Fishes Ministries of Fremont County (Cañon City) and the Adaptive Sports Center (Crested Butte).

El Pomar was honored to invite keynote speaker Rev. Cory Anderson, Chief Innovation Officer of the Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation, who focused his remarks on how the philanthropic sector can be most effective in its grant making. Rev. Anderson encouraged the audience to use this disruptive time to reflect on lessons from the pandemic, challenge previously held assumptions about philanthropy and take new system-wide approaches to solving problems through an equity lens.



President and CEO Kyle H. Hybl delivering the closing address



IT and Media Specialist Kyle Boyle behind the scenes of Statewide

In addition, the event highlighted nonprofit executives from urban and rural communities across Colorado who led their organizations through unique pivots to address the changes brought by COVID-19. Southeast Council member Melanie Bravo of the Caring for Colorado Foundation facilitated a thoughtful panel of nonprofit executives including Metro Council member Rebecca Holmes of the Colorado Education Initiative, Deidre Johnson of the Center for African American Health, Natasha Main of Exponential Impact, Katherine Sand of Aspen Family Connections and Jeff Susor of The Powerhouse in Durango. The panel members spoke about their experiences at the helms of their respective organizations as they found unique ways to address community needs brought by COVID-19.

Over the course of the 90-minute panel, the six leaders discussed topics including the formation of new strategic partnerships with other organizations, restructuring business models to address rapidly evolving community needs and the inspiration they each derived from working with their dedicated staff members and volunteers. As one attendee noted: "All of the speakers were informed and passionate about their organizations and the work they were doing—and communicated that passion effectively and educationally."



Rev. Cory Anderson delivering keynote the address



Melanie Bravo moderating the nonprofit leadership panel

Through a virtual platform produced entirely in-house, we condensed key components of a two-day event into a program that attendees were able to enjoy in a single afternoon from the comfort of their homes. In some ways, our virtual format allowed for increased attendance than we see in a typical year, and we offered an opportunity for participants to learn from and observe our speakers in ways not always possible at a large gathering.

Like much of 2020, while this year's Statewide meeting was not how we envisioned it would be when we began planning early this year, we enjoyed the opportunity to craft a new event that could honor our goals of the program and highlight the wonderful work of nonprofits who have led the charge in weathering the adverse effects of the pandemic on communities around our state.