



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE — June 6, 2016**

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### **Grants, Scholarships Awarded at Women's Fund Gala**

More than 200 in attendance heard from past Women's Fund El Dorado grant recipients and celebrated the recently announced 2016 nonprofit grantees and scholarship winners at the organization's Grants Gala June 3. The annual event took place at Lakehills Covenant Church in El Dorado Hills.

WFED Cabinet Chair Cathy Bean opened the proceedings and thanked all the volunteers, members, sponsors and supporters who made the evening possible. Other moderators included Debi Harlow, Grants Committee chair, who introduced past and new recipients; Jennifer Sands, chair of the Education Committee, which vetted scholarship applicants; and WFED Cabinet Vice Chair Robyn Parker, who provided the closing.

Following dinner, six grants totaling \$60,000 were awarded to western slope 501(c)(3) organizations selected through voting by the WFED membership. Three Community Focus Grants totaling \$45,000 went to Boys and Girls Club of El Dorado County Western Slope, Only Kindness, Inc., and 3 Strands Global, Inc. Impact Grants of \$5,000 each went to Windows To My Soul (Acorn Grant, for organizations that have never received a WFED grant); The Center for Violence-Free Relationships (Human Services Grant); and Master Gardeners of El Dorado County (Community Benefit Grant).

Additionally, WFED Wickline Scholarships were awarded to local residents Jennifer Fitterre, Molly Gruber, Theresa Searles and Jo Ann Warner. "These are women who have the courage to improve their lives and those of their children," noted Education Chair Jennifer Sands. The scholarship was established in 2009 to assist women 25 and over who reside on the county's west slope and are trying to overcome personal hardships by pursuing

postsecondary education. It grew from a legacy gift of the late Marian Wickline, a 1934 graduate of Mills College, one of very few women at the time to earn a degree in chemistry and enjoy a successful career as a chemist at Dow Chemical.

Women's Fund has "accomplished so much this year" in making major changes and opening its granting process to even more local nonprofits, said Grants Committee Chair Debi Harlow, who introduced speakers representing some of the past recipients.

One of two 2015 Focus Grants went to Tahoe Turning Point Placerville for its fledgling Authentic Voice Program, which merges mental health and substance abuse services for female clients who meet the poverty line and are diagnosed for these co-occurring disorders. Amanda DiBiasie, marriage and family therapist intern, thanked WFED and explained the organization's strength-based approach, which results in a 35-percent success rate compared to the national average of 20 percent. Participants create their own goals and work with a team to create healthy boundaries in a safe place and trusting therapeutic atmosphere, giving them "hope, peace, joy, happiness and an amazing sense of confidence," she concluded.

Sean McCartney, executive director of Boys & Girls Club of El Dorado County Western Slope, the other 2015 Focus Grant recipient, thanked WFED for making possible scholarships to ensure kids in need are able to come to the club. "We have lots of good programs and a great staff, but what's special about the club is it makes them feel better, gives them hope—tells them 'yes you can,'" he pointed out. Following a moving video presentation, a group of children from the club joined McCartney on stage, prompting a standing ovation.

Women's Fund El Dorado is collective giving organization that pools its members' donations and is open to all. Most members donate \$200 each year and some donate more; donations are leveraged in the form of substantial grants that support community philanthropy to enhance the quality of life on the western slope of El Dorado County. The El Dorado Community Foundation is entrusted with overseeing the WFED endowment fund and investing monies appropriately to diversify income and ensure its longevity. For details and to join or renew, please visit [womensfundeldorado.org](http://womensfundeldorado.org) or call 530-622-5621.

Since it was founded in 2007, WFED's membership has grown to more than 400. After this year's funds have been awarded, the organization will have granted approximately \$410,000 and will have an endowment totaling more than \$365,000.

Photos by Shelly Thorene:



Focus Grants totaling \$45,000 were awarded to three recipient organizations at the June 3 Grants Gala and were accepted on their behalf by Jenny Anderson and Renee Evans (Only Kindness, Inc.), Sean McCarthy (Boys & Girls Club of El Dorado County Western Slope) and Sarah Singh (3 Strands Global).



The Impact Grant recipients were represented by Cindy Skelton-Hodge (Windows To My Soul), Matt Williams (The Center for Violence-Free Relationships), and Sheri Burke, Jan Sherwood and Cheryl Turner (Master Gardeners of El Dorado County).



(Left to right) Jennifer Fitterre, Theresa Searles and Jo Ann Warner were presented with Wickline Scholarships at the Grants Gala (not pictured: Molly Gruber).