The first-ever Family Engagement Academy for Greeley-Evans School District 6 families at Meeker Elementary School in Greeley provided plenty of positive feedback. United Way of Weld County received a $6,500 grant from the Colorado Children’s Campaign that paid for all costs to conduct the academy for District 6 families.

The academy, which lasted six weeks and ran for two hours for each session with nine participants, was designed to help parents and guardians advocate for their children, said Sheri Hannah-Ruh, director of UWWC’s Promises for Children/Weld County’s Early Childhood Council. Hannah-Ruh said the academy taught parents/guardians to use their voices to push for high-quality education opportunities for their children at the state level.

Jeannine Truswell, president and CEO of UWWC, said the partnership between the Colorado Children’s Campaign and United Way of Weld County is a good investment of resources. “Parents are the most significant influence on a child’s life,” Truswell said. “Empowering them with the information they need to best advocate for their children is an essential strategy in helping children and youth achieve success in school.”

Leslie Colwell, vice president of Education Initiatives for the Colorado Children’s Campaign, said the Family Engagement Academy provided Weld County parents with an opportunity to learn about the issues most affecting their kids in school and armed them with the knowledge and skills to push for high-quality education opportunities for their children at the state level.

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“I feel like the Family Engagement Academy has given me a great amount of knowledge I can use to give my child the best education possible,” said Charity Ricard, one of the parents who participated in the academy.
Q&A with Board Member Nina Duran-Gutierrez

Q: How did you become involved with United Way of Weld County?

NINA: I have always loved being active within the community. My grandfather taught me at a young age that the best thing you can give is your time. I served on the Board for the Boys and Girls Clubs of Weld County for about two years and stepped down once I had my second child. I love the feeling it gives me to be a part of organizations that make a difference, especially those that impact and influence our community directly. My good friends, (board members) Bryan Guest and CJ Archibeque, whom I respect and admire very much for their involvement in our community, sat down with me and shared with me all the great things United Way has done for Weld County, especially our youth and at that time I had to be involved in some way.

Q: Talk about your experience as a board member so far?

NINA: My short time spent as a board member has been wonderful. I have learned so much and it truly is amazing all the ways that UWWC is impacting our community. I was unaware of all the local organizations that are benefiting from United Way’s contributions. It is an honor to be amongst such an incredible group of people that serve on the board.

Q: What makes UWWC stand out to you?

NINA: What I love the most thus far is that this organization has strong leadership both in the staff and the board. I can’t say enough about the staff and how friendly, skilled, hardworking, professional and passionate they are. To me, this is very important for a successful organization.

Q: How has UWWC impacted your life?

NINA: United Way has impacted my life in many ways. Since joining the board, I have reconnected with old friends, made new friends and most importantly it has allowed me to get back to supporting a worthy cause. I am a mother of two young girls and I have a special place in my heart for children and young families in our community. The real future lies in the hands of our children. Their nurture and education needs to be one of our most important priorities. What I have learned thus far about United Way’s Promises for Children has inspired me as a mother and as a volunteer to get involved, pay attention and make a difference.

Q: Why do you feel like it’s important to volunteer your time?

NINA: Volunteering has always made me feel really good. Service has always been important in my family’s life. I have had the privilege to travel abroad and have visited many remote areas and poor villages throughout this world. Although we are truly blessed to live here in the United States, we have a lot of poverty and homelessness that go unnoticed, especially in our community. My family moved to Greeley and had meager beginnings and through hard work and community progression, they were able to establish successful businesses here which in turn have impacted many organizations locally through their contributions. I want to continue that legacy, continue to make a difference and make our community a better place for the sake of our children’s future and beyond. Oftentimes, it just takes one person or one organization that can make the difference and give people a chance to succeed in life and to me that is UWWC!

Campaign Update: Every Dollar Counts

We continue to fight for the Health, Education and Financial Stability of every resident in Weld County, but we still need everyone’s contributions and help. We’re $200,000 from reaching our investment goals for the year. Whether it’s giving $10 or $1,000, every contribution counts! To make a gift today, please visit our website at www.UnitedWay-Weld.org or see the enclosed envelope.

The fourth annual Live United 1310-a-thon, a partnership with KFKA, will be held from 6 a.m.-6 p.m. on May 25. The event is a fundraiser as well as an opportunity to hear of all the wonderful things that we’re doing to help Weld County. It’s also a chance to make a financial contribution to your United Way of Weld County.
JBS USA CEO and Wife Donate $10,000 to Billie Martinez Elementary School in Greeley

Andre Nogueira, CEO at JBS USA, and his wife, Leandra Zanqueta, joined the Kenneth W. Monfort Society with a personal donation of $10,000 designated to Billie Martinez Elementary School in Greeley through United Way of Weld County.

“Andre and Leandra have been supportive of United Way and this year directed their annual contribution to a specific program” said Jeannine Truswell, UWWC president and CEO.

Leandra said education is very important to her and Andre. “This is a way we think we can help the community to grow,” Leandra said. “This is our personal beliefs. It makes me think about the future and doing more.”

Leandra visited Susan Knoeckel’s fifth-grade class along with UWWC President and CEO Jeannine Truswell, Greeley-Evans School District 6 Superintendent Deirdre Pilch and Billie Martinez Principal Monica Draper. Pilch is also a board member for UWWC. Draper said the donation will be used to purchase 10 chrome books and increase the digital content in science for second- through fifth-graders. She said the generous donation will make an impact on 375 students at the school and will boost the school’s Science Technology Engineering Arts and Math (STEAM) focus.

“This gift fills the gap that we had around student learning here at one of our most impacted schools,” Pilch said. “We know that we’re getting good results in our student achievement. So, to have a gift like this and to be able to expand into science and to impact science achievement for our students, it’s really remarkable and really exciting.”

Family Engagement Academy continued from front cover

Roger DeWitt, president of the District 6 Board of Education, said giving parents the opportunity to view their kids’ school from the inside is a wonderful gift. “Parents benefit from de-mystifying the education the children get makes them much better advocates for their children and school district,” DeWitt said.

Mark Reichert, a participant at the academy, liked what the sessions had to offer but also gave some advice for possible future academies. “The Family Engagement Academy, though nicely organized with good information provided, did not truly ignite the group into becoming politically involved,” Reichert said. “I feel that having elected persons, those to whom we were encouraged to contact, attend and speak, would have been far more productive in the getting involved arena. This was obviously the case when school board member DeWitt attended. Persons who had been mostly silent began a high level of interaction, so much so that the meeting continued well past the closing time. This is a two-way street. Not only do we voters need to make more effort to seek out the ears of our elected, so too do they need to invest some time in discovering and meeting with these types of groups.”

KENNETH W. MONFORT SOCIETY

The Kenneth W. Monfort Society (KWMS) recognizes local philanthropic leaders who believe in UWWC and make a generous annual contribution of at least $10,000 to create long-lasting changes by tackling our community's most serious issues. These concerned individuals accept a leadership role in making major individual financial contributions to UWWC. National and international membership is also granted for United Way World Wide Tocqueville Society to individuals who contribute at least $10,000 annually to United Way.

Thank you to those who have committed to date for 2016-17: Dr. Neil Allen, Jamie and Sarah Baessler, Joe Malara, Carrico Family Foundation, Jean Daviet, Kyle Futo, Don and Lynn Janklow, Dr. Richard and Mary Kemme, Roger and Jamie Lynn Knoph, Donna Lakin, Mike and Marilynn Louise, Charlie K Monfort, Dick Monfort, Kaye Monfort, Myra Monfort, Jean and Pete Morrell, Andre Nogueira and Leandra Zanqueta, Tom and Kay Norton, Mike and Lori Shoop, Tate and John Todd, Bob and Betty Tointon, Ted and Sue Warner, Stow and Maggie Witwer.

Would you like to become a member of KWMS? Contact Christi Smith at 970-304-6185 or christi@unitedway-weld.org

TO DONATE GO TO WWW.UNITEDWAY-WELD.ORG
When you make a gift to United Way of Weld County's Legacy Endowment Fund, you are truly making a gift with a future! Your endowment gifts guarantee that financial support will remain readily available for the future needs of the community. If you are interested in any of our planned giving options, we will be pleased to work with you and your advisers to develop a planned gift that best suits your particular needs.

For more information or to discuss your needs in confidence, please contact Christi Smith, Vice President of Resource Development, at 970-304-6185 or christi@unitedway-weld.org

LEAVE YOUR LEGACY

Cornerstone Partners donate all or a portion of their corporate donation to help cover 100% of administrative and fundraising costs for the resources under our management. This ensures that your donation goes directly to programs and services that benefit our community.