



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
December 20, 2021

## **San Juan Rural Philanthropy Days conference to be held in Ridgway in 2022**

It was just announced that the 2022 San Juan Rural Philanthropy Days conference will be hosted by Ridgway in Ouray County from June 7-9, 2022. The announcement about the location of the conference came in early December after community leaders were successful in their pitch to host the event in Ridgway.

Rural Philanthropy Days (RPD) is a statewide program that provides nonprofit leaders the resources they need to lead effective and sustainable organizations. RPD conferences convene nonprofits, funders and local governments to share ideas and develop collaborative opportunities to build the capacity of local organizations and communities to address regional issues.

The Community Resource Center, along with committees of local volunteers, coordinate RPD conferences in eight rural regions throughout Colorado. The San Juan (SJ) region consists of Gunnison, Hinsdale, Montrose, Ouray, and San Miguel counties. RPD conferences are hosted in each rural region every four years, with the location varying depending on the interest of host communities each cycle. The conference would have been slated for 2021, but was delayed by one-year due to the impacts of COVID-19.

“The RPD Conference will provide Ridgway an opportunity to showcase our rural community and highlight the diverse nature of the San Juan region,” shared Ridgway Mayor John Clark. “Ridgway is a destination full of rich history, an array of arts and culture, and home to an engaged and friendly community.”

For over three decades, local communities have worked together to coordinate RPD in partnership with Community Resource Center and Colorado’s philanthropic community. “RPD builds opportunities for important community projects in rural regions across the state by strengthening regional relationships, building the skills of the region’s nonprofits, and connecting local organizations with grantmaking organizations,” said Maria Fabula, Community Resource Center CEO.

The relationships built between local organizations and statewide funders helps to break down barriers and ultimately results in stronger partnerships, increased access to resources and the development of long-term relationships. Fabula shared that “RPD is a grassroots effort to bridge the resource gap between rural and Front Range communities. It exposes funders and nonprofits alike to the unique challenges, as well as opportunities for partnership, that each diverse rural region of Colorado faces - and because of this ultimately more grant awards are

being made to our rural communities to support their critical work. In the year after the last San Juan RPD, from 2016 to 2017, funding to nonprofits in this region increased by 48%. The scale of the impact is immense, we know that 12 of the foundations who participate in RPD alone gave more than \$36,000,000 directly to San Juan nonprofits from 2009 - 2019.”

Local nonprofit leaders and community members continue to generate momentum and express enthusiasm around bringing RPD to Ridgway and the surrounding communities. Carrie Andrew of Lone Cone Library and Danelle Hughes Norman of the Voyager Youth Program have been selected to serve as the San Juan RPD conference co-chairs, and were a part of the team that proposed Ridgway to host the event.

“Rural Philanthropy Days provides a unique and fun way for grant makers, nonprofits and members of local government organizations to get together to meet face to face and learn from one another. In fact,” Andrew says, “a large part of the grant funding for our new library was a result of relationships built with grantmakers through past RPD conferences. That and education opportunities provided through the event set our project up for success.”

“This event supports communities across the San Juan region in so many ways. It brings agencies across the region together to collaborate innovative solutions to challenges we all may be facing,” shared co-chair Danelle Hughes Norman, “It offers professional development for staff and boards, it connects funders with community nonprofits, and this all while celebrating the beautiful mountainous and human landscapes of the region.”

Andrew and Hughes Norman will lead a regional steering committee that has already begun to plan the conference with the first meeting being held in December. Recruitment is still ongoing for the 20+ member regional conference Steering Committee; local nonprofit leaders, government officials, and community leaders are encouraged to consider serving on the 7-month committee which will shape the event in June. The next meeting will be held Thursday, January 20, 2022 from 10 am - 4 pm in Ridgway. If you are interested in joining, please reach out to Nellie Stagg at [stagg@crcamerica.org](mailto:stagg@crcamerica.org).

*Community Resource Center (CRC) supports, strengthens, and galvanizes change-makers across the nonprofit ecosystem, working together to create a more equitable Colorado. We believe in the power of nonprofits to affect change and support thriving communities. To achieve this, individuals, organizations, and the networks that comprise our sector must be supported with meaningful capacity building.*

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