



Colorado Women's
EDUCATION FOUNDATION

Colorado Women's Education Foundation...empowering Colorado women through education



**A FUNDRAISING
HOUSE PARTY
TOOLKIT**

OUR MISSION:

To invest in women who are transforming their lives through education...for themselves, their families, and their communities.

Letter from Karen McGee, Chair of the Board of Trustees

I want to personally thank you for your interest in hosting a fundraising event for the Colorado Women's Education Foundation (CWEF). Since its inception, CWEF has provided over 550 scholarships to women totaling more than \$450,000 over the past 40 years. To achieve greater reach and impact through its work to empower Colorado women through education, CWEF has committed to increase its endowment to \$2 million by 2022 so that the scholarship program can be self-sustaining.

How can you help?

House parties and events provide a great way to raise awareness about the work we do, increase the Foundation's visibility and solicit ongoing financial support to help us reach that \$2 million goal. Many CWEF supporters have hosted events through the years. Volunteering to host allows guests to see old friends, meet new people, and build lasting relationships over food and drinks while providing a supporting atmosphere to raise funds for CWEF's important work.

This kit provides you with all the information you need to be successful. We can't thank you enough for your support and help! Through the efforts of passionate supporters like you, CWEF can broaden its reach while making a huge impact by providing scholarships to women who are often overlooked or excluded from other programs. Our recipients are often older, single – having been widowed, divorced or abandoned – and may be caring for multiple dependents from children to aging parents. Many have overcome tremendous hardship to support themselves and their families in addition to striving to complete their education.

CWEF believes that education is the key to helping women become economically self-sufficient. This investment is multiplied as it expands to impact to their families and wider into their communities. Thank you again for helping us make this happen. We couldn't do it without your enduring support!

In gratitude,
Karen McGee
CWEF Board Chair





Decide on the party details



Send out invitations



Prepare to educate and entertain

WHAT IS A HOUSE PARTY

A house party is an event held by you (or a group) in someone's home, or a comfortable place, to raise funds to support our work, recruit new volunteers and tell friends about the Colorado Women's Education Foundation.

House parties are one of the most common ways that CWF supporters introduce our organization to others. They are a great opportunity to share personal stories from your experience with us, and to get others on board to support our mission.

The **GOALS** of the events are to:

- **Increase awareness and educate guests about CWF**
- **Raise funds to support the continuation of our mission**
- **Create an environment for you and your guests to enjoy themselves**

This guide is intended for smaller, more informal events where guests can be expected to contribute in the \$25 to \$500 range. If you are considering a more formal event, designed for donors who can give at higher levels, please contact us.

HOW TO GET STARTED

Start the process by thinking about the type of event you want. Have a vision – what will be the theme, how many guests, and what is the best venue to meet your needs. Remember, your enthusiasm for our work is the key in getting everyone invested and having a fun event!

PARTY IDEAS



WHAT TYPE OF GATHERING

The purpose of house parties are to share your passion and to connect others to CWF's work AND they can come in many forms. You know your guests better than anyone so consider a party atmosphere that they will be comfortable with and enjoy. Whatever gathering you choose to host, make it unique to you and your community. The type of party is only limited by your imagination!

CHOOSE CO-HOSTS WISELY

- Choose a theme.** Things to consider include what would draw the most people in your specific circle? What theme is appropriate given the venue, date and weather? This can be as formal or informal as you prefer. The possibilities are endless!
- Pick a date.** Plan backwards once you've officially chosen a date. Consider other events around the same time and when guests are most likely to attend. Pick a day that works best for you and when little else is going on.
- Find a location.** A good house party does not require a large or luxurious house as its venue. Decide how comfortable you feel opening your home. You may also consider connecting with others in your area to cohost the event.
- Build your guest list.** Cast a wide net: friends, family, neighbors, coworkers, colleagues and supporters in your area. It's safe to say that a large percentage of invitees will be no-shows, so invite 3-4 times as many people as you'd like to show up.

CREATE A TIMELINE AND AGENDA

Using organizational tools will help you keep on track and help you remember important items. See sample time line below. A few tips:

- * Keep track of your invitation list, including email and postal addresses, in one spreadsheet (i.e. Microsoft excel) which allows for easy sorting and referencing. Track everyone who was invited, RSVP'd, who attended and who donated.
- * Have a clear deadline date for when guests must RSVP.

Sample Timeline (8 weeks before event)		
Item	Target Completion Date	Completed? (Y/N)
Kick-Off Task List: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Choose THEME <input type="checkbox"/> Select VENUE (Visit and inspect for guest capacity) <input type="checkbox"/> Decide on a DATE <input type="checkbox"/> Create a BUDGET for how much you want to spend and GOAL for how much you want to raise <input type="checkbox"/> Recruit CO-HOST or VOLUNTEERS to help <input type="checkbox"/> Build a GUEST LIST <input type="checkbox"/> Draft INVITE. Select dates for when reminders will go out and how (paper, email, phone calls) <input type="checkbox"/> Choose FOOD & DRINK for occasion and have logistics in place for placing and serving 		
Consult with CWF about ideas, calendar, supporters in your area and materials. CWF staff, trustees and recipients, when available, can present "an insider's briefing" on our current work and history. If they are not available, there may be supporters in your area who have a robust history with the organization.		
6 weeks prior – Send out invitation		
5 to 4 weeks prior – Continue to work on details for event. Recruit 1-2 close friends to assist. Confirm with CWF as to attending representatives.		
3 weeks prior – Send reminder invite		
2 weeks prior – Request materials from CWF based on number of expected attendees. Purchase any needed decorations, tableware, pens and donation baskets.		
1 week prior – RSVP deadline, finalize guest list & confirm food/catering/drinks.		
EVENT DAY!!! Woo Hoo!		
Post event follow-up and THANK YOU!		

SOCIAL MEDIA

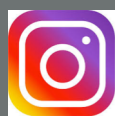
Instead of, or in addition to, print invitations, you can use online tools such as:

- Facebook
- Evite
- Twitter
- Instagram

FACEBOOK: Using your personal profile, create a Facebook event and invite everyone you are connected to on Facebook. This invitation will be the home base for getting people interested in attending your party.

EVITE: Another social planning website for creating, sending and managing online invitations. Both are easy and convenient to use. As host, you can create an invitation that is emailed to your guests. Both allow easy RSVPs. Visit www.evite.com to learn more.

TWITTER: Once you have an online event page for your party, you can also “tweet” about it to your twitter followers. Be sure to include a link to accept donations online for those who can’t attend.



INVITATIONS

Invitations set the tone for the party, so look at them as an extension of the theme and environment you want to create.

STYLE

Paper or email invitations? Both are effective. Traditional paper looks great and gives guests the special feeling of an exclusive event. Email invitations are more modern, cost effective and easier to customize.

CONTENT

Be sure that invitations specify that this is a *fundraising event*. Setting the expectation that guests will be asked to make a contribution early on will relieve awkwardness at the event. You may even want to indicate at what time the presentation will take place to ensure that as many people as possible are in attendance for this portion of the program. Invite your guests to bring their checkbooks! The invitation also serves as the first opportunity to raise money. Consider including a reply envelope or link to a contribution page. This encourages those who are unable to attend to donate. And...be sure to mention that all donations are tax deductible (CWEF can provide gift envelopes.)

RESPONSE

Having one point of contact will make the process easier. We encourage using one email address and phone number, making sure to provide multiple ways for guests to RSVP. A week before the party, you should call those guests who have not already sent an RSVP. Remind them about the party. The most well-attended house parties are typically the result of the host or hostess making a reminder call to the guest.

Sample Invitation Card:



Sample Invitation Letter:

Dear _____,

I am writing to invite you to a house party in support of the Colorado Women's Education Foundation (CWEF). I am thrilled to be able to host this event to showcase the amazing work that the Foundation is doing by investing in women so they can transform their lives through education. Since its inception, CWEF has provided over 550 scholarships to women totaling more than \$450,00. Each woman has an extraordinary story. It is my honor to share the mission of this incredible organization as well as showcase one incredible woman's story the night of the event so that you can see how each scholarship empowers women through education.

Please join us in this effort while enjoying a fun and informative event to raise awareness for CWEF's mission!

DETAILS

When: December 12, 2017 from 6:00pm to 8:00pm

Where: The Home of Jack and Jill Smith, 1000 Center Street, Anytown, USA 00000 (insert map and directions)

RSVP by December 6th to Jill Smith at jsmith@URL.com or (555) 555-5555

Food and drinks will be provided. Your donation of \$100 (*list your amount here from \$25-\$100*) or more would be greatly appreciated. If you are unable to attend, but would like to donate, please visit <https://cwef.org>.

If you have any questions, feel free to contact me. Hope to see you at the party!

Warmly,

Your name

Phone number

Email address

You may also want to consider telling a story about CWEF in the invitation

Example: Meet Lisa.....

Lisa discovered her passion for human services while volunteering at Colorado Miners, Inc., a nonprofit center dedicated to supporting underprivileged youth. After forming strong connections with the families, Lisa yearned “...to be a bigger part of solutions to problems...” facing the vulnerable communities served by Colorado Miners. Because a great need exists for mental wellness programs to help mitigate obstacles such as substance abuse, crime rate, depression, and other psychological and social issues, Lisa hopes to provide “...affordable mental health services to residents living in this poverty-stricken area.”

While overcoming homelessness, an eating disorder, and physical and emotional disabilities, Lisa supported two daughters and earned a 4.0 GPA during her first semester in college. She applied to CWEF for help with the costs of her education. The Colorado Women’s Education Foundation scholarship award helped subsidize her expenses, enabling Lisa to attend classes year-round.

During her project through her Human Services program, Lisa led a weekly peer support group for people with behavioral disabilities. During the program, Lisa reported to CWEF’s Office Manager that “...the attendees are finding it beneficial and uplifting. I see them making strides towards improvements in their wellbeing and they are coming out of isolation to attend and offer encouragement to the other members.”

Lisa continues to volunteer at Colorado Miners while assisting residents at the Denver Rescue Mission with computer literacy skills. As the Founder and President of Colorado Miners noted in Lisa’s recommendation letter, “I know she’ll apply all her knowledge to better any community she elects to be part of.”

STATISTICALLY SPEAKING

WHO RECEIVE SCHOLARSHIPS?

21 high-achieving women received scholarship awards in fall 2017

These women:

- Range in ages from 25 to 63
- 38% are racially diverse
- 43% are caring for and/or supporting dependents
- 5% have served in the military
- Have an average GPA of 3.75 with 8 maintaining a 4.0
- Are seeking an associates, bachelor’s, master’s or Ph. D
- Attend 12 distinctive accredited education institutions
- Live in 16 different cities

KEYS TO SUCCESS

THANK YOUs

FOLLOW UP

WAYS WE CAN HELP

THE PARTY – Sample Timeline

7:00pm **House party begins**

7:00 – 7:40pm **Socializing, eating and drinking**

As guests arrive, ask them to put their names down on a sign-in sheet along with email addresses if they wish to receive updates from CWF. They should be served drink and snacks during this time.

7:40pm – 7:45pm **Welcome and Introduction**

Thank everyone for coming. Appreciate their initial interest and commitment. Give a short introduction to the organization and why you support its work. Then introduce presenters (i.e. Trustees and scholarship recipients who will be presenting). Keep the party upbeat and fire up attendees to take action.

7:45pm – 8:05pm **CWF Presentation**

Following the introduction, an invited Trustee, volunteer and/or scholarship recipient will share information about the history, the work of the foundation, its impact and personal stories about the importance of its mission.

8:05pm – 8:15pm **“The Pitch”**

After presentation, a predetermined speaker should stand up for 2-5 minutes, thank the host and presenters and call on guests to make a donation to Colorado Women’s Education Foundation. The pitch should always be personal and can begin with *“I am committed to the mission of this organization because...”* and share a personal story or anecdote about why the work is so important. Have a volunteer pass out gift envelopes and explain that they may give a gift outright or monthly via check or credit card. Also, make it clear that there is no pressure to donate. They can donate on their own or online (that way it’s not assumed that the guest isn’t supporting the cause if they do not fill out an envelope). Also remember to state the CWF is a registered 501c3 organization and that all contributions are tax-deductible.

8:15pm – 9:00pm **The Close**

Thank everyone for coming. Invite guests to mingle and ask questions.

Need help?

For questions, resources, consultation on your house party agenda or fundraising tools, please feel free to contact us.

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