



## Front Range funders visit Montrose to learn about nonprofit needs in the community

Posted: Wednesday, March 20, 2013 2:00 am

By Elaine Hale Jones Daily Press Lifestyles Editor |

Christ's Kitchen serves upward of 100 hearty lunches for individuals and families in need five days a week. However, for most of Monday afternoon, the facility served as the meeting place for a "listening tour."

The tour was a collaborative effort of several Front Range foundations seeking to gain a better understanding of nonprofit needs in communities across the Western Slope, including Montrose, said Melanie Hall, executive director of the Montrose Community Foundation. The event is a precursor to the 2013 Western Slope Rural Philanthropy Days conference slated for June 17-19 in Ouray. The conference is held every four years.

Montrose was one of five stops on the tour, which included visits to Gunnison, Telluride, Delta and Grand Junction. Monday's event was hosted and facilitated by the community foundation.

Historically, grant funding for nonprofits within the state of Colorado has not been an equal opportunity employer, Hall said. In the early 1990s, for example, the state's Community Resource Center discovered that only 3 percent of the funds granted by Colorado's private foundations were awarded outside the Front Range. In partnership with the Anschutz Family Foundation, the Rural Philanthropy Days program was launched in 1991 to address that disparity. By 2005, grants awarded outside the Front Range had risen enormously.

Representatives from the Anschutz Family Foundation, AV Hunter Trust, Boettcher Foundation, Buell Foundation, Caring for Colorado Foundation, Daniels Fund, El Pomar Foundation and the Women's Foundation of Colorado were on hand Monday to meet with an invited group of 15 community leaders at Christ's Kitchen.

"We talked about issues important to our community, such as economic development, healthcare, education, mental health, housing, senior care and assisted living, plus many other topics," Hall said.

The group also talked about what is working well in the Montrose community, such as the partnership between local schools and the library in the summer reading program; the local food initiative; and the Coalition on Homelessness, which has brought together government entities, local nonprofits and faith-based organizations.

"Funders will better understand the needs of our community with this pre-work that has happened during the listening tour," Hall said.