

For Immediate Release

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**Former First Lady Michelle Obama Reminds Women to Celebrate Their Strength
at The Women's Foundation of Colorado's 30th Anniversary Fundraiser**

*July 25 event brought more than 8,000 together to advance and accelerate
economic opportunities for Colorado women and their families*

DENVER (July 25, 2017) — In a live conversation Tuesday night, July 25, with The Women's Foundation of Colorado (WFCO) President and CEO Lauren Y. Casteel, former First Lady Michelle Obama emphasized that women must celebrate their strength and embrace community.

"I am a strong woman because of other strong women," Mrs. Obama said. "You don't mother alone, you don't grandparent alone, you don't struggle alone. You find your community."

But, she said, "We forget how strong we are. We're never reminded. We're taught subtly and subliminally that our voices are unimportant. Those are the kind of messages that stifle girls' voices."

At TOGETHER, WFCO's 30th anniversary fundraising celebration at Pepsi Center in Denver, Mrs. Obama reinforced the importance of being a positive force in a girl's life.

"Tell her every day she is smart and capable and lift her up," Mrs. Obama said. "For so many people, the role models they follow are right in their backyard. It's their mothers, teachers, siblings, and their fathers and the men around them who every day can lift them up. Don't underestimate the power of day-to-day motivation and inspiration in a girl's life."

More than 8,000 attendees -- including WFCO grantees, donors, and community members -- celebrated WFCO's 30 years as the state's only community foundation focused on advancing and accelerating economic opportunities for Colorado women and their families, while also raising funds to protect women's progress and expand WFCO's community impact.

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The conversation between Mrs. Obama and Casteel centered around the potential of women and the resounding effects of their prosperity on families and communities. Topics included:

- Mrs. Obama's personal history and future plans
- The important role of men in advancing women and girls
- Unexpected outcomes when women break glass ceilings
- The essential elements in achieving women's equality across industries
- Having courageous conversations within our communities
- Girls' and women's confidence in pursuing opportunities

In her first public appearance in Colorado since leaving The White House, Mrs. Obama reiterated that change can only happen by working together.

"It was never yes he can; it was yes we can," she said of her husband, former President Barack Obama. "When we put so much on a person, on a leader, we absolve ourselves of doing anything else. We're all on a journey together – we are all figuring this out. We all want someone who will fix things, but we're going to have to fix it together."

In closing, she shared her hopes for women and girls in Colorado and around the world. "I want to live in a world that cares for its women," said Mrs. Obama. "I hope that we can create a world where women are safe. At the core, I want girls to feel safety as they move about the world."

The Women's Foundation of Colorado invited Mrs. Obama to TOGETHER because of her sustained commitment to creating access to education for girls. Through her advocacy and powerful story, Mrs. Obama has encouraged women and girls to overcome adversity, pursue higher education and job training, and give back by uplifting others. As first lady, Mrs. Obama became a role model, champion, and inspiration for women, families, and young people across America and around the world.

"The Women's Foundation is absolutely honored that Mrs. Obama accepted our invitation to attend our event to power women's prosperity - because we know that when women thrive, Colorado rises," said Casteel. "Just as we knew she would, Mrs. Obama delivered a moving perspective on how we can all play a role in strengthening our communities by strengthening opportunities for women. It was truly a night to remember and inspire."

The event also featured influential speakers, including Denver Mayor Michael Hancock and Colorado Lt. Gov. and Chief Operating Officer, Donna Lynne, as well as performances by Youth on Record and Athena Project.

On September 28, WFCO will feature another live conversation with award-winning actress Octavia Spencer at its Annual Luncheon at Colorado Convention Center.

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About The Women's Foundation of Colorado

The Women's Foundation of Colorado catalyzes community to advance and accelerate economic opportunities for Colorado women and their families. Through a statewide community of giving, WFCO ignites systemic change to help dismantle barriers that keep women from prospering. Since 1987, WFCO has made more than 1,600 grants to nonprofit organizations in 34 Colorado counties, totaling more than \$16 million.

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