

SPRING 2020

CAUSES THAT MATTER



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Reading to Connect

Everyone Has a Story Project
Unrestricted Endowment Fund

Getting a package in the mail is still one of the sweetest surprises somebody can come home to. Especially a child missing their mom.

Through the Everyone Has a Story Project, a special group of kids is getting a comforting delivery. The program gives moms in prison a chance to bond with their children by

reading a book that is recorded. Mary Kay Huck, director of the project, and her volunteers then mail the books and recordings out to the kids.

Everyone Has a Story Project helps incarcerated moms stay connected to their children through reading and storytelling. Mary Kay learned of a similar program in Texas and thought that with the right connections

and people willing to help, this program could help women and their children in Wyoming too.

“These women are telling me they’re talking to their kids more. That’s the purpose of this program, helping these moms stay connected to their kids,” says Mary Kay. “The women are so appreciative of this program; they are blown away they don’t have to pay for any of this.”

Time to Talk

The books give moms and their kids



Connecting through reading books helps incarcerated moms and their children bond.

Continued on back page

STATS & FACTS

10 mothers participated in the pilot program at the Wyoming Women’s Center in 2019

Everyone Has a Story furnishes the books, recording devices, volunteers, and mailings

\$1,340
granted

Moms who stay connected with their children are less likely to relapse

For more information, please visit
Everyonehasastoryproject.org

Making Music History

Wyoming-Singer Songwriter Competition

Unrestricted Endowment Fund

Think about what you would put in a time capsule for someone to open in the future. What would you want people to remember about this time? For Jon Gardzelewski, director of the Wyoming Singer-Songwriter Competition, he's collecting something that will be remembered and understood for decades to come. He's collecting original songs.

"I think of this album as a historical document," Jon says. "What if we took the most talented songwriters from 100 years ago and we had recorded them? Wouldn't that be an amazing artifact now?"

Because of you, a grant from the Wyoming Community Foundation was made to the Wyoming Singer-Songwriter Competition to produce a compilation album of songs from the first year of the competition.

The Wyoming Singer-Songwriter Competition released the first album of songs in 2019. This album gives songwriters a way to tell our state their stories in a way they want to tell it. Because not everyone can win the songwriting competition, this album makes it possible for songwriters to professionally record their music.

"Not everybody wins, that's why the album is great, it gives them something tangible," Jon says.

Bringing People Together

For some songwriters, recording their song for the album means it's the first time they have been in a studio. The competition helps people write better lyrics. It gives songwriters the motivation to find direction and figure out why and how they want to be a



Photo by Jeff Coyle

Above: Tracey Locken with the top song of 2019, Headcase. Below: Rob Weimann, Top Singer-Songwriter of 2019.

songwriter. And putting something in front of people is a valuable learning experience.

Win or lose, this is about much more than the competition. Songwriters get to meet and help each other out.

"Music brings people together," Jon says. "Musicians who didn't know each other before the competition now meet up around the state to play together and tour."

Because of you, Wyoming musicians are getting better and working together. Wyoming has proof of that through this album and competition.

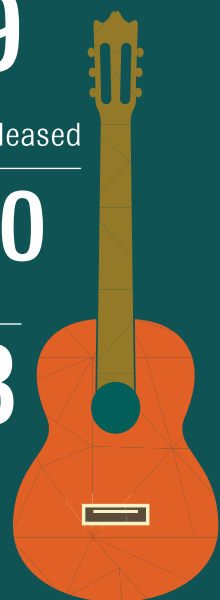
STATS & FACTS

90 original songs available on Spotify, iTunes, and a CD

2019 Compilation album was released

\$1,500 granted

2018 First year of the Statewide Singer-Songwriter Competition



Small Town Solution

Grantmaking from the WYCF Dubois/Crowheart Local Board

In Wyoming, we take great pride in our small towns and want to see them do well. Many of the places you and I call home are small in numbers, but that doesn't mean there aren't big needs.

In a town of just under 1,000 people, Dubois area nonprofits play an important role in this small community. Afterschool programs, senior services and community building organizations all add to the town's vitality. But these nonprofits' needs aren't always met. They don't always stay afloat and often struggle to make ends meet.

"Shortly after I moved here in 1983, I began to see a need," Jim Rice a member of the Dubois/Crowheart Local Board said. "Living in a small town can be difficult and raising money in a small town with a limited population is difficult. After serving a couple of terms on the state board of WYCF I could see that we needed something to generate dollars locally to help the nonprofits."

This is why the Dubois/Crowheart Area Local Board was created in 2007, and the volunteers on this board help tackle these problems. Jim is one of the longest-standing volunteers on the board.

Over the years, the community has helped too.

Every fall the town participates in the Dubois Challenge. Something the local board members are proud to see their community rally around. It's a fundraiser that receives matching grants from members of the local board, community members, and the Wyoming Community Foundation state board. Last year, for every dollar

raised up to \$10,000, it was matched 4 to 1. This money was given back to Dubois/Crowheart nonprofits through the local board's grant process.

"We know we're doing some good by helping raise money that will be granted out. It indicates a huge level of support, if we can quadruple the money for them it has a big impact," Jim says.

The Boys & Girls Club, the Volunteer Fire Department, and High-Country Senior Citizens are just a few nonprofits who applied and received grants from the local board.

Giving More Than Grants

"We are really good about having more accountability in Dubois than when we first started," Jim says.

"As a local board we feel it's our obligation to demand accountability, have them fill out a good application, current financials, and a good final report."

The local board is giving these nonprofits in a small town more than

just money, they are giving them tools to be accountable. Many of the other nonprofits see that the local board has high expectations, and it makes a big difference. To encourage more participation, the local board has also offered grant writing workshops for nonprofits in the Dubois/Crowheart area.

Continued on back page



Jim Rice, local board member, is passionate about helping nonprofits in his community.

STATS & FACTS

7 competitive grants totaling \$86,000 were granted in 2019

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|-----------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| Boys & Girls Clubs of Central Wyoming— Dubois | Dubois Rodeo Association |
| Casting for Recovery | Dubois Search and Rescue |
| Dubois Medical Center, Inc dba Duffy Therapy and Fitness Center | High Country Senior Citizens |
| | National Bighorn Sheep Interpretive Assoc., Inc. |

7 Local Board Members

| | |
|---------------|---------------|
| Wade Beavers | Rick Metzger |
| Budd Betts | Anna Moscicki |
| Jim Rice | Missy Sprouse |
| Ellen Jenkins | |

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another thing to talk about. A chance for connection. Books open that conversation. "That's why we are doing this," Mary Kay says.

It also keeps kids in front of books while giving the moms some quality time to connect with their children. The mothers get to pick out the stories and make requests for other ones they want.

"They are very intentional about the books they pick up; most children's books have a good message," says Mary Kay.

Sometimes the books are a way for a mom to reach out to a child she has not heard from. "I'm not giving up," one mom told Mary Kay. She has

sent books and recordings to her kids five times. "She hasn't heard back yet, but we don't want her to stop trying," says Mary Kay. She is going to keep trying to talk to her kids and it's a way to show them she cares.

Mary Kay feels strongly that these women may be in prison because of a wrong turn, but that doesn't make them bad people. "Each person deserves dignity to tell their story," she says.

Thanks to your support of the Wyoming Community Foundation, this program is helping moms stay connected with their children.

Small Town Solution continued

For Jim, these local efforts mean they'll be able to continue to help "even in the hard years."



Boys & Girls Club kids enjoying Absaroka Ranch

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UPCOMING EVENTS

August 4-5

Wyoming Nonprofit Conference

Ramkota Hotel &
Conference Center
Casper, WY

Register at:
[wycf.org/
nonprofitconference](http://wycf.org/nonprofitconference)



August 6-7

Wyoming Afterschool Alliance

12th Annual
Statewide Conference
Casper College
Casper, WY



THANK YOU! Look inside to see the difference you've made.

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