



# YOUTHROOTS ROUTT COUNTY



**YAMPA VALLEY**  
COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

2023 **GRANT & IMPACT**  
REPORT

# INTRODUCTION

YouthRoots Routt County uses philanthropy and leadership to teach teens how to change the world.

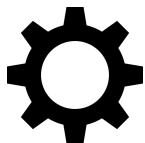
Nine students from Routt County, CO joined this year's YouthBoard. They collectively spent 540 hours working to improve their community while becoming leaders and activists in the process. The team completed a community needs assessment on the most pressing issues facing youth in Routt County, raised awareness of the issues with the community, and fundraised \$13,500 for local nonprofit organizations benefitting Routt County youth.

YouthRoots Routt County YouthBoard Mission Statement: "To positively impact our community and world through philanthropy and the education of our community surrounding issues we care about."



# THE PROGRAM

YouthRoots uses a unique 3-step philanthropic process intertwined with a robust leadership curriculum to teach teens the skills to make an impact. Each group acts as a mini foundation working to tackle the biggest needs in their community.



## NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Youth dive deep to find the most pressing issues facing children and youth in their local community.

## FUNDRAISING

Youth meet with community members to raise awareness about and funding for the biggest issues.

## GRANT MAKING

Youth decide which nonprofits are doing the best at meeting the needs and give away 100% of the funds raised.

## PARTICIPANTS

Facilitator: Ellen Hartman

Lyla Baker  
Ocean Brown  
Stella Crofts  
Abigail Elliott  
Axton Juneau

Suzy Magil  
Madison Mohn  
Mateo Vital-Bartels  
Hailey Znamenacek

*“By recognizing young people's potential, we can empower young people to shape a better future for the up-and-coming generations. ”*

*- 2023 Participant*

# FUNDING PRIORITIES

After many hours of research, the YouthRoots Routt County YouthBoard decided to focus on the following funding priorities:

## Suicide Prevention

Routt County is right in the middle of the “suicide belt”, or an area of the Mountain West region with higher than average suicide rates (Steamboat Pilot). According to community leaders from local nonprofits, Routt County has 130% more suicide deaths than San Diego, a lower elevation district. The Steamboat Springs School District took a survey and found that 33% of respondents felt sad and hopeless; 28.5% committed self harm; and 64% were struggling with their mental health. Suicide is the 7th leading cause of death in Colorado (CDC), and according to the Healthy Kids Of Colorado Survey, 7.2% of youth have attempted suicide in the past year.

Last school year, a student at Steamboat Springs High School died by suicide, and many of us know that our peers have attempted suicide this year, although these instances may not have been reported. In addition to suicide attempts, we know from first-hand experience that our peers have self-harmed, although these instances may not have been reported to adults. Existing suicide prevention resources are often inaccessible or stigmatized or teens, so they must be expanded upon or made more directly accessible and approachable to teens.

## Healthy Relationships

There are not adequate resources in our community to inform Routt County youth about healthy relationships. Within the resources that are available (like units in health classes), there is not helpful information on what to do in real life toxic relationships or how to effectively build and maintain good relationships, whether it be with family, friends, or significant others. This lack of knowledge about how to get out of bad relationships or build healthy ones is a contributing factor to mental health issues, suicide attempts, and self-harm amongst youth in Routt County.

# GRANT WINNERS

The following organizations were awarded a grant based on their ability to meet the funding priorities of the YouthBoard.

## Open Heart Advocates - \$5,000

Open Heart Advocates serves youth in crisis or in need of support in many ways, including providing several carefully cultivated, safe group sessions with youth in crisis. OHA also helps youth after suicide or self-harm attempts create and follow safety plans. This grant expands services for youth in crisis including increased training for peer helpers.

## Better Tomorrow - \$5,000

Better Tomorrow's Social Change primary prevention program offers comprehensive sexual education on topics including consent/healthy boundaries, the red/green flags of dating, staying safe online, reframing masculinity, and more. The program focuses on eradicating violence before it has a chance to occur by identifying how and why these problems start and encouraging behavioral change while discouraging anti-social behavior.



## GRANT WINNERS (cont.)

### Reaching Everyone Preventing Suicide (REPS) - \$1,636

REPS provides crisis support, education, training, prevention and post-vention support in order to eradicate suicide in Routt and Moffat Counties. Their Youth Ambassador Program's goals include: bringing community awareness, building support, and breaking the stigma around suicide and mental health.

### Northwest Colorado Health - \$1,564

Northwest Colorado Health's Youth Resiliency Program utilizes small groups, classroom presentations, and adult trainings to address the feelings of adversity that youth experience associated with trauma. The Youth Resiliency Program serves youth through over 6000 encounters annually at 20 schools and community locations across Routt and Moffat Counties.

### Routt County 4-H - \$300

4-H is a youth development program for kids ages 8 to 18 that empowers youth to reach their full potential, working and learning in partnership with caring adults. The grant covers the speaker fee for a former professional rodeo athlete to help destigmatize mental health struggles within agricultural and rodeo communities and highlight available mental health resources in Routt County and Colorado.

# STUDENT IMPACT



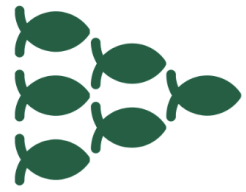
## EMPOWERMENT

100% of participants said the program improved their ability to identify an issue and take action.



## COMMUNITY

Students raised awareness and funding (\$13,500) for pressing issues.



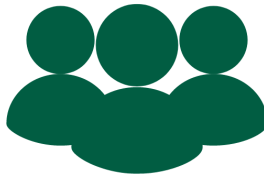
## LEADERSHIP

83% of participants said they would be more likely to take on a leadership role after the program.



## KNOWLEDGE

100% of participants gained knowledge in YouthBoard curriculum topics.



## DIVERSITY

100% of participants improved their ability to work with diverse groups.



## LIFE SKILLS

Participants showed improvement in non-cognitive skills 98% of the time.

*"We can do a lot more for the community if people would support and encourage our ideas."*

*- 2023 Participant*

# PARTNERSHIP



YouthRoots Routt County was established by the Yampa Valley Community Foundation in 2022 to promote community engagement and leadership among Routt County youth. Students involved in YouthRoots Routt County learn about philanthropy and local issues by managing their own grant cycle over the course of the school year and raising funds for nonprofits addressing community issues that they have prioritized. Together, they are cultivating the next generation of Routt County leaders and change-makers.

Learn more at:  
[www.yvcf.org](http://www.yvcf.org)  
[www.youthroots.org](http://www.youthroots.org)

*"I learned that I can actually make a difference in the world and bring about the change I wish for every day"*  
- 2023 Participant