

United Way gives \$50,000 to PS-S

Allocation aims to help group expand reach in long term

BY HALLIE WOODS • HALLIEWOODS@COLORADOAN.COM • SEPTEMBER 2, 2009

A \$50,000 donation to Larimer County's Project Self-Sufficiency will help the program bring its comprehensive approach to fighting poverty to more people in need.

The United Way of Larimer County allocated the money from its "Bridging the Gap" fund, which developed out of the Pathways Past Poverty Initiative designed to combat increasing poverty in the area.

The organization chose Project Self-Sufficiency to receive the money because it believes the organization has successfully helped hundreds of single parents living in poverty and might be able to expand its mission to other areas of the community.

"We realized that they meet most of the objectives that we have from transportation to housing, right down the line," said Gordan Thibedeau, president and CEO of United Way of Larimer County. "We want them to help us understand how they do what they do and how that might be translated more broadly in our community."

Project Self-Sufficiency helps low-income single parents achieve economic independence by assisting in education, housing, child care, transportation, employment and health.

"We need to consider everything from transportation to educational expenses at looking at child care and housing and self esteem and mental health," said Mary Carraher, Project Self-Sufficiency's executive director. "What we have found over the years if there is still a barrier that has been unaddressed, that will affect the level of success the participant can achieve."

The organization serves about 150 families at a time and won't be able to serve more with the money presently but will use the money to invest in a long-term solution to helping people across Larimer County, Carraher said.

There isn't a specific timeline on the new expansion project, Carraher said, because it is still early in the process.

She added that expanding the organization's ideals and efforts will take work and cooperation of many organizations that combat poverty in Larimer County.

"It is going to take multiple strategies and projects together. It's going to be quite challenging to grow this to a size that can have an impact on the entire community," Carraher said. "It's going to take a really strong team effort."