

# United Way is more than fundraising

## Live United

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From the Estes Park Trail-Gazette

ESTES PARK, Colo. — Bittersweet; that is the word I would use to describe my current situation. I am excited because I will be moving to Seattle, Wash., but sad to be leaving United Way of Larimer County and all the wonderful people I have met through this position. I have had so many great experiences and learned so much. I want to take this last opportunity to express my gratitude.

I really feel that I have grown a great deal through my time spent in Estes Park. My first impressions of community strength were emphasized with each person I met. I have seen time and again the way a community can, and does, come together to help those in need and to celebrate one another. I have witnessed the kindness and friendliness that are often found in a small town. These are things that I will certainly long for as I embark on my journey to a big city.

Another important piece of my time spent in Estes Park has been attending the monthly Estes Valley Community Coalition meetings. I can clearly remember how nervous I was, fresh out of college, new to my job and at my first meeting. I was immediately put at ease though by the coalition's affable members. Through this group of nonprofit agency representatives I was also able to better understand the needs in Estes and the services available. And I can tell you that these are passionate, creative people; ready and willing to help this community in every way. The services each of these organizations provides is absolutely crucial to the health of the community, even if we aren't aware of that on a daily basis. So if you see one of these individuals today, take a moment to thank them for their endless work.

As Amanda and I have mentioned, we have had a great deal of help from community members. There has been community involvement in everything from fundraising campaigns, to advertising, to the Glow Parade. Not only has it been an honor to meet each person we've met along the way, but it has been exciting to see the possibilities. As I have said before, I truly believe that we can bring about enormous change when we work together.

Of course, I must thank United Way of Larimer County, since this organization gave me the opportunity to spend time in Estes. I have been constantly amazed by the work of United Way of Larimer County. When I began, I only had a vague understanding of the organization. I quickly learned that it is more than a fundraiser, but also a leading expert in the health and human services field while providing services like 211 – the number people can call whether they need answers or whether they want to volunteer. And of course I must thank all of my wonderful colleagues, the creativity, helpfulness and fun atmosphere will certainly be missed.

Even though I am sad to leave United Way of Larimer County and the wonderful people I've served in Estes Park, I am confident that my successors will do a fantastic job picking up where I left off. I look forward to hearing about the progress and improvements that are sure to come as everyone continues to work together. And, as always, if you are interested in learning more about what United Way of Larimer County does and how you can get involved, don't hesitate to contact Amanda.

Thank you so much for all that you have taught me, your constant kindness, and your openness to new ideas.  
And don't worry; I will be taking Estes Park, and our small town values, to the big city of Seattle.