



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE — Oct. 8, 2015**

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### **Women's Fund Dinner Attendees Inspired to 'Bless What We Have'**

More than 300 members and guests filled the Forni Building at the El Dorado County Fairgrounds on Oct. 8 to celebrate the power of collective giving and hear a message of inspiration from Placerville City Council member and former mayor Wendy Thomas.

The event was the Women's Fund El Dorado Annual Celebration Dinner, which capped another successful year of substantial grants to local nonprofits. In addition to an evening of fellowship and good food, attendees enjoyed the many imaginative table settings crafted by WFED members who volunteered to decorate.

"As a result of everyone's hard work, we are now a group of over 400 members," Cathy Bean, chair of WFED, pointed out in her opening remarks. Robyn Parker, vice chair, introduced the evening's speaker and noted that WFED, as the first collective giving organization in El Dorado County, has granted more than \$350,000 since 2008 to nonprofits on the western slope.

Keynote speaker Thomas, a Placerville native who in 2014 was honored by Assemblyman Frank Bigelow as "Woman of the Year" for Assembly District 5, inspired attendees with examples of "blessing," which begins with "recognizing what we have at the moment...trusting the goodness at hand."

She shared the story of how she came to join WFED at a time when she was at a personal low point and at the height of the recession. While she could have stayed overwhelmed by what she'd lost, instead she chose to focus on what was right with her life, and found that made all the difference. At that moment, Thomas realized a long-suppressed

desire to serve the community on the city council—despite the fact her life circumstances weren't "all spit and polish," she stepped forward "because I didn't want to stay where I was." At the same time, she was invited to a Women's Fund event that honored one of its founders, Katy Peek, and was "in awe of her generous, gracious, visionary spirit." She was encouraged by the fact that by pooling donations together "a relatively small gift could do such amazing things." Thomas also pointed to the fact that despite their levels of contribution, which range from \$200 to \$1,000 or more, all members are equal—"membership is not a status symbol."

Courageous, driven, resourceful... "we are the Women of El Dorado County, and we're pretty doggone incredible," she concluded. "And when we are united in a common goal, we accomplish incredible things."

Women's Fund El Dorado, a fund of the El Dorado Community Foundation, is a collective giving organization that is open to all for a donation of \$200 a year or more. Funds collected are pooled and leveraged in the form of grants, voted on by members, which support community philanthropy to enhance the quality of life on the western slope of El Dorado County. For details, visit [womensfundeldorado.org](http://womensfundeldorado.org).

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#### PHOTOS:

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