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‘Breaking the Cycle of Poverty’ Focus of Jan. 22 Women’s Fund Forum

An estimated one El Dorado County resident in 10 lives at or below the poverty level—a sobering statistic that the Women’s Fund El Dorado (WFED) will address in its next round of charitable grants.

As part of the process and to learn more about the problem, Women’s Fund members and the general public are invited to attend the annual WFED Community Needs Forum on Jan. 22 at the Cameron Park Community Center. Tickets are $20, include a buffet dinner, and must be purchased in advance from the WFED website (www.womensfundeldorado.org).

Each year, WFED provides more than $50,000 to local 501(c)(3) nonprofits in the form of grants. The process begins each October with a vote of the full membership to determine the areas of need on which it wishes to focus, and the final grant recipients are selected by another vote in April. Grants are awarded in June. In addition to the Focus Grants, WFED also selects three Impact Grant areas of need.

“Breaking the Cycle of Poverty” was chosen for Focus Grants in 2015. “It is ironic that the state with the most ultra-wealthy individuals is also home to the highest levels of poverty,” noted Jennifer Sands, chair of the WFED Education Committee, which has assembled a panel of experts to speak on the problem at the Jan. 22 forum. Poverty among children is much higher than it is among adults, and the rate continues to rise even as the economy recovers. Most poor children are members of working families.

As the centerpiece of the forum, four noted local experts will address questions on how to break the cycle of poverty:

Ed Manansala, Ed.D., deputy superintendent for the El Dorado County Office of Education, spent a number of years in increasingly responsible leadership positions at St. HOPE Public Schools, a public charter school system in Sacramento that focuses on providing a
high-quality, rigorous college preparatory education for students from low-income and minority backgrounds. He firmly believes that an excellent education is the most critical lever for all communities to help children fulfill their potential.

After receiving her medical degree from the UCLA School of Medicine, Dr. Veronica Velasquez-Morfin completed a family medicine residency at UCSF-San Francisco General Hospital, with training emphasis on caring, advocating and allocating services to the underserved. A longtime leader in the Latino community, she has continued her mission to serve medically indigent/underserved patients as a family physician, transitioning her practice to the EDC Community Health Center in Placerville, where she is medical director.

The Honorable Dylan Sullivan was elected judge of the El Dorado County Superior Court in the June 2014 primary and was appointed in September by Gov. Brown so she could take office early. Her previous experience includes serving as a commissioner for the Superior Court of El Dorado County and working for the California Parole Authority and in private practice with a focus on criminal defense.

Tiffany Rolston, CSM, is a third-generation El Dorado County resident and an organizational change management consultant with KAI Partners and Unleashing Leaders. She is a certified practitioner of Prosci change management, which emphasizes the “people side” of change and targets leadership at all levels of an organization to work collectively toward a common objective.

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.

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CALENDAR ITEM:

January 22 — Women’s Fund El Dorado annual Community Needs Forum, which features a panel of four local experts answering questions on “Breaking the Cycle of Poverty,” the focus of this year’s granting process. Buffet dinner/Q&A form will be held from 5:30 – 8 p.m. at the Cameron Park
Community Center. The public is welcome to attend; tickets are $20 and must be purchased in advance from womensfundeldorado.org. Visit the website or call 530-622-5621 for more information.