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The Equipoise Fund defines equipoise as the balance between opposing forces, that delicate point where all things are possible. Potential, connection, celebration, holistic growth, these are the elements of equipoise. Founder and president Mickey Babcock says, "To me, it's about that spark when something just hits you as 'great idea; let's do that.'" And to reveal a little secret about the Equipoise Fund's meetings, they're not referred to as meetings: "They're trampoline sessions!" says Mickey. "We bounce good ideas around, and the ones that rise highest get traction."

In the second half of 2008, and after five years of celebrating the achievements of the women and girls of Wyoming, our organization stepped into our own equipoise. With several of our programs off and running on their own, we wanted to gain an appreciation of our accomplishments, assess our shortcomings and develop a sense about where our energies need to be focused over the coming years.

The Equipoise Fund is thrilled to be achieving its goals of celebrating the women of Wyoming, first with our Conversations, then with the Atta Girl Awards; our documentary film, Don't Fence Me In; and with our initiatives, Womomentum and the Wyoming Women's Legislative Caucus. Our enduring hope over the past few years has been that these initiatives would grow to stand on their own legs, allowing us to take on new challenges. And stand they have, as you'll find out in the sections below. This most recent edition of the newsletter, then, brings you up to date on all the activities and growth afoot for our teammates.

Film

Equality Initiatives

Wyoming Women's Legislative Caucus

Womomentum

Atta Girl Awards

Don't Fence Me In:

Our first-ever documentary detailing the lives and stories of the women and girls of Wyoming really struck a chord with the public. Cinematographer Charlie Craighead, Director Bonnie Kreps and Editor Leigh Reagan brilliantly captured those enigmatic Wyoming qualities of freedom and perseverance set against the backdrop of the state's far-flung communities. Following our premiere in Casper, Wyoming, and subsequent showings in Cody, Wyoming; Lander, Wyoming; and Bozeman, Montana, among others, the film has been slated for a March 18th screening at the National Portrait Gallery of the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C. The film will be shown in celebration of the Smithsonian's Women's History Month and as part of the 17th annual Environmental Film Festival. More than 24,000 filmgoers are expected to attend. And in case you missed the film on television the first time round, be sure to tune in to Wyoming PBS on March 31st at 9 p.m.



Wyoming artist Alice Fuller talks about emerging as a painter in a landscape dominated by male artists.

We're thrilled to report that the DVD was the best seller of the holiday season at Jackson's Valley Bookstore in December, and you can still grab a copy, a great gift for moms, grandmoms, nieces, friends and, just maybe, yourself. If you don't see getting to Jackson soon, you can contact Valley Bookstore by phone to order—307.733.4533—or go online at www.valleybookstore.com. To keep up with the film's progress, bookmark this website: www.equipoisefund.org/documentary.html.

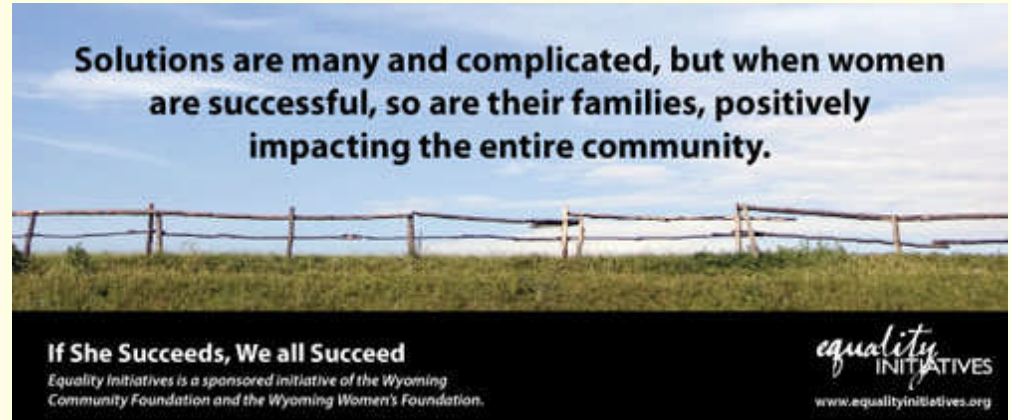
Equality Initiatives:

Bringing Wyoming women's issues to light is what Equality Initiatives does best. Under the guidance of Program Director Sarah Mikesell-Growney and her crew, the two-year-old organization has successfully demonstrated the necessity of such advocacy to lawmakers, stakeholders and the general public. As a catalyst organization, and with the Equipoise Fund as visionary and founder, they've evolved to become a pilot project of the Wyoming Women's Foundation. "It's an exciting time for Equality Initiatives," says Sarah. "With the move to the Wyoming Women's Foundation, we'll map new territory for the organization, more actively engaging in grassroots organization to advance our mission of improving the lives of women and girls in Wyoming."

As part of that arrangement, WYWF will manage a grant presented to EI by the Rockefeller Family Foundation, to study and publicize the barriers Wyoming women face in becoming economically self-sufficient due to the availability and cost of quality childcare. Childcare has emerged as one of, if not *the*, single biggest worry for women seeking jobs in Wyoming. "It is imperative that a mother has a reliable place for her child or children if she is to work and earn a livable wage to help support her family," says WYWF Executive Director Richelle Keinath. "Thanks to EI for all their hard work; taking on this project is a win-win."

A community dialogue held in Lander, Wyoming on February 21, 2009 provided EI valuable feedback from that area's women. The EI-hosted event, called *Sharing*

the Stores of Fremont County and Wind River Reservation Women, was lively and successful thanks to many area partners, including: Northern Arapaho WIC, Lights On In Lander, Interagency Community Coalition, Wyoming Afterschool Alliance, Wind River Tribal College, 55+ Employment Network, Central Wyoming College, Fremont County Libraries and Northern Arapaho Vocational Rehab. An audience of over 125 women and men viewed *Don't Fence Me In*, with a spirited discussion following. The message was clear: the women in Wind River Country do not want to be fenced in any longer!



You can keep up with Equality Initiatives by visiting their website at www.equalityinitiatives.org. You'll find the Wyoming Women's Foundation at www.wywf.org.

Wyoming Women's Legislative Caucus:

The bipartisan Caucus hosted their second *Leap Into Leadership* conference at the state capitol in Cheyenne on February 12th and 13th. The "hands-on-politics" event was completely sold out, with over 100 women from across the state attending, including 20 University of Wyoming students.

The event kicked off with an evening reception at the historic Governor's Mansion. Wyoming's First Lady, Nancy Freudenthal, welcomed all attendees, provided inspiration for the coming day's activities and invited the dozen Wyoming Legislators in attendance—including House Speaker Colin Simpson and Rosie Berger, Chair of the House Appropriations Committee—to share their experiences in deciding to run, campaign and serve in elected office.



Making connections at Leap Into Leadership.

On the 13th, conference attendees enjoyed morning refreshments in State Auditor Rita Meyer's office and took a tour of the Capitol in addition to participating in three leadership development workshops:

- public speaking, led by The White House Project;
- advocating for what you believe in, with the Equality State Policy Center;
- and discerning personal core values, led by the Wyoming Business Alliance.

Over lunch, attendees heard from a panel of female legislators, including former Representative Jane Warren and former State Senators Rae Lynn Job and E. Jayne Mockler. This event was again hosted in partnership with Equality State Policy Center, Wyoming Business Alliance and Wyoming Women's Foundation, with additional financial support from Paul and Tatiana Maxwell and Brimmer Communications.

One participant offered this outlook on the experience:

"I felt that the two-day session made me feel quite empowered by unfolding the political process as an organic entity. I loved the friendliness, warmth and relaxed feel of the entire two days. Leap into Leadership definitely served its purpose for me, inspiring me to be more active in the public domain by planting seeds for future development. The conference gave me much more than what I had expected."

Melissa Turley, Coordinator of the Caucus, noted that the audience was very engaged and took every advantage of the terrific opportunities presented by such a diverse group at a focused gathering. Asked about future plans for the Caucus, Turley said, "We hope to keep moving forward. We want to continue to inspire women to run, but we are also exploring the barriers to that, including financial and child care concerns."

Following the event, reporter Joan Barron of the Casper Star Tribune wrote up the observations of women legislators in her article, **A Power Problem**. You can access the article [here](#).

To stay abreast of current and upcoming developments in the Wyoming Women's Legislative Caucus, visit their website at www.wyowlc.org.

Womentum:

Equipoise Fund's "initial initiative" has really come a long way over the past three years, connecting over 70 Jackson area women in mutually beneficial mentoring relationships. The group's efforts have resulted in two terrific grants in 2008, one from Community Foundation of Jackson Hole and another from the Wyoming Women's Foundation. The 2008-09 Womentoring program includes three CLIMB Wyoming grads in a new pilot program.

"The support Womentum has received from Wyoming Women's Foundation and the Community Foundation of Jackson Hole will have a powerful impact on Womentoring," says Melissa Turley, Coordinator for the organization. "Increased program funding is a catalyst for a richer, more prolific experience for our mentors and mentees."

Anyone interested in establishing a Womentoring program in their community should contact Melissa Turley at info@womentumwyo.org or (307) 734-3908, or visit Womentum's website for more info at: www.womentumwyo.org.

Atta Girl Awards:

Probably the biggest change in the Equipoise Fund's outlook will be the annual Atta Girl Awards program. We learned from our work with the film that authentic



Former Wyoming Senator Rae Lynn Job speaks as part of the lunch panel of former legislators.

stories are vitally important and have an immeasurable impact upon others. As a result, we're re-imagining our current award program, building upon the amazing winners to date. We hope to be able to honor more women, those whose stories of their distinct contributions to their communities mean so much to so many. Keep your eyes and ears open for updates on our website, www.equipoisefund.org . . .
atta girls!

In closing, one of our favorite quotes:

Not everything that counts can be counted, and not everything that can be counted counts.

~ Albert Einstein

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