

# LIFESTYLES

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## Evergreen Legacy Foundation...

### A Visionary Idea in 2010 Evolves into a Community Foundation in 2025



The Evergreen Downtown Business Association appealed to ELF to help with beautifying Main Street in time for the Rodeo Parade, and ELF purchased 26 planters.

BY JO ANN M. COLTON

Special to Lifestyles

Evergreen, Colorado, in unincorporated Jefferson County, does not have a city government. Although it does receive some community services from multiple agencies, including Jeffco, certain amenities like sidewalks, crosswalks, and paved shoulders are not provided and must be managed and funded by other means...

Fifteen years ago, Dean Dalvit, licensed Architect / Professional Engineer and Founder of EVstudio had an idea he hoped might solve this quandary, evolving into what we now know as Evergreen Legacy Foundation (ELF). The organization started in 2010 to address the community's over-use and under-repair issues in downtown Evergreen and was originally a committee of the Evergreen Downtown Business Association.

"What began as a grassroots effort to improve downtown Evergreen has grown into a dynamic organization serving the entire community," said Dean Dalvit, ELF President/Founder who has been involved since its inception.

ELF, with various names and modifications, expanded beyond Downtown Evergreen in 2013. With the help of

grant writer Liz Cohen, the organization was able to secure an "Outdoors Colorado" grant for trails master planning.

ELF not only provided porta-potties after the 2013 flood but also contributed \$30,000 to ERPD to secure partnership funding for the 200-foot Evergreen connector pedestrian bridge near the Lake, while assisting with project coordination.

When erosion closed the North portion trail of Evergreen Lake in 2016, ELF prepared design & conceptual drawings and offered \$50,000 to ERPD to coordinate 10 governmental entities and funding partners to undertake the repairs: Evergreen Park & Recreation, City & County of Denver (owner of Evergreen Lake as part of Denver Mountain Parks), Evergreen Metropolitan District (water source manager), Jeffco Open Space, Colorado Parks & Wildlife, Great Outdoors Colorado, CDOT (Colorado Dept. of Transportation), DRCOG (Denver Regional Council of Governments), DOLA (Dept. of Local Affairs), and Evergreen Legacy Foundation. ESCO Construction was the Evergreen-based contractor, and the project was

completed on time and on budget in 2023.

"Each of these entities values funding 'meaningful projects' in the communities they service, and they were actually able to accomplish that by working together," said Liz Cohen (ERPD Representative) who was responsible for securing project funds. "We are truly grateful to them. all."

"It was an incredibly unusual occurrence to witness so many agency heads and construction managers eager to speak with a microphone at the ribbon cutting, every one of them declaring what a unique project this was ... they are not used to even talking with other agencies, let alone getting along so well and completing it on time and on budget," said Linda Kirkpatrick, Executive Director of ELF. "They considered it a privilege."

Over time, Liz Cohen has been responsible for securing MANY grants that enable ELF to recycle monies paid to the Evergreen Local Improvement District (ELID), which was created in 2020 to focus on all of Evergreen.

Seventeen projects (sidewalks/crosswalks/improved intersections, widening of Hwy 73, replacement of small bridges, etc.) were approved by County Commissioners to be completed by Jeffco. ELF pledged \$90,000 annually

## FEATURE OF THE MONTH

**ELF**

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for ten years in the name of ELID to fund these projects.

The pedestrian crossing at Christ the King Church was completed with the support of Jeffco, curb-to-curb paving of Main Street was accomplished after six years of efforts with CDOT (eliminating 18-inch unpaved gutters on each side).

More recent projects include pedestrian-friendly crosswalks/sidewalks around Wilmot Elementary School, Phase One of a three-phase project to create safer pedestrian passage between Wilmot Elementary School and Evergreen Library,

ADA-compliant crosswalks and improved intersection between King Soopers/Bergen Village, and the Bergen Park crosswalk by Center for the Arts and the RTD lot.

"Over the years, our mission has expanded to meet broader needs—from infrastructure and planning to advocacy and support across all of Evergreen," said Dalvit. "Now, as we evolve into a true community foundation, I'm humbled by how far we've come. I never imagined the reach and impact we'd have when this journey first began."

Evergreen Legacy Foundation is steered by Dean Dalvit, Founder and President; with board members Eric Gill, Bob Cardwell, Brent Kaslon, Brenda Cumming, Anne Vickstrom, Sharon Wood, Tara

Ryan, and Cindy Lempke. Long-time community activist Linda Kirkpatrick serves as Executive Director.

The organization has 25 pass-through members. In ELF's early years pass-through members predominantly represented downtown Evergreen businesses. Current pass-through members, comprised of participating merchants and restaurants throughout Evergreen, collect a 1% (customer) donation that



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After the September 10th shootings, the Evergreen High School Parent-Teacher-Student Association asked ELF to partner with them to create the #EvergreenStrong Community Recovery Fund to create transparency and instill credibility in the donation process. ELF donated the first \$10,000 to open the fund.



# EVERGREEN LEGACY FOUNDATION

*your community foundation. . . .*

## ■ Reporting that efforts to effect the disposition of Bergen Meadow Elementary School Campus for community use are moving forward as follows:

The Jefferson County Schools Board of Education accepted our proposal, offering to sell the 13-acre parcel to Jefferson County at the price stipulated by the Board of Education

Jefferson County will subdivide the land with a portion going to Evergreen Parks and Recreation to retain athletic fields and playground equipment, and reserving a space for a potential community center; additionally, a portion will go to Foothills Regional Housing to construct approximately 120 units of senior housing (apartment rentals considered affordable housing)

## ■ Acting as a conduit, Evergreen Legacy Foundation solicited and has been awarded a \$100,000 grant from The Ackerman Trust specifically to fund the water feature in the Inclusive Playground at Buchanan Park.

## ■ In the wake of the school shootings on September 10th, and partnering with the Evergreen High School Parent-Teacher-Student Assn., ELF has raised more than \$117,000 for the #EvergreenStrong Community Recovery Fund.

*... for the love of Evergreen*



# ELF

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is added to the bottom line of their receipts. The 1% monies collected from patrons for food/merchandise services rendered is a fee, not a tax, which in turn is paid to ELF each month. These committed pass-through donations equal approximately \$100,000 annually and help fund critical public safety projects in Evergreen activity centers that are otherwise not being addressed. Businesses and individuals can either make direct donations to the fund or donate through Colorado Gives Day. Likewise, bequests to ELF are happily accepted.

ELF also serves as a coordinator and/or conduit for legacy projects funded privately or in partnership with ELF. Someone with a million dollars in his will asked if ELF could complete, after his death, the project he had in mind. Another early-on enquiry involved creation of an artificial turf soccer field in memory of a son (although ELF couldn't take on that project at that time). Likewise, in early 2025 a major donor asked for a Wish List of what ELF would do with a million dollars; an endowment fund and functioning as a community foundation were the top two answers.

Evergreen Legacy Foundation provides seed money for projects identified in the Evergreen Local Improvement District to improve safety and preserve the overall culture, amenities and beauty of our special mountain community.

Although ELF does not typically hold fundraising events, it serves as a reliable fundraising source and it has established partnerships

with governmental agencies like Jeffco Dept. of Transportation, EPRD and CDOT in order to get things done.

"We're trying to bridge the gaps and fill the voids by assisting other organizations trying to do good things for Evergreen," said Board Member Bob Caldwell.

Evergreen Legacy Foundation makes small community improvement grants to area organizations, preferring to offer challenge grants to kick-start a campaign that will spur on other donations. In 2024, ELF made a \$5,000 Evergreen High School kick-off challenge for new bleachers to enable it to host home games—the campaign ultimately raised \$398,000.

"ELF was our first major donor, initiating a matching challenge to kick-off our public fundraising in April 2024, and we were extremely thankful," said Evergreen H.S. PTSA campaign co-chair Shellene Ellington. "ELF has supported countless community projects, and having their trust and belief in our team to bring this project to life meant the world to us." The two groups partnered to create the #EvergreenStrong Community Recovery Fund in the wake of the September 10th shootings.

Evergreen Legacy Foundation, a 501(c)(3) organization, has gained a stellar reputation for its many noteworthy community accomplishments. Nonetheless, it unaffectedly views its new community foundation direction as a greater opportunity to evolve into something even bigger and better.

For a list of ELF members/new member enquiries, ELF projects, small grant/challenge grant information, etc., visit Evergreen Legacy Foundation website (<http://evergreenlegacyfdn.org>).



Infrastructure has been the focus of ELF for 15 years. Board member Eric Gill is shown here with additional free parking spaces created at the lower end of Main Street. Infrastructure will continue to be one of several areas the organization will focus on in its expanded role as a community foundation.



# LIFESTYLES

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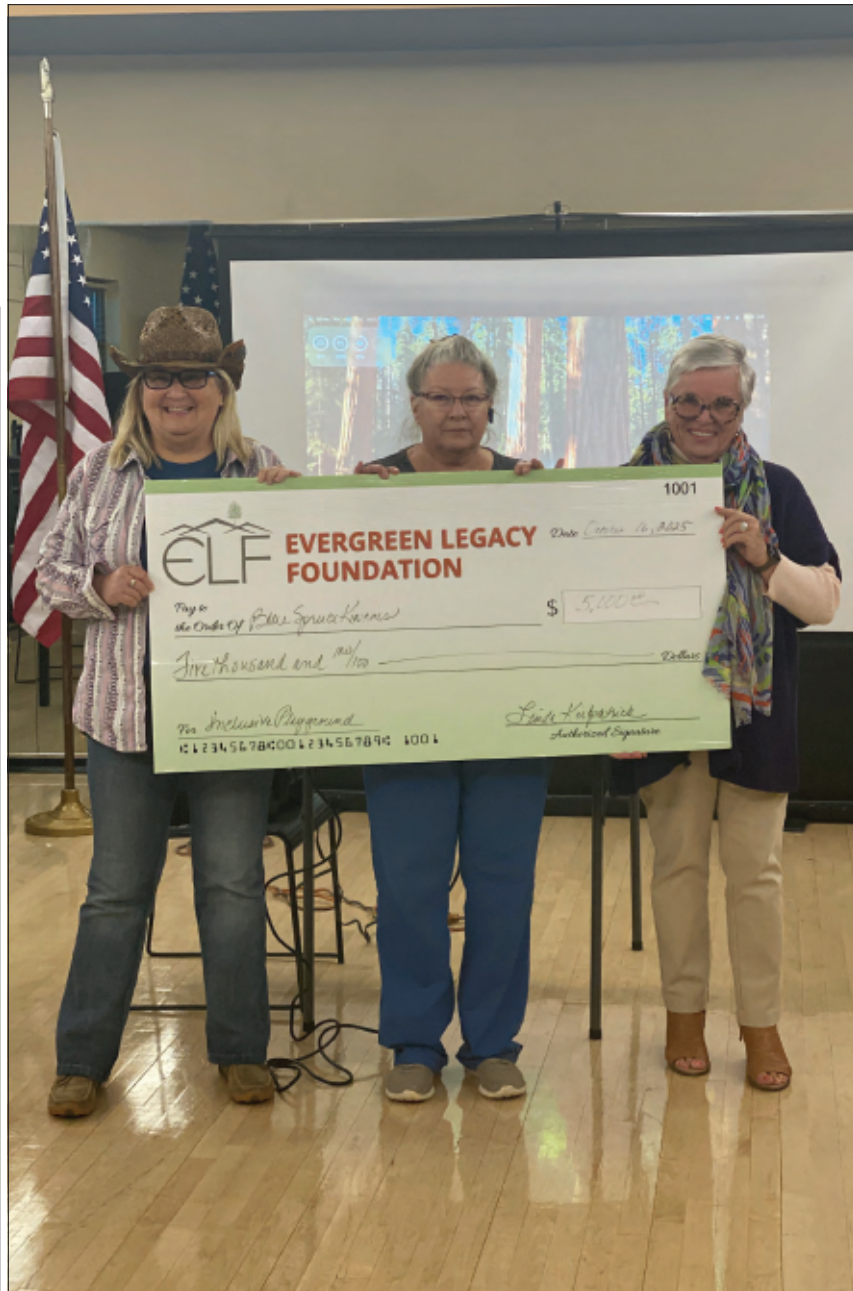
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The little-known 100-year-old tunnel beneath Hwy. 74 connecting Church of the Transfiguration with Center Stage needed freshening up, and ELF provided \$3,000 with a challenge for others to help with donations to paint a 40-foot mural and install better lighting.



When Blue Spruce Kiwanis began fundraising for an inclusive playground at Buchanan Park, ELF provided \$5,000 challenge grant to stimulate additional donations.



After the closure of Bergen Meadow Elementary School in May of 2024, ELF took the lead in coordinating ideas for a proposal to the school district for the creation of affordable senior housing and retention of the athletic fields as well as reserving a building pad for a community center. ELF serves as a convener, bringing people together to make create improvements. It does not own or maintain the projects it helps make possible.



When the Evergreen High School Parent-Teacher-Student Association kicked off a campaign to raise money to acquire bleachers, ELF issued a \$5,000 challenge grant to get them started.