



# WOOD RIVER WOMEN'S FOUNDATION

## Focus Grant Update

The Wood River Early Learning Collaborative, established with our two-year Focus Grant, continues to make substantial progress toward the goals of its Strategic Plan. In an update provided to us in mid-November, Kathryn Ivers, Project Director, reported that the Advisory Council now includes 15 valley nonprofits with a strong interest in the wellbeing and education of young children.

To increase affordable daycare options, the Advocates will be opening a center for 25 children, ages birth to 5, in early April. It will provide much needed after hours care. Possible wrap-around care for families whose children attend half-day preschool in the Blaine County school system is also being explored with the BCSD.

Training and support for childcare providers has begun. The first of planned quarterly gatherings was attended by 20 providers eagerly sharing their insights and challenges. The WRELC is connecting them with training opportunities and incentives to become certified. In addition, in 2024, a more in-depth, 10-session training series on the education of young children will be conducted by Lucy Hart Paulsen, Ph.D

A series of family-focused meetings for Spanish speakers is also underway. In partnership with St. Luke's, these sessions will address pre-literacy skills, nutrition, and social-emotional growth. In addition, the Hailey and Bellevue Public Libraries are collaborating in offering family education sessions with AEYC's *Ready! For Kindergarten* materials.

Kudos to Kathryn Ivers and the Early Learning Advisory Council for tackling our valley's urgent need for better childcare and early education and accomplishing so much in little more than one year.