

Wyoming Council for Women's Issues  
c/o Wyoming Business Council  
214 West 15th Street  
Cheyenne, WY 82002

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# WCWI NEWS

WINTER 2006  
[www.wyomingwomenscouncil.org](http://www.wyomingwomenscouncil.org)

## WCH offers workshops on Women's Suffrage

The Wyoming Council for the Humanities (WCH) offers Women's Suffrage on the Western Frontier. The event will take place July 16-21 and July 23-28, 2006 at: American Heritage Center in Laramie; South Pass National Historic Landmark and South Pass City State Historic Site in Lander; and Wyoming State Capitol National Historic Landmark in Cheyenne.

For more information, contact Marcia Wolter Britton, WCH at 307-721-9244 or visit [www.uwyo.edu/humanities](http://www.uwyo.edu/humanities).

## Wyoming Library Roundup to feature women's issues

The next issue of the Wyoming Library Roundup will be dedicated to women and women's issues. The issue will have stories by and about women and an article on the WCWI. Contact Susan Vittitow at the Wyoming State Libraries for more information at 307-777-5915 or [www.wsl.state.wy.us/roundup/index.html](http://www.wsl.state.wy.us/roundup/index.html).

## Ethete woman named Wyoming Woman of Distinction

ETHETE - The WCWI presented the 2005 Wyoming Woman of Distinction Award to Frances Merle Haas of Ethete, WY during a luncheon on Oct. 14.



Merle Haas

Haas is the executive director of the Sky People Higher Education Program. She has been the executive director since 1997 and through Sky People, she has supported and encouraged enrolled Arapaho tribal members to attend college and technical schools. In 1999, Haas participated in the founding of the Wind River Tribal College in Ethete.

In addition, Haas serves on the Planning Committee for the National Indian Education Association. She also supports Arapaho language and cultural preservation efforts and cultural understanding between Indian and non-Indian communities

in Wyoming. Haas received a fellowship from the Wyoming Council for the Humanities to record, transcribe and publish noted Arapaho storyteller Ralph Hopper's stories in *Stories from Yellowcalf*. She is a Northern Arapaho storyteller as well, providing cultural presentations to many audiences and for several organizations including the Buffalo Bill Historical Center.

She grew up in a traditional Arapaho family and continues to share her values from that upbringing in her educational and cultural work. Haas graduated from Riverton High School in 1971 and received an Associate's Degree in General Education with a minor in Business and a Bachelor's degree from the University of Wyoming in English Education in 1977. She has been employed as an Arapaho Language and Curriculum Specialist for the Wyoming Indian Schools Title V Program and as Native American Studies Director/Instructor for Central Wyoming College.

## March is National Women's History Month

By National Women's History Project

As recently as the 1970's, women's history was virtually an unknown topic in the K-12 curriculum or in general public consciousness. To address this situation, the Education Task Force of the Sonoma County (California) Commission on the Status of Women initiated a Women's History Week celebration for 1978. The week of March 8 was chosen to make International Women's Day the focal point of the observance. The idea met with enthusiastic response and schools planned special programs for Women's History Week.



Organizations sponsored essay contests and other special programs in their local areas. Within a few years, thousands of schools and communities were celebrating National Women's History Week, supported and encouraged by resolutions from governors, city councils, school boards and the U.S. Congress.

In 1980, President Carter issued the first National Women's History Week Proclamation. As word spread rapidly across the nation, state departments of education encouraged celebrations of National Women's History Week as an effective means to achieving equity goals within classrooms. Many states began to distribute curriculum materials of their public schools. Orga-

nizations sponsored essay contests and other special programs in their local areas. Within a few years, thousands of schools and communities were celebrating National Women's History Week, supported and encouraged by resolutions from governors, city councils, school boards and the U.S. Congress. In 1987, the National Women's History Project led a successful campaign to have congress declare the entire month of March as National Women's History Month. Each year, the President issues a special proclamation for the month, reminding the nation of the importance of women's historic achievements. Educators, students, workplace managers, parents and community organizations in thousands of American communities have made National Women's History Month a major focal celebration and a springboard for celebrating women's history throughout the year. For more information, visit [www.nwhp.org](http://www.nwhp.org).

## Cheyenne construction company wins 2005 Wyoming Summit Award

CASPER - The WCWI recognized the 2005 Wyoming Summit Award winner, Edeen Homes of Cheyenne, at the Business Alliance's Business Forum in Casper in November 2005.

The Wyoming Summit Award recognizes businesses that have successfully instituted programs or policies that broaden, strengthen and support their workforce. The award is sponsored by the WCWI, the Wyoming Business Alliance, the Wyoming Department of Family Services, the Wyoming Department of Workforce Services

and the Wyoming Business Council.

Edeen Homes is a residential construction company that is committed to establishing an equitable and diverse workforce in a field historically dominated by men. In 2004, Our Families Our Future forged a partnership with Edeen Homes to bring more women into the construction trades with the Construction Trades Program. The purpose of the program is to train participants in construction trades to a sufficient level that participants feel competent and qualified to seek meaningful employ-

ment that will result in wage capable of supporting their families.

Since the training began, eight participants have completed training; seven of the eight participants have received offers of full-time employment; six of the eight have moved from unemployment to making \$10 per hour with the opportunity to increase their hourly wages; and six are moving off of food stamp assistance. Edeen Homes and Habitat for Humanity have agreed to provide training for the 2006 Construction Trades Training Program.

## NEH offers grants to school teachers for American history landmarks and culture

The National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) will offer grants to hold Landmarks of American History and Culture Workshops for School Teachers.

As part of the "We the People" initiative, the NEH is offering grants to K-12 educators to engage in intensive study and discussion of important topics in American history. These academies will give participants direct experiences in the interpretation of significant historical sites and the use of archival and other primary historical evidence.

Teachers selected to participate will receive a stipend of \$500. Stipends help cover living expenses, books, and travel expenses to and from the workshop location.

Classroom teachers in public, private, parochial, and charter schools, as well as home-schooling parents are eligible to participate. Applicants must complete the NEH application and provide all of the information requested to be considered eligible. The application deadline is March 16, 2006.

Contact Marcia Wolter Britton at the Wyoming Council for the Humanities at 307-721-9244 or e-mail [wych@uwyo.edu](mailto:wych@uwyo.edu) for more information. For additional information on the program, visit [www.neh.gov/projects/landmarks-school.html](http://www.neh.gov/projects/landmarks-school.html).

The National Endowment for the Humanities is an independent grant-making agency of the federal government. For more information on the NEH, visit [www.neh.gov](http://www.neh.gov).

## WCWI MEMBERS

Michelle Aldrich - Judicial District 1  
Cynthia Chavez Kelly - Judicial District 2  
Jan Torres - Judicial District 3  
Linda Naylor - Judicial District 4  
Kim Capron - Judicial District 5  
Julie Simon - Judicial District 6  
Merna Rierson - Judicial District 7  
Sherrill Helzer - Judicial District 8  
Teresa de Groh - Judicial District 9  
Jenny Ingram - At-large  
Nina Romero-Caron - At-large  
Mary England - At-large  
Pamela Downing - At-large  
Diane Moser - Wyoming Business Council  
Ex-officio Member

To be added to the mailing list, call 307-777-2800 or submit your address to [wcmw13@state.wy.us](mailto:wcmw13@state.wy.us).

WCWI News is a quarterly publication focused on news and information of value to women in Wyoming.

[www.wyomingwomenscouncil.org](http://www.wyomingwomenscouncil.org)

## CHAIR'S COLUMN

I recently had cause to reflect on the purpose of organizations such as ours, the Wyoming Council for Women's Issues. Questions begin to arise: Are we still relevant? Not even a moment passed before I began to think of all the reasons organizations such as ours exist.

First I thought of our main goal—this is not stated as such anywhere, but perhaps should be as it is implicit in everything that we do—to improve the status of women. This goal begs the question—why women's status needs improvement—why should women receive special attention or effort?

Women's issues...what are they? Wage disparity: women in Wyoming receive 36 percent less than men in wages for the same work. Health care and child care: women, much more often than men, are negatively affected when there is inadequate health care or child care. Role models: recorded history often neglects to include the contributions of women; in current events, women are under-represented in influential positions. A "woman's view" is often discouraged rather than seriously considered as an alternative approach to problem-solving.

Societal change happens ever so slowly. Women and men have been working for decades to effect the changes from which we benefit today, such as being able to elect our legislative representatives. Change would not happen if there were not groups of people who push for positive change and remain vigilant of changes that would erode progress made.

There will always be a place for organizations such as ours, to work for improving the status of women and make sure our society maintains and supports hard-won improvements. Well, enough reflection, soul searching and reminders of why we do what we do; I have other news.

The WCWI is pleased to welcome Julie Simon as our newest member. Julie lives in Gillette and works for the Campbell County Chamber of Commerce. She will represent Judicial District 6, which contains Campbell, Crook, and Weston counties.

Nina Romero-Caron, who has contributed her time and energy to the Wyoming Council for Women's issues for 5 ½ years is resigning her at-large position. One of the highlights of Nina's career on the Council was the effort she contributed to bringing the Larry Kirkwood body-cast display to Wyoming. This was, and continues to be, a wonderful, artistic exploration and celebration of the diversity of body types we humans have. The Council is sad to see Nina go and wish her well.

—Teresa de Groh

## Health News: Food marketing aimed at kids influences poor nutritional choices

By Nina Romero

Food and beverage marketing targeted to children ages 12 and under influences them to request and consume high-calorie, low-nutrient products, says a new report from the Institute of Medicine of the National Academies. The report offers the most comprehensive to date of the scientific evidence on the influence of food marketing on diets of children.

Because dietary preferences and eating patterns form early in life and set the stage of individual's long-term health prospects, significant changes are needed to reshape our awareness of healthy dietary choices, the report says. Manufacturers and restaurants direct more of their resources to developing and marketing child – and youth-oriented meals that are higher in nutrients and lower in calories, fat, salt, and added sugar.

### Film Series explores issues facing WY families

By Teresa de Groh

Low wage jobs, lack of health insurance and a growing number of single parents challenge many Wyoming families today. This spring, Faces of Family offers Wyomingites an opportunity to talk together about how these issues affect us and our neighbors—and how our values and expectations of family life shape the search for solutions.

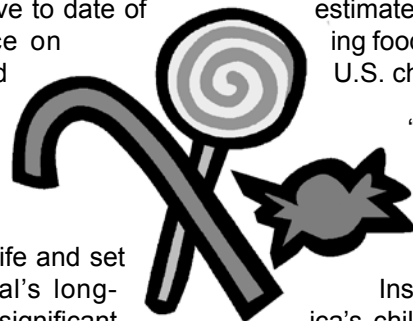
Each program in the free series begins with the screening of a popular movie. After the film, audiences will discuss their reactions to the on-screen family's decisions and choices, and compare them with the real-life stories of people in Wyoming. A free meal and activities for children will be provided at each event.

The four-part Faces of Family begins with *John Q*, a 2001 film starring Denzel Washington as a working father whose son falls through the cracks of the health care system.

Next comes *A Home of Our Own* (1993), with Kathy Bates as poor, single mother building her children a home in Idaho.

The 2002 movie *White Oleander* follows a young girl through foster homes after her mother (Michelle Pfeiffer) lands in prison.

Concern has focused on food and beverage marketing practices because of the increase in products targeted specifically to children and youth over the past decade and the media's increasing role in socializing young people. Companies spent an estimated \$10 billion dollars marketing foods, beverages, and meals to U.S. children and youth in 2004.



"Current food and beverage marketing practices put kids' long-term health at risk," says J. Michael McGinnis, senior scholar, Institute of Medicine. "If America's children are to develop eating habits that help them avoid early onset of diet-related chronic disease, they have to reduce their intake of high-calorie, low-nutrient snacks, fast foods, and sweets which make up a high proportion of the products marketed to kids. Parents have a central role in the turnaround required, but so do the food and restaurant industries."

The series concludes with *The Education of Little Tree*, the tale of an orphan taken in by his grandfather and Cherokee grandmother in Depression-era Tennessee.

Faces of Family is presented by the Wyoming Council for the Humanities in partnership with the Wyoming Department of Family Services. Our Families, Our Future is cosponsoring the statewide series. Programs will take place at seven Wyoming libraries around the state:

- Casper (Natrona County Public Library): May 4, 11, 18, 25.
- Cheyenne (Laramie County Public Library): May 1, 8, 15, 22.
- Jackson (Teton County Public Library): TBA.
- Laramie (Albany County Public Library): March 31, April 7, 21, 28.
- Lusk (Niobrara County Public Library and the Wyoming Women's Center): September 11, 25, October 9, 23.
- Rock Springs (White Mountain Library): March 28, April 11, 25, May 9.
- Sheridan (Sheridan County Fulmer Public Library): April 3, 10, 17, 24.

For more information, contact Victoria Foth Sherry by phone at 307-721-9246 or e-mail [vfsherry@uwyo.edu](mailto:vfsherry@uwyo.edu).

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### February

Black History Month

### February 2-3

Heart Smart - Heart Healthy Conference at the Holiday Inn in Cody. Sponsored by the Wyoming Association of Diabetes Educators. Visit <http://wdh.state.wy.us/DIABETES/index.asp>.

### Tuesday, February 14

Valentine's Day

### Monday, February 20

President's Day

### March

National Women's History Month. For more information, visit the Web site at [www.nwhp.org](http://www.nwhp.org).

### Friday, March 3

Nina Romero will present a Girl Power Train-the-Trainer Workshop in Salt Lake City. For more information, visit the WCWI Web site.

### Wednesday, March 8

International Women's Day

### Friday, March 17

St. Patrick's Day

### Monday, March 20

First day of Spring

### Monday, March 31

2006 Wyoming Woman of Distinction Applications are due. Visit the WCWI Web site for more information.

### Sunday, April 2

Daylight Savings Time Begins

### April 4-5

Wellness in Wyoming (WIN) All Member Meeting at Agriculture Resource and Learning Center (ARLC) in Casper. Visit [www.uwyo.edu/winwyoming](http://www.uwyo.edu/winwyoming) for more information.

### Thursday, April 27

Take Our Daughters and Sons to Work Day. Visit the Web site at [www.daughtersandsonstowork.org](http://www.daughtersandsonstowork.org) for more information.

### Wednesday, May 10

Mother's Day

## Educational Opportunities Committee Update

By Teresa de Groh

In 2003, the WCWI published "A Study of the Disparity in Wages and Benefits Between Men and Women in Wyoming," as directed by the legislature (see the WCWI Web site for the study performed by the University of Wyoming). Part of this study looked at the top five industries in Wyoming. Employment within the higher paying industries, such as mining and a grouping of transportation, communication, and public utilities, is dominated by men.

WCWI strongly believes that pursuing education and training for nontraditional jobs is an important tactic in women obtaining employment that pays a living wage.

WCWI has been a member of the Tech Prep Consortium for many years, which is a program for bringing construction classes to high schools. The last WCWI newsletter contained more detailed information about the Tech Prep Consortium, which can also be obtained from the WCWI Web site at [www.wyomingwomenscouncil.org](http://www.wyomingwomenscouncil.org).

### Home and Community Committee Update 2006

*Media-Smart Youth: Eat Think and Be Active!* is an interactive after-school education program created by the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development that helps young people ages 11 to 13 understand how media can influence their health, especially in regard to nutrition and physical activity. For more information or to order free copies of the *Media-Smart Youth* after-school program materials, phone 1-800-370-2943 or visit <http://www.nichd.nih.gov>.

March is Women's History Month. Wyoming Public Television will air programs celebrating women's contributions, including two western women: Jeannette Rankin, the first woman elected to the U.S. Congress and Mardie Murie, an ardent conservationist. Look for the March program guide at [www.wyoptv.org](http://www.wyoptv.org).

### Foundation helps low-income women attend college

Since 1978, the Jeannette Rankin Foundation has helped over 400 low-income women attend college. In the fall of 2006, JRF will award \$2,000 grants to 55 women across the U.S. Women from every state are encouraged to apply.

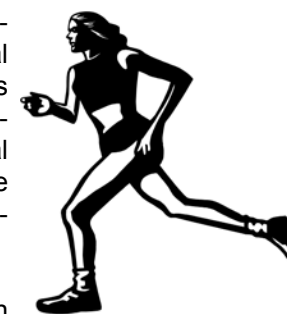
An applicant for the JRF grant must be: a woman; a U.S. citizen; age 35 or older as of March 1, 2006; low-income; enrolled in or accepted to an accredited school; and pursuing a technical/vocational education, an associate's degree or a first bachelor's degree.

The application is available on the JRF Web site at [www.rankinfoundation.org](http://www.rankinfoundation.org).

The WCWI is currently investigating other programs that will enable women to gain employment in non-traditional jobs.

During the annual Business Alliance Forum held in November, several members of WCWI met with representatives of the Wyoming Contractors' Association and toured their facility in Casper. WCWI will be investigating how we can collaborate with organizations such as the Wyoming Contractors' Association to connect women with educational opportunities in comparatively high wage fields. As we have seen, in Wyoming, many of these fields are nontraditional jobs for women.

The Educational Opportunities Committee is researching other organizations and programs that may offer education and training in employment areas in which there is a high demand in Wyoming and that reliably pay a living wage. If you know of programs that meet these criteria, please let us know! Contact Linda Naylor, District 4, at [catsmeow143@hotmail.com](mailto:catsmeow143@hotmail.com).



Applications are due no later than March 1, 2006.

Since 1978, JRF has been awarding grants to low-income adult women who have a vision of how their education will benefit themselves, their families and communities.

The Jeannette Rankin Foundation honors the name and legacy of an American woman of incredible spirit and determination by providing much needed aid to women with the same attributes. Jeannette Rankin was a proponent of women's rights and was the first woman to be elected to the United States Congress in 1917.