



The Aspen Strong Foundation Summary for 2015

I. Brief History of the Organization:

The Aspen Strong Foundation was founded in 2014 by Christina M. King, a licensed professional counselor practicing in Aspen Colorado, as a response to Pitkin County's suicide rate, which is three times the national suicide rate. Pitkin County has ranked mental illness and substance abuse the top issues that have the greatest impact on health. Hike Hope Heal, our annual fundraising event for the community's mental health fund, was the impetus for the Aspen Strong Foundation. With support of the community and the founder of the Mental Health Fund, Lawrence Altman, the Aspen Strong Foundation blossomed into an organization connecting the Roaring Fork Valley's mental health resources and promoting mental hygiene.

II. General:

The Aspen Strong Foundation is inclusive to and promotes all licensed mental health professionals, agencies and resources that are in good standing with DORA (if applicable) and reside in the Aspen to Parachute population. The foundation especially promotes our crisis centers on our web site: Aspen Hope Center, Mind Springs, Cross Roads Church, Metro Line, and National Crisis line. Furthermore, Aspen Strong has partnered with Aspen Valley Hospital, Children's Hospital Colorado, Mind Springs Health, and the Aspen Hope Center to pioneer the first mental health symposium in Aspen Co October 2015. Aspen Strong wishes to maintain and increase our partnerships throughout the years to empower our community by promoting mental health awareness and education.

III. Population Served

The Aspen Strong Foundation promotes services from Aspen to Parachute with a population over 50,000. Aspen Strong is located in Aspen Colorado and thus has had a greater presence to the Pitkin County and specifically the city of Aspen reaching approximately 7-12,000 residents and employees. Demographics recognized by US Census Bureau record 87% White, 9.3% Hispanic, and 1.6% Asian.

IV. Mission Statement

To raise awareness of and improve mental health in the Roaring Fork Valley by creating sustainable financial resources, by uniting professionals and agencies in mental health, and by supporting and implementing empirically based and results-oriented education and action.

V. Three Facets to our Foundation are:

- Financial Resources Center:

The Aspen Strong Foundation is a financial resource center supporting mental health in the Roaring Fork Valley. Funds raised through fundraising events and sponsorship support: the Mental Health Fund, a grant that subsidizes patients' mental health services; The foundation's operational costs, including AspenStrong.org; Sponsorship to community events in support of mental health; Education and Professional Development, through an annual mental health symposium and quarterly professional meetings – the Roaring Fork Valley Mental Health Professional Group.

- Connecting and Uniting

The Aspen Strong Foundation is connecting and uniting mental health agencies and professionals in the Roaring Fork Valley to decrease stigma and raise awareness through the All Valley Mental Health Professionals Group and through our website. The All Valley Mental Health Professionals group will continue to empower connectivity and continued education among providers and agencies. Our website will connect professionals and agencies through our Provider Directory so that the community may have a centralized resource for finding the help they need.

- Education

The Aspen Strong Foundation is promoting and integrating empirical-based and results-oriented education and action into our community. In 2015, Aspen Strong has collaborated with other community organizations to pioneer the first mental health symposium in Aspen Colorado. This symposium will aspire to educate the community at large as well as provide continuing education to professionals in our community.

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VII. Aspen Strong Program/s Summary:

i. Mental Health Fund

- History

1. The Mental Health Fund was started in 2011 by Lawrence Altman (a founding influence to Aspen Strong) to assure that persons needing mental health or addiction therapy in the Roaring Fork Valley that could not afford treatment would be able to financially access treatment through this fund. It is currently set up as a donor advised fund at the Aspen Community Foundation where therapists must apply for the fund on behalf of their client. Subsidized funding is provided to the therapist with the agreement that they lower their cost of treatment as identified on a recognized scale, and that they justify mental health and financial needs appropriately. Clients are requested to sign off on all documents and provide a portion of payment reflective of their financial abilities.

- Current Status

1. The fund has issued over \$190,211 since 2011 serving 14 patients in 2011, and serving 193 in 2015 (Jan-July).

- 2016 Plans

Aspen Strong has worked closely with Lawrence Altman and the Aspen Community Foundation to reflect on the funds effectiveness for our community. A plan of action has been put in place for 2016, to enhance the funds sustainability and effectiveness by:

- Providers interested in utilizing the fund will need to apply to become apart of a Mental Health Fund Provider Network
 - a. This will ensure that providers agree to the procedures and policies of the fund as well as agree to the missions of both the Aspen Community Foundation and Aspen Strong Foundation.
 - b. This will ensure that providers are screened appropriately and meet licensure or credentialing needs of treatment requested.
 - c. This will ensure that clients funding needs will not pend on the ability of a provider's credentials or ability to provide this treatment
- The client application process will request justification for both financial and mental health needs and how therapy and treatment goals will empower the client to reach their personal goals as well as utilize additional supports in the community.
- The application will be set up electronically through the Aspen Strong Directory log-in to:
 - a. Support Aspen Strong Directory, to increase access to care, and decrease vulnerability in connecting with the mental health and substance abuse resources in need. This directory is inclusive to all mental health professionals and agencies providing mental health services or resources to the Roaring Fork Valley.
 - b. Pre-screen for credentials
 - c. Manage the fund more effectively from both Aspen Strong and Aspen Community Foundation.

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ii. Aspen Strong Website

- The Aspen Strong Foundation works hard to promote mental hygiene in order to prevent crisis, substance abuse, and suicide by creating a home base for mental health providers to connect and share their resources to the Roaring Fork Valley. This is specifically exercised through our online screening tools, provider directory, and community calendar.
 1. Provider Directory
 - The provider directory is an online database allowing providers - licensed mental health professionals and mental health and substance abuse agencies providing resources or services - to upload their profiles so that they may be searchable to the community at large - for them self, or for referral. The directory and website acts as a clearing house for the valley at large in concern to mental health and substance abuse, yet also decreases vulnerability in accessing care by allowing the community to connect via anonymously over the internet.
 2. Mental Health Screening Tool
 - Aspen Strong has also paired with Screen for Mental Health Inc (<https://mentalhealthscreening.org/>) to provide online, anonymous screening tools to promote mental hygiene. These tools allow Aspen Strong to record anonymous responses of the community's mental health concerns so that we may work with valley wide partners to address these needs through education and increased resources. The screening tools provide consumers with educational and referral resources, specifically the Aspen Strong provider directory, following their submission.
 3. Community Calendar
 - Aspen Strong provides our community with a calendar listing events and support groups supporting mental hygiene.

ASF 2016 mental health screening initiative will promote our online tools to Roaring Fork Valley residents and employees with the intention to increase mental health awareness, prevent crisis and suicide, and increase access to mental health and substance abuse services and resources. By fall of 2015, Aspen Strong is choosing 3-6 organizations (specifically, a medical office, health club, and government agency) to implement the functionality of our mental health screening tools onto the partner organizations' web site or intranet. The initiative will begin in 2016 with an action plan for each organization for how they will promote these services. Aspen Strong and all partner organizations will meet quarterly through the year to reflect on the data recorded from the screening tools as well as analytical reports of the Aspen Strong provider directory and community calendar. The cost to implement this initiative is \$695 per year per partner organization, to which Aspen Strong will sponsor for one full year. At the end of this year, the foundation and all partner organizations will reconvene to reflect upon outcome data extracted from our initiative. Aspen Strong will specifically analyze utilization reports from the online screening tool and analytics from the aspen strong provider directory. The data will provide Aspen Strong and partner organizations with evidence and understanding of mental health needs in the valley. This evidence will transpire into development of resources specifically education. The data will provide Aspen Strong with incentive to reach more organizations within the valley to provide the same mental health initiative for following years.

iii. Mental Health Education and Awareness

- All Valley Mental Health Professionals Group
 1. This group is inclusive to all mental health and addiction professionals/organizations. The group meets quarterly to share their resources and has currently designed the group to provide education and continuing credits to the valley's professionals.
- Symposium
 1. Aspen Strong has partnered with local organizations to provide the Roaring Fork Valley with an educational opportunity for community members, professionals, and mental health workers to empower their understanding and awareness of mental health. Aspen Strong's goal is to continue these efforts each year.



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- Hike Hope Heal
 1. Hike Hope Heal is an annual event hosted by the Aspen Strong Foundation to raise mental health awareness, connect the community at large and provide them with information of mental health resources in the valley, and, raise funds for the Mental Health Fund. All costs of the event are fully sponsored which allows all registrations fees, auction money, and donations to go directly to the fund.

VIII. Expenditure Information 2014

- Total Income
 - \$79,914.00
- Total Program Service Expenses
 - \$11,430
- Management & General Expenses
 - \$16,667

IX. Number of Volunteers

- 2014: 36
- 2015: 40 (hike hope heal); 2 (operational); 12 (symposium)

X. Accomplishments for 2015

- Hike Hope Heal raised approximately \$25,000 for the Mental Health Fund. \$1,900 was spent on expenses for this event. Over \$16,000 was raised in in-kind donations.
- Aspen Strong will pioneer the first mental health symposium in Aspen October 5-6. We have received five financial sponsors and have collaborated with five other organizations in our valley to present this educational opportunity to our community. Over 170 people are registered for this event year to date.
- Aspen Strong has received \$6000 in grant money from Health and Human Services of Pitkin County to launch our 2016 screening tool initiative and have collaborated with the City of Aspen and Aspen Clinic thus far to implement this initiative.
- Aspen Strong has launched our new provider directory September 2015 which currently promotes employee assistance programming and the mental health fund. Providers who speak other languages will be able to present their information in that language on the directory.
- Aspen Strong has developed a relationship with CeDARS center to provide continuing credit hours to our community mental health professionals.