

## ***ANNOUNCEMENT***

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## **WFSA co-founder Melody S. Robidoux continues her support in a big way**

### ***Grant is the largest in the Foundation's 24-year history***

(July 9, 2015 —Tucson, Ariz.)— The Women's Foundation of Southern Arizona (WFSA) recently received a landmark, half-a-million-dollar grant from the Melody S. Robidoux Foundation Fund held at the Community Foundation for Southern Arizona to create a new donor advised fund at WFSA. It is the fourth donor advised fund to be established at the Women's Foundation in the past two years by long-time supporters.

"After 10 years of Laura Penny's outstanding leadership of the Women's Foundation and the work that WFSA has done over those years to increase their grants program, build an endowment, and commission the 'Self Sufficiency Standard for Arizona 2012' research report – just to name a few accomplishments – I felt that it was a perfect time to show my strong commitment to the Foundation for its next stage of growth under its new CEO Dawne Bell," said Robidoux.

"It also is a way to publicly acknowledge and thank the various board members, Advisory Council members, staff, volunteers, and other donors who have worked so hard over the last 24 years to build a remarkable organization in Southern Arizona that creates better lives for women and girls. It says that I believe in the power, vision, and stability of the Women's Foundation to fulfill its mission," she added.

"Melody's commitment is transformational. She leads the national trend of women donors coming to the forefront to create change by investing in women and girls," said WFSA CEO Dawne Bell. "We are so humbled by this inspiring generosity that will impact thousands of women and girls throughout our region for decades to come."

A donor advised fund is a philanthropic tool that is established at a public charity. It allows donors to make a charitable contribution to the public charity, receive an immediate tax benefit, and then recommend grant distributions to qualified nonprofits from the fund over time.

"The Women's Foundation expanded their services to donors in 2013 when we started offering donor advised funds," said Bell. "These funds allow donors to support the causes and nonprofits of their choice while also receiving tax advantages."

**Melody S. Robidoux** graduated from the University of Arizona (UA) with a degree in political science, and then completed a Juris Doctorate at the UA College of Law. A few years later, as co-owner and CEO of the Tucson-based technology company Artisoft Inc., she helped drive and manage the company's growth. In 1990, Robidoux sold her interest in the company and saw this an opportunity to promote societal change through philanthropy.

In 1990, she founded the Melody S. Robidoux Foundation — a supporting organization of the Community Foundation for Southern Arizona (CFSA) that has become a donor advised fund held at CFSA — and in 1992, Melody co-founded the Women's Foundation of Southern Arizona. Over the years, she has sat on various boards and committees, and raised money for capital campaigns and annual funds. Robidoux is a member of American Association of University Women. In 2014, she was chosen Alumna of the Year by the UA College of Social and Behavioral Sciences in recognition of her philanthropy. Melody is married to Mick Thompson and they have a son, Maxwell. She is a Flagstaff, Arizona native.

**The Women's Foundation of Southern Arizona** empowers women and girls to make positive changes in their lives and the community through leadership, donor services, community building, research, and grants. Leadership development is built into all aspects of the organization, from the nationally recognized Unidas philanthropy program for high school girls to shaping public policy through research and advocacy. With "The Self-Sufficiency Standard for 2012" research report, WFSA educates policy makers about the economic realities facing women and girls.

In 2015, WFSA awarded grants totaling \$400,000 to more than 20 organizations and covered a wide range of needs. Grants are made from annual competitive grant cycles, recommended from donor advised funds, and allocated through Unidas.

The Women's Foundation of Southern Arizona is a supporting organization of the Community Foundation for Southern Arizona. **More information: [womensgiving.org](http://womensgiving.org)**