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**MEDIA CONTACT:**

Lara Whitley, 970.309.8908  
lwhitley@discovercompass.org

**ASPEN COMMUNITY SCHOOL BUILDING “ENERGY MAGNIFICENT” CAMPUS  
WITH \$125,000 TRUE PIONEER GRANT FROM CORE**  
***Environmental Leader Seeks Philanthropic Partners to Help Complete the Green Dream***

(July 29, 2014) Woody Creek, CO — An environmental leader since its founding 42 years ago, the Aspen Community School (ACS) received a \$125,000 TRUE Pioneer Grant from the Community Office for Resource Efficiency (CORE) to fund the energy initiatives of the school’s “I Believe” campaign to rebuild its aging and energy-deficient campus. The grant — named after a fellow energy steward, the late Randy Udall — will fund leading edge energy technology and design in the new construction. This will in turn support the K-8 charter school’s goals for creating what the school calls “energy-magnificent” buildings that are learning tools, achieving LEED Gold designation and reaching the Carbon Neutral 2030 challenge. The five-figure award brings ACS to within 72% of its \$13.1M campaign goal, with \$3.74M remaining to be raised by the end of the year to cover aspects of the campaign that are ineligible for state funding. The school continues to actively seek philanthropic partners.

“We are honored to receive this grant in the name of our local energy hero, Randy Udall,” said Skye Skinner, executive director of Compass, the nonprofit that oversees the Aspen Community School. “The steadfast support of CORE and Pitkin County has helped us to connect outstanding physical spaces to progressive educational philosophy, constructing a green campus worthy of our district’s 21<sup>st</sup> century learners.”

“With this grant, we are moving from an energy-deficient to ‘energy-magnificent’ public school campus and we hope this will inspire others to join our cause,” Skinner added.

ACS’s energy plan is a three-pronged approach: improve energy efficiency, generate renewable energy and promote energy and environmental education. Conservative estimates of the CO<sub>2</sub> that the school will save annually through its energy initiatives equal 61,901 pounds, which equals 30,159 pounds of coal diverted from burning, or the equivalent of carbon sequestered by 23 acres of forest in one year.

The Randy Udall Energy Pioneer Grant (TRUE Pioneer), CORE’s largest and most competitive grant program, provides funding to support projects that focus on energy efficiency, renewable energy, energy and water conservation, and green building.

“CORE is proud to support the energy efficiency and renewable energy systems being incorporated into the new Aspen Community School project,” said Jason Haber, Grants and Community Programs Director at CORE. “This proposal received the highest ranking from our Citizens Grant Review Committee, largely because it is a wonderful example of how new

buildings can be designed to serve as teaching tools that embody the sustainability goals of the Randy Udall Energy Pioneer Grant program.”

CORE’s partnership with the Aspen Community School dates back to 2007, when the school was first awarded one of the organization’s Green Key Awards. Subsequent energy grants followed and, along with the TRUE Pioneer grant, CORE has provided ACS with a total of \$152,500 in funding to date.

The green design of the new Community School campus is a natural outgrowth of the school’s long history of cutting edge architecture and education. The school was founded in 1970 as an alternative to conventional public schooling, in which outdoor education, exploration and respect for the natural world were among the school’s pillars. Creating a campus that “reverses the environment” is one of the four guiding principles of the campus design. The campus will serve as a model for energy and environmental stewardship, educating hundreds of students, families and visitors while saving energy costs to be re-invested in school programs. Select features include:

- Buildings that are teaching tools with dashboards that track electricity, renewables, water and gas usage
- Photovoltaic array and LED lighting and controls, which both reduce electrical use and generate new energy, saving over 28,000kWh per year
- Hyper-efficient construction materials, including aerogel insulated skylights, suspended-film insulated window glazing and condensing boiler to reduce natural gas use
- “Energy recovery” air handling units and demand-controlled ventilation systems
- Daylight harvesting with windows, skylights and customizable controls
- Room-to-room electricity monitoring for real-time energy use management

Studio B | Cunningham, a partnership of Aspen- and Denver-based architecture firms, is collaborating on the redesign of the green campus. The project is managed by Consilium Partners and constructed by Evans Chaffee Construction Group. The team has recently broken ground on Phase I of construction while fundraising for the final phase continues.

ACS made history on May, 1, 2013 when it succeeded in meeting a \$4.2 million state challenge grant for new facilities, known as BEST funding, which along with \$4.9 million in community giving, brought the campaign total up to \$9.1 million. The school, which had just eight months to meet the challenge, raised the highest match in BEST history without a bond or financing.

Instead, the grassroots campaign met this ambitious goal by “turning traditional fundraising on its head,” said Skinner. Unlike most capital campaigns which kick off with a few large donations, ACS launched its fundraising in 2012 with a “people’s campaign” that garnered unprecedented support: attracting more than 650 contributors, including the school’s first million-dollar donation alongside 421 gifts of \$250 or less.

The successful efforts to date have brought the school to within nearly three-quarters of its total goal, green lighting the start of construction. However, the BEST grant, which invests solely in new construction of school facilities, does not cover the full scope of the school’s campus.

While ACS is one of Colorado's highest-performing schools, it operates in one of the state's lowest-performing facilities. In fact, in the most recent School Facilities Index the school facility ranked near the *bottom 1%* of all of Colorado's 1,689 public schools. The State of Colorado recognized this when they awarded ACS the BEST grant in August 2012.

A public charter school of the Aspen School District, Aspen Community School offers equal and tuition-free access to the school's low student/teacher ratio, award-winning curriculum, integrated arts program and small school environment in Woody Creek, CO. More information is available [www.IBelieveACS.org](http://www.IBelieveACS.org) and 970-923-4080.

The Community Office for Resource Efficiency (CORE), celebrating their 20<sup>th</sup> year this year, works cooperatively with businesses, individuals, utilities and government entities to create measurable improvements in energy and water efficiency to benefit the environment and develop a more sustainable economy. More information can be found at [www.aspencore.org](http://www.aspencore.org) and 970-925-9775.

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