



Wyoming Hunger Initiative partners with the Mountain West Credit Union Foundation and Mr. and Mrs. Dan Starks to pay off school meal debt in the state.

CHEYENNE, WYO - First Lady Jennie Gordon's Wyoming Hunger Initiative, the Mountain West Credit Union Foundation, and Dan and Cynthia Starks of Dubois partnered to eliminate school meal debt across the state of Wyoming this week. The amount of debt eliminated totaled \$99,485.61 across twenty-eight school districts.

In addition to increasing awareness and providing support for the missions of anti-hunger organizations throughout the state, Wyoming Hunger Initiative is committed to finding sustainable solutions at a statewide level to ensure no child goes hungry, and addressing the challenge of school meal debt falls under that purview.

The Mountain West Credit Union Foundation partnered with local credit unions across the state through a matching program to raise \$40,000 for this cause; National Military Vehicle Museum founder Dan Starks and his wife Cynthia, of Dubois, Wyoming, matched that contribution. Wyoming's Ellbogen Foundation, Governor Mark Gordon's salary donation, and numerous small individual donations made up the difference, allowing this goal to be realized.

"Wyoming Hunger Initiative is proud to partner with Wyoming's credit unions, Mr. and Mrs. Starks, and other generous donors to reach a milestone that ensures no Wyoming child shoulders the burden of debt. Finding a Wyoming solution to a Wyoming challenge is always our priority," says First Lady Jennie Gordon. "Wyoming Hunger Initiative was launched with one simple mission: to bring our great state closer to ending hunger and its insidious effects once and for all. This

partnership ensures that our schoolchildren and their families will have one less thing to worry about in the future and can focus on learning.”

Wyoming Hunger Initiative continues to seek sustainable solutions to end hunger in the state through its innovative approach to establishing a wide variety of critical partnerships and local solutions through *Food from the Field*, *Food from the Farm + Ranch*, *Wyoming Hunger Initiative Grants*, and *Hunger Champions Circle*.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture will continue reimbursing schools and childcare centers for free meals to all students regardless of their income through the 2021-22 school year, which provides a timely opportunity to eliminate existing debt and end the debt cycle for families facing food insecurity.

About Wyoming Hunger Initiative

Wyoming Hunger Initiative seeks to find and support Wyoming solutions to the challenge of food insecurity, which affects approximately 86,000 residents statewide. Launched in October 2019, Wyoming Hunger Initiative is the official initiative of Wyoming’s First Lady Jennie Gordon and is governed by the Board of Directors of the Wyoming Governor’s Residence Foundation, a registered 501(c)3 nonprofit organization. For more information, visit www.nohungerwyo.org.

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