2019: WE SHINED A LIGHT.

Long before I became the First Lady, I learned from a friend about children in Sheridan County who struggled with food insecurity. I’ve never forgotten about those children, and have made it a priority to work toward a future where hunger no longer exists in our state.

There are grassroots efforts in every Wyoming county dedicated to reducing childhood hunger and combating food insecurity. Instead of reinventing the wheel, the Wyoming Hunger Initiative was launched in October, 2019 to work to prevent food insecurity by increasing awareness and support for the work of local anti-hunger organizations statewide.

I’m proud of the goals the new Wyoming Governor’s Residence Foundation Board has established in the past year. In addition to supporting the Wyoming Hunger Initiative, the Foundation seeks to enhance the beautiful residence I call home and ensure that all corners of the state of Wyoming are felt inside its walls.

We accomplished much in 2019, and are excited for all the possibilities, challenges, and solutions that 2020 offers.

First Lady Jennie Gordon

Wyoming Hunger Initiative is the official Initiative of 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.

Board of Directors
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UNDERSTANDING THE ISSUE

First Lady Jennie Gordon learned about the problem of food insecurity in Wyoming long before she became the First Lady, when a friend from Sheridan was purchasing additional groceries for a local family in need. Because hunger is often an invisible problem, she simply hadn’t known the extent to which Wyoming residents face temporary or long-term food insecurity. Most people don’t.

Approximately 71,000 Wyoming residents struggle with food insecurity. Nearly 24,000 of those are children. The barriers children face when struggling with hunger make educational achievement and other success so much harder—in fact, sometimes it makes those things impossible. And that is not OK.

Before launching Wyoming Hunger Initiative, Mrs. Gordon made it her top priority to learn as much as possible about childhood hunger and the existing nonprofit organizations already in the fight against hunger statewide. Armed with the unwavering belief that no child should struggle with food insecurity—and that the numbers of children who do might drop with increased awareness and action—Mrs. Gordon’s vision was beginning to take shape: a platform to shine a light on the problem and work together to find lasting solutions to hunger.

“More than 12 million children in the U.S. live in ‘food insecure’ homes, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. That means those families don’t have enough food for every family member to lead a healthy life. This doesn’t always mean that there is nothing to eat. But it can mean that children get smaller portions than they need, or parents aren’t able to afford nutritious foods.”

—NO KID HUNGRY

www.nokidhungry.org/who-we-are/hunger-facts
WE TRAVELED.

VISITING THE FOOD INSECURITY WARRIORS

2019 was a busy first year for the Gordons! The First Lady and her team traveled to many locations to witness firsthand the amount of work, care, and dedication that goes into being a food insecurity warrior. Many more visits are scheduled for 2020.

**2019 Wyoming Hunger Initiative visits**

- Cheyenne: Friday Food Bag Foundation, Johnson Jr High School Breakfast After the Bell, Afflerbach Elementary School Breakfast After the Bell
- Laramie: Laramie Interfaith Samaritan, Moose Lodge Friday Food Bags
- Casper: Wyoming Food Bank of the Rockies, Wyoming Food For Thought Project
- Sheridan: The Food Group
- Gillette: Cent$ible Nutrition, Edible Prairie Project, Blessings in a Backpack, Meadowlark Elementary School Breakfast After the Bell
- Newcastle: Wyoming Education Association town hall meetings
- Upton: Wyoming Education Association town hall meetings
- Osage: Wyoming Education Association town hall meetings
There are over 140 nonprofit organizations in Wyoming dedicating part of all of their mission to combatting hunger. School districts also face great challenges and are working to find lasting solutions.

36.42% of Wyoming schoolchildren qualify for free or reduced lunch, yet only 32% of those eligible children who need school breakfast are getting it. Closing this “breakfast gap” is solvable and in doing so, will help students focus and achieve.
BREAKFAST AFTER THE BELL

The First Lady, Superintendent Jillian Balow, and a small Wyoming delegation attended The No Kid Hungry Breakfast Institute held in New Orleans in June 2019. No Kid Hungry, a national organization dedicated to ending childhood hunger in the U.S., selected Wyoming to receive a grant to help implement Breakfast After the Bell in additional school districts. The data is overwhelmingly clear: children focus on school and achieve far greater educational outcomes when they aren’t focused on the nagging pain of an empty stomach. By moving breakfast to the regular school day, more children are fed and better prepared to learn.

101 schools in 21 school districts across Wyoming currently have a Breakfast After the Bell or Grab and Go Breakfast program. Our partnership with No Kid Hungry has increased the amount of funding available through grants to establish this innovative tool, which means more school districts will have the ability to provide nutritious meals to start the school day.
Solving childhood hunger will take time, generosity, and innovative thinking.

WE LAUNCHED.

After months of visits, listening, learning, and planning, Wyoming Hunger Initiative officially launched in October 2019 with a newly selected 11-member board of directors, a video, and a website designed to introduce Wyoming to Mrs. Gordon’s official platform of ending childhood hunger in Wyoming. The website provides a resource listing for anti-hunger organizations in all 23 Wyoming counties as well as a collection of national studies, reports, and statistics to learn more about the extent and ramifications of childhood hunger. Wyoming Hunger Initiative was founded to shine a light and encourage problem-solving statewide, never to reinvent the wheel.

Nourished kids, healthy families, and thriving communities: that’s the goal of Wyoming Hunger Initiative.

Solving childhood hunger will take time, generosity, and innovative thinking.
WE SET SOME BIG GOALS.

EXCITING PLANS IN STORE FOR 2020

Wyoming Hunger Initiative intends to:

• feature the work of anti-hunger nonprofit organizations across the state to bring awareness and encourage involvement in the fight to end hunger
• establish a grant application process for nonprofit organizations with an anti-hunger focus to assist in launching or expanding their mission
• assist in distributing No Kid Hungry grants for Wyoming school districts
• develop a sponsorship kit for corporate giving
• partner with Visit Cheyenne during Cheyenne Restaurant Week to raise awareness and provide an opportunity for people to learn more about the Initiative and participate in a “round up” fundraising campaign, with plans to expand into other restaurant weeks statewide in 2021
• develop additional unique fundraising events based on the principle of “innovative thinking”
• identify additional challenges and barriers Wyoming children face related to food insecurity
• encourage Wyoming residents of all ages to get involved in local efforts through volunteerism
Ending hunger in Wyoming. Together.
Board of Directors: aka game-changers.

First Lady Jennie Gordon selected the Wyoming Governor’s Residence Foundation Board of Directors in 2019 based on experience, geographic location, and dedication to service in Wyoming and beyond. The Board has a two-fold mission: to support projects that enhance the Governor’s Residence, and to support the mission of Wyoming Hunger Initiative through volunteerism, advocacy, and fundraising. The Board meets quarterly.

*Left to right*: Annemarie McCracken Picard, Laurie Box, Lynn Kirkbride, Paty Gierau, Alfrieda Gonzales, Susan Samuelson, Diane Asay, Kathryn Boswell, Joann Skeim-True, Ashlee Lundvall, Deb Wendtland
It’s amazing what a little paint can do.

What better way to celebrate the holidays than by showcasing the talent of Wyoming artists? The Wyoming Governor’s Residence Foundation partnered with Wyoming glass artist Laurie Thal to create hand blown glass ornaments that would serve as a blank slate for artists across Wyoming. The ornaments graced the Governor’s Residence in December, serving as a meaningful representation of Wyoming’s unique history and landscape.

About the Wyoming Governor’s Residence Foundation:
Wyoming’s governors have lived at the Governor’s Residence since 1976. In addition to housing the Gordons, the Residence accommodates many receptions for state functions and local events each year. The funds available to the Residence Foundation for improvement projects are generated by private donations.
THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT.

visit www.nohungerwyo.org to learn more and sign up for updates about ways to get involved in the fight against food insecurity in Wyoming