

The Marguerite Fund: A History



In January 1923, Mrs. Effie B. Reinhart, Chapter S, Ft. Morgan, then President of the Colorado State Chapter, appointed a committee to look into plans to establish a fund for the benefit of needy P.E.O. Sisters.

In June 1924, at the State Convention in Colorado Springs, Mrs. Anna Kidder, Chapter E, brought this report of the first year's work: *"Our Work for Our Own – The Welfare Fund. Let me say, in the beginning, that the Welfare Fund is not offered as a substitute for, nor intended in any way to take the place of the Education Fund. One is our work for the world, the other, our work for our own. The Educational Fund will always be our pride. Cannot the Welfare Fund become our comfort?"*

In 1926, the Colorado P.E.O. Welfare Fund finally became part of the Bylaws of the Colorado State Chapter. In 1933, an application form was designed.

Maxine Howell, Chapter AL, Ft. Collins, was bothered by the name "The Colorado Welfare Fund" and suggested that it be changed to the "Colorado P.E.O. Marguerite Fund". She made the suggestion in 1972 and we still use that name for the Fund today.

In 1939 the Christmas Shower idea was born when a chapter hosted a shower for one of the beneficiaries of The Colorado P.E.O. Welfare Fund who was a shut-in. In 1940, with the approval of the Welfare Fund Board, Editha Berry, President CSC, expanded the practice and started the tradition of providing a financial gift during the Christmas season. Most of the chapters responded enthusiastically, making it a tremendous success. In 1942 a rotation plan was established whereby chapter letters through the first alphabet, A through Z were asked, then AA through AZ, etc. We continue this rotation today, with modifications. To ensure consistency, in 2020 the Christmas Shower rotation schedule was changed to coincide with the official visit schedule. This will allow our state officers the opportunity to review the Marguerite Fund and the Christmas Shower with the chapters they visit and to encourage donations. With sisterly love, we are able to provide a little extra cheer during the holiday season. When monies are available, recipients may also receive a small gift in the Spring.

The unique feature of the Marguerite Fund is the emphasis on privacy which protects the dignity of the recipients. Unlike requests for our other projects where a chapter votes to sponsor a recipient, a request for assistance is made by an individual P.E.O. on behalf of a woman in financial need. In the true sense of being a P.E.O., we can "seek growth in charity toward all with whom we associate".

. As of 2012, the Marguerite Fund is now part of the Colorado P.E.O. Charitable Corporation (CPCC). The CPCC is a 501(c)(3) organization that oversees Colorado P.E.O.'s two oldest charitable philanthropies, the Marguerite Fund and the Colorado P.E.O. Chapter House. As such, individual donations made to the Marguerite Fund are tax deductible for qualified donors.

A request for assistance may be made by an active Colorado P.E.O. to any Marguerite Fund trustee. The recipient must be a Colorado resident and a woman; however, she need not be a P.E.O. to qualify for assistance. A recipient can receive up to \$500.00 per month, or a one-time gift of \$750.00, or emergency assistance of \$500.00.