

**GROUNDBREAKING COLLABORATION ENCOURAGES
COLORADO TAXPAYERS TO CHECKOFF COLORADO –
*IT'S A SIMPLE WAY TO GIVE***

**Economy and Budget Cuts Convince Funds to Join Forces To Stay
Afloat**

(DENVER – January 15, 2003) Adhering to the maxim, *A Rising Tide Lifts All Boats*, for the first time in the history of the tax checkoff program, the ten charitable funds eligible for voluntary contributions on the Colorado income tax form are collaborating on a statewide public awareness campaign aimed at reminding Colorado taxpayers that checkoff giving is a simple way to make a real difference.

Checkoff Colorado - *A Simple Way to Give* – is targeted at taxpayers and tax preparers, and delivers the powerful message that regardless of income, everyone can help. By donating just \$5 or \$10, taxpayers can make a profound difference for a diverse range of organizations helping abused and neglected children, victims of domestic violence, endangered wildlife, pet overpopulation, the Western Colorado veteran's cemetery, U.S. Olympic athletes, childcare programs, Special Olympics athletes, watershed protection, and homeless prevention programs.

Colorado was the first state in the country to allow a taxpayer to “check-off” a voluntary contribution to a state program. In 1977, the Colorado Nongame and Endangered Wildlife Fund became the first state income tax check-off fund in the United States. Currently, there are 179 check-off programs in 41 states and the District of Columbia.

All state check-off contributions are voluntary donations from a taxpayer's refund, not a redirection of his or her liability. Last year, 76,000 Colorado taxpayers donated nearly \$2 million through the program. The collaboration hopes to increase those numbers this year.

Checkoff add one

“It’s no secret that nonprofit and government agencies are facing severe budget cuts and reduced donations,” said Barb Mattison, Executive Director of Colorado CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates). “We decided to get creative. By working together, we have a better chance of getting the word out that checkoff giving is a simple, painless way to make a real difference for nearly every town and citizen in our state.”

Checkoff Colorado is supported by donations from corporate partners H&R Block and the law firm of Rothgerber, Johnson & Lyons LLP. The campaign includes a public service announcement for TV and radio featuring Governor Bill Owens; RTD bus and DIA signage; posters and flyers; grassroots messaging, and a web site designed by students at the Art Institute of Colorado.

The organizations listed on the 2002-2003 Colorado Tax Checkoff are: Colorado Child Care Improvement Fund; Colorado Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) Fund; Colorado Domestic Abuse Program Fund; Colorado Homeless Prevention Activities Fund; Colorado Nongame and Endangered Wildlife Fund; Colorado Pet Overpopulation Fund; Colorado Watershed Protection Fund; Special Olympics Colorado Fund; United States Olympic Committee; Western Colorado State Veterans Cemetery Fund.

For more information, visit www.checkoffcolorado.org.

###