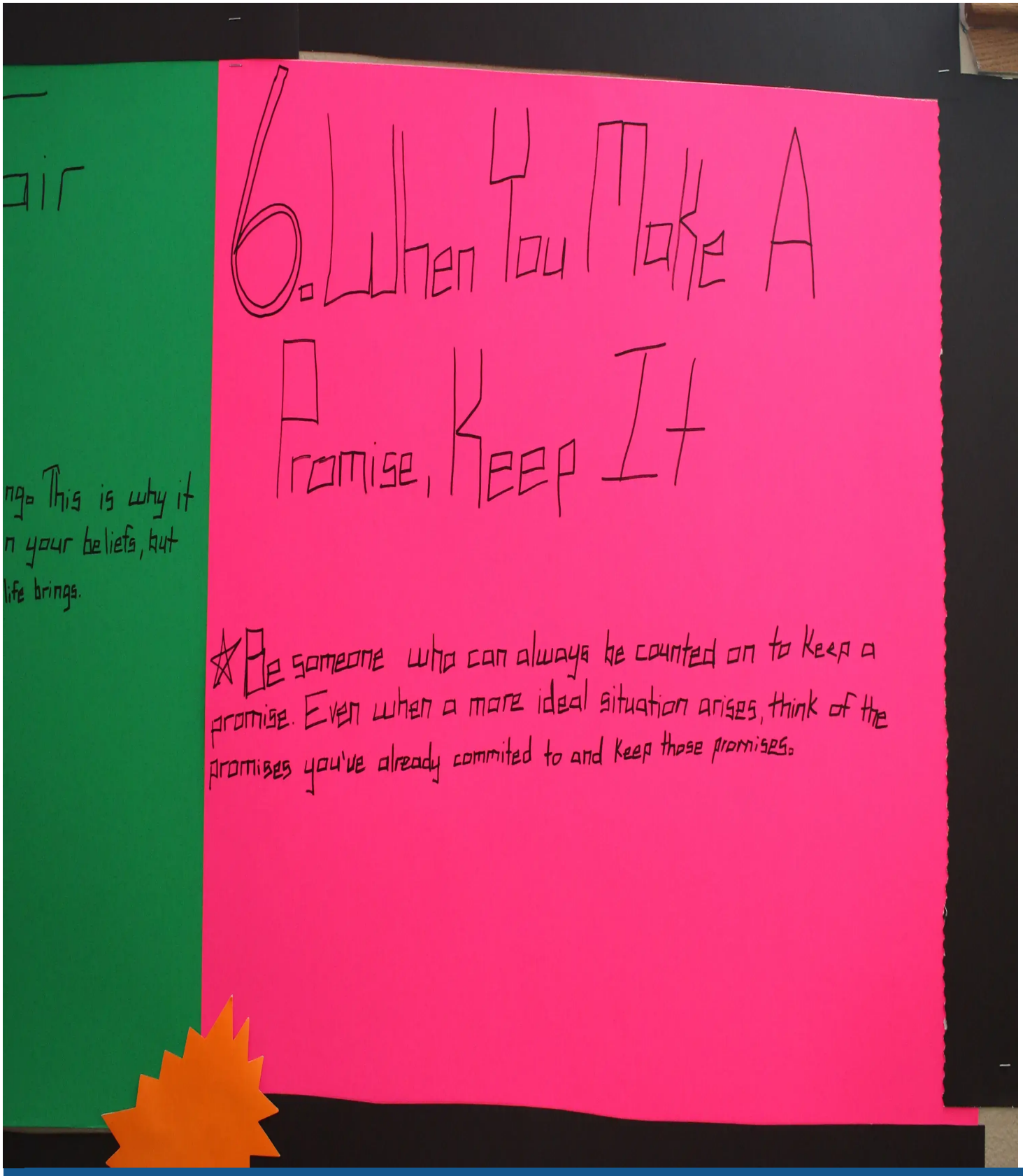

air
ng. This is why it
n your beliefs, but
life brings.
6. When You Make A
Promise, Keep It
☆Be someone who can always be counted on to keep a promise. Even when a more ideal situation arises, think of the promises you've already commited to and keep those promises.

Checking Ourselves on How Grantees Experience the Foundation

Last year, the Foundation received a number of recommendations from the Center for Effective Philanthropy (CEP) that were designed to help us achieve greater impact with our grantmaking. CEP's recommendations were part of a Grantee Perception Report that is an important data point as we work to increase our impact through grantmaking.

Many of the recommendations were aligned with changes that were underway, or being developed, by our leadership team. For example, the recommendations directed us as a staff and team to engage differently with the grantees we fund. They also called for us to build a much greater understanding of the fields and communities that grantees serve, work and live in. Finally, CEP recommended more robust communications – from clearer points of contact to more regular communication and proactive discussions about evaluative data from a grantee's work.

As we near the end of 2017, we wanted to share updates on how we're addressing the CEP recommendations:

CEP recommendation: Seek opportunities for grantee engagement that drive and demonstrate a deeper understanding of their fields and incorporate grantees' ideas and concerns into future grantmaking strategies and approaches.
Here's how we're doing today: In 2016, we went on a listening tour across the state. That tour, along with other data sources we draw from, prompted us to step back and reflect on how and what we do in grantmaking. It re-inspired how we think about "listening" to learn from Coloradans, including grantees. In January 2017, we shared how we have changed the program officer role. Now, program

officers are spending more time on the ground than ever before, focused in specific geographic regions of the state. We hope that by listening and being present in communities, everyone in Colorado (especially grantees) find a voice in our work and spirit as an organization.

CEP recommendation: Consider where the Foundation can build a stronger understanding of grantees' local communities and contexts, particularly for those working in rural areas.
Here's how we're doing today: Our mantra today is that community engagement is both a process and an outcome. We see engaging residents as vital for communities to thrive. Bringing in new voices and supporting local champions taps into the inherent power in communities and helps create equitable, sustainable and healthy communities. In October, our portfolio directors wrote an update about how we are striving to understand communities more deeply in every area of the state.

CEP recommendation: Ensure staff have opportunities to engage with grantees to create a stronger shared understanding of grantees' goals, strategies and the challenges their organizations face.
Here's how we're doing today: The Foundation has a new philosophy overall about how we show up and work in communities. The new philosophy has impacted grantmaking deeply: We have fundamentally shifted how our program officers work and operate across the state. In a blog post we published back in February, we shared our thought process behind our philosophy: *"This is a fundamental shift in who we are, how we show up, who we talk to and who we pay attention to. The shift happens far beyond philanthropy. This is not just a grantmaking strategy. It's about us changing our DNA, changing our fingerprints ."*

CEP recommendation: Facilitate regular staff conversations about barriers that hinder and how to facilitate stronger relationships with grantees, and how these

challenges might be addressed.
Here's how we're doing today: Throughout 2017, our program officers have engaged in a learning series focused on helping us continue to improve how we engage both as leaders and how we work together. This has enabled staff to spend more time considering how we can improve our knowledge base and how we can use what we learn to achieve more impact. Our staff have also been engaging in a variety of trainings and education focused on the political, economic and cultural aspects in different parts of the state, as well as building content knowledge in our new focus areas.

CEP recommendation: Review and refine our process for increased continuity and robust knowledge transfer during moments of staff transition.
Here's how we're doing today: We revisited our transition process earlier this year to ensure full clarity about each transition of a grant or portfolio that occurs. Staff are also spending more dedicated time and energy on transitions between themselves and in learning about new bodies of work or issues they've been asked to take on.

CEP recommendation: Strive to communicate clearly with understandable and timely messages to grantees about organizational changes.
Here's how we're doing today: Timing was in our favor this year, as our Communications Team was already committed to reworking several of our main communications tools. We launched a new website that has enabled much clearer communications for those that are trying to learn about us online. It includes a blog that has helped us to share information more readily and directly from those of us who manage certain types of work. We also launched an interactive map that is designed to help you connect with a program officer by area of the state. Most importantly, the new program officer role outlines how we can communicate more clearly and regularly. Being available to grantees in their own communities is integral to this.

CEP recommendation: Discuss reports/evaluations with grantees.
Here's how we're doing today: We are committed to timely review of reports and communicating with grantees about the reports they submit. We also want to share our broader outcomes across grantmaking as much as possible. Fortunately, this has become much easier since we launched a new website with a dedicated area for organizational insights. Check out an example of how we are sharing insights from a recent funding opportunity we wrapped up earlier this year.

CEP recommendation: Consider how to mitigate pressure to modify programs or projects in order to receive funding through current opportunities.
Here's how we're doing today: We are trying to develop funding opportunities that are more responsive to community needs. For example, based on what we heard from Colorado communities, we opened two new funding opportunities for our June 2017 deadline that focused on behavioral health and immigrant and refugee communities.

While we know there is more to do, we remain committed to sharing our progress in our areas of opportunity and improvement. We look forward to this continued progress and to any thoughts you may have along the way.

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Blog

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BY

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