

# Front Porch

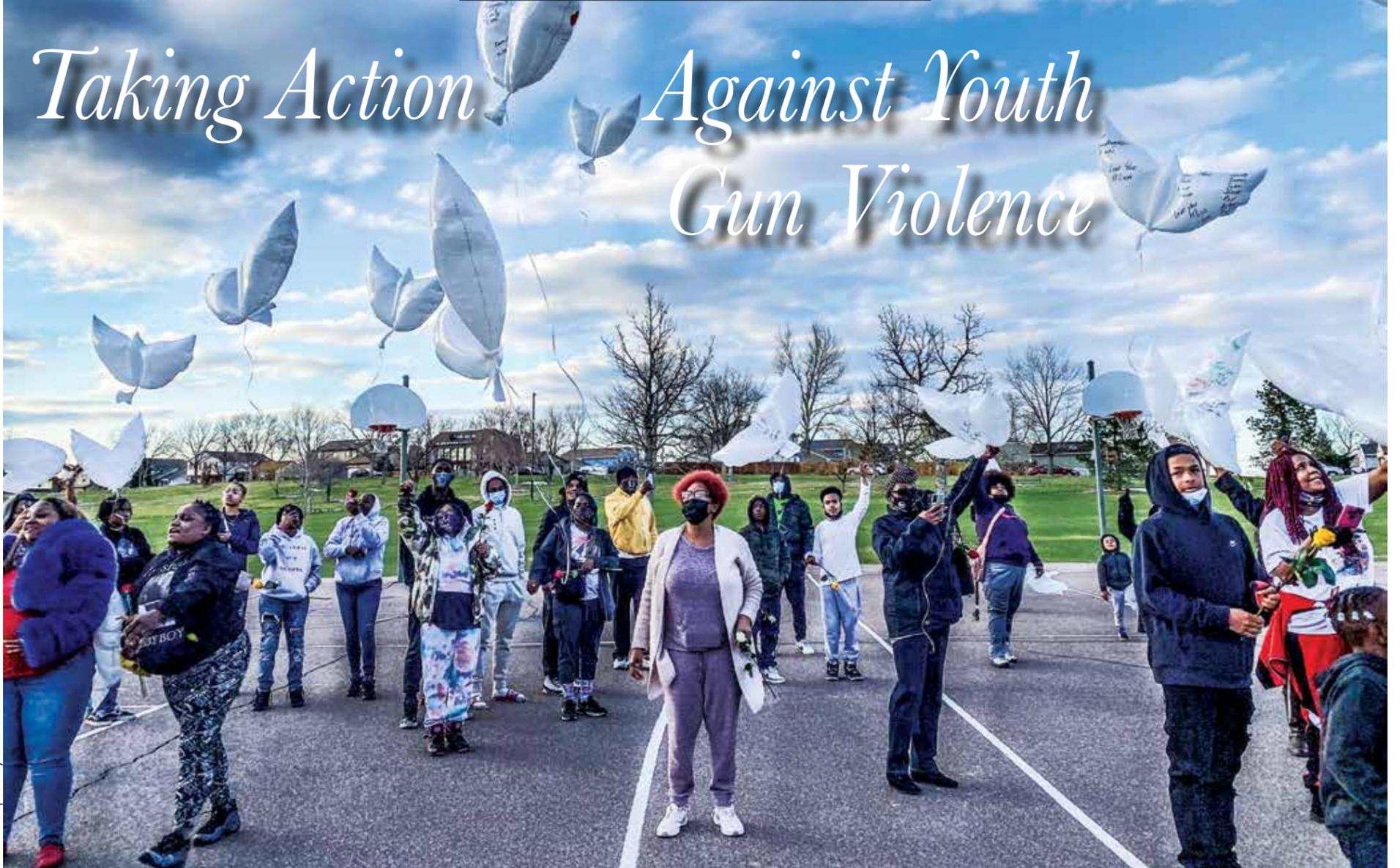
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DENVER, COLORADO

NORTHEAST DENVER

MAY 2021

## Taking Action Against Youth Gun Violence



Front Porch photo by Christie Gosch

Participants at the Sky Dove Balloon Release wrote the names of loved ones lost to violence on their balloons and released them at Village Place Park in Montbello. The event on April 17, sponsored by Families Against Violence Acts (FAVA), was held to honor Denver's Youth Violence Prevention Week in mid-April.

Mass shootings like the one at the Boulder King Soopers in March get a lot of attention, but what is less reported is the gun violence that directly impacts

more than 700 young people in Denver every year. Youth advocates believe that treating the problem as a public health issue can greatly reduce that violence. *Story on page 6 by Mary Jo Brooks*

## Do Twins Share a Soul?

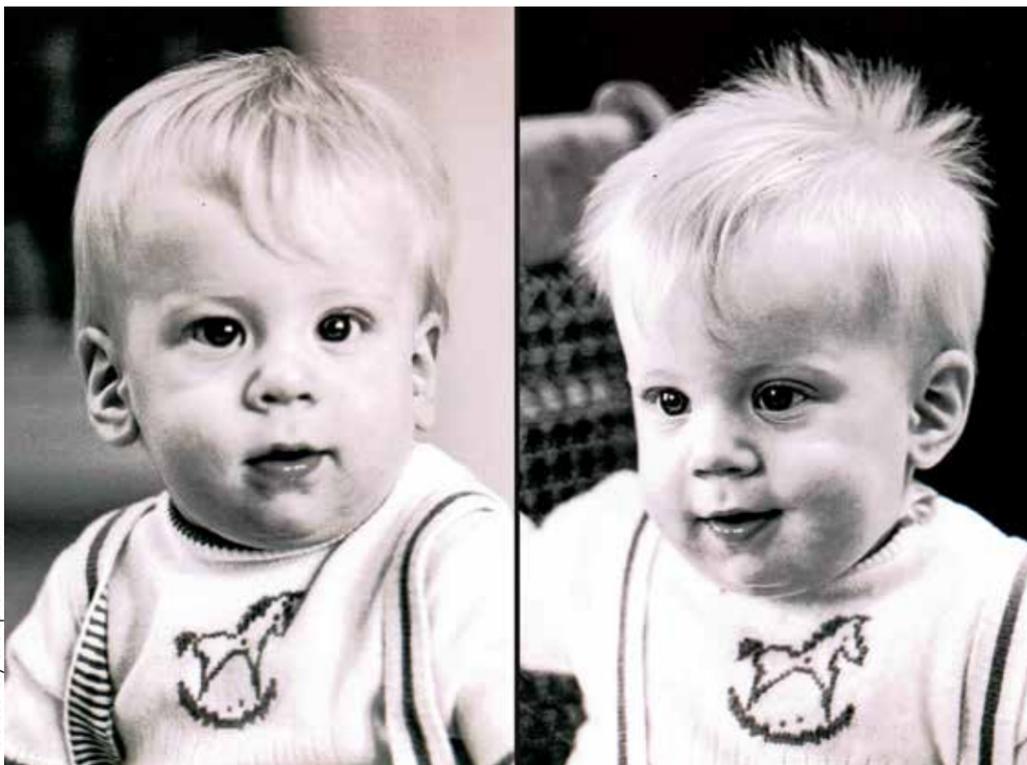


Photo courtesy of Stephen E. Nash

Park Hill resident Steve Nash is an identical twin. Through his work as an archeologist at the Denver Museum of Nature and Science, he also has a broader perspective about twins. Nash weaves together the story of his own life as a twin with the beliefs and customs about twins in the Yoruba culture in Nigeria, which has one of the highest rates for twin births in the world.

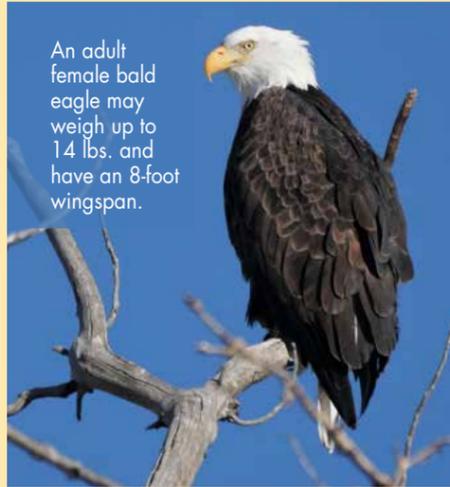
*Story by Stephen E. Nash on page 14.*



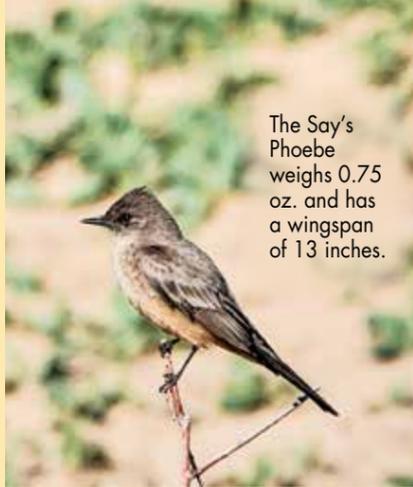
Front Porch photo by Christie Gosch

### View Hubble Photos at Wings

From 350 miles above the Earth, the Hubble telescope has been advancing science with astounding pictures of the universe since 1990. An exhibit of Hubble photos at Wings Over the Rockies Air & Space Museum in Lowry offers visitors the opportunity to pause and appreciate these views of the cosmos. *Story by Ken Lutes on page 8.*



An adult female bald eagle may weigh up to 14 lbs. and have an 8-foot wingspan.



The Say's Phoebe weighs 0.75 oz. and has a wingspan of 13 inches.

**BIRD SIGHTINGS**—A bald eagle was recently spotted at the west end of Prairie Meadow Park in North Central Park. Bird watcher George Ho says, "Sightings of bald eagles in the Central Park area have been uncommon this past winter." The eagle photo above by Ho was taken in Jan. 2020 along Sand Creek. The Say's Phoebe was photographed at Bluff Lake by Ho in April. He says, "It is one of the more common flycatchers that arrive here early in the spring and depart late in the fall. They perch on the tip of a branch and fly off to snatch an insect in flight and then return to the same perch. The flight seems erratic and very acrobatic at times, but they are merely following the flight path of the insect trying to escape from them."

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## Events & Announcements

### Active Minds: The Future of Bees

Thursday, May 13, 1-2pm, Online  
Found on every continent except Antarctica, bees are vital pollinators, making possible much of the food humans eat. In recent years, however, crucial bee species have experienced significant loss. Since the 1990s, the bumblebee population has plunged almost 90%. Additionally, since 2006, a malady called Colony Collapse Disorder has afflicted honeybee populations. Join Active Minds as we dive into the world of bees and examine the factors that are affecting these important species.

### Active Minds: The US Electric Grid

Thursday, May 27, 6:30-7:30pm, Online  
Many have described the United States electric grid as antiquated and potentially vulnerable to cyber-attack. It is arguably the largest machine in the world, comprised of many different systems of almost unimaginable complexity that, taken together, make life as we know it possible. The transition from fossil fuels to renewable energy has further complicated the system in ways that are still being determined. Join Active Minds as we explore how this system works, its current challenges, and its future opportunities.

Join in the Active Minds webinars by visiting [https://www.activeminds.com/events\\_denver.html](https://www.activeminds.com/events_denver.html)

### A Deep Dive into the 2021 Aquatic Season

As we quickly float into the MCA's 2021 aquatic season, it's important to stay current with the latest pool related news and information. We would encourage you to take note of these important updates and confirm your family's account information is current and up to date in preparation for the pools opening, which is projected to occur on June 1, 2021.

The MCA is continuing to follow all mandates and guidelines set forth by city and state governments. As these guidelines and mandates change leading up to, and throughout the summer, the MCA will need adequate time to modify any current restrictions and ensure our staff and facilities are equipped

for these changes. Therefore, the MCA will implement all changes to the COVID-19 related restrictions currently in place on a two-week delay from when they go into effect. Get familiar with the Active Pass, our new resident membership program, and your key to summer. The Active Pass provides residents with access to all 7 community public pools without paying the daily entry fee. Residents planning on visiting the pool more than 5 times during the pool season should consider this option. Find out more about the newly launched Active Pass, including details on getting yours today, by scanning this QR code.



If you are not subscribed to the MCA's weekly email newsletter, please sign up via [www.mca80238.com](http://www.mca80238.com). Community news and upcoming event newsletters are sent weekly on Wednesdays and the latest aquatic related announcements and pertinent reminders are sent bi-weekly on Fridays straight to your inbox. Get the information you need to ensure your summer is nothing but smooth sailing

### Central Park Community Garage Sell

Saturday, May 22, 8am-12pm, Central Park Community  
The 2021 Central Park Community Garage Sale will take place on Saturday May 22, 2021 from approximately 8 am to Noon. Individuals who register for the event can sell at their homes throughout the neighborhood. A list of homes participating, including a map, will be available the Friday before the sale. Please be sure to clean up after your sale is complete. This includes removing any signs you put up (on your property or elsewhere). Please do not leave items at the curb with "Free" signs. Event organizers are working to find community organizations to accept donations of unsold items. For more information, and to register to participate please visit [www.cpgaragesell.com](http://www.cpgaragesell.com).

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# Front Porch

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Left: Justin Barney is pictured with Denver Green School Northfield students (from left) Norah Krause, Kade Bassoukous, Talya Sigel, and Amaya Whitehead-Bust.

Right: Barney sets aside class time to focus on mental health, which he says is important not just for students, but also for teachers.

Photos by Honored photographer Lance Murphey



A poster shows an orange and black monarch butterfly pictured over the eyes of a brown woman with long black hair. The words underneath say “no human is illegal.” Next to that, a protest photo of what appears to be an empowered Latino fist says “Si Se Puede” (“Yes, We Can”) on the forearm. His message behind the posters? “I think that it is important for students to see their teachers as activists in terms of how they engage with the outside world.”

Barney explains his teaching methodology is to offer an immersion experience. “A lot of our curriculum is class-created content, and the whole process is in Spanish. I have an easel, and the art is based upon what the class comes up with. Once it is done, that character becomes a protagonist in a story. The coolest thing about it is that the story is wacky and hilarious—the process makes it engaging,” Sigel says, “We are learning, but it doesn’t feel like a boring school day. Class is always hands-on, even during online learning.”

In late 2013, while teaching Spanish at a Lutheran school in Phoenix, Barney got a wake-up call as he hit what he described as “the 8-year wall of teaching.” A mentor and former professor at Valparaiso University, Alan Bloom, passed away suddenly

# Local Teacher Selected for National Honor

Denver Green School Northfield teacher Justin Barney was selected for recognition by *Honored*, a national nonprofit organization dedicated to keeping great teachers in the classroom and to inspiring a new generation of talent to pursue teaching. *Honored* believes that the special one-to-one relationship between a teacher and a student is the foundation of great education, and each month they shine a spotlight on one Honoree who has changed the life of one student.

By Meg Nocero, writer for *Honored*, edited for length by Front Porch

What does Justin Barney, a Spanish teacher at Denver Green School Northfield (DGSN), consider to be his superpower?

“My classes during virtual school were 40 minutes, and we would spend 15 a day talking about mental health. That could be a superpower: a laser focus on the importance of mental health, not only for students but also for teachers.”

For students Kade Bassoukous, Amaya Whitehead-Bust, Talya Sigel, and Norah Krause, all of whom nominated Barney for the Honored award, Barney’s focus on each student as a whole person makes all the difference. “The DGSN community loves Señor Barney, but the important thing is he loves his school, colleagues, and students back,” says Krause.

Barney’s classroom displays colorful character cut-outs that his students design during the improv portion of his lessons.

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from a heart attack. “It was a shock. He exemplified what I try to exemplify: how to teach and how to live—boldly, prioritizing connections with students, as a bleeding heart activist, unabashed advocate for people who are the most vulnerable in society. And he did this at a Lutheran University. Here is this guy who was living out loud even though the religious doctrine was sort of against what he was saying—he lit a fire in me on how to live.”

A few months later, on a service trip with 12 seniors in San Miguel de Allende in Guanajuato, Mexico, Barney was approached by a student asking him if he thought it was okay to be gay. He responded honestly with his truth, “I do think it’s okay to be gay, and I think that the Lutheran stance on this is wrong.”

Upon their return to Arizona, the school’s principal admonished Barney for sharing a belief that was not in line with their teachings. Barney calls this a pivotal moment in his life, “It was maddening that I couldn’t share my opinion in a way that’s loving, compassionate, and accepting of individuals. That’s when I decided that I could not work there anymore.”

One year later, an opportunity opened up for both Barney and his wife to serve as volunteer coordinators at a school for the deaf in San Miguel de Allende, fulfilling their dream to live abroad. After six months in Mexico, they taught in Costa Rica for two years, then returned to Denver. In 2019, DGSN hired Señor Barney to teach Spanish as a founding member of the faculty.

Kartal Jaquette and Erin Miller are Lead Partners at The Denver Green School, which is based on a shared leadership model. Jaquette says “Señor Barney has strengths that few educators possess, and at DGSN, his strengths are leveraged to do the exact thing he wants, which is to help his students grow as people and learn Spanish.”

Senor Barney makes everyone feel safe and loved, says Amaya Whitehead-Bust, which was important to her during this past year. Kade Bassoukos, a transgender student, says, “The first day I learned about Senor Barney and his personality, he opened up a whole new world at school for me. I had come out to my parents in June. I emailed Señor Barney about it, and he immediately used language to call me “amigo,” (male friend), and that felt so nice. I felt like I had finally been accepted.”

Barney’s impact on Bassoukos’ life led him to do a Google search for national teaching awards. He found Honored and submitted a nomination for Barney. Norah Krause, who writes for *The Goat Gazette*, the school’s newspaper, was looking for a teacher story. When she learned of Bassoukos’ nomination, she also sent one—and

she invited fellow students Talya Sigel and Amaya Whitehead-Bust do likewise. In Norah’s article entitled “Sr. Barney Gets Nominated For National Teacher Award,” she wrote about how Barney and Bassoukos mutually look up to each other and see each other as role models.

When asked what touched him the most about this nomination, Señor Barney says: “I took care of them before the pandemic. And then through the pandemic, they took care of me through this nomination—because this has been extremely hard. What does a community do during tough times? You lift each other up.”

Bassoukos says Señor Barney checked in with him during quarantine: “I had a very hard time with mental health and one day I got an email saying, ‘How are you doing?’ I talked about how I felt for the first time with a teacher—he understands what it is like to struggle, and if he doesn’t, he wants to learn. When I came out as trans, I did not think that I would have this much acceptance. But I have acceptance from everyone—the teachers even correct people on my pronouns—the school made it so easy.”

This year Barney says his class will be co-exploring many issues including what it means to be not male or female through characters like a fish that is gay and a dinosaur that is non-binary. Bassoukos adds how this impacts him: “When we truly and deeply respect someone, we learn.”

Barney has a YouTube channel with more than 17,000 views of his Rap, Yo Juego Fortnite. “I bring music into the classroom by giving each character a song—through repetition of the vocab; it gets stuck in their head. I am certainly not the best rapper, but I know how to make something where a kid will go, ‘Oh, this is weird—my teacher is rapping, and it might not be the best thing ever, but also it is not terrible.’”

“Teachers have been going through the wringer this year. With virtual school, hybrid learning—we have had to modify our whole job to fit this pandemic. I know I was not connecting with my students as I do—so I felt bad about myself. ‘Always do your best,’ drives home that we extend ourselves grace, forgiveness, and permission not to do great work—then go to bed at night and say today was crap, but I did my best.”

Señor Barney offers these final words for his students and fellow teachers: “Be yourself because the world is always trying to get you to be something that you are not. I think that our spirits are perfect, and something healthy occurs when you are just okay with yourself the way you are and celebrate it—the most mentally okay thing that you can do is to be okay with you.”

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# Working for Smiles



For 29 years Volunteers Of America Colorado has hosted an “I Remember Mama” tea that has honored mothers who are unable to celebrate Mother’s Day with their families. The women pictured above were among the guests in 2019 who chose to participate in the hat contest. This year, due to Covid-19, handmade cards with personalized kind messages, goodie bags, and treats made by Retired Senior Volunteers (RSVP) will be delivered to isolated senior women. One of last year’s recipients wrote about what the card and treats meant to her. “It is so nice to hear someone ask about my well being. Receiving the card is the most the inspiring thing. I have it on display. This card lifted my spirits.” Photos courtesy of Volunteers Of America

By Carol Roberts

Are you over 55 and have a desire to give back to the community in a way that fits with your level of time, energy and interests? “We’re a matchmaker for those people,” says Cathy Law, Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) project manager. “If you’re over 55 and you’re willing to work for smiles, you qualify to be an RSVP volunteer.

“We have one-time projects and we have volunteers working from home several hours a month to 40 hours a week in a food bank. When we’re trying to place volunteers, we’ll ask how many hours you want to work and what you like—and we’ll find job descriptions that fit you,” says Law.

“When you’re tired of working in one area and want a change, we’ll help you find a new opportunity. We’re there for your entire volunteer career.

We want you to be able to go on vacation, watch your grandkids, and do something meaningful, impactful and flexible that fits in your lifestyle.”

RSVP is a program under the umbrella of Volunteers Of America (VOA)

Colorado, a 125-year-old organization. The program has 250 job descriptions in 50 non-profit agencies. Orientation is a one-hour phone call—or it may last as long as you want to talk. Law will pull job descriptions based on your interests.

Law, who has worked at VOA for 10 years, says the organization tries to see where there’s a need in the community—and then they try to fill it. “If you’re not sure how to volunteer, we’re part of a big network and have a lot of contacts with volunteer coordi-

“I grew up in a family where my mother was involved in volunteer work...[so] it’s something I’ve been drawn to.” Through a chance contact, she found Epicurean catering and participated in their regular schedule of distributing food to the Mission downtown—and that experience brought her in contact with VOA. “It’s amazing to me how much VOA does. It’s a huge umbrella: helping women get ready for the workforce, helping veterans, even Meals on Wheels. VOA has been here [Colorado] for

125 years; they’re an amazing story. As much as I was volunteering on the East Coast, I didn’t hear about VOA there.”

Roche lives at Everleigh Central Park (formerly The Grove) and says six other residents there have registered with RSVP, and the management has been supportive of their work.

If volunteering runs in families, it’s not surprising that when another of Roche’s children moved to Denver, she called Cathy Law. Sarah Rooney works full time from home in marketing. “I like talking to different people and meeting people.” Her interests and skills led her to participate as a volunteer in the state’s contact tracing program. “People have been so responsive and appreciative,” she says, reflecting on the challenges facing a woman she called who lives on the border of Kansas and her husband was in the ICU in Denver. As the contact tracing program winds down, she has been volunteering at vaccine clinics. She says her love of gardening may lead her to look for a volunteer position at the Botanic Gardens in the future. “RSVP has been a great way to give back and really fulfilling. It’s a great organization.”

*If you’re interested in volunteering with RSVP, email Cathy Law at [claw@voacolorado.org](mailto:claw@voacolorado.org). Also email Law to have a belated Mother’s Day card made by VOA volunteers and sent to honor someone special—include name, address and brief information. To donate in support of the VOA Mother’s Day annual event, call 303.297.0408.*



Central Park resident Sarah Rooney volunteered to do contact tracing. Her mother, Pat Roche, writes notes to Meals on Wheels recipients in addition to other volunteer jobs. Front Porch photo by Christie Gosch

nators. We’ll know the name of someone to contact. Even if it’s not one of our partner agencies, we want to be sure you can volunteer doing something meaningful to you.”

Pat Roche moved to Denver from the East Coast in 2016 to live near her adult children.

# Stopping

Jonathan McMillan is the newly-appointed Youth Violence Prevention Coordinator for the City and County of Denver. After being imprisoned as a young man, he turned his life around and has been a youth mentor for over two decades.

Photo courtesy of Jonathan McMillan

By Mary Jo Brooks

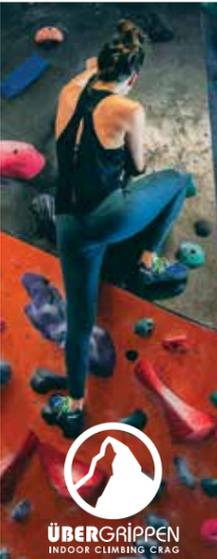
Just three weeks after a mass shooting at a Boulder King Soopers store left 10 people dead, Governor Jared Polis signed two bills into law designed to reduce gun violence: one mandates the safe storage of weapons, the other requires owners to report lost or stolen guns. State Representative Tom Sullivan, whose own son was killed in the Aurora theatre shooting 9 years ago, called the new laws “common sense, life-saving pieces of legislation.” And to any who might argue the bills are too small in scope to make much of a difference, he has a quick reply. “Every single step matters. Every incremental step. There isn’t one bill or one pill that will solve it all, but we’re working on it.”



Front Porch photo by Christie Gosch

Linda Colbert, from Families Against Violent Acts, watches as balloons to honor victims of violence float away.

The gun safety advocacy group Moms Demand Action is also cautiously optimistic that some legislative progress is being made. In addition to advocating for state and federal gun legislation, the group works to elect like-minded candidates. Rachel Barnes, a Park Hill mother and elementary school teacher, leads the organization in Denver. “Candidates used to be unwilling to talk about gun safety issues, but that has changed. Jason Crow won on that platform. Tom Sullivan won on that platform. And that has been refreshing to see.”



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# Youth Gun Violence



ing point for city officials to create a violence prevention plan that was much more holistic. “Gun violence is a public health problem—and it’s preventable. But treating it as a public health problem—instead of a law enforcement problem—means looking upstream,” says Valenzuela. “Looking at schools and parents, what are the resources that need to be deployed to prevent kids from getting involved with gun violence? How do we support young people instead of trying to put young people away?”

Shortly after the report was released, Mayor Michael Hancock formed the Youth Violence Prevention Action Table (YVPAT) which brought together more than 100 people from city agencies, school and law enforcement groups, along with non-profit organizations that worked directly with gang members and at-risk youth. Jonathan McMillan, who has been working to reduce youth and gang violence for over two decades, has been part of YVPAT from the beginning. Two months ago, he became the city’s full-time youth violence prevention coordinator.

“I’m grateful that Mayor Hancock and other city officials have taken this seriously—allocating a half million dollars to identify risk factors and provide resources to organizations on the ground who are doing the work they do so well but who have been under-resourced.”

McMillan knows firsthand the pressures that disadvantaged youth face. Growing up in Park Hill in the 1980s, he says there was a pervasive

narrative that Black youth were less likely to graduate high school, more likely to go to prison than college, more likely to die before the age of 25. “It created a paradigm of hopelessness—as though being part of that negativity was what I was supposed to do.”

McMillan says after making some bad choices and ending up in prison, he began to reflect on who he wanted to be. “I committed to reshaping that negative narrative—both on a personal level and a systemic level.”

He became a youth mentor and led gang intervention groups. Four years ago he started Park Hill Strong, a non-profit funded by the Centers for

Disease Control dedicated to reducing violence among 10 to 24-year-olds. The group focuses on helping youth develop emotional intelligence: how to handle conflict and communicate in a healthy way. It also tries to make them feel more empowered and connected to their neighborhood. “We helped the kids develop a social media platform to talk about what contributes to violence: mental health issues, economic disenfranchisement, systemic racism.

If we address these issues holistically,

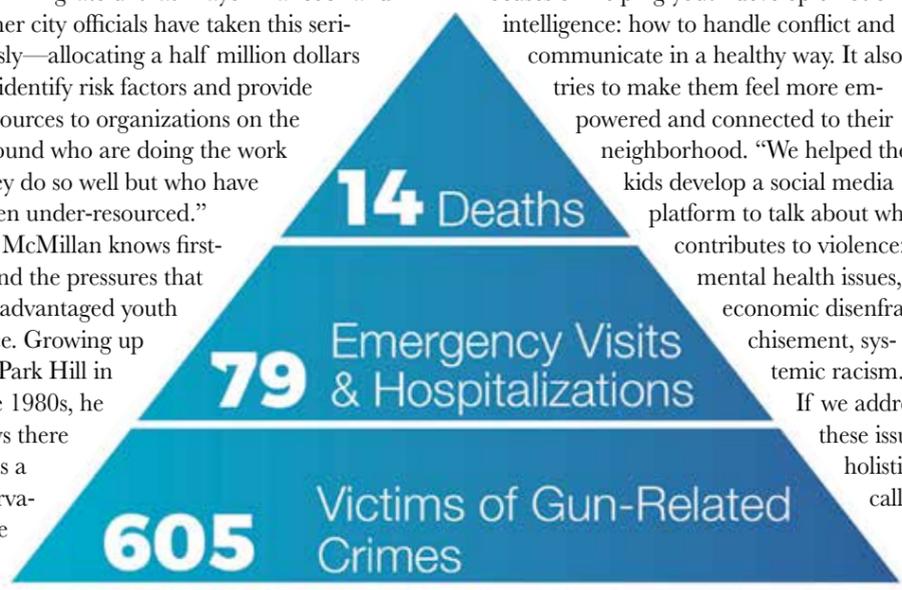
we’re going to see a reduction in violence in all forms,” says McMillan.

Linda Colbert agrees that too much violence happens because youth aren’t connected to their communities. “So many young people feel isolated, hopeless, so they look for comradery—even if that’s through a gang.” Colbert is part of Families Against Violent Acts (FAVA), which was formed as a grief support group for families impacted by gun violence, but increasingly works on violence prevention. In mid-April, it held an event in Montbello, launching balloons to honor victims of violence. The goal was to bring attention to problems plaguing many neighborhoods in Denver. “The idea is to get people thinking about collaboration, about ways we can get back to community partnerships between families, businesses and even law enforcement. We can’t give up on our ability to bring our community back together to prevent violence.”



Anicia Carey, assisted by Franklin Cruz from the Montbello Organizing Committee, adds a word to a poster of community values created at the Sky Dove Balloon Release event in April.

Front Porch photo by Christie Gosch



Youth Directly Affected by Gun Violence in Denver Annually

Still, she admits she’s frustrated every time she hears of another mass shooting. “What’s even more troubling is the everyday gun violence—there’s been a dramatic increase in those shootings which disproportionately impact Black and Latino youth. But those don’t get the media attention that the mass shootings do.”

Two years ago, Denver Public Health issued a report that shows an average of 700 young people in Denver under the age of 25 have been directly affected by gun violence each year. Maritza Valenzuela, author of that report, says the findings became a turn-

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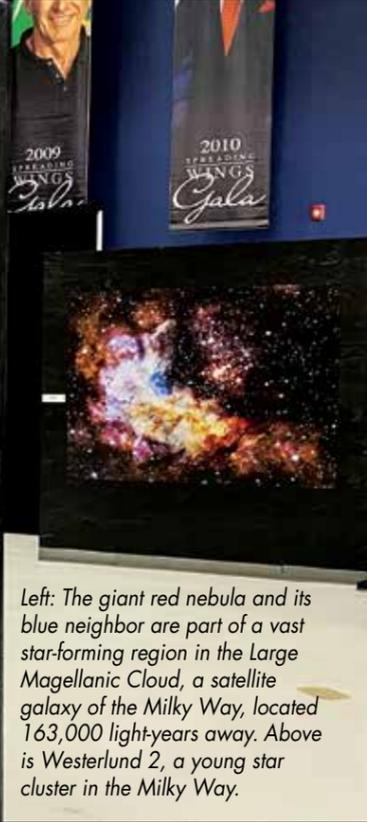
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# Hubble Still Unveiling Mysteries of



Left: The giant red nebula and its blue neighbor are part of a vast star-forming region in the Large Magellanic Cloud, a satellite galaxy of the Milky Way, located 163,000 light-years away. Above is Westerlund 2, a young star cluster in the Milky Way.

Front Porch photos by Christie Gosch

By Ken Lutes

"How many planets are there with people like us looking up and wondering whether there are other planets with people like them?" asks Chuck Stout, curator for the Wings Over the Rockies Air & Space

Museum. Visitors to *All the Cosmos a Canvas: Hubble Reveals our Beautiful Universe* are likely to be asking that question—and many others.

All the photos in the exhibit were taken by the Hubble Space Telescope. Launched in 1990 to an orbit 350 miles

above Earth, Hubble has outlived its life expectancy, yet it continues to advance science with astounding pictures of the universe.

The exhibit, on display until mid-September, is nestled in a corner of the cavernous hangar of the museum. "The vibe we're going for here is quiet, introspective, like the inside of the Denver Art Museum," says Stout. "We wanted long sight lines so visitors could see different images from any vantage point." The interpretive signage (in English and Spanish) for each image is minimal "to make this an exhibit about the visual aspects without

burdening people with technical terms." The exhibit was designed and produced in-house to promote the museum's mission—Stout wants visitors to understand the impact of aviation and aerospace on their lives, even if they never get on an airplane.

"It's a challenge to make relevant something that's orbiting 350 miles above your head and takes pictures that may be of interest only to businesses and astronomers," says Stout. "How does that affect me, why should I care about that, and why should I think that spending money on space exploration is a good idea?"

"Because NASA technology is ubiquitous. We have solar energy because of solar panels developed for spacecraft, microelectronics gave us computers; and that whole stream of technology makes it possible for us to have cordless drills and LED lights instead of heating up a wire until it glows.

"Our mission is to educate and inspire." Stout hopes to inspire a diverse audience, including women, people of color, people who don't speak English, people with disabilities, and people with different socio-economic backgrounds. He thinks of this exhibit as a place people can go to be transported, to think about something other than politics or Covid. "And I hope there's that 10-year-old girl who looks up from her cellphone and says, 'This is cool!' and suddenly becomes more interested in math and science at school."

Until 400 years ago, all humans knew about the universe came through ob-

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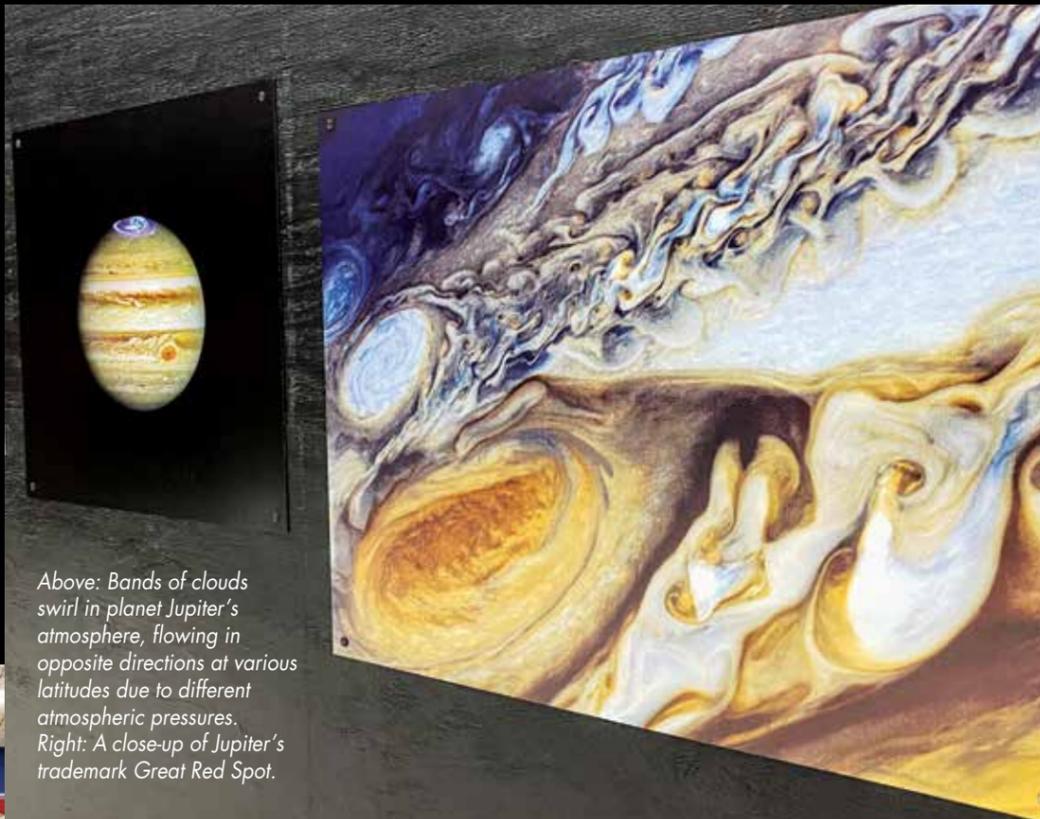
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# the Universe

servations with the naked eye. In 1610, Galileo's telescope changed our perception of the skies. Earth-based observatories extended our knowledge, and now Hubble, above the turbulence of Earth's atmosphere, gives us an undistorted window to the rest of the universe.

Want to see what Hubble is looking at right now? Visit [spacetelescopelive.org](http://spacetelescopelive.org).

Tickets may be pre-reserved for two-hour visits (walk-ins not taken at this time): 303-360-5360 x105. Learn more about the museum at [wingsmuseum.org](http://wingsmuseum.org).



Above: Bands of clouds swirl in planet Jupiter's atmosphere, flowing in opposite directions at various latitudes due to different atmospheric pressures. Right: A close-up of Jupiter's trademark Great Red Spot.



Left: The actual Hubble Space Telescope (HST) is about the size of a large school bus. A 1/5 scale model is on display. Based on Hubble photos, scientists date the universe at almost 14 billion years old.

Below: NGC 3603 is a nebula situated in the Carina-Sagittarius Arm of the Milky Way, about 20,000 light-years away from the Solar System.



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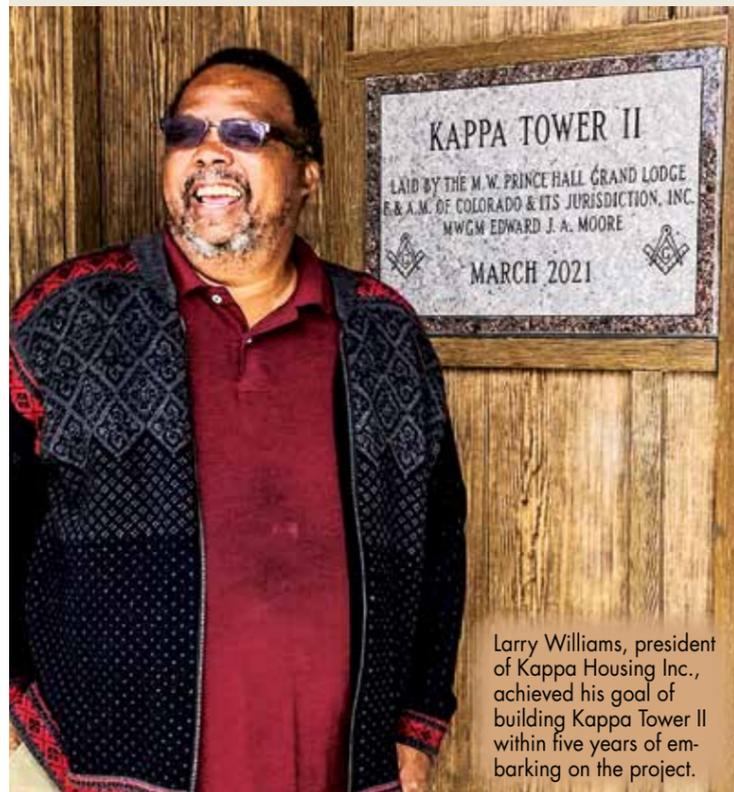
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# Kappa Tower II Apartments Open in Central



Larry Williams, president of Kappa Housing Inc., achieved his goal of building Kappa Tower II within five years of embarking on the project.

By Carol Roberts

Larry Williams joined the Kappa Alpha Psi fraternity—but it wasn't to live in a frat house or party with fraternity brothers. "I couldn't afford to join when I was in college," he says. "And I was concentrating on my studies to go to law school."

Williams settled into his law career and got involved with Big Brothers and Warren Village. And he was "looking for something more substantial, so he could give back." His father-in-law, Willie Williams, was a Kappa alumni and talked about their projects, which appealed to Williams. And by the time he joined in 1991, he says, "I could afford it."

Williams participated in Kappa's youth scholarship program, meeting with high school boys, offering classes for taking the ACT and SAT, and "helping young men of color adjust to society and prepare for society." He became president of the chapter in 1997. "That's when I learned about housing and what Kappa Tower I was doing for senior citizens."

Denver alumni members in 1979 had come up with the idea of building an apartment for low

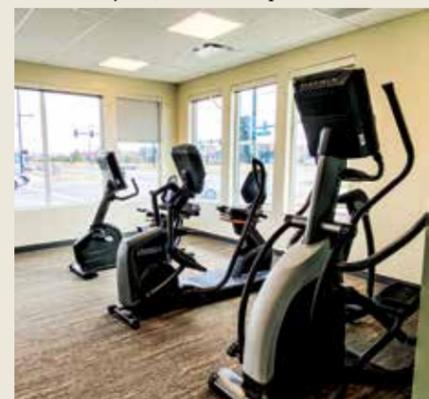
income seniors; they opened the Kappa Tower I in 1984 at E. 22nd Ave. and Downing. "They were having constant conversations about building another tower—but it never came to life," says Williams. "In 2015, I became president of Kappa Housing, Inc. I announced we'd build—and if it wasn't started within 5 years, I would leave the position."

Thus started Williams' journey, together with his Board of Directors, to build another housing project that recently culminated in the opening of Kappa Tower II at Northfield and Central Park boulevards.

He took classes on how to access tax credits from the federal government that could be used to finance income-qualified housing. They visited other senior housing facilities and talked to architects about what could feasibly be built. They got plans drawn and forms filed and land donated. In 2018, they submitted the Kappa Tower II application to the Colorado Housing and Finance Authority (CHFA), the organization that looks at the most pressing housing needs in the state and decides who will get the federal tax credits that year.

Kappa Tower II didn't make the cut in 2018, but it did get chosen to receive the tax credits in 2019. Construction broke ground on February 28, 2020. Despite the limitations and new restrictions imposed by the pandemic, construction stayed on schedule, and they got their occupancy permit in March of 2021.

Kappa Tower II includes almost every feature and amenity that the Board of Directors identified as important for a successful project. They have spacious apartments residents can be proud to live in and wide halls where they can walk for exercise in winter, as well as a workout room. They got green construction and approval for a fence around the building so residents would feel safe. They have an outdoor space for a garden to grow food



Kappa Tower II amenities for residents include a workout room (above) and a community room for small gatherings (below). Not pictured are a top floor deck with a view of downtown Denver and a craft and computer room for residents.



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Front Porch – NE Denver

# Park



Kappa Tower II, located on the southwest corner of Northfield and Central Park boulevards, has 70 one- and two-bedroom apartments. The units are for residents 62 and older and are income qualified based on 30 to 60 percent of the area median income (AMI). Photos for Front Porch by Christie Gosch.

and flowers. A swimming pool is a block away, a bus stop is just outside the door, and a major shopping center is nearby. The service coordinator from Kappa Housing I, Joslyn Reese, will work with the residents, encouraging them to be involved and arranging the services they want, such as games, outings, exercise classes, healthy eating classes, and speakers.

The building has 70 one- and two-bedroom units, and Kappa Housing has land and plans for a second phase that will attach to the

building in an L shape and add 30-40 more units within a few years.

Some units are still available. To qualify, residents must be age 62 and older with income at 30 to 60 percent of the area median income (AMI). For information contact Lawanda Dudley, the community manager at 720.688.1217.

Kappa Tower II was built by Alliance Construction and designed by Kephardt Architecture.



Lawanda Dudley, pictured with Larry Williams, is Kappa II's community manager.



Kappa Housing, Inc. Board of Directors at the Kappa Tower II groundbreaking Feb. 28, 2020 (from left): James Deadwiler, Charles Thomas, Jr., Leonard Newson, Sam Spraggins, Dr. James Mann, Kappa Alpha Psi President Jevard Hitch, Stokes Anderson, Hon. Wellington Webb, Kappa Housing, Inc. President Larry A. Williams. Board members not pictured: Dr. Columbus Veasey, Geoffrey Crowell and Alonza Love. Photo by Snap Shots Photography

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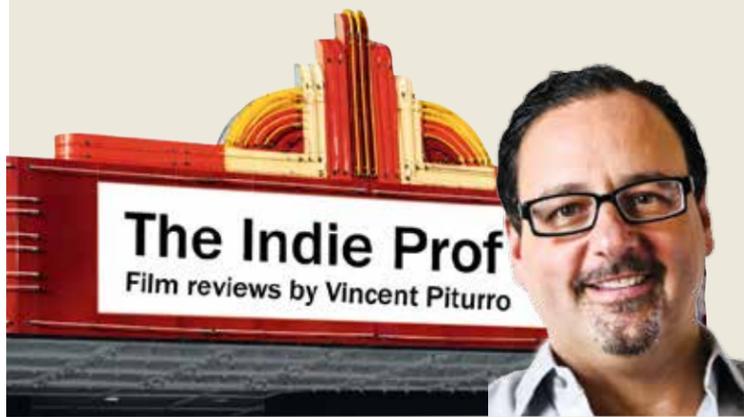
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everybody it seems. This is all set amidst 1927 Chicago and the horrible race relations therein. The sharp dialogue highlights the past, present, and future—some hopeful and some not-so-hopeful—of race relations in the city and the country writ large. Even though Ma is a larger-than-life, beloved figure, there are limits to how far she can push everyone and what she can/can't do. She continually surprises, however.

This was a very good year for stories, films, and performances by women and people of color. Ma Rainey's Black Bottom is another in that group, and let's hope this trend continues and grows. We need it.

You will like this if you enjoyed *Fences*, *One Night in Miami*, and/or *Moonlight*.

**Killing Eve** (BBC & Hulu)

Season three of this stylized and quirky show catapults it into the running for the best show on TV. The show is predominantly produced, written, and directed by women, and the two protagonists of the show are both women—Sandra Oh as Eve and Jodie Comer as Villanelle (do your quick French translation on that one). The premise since the beginning of the show has Eve, a British intelligence agent, hunting down Villanelle, one of the most dangerous assassins in the world, who works for Russia. Eve is clever, thoughtful, and logical

(if not bored) at her job while she is somewhat inept at her marriage with a dry, wonderful sense of humor. Villanelle is a psychotic killer with a comic touch and flair for the dramatic. The two become enamored with each other. Eve finds a purpose in chasing Villanelle.

Season one was adapted from the *Villanelle* book series by Phoebe Waller-Bridge (creator, writer, and star of *Fleabag*); season two by Emerald Fennell (writer/director of *Promising*



*Killing Eve*

*Young Woman*); and season three by Suzanne Heathcote (*Fear the Walking Dead*). The show is masterfully done on every level, and each season fits perfectly with the previous season while adding new wrinkles. The brilliant writing has won many awards, as have Oh and Comer, Fiona Shaw (as Eve's handler Carolyn) for best supporting actress, and Kim Bodina (as Villanelle's handler Konstantin) for best supporting actor.

It also marks a breakthrough in the spy/thriller/black comedy/action/mystery etc. genre as it features two strong, interesting, and fiery women who always go against the grain. Oh and Comer are perfectly outrageous in their parts, and that starts with casting. Executive Producer Sally Woodward Gentle put it best when she said that they "didn't want Villanelle to be like *Nikita* or *The Girl With the Dragon Tattoo*—that male fantasy version of what a woman who'd come for them might look like. We wanted her to be able to disappear into a crowd." After casting, the writing is superb, and then finally, the execution on the show is downright flawless. It always surprises, is as quirky as the characters, and it is not afraid to take chances. The music choices are particularly inspired, but all cinematic aspects hold up. If you are interested in laughing out loud (and not just through abbreviations on a text), these are your women.

You will like this if you enjoyed *Promising Young Woman*, *Fleabag*, and/or *Lucy*.

Vincent Piturro, Ph.D., is a Professor of Film and Media Studies at MSU Denver. He can be reached at [vpiturro@msudenver.edu](mailto:vpiturro@msudenver.edu). Or follow him on Facebook and Twitter.

This month's column gets back to routine with two reviews: one movie and one TV show. Let's hope the world soon gets back to routine as well. I hope to see you at the movies soon.

**Ma Rainey's Black Bottom** (Netflix)

As I've said before on these pages, stage plays turned into film have a tall task: one medium is visual while the other relies purely on dialogue. Based on the stage play by August Wilson and directed by George C. Wolfe, this is still a wonderfully-acted film that lays bare the exploitation of black art/artists throughout American history (among other things). Where it lacks in visual flair, the film makes up for it in the snappy performances, the insightful dialogue, and the stinging social criticism. In particular, Viola Davis is magnificent as the larger-than-life eponymous blues singer, and Chadwick Boseman is stirring in his last performance.

The story concerns a contentious recording session where legendary blues singer Ma Rainey fights with the white management, spars with her own band, the band fights amongst themselves, and well, everyone fights with



*Ma Rainey's Black Bottom*

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**How Does COVID-19 Affect the Aging Brain?**  
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Participation involves two research visits over the course of two years. Procedures Include: • Memory and thinking tests • Health history questionnaires • Blood sample • Spinal fluid sample • MRI of brain • SARS-CoV-2 antibody test (results provided)

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# ...NE News Updates



By Carol Roberts

## 1 Brookfield Submits Plan for Almost 500 Additional Residences in Central Park

Brookfield (previously Forest City), the developer of Central Park, has submitted a proposal to the City to develop 492 residences on 39.67 acres at the southwest corner of Central Park Blvd. and I-70. The proposal is under consideration by the City, but has not yet been approved. For years, the area called Centerfield, located between the train station and the highway, has been marketed as a campus style office park.

Jim Chrisman, senior vice president at Brookfield, says before the pandemic they hadn't even considered developing that land for residential. The pandemic effect of more people working at home is part of the reason for the shift to residential, but the specific goal of the project is "to provide an opportunity for those that can't afford to buy a single family home to still be able to live in one."

The proposal divides the land into three sections. The single family homes will all be rentals, with Brookfield as the landlord. As proposed, it will include 267 two-story, two- and three-bedroom units with 1,107 to 1,244 square feet. Driveways will provide two-car tandem parking for each home. Architectural design has not been determined; the provided renderings of homes are to illustrate the density. Single family homes in the rest of Central Park have a density of about 7 units per acre. These rental homes will have a density of 14.9 units per acre. Chrisman says, "We have maximized the density for this product while still providing parks and greenway amenities."

The 87 townhomes will probably be for-sale units, as other townhomes in Central Park are, says Chrisman, though at this proposal stage, final decisions have not been made. The townhomes in the proposal are shown as two- and three-bedrooms from 1,000 to 1,300 square feet.

The 138 income-qualified one- and two-bedroom rental units in the proposal range from 520-870 square feet.

## 2 Exchange at Blvd. One in Lowry Announces New Tenants Including Clark's Market

Clark's Market rendering



Courtesy of Clark's Market

The Exchange at Boulevard One in Lowry, located at

Quebec and Lowry Blvd., is now 65% leased, including Clark's Market, a co-anchor to the previously announced small-format Target. Clark's, which was founded in 1978 in Aspen and now has multiple locations in Colorado mountain towns, will offer natural, organic and gourmet products. Included will

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Front Porch - NE Denver

## Concept Sketches to Illustrate Proposed Density, Not Architectural Design



These concept sketches were submitted with Brookfield's proposal to build almost 500 residences on the southwest corner of Central Park Blvd and I-70. Their purpose is to illustrate 2-story single family rental homes with driveway parking and density at 14.9 units per acre. The proposal is currently under review by the City; it has not yet been approved. Actual architectural designs have not yet been drawn.



be a bakery, fresh fish and meats freshly cut by Clark's butchers. The deli will offer prepared meals, specialty cheeses, stone-fired pizza and gelato. If licensing permits, the Clark's team says they hope to serve beer and wine

within the grocery store, with cup holders in the carts and, in the liquor store, offer samples of new wines. The new store will also have bar stools that will be a gathering place "where strangers become friends." The goal is for shoppers to "slow down and enjoy the experience." The new store will be at Lowry Blvd. and Pontiac, a block west of the Target.

Along with Clark's Market, five other new tenants have been announced: Pacific Dental Services; I Scream Gelato; F45 Training; Mountain View Pain Center; and Blue Sky Nails & Lash. These join the previously announced tenants: Target, SCL Health, Sushi Ronin, MOD Pizza, YogaSix and Logan House Coffee. The initial phase of the Blvd. One project broke ground in April 2019 and is expected to be completed this spring.

## 3 Central Park Garage Sale Sat., May 22

Online registration for the garage sale on May 22 is now available, along with sale information, at [www.CPgaragesale.com](http://www.CPgaragesale.com). A map and list of participating homes will be posted on the website the Friday before the sale. Registration is free, with the event sponsored annually since 2006 by Diana and Michael Kearns, The Kearns Team at Realty One Group Premier. Questions? Email [CPGarageSale@KearnsTeam.com](mailto:CPGarageSale@KearnsTeam.com).

## 4 May 15 Public Celebration on the New Section of I-70 before Opening to Traffic

Walk along the new lowered section I-70 before it opens to vehicles! This portion of the highway will become an outdoor museum for the day with 25 stations installed throughout the lowered section for visitors to learn more about the history of Colorado, the Globeville Elyria-Swansea neighborhoods, the origins of the interstate system, and the Central 70 Project. Registration is required at [c70.codot.gov](http://c70.codot.gov)

## 5 New Pet Licenses Have a QR Code

When you license your pet in Denver, you now get a Pet Hub ID tag that has a scannable Quick Response (QR) code. The barcode stores all your pet's important information, like

owner contact, medical records, microchip, and dietary restrictions. Information can quickly be updated from your phone. If your pet is lost, anyone with a smartphone can scan the QR code and see your pet's information. Purchase a license online at [PetData.com](http://PetData.com) or in person at 1241 W. Bayaud Ave. For more information on licensing visit <https://www.denvergov.org/Government/Departments/Animal-Shelter/Services/Pet-Licensing>

## 6 Park Hill Methodist Church Offers Safe Space for Unhoused Neighbors

Park Hill United Methodist Church, in partnership with Colorado Village Collaborative (CVC), will host a Safe Outdoor Space for up to 45 tents from June

Colorado Village Collaborative's tents in a Safe Outdoor Space.



Photo courtesy of CVC

1 to Dec. 31, 2021. The goals are to mitigate the impacts of Covid-19, provide safety and connect occupants with resources, and reduce the impact of unsanctioned camping. It will have the capacity to serve 50 people and will welcome couples, singles, pet owners, LGBTQ+ people, people with disabilities, and more. No guests will be permitted. Resources provided will include bathrooms, sinks, trash, meals, water, laundry, showers, electricity, internet and tents.

To learn more join one of these Zoom webinars or visit [ColoradoVillageCollaborative.org](http://ColoradoVillageCollaborative.org) :

**Thursday, May 13, 7-8:30pm**, Zoom Webinar ID: 880 2814 6600, Dial In: +1 253 215 8782.

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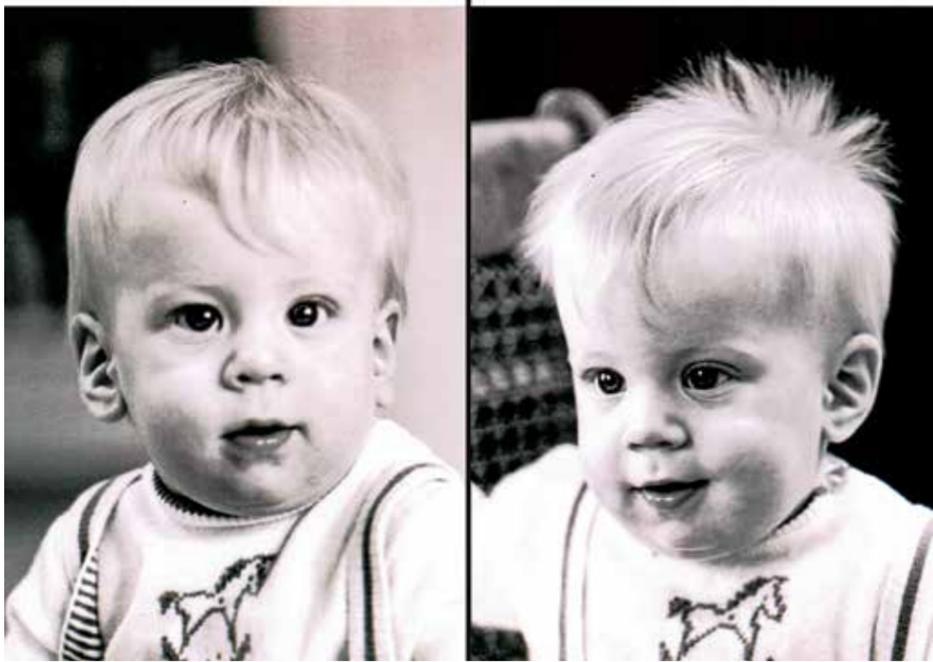
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# Do Twins Sh



Identical twins Stephen and Peter Nash as babies. Photo courtesy of Stephen Nash

By Stephen E. Nash

I have a clone. He's an identical twin brother, really. But as monozygotic twins derived from one fertilized egg, we share the exact same genome.

Since birth, we have been engaged in an inadvertent experiment to test whether nature (genetics) or nurture (culture) is more important in an individual's development. As with any dichotomy, the reality lies not in the extremes but somewhere in the middle: Nature and nurture are important to an individual's development.

That said, if nature were the more important force, we'd expect identical twins to be really similar people—physically, socially, psychologically, and otherwise. If nurture were more important, we would expect identical twins to end up as very different people.

Twins make for a fun existential thought experiment—one that philosophers, anthropologists, theologians, biologists, and parents have pondered deeply through the ages. In some parts of the world, such as in southwestern Nigeria, rich cultural traditions about twins have emerged over time.

As a twin, a parent of twins (you read right: fraternal boys), and an anthropologist, I've thought a lot about how people around the world understand the phenomenon of twinning.

My brother and I were born in Hyde Park, a neighborhood on the South Side of Chicago, in 1964. Our mother was an admissions counselor at the University of Chicago; our father was an editor at the Field Museum of Natural History. Their primary network of friends consisted of anthropologists and other scholars from those institutions, as well as an eclectic, steady stream of students, postdocs, and young faculty members who came through the university.

At that time, Hyde Park was known for its social and political activism and for the scholarly atmosphere offered by a world-class university in a diverse, cosmopolitan city. Although our folks were not full-blown hippies, they were strong supporters of the anti-war, civil rights, and women's liberation movements.

Our parents were also keen readers of Dr. Benjamin Spock's influential book *The Common Sense Book of Baby and Child Care*. (Now in its revised 10th edition, the

book has since been renamed *Dr. Spock's Baby and Child Care*.) Spock confidently told nervous new parents: "You know more than you think you do," and "trust your own common sense." He advised them to take a more laissez-faire approach to parenting than their own parents likely had and suggested they shower their children in permissive affection. (Conversely, he also advocated corporal punishment.)

Following on Spock's advice, my parents encouraged my brother and me, from birth, to establish our own identities. On the surface, we were (very) identical twins, but the message from our folks was clear: Be your own person.

Looking back, we may have taken that advice to its extreme—we often defined ourselves as the antithesis of the other. I went to Grinnell College and went politically further to the left; he went to Macalester College and took a hard turn to the political right. I became an anthropologist; he went into finance.

Nurture ate nature for lunch.

I now serve as the director of anthropology at the Denver Museum of Nature

& Science (DMNS). In June, we obtained a National Endowment for the Humanities CARES grant to keep members of the department employed during the economic downturn resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. That grant specifically provided funding for us to conduct research on the World Ethnology Collections, which include

a small but significant collection from Africa. Given that we don't have an African collections expert on staff, I volunteered to accept the charge.

As I went through cabinets full of baskets, masks, textiles, and other artifacts, I spotted a pair of exquisite wooden statues, roughly 12 inches high. They looked vaguely familiar to me, but I couldn't remember why.

One statue is biologically female, the other biologically male. They look like fraternal twins because of their similar expressions, hairstyles, jewelry and accoutrement, stances, and decorative pigments. Their arms and legs are bent as if engaged in

some action, perhaps a dance of some kind. The gaps between their torsos and arms



While working as Head of Collections in Anthropology at the Field Museum in Chicago, Steve Nash realized the ibeji collection triggered a memory. His mother confirmed his recollection and pulled out the childhood image above of Steve (left) and his brother Peter looking at ibeji twin statues. The brothers recreated the photo as adults, surprising their parents when they saw it in the museum's magazine.

Top photo: STM-037871176, by John Lenahan/Chicago Sun-Times. Lower photo: © The Field Museum, GN89822\_4c, Photographer Mark Widhalm

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# are a Soul?

add to their depth and dynamism; they are clearly meant to be seen in the round.

A quick review of our files confirmed my suspicions. The statues are Yoruba twin statues, or ère ibejì. Usually between 6 and 12 inches high, ère ibejì come in a great variety of styles.

Yoruba women in southwestern Nigeria have one of the highest rates for twin births in the world. Between 4 and 5 percent of all Yoruba births yield dizygotic (fraternal, or two egg) twins compared to a rate of between 1 and 2 percent for births in other



In the Yoruba culture in Nigeria, artists were commissioned to carve ère ibejì, statues of twins, when one or both of a set of twins died.

© Denver Museum of Nature & Science

societies. Scientists have been unable to explain why this population's twinning rate is so high, but one theory—by far my favorite—is that a diet high in yams might be to blame. (I'd like to think my brother and I are the result of some dietary quirk of the early to mid-1960s. Anyone up for a glass of TaB or Tang, perhaps?)

Sadly, Yoruba artists were once commissioned to carve ère ibejì when one, or both, of a set of twins died. As surrogates for the deceased, the ère ibejì were carried by the mother of the twins; she fed and cared for

them as if her babies were still alive. She did so because some Yoruba understood that twins, in addition to being sacred and powerful, shared a soul. If one twin died, that collective soul was then out of balance, hence the need for a stand-in.

Some ère ibejì display distinctive wear patterns, particularly on their faces, demonstrating that their mothers actively cared for them for years and, in some cases, decades.

After working with these statues for a time, I finally realized why they looked so familiar to me. My brother and I spent some time with a similar set of statues when we were very young.

In 1967, before our third birthday, the Field Museum presented an exhibition of 68 pairs of ère ibejì.

My father, then working in the museum's public relations department, thought it would be cool to stage a photograph of us with a set of ère ibejì. (Even though our parents made every effort for us to be different, they, and we, occasionally took advantage of our twinship.) The resulting photograph ran in the July 7 issue of the Chicago Sun-Times under the headline "Chicago Twins Meet Yoruba Twins." I look at it from time to time, amazed that we were that identical as children.

Now, years later, the photograph reminds me that cultural diversity is a wonderful thing. People may be born in different times, in different places, and with different technologies, but we are all humans who have to address issues like life, love, and death. Through culture, humans address those issues in a myriad of ways. As one of my students wrote long ago: "The epic sweep of humanity is indeed mighty cool to behold." He was right.

What, then, does it mean to be a twin?

Honestly, I'm ambivalent about it. Growing up, I enjoyed always having someone of the same age available to play with, but that meant

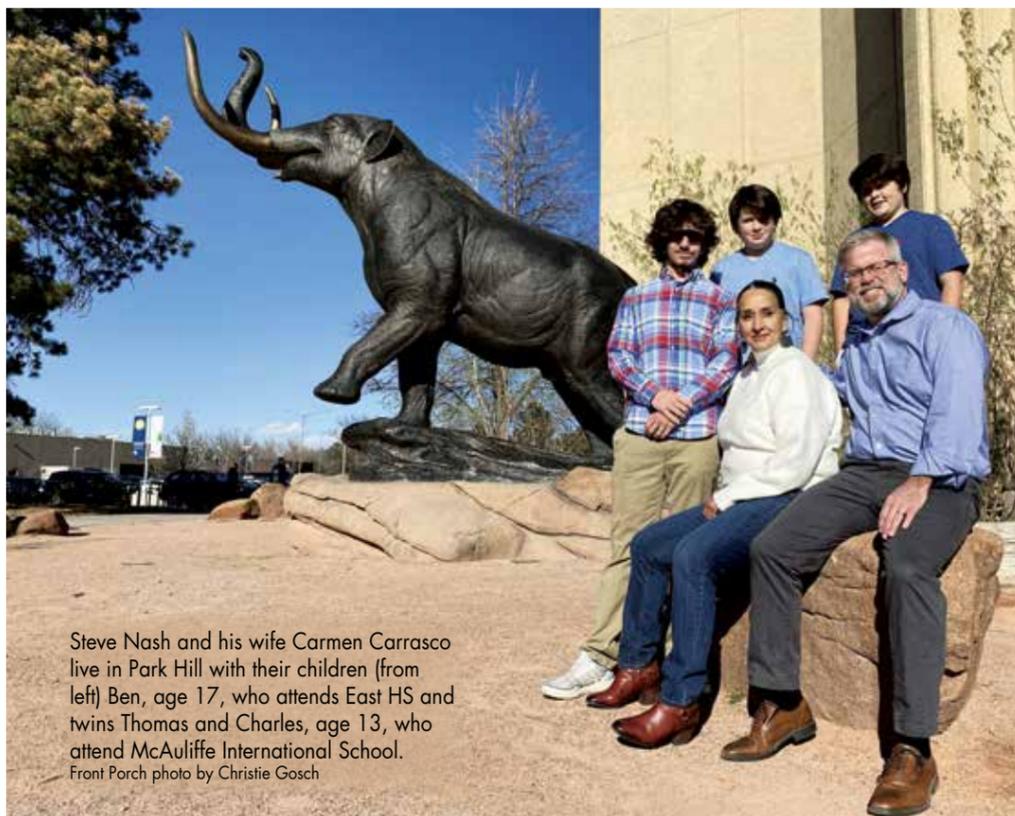
there was always someone around to fight with as well.

I can't really say what it's like to be a twin because I don't know what it's like not to be a twin. Most of the twins I know—and I know a surprising number of them—were raised, like my brother and I were, to be different. Our identities and our public personas do not focus on our twinship. We cannot engage in telepathy, as some twins claim to do.

Our interests, feelings, and emotions are often more divergent than identical.

And we don't, like some Yoruba twins, share a soul. Sometimes I wish we did.

*Stephen E. Nash is a historian of science and an archaeologist at the Denver Museum of Nature & Science. His expertise includes dendrochronology (tree-ring*



Steve Nash and his wife Carmen Carrasco live in Park Hill with their children (from left) Ben, age 17, who attends East HS and twins Thomas and Charles, age 13, who attend McAuliffe International School. Front Porch photo by Christie Gosch

*dating), the history of museums, the archaeology of west-central New Mexico, and Russian gem-carving sculptures by Vasily Konovalenko. Nash has published numerous books, most recently Stories in Stone: The Enchanted Gem-Carving Sculptures of Vasily Konovalenko and An Anthropologist's Arrival: A Memoir. Follow him on Twitter @nash\_dr.*

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