

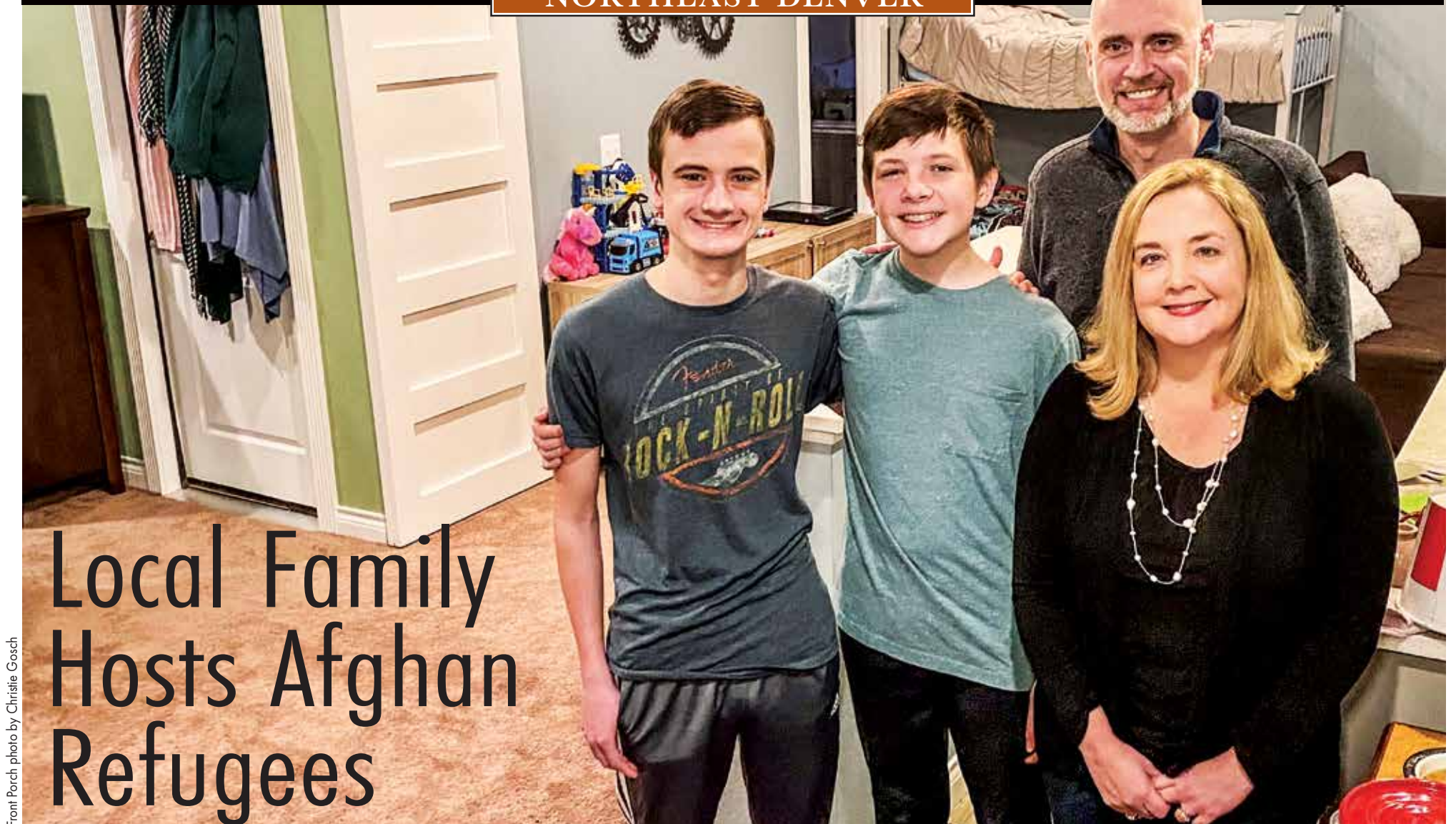
Front Porch

Central Park, Park Hill, Lowry, Montclair, Mayfair, East Colfax, NW Aurora

DENVER, COLORADO

NORTHEAST DENVER

JANUARY 2022



Local Family Hosts Afghan Refugees

Jim, Kristy, Joey (16), and Charlie (13) Crooks say opening their home to complete strangers has been easy. "I grew up in a big family," says Kristy. "It always felt like the more people, the better. My mom always said, 'Where there's room in the heart, there's room in the home.'"

Mohammed flew out of the Kabul Airport on August 24th. Forty-two hours later, a suicide bomber killed 60+ Afghans and 13 U.S. Service members. He remembers when the Taliban used to perform public amputations and stone people to death at soccer games. "They're wearing a mask now," says Mohammed. "But this is the same Taliban." *Story on page 14 by Tracy Wolfer Osborne*

Addressing Past Injustices: How is CO doing?



Colorado Gov. Jared Polis signs an executive order that rescinds proclamations from Colorado Territorial Gov. John Evans at the Capitol on Aug. 17, 2021. Gov. Polis handed sage to the various tribe representatives and speakers after signing. *Story on page 6 by Tracy Wolfer Osborne. Photo by Rebecca Slezak, courtesy of The Denver Post, <https://www.denverpost.com/2021/08/17/colorado-1864-proclamation-native-americans-sand-creek-massacre/>*



A Bigger Better Stock Show

Starts
Jan. 8 and
runs through
Jan. 23

The 116th Annual National Western Stock Show gallops into Denver on Jan. 8 and ends on Jan. 23. It features new amenities as part of a massive redevelopment project. *Story on page 11 by Mary Jo Brooks*

Front Porch 10th Annual Summer Camp Guide

The guide will be in the February issue. Camps should post their **FREE** listings by January 17 at frontporchne.com/submit-event/

Bird Sightings



Great Horned Owl

The most common owl in North America, the Great Horned Owl, thrives equally in deserts, wetlands, forests, grasslands, backyards, and cities. It is a powerful carnivorous apex predator who can take down creatures larger than itself, and it also dines on smaller fare, including smaller raptors.

The horns are actually feathers that stand up. Its keen eyesight and hearing are special senses that make this owl such a fierce and successful predator. The owl's eyes don't move in their sockets. Instead, the owl swivels its head more than 180 degrees to look in any direction. The Great Horned Owls are most active at night and are often perched at the fork of large tree branches in the daytime to sleep. They are one of the earliest nesters whose hatchlings must endure some very cold temperatures at the tail end of winter.



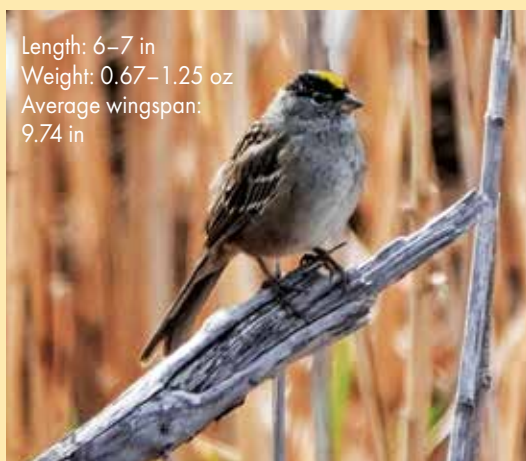
Average length: 22 in
Average weight:
Male 2.7 lb,
female 3.5 lb
Average wingspan: 4 ft

Golden-crowned Sparrow

A rare visitor to the Denver area, the Golden-crowned Sparrow is common in weedy lowland shrubs and city edges of the Pacific coast during winter. In the summer, it vanishes into the tundra and shrublands of western Canada and Alaska.

The bird seen in April 2020, along Sand Creek Greenway north of Central Park, was an adult in breeding plumage, with the distinctive golden crown flanked by black stripes. The birds seen in Bluff Lake Nature Center in November 2021 appears to be a juvenile where the golden crown is less conspicuous and colorful. At both sightings, the Golden-crowned sparrow was seen in the company of White-crowned sparrows, which are common in Denver.

Photos and information by George Ho



Length: 6-7 in
Weight: 0.67-1.25 oz
Average wingspan:
9.74 in



Bird Walks

Jan. 1 and Feb. 5, 8 -10am. Join George Ho and other bird experts for a free guided walk around Bluff Lake. All are welcome. Bring your own binoculars or borrowed ones will be available. 11255 MLK Blvd. BluffLake.org. Search FrontPorchNE.com for "Bird Sightings" to see all the past bird stories and photos from George Ho.



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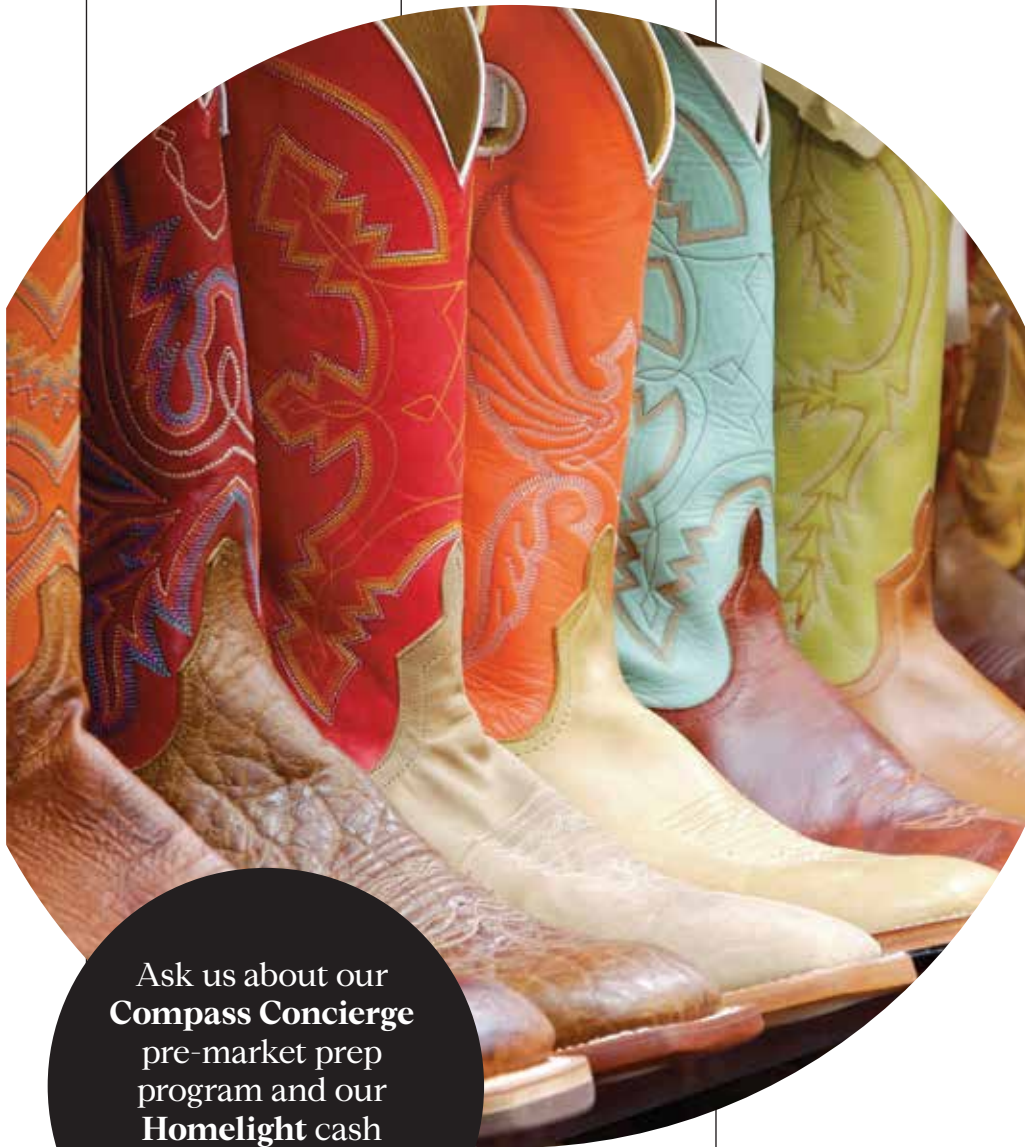
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Colorado State Capitol Building. Front Porch file photo by Steve Larson

By Todd Engdahl

Colorado lawmakers will have billions of extra dollars to spend during the 2022 legislative session—and after that most of it will be gone.

A bonanza of money, both state surpluses and federal pandemic relief funds, is giving lawmakers the chance to address some important needs and to save for the future. But they're going to have to be careful about creating new programs with permanent staff, because the state surplus is one-time, and the federal funds have to be spent within a few years.

Beyond money, a rising crime rate, increasing numbers of drug abuse deaths, and reproductive rights are likely to be on

the legislative agenda, at least rhetorically if not substantively. Resumption of statewide student achievement testing and possible modernization of the K-12 school funding formula also may be considered during the session.

And there are two substantive, if somewhat bureaucratic, issues that lawmakers must decide. Both involve establishment of two big new state agencies, a Department of Early Childhood and a Behavioral Health Administration. Both agencies are intended to create efficiencies by combining offices and programs now scattered among various state departments. Both were created by laws passed in 2021, but it's up to the 2022 session to fill in the bureaucratic, procedural, and funding details needed to stand up the two agencies.

It's all about the money

Lawmakers have two big pots of money to deal with.

State revenues—Those have been growing at higher-than-forecast rates since before the pandemic first hit, leaving the state with a “surplus” of about \$3 billion. That's considered to be one-time money because revenue growth is expected to return to lower levels of 3-4 percent annually in coming years.

In fact, state revenues have been so good that taxpayers are projected to receive about \$6 billion in refunds through 2025 under the provisions of the constitutional Taxpayer's Bill of Rights, which require refunds if revenues rise above certain annual limits. You won't get a check—refunds are paid through indirect methods like temporary sales tax reductions.

Gov. Jared Polis has proposed a big package of proposed spending focused on four priorities—fiscal responsibility, relief for individuals and businesses, public safety, and improving air quality.

Those include a 15 percent state reserve, temporary reductions in fees for things like professional licenses and business registrations, expansion of the Colorado Bureau of Investigation, two new campuses for the homeless, grants for purchases of electric school buses, and expansion of the Air Pollution Control

Division.

Polis also wants to “prepay” some known future expenses, like part of school funding and the state's contribution to the Public Employees' Retirement Association (PERA). The idea is that setting aside money for such things now will reduce pressure on routine state spending when annual revenues return to normal levels.

The governor's budget plan totals \$40 billion from all funds, including federal and fee revenues, and about \$17 billion in the state tax revenues called the General Fund.

Legislative economists estimate that if Polis' budget plan were to be adopted in full, there would be only \$183 million left over for other spending. So there will be plenty of push and pull between the governor and the legislature before a final 2022-23 budget is adopted sometime next April.

One important budget issue lawmakers will have to think about is state employee pay. The state's new collective bargaining agreement with state workers includes a three percent raise. But state agencies are struggling with high vacancy rates and small applicant pools, part of the “great resignation” trend that affects the entire economy. There are significant vacancy rates among health and safety staff, as well as among state contractors like community mental health centers.

Revenue from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)—Lawmakers will have to deal with about \$1.6 billion that Colorado received from the massive federal ARPA pandemic relief bill passed by Congress in 2021.

The 2021 legislative session reserved that money for spending on three areas in 2022—behavioral health, affordable housing, and general economic relief and recovery.

Three large task forces of legislators and state agency directors, each with advisory panels of experts, worked over the summer and autumn developing recommendations for spending those funds.

But those task forces were given until early January to file their reports, so those were still being finalized over the holidays. And the task forces did not have the authority to introduce



Senator James Coleman, Senate District 33



Rep. Leslie Herod, House District 8

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ses Big Financial Issues for Lawmakers

bills during the 2022 session. So, the bills needed to spend the money likely won't take shape until legislative leaders and the governor agree on how to spend the money.

Much of the affordable housing money is expected to end up in state loan and grant programs that provide funding to local governments, non-profit agencies, and developers.

There's expected to be significant debate over how much of the relief and recovery money should be used to support the state's unemployment insurance fund, which has been tapped heavily during the pandemic and now is supported by loans from the federal government. Such loans typically are paid back by higher fees on employers. Some lawmakers, particularly Republicans, would like to reduce that burden by using relief money to support the insurance fund.

The federal ARPA money is not part of the main budget and has to be spent within four years.

Beyond the money

Legislative policy proposals don't really start coming into focus until the first big waves of bills are introduced during the opening days of the session. (This year the session convenes Jan. 12.) And the governor's priorities get fleshed out in the state-of-the-state speech on the second day of session.

Behavioral health, which is larger than just creation of the new agency and spending the federal money, is expected to be a big issue this year. A recent series of media investigations have highlighted problems in the system, and the pandemic reversed progress that was being made on a backlog of evaluating criminal defendants with mental health problems. And rising numbers of substance abuse

deaths started to attract official attention late in 2021.

Crime may well be an issue during the session as minority Republicans already have been trying to tie those trends to Democratic criminal justice reforms passed in recent sessions.

Other issues that already have started to surface are unionization rights for local government employees, the level of state support for PERA, controls on water speculation, simplification of the sales tax system, and state support for wildfire prevention and recovery efforts.

During the 2021 session, majority Democrats were able to push through significant packages of bills on criminal justice, transportation, economic security, elections, the environment, and firearms control. Whether they will be as ambitious in 2022—an election year—remains to be seen.

Another pandemic session?

Legislature sessions normally are limited to 120 consecutive days a year. During the pandemic sessions of 2020 and 2021, the legislature was able to adjust its schedule because the state was under a Polis health emergency declaration. That declaration is no longer in effect, and the impact of the Omicron variant in Colorado remains to be seen, so only time will tell if 2022 will be the third pandemic session.

A last hurrah for this group of lawmakers

Colorado legislative boundaries were redrawn in 2021 by an independent commission to reflect population changes recorded by the 2020 census.

"Redistricting," as it's called, had the usual uncomfortable consequences for some lawmakers, like changing the partisan makeup of some districts and putting two incumbents in the same district in a few instances.

Despite the new boundaries, Democrats are predicted to have the better odds of controlling both chambers.

But term limits and legislator ambitions for higher office also will have an impact on how many 2022 lawmakers will be around when the following session convenes in January 2023.

In addition to incumbents who may be turned out in the November 2022 elections because of redistricting changes, about a quarter of the body's 100 members are running for other offices, are term limited, or are leaving for other reasons. (Several members of the House are running for the Senate.)

And four of the House and Senate's six party leadership positions will turn over because of term limits. That includes House Speaker Alex Garnett of Denver and Senate President Leroy Garcia of Pueblo, both Democrats.

Todd Engdahl is owner of Capitol Editorial Services, a firm that provides legislative coverage, intelligence and analysis to private clients. During a long career as an editor and public policy writer, he served as executive city editor of The Denver Post, founder of DenverPost.com and co-founder of Education News Colorado, which later became part of Chalkbeat Colorado.



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Sand Creek Massacre

On August 11, 1864 Territorial Gov. John Evans issued two orders. The first directed Native Americans to gather at specific camps. The second directed U.S. troops to kill them. Approximately 230 members of the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes died. The majority of them were women, children, and elders, but 13 Cheyenne Chiefs, four Cheyenne Society Headmen, and one Arapaho Chief also lost their lives.

Not everyone participated in the massacre. U.S. Captain Silas S. Soule

hold one of another's hands, chased until they were exhausted, when they knelt down, and clasped around each other the neck and were both shot together. They were all scalped...all horribly mutilated. One woman was cut open and a child taken out of her, and scalped."

157 years later, Gov. Jared Polis officially rescinded both orders and apologized on behalf of the state. "We can't change the past," he said. "But we can honor the memories of those who we lost by recognizing

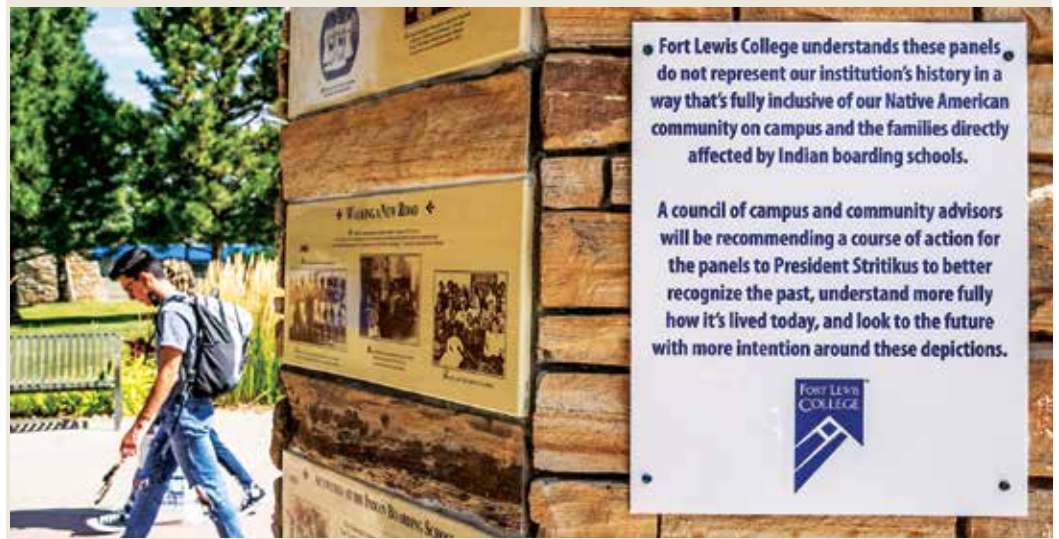


Gov. John Hickenlooper shakes hands with a tribal leader in a Dec. 2014 ceremony apologizing for the Sand Creek Massacre. Photo from the Colorado governor's office

ordered his troops to stand down. He later testified to the Military Commission about what he saw. "The massacre lasted six or eight hours, and a good many Indians escaped....It was hard to see little children on their knees have their brains beat out by men professing to be civilized....One squaw with her two children, were on their knees begging for their lives of a dozen soldiers, within ten feet of them all, firing—one succeeded in hitting the squaw in the thigh, when she took a knife and cut the throats of both children, and then killed herself. One old squaw hung herself in the lodge—there was not enough room for her to hang and she held up her knees and choked herself to death....I saw two Indians

their sacrifice and vowing to do better." Polis also established the Colorado Geographic Naming Advisory Board which renamed Squaw Mountain to Mestaa'êhehe (pronounced mess-ta-HAY) Mountain. Mestaa'êhehe was an important female translator for the Cheyenne Tribe. Other amends include Gov. John Hickenlooper officially apologizing to descendants of the Sand Creek Massacre, the removal of a statue that referred to the massacre as a "battle," and Colorado banning Native American mascots in the state. Mt. Evans, named after the Territorial Gov. who ordered the massacre, is likely to get a new name next year.

Indian Boarding Schools



A sign at Ft. Lewis College acknowledges that panels about the history of the Indian School "are not fully inclusive of our Native American community." Photo by Hart Van Denburg/Colorado Public Radio

Ft. Lewis was a military post turned Indian Boarding School that operated for almost two decades from 1891 to 1910. The purpose of the school was to de-Indian Native American students. A common mantra was, "Kill the Indian; save the man." Students, some of whom were kidnapped from their homes, were forbidden to speak their native language, pray, or practice any of their cultural rituals. Their hair was cut, and punishment could be swift and cruel. It's what many have called a complete cultural genocide.

Today, Ft. Lewis College (FLC) sits where the Indian Boarding School used to be. According to their website, about 45 percent of FLC students are Native American. In September, the school removed panels from their iconic clock tower that whitewashed history by portraying images of Natives as carefree and lighthearted. The school is still in the process of determining what art will replace the panels, but they say it will tell the true story of life at the boarding school. Furthermore, FLC will participate in the Federal Indian Boarding School Initiative to investigate schools that forced assimilation and identify burial sites. According to an article by CNN, Interior Secretary Deb Haaland said, "At no time in history have the records or documentation of this policy been compiled or analyzed to determine the full scope of its reaches and effects. We must uncover the truth about the loss of human life, and the lasting consequences of the schools."

Darius Smith, whose mother attended a Navajo Boarding School in Arizona and who is now the Director of Denver's Anti-Discrimination Office, says one of the

The country is struggling with how to address past injustices

By Tracy Wolfer Osborne

biggest problems *still* facing Native Americans today is stereotypes. People tend to think all Native Americans live on the reservation, that they're mass consumers of resources, all living in abject poverty as relics of the past. "When I first started working for the city in 2005," says Smith, "we had one of the largest conferences in Denver, The National Indian Education Association. They recruited me to staff Mayor Hickenlooper at the time. I wrote this brief all about the positive things Natives were doing. I talked about the Native American Bank and all these native organizations and their accomplishments. And Hickenlooper gets up there in front of 3,500 people, and I'm thinking he's going to read my brief about all these amazing things American Indians are achieving. And he grabbed my brief, he looked at it, and he looked out in the crowd, and he folded it up and put it back in his jacket, and he started to tell the story of The Sand Creek Massacre. That's just one example," says Smith. It's the narrative—not the Natives—who need to change.



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Ku Klux Klan



History Colorado's exhibit on the Ku Klux Klan helps visitors understand how pervasive the Klan was in Denver in the 1920s. Front Porch photo by Steve Larson

and retaining educators of color. The board passed The Know Justice, Know Peace Resolution calling for curriculum and professional practices to “include comprehensive historical and contemporary contributions [of] Black, Indigenous, and Latino communities.” It also passed the Black Excellence Resolution that aims to “prioritize student

success, be a district that is community-driven and expertly-supported [while] being equitable by design.” In December, Centennial Elementary School made national news for their controversial decision to host their monthly “Families of Color Playground Night.”

When it comes to progress, Norma Johnson—a healer, poetic storyteller, and social justice educator—says people have been talking forever, but others are finally starting to listen. She wrote, “A Poem for My White Friends: I Didn't Tell You,” which reads in part, “It comes in moments of time triggered by a look, an attitude, a sensing of superiority, of blatant ignorance, of good-meaning intentions dripping crap down my face. I didn't tell you about the white woman—a stranger—who chose out of all the white people around us to sit next to me and proceed to tell me all about her favorite black performers, her black friends, and how this country needs to take integration to the next level, so I could see how *her* life is an example of that.” Johnson says when it comes to social justice, she focuses on the momentum that's occurred throughout generations all the way down to everydayness of life. And she says we're on the edge of a moral precipice. For so long, narratives were controlled by certain groups. But now, in the digital age, stories that were once marginalized or ignored have a platform. When people can hear, they can ask, “What does this mean for my life?” Johnson believes the burden of inclusivity and understanding may finally be shifting from people of color to white people.

How is Colorado doing?

In April, History Colorado released a digitized version of two Ku Klux Klan ledgers that include 1,300+ pages of names, addresses, and businesses affiliated with the Denver KKK from 1924-26. The ledgers show just how pervasive the Klan was when Ben Stapleton was mayor. Klansmen were employed everywhere from grocery stores and pharmacies to cab companies and the zoo. And while the second wave of the Klan wasn't known for their violence, their threats and intimidation created a power structure that endured long after they began to fizzle in 1925.

In the last few years, Denver has taken steps to address concerns of racial inequality. Stapleton residents changed the name of their neighborhood to Central Park. While school board meetings across the country became heated, Denver elected a board that has been progressive in addressing equity issues. DPS has implemented implicit bias training for teachers and has worked with Promise 54, a group dedicated to recruiting

Amache Internment Camp

After the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, many white Americans began to distrust their Japanese neighbors. On February 19, 1942, President Roosevelt ordered approximately 120,00 Japanese—the majority of them American citizens—to relocate to internment camps (which some historians say should more accurately be called concentration camps). Amache, which operated in southeast Colorado from 1942-45, housed 7,318

be when I came out. I was 15. I joined the Navy. We were patriotic loyal citizens before camp, while we were in camp, and after we were in camp.”

Two bills have been introduced to establish the Amache National Historic Site as part of the U.S. National Park system. “That's good,” says writer Gil Asakawa who's worked to re-envision Denver's once-booming Chinatown, “but hate crimes still plague the Asian community.”



A docent at History Colorado's Amache exhibit talks to Northfield High School students in a room recreated to look like an Amache residence. Front Porch photo by Steve Larson

of those souls. One of them was Bob Fuchigami, 91. His parents and seven siblings operated a peach farm in Northern California when they were relocated. Fuchigami was 11. In a YouTube video that superimposes Fuchigami's experience over a U.S. propaganda film that shows Japanese Americans waving and smiling as they board buses to Amache, Fuchigami explains his experience. “I was still playing with marbles, riding my bike, and taking care of a few rabbits. I thought we were going on a trip to the Sierra Nevadas or something, but then you walked into the room, and there was just one bare light bulb, folded cots, a thin mattress, and some army blankets, that's it. I remember being told not to go near the fence. You'd get shot,” he says. “There were no charges, no hearings, no due process. The assumption was ‘you're guilty.’ You haven't done anything, but you *might* do something. I always wondered where my place in society would

Last year when Asian hate crimes were on the rise nationwide, Asakawa and a group he helped found, The Colorado Asian Response Committee, met with the DPD Hate Crimes Unit and learned that only three incidents had been reported in Denver. When they followed up a few months later that number had dropped to zero. Asakawa wasn't surprised. He says the same values that enabled the Japanese to board buses waving and smiling are the same ones that keep Asian Americans from reporting hate crimes. “Gaman” he says, “can be translated into suck it up, work hard, push through. For example, If a Japanese parent is encouraging his kid to finish a daunting school project, he might say, ‘Gaman! Gaman!’ The other is Shigata Ga Nai which means ‘it can't be helped.’ This is where we live now. This is our government, our community in the United States. Asakawa says just because hate crimes weren't being reported didn't (continued on page 10)

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For Factory Five Five Owner, the Skye is the Limit

By Tracy Wolfer Osborne

Wearing an avocado-green skirt suit, long gloves, and a voguish hat, Skye Barker Maa serves retro stewardess vibes as she describes her latest endeavor—a Pan Am-themed cocktail lounge on the second floor of the Stanley Marketplace. “Guests will check in downstairs. They can have pre-flight cocktails. Then they’ll get a boarding pass with a boarding time and take the elevator up to the ‘gateway.’ We’ll have sexy leather furniture, and the drinks will be served on a roll cart. We’re gonna have nuts. It’s gonna be very cool, very 60s. You won’t hardly believe it,” she says stepping over a heap of construction debris, “but we’ll be open in February. I mean hopefully open in February.” She stops. Looks up. “No definitely,” she corrects herself. “We’ll be open in February.”

She wasn’t always so sure. “I remember our first epic

disaster of a play,” she says. “I was doing ‘Yellow Submarine’ in my backyard, and I was so wet behind the ears, I didn’t even know you had to license it. Someone asked, ‘How did you get the rights to this play?’ And I was like, ‘Rights?’ And you know what else? I bought two blue bath mats and sewed them together with

armholes to make a blue meanie costume, and I made some poor child wear that. I still can’t believe I made some poor child wear that,” she chuckles with both horror and amusement.

Barker Maa’s come a long way from blue bath mats. Today she owns and operates an Arts Empire that spans four locations and includes four bars. Neighborhood Music, which lives at the Stanley Marketplace,

offers private and ensemble lessons while Factory Five Five offers education and productions in fashion, film, theatre, and photography. “I wanted to create a factory like Andy Warhol’s New York experience,” she says.



Students hone their skills as Director of Factory Fashion Julianna Aberie-McClellan teaches Fashion Design and Sewing Construction Level 2.



Skye Barker Maa sits on the edge of her stage in The Black Box Theatre (left). During the pandemic, Neighborhood Music students who participated in a summer camp performed “Newsies Junior” in the parking lot of Stanley Marketplace.

“And it’s working. We’re churning out creativity.”

Churning indeed. The Black Box Theatre, which is a warehouse-turned-stage offers something for everyone. “This first time around, I could only afford to build it to code,” she says. “But now I’m making it sexy.” There’s Storybook Theatre for ages 5-6, a part camp, part experiential opportunity that teaches children how to act out scenes from their favorite books. In January, children 7+ can audition to be part of “James and The Giant Peach Jr.” Tweens and teens will perform a production of “The Lightning Thief: The Percy Jackson Musical.”

The fashion arm of her factory, which lives on the second floor of the Stanley Marketplace, gives kids the opportunity to show at Denver Fashion Week. New-comers can start with the Fashion and Design Sewing Construction Class which teaches basic skills such as threading a machine or ripping a seam. Then they can move to pattern making and accessory creation. In January, they’ll offer Drag Tween/Teen Fashion which will feature classes in wig maintenance, drag makeup, and performance technique. Students can also take courses in millinery (hat making), corset making, and upcycling.

Factory Fashion also doubles as an event rental with a full bar. “I’m on the straight hustle 24/7,” says Barker Maa. “Artists always have to think about additional revenue, and that’s something I feel really strongly about—artists making liveable wages.”

Maa’s currently working on her first adult-production “Metamorphosis.” “There’s a sharp learning curve,” she says. “But it’s going to be epic. We’re working with real creative teams. We have music directors, set designers, sound and light designers. It’s scary but exciting.” If the past is any indicator of future success—there are clear skies ahead.”

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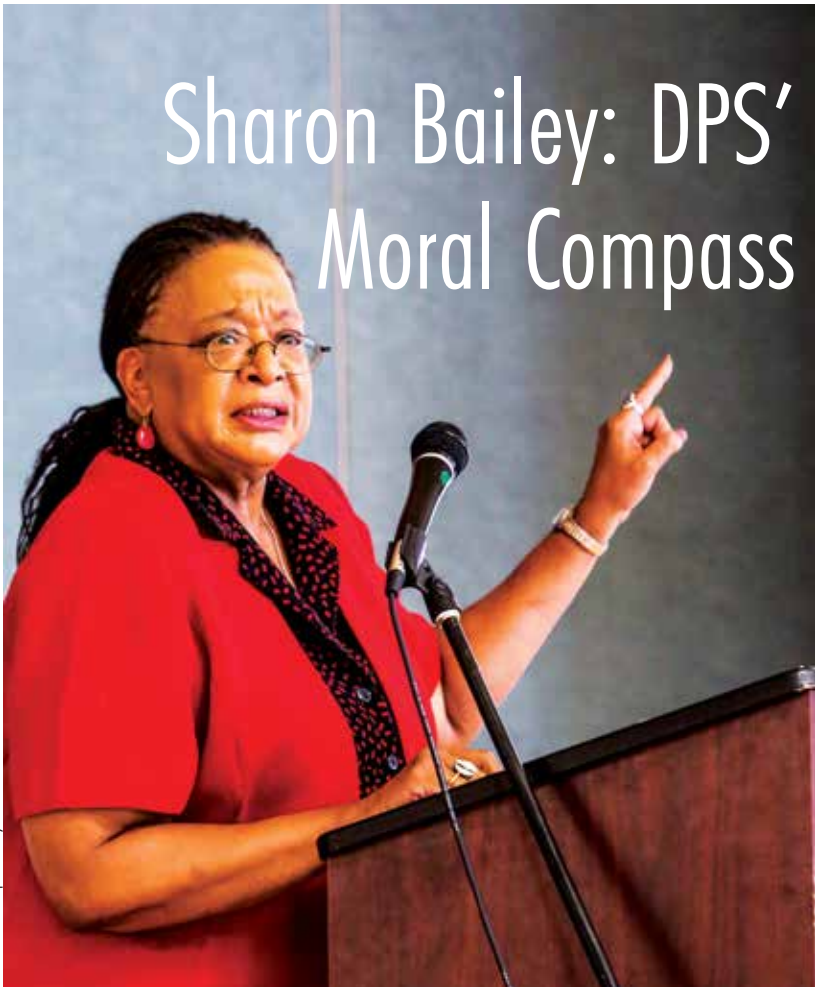
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Sharon Bailey: DPS' Moral Compass

Front Porch file photos by Steve Larson



Sharon Bailey, a leader at Denver Public Schools and longtime advocate for improving equity for Black students and teachers, died in December.

By Melanie Asmar, Chalkbeat Colorado

Denver Public Schools lost its moral compass with the passing of district ombudsperson Sharon Bailey, 68, in December. A straightforward critic of the institutional racism she saw in the district, Bailey was also a compassionate leader who believed the system could change and was willing to help.

In 2016, Bailey authored a seminal report about the treatment of Black educators and students in Denver that served as a catalyst for the district's current Black excellence efforts. "She knew all the research, all the data, all the negativity going on, but Dr. Bailey had this hope in her that things were going to be better, that we could do this," said Vernon Jones Jr., a longtime Denver Public Schools educator and former school leader.

Three days before her death, she spoke at a meeting honoring outgoing Denver school board members. She urged the incoming board members to focus on three things: recognizing the history of institutional racism in Denver schools, changing mindsets so that creating equity becomes a collective responsibility, and sustaining those efforts through a mix of transparency and accountability.

Bailey grew up in Denver and attended schools in the northeast part of the city. Happy Haynes, a former school board member and city councilor who is now executive director of Denver

Parks and Recreation, met Bailey when they were students at East High School in the late 1960s.

Haynes said she and Bailey advocated for the teaching of what was then called Afro-American history, an effort that resulted in the first such class being taught at East.

"Our advocacy was really all about, 'We want our history. We want to be acknowledged,'" Haynes said.

After graduating from East, Bailey got her undergraduate degree from Princeton University and earned a doctorate degree in public administration from the University of Colorado. Her dissertation examined efforts to desegregate Denver schools.

Bailey witnessed those efforts firsthand. As a parent with children in Denver schools, she served on the Denver school board from 1988 to 1995, at times as the only member of color. She was on the board when a judge ended a decades-long court ordered program of busing students to schools in different neighborhoods to achieve racial integration.

Worried the district would lose sight of the importance of equity once busing ended, Bailey sponsored a resolution in 1995 declaring, in part, that the district give all students equal academic opportunities and that student discipline would be free from bias. The resolution passed unanimously, but the issues it aimed to address didn't

go away.

Her 2016 Bailey Report, commissioned by the district, found Black students were disciplined more harshly and had fewer resources dedicated to their academic success. It also found that Black educators felt isolated and passed over for promotions.

The report led to the creation of a districtwide African-American Equity Task Force, which made 11 recommendations, including that every school should be required to write a plan for how to better serve Black students and that curriculum should be culturally relevant.

"She always wanted us to know the history of Denver Public Schools and of Denver because a history unknown is a history repeated," said former school board member and state Representative Jennifer Bacon.

Mentoring younger leaders was important to Bailey. "She knew one day the torch or the baton would be passed to us, and she wanted us to be ready," Jones said.

After authoring the Bailey Report, Bailey took a job as a senior adviser for equity initiatives in Denver Public Schools before being appointed the district ombudsperson this year. The ombuds office was envisioned as a confidential space for employees to express their concerns. Bailey's experiences made her "uniquely suited" to the role, the district said.

"In the old days, the revolutionary language was 'working in the belly of the beast,'" Haynes said. "And that's what Sharon was doing. Even though she was a critic, sometimes a harsh critic of the district and what was happening in public education generally, she was always willing to step in and help and say, 'Here's what you need to do.'"

Bacon, Jones, and others said they worry about how Denver Public Schools will fill the role Bailey played. Bailey's husband, John, said she would want others to continue her work. "She would say, 'Don't mourn for me. Do more for kids and community.'"

In her last public remarks before the school board, Bailey herself issued a prescient call to action.

"There are lessons to be learned with the long view of the historical inequities in the school district. Genuine educational equity in our district and around the nation has been elusive. Where is it? How will we know it when we see it? What will it look like? What will it feel like? So I contend that we can't simply believe in equity, fairness, and justice in education. We have to create it."

Editor's note: This story was edited for length. The original version can be found at www.chalkbeat.org. Chalkbeat is a nonprofit news organization covering public education.



Bailey authored a seminal report about racial inequities at DPS. She is shown here with former Superintendent Tom Boasberg at a 2017 community meeting about that report.



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Please double check event dates & times using contact info provided.

NE DENVER/NW AURORA EVENTS

Sundays & Mondays—Latin Dance Class with Carmen Dura. Sat. 10am, Mon. 7pm. \$6/class. Stanley Marketplace, 2501 N. Dallas St, Aurora. stanleymarketplace.com

1/1 and 2/5—Bird Walks. A free guided walk around Bluff Lake. All are welcome. Bring your own binoculars or borrowed ones will be available. 11255 MLK Blvd. BluffLake.org.

Through 1/2/22—Zoo Lights. *A Toast to Love, 125 Years + Beyond.* Denver Zoo, 2300 Steele St. denverzoo.org

1/3 to 1/14—Denver Treecycle 2022. Recycle your tree by removing all decorations/lights and set out for collection on scheduled trash day by 7am. Old lights can be recycled too - info at denvergov.org, 311 or 720-913-1311

1/11 & 1/18—In-person Memory Café. 1:30–3pm. For people experiencing memory loss and their families/caregivers. Schlessman Family Library, 100 Poplar St. denverlibrary.org

Through 2/21/22—Winter Skate. Outdoor ice skating with holiday entertainment. 47th & Verbena St. at The Shops at Northfield. Shopsatnorthfield.com

2/4 Friday—Visions of Love –A Benefit for Anchor Center for Blind Children. 6-9pm. Enjoy wine selections with sweet and savory delights. 2550 Roslyn St. Anchorcenter.org

METRO EVENTS

1/7 Friday—First Friday Art Walks. Art District on Santa. 5:30–9:30pm. denver.org/things-to-do/denver-arts-culture/denver-art-districts

1/8 to 1/23—National Western Stock Show. Kick off parade, Jan. 6 at noon from Union Station and continues on 17th St. ending at 17th & Tremont. Nationalwestern.com

1/14 to 1/16—Denver Boat Show. Colorado Convention

View and add local events FREE at FrontPorchNE.com/events. Submissions by the 17th will be considered for printing in the upcoming month's issue.

Jan. & Early Feb. Events

Center, 700 14th St. Fri. 12–8pm, Sat. 10am–8pm, Sun. 10am–5pm. Denverboatshow.com

1/17 Monday—Martin Luther King Jr. Parade and Program. Program starts at 9:30am, Parade starts at 10:45am sharp from the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. I Have A Dream Memorial in City Park. drmartinlkingjrchc.org



Recycle your Christmas tree from 1/3–1/14. Remove all decorations and place out on your trash day by 7am.

1/19 Wednesday—Bold Women. Change History. Lecture Series. United States Poet Laureate, author, and performer Joy Harjo. 7–8pm. History Colorado Center, 1200 Broadway. H-co.org/BoldWomen

1/22 Saturday—Denver Winter Brewfest. Mile High Station, 2027 West Colfax Ave. Tickets start at \$45. Benefits Big Bones Canine Rescue.. denverbrewfest.com

1/25 Tuesday—Active Minds presents: Bangladesh. Free, 5-6pm. Tattered Cover, 2526 E Colfax. Activeminds.com

Through 2/20/22—Downtown Denver Rink. Free admission, rentals available. Check out hours at downtown-denver.com

KIDS AND FAMILIES

Tuesdays & Wednesdays—All Ages Storytime at Sam Gary Library. 10:30–11am. Ages 0–5. Space is limited, registration is required. 2961 Roslyn St. denverlibrary.org

Wednesdays—Toddler Storytime at Schlessman Library. 10:30–11am. Ages 18–36 months. Space is limited,. 100 Poplar St. denverlibrary.org

Thursdays—Baby Storytime at Sam Gary Library. 10:30–11am. Ages 0–18 months. Space is limited, registration is required. 2961 Roslyn St. denverlibrary.org

Thursdays—Baby Storytime at Schlessman Library. 10:30–11am. Ages 0–18-months. Space is limited,. 100 Poplar St. denverlibrary.org

Fridays—Preschool Storytime at Schlessman Library. 10:30–11am. Ages 3–5-years. Space is limited,. 100 Poplar St. denverlibrary.org

1/5 Wednesday—Mornings at the Museum. Ages 3–6, 10:30–11:30am. Aurora History Museum, 15051 East Alameda Pkwy. auroragov.org

1/16 Sunday—Spanish Storytime at Tattered Cover Kids. 5pm. Stanley Marketplace, 2501 N. Dallas St, Aurora. stanleymarketplace.com

MUSEUMS, ETC.

American Museum of Western Art. Advanced tickets required, admission is \$5. 1727 Tremont Pl. anschutzcollection.org

Aurora History Museum. Advanced reservation is required, admission is free. 15051 East Alameda Pkwy. auroragov.org

The Byers-Evans House Museum. Timed tickets required, History Colorado members are free. 1310 Bannock St. Tickets at historycolorado.org

The Children's Museum. Snow Days through Feb 27. Wed–Sun, by reservation only at mychildsmuseum.org

Clyfford Still Museum. Reserve tickets in advance. 1250 Bannock St. clyffordstillmuseum.org

Denver Art Museum. SCFD Free Days Jan. 11 & 22. Youth 18 & under always free. 100 W 14th Ave. Pkwy. denverartmuseum.org

Denver Botanic Gardens. SCFD Free Day Mon., Jan. 17. Tickets and member reservations required. 1007 York St. botanicgardens.org

Denver Firefighters Museum. Tues–Sat, 10am–4pm. 1326 Tremont Pl. denverfirefightersmuseum.org

Denver Museum of Nature and Science. SCFD Free Days Jan. 3 & 23. 2001 Colorado Blvd. Timed tickets required. Dmns.org

Denver Zoo. SCFD Free Days Jan. 7 & 22. Must reserve free tickets at denverzoo.org. 2900 E 23rd Ave.

The Forney Museum of Transportation. Mon, Th–Sat, 10am–5pm; Sun, noon–5pm. 4303 Brighton Blvd. forneymuseum.org

Four Mile Historic Park. Open Wed–Sun, 10am–4pm. 715 S. Forest St. fourmilepark.org

History Colorado. Some exhibits are timed entry and free with museum admission. 1200 Broadway. More info at historycolorado.org

Kirkland Museum of Fine and Decorative Art. Tue–Sat, 11am–5pm; Sun 12–5pm. Ages 13+ welcome. 1201 Bannock St. kirkland-museum.org

Molly Brown House Museum. Tue–Sun, 10am–4:30pm. 1340 Pennsylvania St. mollybrown.org

Museo de las Americas. Tue–Fri, noon–6pm. Sat, noon–5pm. Closed Mon & Sun. 861 Santa Fe Dr. museo.org

Museum of Contemporary Art Denver. Penny admission 1st Sat. of the month. 1485 Delgany St. mcadenver.org

National Ballpark Museum. 1940 Blake St. Check for days/hours at ballparkmuseum.com

The Urban Farm. Currently under renovation, contact for possible tours/events. 10200 Smith Rd. theurbanfarm.org

Wings Over the Rockies Museum. New exhibit: Skyward: Breakthroughs in Flight. 7711 East Academy Blvd. wingsmuseum.org

PERFORMANCE/ THEATRE

1/4 to 1/9—Potted Potter. Family entertainment perfect for ages six and up. Newman Center, Gates Concert Hall. newmancenter-presents.com

1/7 to 2/12—Fireflies. A romantic comedy. Vintage Theatre, 1468 Dayton St, Aurora. Vintagetheatre.org

1/7 to 1/9—Marin Alsop Conducts. The former Music Director for Colorado Symphony, makes her long-awaited return. Tickets start at \$15. Boettcher Concert Hall. coloradosymphony.org

1/7 to 3/6—Edward Albee's Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf? A hilarious, endearing and hummable musical. Garner Galleria Theatre at the DCPA. denvercenter.org

Through 1/8—Blossoms of Light. A dazzling and ever-changing display of light and color. Denver Botanic Gardens, 1007 York St. botanic-gardens.org

Through 1/9—Rogers and Hammerstein's Cinderella. The classic musical from the most famous of duos. Vintage Theatre, 1468 Dayton St, Aurora. Vintagetheatre.org

1/11 Tuesday—Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Tribute. Honoring recipients of the 2022 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Humanitarian Awards. Boettcher Concert Hall. FREE - tickets at coloradosymphony.org

1/12 Wednesday—Kronos Quartet. The essential string quartet of the modern era. Tickets start at \$19. 7:30pm, Newman Center, Gates Concert Hall. newmancenter-presents.com

1/14 to 1/17—The Choir of Man. The boys are back by popular demand ready to take America by storm! Buell Theatre, 1350 Curtis St. denvercenter.org

1/15 to 2/12—The Sound Inside. An intimate drama. 1080 Acoma St. curious theatre.org

1/20 Thursday—Hawaiian Legends: Keola Beamer & Henry Kapon. With special guest Moanalani Beamer. 8pm. Swallow Hill Music, Daniels Hall, 71 East Yale Ave. swallowhillmusic.org

1/28 to 2/20—Dontrell, Who Kissed The Sea. A hero's quest exploring what we must go to in order to right history's wrongs. Aurora Fox Arts Center, 9900 E. Colfax Ave. aurorafox-artscenter.org

Through 2/2—The Lion King. The entire Serengeti comes to life. Buell Theatre, 1350 Curtis St. denvercenter.org

2/4 to 2/13—Colorado Ballet Presents Romeo and Juliet. Featuring live music. Ellie Caulkins Opera House (14th & Curtis) coloradoballet.org

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Denver Public Schools - Volunteer Services. Check out what services are needed at local DPS schools at volunteer-match.org/search/org/110806.jsp

Food For Thought Denver. Striving to eliminate childhood hunger by providing food for students to take home to their family for the weekend. Sign up to volunteer or donate at food-forthoughtdenver.org

Mentoring high performing, low income students. Minds Matter is recruiting our next class of college access mentors to help high-performing, low-income high school. mindsmatter-denver.org

Project Worthmore. Help bag and deliver fresh fruits and vegetables, dairy, and household necessities to refugees in Denver and Aurora. projectworthmore.org

Reach Out and Read Colorado. Help sort and pack gently-used children's books for underserved families. On the Clayton Early Learning Campus, individuals and groups welcome. Email info@reachoutandreadco.org for details.

Reading Volunteers Needed. Stedman Elementary and Bill Roberts Middle School. More info at partnersin-literacy.org



The Kronos Quartet will be at the Newman Center on 1/12.

Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) For volunteer opportunities, email Cathy Law at claw@voacolorado.org

Ronald McDonald House Charities Volunteer. Go to ronaldhouse.org under "How You Can Help" for info.

Sand Creek Greenway Volunteer Opportunities. For more info, email cgarwood@sandcreekgreenway.org or go to sandcreekgreenway.org/upcoming-volunteer-opportunities/

Single Volunteers of Greater Denver. Volunteer, not-for-profit singles group to meet others and assist nonprofit organizations for events/activities. svgd.org

Village Exchange Center A non-profit formed to serve immigrants and refugees in the Aurora & Denver. villageexchangecenter.org

Volunteers of America Colorado Branch For volunteer opportunities go to voacolorado.org/volunteer-opportunities/

Indian Schools

(continued from page 7)

mean they weren't happening. "I can rattle four or five off the top of my head," he says. "A young Japanese American woman was driving. She had her window down at a stoplight, and a group of young guys started yelling epithets at her and then sprayed her with disinfectant through her window. She was so freaked out, she ran the red light. Another woman was at a laundromat, and a white woman poured bleach all over her folded clothes. A Korean woman had her kids in a stroller at King Soopers in Englewood when a white person spit on her. A friend of mine, who works for the city, was walking on Bannock, when a woman yelled, 'Go back to China!' We urged them to report these crimes. None of them did because—Gaman! Shigata Ga Nai.

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Temple Grandin: Animal Welfare and Autism Guru

A new center for equine-assisted therapies, named for Temple Grandin, just opened at the National Western Center. Front Porch file photo of Temple Grandin giving a talk at the 2015 National Western Stock Show on proper handling of livestock.



By Mary Jo Brooks

Colorado State University professor Temple Grandin has long been celebrated as one of the world’s leading authorities on the subjects of animal welfare and autism, so it’s only natural that the new CSU Spur campus at the National Western Center features a facility for equine assisted services bearing her name. The newly-completed Temple Grandin Equine Center offers adaptive horsemanship and equine assisted therapy to improve the physical, mental, and emotional health for people of all ages. A similar center opened on the Fort Collins campus in February.

Director Adam Daurio says the equine assisted therapy sessions, which can involve horseback riding or just being near the horses, are used to treat people suffering from the effects of a stroke, PTSD, autism, cerebral palsy, de-

mentia, and more. Even children as young as 18 months old can benefit. “If young children haven’t learned to crawl, we can put them on their hands and knees on a bareback pad on a horse and as the horse walks, it mimics the movement of crawling and helps stimulate the child’s neurons to learn to crawl.”

Grandin, who has said that horses saved her life as she navigated autism as a teenager, served as a sensory consultant in the design of the state-of-the-art facility.

“She provided input on color schemes and design, on lighting, and the awareness of sounds coming from appliances and utilities,” said Daurio. Grandin is renowned for designing facilities that reduce stress for animals.

Visitors to the equine center will be able to watch therapy sessions in action. Daurio says one of the main goals of having the center in Denver is to educate an urban population about the connections between animal and human health. Eventually 15 therapy horses will live onsite, aiding in some 150-200 sessions per week.

Temple Grandin herself will be at the ribbon cutting ceremony for the official opening of the equine center on January 7. Visitors to the stock show will also have the chance to meet her two weeks later on January 20 when the center hosts an adaptive rodeo for youth with special needs.

Stock Show: Bigger & Better

Calling it the “Super Bowl” of livestock shows, Paul Andrews, president and CEO of the National Western Stock Show, says he’s fully expecting this year’s show to be the best ever. “It will be second to none. We’re going to have the greatest cowboys, the greatest equestrians, and so much more this year.” Following last year’s unprecedented cancellation because of the COVID-19 pandemic, Andrews says interest in the 116th show is higher than usual. More than 40 states and 35 countries will be represented at the festivities, which include 28 rodeo performances, 14 horse shows, and 900 exhibitors over the 16-day celebration.

The annual stock show parade through downtown Denver will be held Jan. 6. The Stock Show event at the National Western Center complex runs from Jan. 8 to Jan. 23, with dozens of events every day ranging from fiddle competitions, folkloric dancing, livestock auc-



tions, dog shows, goat roping, sheep shearing, and a petting farm with 60 barnyard animals. (For a complete list of events visit www.nationalwestern.com)

Attendees will be able to take advantage of several new amenities this year, including a new RTD light rail station, the new Stockyard Events Center, and state-of-the-art livestock pens. It’s all part of a massive redevelopment plan which that began three years ago. There are also new roadways and sidewalks with lighting and landscaping to encourage people to explore more of the campus. “I think people will be blown away by the progress we’ve made,”



The annual National Western Stock Show features events for all ages, including rodeos, horse shows, livestock competitions, fiddle championships, folkloric dancing, and a free petting farm with 60 barnyard animals.

says Brad Buchanan, CEO of the National Western Center. In addition, Colorado State University’s newly-completed Vida building will be open with free admission. The facility focuses on animal and human health and visitors will be able to watch as veterinarians treat small animals in a clinic operated by the Denver Dumb Friends League. There will also be demonstrations in equine assisted therapy and sports medicine for horses, where the animals exercise on an underwater treadmill. And although it won’t



be visible to visitors this year, Buchanan also touts the new heating and cooling system on the campus, which uses recycled thermal energy from sewer pipelines. Buchanan says it’s the largest system of its type in North America and will provide 90 percent of the heating and cooling on the campus without burning fossil fuels. Next year, the central utility plant that runs the system

will be open for tours. “We want to use it as a teaching tool so people can learn about low-carbon, sustainable solutions,” says Buchanan. While the stock show is the signature event every year at the National Western Center, Buchanan hopes that the new facilities will encourage other large-scale events. He says he could envision Farm Aid, TED Talks, X Games and more. Already scheduled for March—a 20,000-square-foot immersive dinosaur experience called Jurassic World: The Exhibition.

Stock Show and Temple Grandin stories by Mary Jo Brooks

A photograph of a young girl with dark hair, wearing a pink shirt, looking at a book. The book has a picture of a bird on it. The background is a colorful wall with various posters and drawings.

The logo for the Denver Preschool Program, featuring three stylized faces in a row and the text "DENVER PRESCHOOL PROGRAM".

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Many times my reviews cover very dark, heavy, and/or (somewhat) disturbing films, so this column may be a welcomed respite. Well, sort of. Enjoy these two wonderful documentaries and start the new year on a high note!

The Rescue (2021)

We all remember hearing the story of this wonderful documentary: in the summer of 2018, 12 Thai boys and their soccer coach were caught deep inside a flooded cave. Their rescue was broadcast all around the world, and everyone saw the agony of the waiting as well as the thrilling happy ending after 17 days. American coverage was mostly sound bites, strained faces, and rain; it was

sorely lacking in the details, however. This film from the makers of *Free Solo* (2020), Elizabeth Chai Vasarhelyi and Jimmy Chin, gives us those details in stark, emotional, and stirring fashion. Perhaps we are lucky we didn't know the entire story at the time, but we are certainly fortunate to have this wonderful film now.

I have argued many times on these pages that what makes a great documentary film is more than story. Films are works of art: they have form, structure, pacing, and a language all their own. What makes a great documentary film is a great story inside of a great film; that is exactly what we have here. The filmmakers have fashioned it around specific characters, and they use extant footage as well as new footage, interviews, animation, and re-enactments. The cinematography of the events comes from actual footage, the setting is very real, the original score is properly dramatic, but it is the editing that shines here and makes the movie go. The editing helps the finished product play like a thriller that always keeps us enthralled.

The film gives us fascinating principals and miraculous events, yet all I remember is the spotty coverage and something about Elon Musk. What I never heard was that the entire rescue was made possible by two middle-aged Englishmen whose hobby was cave diving—John Volanten and Richard Stanton. Once the Thai Navy SEALs realized they did not have the proper training for the daring endeavor, they summoned the Englishmen. A few days later, these men had the weight of a nation on their backs. Volanten and Stanton would be the first to find the boys alive and the last to bring them out.

Water is life. Yes, it gives us life but it also can be lethal—whether that is from too much or too little. We in the West know the too-little part, but many others around the world live in fear of it. The fear is real in this film, the faces are real in this film, the rescue is real in this film, and the characters are real in this film. You just can't make this up.

One other note: thankfully, it never mentions Elon Musk.

Available on Disney+

You will enjoy this movie if you liked *The Cove*, *Free Solo*, and/or *Man on Wire*.



Summer of Soul (2021)

This is a visual and aural feast: a magnificent, ebullient, and informative film that achieves the rare feat of entertaining while giving us lessons in history, culture, race, and politics. The premise is simple: we get to see original footage of the 1969 Harlem Cultural Festival, footage that had been abandoned for 50 years. We have heard plenty about Woodstock, the music festival that took place that same summer just 100 miles away, but we have never heard of this Festival. The event took place over the course of several weekends that year and included some of the all-time music greats. Director Questlove wonderfully brings it all back to life.

Stevie Wonder opens the film, and our show, from the stage in Harlem. We then see the acts—legends of music—as well as hear from them, hear from attendees, and hear from a generation that began to change the way our country views race and race relations. Of course that journey continues, and it is not always pretty. The film recognizes this fact and embraces it; the festival was an eye-opening experience for many and empowering for many more. The music is uplifting, the costumes audacious,

the lessons timely, and the *ethos* is powerful.

I was born that same year, just a few months earlier and just 8 miles away from where the Festival was held. Yet I had never heard of the Harlem Cultural Festival. Why is that? That may be material for another page in this newspaper, but I can say this: my children know about it now. You and your children should as well.

Now available on Hulu.

You will enjoy this movie if you liked *20 Feet From Stardom*, *Standing in the Shadows of Motown*, and/or *Amy*.

Vincent Piturro, Ph.D., is a Professor of Film and Media Studies at MSU Denver. Contact him directly at vpiturro@msudenver.org or follow him on Twitter. For more reviews, search The Indie Prof at FrontPorchNE.com.



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Message to Central Park residents:

The “financial health” of your special district is being “negatively impacted.”

By Carol Roberts

Central Park residents have been concerned and confused by letters they received this fall about “an issue which will negatively affect the financial health of Central Park both in the near and long term.” The issue? Refinancing bonds for Central Park infrastructure construction at a lower rate—a move that could save Central Park property owners \$65-70 million in interest over the life of bonds. Until refinancing occurs, the delay is being projected to cost Central Park residents \$10,000 a day. Refinancing is in jeopardy due to a threat of litigation. Understanding the benefits of refinancing is easy enough. Understanding the three organizations described here—and why there’s a threat of litigation—is more complex.

Three Organizations behind Central Park’s Development

The Stapleton Airport closed down when DIA opened. There would be a new use of the land, but Denver taxpayers did not want its development to be done with City tax funds. Structures to govern a public-private partnership (PPP) had to be created. Westerly Creek Metro District (WCMD) was formed to collect the proceeds of the special district mill levy to fund infrastructure construction. A separate special district, Park Creek Metro District (PCMD), was formed to manage financing and construction of the infrastructure. A third organization, the private non-profit Stapleton Development Corporation (SDC), is composed of community members selected by the mayor and the Denver Urban Redevelopment Authority to carry out three primary tasks on behalf of the City. The 1998 SDC/City agreement gives SDC the authority to select a master developer and sell parcels of the city-owned land to the developer for uses consistent with the Stapleton Development Plan (approved by City Council in 1995). The SDC was also given the authority to select the five PCMD board members.

SDC’s mandate to select those five board members is at the heart of the current refinancing issue.

WCMD’s View—Taxation Without Representation

Before Central Park was built and for a number of years, representatives of the developer sat on the WCMD Board. Once the board seats were filled by residents, they started raising the question, “Why do we have a structure where WCMD, populated with elected residents, is required to turn over the tax proceeds to PCMD, which is populated by non-residents who are appointed, not elected by residents of the taxing district?” They say it’s taxation without representation.

A January 2017 *Front Porch* article and video at FrontPorchNE.com documents the first public confrontation between the two groups over this issue—and they’ve been hashing it out for much of the past five years. Now WCMD and PCMD have come to an agreement that is also acceptable to the current developer, Brookfield. WCMD Board Member Dave Ungemah described this agreement in an email to *Front Porch*. “All we have asked, and is shown within these agreements, is that once the infrastructure is done and the developer debt is refinanced, Central Park residents will have the right to vote for the directors that control the tax dollars and debt obligations for Central Park.

“The stumbling block has been SDC,” says Ungemah. “We are saddened that we’ve come so far, and yet SDC cannot agree to this without various meetings and strategic planning in 2022. Agreeing to qualify PCMD directors who have been elected from the Central Park community...does not require meetings and deliberations, just a signature, as an agreement has already been provided to

SDC that would accomplish this.

“Because the meaningful right to self-control is so important to Central Park residents, we have no choice but to unfortunately wait until SDC agrees....we stand ready to sign the agreements among all parties at the earliest moment if SDC wishes to engage us in such an agreement.”

Brookfield’s View on Getting the Financing Done

Jim Chrisman, senior vice president for Brookfield, said at the Dec. 14 Central Park United Neighbors (CPUN) meeting, “If WCMD would agree to rescind their threatened lawsuit, PCMD can issue the debt. Then SDC, over the next 30-90 days can figure out the best way its stakeholders, including WCMD, can best ensure citizen representation on the PCMD board by the end of 2023. We ask that you,

the other property owners within Central Park, join us in contacting the Westerly Creek Board and suggesting they rescind the threatened lawsuit.”

In response to a question, Chrisman responded that SDC’s role to qualify members to the SDC Board “still needs to be resolved. That really only came to SDC’s attention, maybe 45 days ago or so. It has not been mediated. I will say, I do believe they genuinely want to solve this problem, but I also think the process that they put forth to solve it may take a long, long time—and I don’t think this problem is, honestly, that complicated. And the longer time, you know—\$10,000 a day, things do add up.”

What Does SDC Say?

The president and CEO of SDC, Tammi Holloway clarified that SDC has done what’s

necessary for the refinancing to proceed—provide a Certificate of No Threatened or Pending Litigation. “WCMD has offered to remove their threat of litigation and issue a certificate if SDC (and other parties) agrees to demands that WCMD has made that are not part of a bond transaction. Their demand [regarding who is appointed to PCMD] is a separate matter from the bond transaction.”

The chair of the SDC Board, Pat Teegarden, did not respond to three requests from *Front Porch* to explain the SDC Board’s delay in accepting the agreement between WCMD and PCMD on citizen representation in the PCMD Board.

What can residents do about the impasse?

SDC’s lack of response means relevant information is missing at a time residents are struggling to understand the issues. Given the years WCMD and PCMD have spent addressing the issue of PCMD Board appointees, they might ask SDC, “Why did you only learn about this financing delay 45 days ago? The same issue threatened to delay bond financing in 2017. And what is the process SDC still needs to go through before signing the agreement? Chrisman described it as ‘not that complicated.’”

Brookfield has called for Central Park residents to contact the WCMD Board and encourage them to rescind the threatened lawsuit so refinancing can proceed. Or residents might choose to contact SDC to encourage them to quickly sign the WCMD/PCMD agreement. Or they might encourage Brookfield to encourage SDC to quickly approve the agreement? Each resident will need to weigh the options and choose the response they believe is best for the community.

For Central Park residents who would like more information on these three organizations, additional information is provided with this article at FrontPorchNE.com, including contact information for the three boards, and a link to the January 2017 article documenting the beginning of WCMD’s efforts to give residents a role in decisions about WCMD’s revenue.



At a Dec. 2016 special meeting, WCMD and PCMD clashed over WCMD’s demand for independent legal and financial advice about PCMD bond issues. PCMD Pres. King Harris is saying “Ain’t gonna happen.” The two boards have now come to an agreement on WCMD’s future role. *Front Porch* file photo by Steve Larson



Can allergies be prevented in infants?

Researchers want to know if keeping a baby’s skin healthy and hydrated with moisturizer will prevent the child from developing allergies such as food allergies.

- New parents and their newborns up to 12 weeks are needed for this important research study.
- Children in this study will be followed for three years to track whether or not the child develops allergies.
- Compensation provided.

Learn more at njhealth.org/SEALstudy or call 303.398.1409.



Why do babies develop food allergies and eczema?

Researchers are studying factors before birth and through age 3 that may influence the development of allergic conditions such as food allergies and eczema.

- Pregnant women who are delivering their baby at Saint Joseph Hospital are needed for this important study.
- Mom and baby (biological father optional) will be followed for up to three years.
- Compensation provided.

Learn more at njhealth.org/SUNBEAM or call 303.398.1409.





Front Porch photo by Christie Gosch

The Crooks in their basement apartment where Mohammed and his family live. Kristy says community support was overwhelming. They paid for a storage unit through December, so they could move their stuff out to make room. Mario, from Infinity Carpet Care cleaned the carpets for free.

By Tracy Wolfer Osborne

It was a hot afternoon in Kabul when the Taliban threw a bomb under Mohammed’s car, engulfing his family in flames. Mohammed had noticed a silverish ‘97 Toyota Corolla in his rear view. When he turned, the car turned. Still he didn’t think much of it. “We were on our way to drop my brother and his whole family at their grandparents’ house. The kids were thirsty, so I stopped to get juice. That’s when the store clerk yelled, ‘Your car’s on fire!’ You kind of lose consciousness,” he says about what came next. “We tried to roll the car into a nearby car wash to put out the flames. This is where we broke the glass to get the kids out,” he says handing over a picture.



The charred remains of Mohammed’s car after it was set on fire in a terrorist attack.

Mohammed can only guess as to why he was targeted. “I was working as a project manager on the third floor of a building. There were other guys—fundamentalists—who worked in the same building. They would call for afternoon prayer, and I didn’t always go. I dunno. I think that’s maybe why,” he says. By midsummer, there were murmurings in the street, rumors the president was going to come on TV and resign. “I was in my office when a colleague popped in and said, ‘Get out!’ I called my brothers and told them to close the store; told them I was on my way.” The short trip from Mohammed’s office to his family’s carpet and jewelry store held ominous signs. The streets of Kabul, usually bustling and beeping with gnarly traffic, were eerily quiet. Mohammed saw a leery Afghan soldier

dip behind a wall to change from his military fatigues into civilian clothing. A cop car with its doors open, sirens still wailing, sat askew on the curb. By the time Mohammed and his brothers returned home, fires had broken out. There were gunshots and looting. People were saying that the Taliban had entered Kabul from the west; they had invaded the Palace.

“I honestly don’t know how many times my brothers and I went to the airport,” says Mohammed. “You almost give up. We had all the proper documents, but we needed to get close to somebody, to one of the soldiers, but every time we went, my four-year-old would cry because they were doing this,” Mohammed says spraying an invisible arc of bullets into the air, “ya know

to break the crowds, so it was hard. I got a call in the middle of the night. They said, ‘I know you have proper documentation. If you take another person with you, someone will come to your door, and you can go.’ I wasn’t going to do that,” says Mohammed. “If that was the only way, there was no way.” Mohammed tried one more time to breach the crowd leaving his wife Aadela, four children and nephew waiting outside on a rug. I had our passports open. A U.S. soldier spotted my visa stickers. That’s the only reason he chose me,” says Mohammed who was plucked from the chaos. After checking his documents



After Mohammed’s visa was approved, his wristband showed he had a seat on the flight.

Local Family Hosts Afghan Refugees

several times, one U.S. Soldier told Mohammed to hold onto his backpack while another held Mohammed’s back and they sandwich-walked him back to the rug to collect his family. His nephew was punched in the stomach and a girl tried to fall in with their group. “I yelled at the soldiers, ‘We are seven! We are seven! I do not know her!’” The next days and months passed in a haze. They traveled from Kabul to Qatar to Germany to Virginia and finally landed in Denver.

Halfway across the world, Central Park epidemiologist Jim Crooks saw a LinkedIn post from an old college buddy. He had a friend trapped in Afghanistan and was wondering if anyone could host them. “It’s funny,” says his wife Kristy, a genetics lab director and assistant professor at the University of Colorado. “We didn’t even discuss it. We just looked at each other and were like, ‘We’re gonna do this, right?’ ‘Yeah, definitely.’ And that was it.”

Kristy says the support they received was overwhelming. “I think my post on a Central Park moms’ group received over 300 comments. People paid for a storage unit through December. I needed a high chair; eight people offered high chairs. I asked for two baby gates. I got 12. We got carseats and boosters, and all kinds of people dropped off clothes and toys. Almost all the furniture in the basement—the bunk beds, the cribs, the queen bed with storage underneath—was donated. I actually had to make an Excel spreadsheet so I could keep track of who was dropping off what. Next we asked if people would come help us assemble furniture,” says Kristy. “It was kinda a party atmosphere. All these people showed up with power tools, like burly men just there ready to assemble a bed or run to Home Depot for more screws or whatever we needed. It was amazing.”

The most surprising thing,” says Kristy, “is how easy it’s been. After we agreed to it, we talked a lot as a family, and we said, ‘This is going to be hard. These people are going to eat differently, and pray differently, and be different than us. This is going to be a challenge.’ But I was wrong. After like a week, it felt like family even though I can’t talk with half of them.”

Food has become a kind of language. “Aadela doesn’t speak English,” says Kristy. “And I don’t speak Dari or Persian, so most of the time we just bond through cooking. One of us will be kneading bread, and the other one will take the other half and start kneading it or roll biscuits up or whatever.” Kristy says.

A few weeks ago after Mohammed and his family had been with them for a few months, he told Kristy how grateful he was and asked how long they could stay. “It’s funny,” says Kristy, “because we didn’t even discuss it. We just looked at each other and were like, ‘Indefinitely?’ ‘Yeah, indefinitely.’”

Pseudonyms were used at the family’s request.

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January 2022

14

Front Porch – NE Denver

NEWS IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD

MEET YOUR 2022 DISTRICT DELEGATES & CANDIDATES

*DISTRICT 1: (voting extended thru 1/19)



Caleb Lowe – A Colorado native, Caleb was born and raised in Salida, where he grew to love the amazing culture and community that make up this beautiful state. After high school, Caleb ventured to Rangely, Colorado, where he trained as a pilot and earned his Private Pilot's License. Soon after learning of his son's forthcoming arrival, Caleb and his partner moved to Denver to continue their training at MSU. Having lived in Denver for five years now, Caleb is blessed with a home, family, and an abundance of friends. His next venture is to step into the public eye as a leader in the community, and he looks forward to the opportunity to serve the Central Park community we all call home.



Krista Brown – A long-time resident of Central Park, Krista, and her husband moved to the community in 2007 and are currently living in their second Central Park home. As a Denver native, Krista remembers flying out of the former Stapleton Airport as a child. Krista has served as block captain for the East Bridge and Bluff Lake neighborhoods. She cares deeply about the community and hopes to bring a different voice to the conversation as a District Delegate.



Lois Rzasa – A retired faculty member from the University of Colorado School of Dental Medicine, Lois holds multiple degrees, including a BS, MHA, and MBA, obtained from the University of Colorado. Lois supports a safe, clean community and she advocates for responsible citizenship and helping neighbors when there's a need. She will fight for financial accountability and defend our community against unfavorable outcomes. Lois has lived in the Central Park community for eight years and enjoys having her family and grandchildren in the area.



Sara Streich – Sara and her two boys moved to Central Park in 2014. They love living in the community and enjoy everything it has to offer. As the community continues to grow, Sara is aware there are safety concerns to be mindful of. Having a home once hit by a stray bullet, Sara will advocate for a

safe community and support continued neighborhood improvements if elected. Professionally, Sara works in higher education research management as a consultant. Sara enjoys walking her dog Ollie during her free time, attending concerts in the park, and spending time with her two boys and neighbors.

DISTRICT 2 (Uncontested):



Heather Vasquez – Heather believes it is essential to know what is happening in the community. She plans to be a voice for people from all walks of life as she continues to serve as your District 2 Delegate in 2022.

DISTRICT 3 (Uncontested):



Dana Elkind – Dana has been a Central Park resident since 2006. He has been an active serving District Delegate for the MCA since 2007 and is currently serving as President of the MCA Board of Directors. Dana is an experienced Network Engineer, Sales Engineer, and manager. Dana's goal has always been to keep an eye on the budget, bring great programming to the community, and ensure that the MCA parks and pools are the best. Dana is married to Melinda Elkind, a retired teacher in Aurora Public Schools. They have two adult children, Richard, an educator in Denver Public Schools, and Stephen, a practicing lawyer in San Francisco. Dana has called many cities home, but he loves Denver and doesn't plan to move again.

DISTRICT 4 (Uncontested):



Elisabeth Cohen – Elisabeth enjoys living in the Central Park community. Elisabeth has a daughter in DPS, and she is active in the PTA, which helps connect her to others. Her background in public policy could help the MCA recognize and consider the entire population in their decisions and make the community stronger.

DISTRICT 5 (Uncontested):



Andrew Bartlett – Andrew has been a resident of the Central Park community since 2006 and has lived in two neighborhoods, including Central Park West and Eastbridge.

Andrew has served as the District 5 Delegate for many years and has served previously as a board member for one of the neighborhood's sub-associations. Andrew enjoys serving the community and hopes to continue serving the members of his district in the future. As a husband and father of two kids, Andrew recognizes the leadership the MCA provides in the Central Park community. Andrew believes that serving as a Delegate is a privilege. He hopes to help keep the neighborhood a place that values diversity and inclusion and help everyone who calls Central Park home see how great the community can be.

DISTRICT 6 (Uncontested):



Rebekah Henderson – Rebekah is an active and engaged Central Park community member. Rebekah is a filmmaker and podcaster who takes a great interest in happenings all around Denver. She has enjoyed serving as District 6 Delegate since 2021, and she looks forward to serving as your representative in 2022.

DISTRICT 8 (Uncontested):



Sarah Stabio – Sarah has lived in Central Park's Conservatory Green neighborhood since August 2014, after moving from Southwest Denver. Not long after moving, Sara opened The Bar Method Denver-Northfield in The Shops at Northfield. She has developed a robust fitness-minded community and participates in several local business organizations and charities. Sarah loves working in and living in the Central Park community. As an MCA Delegate with two years of experience, Sara has expanded her community knowledge and the relationship between various community entities. She enjoys being the liaison between her Conservatory Green neighbors and the MCA. When not at the barre, you can find Sarah spending time with her husband, Brad, and their three kids.

DISTRICT 9 (Uncontested):



Hope Miller – Hope moved to Central Park with her family from DC in 2014. Her home was one of the first to be built in the Willow Park East neighborhood, and she has loved seeing District 9 grow into an amazing little slice of Central Park. Hope is an exec-

utive for a federal IT consulting firm and a mom of three kids and two dogs. She loves meeting neighbors and new friends through her volunteer efforts. Hope believes community representation is vital for creating a welcoming and enjoyable neighborhood for all. She believes in kindness and open communication, and she welcomes discussion on all topics, big or small. As the Willow Park East/Wicker Park representative, Hope will continue to be an unbiased liaison between community members and the MCA.

DISTRICT 10 (Elected):



Shalise Hudley-Harris – Shalise is passionate about community involvement. She has been honored to serve as District 9 Delegate since September 2020. While serving as District 9 Delegate, Shalise has successfully clarified the neighborhood's concerns. When a racist incident occurred in the community, Shalise was one of several delegates who requested the MCA and CPUN send statements to the community denouncing such behavior. Working on the MCA Board, Shalise has helped create a more diverse, inclusive, and relatable MCA. She looks forward to continuing to serve District 10 in 2022.

*DISTRICT 11: (voting extended thru 1/19)



John B. Holt – As the incumbent District 11 Delegate for the North End, John has found it an honor and privilege to serve as a voice for the community. Having lived and worked in the community for 12 years across three districts, John is deeply tied to the community and committed to its success. John is proud of what has been achieved collectively throughout the past year. He is excited by the prospect of working together again in 2022 for there is much work to still be done. With years of experience serving on multiple HOA boards, John is confident that he will help continue to make Central Park a wonderful place to live for all residents.



Monica Meza – Monica is interested in serving as District 11 Delegate for Central Park because it is the community where she has chosen to live and open her business. She has a vested interest in the community's continued success for all its residents.

*10% QUORUM NOT MET. VOTING EXTENDED THROUGH JANUARY 19, 2022.



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Central Park Community News

JANUARY CPUN SPOT

Central Park United Neighbors (CPUN) is the registered neighborhood organization for the Central Park community. Our mission is to work for the betterment of Central Park by providing a forum for residents to discuss and resolve issues, a network of communication, and a means of acting on matters of importance to the community as a whole. We are committed to providing an inclusive and welcoming environment for all members of our community. CPUN is a 501(c) 3 nonprofit organization led by an all-volunteer board of directors, elected to serve by our neighbors. Learn more at www.centralparkunitedneighbors.com

CHANGES TO BYLAWS CREATE OPEN SEATS ON THE CPUN BOARD

The community voted at the December board meeting to adopt three changes to our bylaws. These changes allow CPUN to better represent the Central Park community:

- The board has been expanded from a maximum of 15 board members to a maximum of 19.
- The geographic footprint of CPUN has been expanded from Denver residents only to include Central Park residents with an Aurora address.
- The CPUN Executive Committee has been expanded to make Former President an officer role.

CPUN is a 501(c) 3 nonprofit organization led by an all-volunteer board of directors, elected to serve by our neighbors.

CPUN BOARD ELECTIONS COMING IN MAY

The expansion of our board creates four open seats. To learn more about CPUN or to apply for an open seat, contact us centralparkunitedneighbors@gmail.com.



NEW PROTECTED BIKE LANE COMING SOON ON CENTRAL PARK BLVD.

Funded from the city's 2017 GO Bond, the lane will run on CPB from Montview Blvd. to 36th Ave.; it will replace on-street parking to create a safer place to ride. Scheduled completion January 2022 depending on contractor availability.

JOIN THE CPUN EMAIL LIST FOR COMMUNITY NEWS AND DEALS FROM LOCAL BUSINESSES

CPUN issues a twice-monthly email that features news and information about opportunities to get involved in your community. Our emails also include deals from restaurants and other local businesses. Sign up at www.centralparkunitedneighbors.com/join



NORTHEAST TRANSPORTATION CONNECTIONS

NETC will be recruiting participants and community partners for Winter Bike to Work Day (2/11) and Bike to Work Day (6/22). Contact EHerbst@NEtransportation.org for more information.

We are also signing up employers for the Central 70 Incentive Program, helping employees ride RTD and form carpools. Contact JStreeter@NEtransportation.org to apply.

We're consulting with developers to help them meet the city's new requirements for transportation demand management. Contact AMalpiede@NEtransportation.org for details.



VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES!

Get outside and give back to nature! If you have a group that would like to complete a service project on the Sand Creek Regional Greenway, reach out to our program manager, Elena Smith, at esmith@sandcreekgreenway.org.

Monthly volunteer workdays will start in March 2022. Upcoming workdays will be posted soon! For more information about individual volunteer opportunities contact Elena!



Central Park Business Association

The CPBA's mission is to foster relationships among businesses while working to benefit local organizations. The CPBA meets on the 3rd Tue. of every month at 8am (w/coffee and bagels) at The Cube (or virtually) located next to the MCA offices at 8371 Northfield Blvd. Contact us at info@centralparkbusiness.com for information or email questions to info@centralparkbusiness.com.



Bluff Lake Nature Center is an urban nature refuge directly east of Central Park, open for free 365 days

a year, sunup to sundown. Plenty of family-friendly activities, including nature play stations and self-guided scavenger hunts. Check out our field trips, after school programming (free for Title 1 students) and summer camps at www.blufflake.org.

See what we are up to: www.blufflake.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/2020-BLNC-Impact-Report.pdf

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Awards & Community Celebration

The **12th Annual be well Awards and Community Celebration** will be held **January 27th, 2022** at [StanleyMarketPlace](http://StanleyMarketPlace.com) located at 2501 Dallas St, Aurora, CO 80010.

Thriving in a Pandemic

Join us for a night of live music, food, special guests, and giveaways as we honor unsung heroes in our communities who have gone above and beyond to ensure all people's health and well-being through the COVID 19 pandemic and racial reckoning.

Vaccinations

Please take advantage of the opportunity to ask questions or receive their COVID 19 vaccination or booster shots! Anyone 5 years of age and up can take the vaccine! A parent or legal guardian must accompany minors.

Registration for the Event Only and/or Vaccinations

The registration form will allow participants to indicate if they are registering for the be well Awards Program only, be well Awards and Vaccine, or Vaccine only. The option to register for in-person or virtual attendance will be indicated on the registration website or by phone. **All participants are required to register for in-person or virtual attendance.** A wait list will be created once all slots are filled! Register Early! Limited in-person seating is available to ensure the safety of participants! Food will only be provided to those in attendance based on registration. A virtual option is available.

RSVP at <https://bit.ly/2022bewellawards> | Or call: 720-812-3928

Nominations

Nominations for unsung heroes are still being accepted through **January 3, 2022**. Please visit <https://bit.ly/3FQeUCeBeWellAwards2022> to nominate your unsung hero who has made a difference in the **be well** Zone neighborhoods of Park Hill, East Colfax, Northwest Aurora, Montbello, and Central Park.



Save The Date: 1/27/22

📞 bewellconnect.org
303-468-3222

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