

Front Porch

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JUNE 2023

Central Park Playground Playtime Ramps Up as Reimagined Park Opens



Front Porch photo by Christie Gosch

Otto Kopf of Central Park has been watching the construction of the improved and restored playground at Central Park with growing excitement. His mom, Kelli Kopf, saws Otto hoped to be the first down one of the slides. He also loves the climbing structure and says the new park “is a lot more fun” than the original

The Central Park playground reopened in May after a multi-year restoration and improvement project by Denver Parks & Recreation. The \$2 million renovation plan, funded primarily by the DPR Legacy Fund and Capital Funds, includes a roller slide, zip line and large play tower, as well as picnic tables, a sand pit with mechanical diggers, soft playground surfacing, a modernized irrigation system, and every kid’s summer favorite: water pumps and misters. *Story by Sarah Huber on page 8.*

Bring Expert BBQ Chops to Your Own Backyard



Front Porch photo by Christie Gosch

Tony Bolding, co-owner of Backyard Pitmasters Colorado, explains the complexities of smoking beef ribs. *Story by Courtney Drake-McDonough on page 6.*



Front Porch photo by Christie Gosch

Before the Blue & Beyond the Badge

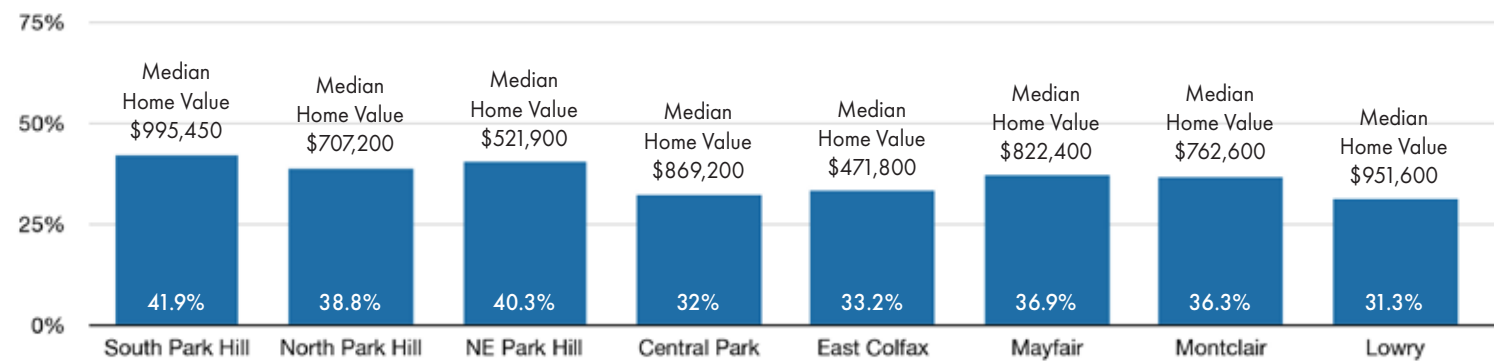
New Denver Police Department recruits listen to Detective Tevonnon Jones recount how his partner was killed at this spot while they both were patrolling a City Park Jazz concert in 2012. The field trip was part of a new training called “Before the Blue & Beyond the Badge” designed to introduce recruits to Denver communities and learn life skills from veteran officers. *Story by Mary Jo Brooks on page 14.*

Overview of the 2023 Legislative Session

Story by Todd Engdahl on page 4.

Tax Relief for High Valuations To Be on the Fall Ballot

Property Value Increases from 2020 to 2022 in Northeast Denver Neighborhoods



By Brian Heuberger

Many homeowners throughout Colorado were alarmed to discover that the home valuations they received in May were disproportionately higher than usual and could



CO State Senator Chris Hansen who co-sponsored Senate Bill 303

burden them with exorbitant property taxes. Denver experienced a median valuation increase of 33 percent, and most Northeast neighborhoods were on the high end of that average.

“I’ve been doing this for 29 years, and I don’t remember the median increase in Denver ever being to this level,” says Keith Erffmeyer, the Denver County Property Assessor. “It’s the highest increase we’ve ever had, that’s true statewide, and so this increase is very historic.”

Certain factors contributed to the skyrocketing values of homes during this assessment period, including the recovery from the Covid pandemic, the influx of new residents, and the shortage of available housing. However, Erffmeyer believes the reduced number of sellers significantly contributed to the increased values of homes.

“There wasn’t enough of a supply of willing sellers to keep up with the high demand of people wanting to purchase,” explains Erffmeyer. “With the increased demand to live in Denver, buyers had to compete with 10 or 20 other people, so they were willing to pay increasing numbers and we had a phenomenon of properties being sold within 48 hours.”

Many residents are concerned that the jump in their home valuations will also lead to a spike in their property taxes. This has caused a high volume of residents to file petitions to appeal the valuations and argue for reductions. People can file their petitions until June 8, and the assessors will mail out all determinations on Aug. 15.

Denver usually approves approximately 50 percent of appeals, and certain strategies can improve the efficacy of the petitions and the chances of getting approved. “I refer to the Three C’s,” explains Erffmeyer. “One is to review the characteristics and make sure that’s right. Then there are the comparable sales from the appropriate period, and third is the condition of the property and whether it’s typical for the neighborhood.”

The repeal of the Gallagher Amendment is also impacting the dynamics of the property taxes. Gallagher required residential and commercial property taxes to provide the State with similar revenue levels.

When the housing market soared, Gallagher held down residential tax rates to match commercial rates. It meant that Colorado residential property taxes were some of the lowest in the nation. However, insufficient

tax revenue hindered cities from providing public services for residents and prevented schools from having adequate funding for students. Since Colorado voted to repeal Gallagher by an overwhelming margin in 2020, now there is no mechanism to pull down the property tax increases.

For this reason, the State Legislature passed Senate Bill 303 in the last days of the session to provide tax relief for Colorado residents. SB 303 will appear on the November ballot as Proposition HH, and the bill was championed by Governor Jared Polis and co-sponsored by State Senator Chris Hansen, who represents Northeast Denver residents. The bill decreases the property tax rates from

7.1 percent to 6.7 percent, and it also allows homeowners to reduce their home valuations by \$50,000.

“We wanted a package that would provide significant tax relief without causing giant fiscal problems, and for the average homeowners this will wipe out about 60 percent of their increases,” says Sen. Hansen, who also contends that the valuation reduction primarily benefits vulnerable residents and struggling families. “That \$50,000 will disproportionately help lower income homeowners. That number’s not a big deal if you own a \$2 million home, but it’s a really big deal if you own a \$500,000 home.”

A change to the Referendum C (Ref C) cap is another important component of the bill that would provide extra funding to local governments and school districts. The Ref C cap is a limit on how much revenue the State can retain and spend, and any revenue that exceeds the limit gets refunded to the taxpayers. However, SB 303 would raise that Ref C cap by one percent for ten years and allow the State to allocate the money to cities and districts. “We’re asking for permission to retain

that additional revenue to provide backfill funding for the school districts, local districts, water districts, fire districts, and library districts that rely on property taxes.”

House Bill 1311 is also a key feature of the tax relief package. HB

1311 equalizes TABOR refunds by assuring that all taxpayers receive an identical refund of \$661 regardless of the income they earned or the taxes they paid. “HB 1311 provides tax relief and refunds to the families who need it most,” says Hansen. “We have a relatively regressive tax system in Colorado, sales taxes hit working families much harder than wealthier families, and so the bill helps make the tax code more progressive and get relief to the folks who are feeling the biggest effects from inflation.”

This property relief package will be placed on the ballot in November, so Colorado voters will decide whether the tax relief package gets implemented.

“It’s the highest increase we’ve ever had, that’s true statewide, and so this increase is very historic.”

—Keith Erffmeyer,
Denver County Property Assessor

Bird Sightings

Generously donated by George Ho



Fig. 1

Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs

Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs are large sandpipers that look alike. The Greater Yellowlegs is a heavier, bulkier bird while the Lesser Yellowlegs is a slimmer, more delicate bird (Fig 1).

The bill of the Greater Yellowlegs is 1.5 times the length of its head while the Lesser’s bill approximates its head length. Side-by-side, their differences are more apparent (Fig 2). When observed separately, they are hard



Fig. 2

to differentiate, especially in flight because their wing-spans are similar. However, their calls are distinct.

Despite their similar appearances, the Greater Yellowlegs is more closely related to the Greenshank and the Lesser Yellowlegs to the larger Willet.

Bird Walks

June 3 and July 1. Two options: 8–10:30am or 8:30–10:30am (choose a 2-hour or a 2.5-hour walk.) Both walks are free but you must RSVP at www.blufflake.org/ birdwatching. All are welcome. Bring your own binoculars, or borrow a pair from your guide. 11255 MLK Blvd. Search FrontPorchNE.com for “Bird Sightings” to see all the past bird stories and photos from George Ho.

Front Porch

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Colorado State Senator James Coleman urges the Senate to approve HB23-1249, which intended to reduce youth involvement in the court system. An amended version of the bill calling for a study of the issue passed through both chambers.

By Todd Engdahl

Democrats Win Some, Lose Some During Legislative Session

The 2023 Colorado legislative session opened in January with high hopes by Democrats, who had won historic House and Senate majorities in the November 2022 elections.

Those hopes were tempered by the late evening of May 8, when the session ended in acrimony and recriminations after lawmakers struggled to resolve the two biggest issues of the session.

Here's what was in play on the final weekend, when lawmakers held rare Saturday and Sunday meetings leading up to the 120th and final day.

Land-use defeat—The ambitious and much amended land-use bill championed by Gov. Jared Polis died on the last day of the session. The Senate had stripped the top-down, state-control provisions of the original SB23-213. House Democratic progressives restored some of those provisions when they got their hands on the bill. The Senate, anchored by a group of local-control suburban Democrats, re-

fused to give in to the House changes, and the bill died. It was a major defeat for Polis, who promised the issue will be back. A companion bill, HB23-1255, actually passed without controversy. It bans cities from enacting growth limits.

Property tax relief passes, bitterly—The second major end-of-session issue was property tax relief. A complicated measure, SB23-303 proposed a reduction of property tax rates with losses of local government revenues to be backfilled with the diversion of some Taxpayer's Bill of Rights surpluses. All of this will have to be approved by voters in November because it requires a change in TABOR refunds. Democrats tweaked amendments to the bill to attract the support of some local governments, drawing Republican rhetorical scorn during debate.

The bill passed the House on the evening of May 8 without the no votes of the House's 19 Republicans, who walked out of the chamber. That's a first in the memory of this writer. The measure will be on the November ballot as Proposition HH.

House Dems fight among themselves—During recesses on that last evening, a meeting of House Democrats degenerated into a

Overview of the

rhetorical assault on Speaker Julie McCluskie, D-Dillon, led by Democratic ultra-progressive Rep. Elisabeth Epps of Denver. Democratic women of color accused McCluskie of not defending them enough against floor innuendos from conservative Republicans and hostile social media posts, and of not corraling GOP members more tightly.

Senate Democrats crack down—The Senate had been largely free of the House Democratic-Republican procedural conflicts this session. But when Republicans threatened to slow things down on that final Sunday and Monday, Democratic leaders lowered the hammer and limited debate. That ensured the passage of HB23-1311, a SB23-303 companion bill that will provide flat Taxpayer's Bill of Rights refunds next year.

Criminal justice—The third major debate during the closing days was over HB23-1249. Originally the bipartisan measure proposed raising the minimum age for charging youths with crimes to 13. The current age is 10. Instead of going into the criminal or juvenile court systems, youths would be supervised and treated by local organizations called collaborative management programs. In the face of strong opposition, the bill finally passed on the last morning in a highly amended version that basically calls for a study of the issue.

Setting Up The Session

When the session started, 30 members of the 65-member House were new, with many of them being young Democratic progressives.

Republicans were sobered by their

November losses, and the rhetoric of 19 GOP House members warned early on that they would make things difficult for the majority.

That threat played out as the session unfolded. Republicans made long speeches on minor bills they supported, and several times delayed action by asking bills be read aloud in their entirety. Democratic majority leadership responded by invoking rules that limited the length of debate, something rarely done in past sessions.

Veteran legislative observers, including lobbyists, said new members sometimes weren't interested in consulting interest groups about their bills, and that there was behind-the-scenes backbiting—like snarky Tweets—among House Democrats.

During the first part of the session, Democrats pushed through the GOP speechmaking and passed significant bill packages on gun control and protection of reproductive rights.

But House Democratic progressives had a mixed scorecard, losing bills to ban assault weapons, create "fairer" scheduling for workers, and allow cities to permit safe drug injection sites.

The Rest of The Issues

Budget—The 2023-24 state full budget package, which includes more than just the long appropriations bill (SB23-214), added up to \$41.4 billion from all funding sources, a 4.2 percent increase. Projected higher Medicaid costs, 5 percent raises for state employees, a 3 percent increase in payments to agencies that provide services to the state (think doctors who serve Medicaid patients, for instance), and inflationary costs drove most of the increased spending.

Other Criminal Justice—This was an active area of legislation.

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2023 Colorado Legislative Session

Bills of interest that passed include limits on the use of restraints in state prisons (HB23-1013), admissibility of juvenile statements when police lie during interrogations (HB23-1042), toughening of auto theft laws (SB23-097), and restrictions on no-knock raids (SB23-109). An effort to toughen fentanyl laws (SB23-254) failed.

Education—Bills of note that passed included a \$41 million increase in special education funding (SB 23-099), creation of a task force to study the state school rating system (HB 23-1241), a \$27.3 million program to improve math teaching and student performance (HB 23-1231), a provision of mental health screening in secondary schools (HB 23-1003), and banning of corporal punishment in schools and childcare centers. There also were several bills passed that seek to improve adult education and workforce training.

Environment & energy—This also was a high-interest area this session. Bills that passed dealt with air quality permits (HB23-1294, much amended), tighter utility regulation of utilities and limits on which rate-case expenses can be passed on to customers (SB23-291), reduction of greenhouse gas emissions (SB23-016), energy standards for appliances (HB23-1161), expanding the role and changing the name of the oil and gas conser-

vation commission (SB23-285), and creation of a task force to study Colorado River issues (SB23-295). Law-makers also passed a number of wildfire mitigation and suppression bills and approved the purchase of a second firefighting helicopter.

Firearms—This was the first hot issue of the session. Measures that passed included creation of a waiting period for delivery of firearms purchases (HB23-1219), strengthening the Red Flag law (SB23-170), increasing the minimum age to buy firearms (SB23-169), making it easier to sue gun manufacturers (SB23-168), and cracking down on “ghost guns” (SB23-279). But a proposed ban on assault weapons failed in committee with bipartisan opposition (HB23-1230).

Health care costs—Hospital costs were a major focus in this area and included measures to establish corrective action procedures for hospitals that fail to meet the minimum community investment thresholds (HB23-1243), some restrictions on hospital outpatient facility fees (HB23-1215) and hospital and medical cost transparency (HB23-1226 and SB23-252), and regulation of psychedelic mushrooms (SB23-290).

Housing—Beyond the late-breaking land-use bill, the legislative calendar was full of other housing measures.

A proposal to allow local governments to impose rent controls failed (HB23-1115), and there were a variety of renters’ rights bills, including some restrictions on landlords (HB23-1095 and SB23-184), eviction protections (HBs 23-1120 and 1171), and habitability requirements (HB23-1171).

Reproductive rights—The session’s second big controversy after gun control was abortion. Majority Democrats efficiently pushed through bills to expand access to reproductive health services



Front Porch photos by Christie Gosch

Rep. Serena Gonzales-Gutierrez gets hugs from colleagues on her last day as she transitions to her new City Council At-Large position.

(SB23-189), strengthen legal protections for reproductive health care providers (SB23-188), and provide stronger regulation of agencies that counsel against abortions.

School funding—The annual school finance act (SB23-287 this year) set operating for school districts at \$9.1 billion, an increase of about \$670 million, funded almost entirely by dramatic increases in local property tax revenues. Base per pupil funding increases by \$598.25, to \$8,076.41, an 8 percent inflation increase. Average per-pupil funding is estimated at \$10,579.

Todd Engdahl operates Capitol Editorial Services, which provides clients with research, reports and news on the state budget and other issues at the Colorado legislature. He’s a former executive city editor of The Denver Post, launched DenverPost.com and was a co-founder of the website Education News Colorado.



Governor Jared Polis signs SB23-170, a bill that was co-sponsored by State Representative Jennifer Bacon and that strengthened the state’s Red Flag gun control law. Photo courtesy of Rep. Bacon

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Tony Bolding pulls out four types of ribs he cooked during a class at Second Dawn Brewing, one of the local breweries where he brings his smoker.

By Courtney Drake-McDonough
Summertime means barbecue time, and on any given day aromas from neighborhood grills and backyard smokers waft through the air while teasing and tempting all those who catch a whiff. For those doing the cooking, especially when it comes to smoked foods, it’s about the cooking process as much as the finished product, requiring a commitment of several hours and periodic monitoring. A local company, Backyard Pitmasters Colorado, offers immersive classes—on wheels—that teach people the knowledge, skills, tips, and recipes that can help them achieve barbecuing success.

Owned by Central Park residents Tony and Sarah Bolding, Backyard Pitmasters Colorado is the first franchise of Houston-based Backyard Pitmasters, which holds classes in Georgia, Tennessee, and Texas. The team hitches their big, shiny, red smoker to a pickup truck and pulls up to local breweries, wineries, and cideries to teach classes on-site. That partnership works well for everyone involved.
“What makes us unique is that we come to our customers. We go into their neighborhood and to the local place where they like to hang out and teach the classes there,” says Tony. “The breweries have an established brand and

following, so we partner with them to bring something new to their current customers and to bring some new customers to them.”
Three-hour classes include BrisketU, RibsU, ChickensU, SeafoodU, TurkeyU, and the new Pitmaster360 Class, each costing \$149 per person. Tony covers different types of grills and smokers, the best kinds of wood for various meats, the solutions for potential problems, and the recipes for delicious rubs and sauces. The sessions also address ideal barbecue tools, preparation methods, cooking times, and temperature levels. Although the classes are primarily

Bring Expert BBQ

visual with Tony demonstrating the techniques, hands-on exercises include smelling different types of wood smoke, testing meats for readiness, and best of all, tasting samples of the finished product.
Job opportunities in advertising brought Tony and Sarah to Colorado from Texas in 2021, but they soon started looking into franchise opportunities that could be part of a long-term retirement plan. Back in Texas, through their work, the couple had gotten to know the founding members of Backyard Pitmasters.
“I’d been cooking up here and neighbors would ask me how to do this or that, so I just threw the crazy idea out to Sarah of reaching out to those guys in Houston to see if they’d be interested in partnering with us up here,” explains Tony. “Because we are friends, they know us, my cooking background, and my business background, so they were willing to test the franchise system with us.” This partnership became official, and Backyard Pitmasters Colorado was started in April of 2022.
Tony feels one of the reasons his classes are well-received is because he can relate to his students.
“I am the people in my classes—I’ve been cooking since the late 90s with friends, at events, in competitions, and just having fun,” Tony says. “I’m not professionally trained, but I’ve become a decent barbecue cook. It’s just that I’ve done it thousands of times more than the people in my classes, so I can teach them from my mistakes and show them how to overcome challenges and make adjustments. Barbecue isn’t a recipe. It’s a guide of how it *should* happen—but all these *different* things will happen.”
“You have to know the dynamics for each piece of meat,” adds Sarah. “The fat content is different, the weather’s different, and there’s a whole lot of nuance. Learning the tricks that go along with it is really complex, but it’s also very fun.”
The way those variables happen in Colorado was intriguing to Tony, who had never

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Chops to Your Own Backyard

lived or cooked outside of Texas. Adjustments have to be made in temperature ranges and cooking duration because of the higher altitude, which he discusses in his classes. He's also happy to answer specific questions people have after the classes.

For now, this is still a side business for the couple. "At first, it was just the concept of something we would want to do down the road," says Sarah. "That evolved into the barbecue conversation where I would be in more of a supporting role. At this point, it's definitely taking up a little more time than we expected, but that's the reality of any new business.

We're both used to being really busy and doing lots of things."

Tony agrees. "We're getting into a rhythm now of learning what we need to do and when we need to do it. So we're getting there, we're sleeping some, and that's good," he says, laughing.

There are multiple Backyard Pitmasters Colorado classes each month, from Fort Collins to Colorado Springs. Classes are held through the end of the year, including on how to smoke or fry turkey for the holidays. To learn more about the company, upcoming classes, and to book them for private events, visit <https://colorado.brisketu.com/>



Second Dawn Brewing owners and class attendees talk to Backyard Pitmaster Colorado co-owner Tony Boldin about the techniques he uses to smoke different types of ribs while sampling what he made for the class.

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Zipline fan Jack rushes by in a whirlwind of momentum. The zipline is among several new features at the renovated playground at Central Park. On the park's opening day, children lined up again and again to ride the zipline.

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By Sarah Huber

Even as storm clouds billowed overhead, a group of intrepid parents and their eager children gathered on the afternoon of May 18 to skip, run, and tumble across Central Park's newly improved and renovated playground at Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard and Xenia Street.

Though the day's grand opening ceremony was canceled by Denver Parks & Recreation due to lightning, families in attendance seemed happy to focus on play. Children blissfully climbed towers, splashed beneath water pumps, and swooshed down slides. Central Park mom Kelli Kopf says her son Otto has been watching the construction of the playground with mounting excitement. "He wanted to be the first down the slide," she says. Otto adds, "I like the roller slide because it's fast."

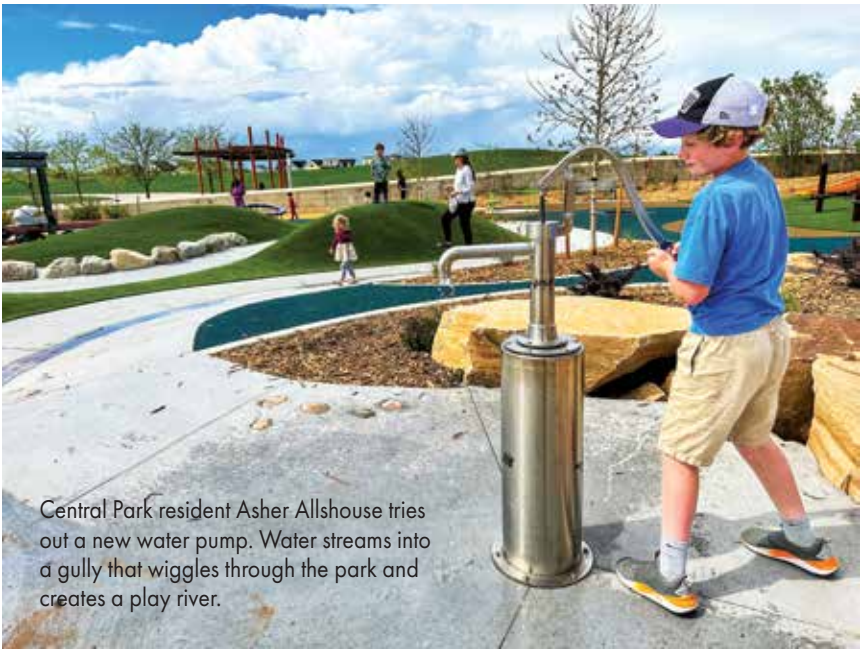
Chelsea Sealy says her kids have been counting the days to the opening. "I really appreciate the extra seating and shade," she says. "They made it such a kid-friendly place."

The redesigned playground integrates the most resilient structures from the previous setup with colorful new play equipment for the new design. Updated features include the roller slide, zip line, play tower, and a sandpit with mechanical diggers. The playground also added new picnic tables, soft playground sur-

Central Park Playgro Playtime Ram

facing, a modernized irrigation system, and for hot days, water pumps and spray misters. Additionally, artificial climbing rocks, racer bouncers, and swings from the original playground were incorporated into the refreshed site. Kristin Beard, the project manager of the Central Park playground restoration for Denver Parks & Recreation, says it was important for her team to create a regional park with "inclusive elements for everyone to enjoy."

She continues, "The new improvements respond to the growing Denver and Central Park neighborhood populations, material lifecycles, and impacts that park users have had on the site." The original Central Park playground opened in 2007, when the Central Park community numbered 7,500 residents (compared to approximately 30,000 today). By 2018, when Denver Parks & Recreation began collecting information for the Central Park restoration project, the playground was showing its age,



Central Park resident Asher Allshouse tries out a new water pump. Water streams into a gully that wiggles through the park and creates a play river.

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und ps Up as Reimagined Park Opens

due in part to the impact of Colorado winters and, of course, thousands of hours of joyful use. Personally, Beard says, she was excited to “restore this well-loved playground to a space for the community to enjoy.” The new playground includes a dedicated area for children ages two through five, as well as a space tailored to older children and “improved accessibility and inclusive features throughout,” she says.

In 2019, Denver Parks & Recreation partnered with Russell + Mills Studios, a landscape architecture and design firm with offices in Denver and Fort Collins, to solicit input on the project from Central Park residents. Beard recalls, “The ideas and concepts were derived from feedback we received from the community from surveys, public meetings, and pop-up events.” Russell + Mills Studios displayed illustrations of potential playground concepts at the Central Park Recreation Center and at a 2019 community event at the Runway 35 field while asking residents to vote for their favorite design plans and play structures.

Construction began in the spring of 2022 with the removal of old equipment. The \$2 million renovation and improvement plan, which was paid for primarily by Capital Funds and the DPR Legacy Fund, was slightly hampered by shipping delays related to the Covid-19 pandemic, but Beard and her team were able to juggle vendor deliveries to make the spring 2023 deadline. Beard says she hopes the renovated playground “encourages creative play through connective elements that provide a sense of exploration and promote ways of playing while living a healthy lifestyle.”

Greenway Park and Northfield Pumptrack Updates

Denver Parks and Recreation completed conceptual plans to restore the Greenway Park playground, off the Westerly Creek Trail in Central Park. This project was developed at the same time as the Central Park playground plans were finalized, but funding has not yet been secured for the Greenway project. Beard notes that the Greenway Park playground has “existing play elements that are well-suited for the site and in good condition, while other items need redesigns and new concepts.”

The community of Central Park also welcomed a new park of a different style in Northfield during the spring. High Plains Park now boasts 15,000 square feet devoted to a nature play area for kids and an exhilarating pumptrack for bikers that was designed by the Velosolutions pumptrack company. The looped track with an asphalt surface is spiked with winding curves, a wall ride, and a deep bowl for maximum air and technical tricks. Brody Driesbach, who lives in Northfield, says the park is a “good place to hang out,” and Quinn Varner, also of Northfield, says the track is “great for exercise and really fun.” The teens have also spotted skateboarders and “an awesome rollerblader” on the track, Dreisbach says. Bikes of all types may ride on this pumptrack located at 57th Avenue and Elmira Court.

The Central Park playground is located at 8801 MLK Jr. Blvd. The High Plains Park is located at the intersection of E. 57th Ave. and N. Elmira Ct.



The improved Central Park playground boasts a large play structure with slides and a sandpit. Denver Parks & Recreation project manager Kristin Beard says her team created elements for a variety of ages and interests.



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...NE News Updates

Ethiopian, and Costa Rican importers and that are then roasted on-site in his cafe.

The interior of Glissade is designed to offer a community space for Northeast residents. The cafe features a couch and chairs to provide a living room atmosphere, a countertop bar that surrounds a cozy fireplace, small tables for friendly conversations, and a large table for group gatherings. While some areas have electrical outlets so people can work while using their electronic devices, other sections are purposely devoid of outlets to instead encourage social interactions. For Harwin, offering residents a comfortable environment to meet with friends and engage in conversations is the most important benefit of opening the cafe and serving the coffee. Glissade recently began serving alcoholic beverages by adding beer and wine to the menu, and in June the cafe will expand its hours by staying open until 6:30pm Monday-Saturday.

2 Alexan Montview Plaza Progress

The construction for the new Alexan Montview Plaza project is making significant progress. This luxury multifamily development is located north of the Montview and Clinton intersection, which would position residents within walking distance of the Stanley Marketplace and the Westerly Creek Greenway. The buildings along the south side of 22nd Avenue and stretching across Chester Street will offer 395 residential apartments and townhomes that consist of studio, one-bed, two-bed, and three-bed units. The amenities of the complex will feature a pool, spa, clubhouse, and community garden. Residents will also have access to pickleball courts, fitness studios, work offices, and rooftop decks.

Additionally, the buildings along the north side of Montview Avenue will provide 14,000 square-feet of retail space. This Alexan Montview project is being constructed by Trammell Crow Residential, which develops multifamily real estate properties throughout the Denver Front Range. The business tenants for the retail space will be announced in the summer, the apartment units for residents will start opening in the fall, and the entire project is expected to be completed by next spring.



Photo courtesy of East High School

Earning a fourth place finish allowed the students on the East High con-law team to participate in the awards ceremony at the national We the People competition in Washington DC.

3 East High Con-Law Fourth in Nation

The East High Constitutional Law (Con-Law) team culminated their season by winning fourth place in the national We the People competition. The Con-Law team consists of students in the East High AP Government and Politics class. The annual competition fosters a passion for civics while the students are judged on their knowledge of constitutional, government, and political issues. East High has traditionally performed well in the We the People competitions, and after winning the state contest during the fall semester, the students traveled to Washington DC to compete in the national competition on April 22.

The National Finals competition involves simulated congressional hearings that require the students to testify in front of judges while answering their questions and discussing the topics. The East High class was led by teacher Mandy Hostetter, and the Angels were competing against more than 50 other schools that had also won their respective state or regional contests. The program took first place at nationals in 2019, and winning fourth place in 2023 was an especially exciting victory because it was the best finish that East High has reached since the Covid pandemic and it reflected a remarkable achievement for this generation of Con-Law students.

4 Northfield Drones

Students at Northfield who spent the entire school year developing a drone had their hard work rewarded with an exciting event. The Career and Technical Education (CTE) program enables students with a passion for engineering to construct a drone and design its features with the assistance of faculty members who lead the program and serve as mentors. The students collaborated to develop the drone, all

students in the class earned FAA 108 pilot licenses, and on April 28, the students delivered a presentation to Lockheed Martin representatives to showcase the features of their design and fly their drone.

5 Suncor Update

The Suncor Energy oil refinery in Commerce City has again released some potentially harmful chemicals that may have impacted the surrounding neighborhood. On Friday April 28, the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment announced that Suncor had a malfunction with the equipment and that it released excessive levels of hydrogen sulfide and sulfur dioxide into the air. Exposure to these chemicals can cause severe respiratory illness, breathing difficulties, and asthma attacks. As a result, the state issued an alert to warn residents in the area to remain inside their homes and keep their windows closed throughout that weekend until the emissions subsided.



Owner Sean Harwin personally installed the white and blue tiles that give Glissade Coffee a comfortable atmosphere and icy mountain feel.

By Brian Heuberger

1 Glissade Coffee Opens in NW Aurora

The new Glissade Coffee Company that recently opened on 25th and Galena offers specialty coffee for customers and a gathering space for residents. The coffee roastery and cafe was founded by Sean Harwin, and the term Glissade refers to the activity of sliding down a steep slope of snow. Harwin's affinity for glissading down mountain slopes provided the inspiration to incorporate the glissading concept into his cafe by having the coffee slide down the white espresso machines and glide right into the coffee cups. After spending six years overseeing a coffee company in Seattle, Harwin is now excited to develop his own specialty drinks for Denver customers with beans that are derived from Brazilian,

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game takes us on a ride across an American wasteland and through storylines that mostly end in, well, you'll see. The first comparison I can think of for many of the episodes is *Game of Thrones*, but even that is unsatisfactory. Yes,

you should be ready for the violence, the twists, and the general ugliness. Funny how a pandemic can bring out the worst in us.

The episodes range from tense to horrific to sublime. A psychopathic leader of the Kansas City faction kills with impunity in one episode; a hungry religious group (led by a sadistic preacher) searches for food in the dead of winter; a commune in Wyoming tries to recreate society in a Wild West/gated community. The most heart-breaking, glorious, and tender episode concerns an older gay couple who find safety in a secure neighborhood. They carve out a quiet life for themselves amidst a decaying world. Their story is the very definition of bittersweet. Just don't get too attached to any of the characters.

Aside from the thinly veiled allegory for the recent, real-life referent, the show wins on multiple levels. The stories are dense and multilayered, the acting is excellent,

the filmmaking is expert, and the world-building is convincing. Zombie apocalypse films/shows may have seemed distant to us in the past, but this one feels closer.

Real. Tangible. Visceral. Perhaps it is recent events, or perhaps our imaginations have expanded the bounds of our normal "what-ifs." Either way, the events are



The Last of Us

The Last of Us (2023)

Are we ready for pandemic media? Some say it is too soon, but this recent HBO production gives us just that, albeit couched in a different guise. Based on a video game of the same name, *The Last of Us* tells the story of a post-pandemic America where civilization has disintegrated after a fungal infection—which turns its victims into zombies—wipes out most of the population. The survivors live in a quarantine zone policed by a government organization near Boston, and their iron-fist rule has birthed opposition inside and outside the walls. Light summer viewing this is not.

The story centers around hardened survivor Joel (the gritty and wonderful Pedro Pascal), who is tasked with transporting a young girl, Ellie (a pugnacious Bella Ramsey) "out West" for reasons not quite clear to everyone; she is evidently the key to unlock a cure. We get all of this backstory in the first episode, and then, the game is afoot. The

Recent reports also demonstrated that Suncor has been consistently exceeding the state's permitting regulations. The state establishes limits regarding the quantity of sulfur dioxide and other dangerous chemicals that Suncor can emit. But according to data in Suncor's Environmental Reportable Events Summary, in March the refinery violated the state regulations and exceeded the emission limits on more than 60 separate occasions during that 30-day period.

In May, Suncor also closed one of its three plants to perform a maintenance project that could persist through June. Suncor says that the \$100 million maintenance project is intended to improve equipment operations and reduce air emissions, but during the project residents can expect frequent flaring from the smokestacks, increased noise in the community, and heavy traffic on the roads.

6 Denver Discovery Classrooms

In the spring, Denver Public Schools announced that Denver Discovery School would be closing due to low enrollment numbers. Denver Discovery shared a building

with Swigert International, an early education and elementary school with 575 students. Swigert will take advantage of Discovery's closure by expanding its student population and by utilizing some of those empty classrooms. Whereas Swigert currently has one classroom for 4-year-old Early Childhood Education (ECE) students, next year it will grow to three ECE classrooms. Swigert will also provide an additional kindergarten class and second grade class in the fall, and the school will add another first grade class the following year. This expansion will eventually enable Swigert to have four classrooms for each grade level from kindergarten through 5th grade.

7 Costco Opens in Green Valley Ranch

Northeast Denver residents will soon be able to get groceries at a new Costco in Green Valley Ranch. The location at the intersection of Peña and Green Valley Ranch Boulevards positions the store in an area that has generally been considered a food desert and where residents have long been pleading for grocery options. The Costco will open on July 1, and the full-service grocery store will also provide a pharmacy, food court, gas station, and tire service center.

scary tunnels of light. Perhaps our societal move toward that light is progressing. And that sticks.

You will enjoy this if you liked *The Walking Dead*, *The Road*, and/or *Snowpiercer*.

Available on HBO.

All The Beauty and Bloodshed (2023)

The life of Nan Goldin is a fascinating one. The subversive photographer has spun an interesting web in her life—from underground denizen in the 70s, to the front lines of AIDS activism in the 80s, to organizing opposition to the Sackler family (of Purdue Pharma) in the last decade, Goldin has fought the good, tough fights in her life. This illuminating documentary tells her whole painful, personal story, from the formative childhood event of her sister's suicide to her own bout with domestic abuse that landed her in the hospital and began her painkiller addiction. On the other side of it, she formed an activist group to hold the Sackler family accountable. She finds some success in the morass of venality that is the Sackler family.

The life of activism comes with costs, and she is by no means a perfect human. She admits as such, and she is honest—in addition to being very brave—about her travails. But she is a survivor, and she wishes that others may survive as well. The documentary structure and the narrative therein highlight this *milieu*, and director Laura Poitras crushes a diamond here. It's an interesting journey and a documentary that shines.

You will like this if you enjoyed *A House Made of Splinters*, *Dolores*, and/or *Till*.

Available on Amazon Prime Video.

And a book review from my daughter, budding 20-year-old literature critic Margaret Piturro, who goes to CU Boulder:



All the Light We Cannot See

All the Light We Cannot See

Anthony Derr does a masterful job of incorporating history with mystery and all manners of love. The 2014 novel follows two young people whose teen years coincide with World War II. Werner Pfenning, a German boy recruited into the military by Nazi leadership after his talent for radio technology was recognized, struggles with life as a soldier. Marie-Laure, a blind girl living in Paris, is forced to move in with family due to the Nazi occupation. Written in non-linear fashion, bouncing between the beginning of the war and the battle of Saint Malo, both Werner and Marie-Laure struggle with the varying shades of loss that come along with war. Their parallel stories depict two opposing ways that Europeans became victims of Hitler's regime. Derr eloquently evokes a myriad of emotions surrounding the two characters and their stories, as well as the war as a whole. While lovers of history may particularly enjoy this book, it is captivating for readers at all levels. This is the perfect summer read, as the series adaptation is set to premiere on Netflix on Nov. 2.

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

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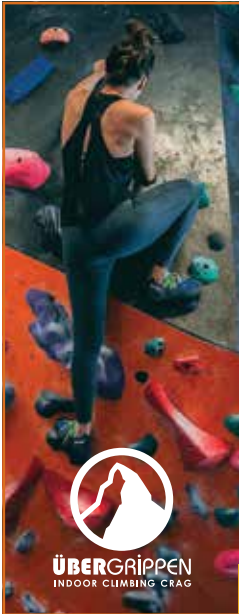


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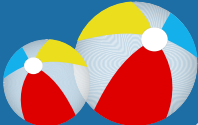
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June & Early July Events



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.



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

NE DENVER/NW AURORA EVENTS

Saturdays—City Park Farmers Market. 100+ local producers, live music, donation-based yoga and a run club. 2551 E Colfax Ave, cityparkfarmersmarket.com

Sundays—City Park Jazz. 6–8pm City Park Pavilion and Bandshell, 2001 Steele St. cityparkjazz.org.
6/4: Kick-off concert: Sarah Mount and the Rushmores
6/11: Stafford Hunter & Jazz Explorations
6/18: Dotsero
6/25: Ritmo Jazz Latino
7/2: Wellington Bullings

Thursdays starting 6/8—MojaBlu Concert Series. Free admission, food trucks. North Green (49th & Valencia) 6:30–8:30pm. 6/8–*One On One Motown Review*, 6/15–*Tunisia*, 6/22–*Wash Park Band*, 6/29–*Dotsero*. mca80238.com

Fridays—Free outdoor Yoga on the Plaza. YogaSix hosts a free 60-minute yoga class at 9:30am (weather permitting) in the Plaza space located on Main Street between 47th Ave. and 48th Ave. shopsatnorthfield.com

Every Sunday Starting 6/25—Central Park Farmer's Market. Colorado-grown produce, baked goods, meats, and more at The Green (29th Ave & Roslyn St.) 8:30am–12:30pm. mca80238.com

6/2 Friday—Judi's House Happy Hour in the Garden. Tickets include food and beverage, games and entertainment. 10125 E. 25th Ave, Aurora. judishouse.org

6/3 Saturday—Concert on The Green- Darling Revival. Free admission, food trucks. The Green (29th Ave & Roslyn St.) 6–8pm. mca80238.com

6/3 Saturday—Free Trigger Lock Giveaway Event. Evidence suggests that locked firearms reduces the risk of accidental injury. 10am–3pm. Park Hill Library, 4705 Montview Blvd. denverlibrary.org

6/3 & 6/4—The 10th Annual Park Hill Art Festival. Outdoors at The Park Hill Masonic Lodge. 10am–5pm. 4819 Montview Blvd. parkhillartfestival.com

6/3 & 7/1—Bluff Lake Bird Walks. Sat: 2.5-hour walk at 7:30am or 2-hour walk at 8am. Free but must RSVP at blufflake.org/birdwatching

6/4 Sunday—Glissade Run Club. Launch Party will be @ 8am. This event kicks off our weekly Wed 6:30am and Sunday 8:30am runs. ALL paces welcome, including walkers. 2520 Galena St, Aurora. glissadecoffee.com

6/7 Wednesday—Beyond Babble with Project Worthmore. Learn to support refugees, immigrants, asylum seekers, and others. 1–3pm. Park Hill Library, 4705 Montview Blvd. Register at helpinghabit.com/discover/14990

6/8 Thursday—Active Minds Presents New Zealand. Learn about the mixture of British influence and native Māori culture that make-up New Zealand. 1–2pm, Free. Sam Gary Library, 2961 Roslyn St. activeminds.com

6/8 Thursday—12th Annual Lowry Beer Garden Fundraiser. To benefit the Lowry Foundation. Lowry Beer Garden, 7577 E Academy Blvd. Details at: lowryfoundation.org.

6/8 Thursday—Park Lights and Movie Nights. *The Sandlot*. 7pm at Cottonwood Park, 2600 Abilene St, Aurora. auroragov.org



14th Annual Park Hill 4th of July Parade.

6/9 Friday—Birding Without Barriers. Designed for people with mobility challenges. 4–6pm. Sand Creek Park, 2700 Peoria St, Aurora. sandcreekgreenway.org

6/9 Friday—Movie on The Green-Lightyear. Free admission, food trucks. The Green (29th Ave & Roslyn St.) Movie starts at dusk. mca80238.com

6/9 to 6/11—Lowry Community Yard Sale. More info. at lowrydenver.com

6/10 Saturday—Cockpit Demo Day. Get an up close look inside select aircraft. 10am–2pm. 7711 East Academy Blvd. wingsmuseum.org

6/10 Saturday—Colfax Art Jams-Neon Garden. Featuring Vintage Theater. 12–4pm. Free. Fletcher Plaza, 9800 E Colfax Ave, Aurora. auroraculture.org

6/11 Sunday—23rd Annual Park Hill Garden Walk. \$15 in advance, \$12 for Seniors, children under 12 free, day of event \$20. 9am–3pm. Park Hill Neighborhood. parkhillgardenwalk.org

6/11 Sunday—Rescue Puppy Yoga. Donation-based yoga class alongside puppies available for adoption. 9:30am on the West Lawn. Stanley Marketplace, 2501 N. Dallas St, Aurora. stanleymarketplace.com

ra.stanleymarketplace.com

6/13 Tuesday—3rd Annual City Park Alliance Golf Tournament. Single \$175, foursomes \$700. City Park Golf Course, 3181 E 23rd Ave. cityparkalliance.org

6/17 Saturday—Forest Bathing. Open your senses and engage with nature. Bluff Lake Nature Center. 8–10am. 11255 E. MLK Jr Blvd. blufflake.org

6/17 Saturday—Volunteer Workday at Sand Creek. Work with SCRG to improve a Denver portion of the greenway. More info and sign-up at sandcreekgreenway.org

6/17 Saturday—Concert on The Green- That 80's Band. Free admission, food trucks. The Green (29th Ave & Roslyn St.) 6–8pm. mca80238.com

6/21 Wednesday—Speaker Series Presents Olivia Goodreau- "But She Looks Fine: From Illness to Activism". Free and open to the public. 7pm at the Eisenhower Chapel, 293 Roslyn St. lowryfoundation.org

6/21 Wednesday—The Power of Pride & Juneteenth. DU's head

women's basketball coach Doshia Woods talks about her journey. 2–3pm. Pauline Robinson Library, 5575 E. 33rd Ave. Must register at denverlibrary.org

6/23 Friday—Movie on The Green- Mitchells vs. The Machines. Free admission, food trucks. The Green (29th Ave & Roslyn St.) Movie starts at dusk. mca80238.com

6/25 Sunday—Qigong and Mindfulness Walk. Gentle mind/body practice followed by a contemplative walk. 7:30–9am. Bluff Lake Nature Center, 11255 E. MLK Jr Blvd. Free. blufflake.org

6/25 Sunday—8th Annual Corgis and Friends Take Over Denver. Admission is free for non-participating attendees. Great Lawn Park, 101 Yosemite St. <https://www.facebook.com/events/584705456926369>

6/25 Saturday—Film on The Field. This month: *Jurassic World Dominion*. Movie starts at dusk. Stanley Marketplace, 2501 N. Dallas St, Aurora. stanleymarketplace.com

6/28 Wednesday—Quaint College Cards. Enjoy a charming hour collaging hand made cards to give to loved ones. Ages 18+. 2–3pm. Park Hill Library, 4705 Montview Blvd. denverlibrary.org

7/1 Saturday—Concert on The Green- Thumpin'. Free admission, food trucks. The Green (29th Ave & Roslyn St.) 6–8pm. mca80238.com

JULY 4TH/HOLIDAY EVENTS

7/1 Saturday—Four Mile Historic Park's Independence Day Celebration. 10am–4pm. Live music, pioneer games, food trucks and live entertainment. 715 S. Forest St. Tickets at fourmilepark.org

7/1 Saturday—Glendale Fireworks Show. One of the largest and oldest displays in Denver. Starts at 9:15pm. For best parking and viewing info, go to glendale.co.us

7/1 & 7/2—Rockies vs. Tigers at Coors Field. Fireworks display after the game. mlb.com/rockies

7/3 Saturday—Civic Center Park Independence Eve Celebration. Gates open at 4pm, live music starts at 6pm, Colorado Symphony, fireworks, food trucks, and more. Info at denver.org

7/4 Tuesday—Central Park Pancake Breakfast & Parade. 9–11am, parade starts at 10:30am. The Green (29th Ave & Roslyn St.) More details at mca80238.com

7/4 Tuesday—14th Annual Park Hill 4th of July Parade. Floats, music, classic cars, costumed characters, and more! Parade starts at 1:30pm and runs along 23rd Ave. from Dexter St. to Krameria St. parkhillparade.org

7/4 Tuesday—Aurora 4th of July Spectacular. Free activities from 6–10pm. Live music, food, and fireworks at 9:30pm. Aurora Municipal Center Great Lawn, 15151 E. Alameda Pkwy. auroragov.org

7/4 Tuesday—Denver Municipal Band Patriotic Concert. 7–8:15pm. Free concert in Washington Park. denvermunicipalband.org

7/4 Tuesday—Colorado Rapids vs. Portland Timbers. Fireworks after the game. coloradorapids.com

METRO EVENTS

6/2 & 7/7—First Friday Art Walks. Art District on Santa Fe. 5:30–9:30pm. denver.org/things-to-do/denver-arts-culture/denver-art-districts

6/3 Saturday—Denver Day of Rock. 4 stages of live music in the LoDo District of Denver. denverdayofrock.com

6/8 Thursday—Art & About Tours. For visitors with early-stage Alzheimer's or dementia and their care partners. 1–2:30pm. 100 W 14th Ave Pkwy. denverartmuseum.org

6/8 to 6/11—Denver Fringe Festival. Four days of unbridled creativity. Venues throughout RiNo/Five Points. denverfringe.org

6/9 to 6/11—Denver Greek Festival. Food, music, boutique, cathedral tours, etc. 4610 E. Alameda. thegreekfestival.com

6/10 Saturday—Five Points Jazz Festival. Celebrating 20 years. Five Points neighborhood. artsandvenuesdenver.com

6/10 Saturday—Guns to Gardens Safe Surrender Event. Bring unwanted firearms for dismantling. Receive a \$50, \$150, or \$250 gift card. 10am–12pm. Cure d'Ars Catholic Church, 3201 Dahlia St. Details at gunstogardensdenver.org

6/10 Saturday—Steep Dreams Ice Tea Day Tea. Tour of our historic home and a refreshing glass of iced tea, in our garden, weather permitting. 1310 Bannock St. historycolorado.org

6/10 Saturday—June Sip and Paint. Instructor guides your art piece while you sip a beverage. 5–7pm. Molly Brown House Museum, 1340 Pennsylvania St. historicdenver.org

6/10 to 6/11—The Highlands Arts Festival. Music, food and fine art. The Highlands Masonic Lodge, 3550 Federal Blvd. highlandsartfestival.com

6/10 to 6/11—áya Con 2023.

A celebration of Indigeneity hosted by North American Indigenous artists. Included with admission, 10am–5pm. 100 W 14th Ave Pkwy. denverartmuseum.org

6/10 to 6/11—Denver Chalk Art Festival. 150 artists turn the streets of The Golden Triangle (new location) into a museum of chalk art. Cross streets are 12th & Bannock. <https://denverchalk.art>

6/10 & 6/21—Downtown Denver Public Art Walking Tour. A leisurely walk around Downtown Denver, learning about some of Denver's most unique, eccentric public artwork. Tickets \$5. Details at denverpublicart.org

6/11 Sunday—Sunday Sundae at Art Students League of Denver. A sweet fundraiser. A ticket buys you a handmade ceramic bowl plus all the Sweet Action ice cream you can fit in it. 200 Grant St. asld.org

6/12 Monday—Movie Nights—Black Panther: Wakanda Forever. Free, gates open at 6pm, movie starts at 7pm. Infinity Park, 4400 East Kentucky Ave, Glendale. infinityparkatglendale.com

6/17 to 6/18—Juneteenth Music Festival. Historic Five Points Neighborhood in Denver on 27th & Welton St. juneteenthmusicfestival.com

6/17 to 6/18—Annual Cherry Blossom Festival. Downtown Denver in Sakura Square. cherryblossom-denver.org

6/21 Wednesday—Trinidad and Colorado's Gender Legacy. Learn about Trinidad's innovative role in gender confirmation surgery. History Colorado Center, 1200 North Broadway. historycolorado.org

6/21 Wednesday—Culture Club. Guided artmaking workshop open to all. Registration required. 6pm. 965 Santa Fe Dr. msudenver.edu

6/24 Saturday—Denver Public Library Used Book Pop Up Sale. Green Valley Ranch Library, 4856 Andes Ct. 10am–2pm. denverlibrary.org

6/24 to 6/25—Denver PrideFest. Sunday, 9:30am parade starts at Cheesman Park and spans 14 blocks to Civic Center where the 2-day celebration takes place. denverpride.org/fest

6/26 Monday—Movie Nights—Encanto. Free, gates open at 6pm, movie starts at 7pm. Infinity Park, 4400 East Kentucky Ave, Glendale. infinityparkatglendale.com

6/28 Wednesday—Bike to Work Day. Water and breakfast stations—for a specific location or to register, go to biketoworkday.co

7/1 to 7/3—Cherry Creek Arts Festival. More than 200 juried artists, family-friendly art activities, live music, immersive art experiences and food & drink. Cherry Creek North. cherryarts.org

KIDS AND FAMILIES

Tuesday-Friday—Local Library Storytime. Different age groupings and locations. Info at denverlibrary.org

Wednesdays—Mornings at the Museum. Ages 3–6, 10:30–11:15am. Free. New programs every week. Aurora History Museum, 15051 East Alameda Pkwy. Register at auroragov.org

Fridays—Magic the Gathering Club. 4:30–5:30pm. Ages 12–18. A teen-run magic club. Park Hill Library, 4705 Montview Blvd. denverlibrary.org

Saturdays—Bluff Lake Nature Center Family Events. No event on 6/10. 11255 E. MLK Jr Blvd. Free, check times and programs at blufflake.org

Saturdays—Chess Club for 18 and Under. 3:30–4:30pm. Ideal for ages 5–18. Park Hill Library, 4705 Montview Blvd. denverlibrary.org

6/4 Sunday—Denver Young Artists Orchestra Tour Kick-Off Concert. Free, outdoor concert at Stanley Marketplace. Bring your own blankets/chairs. 2501 N Dallas St, Aurora. stanleymarketplace.com

6/6 & 6/14—Mad About Hoops. Learn how to master the hula hoop. Kids 5–12. At Pauline Robinson Library on 6/6, 11am–12pm. At Sam Gary Library on 6/14, 3–4pm. denverlibrary.org

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6/7 Wednesday—Early Literacy Art Exploration. Enjoy art with your child and help them develop fine motor skills. Ages 6mo to 5 years. 10:30–11:30am. Park Hill Library, 4705 Montview Blvd. [denverlibrary.org](#)



6/7 Wednesday—The (tabletop) Tempest presented by Peter Davison. Family-friendly version of Shakespeare's tale of magic and adventure. Kids 5–12 and their families. 3–4pm. Sam Gary Library, 2961 Roslyn St. [denverlibrary.org](#)

6/8 Thursday—Colorado Natives with Nature's Educators. Learn what makes CO habitats a great place for our feathered, scaly, and slimy neighbors. Kids 5–17. 11am–12pm. Pauline Robinson Library, 5575 E. 33rd Ave. [denverlibrary.org](#)

6/9 Friday—Comedy, Magic, and Juggling with Ann Lincoln. A live rabbit and dove to create some awesome entertainment. Ages 3–12. 3:30–4:15pm. Schlessman Library, 100 Poplar St. [denverlibrary.org](#)

6/10 Saturday—CSU Spur 2nd Saturdays. Free. Lots of family-friendly programming. 10am–3pm. 4817 National Western Dr. [csuspur.org](#)

6/10 Saturday—Family Program: Big Paintings. Make your own big paintings outside on the Museum's outdoor forecourt. 10:30am–12:30pm. For toddlers to 8yrs old. 1250 Bannock St. [clyffordstillmuseum.org](#)

6/10 to 6/11—KidsFringe at the Denver Fringe Festival. A two-day mini-fest as part of the Denver Fringe Festival, the KidsFringe offers free shows for kids and families. 2700 Arapahoe St. [denverfringe.org](#)

6/11 Sunday—Foxy and Shmoxy: Art Detectives. Join two witty foxes who solve mysterious cases involving artworks in the galleries. 10:30am–12pm. 100 W 14th Ave Pkwy. [denverartmuseum.org](#)

6/13 Tuesday—Canvas Painting w/ My Art Workshop. Learn painting techniques and create your own masterpiece on an 11x14 canvas. Ages 13–17. 3–4pm. Sam Gary Library, 2961 Roslyn St. [denverlibrary.org](#)

6/15 Thursday—Kids Book Club. This month's theme is Read Around the World. Craft and snack included. Ages 5–12. 4–5pm. Park Hill Library, 4705 Montview Blvd. [denverlibrary.org](#)

6/15 Thursday—Instrument Creation. Explore how music has an important role in brain development. Ages birth to 6yrs. 3–3:30pm. Schlessman Library, 100 Poplar St. [denverlibrary.org](#)

6/17 Saturday—Rainbow Family Party. Celebrate LGBTQ+ Pride with festive food, crafts, and activities for the whole family. 10:30–11:30am. Park Hill Library, 4705 Montview Blvd. [denverlibrary.org](#)

6/18 Sunday—Spanish Storytime at Tattered Cover Kids. 5pm. Stanley Marketplace, 2501 N. Dallas St. Aurora. [stanleymarketplace.com](#)

6/18, 6/21, & 6/24—Art Crawl: Messy Art Making Part 1, Clay Time! 10:30–11:15am. For caregivers with infants–14 months. Registration required. 1250 Bannock St. [clyffordstillmuseum.org](#)

6/20 Tuesday—Draw Yourself as a Manga/Comic Character. Students will learn to draw themselves as a fantastical character. Ages 13–17. 3–4pm. Sam Gary Library, 2961 Roslyn St. [denverlibrary.org](#)

6/21 Wednesday—Inside the Orchestra: Art Party. Children will be guided to create their own art inspired by short, live performances from a musician. Ages 5–10. 10:30–11:30am. Park Hill Library, 4705 Montview Blvd. [denverlibrary.org](#)

6/21 Wednesday—Crafternoon - Birdhouses. Build and decorate your own birdhouse kit. Ages 5–17. 3–4pm. Sam Gary Library, 2961 Roslyn St. [denverlibrary.org](#)

6/23 Friday—Decorate a Pride Crown or Pride Umbrella. Celebrate Pride and loving who you are with a fun crown craft. Ages 2–12. 4–5pm. Schlessman Library, 100 Poplar St. [denverlibrary.org](#)

6/26 Monday—Minecraft Engineering using LEGO® Materials. Venture into the world of Minecraft in our unique LEGO® experience. Ages 5–12. 10:30–11:30am. Schlessman Library, 100 Poplar St. [denverlibrary.org](#)

6/28 Wednesday—Play-Well TEK-nologies. Transportation Engineering using LEGO® Materials. Ages 5–12. 3–4pm. Sam Gary Library, 2961 Roslyn St. [denverlibrary.org](#)

MUSEUMS, ETC.

American Museum of Western Art. Open M, W & F from 10am–4:30pm. Admission is \$5. 1727 Tremont Pl. [anschultzcollection.org](#)

Aurora History Museum. Admission is free. Closed Mondays/holidays. 15051 East Alameda Pkwy. [auroragov.org](#)

The Byers-Evans House Museum. Operated by History Colorado as the Center for Colorado Women's History. History Colorado members are free. 1310 Bannock St. [historycolorado.org](#)

The Children's Museum. Reservations recommended at [mychildsmuseum.org](#)

Clyfford Still Museum. SCFD Free Day Jun. 25. 10am to 5pm. Children ages 17 and under are always free. 1250 Bannock St. [clyffordstillmuseum.org](#)

Denver Art Museum. SCFD Free Day Jun. 13. Youth 18 & under always free. 100 W 14th Ave. Pkwy. [denverartmuseum.org](#)

Denver Botanic Gardens. SCFD Free Day Jun. 6. Tickets and member reservations required. 1007 York St. [botanicgardens.org](#)

Denver Firefighters Museum. Hours: Tues–Sat, 10am–4pm. 1326 Tremont Pl. [denverfirefightersmuseum.org](#)

Denver Museum of Nature and Science. SCFD Free Night Jun. 28, 5–9pm. Open till 9pm on Fridays. 2001 Colorado Blvd. Timed tickets required. [dmns.org](#)

Denver Zoo. Check out the daily schedule at [denver-zoo.org](#). 2900 E 23rd Ave.

The Forney Museum of Transportation. Mon, Th–Sat, 10am–5pm; Sun, 12–5pm. 4303 Brighton Blvd. [forneymuseum.org](#)

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

History Colorado. Free membership for 4th graders. 1200 Broadway. [historycolorado.org](#)

Kirkland Museum of Fine and Decorative Art. Tue–Sat, 11am–5pm; Sun 12–5pm. Ages 13+ welcome. 1201 Bannock St. [kirklandmuseum.org](#)

Molly Brown House Museum. SCFD Free Day Jun. 1. Tue–Sun, 10am–5pm. 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. 1¢ 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. Open to the public from 9am–1pm, Wed–Sat. 10200 Smith Rd. [theurbanfarm.org](#)

Wings Over the Rockies Museum. Celebrate this Father's Day with \$1 admission for all Dads on 6/18. 7711 East Academy Blvd. [wingsmuseum.org](#)

PERFORMANCE/ THEATRE

Thursdays starting 6/1—Shady Grove Concert Series. 6/1: Stillhouse Junkies; 6/8: Birds of Play; 6/15: Automatic Iris; 6/22: Clay Kirkland & Friends; 6/29: Thunder & Rain. At Four Mile Historic Park. Tickets at [swallowhillmusic.org](#)

6/2 to 7/9—Driving Miss Daisy. Poignantly explores the transformative power of friendship. Vintage Theatre, 1468 Dayton St. [vintagetheatre.org](#)

6/3 to 7/1—A Mexican Trilogy: Charity. The story of the Moraleses, a Mexican-American family over a period of 100 years. The John Hand Theater, 7653 E. 1st Pl. [firehousetheatercompany.com](#)

6/9 & 6/10—Denver Chamber Music Festival Concerts. Two evening concerts with the Denver Chamber Music 7:30pm. The Newman Center, 2344 E Iliff Ave. [denverchambermusicfestival.org](#)

Through 6/10—On the Exhale. Visceral. Powerful. Necessary. Curious Theatre, 1080 Acoma St. [curioustheatre.org](#)

Through 6/11—Best Town. About stars, isolation, the magic of libraries, and Laura Ashley curtains. Name your price tickets. Buntport Theater, 717 Lipan St. [buntport.com](#)

6/13 to 6/18—Disney's Aladdin. One lamp and three wishes make the possibilities infinite. Buell Theatre. [denvercenter.org](#)

6/16 Friday—KGNU presents TAARKA. Western and Eastern folk, jazz, rock, bluegrass, old-time, Indian, and Celtic

music mix to create something unique. 8–10pm. Tuft Theatre, 71 East Yale Ave. [swallowhillmusic.org](#)

6/17 Saturday—Sound of the Rockies: Summer Sounds. Colorado's premier a cappella choruses. 2pm and 7:30pm. The Newman Center, 2344 East Iliff Ave. [newmancenterpresents.com](#)

6/21 to 7/2—The Book of Mormon. An international sensation. Contains explicit language. Buell Theatre. [denvercenter.org](#)

6/23 to 7/30—In The Heights. The story of a vibrant community in New York's Washington Heights neighborhood. Vintage Theatre, 1468 Dayton St. [vintagetheatre.org](#)

Through 6/18—The 39 Steps. Where Hitchcock meets hilarity. Singleton Theatre. [denvercenter.org](#)

6/28 Wednesday—Lyle Lovett and His Large Band with the Colorado Symphony. Red Rocks Amphitheatre. 7:30pm. [coloradosymphony.org](#)

6/30 Friday—A Night at the Movies with the Colorado Symphony. Celebrate some of the greatest film scores ever composed. 7:30pm. Arvada Center Outdoor Amphitheatre. [coloradosymphony.org](#)

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Denver Public Schools. Numerous volunteer opportunities with our students and schools. [equity.dpsk12.org/](#)

[get-involved/volunteer-services](#)

Food For Thought Denver. Providing food for students and their families. Sign up to volunteer or donate at [foodforthoughtdenver.org](#)

Project Worthmore. Help bag and deliver fresh fruits and vegetables, dairy, and household necessities to refugees. [projectworthmore.org](#)

Reach Out and Read Colorado. Help sort and pack gently-used children's books for underserved families. Email [info@reachoutandreadco.org](#) for details.

Reading Volunteers Needed Read with students in grades K–8. One hour a week. No experience necessary. Contact: Pil, 2011 @ [partnersinliteracy.org](#).

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 go to [sandcreekgreenway.org/upcoming-volunteer-opportunities](#)

Single Volunteers of Greater Denver. Not-for-profit singles group to meet others and assist nonprofit organizations for events/activities. Info at [svgd.org](#)

Village Exchange Center A non-profit formed to serve immigrants and refugees in Aurora & Denver. [villageexchangecenter.org](#)

Volunteers of America Colorado Branch For volunteer opportunities go to [voacolorado.org/volunteer-opportunities/](#)



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Front Porch – NE Denver

13

June 2023

Before the Blue & Beyond the Badge

Front Porch photos by Christie Gosch



Vickie Wilhite and Marilyn Ackerman, from "Together Colorado," have criticized police in the past. Now they are partnering with DPD to teach recruits about the importance of establishing relationships with communities they police.

By Mary Jo Brooks

On a recent Wednesday in May, more than four dozen police recruits stood outside the Blazing Chicken Shack in Park Hill listening to owner Rhonda Banks talk about how she and other small business owners have felt ignored by the Denver Police Department over the years. She described an incident when a patron's car was stolen but police officers never arrived to talk to the victim. "Know that when we call you, we're calling for a reason." She urged the recruits to stop in at her restaurant just to say hello when they are in the area. Leslie Williams, senior librarian at the nearby Pauline Robinson Library, had a similar message. "If you're in the area, stop in and talk to the kids who are in the library. Get to know them."

It was an invitation the new recruits heard again and again as they visited neighborhoods all over Denver as part of a brand-new program initiated by Police Chief Ron Thomas called "Before the Blue and Beyond the Badge." Thomas modeled it after a pilot program in Seattle that tries to create better relationships between police officers and community members. "I thought there would be some pretty significant value [for the new recruits] to learn about cultures and various communities, and some of the

challenges that exist between communities and police, reasons for distrust, and historical context," says Thomas.

The class is taught the very first week of the police academy to emphasize the importance of building those relationships. The first workshop was led by two leaders from Together Colorado, a faith-based grassroots organization that has often been critical of the Denver Police Department. Central Park resident Marilyn Ackerman, one of the group's facilitators, says she was shocked but very pleased when she received the invitation to teach the new recruits. "We want to be part of the team. We want to be part of their learning and what molds them. We want to change the face of policing from the old days."

Ackerman says she and Vickie Wilhite started their class by talking about the history of racism in the nation and how that has influenced policing. They taught about the history of the Ku Klux Klan in Denver and then brought the discussion forward to how ill-prepared the Denver Police Department had been in handling the protests that followed the killing of George Floyd. "We wanted them to really understand why so many communities don't trust the police," says Wilhite.

Both women ended up spending the entire week with the recruits, watching them meet community leaders and listening to veteran officers talk about things they had learned over

the years. They say they were impressed by how open and vulnerable the officers were during the discussions. "We thought we were going to be the only ones talking about the importance of building relationships, and nearly everyone who spoke emphasized relationships," says Ackerman.

On the day that the recruits spent in Police District 2 in Northeast Denver, Sgt. Nate Beiriger asked recruits to talk about any negative experiences they had with police in the past. New recruit Madison Gibbs described how she had been sexually assaulted several years ago and the police officer who was assigned to the case didn't seem to take her story seriously and didn't keep her informed about the progress of her case. Beiriger listened empathetically and then used it as a teaching moment. "We need to avoid taking a victim of a crime and turning them into another victim at the hands of the police department." He then added, "You don't have the option of having a bad day and taking it out on the community. What you do impacts lives and people will remember—good and bad."

After the class, Gibbs said that she had always been interested in criminology, but her assault—and the way she was treated by the police—acted as a catalyst for her to become a police officer. She thinks the Beyond the Badge training will be very helpful for the way policing is conducted in the future. "All of the stories we've heard really reinforce the idea that everybody is going through something and that you really need

to have empathy when dealing with members of the community."

Central Park resident and new recruit Katie Bonawitz agrees. She says she was especially grateful for the lessons shared by the officers with decades of experience. "It's nearly impossible to wrap my head around how much wisdom has been given to us." She believes the officers provided concrete ways to connect with the community they are policing. "One officer said he didn't know for the first 12 years to regularly go to community meetings. He told us not to make that mistake."

Chief Thomas says that he will solicit feedback from both the new recruits and community members about ways to enhance and improve Beyond the Badge going forward. He already thinks they should extend the training a few more days. He says he doesn't have specific benchmarks to judge whether the program is a success, but ultimately he hopes the recruits will develop a real understanding and love of the neighborhoods they are assigned to police. "We really would prefer that our interactions with the public always be positive. We know that's not always going to be the case, but if the majority of our interactions with the public are positive and not always enforcement-based, I think that is going to go towards improving our relationship with the community overall."

Community activist Wilhite says she was impressed with what she saw from this initial training. "I have real hope now. And I think going forward, we're going to be making real relationships and partnerships with police officers."



Librarian Leslie Williams tells new police recruits to stop in at the Pauline Robinson Library in Park Hill to meet and make connections with the young people who hang out there.

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June 2023

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Front Porch – NE Denver

NEWS IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD

MASTER COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION JUNE 2023

PUDDLE JUMPER (PJ) POOL RESTORATION UPDATE

We are pleased to announce that we have finalized the PJ pool contract with Palace Construction as of May 12, 2023, and we are now able to move forward with the pool's restoration. We fully understand that this process has taken time as we worked through the required processes with the Park Creek Metro District. We want to thank all of the stakeholders who have been a part of the work and efforts so far, and we also want to acknowledge the community's patience. Although we will be able to have the PJ pool facility open this summer, the experience may look and feel different. Given the current time it requires for the City and County of Denver to review and issue building permits, full re-construction will not begin until the fall. However, as soon as permits are issued, construction will begin.

What does this mean for PJ this summer?

Over the next few weeks we will be preparing the PJ pool for summer activities. Currently, we have permission from the City & County of Denver, the insurance company, and the builder to operate the facility while we await permits. During this time, we will not be able to use the office/check-in area or the two bathroom facilities. The check-in will be temporarily relocated to the concession stand, and we will be bringing in a restroom trailer on the north side of the pool (in the grass area). The outdoor showers will be available. These accommodations will provide us the appropriate number of facilities in order to operate the pool per City codes.

When will PJ open?

Our goal is to open the PJ pool as soon as possible in June. Our expected opening day timing is currently as early as Father's Day weekend and not later than the July 4th holiday. We will continue to provide updates, including a defined opening date, over the next several weeks. Right now, we are gearing up to offer "open swim" during regular pool hours. We are evaluating the capability to offer programming and lessons while we are under reconstruction this summer. Lessons will be available for all ages and levels at the other six community pools.

We understand that this situation is an inconvenience for many of our families that look forward to summer swimming and activities at the well-loved PJ pool. It is our plan to open the pool in June and offer as much

swimming and activity as the current conditions and limitations will allow.

Please refer to the MCA website for the latest updates on all community pools, programming, and summer fun in Central Park.

CENTRAL PARK BEER FESTIVAL

Save the date! Tickets for the Central Park Beer Festival go on sale Thursday, June 1st. The Central Park Beer Festival will be held on Saturday, July 15th on the South Green from 4-8pm. For more details about the Beer Festival and to purchase tickets please visit mca80238.com.

CONCERT ON THE GREEN SERIES

Join us at the South Green located at 29th Ave & Roslyn St. for our summer Concert Series. The concerts start at 6pm and are free and open to the public!

Saturday, June 3rd, Darling Revival

Saturday, June 17th, That 80's Band

MOVIE ON THE GREEN SERIES

Grab your blankets, coolers and your friends and come to our Movie on the Green Series! All movies begin at dusk, get there early and purchase some treats from one of the food trucks that are available. All summer movies will be held on the South Green located at 29th Ave & Roslyn St. This event is free and open to the public!

Friday, June 9th, Lightyear

Friday, June 23rd, Mitchells vs. The Machines

MOJABLU CONCERT SERIES

Join the MCA on the North Green (49th & Valentia) for great music and yummy food trucks! The MoJaBlu concerts start at 6:30pm and are free and open to the public!

Thursday, June 8th, One On One Motown Review

Thursday, June 15th, Tunisia

Thursday, June 22nd, Wash Park Band

Thursday, June 29th, Dotsero

FARMERS MARKET BEGINS

Every Sunday starting June 25th, 8:30am-12:30pm, South Green

Local vendors provide Colorado-grown produce, tasty baked goods, specialty meats, gourmet food items and more! We strive to support and enhance the surrounding communities by providing an experience where fresh and wholesome products can be found.



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ACTIVE MINDS: New Zealand

Thursday, June 8th, 1-2pm. Sam Gary Library

From its roots as a British colony, New Zealand emerged as a mixture of British influence and its native Māori culture. With a population of just over 5 million people, New Zealand has an outsized cultural impact in the region and the world. Join Active Minds as we tell the story of the world's sixth largest island nation as well as why its inhabitants are often called kiwis.

ACTIVE MINDS: Affirmative Action

Thursday, June 22nd, 6:30-7:30pm, Online

As the Supreme Court rules on the constitutionality of affirmative action in the area of higher education admissions, join Active Minds for an in-depth look at the origins, history, and future of affirmative action in the United States. Born out of the legacy of slavery in the

U.S., affirmative action has been a part of our culture for decades. Proponents claim it is necessary to even the playing field given past disadvantages while others argue that it just creates a new uneven playing field. We will examine both these arguments and more as we attempt to understand this complicated and important issue.

Join the Active Minds webinars by visiting https://www.activeminds.com/events_denver.html.

Jennifer Olsen
Communications Manager
Jolsen@mca80238.com



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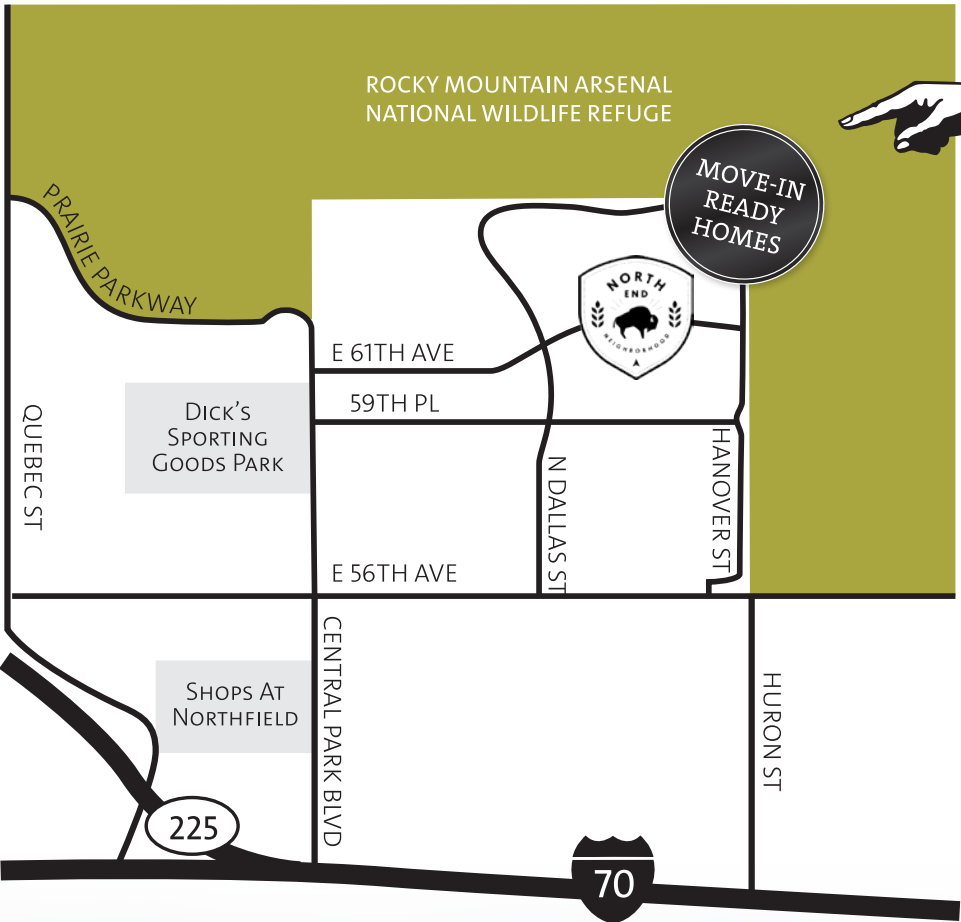
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