

Front Porch

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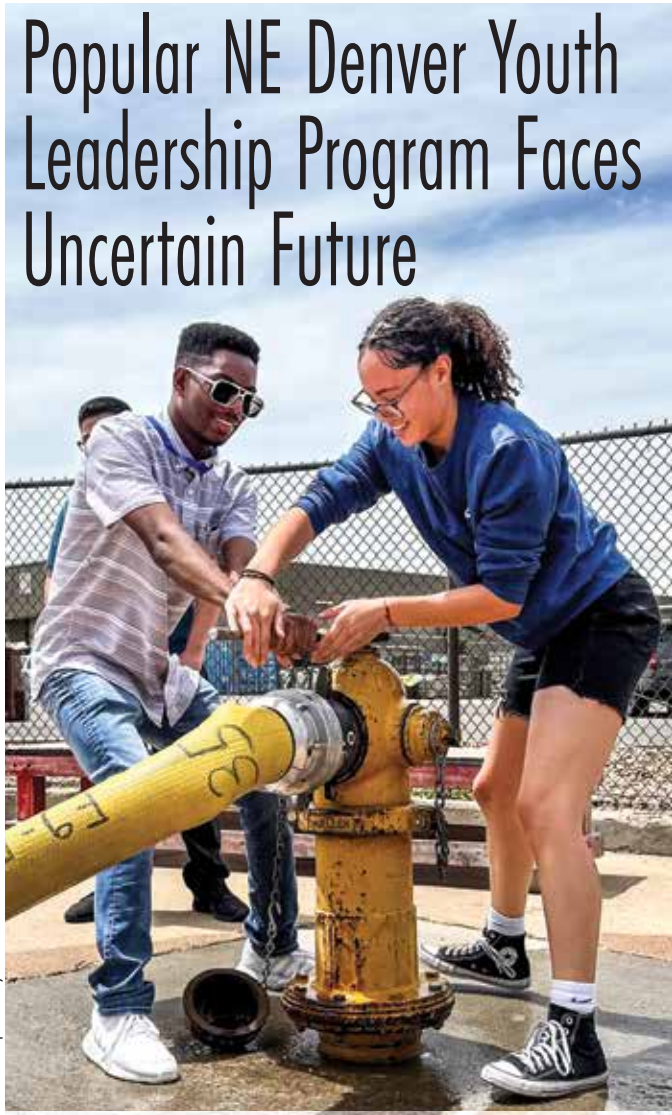
NORTHEAST DENVER

JULY 2023



Valor on the Fax:
“An Incredible
Journey” to
Supportive
Housing

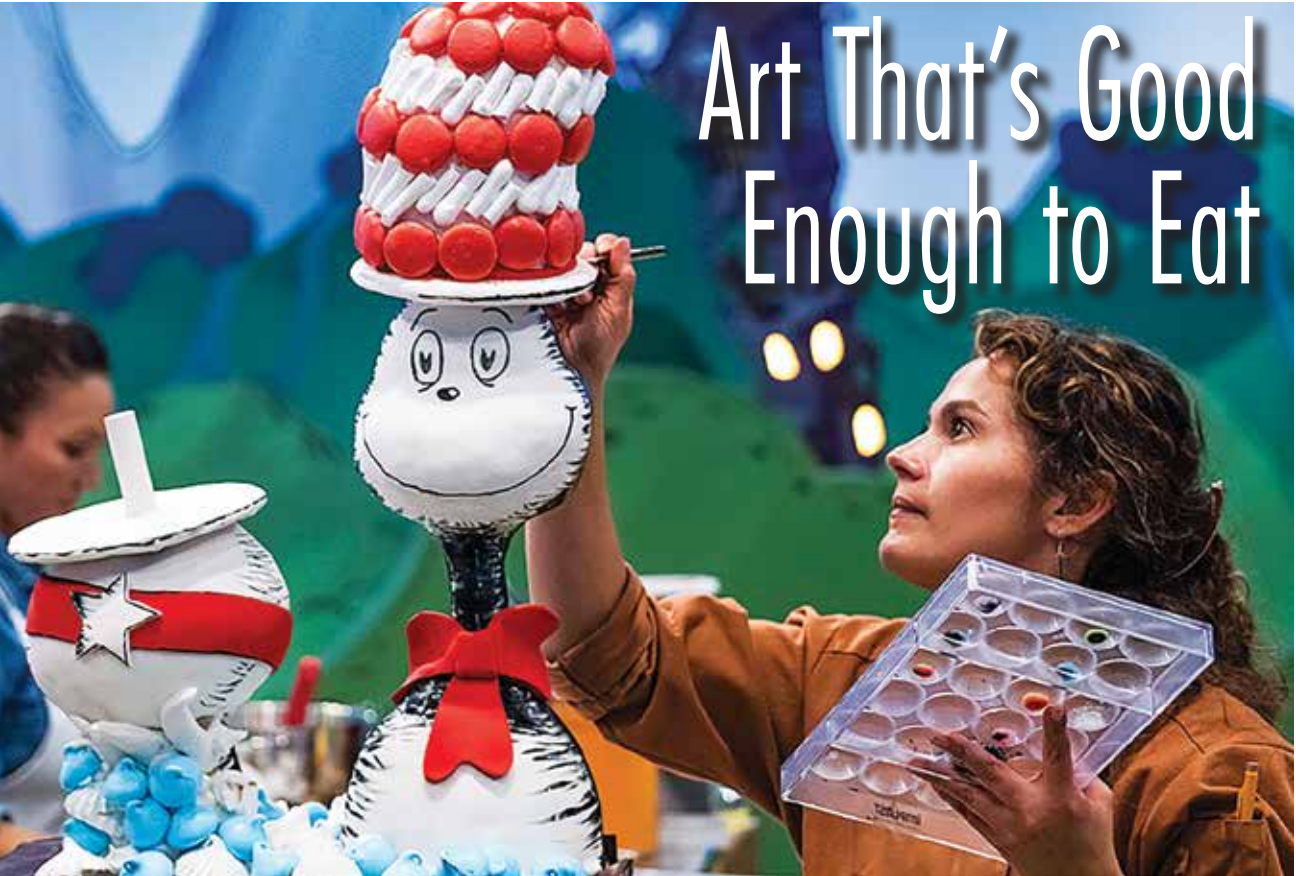
“It has been an incredible journey,” says Kate Kerkmans, Pres. and CEO of the Brain Injury Alliance, of the effort to bring 72 new units of permanent housing to East Colfax for people with brain injuries. Pictured left to right: Mike Rooney, Dir. Of Clinical Services; Kerkmans; Jeff Martinez, Pres. of Brothers Redevelopment, and Grant Williams, Community Manager.



Popular NE Denver Youth
Leadership Program Faces
Uncertain Future

DSST Green Valley Ranch rising seniors Quentin Newbern and Anela McCowin learn about teamwork during their visit to the Denver Fire Academy.. Story by Mary Jo Brooks on page 8.

Valor on the Fax, a new four-story apartment building serving people with traumatic brain injuries and/or related disabilities, welcomed its first tenants in April. The 72-unit building promises to be a catalyst, not only for those formerly unhoused, but for the East Colfax neighborhood. The structure pairs design that respects the area’s aesthetics with an interior that fosters relaxation and healing. Story by Martina Will, PhD on page 14.



Art That’s Good
Enough to Eat

Angel Figueroa, owner of 3 Cherries on Top in Park Hill, turns cakes, cupcakes, and sugar cookies into creative masterpieces. Her artistry earned her a spot on the reality baking show, Dr. Seuss Baking Challenge, where she designed a cake depicting the Cat in the Hat popping out of a mail shipment box. “It was a nod to the pandemic, when everyone was ordering things online,” she says. Story by Sarah Huber on page 4.



Sanderling, originally misidentified as the Western Sandpiper.

Bird Sightings

Generously donated by George Ho

Although it can be difficult to distinguish between birds that have similar features, modern technology can help birders correct mistakes and make accurate identifications. The bird on the left was misidentified as a Western Sandpiper, a small sandpiper and one of many migratory shorebirds that returns to Denver in the spring. It's smaller than the Killdeer and has a black bill and legs. The bird on the right was misidentified as a Franklin's Gull, which is also more common in the spring. Turns out, they are a Sanderling and a Laughing Gull respectively.



Laughing Gull, originally misidentified as the Franklin's Gull.

Birding can be nuanced and humbling. But modern technologies, such as continuous auto-focusing digital cameras, and the Merlin app from the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, have helped me become a better birder—more skillful, knowledgeable, and accurate. Two recent examples from my birding experiences at the Rocky Mountain Arsenal

National Wildlife Refuge demonstrate the usefulness of these tools. In April, I misidentified the sandpiper as a Western and the gull as a Franklin's. If I reported these results as such without photos, they would have been incorrectly accepted and entered into Cornell's huge database. However, because of the captured photos (above) that were subjected to scrutiny under the Merlin

app for photo ID, the misidentifications were corrected to the Sanderling and Laughing Gull, both considered rare sightings for Denver. Without modern technologies, the

initial misidentifications would have been recorded erroneously. But with the help of photos and Merlin's photo ID app, the mistakes were corrected and the accurate data of these rare sightings were recorded.



Sanderling (8 inches)



Western Sandpiper (6 inches)

The Sanderling is larger than the Western Sandpiper, and the patterns or markings on the head and breast have subtle differences. Also, the Sanderling is missing the hind toe (not always obvious).



Laughing Gull (17 inches)



Franklin's Gull (13 inches)

The Laughing Gull is larger than the Franklin's and lacks the white spots on the black primary feathers (seen better in flight). The bill is longer and thicker. Otherwise they are quite similar.

Bird Walks

July 1 and August 5. 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.



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PUBLISHERS: Steve Larson & Carol Roberts
EDITOR: Brian Heuberger 303-526-1969 or
Editor@FrontPorchNE.com

DESIGN EDITOR: Christie Gosch, DesignEditor@FrontPorchNE.com
AD SALES MANAGER: Heather Weldon 720-655-4016 or
AdSalesManager@FrontPorchNE.com

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Art That's Good Enough to Eat



Angel Figueroa, owner of 3 Cherries on Top in Park Hill, finishes a tray of cupcakes with a dash of sprinkles. Her pink and yellow flowered cake was destined for an anniversary celebration.

By Sarah Huber

Park Hill artist Angel Figueroa paints, sculpts, and builds. With exquisite attention to detail and bright explosions of color, she creates whimsical fairy gardens, smiling Minions, jovial cows, and gleaming race cars. And she has received national recognition for pulling this off with cake batter, buttercream, and a tall stack of fondant.

Figueroa launched her custom cake business, 3 Cherries on Top, out of her kitchen five years ago. “We started by word of mouth, and it’s never stopped,” she says. “For some of my clients, I made the cake for their baby shower, and then I’m making the cake for their child’s sixth birthday.”

3 Cherries on Top is named in honor of Figueroa’s three children. “I am proud to be a working mom who can do what I love and be present for my family,” she notes.

Figueroa grew up in Chile, where she trailed her grandmother in the kitchen and “wanted to go to culinary school from day one,” she recalls. At age 16, Figueroa moved in with extended family in Park Hill and attended East High School, but she soon returned to Chile to pursue her epicurean dream. Three years in culinary school led to an internship in Thailand, where Figueroa baked, frosted, and molded her way from kitchen intern to pastry chef. “For me, it was always the artistic part of pastries,” she says.

It wasn’t until her sister asked Figueroa to live with her back in Denver that Figueroa considered a dream grander than culinary school: a dream of channeling her creativity in the kitchen into her own business. “This was important to me as an immigrant—to make this happen and show others they can too,” she says. Meanwhile, Figueroa married, and she and her husband, Carlos, began looking for their first home. “It was always going to be in Park Hill,” she says. “That’s where we have friends, family, and a place we know and love.” In 2018, she and Carlos expanded their new home with a modernized kitchen featuring four refrigerators (one for the family and three for custom cakes), a huge island, and three spice racks bursting with sprinkles. 3 Cherries on Top was born.

“Each cake I make for 3 Cherries on Top is unique; a work of art and a little piece of myself,” she says. “This is not my job but my passion.” Figueroa especially enjoys preparing cakes for kids. “I love fairy cakes,” she says. “I can spend hours on the mushrooms, houses, and flowers. It’s almost like I’m playing.” She frequently adorns her cakes with sculpting from fondant or rice crispy treats. “Sometimes I even use a hammer and PVC pipes,” she adds, explaining, “The pipes provide the structure that allow me to make a standing character cake.”

Figueroa’s custom cakes start with a con-

versation. “Clients can request a quote from my website and send pictures of what inspires them and then I give them ideas,” she says. The number of cake tiers is dictated by how many people the client wishes to serve, and the client selects flavors for the cake batter, buttercream frosting, and cake filling; options include strawberry, raspberry, chocolate, and dulce de leche. Figueroa spends one to four days creating her confectionary wonders. “Sometimes I just can’t stop,” she says with a laugh. She has crafted desserts as varied as a five-foot Cinderella cake topped by a shimmering golden carriage and, for the Denver Museum of Nature and Science, a cake embellished with edible miniatures of museum acquisitions. She also bakes and decorates sugar cookies frosted in intricate patterns and comical characters. “I love to turn into reality what the client can imagine,” she says.

Figueroa overhauled 3 Cherries on Top two years ago after her daughter was diagnosed with celiac disease. “We had to change absolutely everything as a family, and it’s made our business a venture for more awareness for gluten disease,” she says. Figueroa experimented with recipes and techniques until her gluten-free cakes tasted and looked as fabulous as her standard creations.

Figueroa’s talent has been appreciated nationally, with invitations from Food Network and bridal magazines. In 2022, she was selected to compete on Amazon Prime’s reality baking show, *Dr. Seuss Baking Challenge*. Figueroa advanced to the semifinals, thanks to her captivating cake depicting the Cat in the Hat popping out of a mail shipment box and a three-dimensional Yertle the Turtle in buttercream and fondant.

“I was thinking, ‘If I make it to the second episode, I’m happy,’” she says. “When I was there, I found I could put everything out there and give 100 percent.” Figueroa continues, “It gave me the opportunity to see what I could do. I love the challenge and the artistry of each and every cake.”

To view more of Figueroa’s creations, visit www.3cherriesontop.com.



Figueroa’s flair for cakes ranges from lacy edible flowers to mythical creatures and Highland cows. She says she especially enjoys creating whimsical cakes for children.



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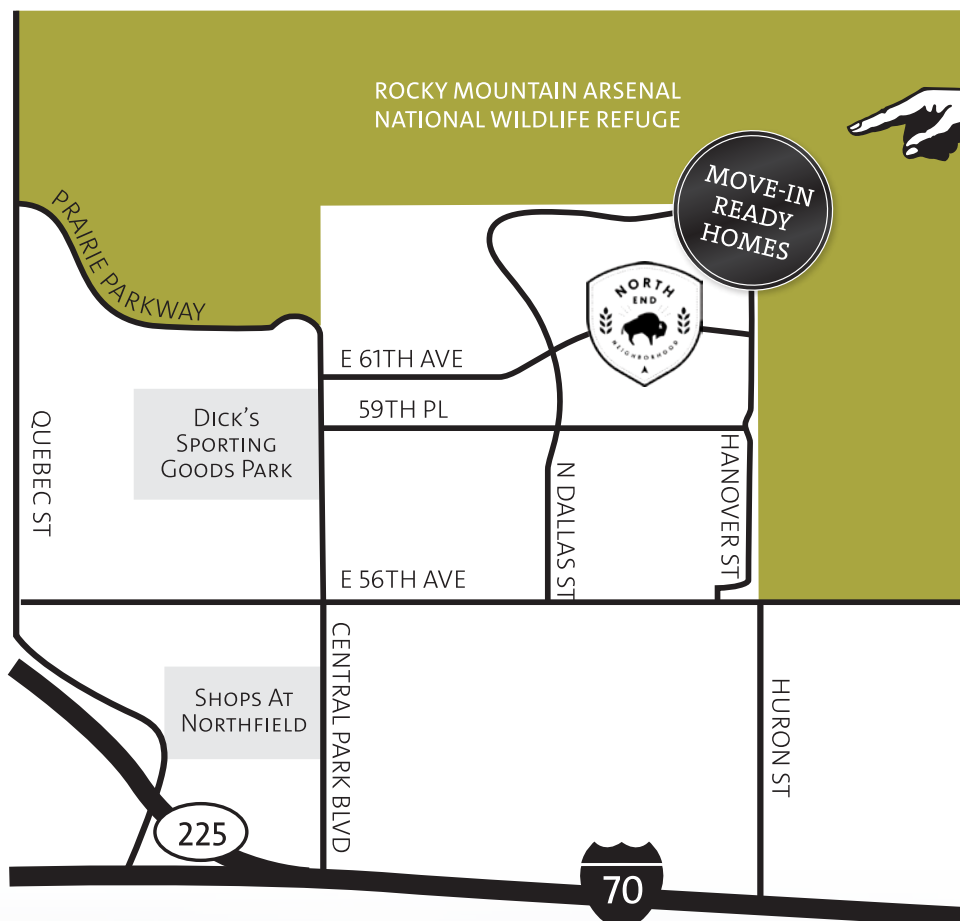
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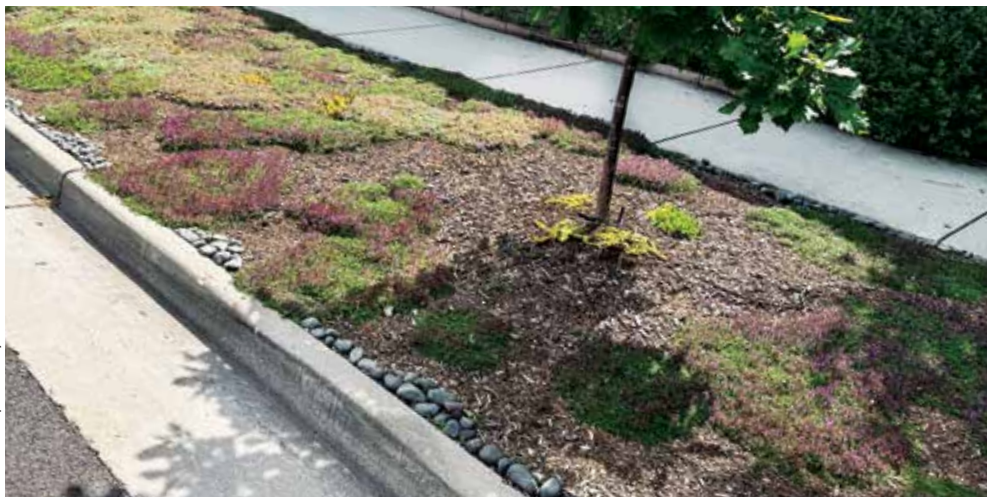


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Examples of drought-resistant landscaping above, including the bottom photo of Anne Hazelton's hell strip that features colorful Creeping Thyme, Creeping Jenny under the oak tree, and some yellow/green Angelina Sedum.

Xeriscaping in the Denver Climate

Drought-Resistant Landscaping

By Brian Heuberger

The Denver environment features adverse conditions that can hinder homeowners from being able to maintain landscapes or cultivate gardens. The high altitude can cause grass to wither in the strong sun, the semi-arid climate can prevent plants from getting adequate rain, and the water restrictions limit the use of sprinkler systems to just three days a week. Since these conditions can impair the quality of Denver landscapes, many homeowners are turning to xeriscaping as an effective solution.

"I started xeriscaping seven years ago," says Central Park resident Anne Hazelton. "I have no grass, and I haven't even turned my sprinklers on this year. The xeriscape is drought-resistant and the plants don't need much water, so I just water it by hand for about five minutes twice a week."

The word "xeriscaping" was coined by Denver Water in 1981. The "xeri" prefix derives from the Greek word for "dry," and xeriscaping refers to maintaining landscapes with reduced irrigation by using low-water plants and efficient soiling. However, many Colorado cities or Homeowner Associations (HOAs) have traditionally prohibited xeriscaping because the process involves ripping out the grass from yards and replacing it with drought-resistant plants. But with drought conditions intensifying and water resources dwindling, the Colorado Legislature passed a bill in 2021 to prevent HOAs from restricting the use of xeriscaping. This has led to a surge of residents removing their grass to cultivate xeriscapes, and this trend is also visible in Northeast Denver.

"I think it's gaining momentum," exclaims Hazelton. "I was the first on my block to grow a xeriscape, but now I just see more and more people switching out their grass with xeriscapes around the neighborhood."

Certain drought-resistant plants have been highly conducive for Hazelton's xeriscape. "The Angelina Sedum pro-

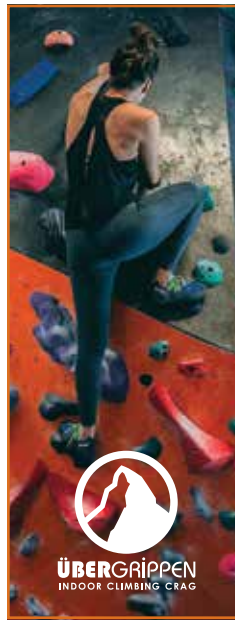
vides a little pop of spiky yellow and dark green, and I also planted Creeping Jenny to add a different brighter green color," says Hazelton, who is especially proud of one particular plant. "The Creeping Thyme is my ground cover because people can walk on it, and it's got nice purple, pink, and lilac colors. I'm thrilled that the Creeping Thyme propagated in a flowing river, and the crescent shape is really stunning."

Homeowners can also cultivate xeriscape gardens by using drought-resistant flowers. Chris Ibsen, the gardening specialist for Plum Creek Garden Market, explains the importance of selecting plants that are optimal for Denver's climate. "You want local plants for gardens because they're from seedlings that grew in Colorado soil," says Ibsen. "Plants that are grown locally are used to the arid Denver environment, they're already acclimated to this climate, and they're ready to succeed in the ground."

Plum Creek Garden Market originated in 2013 as a seasonal "pop-up" gardening center. Plum Creek now has six locations, including a market in the parking lot of the Shops at Northfield. "There are very few Colorado native plants available," says Ibsen. "But we have a lot of varieties that are genetically connected to those native plants, such as Coreopsis plants, blanket flowers, and Larkspur annuals."

A primary mission of Plum Creek is to promote the mental health benefits of gardening and to help Denver residents excel at the craft. "It's good to get outside, unplug from our mobile devices, and see our flowers or eat our vegetables," says Ibsen. "The planning process of deciding where to place the plants helps our minds grow, and seeing our plants thrive gives us a real glimmer of hope."

Hazelton also appreciates the positive impact of a healthy xeriscape. "When I open the blinds in the morning, it fills me with joy," says Hazelton. "It's just so calming and blissful to look out at what's a beautiful xeriscape, and rather than just grass it's like I have an English garden in my yard."



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Photo courtesy of Mike Johnston for Mayor

Denver Election Runoff Results

City Council District 8 (Central Park, Northeast Park Hill, and East Colfax)



The City Council races in the runoff election featured contests between moderates versus progressives. In District 8, Shontel Lewis was the progressive candidate going against Brad Revare

as the moderate alternative. The closeness of the results was a dramatic aspect of this race. Although Revare had an early lead on Election Day, his slim margin diminished throughout the night as the late ballots from progressive voters got counted. This helped Lewis make a comeback, take the lead, and win the seat with a 51%-49% victory.

“I feel such an immense amount of gratitude, humility, and responsibility,” says Councilwoman-elect Shontel Lewis. “I’m glad folks showed their belief in what I’ve been saying by electing me, I’m ready to serve the people, and I’m ecstatic that I can lead for the next four years.”

Lewis is also confident that her experience serving on the RTD board will help her effectively transition onto the City Council. “For the first time, my past and where I am today makes sense,” says Lewis. “I’ve done so many different things, including gang reduction, youth services, housing stability, the economics office, and workforce development. But I’ve never had just one interest in terms of specific issues. I understand the threads and interconnectedness of all these issues, and my experience makes me uniquely prepared to navigate this position.”

City Council District 9 (South and North Park Hill, North Denver, and Five Points)



The race for the District 9 seat was the most intense contest of the election cycle. Candi CdeBaca was an incumbent councilmember and Democratic Socialist

who was being challenged by the more moderate Darrell Watson. But CdeBaca garnered a controversial reputation during her first term as many critics claimed that she used divisive rhetoric, harbored extreme positions, and cast obstructive votes.

These controversies caused donors to get heavily involved with this race to oppose CdeBaca and support Watson, as the \$1.2 million dollars that Watson raised more than doubled that of CdeBaca and was the most of any city council candidate. On Election Day, the outcome of the race was especially shocking due to the size of the blowout. Watson wound up defeating CdeBaca by a 61%-39% margin, which was the second-largest margin of victory in a runoff election over the past decade.

“When we saw the final number at 61 percent we knew it was not simply a validation of our messaging, but it was a validation on the people within District 9,” says Councilman-elect Darrell Watson. “They communicated clearly that what wins in District 9 is progress, bringing people together, and really listening and working together on solutions. I was overjoyed because that was not just some small win—it was an unprecedented win—and so I look forward to leveraging this as a mandate for change within District 9, for how we engage with the community, and that positive message is the way we’re going to continue leading.”

Watson is now fulfilling many tasks to complete the transition process and prepare for his new role. “We’re meeting with other councilmembers so I can form deeper levels of relationships, get feedback and input from leaders, and understand the council culture and how things work,” says Watson. “But I’m also a numbers person, so I’m really digging into the specific data within our district so I have a better sense of where our 311 call volumes occur, our success rates with responsiveness to communities, and where we’re stuck and need to provide more support.”

By Brian Heuberger

After several months of campaigning and two rounds of voting, the results of the 2023 Denver elections have been certified and the leaders of our communities have been determined. Mike Johnston will serve as the new Denver Mayor and become the first new occupant of the mayor’s office in 12 years. Northeast residents also decided which candidates should serve on the City Council, with Shontel Lewis winning the race for District 8 and Darrell Watson earning the seat for District 9. Many factors contributed to the dynamics of the election, the patterns of the voters, and the outcomes of the races.

Mayor’s Race

Support from Endorsements

The types of endorsements that were accumulated seemed to impact the level of support for the candidates. Most of Brough’s endorsements came from business interests, real estate organizations, and even Republican groups. In contrast, Johnston was able to consolidate the progressive vote by receiving endorsements from most of the progressive mayoral candidates who weren’t able to get past the first round, such as Lisa Calderon, Leslie Herod, Terrance Roberts, and Ean Tafoya.

The Influence of Money

The prevalence of money in the mayoral race demonstrated the failures of the Fair

Election Fund. The fund was approved by Denver voters in 2018, and it encouraged candidates to receive small donations that would then be matched by taxpayer money. The goal was to reduce the influence of wealthy donors on the races and enable more grassroots candidates to run for office. But the Fair Election Fund couldn’t account for independent expenditure committees that were not affiliated with the mayoral campaigns and that could raise limitless donations for their preferred candidates. As a result, these groups injected substantial funds into the mayoral race, with Brough raising \$1.4 million and Johnston trouncing that by raising \$4.9 million.

Both candidates attacked the fundraising patterns of their rivals for opposite reasons. Advancing Denver generated funds for Johnston, with most of its donors living outside of Colorado, including Michael Bloomberg in New York and LinkedIn founder Reid Hoffman from California. Brough’s team claimed it was wrong for Johnston to let these outside donors impact the outcome of the Denver election. A Better Denver raised money for Brough and was mostly filled with donations from local business interests, including Republicans Pete Coors and Philip Anschutz. Johnston’s team claimed that Brough taking money from local businesses could increase their influence over the policies of the Denver government.

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Popular NE Denver Youth Leader

By Mary Jo Brooks

A small business owner has called the police because a homeless person set up a tent in front of his store and won't leave. When the young officers arrive on the scene, they know they need to treat everyone with respect while defusing the tense situation. "I thought it was going to be easy, but when I was supposed to react, my mind went blank," says Nahom Amanuel. But Amanuel is not a police officer—he's a rising sophomore at DSST Green Valley Ranch. And the situation wasn't real—it was part of an immersive video simulation at the Denver Police Academy.

Amanuel was taking part in Northeast Denver Leadership Week, a summer program that is designed to teach leadership skills, improve financial literacy, and expose high school students to a wide variety of careers. The program was started 12 years ago by District 8 City Councilman Chris Herndon just one month after he was sworn into office. "When I was campaigning, I realized that Denver youth weren't aware of all of the opportunities that Denver had to offer. I wanted to help change that."

Since then, the weeklong program has served more than 600 youths from diverse backgrounds. It takes five months of planning by Herndon and city council staffers and costs roughly \$15,000, with funding coming from mostly local businesses. The camp is free for all students.

Now that Herndon is leaving office in July because of term-limits, the future of this popular program is in jeopardy. "I'm hoping this program will continue, but it's unclear what will happen after I'm gone. There's a shortage of youth leadership programs at a time when they've never been more necessary," says Herndon.

Each day of Leadership Week, the students board buses to travel to various locations throughout the city to learn first-hand about careers in police and fire departments, businesses, the medical field, and non-profit organizations.

This year at the Denver Fire Training Center, for example, the students hauled heavy hoses, put out a car fire, and learned about teamwork. During their visit to the Junior Achievement Finance Park, students role-played being adults while making decisions about family budgeting, banking, and investments. A trip to Denver International Airport exposed students to a variety of jobs, from working at concession stands to air traffic control duties.



Outgoing Dist. 8 City Councilman Chris Herndon shares a laugh with students during a visit to the Denver Police Academy.

Photo by Mary Jo Brooks



Students sat inside a Support Team Assisted Response (STAR) van and learned about Denver's innovative program to send mental health specialists instead of police officers on certain emergency calls.

Front Porch photos by Christie Gosch



Participants in NE Denver Leadership week spend several hours at Denver International Airport learning about a variety of jobs—from airport concessions to working for a major airline.

Photo courtesy of Northeast Leadership Week

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ship Program Faces Uncertain Future

Herndon says the main focus of the program is cultivating leadership skills and letting young people see how many opportunities are available to them.

Tech entrepreneur Emile Nkwagoh says the program completely changed his life. When he took part in the program as a high school junior in 2016, he had recently moved to the United States from Cameroon. "Leadership Week exposed me to so much, especially as an immigrant child. It helped me decide what career path to follow. It's why I'm now an IT professional." Nkwagoh was awarded a computer at the end of the camp, and the program also inspired him to apply for—and be awarded—a spot in the city's public safety cadet program, which paid for his undergraduate degree at Metropolitan State University of Denver. Nkwagoh is now pursuing a master's degree there in cyber security. "Many of the leadership skills I have today started that week when we met with

leaders from the city," says Nkwagoh. "I learned that leaders care about the people that work for them as much as they care about the people they serve."

Students who participated in this year's Leadership Week were equally enthusiastic. Quinten Newbern is a rising senior at DSST Green Valley Ranch. He hopes to use some of his newly acquired leadership skills at school by serving as the president of the robotics club. He's also appreciative of the financial skills he learned as he thinks about college and beyond. Newbern says it was especially helpful to role-play at Finance Park and listen to the real-world experiences of former Broncos lineman and Superbowl champion Ryan Harris. "He talked to us about his experience with money and a rocky patch he went through. It was good to learn about that because school doesn't teach you about money," says Newbern, who also enjoyed Harris'



Photo courtesy of Northeast Leadership Week

NE Denver Leadership Week offers high school students the chance to visit some of Denver's largest employers, like this trip several years ago to an Excel Energy facility.



Photo by Mary Jo Brooks

Students tried to de-escalate a tense situation involving a homeless man who refused to remove his possessions from a storefront in this immersive training simulation at the police academy.

advice about the importance of being accountable. "He said you have to have the mindset of 'I am. I can. I will.' That was inspirational."

Anela McCowin, another rising senior at DSST Green Valley Ranch, was also inspired by Harris. "He wanted to help us learn how to be financially responsible. He didn't sugarcoat anything." She says the overall program helped expand her ideas about leadership. "Leadership is putting yourself out there. It's speaking out on behalf of others. This program really gives you an insight into what real leadership means."

The program also tries to teach youths about empathy and how to make a difference in their community. They heard from people who work with domestic violence victims at the Rose Andom Center and from members of Denver's Support Team Assisted Response (STAR) program, who respond to 911 calls to help people who are experiencing a mental health crisis. At the police academy, students listened to

police officers describe some difficult moments on the job. The immersive simulation with the homeless man gave students an enhanced respect for some of the complexities of police work. Student Nahom Amanuel says the simulation showed how hard it can be to think quickly on your feet in a stressful situation. "It made me realize that police have to deal with this daily. It made me appreciate the patience that officers have to have."

"Leadership week is all about connections. Kids connecting with each other. Kids connecting with leaders in the community. Kids connecting with what is possible," says Herndon. In a post-pandemic world where so many youths feel isolated and alone, Herndon says those connections matter. "The fact that all of these adults take time out of their day to talk to them is meaningful to our students. It shows that they matter. Because I do think at times they wonder how much they are valued by society."

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...NE News Updates



Snarfs Sandwiches is now open in the Montclair neighborhood at 14th Avenue and Krameria. The chain originated in Boulder in 1996.

By Brian Heuberger

1 Snarfs Opens in Mayfair Plaza

Snarfs Sandwiches has opened a new location in the Montclair neighborhood on 14th Avenue and Krameria Street. The family-owned restaurant started in Boulder in 1996, and the toasted subs on the menu and the colorful décor in the restaurants enabled Snarfs to develop a loyal following and expand throughout the Front Range. Snarfs is also known for selecting old buildings in historic neighborhoods for its locations, which made Montclair an ideal community and the 1950s building an appropriate setting.

2 Westerly Creek Election Results

The election for three new board members in the Westerly Creek Metropolitan District wound up being a close race with a dramatic finish. The five-member board of the WCMD had three openings in May due to

term limits, and six can-

didates were vying for those available positions. The tight results of the election required the WCMD to conduct a mandatory recount of the ballots. The recount verified that Robert Marsh was the first place winner with 593 votes, Jack Seward won the second open seat with 497 votes, and both Barbara Dornseif and Matthew Blackburn were tied for the third seat with 471 votes apiece.

The third-place status of those two candidates triggered the tie-breaking protocols of the WCMD. According to the rules, if seats are available for both candidates who are tied, both candidates can claim the given seats. But because Blackburn and Dornseif were vying for the third and final seat, the rules required the WCMD to break the tie by performing a lot drawing and by essentially picking a name out of a hat. The lot drawing was conducted on May 19, and the winner of the final seat was Matthew Blackburn. As a result, Robert Marsh, Jack Seward, and Matthew Blackburn have been certified as the three newest board members for the WCMD, and their terms will end in May of 2027.

3 Stanley Marketplace Ownership Correction

There has been no change in ownership at the Stanley Marketplace. Stanley JV owns the marketplace and is a joint venture partnership between Flightline Ventures and Westfield Company. The original article in the Updates section of the July Front Porch that a change in ownership had occurred was incorrect. We sincerely apologize to our readers, to Stanley Marketplace, to Flightline Ventures, and to Westfield Company for the error.

4 Non-Profit Kids' Soccer League

Yeti United, a new non-profit soccer league, has opened in Northeast Denver to provide kids from all socio-economic backgrounds with an affordable opportunity to hone their skills and enjoy the sport. The Yeti United league was created by Central Park resident Barry O'Connor, who moved here from the United Kingdom with his wife and two children. O'Connor was inspired to start Yeti United when he was surprised that the prices of youth soccer leagues in Denver were substantially more expensive than the leagues in the UK. He officially kickstarted Yeti United in June, it is available for all



Barry O'Connor, who started the non-profit soccer league Yeti United, coaches a class of U6s (under 6 years old) in the North end of Central Park. O'Connor started the league in June and now has four teams.

kids ages 3-8, and he hopes the experience can prepare the kids to play in more intense clubs and competitive leagues as they reach older ages and progress to more advanced levels.

Parents can enter their kids into the league for a one-time \$25 fee that is used exclusively to purchase the uniforms and provide the equipment. O'Connor encourages groups of friends or families to establish teams of 5-7 players and welcomes parents to volunteer as coaches for their respective teams. However, kids who would like to join the league but do not have a large enough group can still be placed on teams that have open spots for additional players. Yeti United currently has four teams, the league holds practices at a park on 59th and Chester, and games are scheduled according to the dates and times that are most convenient for the players and coaches. Parents who would like to sign up their kids or volunteer to coach can get more information at www.yetiunited.com.

5 East Colfax Neighborhood Mural

The new mural featuring the logo for the East Colfax Cultural District has been painted on the side of Tiger Kim's Academy of Taekwondo, located at 7000 E. Colfax Ave. The process began last October when the district hired local artist Sam Hutch-Ouranos to develop a logo that could represent the character of East Colfax. In the ensuing months, different variations were considered, resident surveys were conducted, and community meetings were held to eventually determine the final version



Local artist Sam Hutch-Ouranos created an East Colfax logo and painted a mural of it at Tiger Kim's Academy of Taekwondo at 7000 E. Colfax Ave.

of the East Colfax logo. Hutch-Ouranos painted the main features of the logo on the side of Tiger Kim's Academy, and on June 3, all residents were invited to participate in the process by also painting portions of the mural. The community mural and East Colfax logo were intended to reflect the diversity of the district, the creativity of the residents, and the camaraderie of the neighborhood.

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in the desert and ends with giant, killer ants roaming the sewers of Los Angeles. With the much-anticipated, Christopher Nolan-directed *Oppenheimer* set to premiere on July 21, *Them!* will give you more context to

the aftermath of the bomb/testings. Dr. Stephenson is a longtime veteran of the series and always adds fun, quirk, and education to the proceedings.

Everything, Everywhere, All at Once

July 19 with Astrophysicist Naomi Pequette at DMNS.

If you have yet to see this Oscar-winning gem, this is your chance. If you have already seen it, then you get to experience it on the giant screen with a dynamite sound system. A win-win-win for all! See my short review from the March column for specifics on the film, but our discussion will go well beyond that short synopsis. The film is a masterpiece of cinema in all areas, and Dr. Pequette is a brilliant and dynamic scientist who is sure to delight. A rare treat.

Nope

July 26 with Zoologist Paula Cushing, Ph.D. at DMNS.

Prepare to be excited, scared, awed, and ultimately, educated by this

sci-fi/horror/mystery film from writer/director Jordan Peele. Starring the astounding Academy Award-winning actor Daniel Kaluuya (*Judas and The Black Messiah*) and an all-star cast, you will sit on the edge of your seat, close your eyes at points, and then perhaps have a nightmare or two. This fascinating film by one of the more innovative storytellers of



Them!

July brings the 13th installment of the annual Science Fiction Film Series. Held in conjunction with the Denver Film Society, the Denver Museum of Nature and Science (DMNS), and MSU Denver, we once again screen and discuss six films over six weeks with an overarching mission of blending art and science. I host the entire series and analyze the films along with a scientist from the museum who discusses the actual science—or lack thereof—in each of the films. We have an interesting, diverse, and eclectic slate of films/discussions/scientists on tap this summer at the Sie Film Center and the all-new Infinity Theater at DMNS. Tickets and information can be found at www.denverfilm.org or at the DMNS website. This column previews the series (along with a book that is an astounding must-read). All shows begin at 6:30pm, and if possible, please bring non-perishable food donations for Rowdy's Food Pantry at MSU Denver. See you at the movies this summer!

Them!

July 12 with Zoologist Jeff Stephenson, Ph.D. at the Sie Film Center

This 1954 classic sci-fi film is a fun and thought-provoking allegory for the nuclear age and the basket of unknowns surrounding the atom bomb testing in the New Mexico desert circa late 1940s. It begins with a young girl found wandering alone

our time is sure to thrill. DMNS veteran Dr. Cushing is always educational and fascinating in the discussions as well.

The Mummy

Aug. 2 at DMNS.

Recent Oscar-winner Brendan Fraser stars in this entertaining blockbuster from 1999 that calls back to some of the classic monster movies of Hollywood cinema. When a mummy is accidentally brought back to life in 1923 Cairo, death and mayhem ensue. Enough said! Join us for fun, adventure, history, and all things mummies.

Beyond the Infinite Two Minutes

Aug. 9 with Astrophysicist Ka Chun Yu, PhD at the Sie Film Center.

This gem from Japanese director Junta Yamaguchi has a simple premise that propels a fascinating story and asks a scintillating question: What would you do if you could see into the future, but only *two minutes into the future*? We are presented with that question when a café owner finds that his computer monitor allows him to do just that. Comedy, hijinks, but also vexing existential issues arise in this simple yet very complex film. Dr. Ka Chun Yu and I have collaborated at dozens of presentations over the years, and he always brings a brilliant scientific approach along with a wonderful cinematic eye to every show. Don't miss this one!

Little Shop of Horrors

Aug. 16 at the Sie Film Center.

You know this one. The 1986 musical/comedy/horror film includes an all-star cast in unforgettable performances: Rick Moranis, Steve Martin, Ellen Greene, Vincent Gardenia, Levi Stubbs, James Belushi, John Candy, Christopher Guest, and Bill Murray (among others). Need we say more? This will be a fun and informative cherry on top to this year's wonderful series.

Please join us, bring food to donate, and find wonder in the marriage of art and science.



Beyond the Infinite Two Minutes

Book Review:

The Ministry for the Future

by Kim Stanley Robinson

Without a doubt, this is the most impactful book I've read in a long, long time. Sticking with the science fiction theme of this column, the book is ostensibly a sci-fi story with a plethora of other topics embedded into its hefty 576 pages: history, economics, politics, psychology, sociology, race study, gender study, cultural study. (I use the rhetorical flourish of asyndeton purposefully here, to show how the book moves along from topic to topic without pause and without end.)

The story is built around a near-future ministry that is tasked with defending those who have yet to be born. In a world that is disintegrating before our eyes, what do we do about current offenders who are harming (and some believe, murdering) future generations? What do we do about institutions, corporations, and/or governments who refuse to keep the Earth alive for our progeny? This is the frame story, but the brilliant Robinson intersperses current theory and fact to show us *how this is happening right now*. There is nothing futuristic about climate science, and the book engages that discourse.

I wish I could write a much longer review on this brilliant, thought-provoking, and dense novel that will certainly change the way you see the world. If I had to boil down the review into a simple phrase, it would be "read it now."

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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11

July 2023

July & Early Aug. 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

Sundays—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

Sundays—City Park Jazz. 6–8pm City Park Pavilion and Bandsell, 2001 Steele St. cityparkjazz.org.
7/2: Wellington Bullings
7/9: Chris Daniels and the Kings with Freddi Gowdy
7/16: 4th Annual Brass Band Extravaganza feat. Guerrilla Fanfare and Bourbon Brass Band
7/23: Otis Taylor
7/30: The Burroughs
8/6: LAPOMPE

Thursdays—MoJaBlu Concert Series. Free admission, food trucks. North Green (49th & Valencia) 6:30–8:30pm. mca80238.com
7/6: Wirewood Station
7/13: Jacob Larson Band
7/20: Daddy Blue
7/27: Hot Lunch Band

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

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

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

7/1 & 8/5—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

7/7 Friday—Movie on The Green- Selena. Free admission, food trucks. The Green (29th Ave & Roslyn St.) Movie starts at dusk. mca80238.com

7/8 Saturday—Snarky Cross Stitch. Sarcasm meets handicraft. Bring your own project or choose from a selection of simple, cynical patterns. Materials provided. 11am–1pm. Schlessman Library, 100 Poplar St. denverlibrary.org

7/8 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

7/8 Saturday—Goatflix and Chill Summer Series. Watch a movie (*Jungle Cruise*) with a goat! 8am at the Shops at Northfield Plaza on Main Street between 47th and 48th Aves. Tickets at shopsatnorthfield.com

7/8 Saturday—Cockpit Demo Day. Get an up close look inside select aircraft. 10am–2pm. 7711 East Academy Blvd. wingsmuseum.org

7/9 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

7/9 Sunday—Stanley Farmers Market. 1–6pm on The Field. Stanley Marketplace, 2501 N. Dallas St, Aurora. stanleymarketplace.com

7/12 Wednesday—Native Plant Discovery Walk. Learn how to identify the amazing native plants that thrive along the trail. 5–6pm. Smith Road Trailhead, 9450 East Smith Rd. sandcreekgreenway.org

7/13 Thursday—Active Minds Presents France. Explore the rich history of France, both politically and culturally. 1–2pm, Free. Sam Gary Library, 2961 Roslyn St. activeminds.com

7/15 Saturday—Forest Bathing. Open your senses and engage with nature. Bluff Lake Nature Center. 8–10am. 11255 E. MLK Jr Blvd. blufflake.org

7/15 Saturday—Speaking Up: Refugees Advocating for Change. Hear the lived experience of members of the refugee community. 2–3:15pm. Park Hill Library, 4705 Montview Blvd. denverlibrary.org

7/15 Saturday—Central Park Beer Fest. A variety of craft breweries, local food trucks, and live music. The Green (29th Ave & Roslyn St.) 5–8pm, VIP tasting starts at 4pm. Tickets at mca80238.com

7/21 Friday—Movie on The Green-Top Gun: Maverick. Free admission, food trucks. The Green (29th Ave & Roslyn St.) Movie starts at dusk. mca80238.com

7/22 Saturday—Free Bike Tune-Ups. Volunteer bike mechanics help keep your bike rolling smoothly and give one-on-one instruction. 10am–12pm. Schlessman Library, 100 Poplar St. denverlibrary.org

7/22 Saturday—No Strings Attached Book Chat. Share a recent read, an old favorite, or anything in between. 11am–12:30pm. Park Hill Library, 4705 Montview Blvd. denverlibrary.org

7/29 Saturday—Shelley Read, Author of Go As a River. A reading and discussion. Books available for sale and signing after the program. 3–4pm. Sam Gary Library, 2961 Roslyn St. Register at denverlibrary.org



Cockpit Demo Day at Wings Over The Rockies Museum

7/29 Saturday—Concert on The Green- Funkiphi-no. Free admission, food trucks. The Green (29th Ave & Roslyn St.) 6–8pm. mca80238.com

7/29 Saturday—Film on The Field. This month: *Top Gun: Maverick*. Movie starts at dusk. Stanley Marketplace, 2501 N. Dallas St, Aurora. stanleymarketplace.com

7/30 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

8/5 Saturday—Brent's Place Annual Block Party. Family-friendly event with carnival games, live entertainment, music, water activities, inflatables, and food trucks for all-ages. 11am–3pm. Anschutz Medical Campus, 12474 E 19th Ave, Aurora. classy.org/event/brents-place-block-party/e465508

8/5 Saturday—Run for the Ring 5K Run/Walk and Kid's Fun Run. The 9th Annual Run for the Ring, raising money to cure Type 1 Diabetes. Anschutz Medical Campus, 1775 Aurora Ct. unsignup.com/Race/CO/Aurora/RunfortheRing

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—Lowry's Independence Parade & Festival. A fun-filled, family-oriented event. 9am–12pm. Great Lawn Park, 101 Yosemite St. lowryfoundation.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

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

7/7 to 7/9—Colorado Black Arts Festival. 37th annual celebration of African American art and culture, free to attend. City Park West. Hours and info at colbaf.org

7/7 & 8/4—First Friday Art Walks. Art District on Santa Fe. 5:30–9:30pm. denver.org/things-to-do/denver-arts-culture/denver-art-districts

7/9 Sunday—Lowrider Show and Shine. Family-friendly event featuring lowriders, local vendors, delicious food, music, and free admission. 10am–5pm. 100 W 14th Ave Pkwy. denverartmuseum.org

7/10, 7/17, & 7/24—Movie Nights at Infinity Park. Free, gates open at 6pm, movie starts at 7pm. 7/10: *Top Gun: Maverick*, 7/17: *Black Panther: Wakanda Forever*, and 7/24: *DC League of Super-Pets*. Infinity Park, 4400 East Kentucky Ave, Glendale. infinityparkatglendale.com

7/13 Thursday—Art & About Tours. For visitors with early-stage Alzheimer's or dementia and their care partners. 1–2:45pm. 100 W 14th Ave Pkwy. denverartmuseum.org

7/13 Thursday—1340 Penn: Sexy Sarah. The Art and Eroticism of Sarah Bernhard. 7pm. Molly Brown House Museum 1340 Pennsylvania St. Tickets at mollybrown.org

7/14 & 7/28—Summer Film at the Historic Elitch Gardens Theatre. 7/14: *Black Panther: Wakanda Forever*. 7/28: *Coco*. Doors open 6pm, pre-movie activities at 6:30pm, raffle at 7:30pm, movie starts at 8pm. 4550 W 38th Ave. historichelitchtheatre.org

7/15 Saturday—Bananas and Imperialism. Guided City Park tour, engaging presentation, visit to the farmer's market, and a banana "nice cream". 11:30am–3pm. City Park, 2001 Colorado Blvd. Tickets at historycolorado.org

7/15 Saturday—26th Annual Blues & BBQ. Gates open at 10:30am, live music from 11am–8pm. Benefits Habitat for Humanity. Citizens Park, 5560 W. 24th Ave. bluesnbbq.com

7/15 & 7/16—Mile High Global Bazaar. International cultures, arts, crafts, merchandise, food, and music. Skyline Park, 16th St. Mall & Arapahoe St. coloradoevents.org/mile-high-global-bazaar

7/16 Sunday—City Park Public Art Walking Tour. Visit the historic sculptures, fountains, and gateways of City Park. 10am. Tickets \$5. Register at denverpublicart.org

7/20 Thursday—Fork Cancer Denver Fundraiser. Save lives and join us for a party with a purpose. 6:30–10pm. Mile High Station, 2027 West Colfax Ave. e.givesmart.com/events/upT

7/21 Friday—Lawn Concert: Brothers of Brass. Pack a picnic or purchase snacks and drinks at this free event. 5:30–7:30pm. 1250 Bannock St. clyffordstillmuseum.org

7/23 Sunday—Americans with Disabilities Act Celebration. Drop-by activities on the lawn and SCFD free day inside. 10:30am–12:30pm. 1250 Bannock St. clyffordstillmuseum.org

7/25 Tuesday—Under the Lens: Innovation. Explores the electric details and innovations of the 1893 World's Fair. Molly Brown House Museum, 1340 Pennsylvania St. mollybrown.org

7/29 Saturday—Epilepsy Awareness Day at Elitches and the Purple Duck Chase. Help raise awareness! Elitch Gardens, 2000 Elitches Circle. eventvesta.com/events/27641

7/29 Saturday—The Wonders of the Whittier Neighborhood Walking Tour. Explore one of Denver's historic neighborhoods. History Colorado Center, 1200 North Broadway. Tickets at historycolorado.org

8/1 Tuesday—Colorado Day. The Centennial State celebrates its 147th birthday with a free arts and crafts, live music, snack, and alpacas, are just the tip of the snow cone at this carnivalesque gathering. 1200 North Broadway. historycolorado.org

KIDS AND FAMILIES

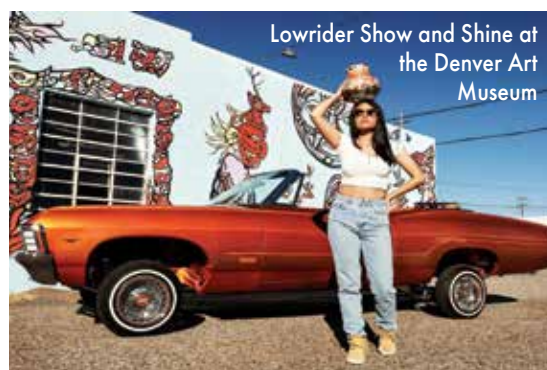
Tuesday–Friday—Local Library Storytime. Different age groupings and locations. Info at denverlibrary.org

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 7/29. 11255 E. MLK Jr Blvd. Free, check times and programs at blufflake.org

7/5 Wednesday—Intro to Breakin'. An intro to Hip Hop dance including agility, rhythm, and coordination. Ages 5–12 years with an adult. 3–4pm. Park Hill Library, 4705 Montview Blvd. denverlibrary.org



Lowrider Show and Shine at the Denver Art Museum

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7/8 Saturday—CSU Spur 2nd Saturdays. Free. Lots of family- friendly programming. 10am–3pm. 4817 National Western Dr. csuspur.org

7/8 Saturday—Low Sensory Morning. Admission is free and space is limited. RSVP is required. 8–10am. History Colorado Center, 1200 North Broadway. historycolorado.org



Low Sensory Morning at History Colorado Center

7/11 Tuesday—Abstract Rock Art. Explore rock art and collage by creating a painting with a whimsical cat theme. Ideal for ages 6–11. 11am–12pm. Pauline Robinson Library, 5575 E. 33rd Ave. denverlibrary.org

7/11 Tuesday—4EverFit4KIDZ!™. Fun fitness for the body and brain. Ages 5–12. 2–3pm. Schlessman Library, 100 Poplar St. denverlibrary.org

7/11 Tuesday—Button Making. Make a button for your backpack or jacket. 5th–12th graders. Limited to the first 25 attendees based on a first come first served basis. 3–4pm. Sam Gary Library, 2961 Roslyn St. denverlibrary.org

7/12 Wednesday—Book Crafts. Make a bookmark, a button, or your own small book. Ages 5–17. Space and materials limited. 3–4pm. Sam Gary Library, 2961 Roslyn St. denverlibrary.org

7/16 Sunday—Spanish Storytime at Tattered Cover Kids. 5pm. Stanley Marketplace, 2501 N. Dallas St, Aurora. stanleymarketplace.com

7/18 Tuesday—Paper Craft - Flying Cockatiel. Draw and paint a paper cockatiel with wings that simulate flight. Ideal for ages 6–11. 11am–12pm. Pauline Robinson Library, 5575 E. 33rd Ave. denverlibrary.org

7/19 Wednesday—Family Yoga. A series of mindfulness activities, fun stretches, and relationship-building partner poses. Ages 1–6 with an adult. 10:30–11am. Park Hill Library, 4705 Montview Blvd. denverlibrary.org

7/19 Wednesday—Family Dance Party. Come and get your groove on at our Family Dance Party. All ages welcome. 3–4pm. Sam Gary Library, 2961 Roslyn St. denverlibrary.org

7/19 Wednesday—Katherine Dines Musical Show. Movement, story songs, sign language, sing-alongs, percussion, zany props, and more. Ages 2–12. 4–5pm. Schlessman Library, 100 Poplar St. denverlibrary.org

7/20 Thursday—Kids Book Club. This month's theme is fairy tales and folk tales. Craft and snack included. Ages 5–12. 4–5pm. Park Hill Library, 4705 Montview Blvd. denverlibrary.org

7/23 Sunday—Sensory-Friendly Morning. A program for kids with neurodiversity or sensory processing disorders and their families. 9am–12pm. 100 W 14th Ave Pkwy. denverartmuseum.org

7/23 Sunday—Teen Jam. Learn to better express yourself through music while forming relationships with peers. Youth-led. Free. 11am–1pm. Tuft Theatre, 71 East Yale Ave. swallowhillmusic.org

7/25 Tuesday—Cool Science Experiments. An afternoon of science experiments using cornstarch, water, ice and, liquid nitrogen. Ideal for ages 6–11. 2:30–3:45pm. Pauline Robinson Library, 5575 E. 33rd Ave. denverlibrary.org

7/25 Tuesday—Tie Dye Workshop. Learn to tie dye a pillowcase, shirt, or bandana. 5–17 years. Limited to the first 25 attendees based on a first come first served basis. 3–4pm. Sam Gary Library, 2961 Roslyn St. denverlibrary.org

7/25 Tuesday—Faerie Magic Show. A fun magic show filled with abundant audience participation. Ages 4 and up with an adult. 3–4pm. Park Hill Library, 4705 Montview Blvd. denverlibrary.org

7/26 Wednesday—Friendship Bracelets. We provide the materials, you bring the ideas. Ideal for 3rd grade and up. 3–4pm. Sam Gary Library, 2961 Roslyn St. denverlibrary.org

7/26 & 7/29—Art Crawl: Messy Art Making Part 2, Big Paintings. 10:30–11:15am. For caregivers with infants–14 months. Registration required. 1250 Bannock St. clyffordstillmuseum.org

7/29 Saturday—Fire Engine Visits the Library. Meet some local firemen and view their fire truck. Ages birth–17. 2–3pm. Schlessman Library, 100 Poplar St. denverlibrary.org

8/1 Tuesday—Nature's Educators - Colorado Natives. Meet animal ambassadors that are true Colorado Natives. Ages 5–12. 3–4pm. Park Hill Library, 4705 Montview Blvd. denverlibrary.org

MUSEUMS, ETC.

American Museum of Western Art. Open M, W & F from 10am–4:30pm. Admission is \$5. 1727 Tremont Pl. anschutzcollection.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 July 23. 10am to 5pm. Children ages 17 and under are always free. 1250 Bannock St. clyffordstillmuseum.org

Denver Art Museum. SCFD Free Days July 9, 11 & 30. Desert Rider exhibit opens July 9. Youth 18 & under always free. 100 W 14th Ave. Pkwy. denverartmuseum.org

Denver Botanic Gardens. SCFD Free Day July 5 with registration. 1007 York St. botanicgardens.org

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

Denver Museum of Nature and Science. Open till 9pm on Fridays. 2001 Colorado Blvd. Timed tickets required. dmns.org

Denver Zoo. Check out the daily schedule at denverzoo.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. SCFD Free Day July 28. Open Wed–Sun, 10am–4pm. 715 S. Forest St. fourmilepark.org

History Colorado. Free admissions and party on Colorado Day—Aug 1. 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. 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. 7711 East Academy Blvd. wingsmuseum.org

PERFORMANCE/THEATRE

7/6, 7/13, & 7/20—Shady Grove Concert Series. 7/6: Miguel Añaña; 7/13: Los Mochetes; 7/20: High Lonesome. At Four Mile Historic Park. Tickets and info. at swallowhillmusic.org

7/8 Saturday—Dixie's Cherry Bombs & Bottle Rockets. The new show from Dixie Longate is a web of storytelling that only America's favorite southern redhead can create. Ellie Caulkins Opera House. denvercenter.org

7/8 Saturday—Beethoven & Brews Fest. A pre-concert beer fest in the Denver Performing Arts Complex Galleria and a concert event in Boettcher Concert Hall. 5pm. coloradosymphony.org

PERFORMANCE/THEATRE

Through 7/9—Driving Miss Daisy. Poignantly explores the transformative power of friendship. Vintage Theatre, 1468 Dayton St. vintagetheatre.org

7/13 Thursday—True Crime Obsessed. Gillian Pensavalle and Patrick Hinds bring their ridiculous, hilarious, and over-the-top live podcast to the stage. 8–9:30pm. The Newman Center, 2344 East Iliff Ave. newmancenterpresents.com

7/14 Friday—Batman in Concert with the Colorado Symphony. Experience the iconic 1989 DC Superhero film and score. 7pm. Boettcher Concert Hall. coloradosymphony.org

7/15 Saturday—Colorado Jazz Repertory Orchestra. Presenting The Ladies of Soul: Celebrating the Music of Aretha



Franklin with Tatiana “LadyMay” Mayfield. Arvada Center, 6901 Wadsworth Blvd, 7:30pm. coloradojazz.org

7/19 Wednesday—The Narrators: Hot. The Narrators is a live storytelling show and podcast based in Denver. Name your price tickets. 8pm. Buntport Theater, 717 Lipan St. buntport.com

7/28 to 8/13—Reptile Logic: A Corporate Dismemberment. An award-winning stage play with accolades from across the nation. Vintage Theatre, 1468 Dayton St, Aurora. vintagetheatre.org

7/29 Saturday—Small Town Murder. Comedians James Pietrangallo and Jimmie Whisman are taking their hit podcast on the road. 7:30–9:30pm. The Newman Center, 2344 East Iliff Ave. newmancenterpresents.com

Through 7/30—In The Heights. The story of vibrant community in New York's Washington Heights neighborhood. Vintage Theatre, 1468 Dayton St. vintagetheatre.org

Through 10/15—Miss Rhythm - The Legend of Ruth Brown. Before Etta James, Aretha Franklin, and Tina Turner, there was Ruth Brown. Garner Galleria Theatre. denvercenter.org

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

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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Ages K—entering grade 4 (Fall 2023). 9:30–2:30, M–F. Four identical sessions: weeks of June 12, June 19, July 17, and July 24. Please visit www.montview.org to register.

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"I'm really jazzed about this place," says resident Ken Stansberry in one of Valor's gardens. Divorce and health issues had left him unhoused for two years, but he says "the good Lord's blessed me."

By Martina Will, PhD

A recent study conducted by the University of Denver's Center for Housing and Homelessness Research (CHHR) has shed light on the pervasiveness of traumatic brain injury (TBI) among people experiencing homelessness. The study showed that 71 percent of homeless individuals suffer from a traumatic brain injury (TBI). This figure dwarfs the TBI rate that is experienced by the general population, which hovers around the 2-8 percent range.

To address this critical issue, a new four-story, 72-unit apartment building called Valor on the Fax welcomed its first tenants in April 2023. Resident Christiana Collins had been unhoused for eight years. She recently planted sunflowers. "Sunflowers bring me luck wherever I go," she says with a smile. Sunflowers. Roots. Home.

The Valor on the Fax is a culmination of five years of public and private sector efforts. Valor is located at 7900 East Colfax Ave. and the building will "make a dent" in the tremendous need for housing and supportive services for those with TBI or related disabilities, says Kate Kerkmans, President and CEO of the Brain Injury Alliance of Colorado (BIA).

Motor vehicle accidents and falls are the most common

Valor on the Fax: "An Incredible Journey" to Supportive Housing

causes of TBI, but anoxia or oxygen loss (e.g. through stroke, aneurisms, near-drowning, and suicide attempts) can also lead to a brain injury. The BIA staffs and provides services at Valor, including support groups, peer mentorship, mindfulness classes, art and music therapy, and a Self-Advocacy for Independent Life program. Public school children residing at Valor have a staff person who can help them with their Individualized Education Plans, bus passes, and other needs.

This vision originated in 2017 in a vacant parking lot at East Colfax and Trenton. "A herculean effort," is how Jeff Martinez, President of Brothers Redevelopment, describes the Valor project. Brothers Redevelopment built Valor and manages the property, while Shopworks Architecture ensured that the building's design complements Park Hill's aesthetics. On the Trenton exterior, the facade transitions to bricks and archways as it moves into the existing residential neighborhood. Inside Valor, dimmed lighting, muted colors, and long lines of sight create comfortable environments and welcoming spaces.

"We were really lucky to be a part of the design from the beginning," says BIA's Kerkmans, "including trauma-informed design elements so people feel at home and safe. We were also able to include what we know of elements of brain injury and disability. Does our seating have backs and is it easy to transition into and out of, for example?" This attention to nuances is not lost on residents, who can find quiet spaces for conversation or rocking chairs for relaxation, with the motion itself regulating the central nervous system.

All tenants sign a one-year lease before they receive the keys to their furnished one-, two-, or three-bedroom apartments. Grant Williams, Brothers' Community Manager for Valor, shares the deep emotion he witnesses when walking new residents through their units for the inspection process. "One man just sat quietly looking out the window, and didn't respond when I asked him a question... When I looked, I saw how choked up he was." Habits born of necessity also appear among the residents. "Sometimes they show a lot of anxiety, and they don't want to put their bags down. They hold onto them," says Williams. For this reason, there are no closet doors, and the one-bed units don't have bedroom doors—it is reassuring for people who have been living on the streets to be able to see their things in the apartments.

Social isolation is a significant challenge for those with brain injuries, but it is apparent that the Valor community is already coalescing. Some talk enthusiastically about cooking classes in the works for January, and others talk about cooking meals to eat with their neighbors while rely-

ing solely on what the pantry has in stock. Tenant Ken Stansberry shares that he began walking his neighbor's service dog Rufe, a chihuahua. Stansberry initially began walking Rufe to help out his friend, but now he just enjoys walking the dog around the area and picking up litter he finds along the way. "We all have our different issues, and we are all living in this village together. I am going to work to keep making it better," Stansberry says.

Fostering community was built into Valor's design. Indoor and outdoor amenities include a shared kitchen, food pantry, communal garden, and classrooms for group activities. "When looking at assisting people who are unstably housed, it is one thing to find them housing and another to keep them housed. We are hoping that the trauma-informed design elements and staff with expertise will make this permanent supportive housing for residents," says Kerkmans.

Community writ large is also fundamental to Valor. Being a "good neighbor" to businesses and other residents has been important from its inception, says Martinez. Brothers' new office at Valor will provide a neighborhood base for housing counseling, home repair, and other services offered by Brothers. "We see this building as catalytic. The corridor needs good development," says Martinez, who hopes that Valor becomes a model for other cities and states.

For more information, visit www.valoronthefax.com.



All units include basic furnishings and tenants can "shop" for home necessities among the pre-purchased and donated items stored for residents.



Facing the building on the Trenton side, the brick exterior and arched design elements help transition it into the Park Hill neighborhood. A secure parking garage for residents and staff is not visible from the street.

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NEWS IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD

MASTER COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION JULY 2023



CENTRAL PARK BEER FESTIVAL

Join us on Saturday, July 15th on the South Green (29th Ave & Roslyn St) from 5–8pm for the Central Park Beer Fest! A

portion of the proceeds will go to a non-profit organization.

VIP Tasting starts at 4pm!

This festival features a variety of craft breweries, local food trucks, live music featuring Ryan Chrys & The Roughcuts.

VIP Tickets include: Early Admission (4–pm) with breweries VIP tasting, a glass taster, a commemorative glass, \$12 food coupons.

General Admission Tickets include: Admission (at 5pm), a plastic taster and \$12 food coupons.

If you do not want to participate in brewery tastings but would like to attend the event, admission is \$10 a person (ages 2 and up).

There will be a concession stand selling domestic beers for purchase and food trucks that will take the food vouchers and all other forms of payment. Scan the QR code above to purchase tickets!



4TH OF JULY BREAKFAST AND PARADE

The Annual 4th of July Breakfast begins at 9am at the South Green (29th & Roslyn)!

Breakfast will be on the stage and provided by one of our sponsors, Journey Point. There will be a suggested donation for the breakfast with all proceeds going to Moms Demand Action For Gun Sense in America. There will also be a balloon artist and a face painter.

Donations will also be collected for Moms Demand Action For Gun Sense in America who will be at the bike decorating booth.

Bring your decorated bicycles, tricycles, wagons or scooters for the parade, which will begin at 10:30am. There will be parade leaders at the start of the parade to guide participants through the course.

ACTIVE MINDS: France

Thursday, July 13th, 1–2pm. Sam Gary Library

With Europe's second largest economy and population, France is a key player in the region and the world. As a member of both the European Union and NATO, France's power and influence shapes policies far beyond its borders. Join Active Minds as we explore the rich history of France, both politically and culturally, and place it within the current context evolving European and global concerns.

ACTIVE MINDS: Indonesia

Thursday, July 27th, 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.

CONCERT ON THE GREEN SERIES

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

Saturday, July 1st, Thumpin'

Saturday, July 29th, Funkiphino

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 Street. This event is free and open to the public!

Friday, July 7th, Selena

Friday, July 21st, Top Gun: Maverick

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, July 6th, Wirewood Station

Thursday, July 13th, Jacob Larson Band

Thursday, July 20th, Daddy Blue

Thursday, July 27th, Hot Lunch Band

FARMERS MARKET BEGINS

Every Sunday, 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.



Visit our website!

Jennifer Olsen | Communications Manager | Jolsen@mca80238.com

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