



# **“Driving Aurora Forward”**



## **Road Map to Success**

Work Hard • Play Hard • Be Kind to Others • GIVE More Than You Take

### **Class of 2011**





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*Congratulations  
Leadership Aurora  
Class of 2011*



# Introduction

Since 1984 the Aurora Chamber of Commerce has promoted and fostered the development of leadership in our community. Leadership Aurora is a program designed to meet our city's need for the active participation of informed, skilled and involved community leaders. As a result, Leadership Aurora educates and prepares community leaders who are committed to shaping Aurora's future.

The class of 2011 brought together 33 individuals, all with diverse backgrounds, and in ten months produced one voice to help drive Aurora forward by working hard, playing hard, being kind to others and always giving more than they took. In the end all 33 are committed to continuing to shape Aurora's future.

Leadership Aurora begins each September with a class retreat that includes

social activities, team building exercises, and leadership seminars. After the retreat, the class meets once a month for the next nine months. Topics are presented through the use of prominent individuals from the public and private sectors, in-depth dialogue of current issues pertinent to the session topic, case studies, site visits, interactive and "hands-on" experience. Participants also work in teams or as a group on projects of their own design to provide tangible solutions to various contemporary community challenges. The community actually becomes the classroom. In addition to the monthly sessions, each Leadership Aurora class chooses a project (or projects) and endeavors to help local organizations in their effort as they address the needs of the community.

Leadership Aurora is one of the more than 1,000 community programs in the nation. We are a member of the Association of Community Leadership, a non-profit 501 (c)(3) organization dedicated to leadership development. Sponsored by the Aurora Chamber of Commerce, Leadership Aurora is funded by The Chamber, in-kind donations and class tuition. The Leadership Aurora Board steers the program, develops the curriculum and oversees its success.

We congratulate all Leadership Aurora graduates and commend their dedication to serving Aurora and influencing its on-going progress toward becoming a world-class city.

The Leadership Aurora Class of 2011

## Acknowledgements

The Leadership Aurora class of 2011 is very grateful for having had the opportunity to be led, and taught by such a fine group of Aurora leaders.

Without the Aurora Chamber of Commerce, whose support makes this class possible, our experience would have not been possible and for this we will be eternally grateful.

Our deepest gratitude and thanks to the Leadership Aurora Board. The board took their time to enrich our professional and personal lives by immersing us into unique opportunities within this community. Their planning and implementation was effective from start to finish. They started with an impactful class retreat, filled with funny and memorable activities to bond the group and encouraged us to move forward in our newest adventure. They continued as they maximized our monthly classes and helped us get a taste of our community through dozens of unique activities. Thank you for your dedication to the leaders of Aurora.

Through contact with a wide range of professionals, and the "behind the

scenes" knowledge gained, Leadership Aurora participants have the opportunity to expand their influence on the community. The sessions experienced were varied: Community programs, non-profits, police, fire, EMS, healthcare, education, military presence, media and communications, economic, and infrastructure awareness. Leadership Aurora seeks to present views from a wide spectrum of experts. The Leadership Aurora program has given us a comprehensive view of our community.

We could not have been successful without the Leadership Aurora Program director, Kimberly Curtis. She kept us on task as a class and ensured the sub-committees had all the support needed to execute each month's session. Thank you for your leadership, your passion, and most of all your patience.

We would like to extend our sincere appreciation to those organizations and companies that opened their doors, their staff, and their training to our class this year. Without you, the program would be lifeless. Thank you for sharing your time, expertise, and energy with our class.

Leadership Aurora provided the Class of 2011 the opportunity to broaden their knowledge of the community, to enhance their leadership skills, and the privilege of giving back to those most in need in the community. The experiences and friendships developed through this program will be everlasting. Thank you again for supporting this extraordinary program.





# Board Chair

Dear Class of 2010-11,

This class has been amazing from the very beginning. Under the sunny skies and fall colors of Winter Park you came together with eagerness and set your sights on achieving the common good. You exemplify the saying, "Random Acts of Kindness; Senseless Acts of Beauty". Each individual has been an integral part of the success and community contributions of the class. The ripple effect of your impact will be appreciated for years to come.

From the beginning, this class was unusually inclusive of everyone's ideas and uniqueness. As the year progressed,



you developed strong relationships with one another, solved problems and focused on solutions. The energy and enthusiasm was present throughout each Leadership Session. It has been so much fun for the Leadership Aurora Board to plan the sessions because the class was always appreciative of the experiences. And a big

Thank You to the board who did a superb job of planning, setting up and delivering each monthly session. You provided great attention to detail and valuable contributions to the program.

I am proud to have served as the Leadership Board Chair for this Class. I wish for each of you success and happiness and I hope that you will pass along to others some of the interpersonal gifts that you have received as a participant in this program. You are all role models for how each of us should give back to our community. Thank you from the bottom of my heart for everything you have done to improve the lives of others.

That is, after all, what makes the world a better place...when we each give more and expect nothing in return. Thank you.

Cindy Kreutz

Board Chair 2010-11

# Class President

Greetings Leaders of Aurora,

The road of "Driving Aurora Forward" has been an exceptional experience that has been accompanied by exceptional people. From our Director, Kimberly Curtis, to each and every member of this class we have represented this program in a first class manner. From the retreat in early September I knew immediately I was in the company of professional and balanced individuals. There was no doubt in my mind that we were destined to do great things for the city of Aurora. I would like to walk you through a bit of our journey and how it all began.

Our class uses the philosophy "Work hard, play hard, be kind to others, and give more than you take" as our foundation to success. With this in mind our Project committee developed specific systems to include all members of our class and strive for consistent participation and engagement.

Having multiple projects allowed members of the class to partake in something that struck their individual interest. Once the projects were outlined, we asked for each member to commit to the project that fit them best. All in all we have had success beyond our expectations and exceeded each and every goal that was set before us. You all should be proud of who you are and what you do.

What is Leadership Aurora? Leadership Aurora is not just a 10 month program that you graduate from, or even just a great experience. Leadership Aurora is about people; people who care, people who are in need, and those who want to improve their city. We as a class have



experienced struggles in our own personal and professional lives, but with the support of each other we have triumphed over them and found new ways to give to those in need. Remember the impact you have made in our city and the bonds we share together forever.

I have lived my entire life in Aurora and am honored to have had the privilege of serving as your class President. You are the most impressive group of individuals I

have ever met and I look forward to our ventures in the future.

Leaders of Aurora **"Work hard, play hard, be kind to others, and give more than you take."**

With my warmest regards,

Michael J. Garcia  
President 2011



# 2011

## Class Profiles



### FAVORITE QUOTE:

*"Your whole life is a rehearsal for the moment you are in now."*

*"Do the right thing for the right reason and you will never be wrong."*

— Judith Malina

BIRTHPLACE: Kansas City, KS

EDUCATION: MS- Education, Colorado State University 2010; BS- City Planning, University of Colorado 1984

FAMILY: Yes and one large dog

HOBBIES: Working out, home renovation, and continuing to learn and be challenged

I have worked for the fire department for 15 years. During this time I've been exposed to the needs of our citizens. Now Leadership Aurora has filled the gap between the needs of the citizens and the community resources. These are long term, situation oriented resources I can use to make a difference. From this experience I've made new friends and business associates that I can support and assist, and the best part is none of these things can be taken away.

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Aurora Fire Department  
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**Cindy Andersen**



### FAVORITE QUOTE:

*"The bravest are surely those who have the clearest vision of what is before them, glory and danger alike, and yet notwithstanding, go out and meet it."*

— Thucydides

BIRTHPLACE: Sikeston, MO

EDUCATION: M.ED – Colorado State University; B.S. – Regis University

FAMILY: Wife Angela, four children; Chantee, Julian, Erica and Ty

HOBBIES: Sports, reading, exercising, spending time with family

I plan to apply what I have learned by sharing with the experience with people in school, business and in my personal relationship. I think they will find it as fascinating as I have... Hopefully to encourage someone to seek the same experience that I have had the pleasure of experiencing.

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**Eric D. Artis**



### FAVORITE QUOTE:

*"Obstacles are things a person sees when he takes his eyes off his goal."*

— E. Joseph Cossman

BIRTHPLACE: Detroit, MI

EDUCATION: B.A.-Broadcast Journalism, University of Michigan; Certified Residential Specialist; Graduate Realtor Institute; Seniors Real Estate Specialist; Accredited Buyer's Representative

FAMILY: Wife and teenage daughter and son

HOBBIES: Hunting, fishing, skiing, woodworking, hiking

Leadership Aurora has given me greater community awareness, and will help me promote our city at state and national real estate conferences and be able to discuss in detail everything this community has to offer. It gives me a better understanding to relay to my clients and business associates of the inner working that make this city great.

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**David J. Barber**



### FAVORITE QUOTE:

*"No one can make you feel inferior without your consent."*

— Eleanor Roosevelt

BIRTHPLACE: Denver, CO

EDUCATION: BA, Smith College, Northampton, MA.

FAMILY: Husband , John, son, John, age 21 and Bridget, age 16

HOBBIES: Skiing, gardening, cooking, reading

The vast diversity of Aurora and its resources has made a big impression as have the quality of the members of the Leadership Aurora class.

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**Maureen Barker**





## Terry Brown



### FAVORITE QUOTE:

*"It's not the critic who counts, not the man who points out how the strong man stumbled, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood, who strives valiantly, who errs and who comes short again and again, who knows the great enthusiasms, the great devotions and spends himself in a worthy cause, who at the best knows the triumphs of high achievement, and who at the worst, if he fails at least fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be among those cold and timid souls who know neither victory nor defeat."*

Captain  
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The community experiences have opened my eyes to what goes on in the City of Aurora outside of Law Enforcement. I have become much more involved in the community and plan on continuing my involvement in more and more activities. The friendships I have developed with my professional colleagues will continue for years to come.

— Theodore Roosevelt, President

BIRTHPLACE: Burbank, CA  
EDUCATION: Master of Public Administration - University of Colorado at Denver; BS - Applied Management - National American University, 1998  
FAMILY: Two Children  
HOBBIES: Bicycle riding, 4-wheeling, dirt biking and anything in the water

## Melissa Clifford



### FAVORITE QUOTE:

*"...and the day came that the risk to remain tight in a bud was more painful than the risk it took to bloom."*

— Anis Nin

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Participating in the Leadership Aurora program has been a life changing experience and an eye-opening adventure. I will graduate from this program with a greater sense of self, many new friends, a vast number of community connections, and an authentic appreciation of Aurora opportunities.

BIRTHPLACE: Denver, CO  
EDUCATION: B.S. Human Development & Family Studies with a Concentration in Gerontology, Colorado State University, Fort Collins, CO 1994  
FAMILY: Husband, Eric and two beautiful daughters Jordan and Jocelyn.  
HOBBIES: Spending time with the family, dancing, volunteering, cooking, gardening, and writing.

## David Cooper



### FAVORITE QUOTE:

*"When you arrive at a fork in the road, take it."*

— Yogi Berra

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Leadership Aurora has allowed me to gain a much deeper understanding of everything that is happening in Aurora. With the relationships that have been built over the past year and the greater understanding of the needs of Aurora, I think I will be in a position to make a very positive difference in Aurora's future.

BIRTHPLACE: Del Rio, TX  
EDUCATION: BBA - Texas A&M University 1998  
AAMS - College for Financial Planning 2008  
FAMILY: Wife Allison, Daughters Rachel (5) and Lauren (2)  
HOBBIES: Rockies baseball, camping, hiking

## John "Jack" Criswell



### FAVORITE QUOTE:

*"I believe that imagination is stronger than knowledge -- myth is more potent than history -- dreams are more powerful than facts -- hope always triumphs over experience -- laughter is the cure for grief -- love is stronger than death."*

— Robert Fulghum

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The Leadership Aurora Program was inspirational and I walked away with something from each of the sessions and speakers, as well as, learning a great amount from my fellow classmates. My goal is to continue my involvement in our great community and inspire others to join me with the same passion that I have for our city.

BIRTHPLACE: Denver, CO  
EDUCATION: BA Political Science, American Military University 2007  
FAMILY: Wife - Deanne, Children - RJ, Kate and Eddie  
HOBBIES: Soccer, camping, travelling



**FAVORITE QUOTE:**

*"People will try to tell you that all the great opportunities have been snapped up. In reality, the world changes every second, blowing new opportunities in all directions, including yours."*

— Ken Hakuta

**BIRTHPLACE:** Panarama City, CA  
**EDUCATION:** MBA, University of Phoenix  
**FAMILY:** Fiancé, 2 children Bella and Mikey  
**HOBBIES:** Camping, cooking/baking/fitness activities/family outings

I look forward to sharing the knowledge that I have gained with my colleagues and hope that they too will take an opportunity like Leadership Aurora to develop. I've met some wonderful individuals and look forward to working with them on future endeavors.

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**Mike DiDonna**



**FAVORITE QUOTE:**

*"The character of a man is made by the trials and tribulations he endures along his personal journey."*

— Jerilyn Hitch-Fuller

**BIRTHPLACE:** Philadelphia, PA  
**EDUCATION:** MS - Graduate School Of Banking University of Colorado 2009; BS - Communication, University of Denver 1992  
**FAMILY:** Wife and two children  
**HOBBIES:** Reading, travel, golf

I see so many areas that I can work with and lend support and use the fullness of my talents and personal knowledge and skills. I realize that, "I am one, but I can't do everything but I can do something, what I can do I must do". Helen Keller stated that and I agree whole heartily. This experience has opened my eyes to more that just my individual community and I realize that so much more can be done.

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**Derrick Fuller**



**FAVORITE QUOTE:**

*"Leaders are made, they are not born. They are made by hard effort, which is the price which all of us must pay to achieve any goal that is worthwhile."*

— Vince Lombardi

**BIRTHPLACE:** Denver, CO  
**EDUCATION:** Smoky Hill High School '97  
**FAMILY:** Single  
**HOBBIES:** Golf, and any Colorado sports event

The friendship and bonds that I have had the pleasure of obtaining in these few months are unmeasurable. I know my classmates will continue to engage me in areas of opportunity where they know I can assist. The knowledge I have been educated on will help me to enlighten others on my continued journey. Most of all I hope our classes' legacy helps drive others to Leadership Aurora in growing our support and "Driving Aurora Forward".

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**Michael Garcia**



**FAVORITE QUOTE:**

*"In order to succeed, your desire for success must be greater than your fear of failure..."*

— William H. Cosby

**BIRTHPLACE:** Queens, NY  
**EDUCATION:** MA Educational Counseling & Principal Licensure; BS Sociology AGS  
**FAMILY:** Wife- Yes; Two beautiful little girls  
**HOBBIES:** Music, travel, sports, reading

The education of knowing the resources in my community has already been invaluable. My goal is to slowly create a network of resources that I can use to create opportunities for all kids in the city of Aurora. As an administrator in the public school system of Cherry Creek, I am constantly looking for ways to engage, support and motivate students and their families. One day I hope to create a system/program that has this impact on more than just the students in the school in which I work, but for kids across the city in which I live. The Leadership Aurora experience will assist me in seeing this come to fruition.

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**Michael Giles**



**FAVORITE QUOTE:**

*"Learn from the mistakes of others. You don't live long enough to make them all yourself"*

— Eleanor Roosevelt

**BIRTHPLACE:** Tokyo, Japan  
**EDUCATION:** BA-Political Science, Metropolitan State College of Denver 1999  
**FAMILY:** Son-Dillon (19)  
**HOBBIES:** Politics, cowboy action shooting, reloading, rafting and fishing

I'm inspired by the education and support services; thankful for the modern healthcare facilities and grateful for the brave men and women who protect our city from crime, fire and national threats. I'll use this awareness to better serve my community.

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**Rachael Gregoire**





## Christy Papoi Jones



### FAVORITE QUOTE:

*"Your attitude, not your aptitude, will determine your altitude."*

— Zig Ziglar

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The value of the program is that what I've learned could be immediately applied to improve my leadership skills. I've gained the most insight from interaction with classmates planning and working together to "Drive Aurora Forward" through our multiple class projects to benefit many citizens of Aurora and their children.

BIRTHPLACE: Aurora, CO

EDUCATION: BS - Business Administration (Management Emphasis), Regis University  
Paralegal Certificate, University of Colorado;  
AA - Aurora Community College

FAMILY: Husband - Steve; Daughter - Claire

HOBBIES: Traveling & enjoying the outdoors: riding horses, skiing, mountain biking.

## Robert E. S. Joseph



### FAVORITE QUOTE:

*"Now I am the voice, I will lead not follow. I will believe not doubt. I will create not destroy. I am a force for good. I am a leader."*

— Anthony Robbins

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I plan on using the resources and contacts that I have gained from the Leadership Aurora 2011 Class to expand my personal knowledge, skills, and capabilities to become a better member of the community. The experience has left me with a greater appreciation and knowledge of the City and I look forward to sharing it with others.

BIRTHPLACE: St. John's Antigua – West Indies  
EDUCATION: MBA – Columbia College 2010;  
BA-Business Administration/Criminal Justice,  
Columbia College 2007

FAMILY: Three adult children & two dogs

HOBBIES: Gardening – exercising – yoga – walking – volunteer probation officer.

## Diane Kirkpatrick



### FAVORITE QUOTE:

*"Excellence is doing ordinary things extraordinarily well."*

— John W. Gardner

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Sharing the knowledge and experiences I gained in Leadership Aurora with my network of professional and personal contacts, friends and family members will be my small contribution in helping educate others about the amazing resources available to the Aurora community and paying tribute to the leaders who are their champions.

BIRTHPLACE: Denver, CO

EDUCATION: MS – Marketing and Management, University of Colorado Denver, 1997; BS – Business, University of Colorado Boulder, 1990

FAMILY: Not married, but have a great guy, loving dog and a crazy kitty

HOBBIES: Road and mountain biking, hiking and volunteering with MaxFund Animal Shelter

## Amy Kusek



### FAVORITE QUOTE:

*"If I am not for myself, who will be for me? If I am not for others, what am I? And if not now, when?"*

— Rabbi Hillel

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Leadership Aurora has been an amazing experience for me. It has enriched my life through a better understanding of the community of Aurora and an opportunity to meet extraordinary people. I look forward to continuing serving Aurora and staying connected to my wonderful classmates.

BIRTHPLACE: Kearney, NE

EDUCATION: MS-Management, Regis University, 2004; BA-Business Administration, Doane College, 1991

FAMILY: Single, no children, two active cats

HOBBIES: Volunteering/ training for half marathons/ traveling/connecting with family & friends

## Mary Lewis



### FAVORITE QUOTE:

*If you are not part of the solution, you are part of the problem*

— An African Proverb

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Board of Education  
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The friendships and contacts that I have made will definitely help me be even more effective in my work to make Aurora a better place for all – especially the children, who are our future. And I won't hesitate to contact all of you!

BIRTHPLACE: Aberdeen, SD

EDUCATION: BS – Police Science, New Mexico State University, 1979

FAMILY: Husband, David; Children, Grandchildren and many children that I have "adopted"

HOBBIES: Reading, politics, good wine, good restaurants



**BIRTHPLACE:** Youngstown, OH  
**EDUCATION:** BS, Computer Science – U.S. Air Force Academy, 1989; MBA – College of William and Mary, 1995; Master of Science, Computer Science and System Security, 2004  
**FAMILY:** Son, Tyler Lewis; Father, Richard Lewis, Sr.; Mother, Florine King; Brother, Randy Lewis  
**HOBBIES:** Reading, travel and exercise

**FAVORITE QUOTE:**  
*"Do the Right Thing"*

— Spike Lee

I would like to become more involved in Aurora Community activities and organizations, especially the military and education. I would also like to do more to engage Aurora and Denver communities into a conversation about regionalism.

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## Richard Lewis



**BIRTHPLACE:** Fort Ord, CA  
**EDUCATION:** BA, Journalism, University of Hawaii, 1990  
**FAMILY:** 1 child  
**HOBBIES:** Any sport involving a ball that my boy happens to be playing, gardening, reading, crocheting

**FAVORITE QUOTE:**

*"We don't turn out ok, we just turn out. It's what we do along the way that counts."*

— Doug Olson

It has been eye-opening to see the resources in the city in which I live and work.

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## Erika Matich



**BIRTHPLACE:** Denver, CO  
**EDUCATION:** MA – Curriculum and Instruction, Colorado Christian University, 2009; BS – Organizational Management, Colorado Christian University, 2006  
**FAMILY:** Husband, Chris; Daughter, Lexi; Son, Jeremiah  
**HOBBIES:** Reading, family time, swimming, and spending time with friends.

**FAVORITE QUOTE:**

*"Ability may get you to the top, but it takes character to keep you there."*

— John Wooden, UCLA Basketball Coach

Leadership Aurora has changed my mind set and perspectives in several areas. The biggest change is the value of authentic connections; connections to individuals and organizations. I will develop genuine connections with people and organizations in my community so I can help my community come together and move forward.

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## Noel Mink



**BIRTHPLACE:** Reno, NV  
**EDUCATION:** MPA – Troy State University, 1998; B S - University of Nevada, Reno, 1991  
**FAMILY:** Father, Charles; Mother Barbara; Sister, Elizabeth and Brothers John and Charles  
**HOBBIES:** Traveling, cooking, outdoor recreations, motorcycle riding.

**FAVORITE QUOTE:**

*"In Alice in Wonderland, Alice asks the Cheshire Cat for directions: 'Would you tell me, please, which is the way to go from here?' That depends a good deal on where you want to get to," says the cat. 'I don't much care where...' says Alice. Then it doesn't matter which way you go," says the cat."*

— Lewis Carroll

I would like to give back to Aurora for the opportunities I have had as a result of the Leadership Aurora experience. As I move forward I would like to become more involved in the community and explore even further what Aurora has to offer!

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 Colorado Air National Guard  
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## Barbara Morrow



**BIRTHPLACE:** Fargo, ND  
**EDUCATION:** MPA – University of Denver, 1982; BSN – University of Colorado Health Sciences Center, 1975  
**FAMILY:** Husband, Mark and two daughters, Kristen and Kara  
**HOBBIES:** Walking, cooking, spending time with family and cats

**FAVORITE QUOTE:**

*"To be a leader, you have to make people want to follow you, and nobody wants to follow someone who doesn't know where he is going."*

— Joe Namath

I think that my exposure to the inner workings of a complex and diverse metropolitan community will make me a stronger and more-effective participant in my workplace, my local community, and the larger world community. Leadership Aurora has inspired me to become more involved in the community I have lived in for twenty years.

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## Pam Ninke





## Sharon A. Perry



### FAVORITE QUOTE:

*"The way you get meaning into your life is to devote yourself to loving others, devote yourself to your community around you and devote yourself to creating something that gives you purpose and meaning."*

— Mitch Albom

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I am so glad we had this time together, just to have a laugh, or, sing a song. Seems we just get started and before you know it comes the time to say "so long". Thank you Robert for introducing me to my new best friend. Serving on the project committee affirmed that leadership experience isn't about what I I've done—it's about what I've helped other people do.

BIRTHPLACE: Denver, CO

EDUCATION: BS – Finance, Metropolitan State College

FAMILY: Widow, 3 sons, Marcel, Nico, Renzo

HOBBIES: Spending time with my family, traveling, basketball, movies, walks

## Jeff Rauske



### FAVORITE QUOTE:

*"Variety is the spice of life."* — Unknown

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The networking and friendships are great for sharing ideas and methods as well as expanding my knowledge on different industries. I plan to stay more involved in community outreach and continue helping Aurora grow.

BIRTHPLACE: Cleveland, OH

EDUCATION: BA – Criminology from Ohio State

FAMILY: My dog Tanis. (Dodged the married/kids bullet so far)

HOBBIES: Camping, hiking, SCUBA diving, biking, reading, travel photography, or anything else outdoors

## Kim Sopoci



### FAVORITE QUOTE:

*"In Order to Change the World I Must Change Myself"*

— Anonymous

Personal Fitness Trainer  
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Leadership Aurora has been an amazing experience! I have great personal and professional satisfaction in creating the friendships with my classmates and individuals in my community, while helping others in need within the community. I'm very proud to be a part of this fine city! Thank you LA Class 2011. I will continue the mission.

BIRTHPLACE: Sioux City, IA

EDUCATION: Two National Fitness Certifications, American Council on Exercise, National Exercise Trainers Association, 30 years of experience in Variety Health & Fitness Education

FAMILY: Husband Ron – Son Traver & family

HOBBIES: Health, fitness, Holistic medicine, travel, adventure, Harley riding, fast cars

## Steve Sundberg



### FAVORITE QUOTE:

*"Half this game is 90% mental."*

—Yogi Berra

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In business I recognize how the new ROI or "return on involvement" as Mark Moses puts it, is advantageous in winning new customers. Personally and professionally, I'm learning from the quality people in my class and from those who lead this dynamic community.

BIRTHPLACE: Eau Claire, WI

EDUCATION: MA – Organizational Management, University of Phoenix 2002; BA – Speech Communication – Colorado State University 1993

FAMILY: Wife, yes. Two Children: Livia 11, Luke 9

HOBBIES: Family time, dirt biking, outdoors, travel, red wine

## Michael P. Tapp



### FAVORITE QUOTE:

*"Spare me the grim, daily litany of the 'realist' - but give me the unrealistic aspirations of an optimist any day."*

— Colin Powell

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Aurora, Colorado is a city with proven talent, creativity and human spirit across all industries! Leadership Aurora has helped me to recognize the need for networking and building bridges with a wide array of informed (and conscientious) "citizen" leaders. More to come...

BIRTHPLACE: Ogden, UT

EDUCATION: MS – Counseling Psychology, Florida State University (1992); BS - Psychology & Criminal Science, Weber State University (1984); AS – Military Science, Weber State University (1982)

FAMILY: Spouse: Elspeth (Cardiology Nurse, Aurora); Nathan (24), Dayna (22)

HOBBIES: Bicycling; snowshoeing – hut trips; soccer referee; reading for fun!



**BIRTHPLACE:** Fort Worth, TX  
**EDUCATION:** PHD – Public Policy, Rand Graduate School, 2000; MPP – Public Policy, Harvard University, 1990; BS – General, U.S. Military Academy, 1980  
**FAMILY:** Married, Three Children  
**HOBBIES:** Mountain biking, travel, writing, Nova Scotia Duck Tolling Retrievers (Dogs)

**FAVORITE QUOTE:**  
*"It's tough to make predictions, especially about the future."*  
 — Yogi Berra

Leadership Aurora has been a terrific networking and community exploration experience. I will collaborate with the community members I have met to help improve public education in Aurora and to support their efforts to make Aurora a great community for families and business.

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## E. Casey Wardynski



**BIRTHPLACE:** Aurora, CO  
**EDUCATION:** BS- Health and Exercise Science, Colorado State 2006; AAS- Para medicine, Community College of Aurora 2009  
**FAMILY:** Wife-yes, Children- Brand new baby girl (1-22-11)  
**HOBBIES:** Photography, motorcycle rides, Frisbee Golf

**FAVORITE QUOTE:**  
*"If you aren't going all the way, why go at all?"*  
 — Joe Namath

It's been a pleasure and an honor seeing the inner working of Aurora. I will try to become a larger community activist and strive to drive our community forward to even greater futures. Every person in Aurora has the opportunity to offer critical pieces of success.

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## Adam Wehrle



**BIRTHPLACE:** Joliet, IL  
**EDUCATION:** JD- Juris Doctorate with Honors University of Arizona; BA- Administration, Phi Beta Kappa, Indiana University  
**FAMILY:** Extended Family, Foster and Blended  
**HOBBIES:** Dance, outdoor sports, theatre, music, singing, photography, community gardens

**FAVORITE QUOTE:**  
*"We cannot change the cards we are dealt, just how we play the hand."*  
 — Randy Pausch

With my new lifelong friends, I have a lifelong commitment to developing children's language skills. I never read, Mom and I were dyslexic. We didn't know it, we thought ourselves dumb and stupid. Embarrassed to speak, I was isolated by my lack of words. I wish that for no child.

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## Sue Wehrspann



**BIRTHPLACE:** Roswell, NM  
**FAMILY:** 6 amazing nieces & 12 wonderful nephews  
**HOBBIES:** Volleyball, hiking, reading, watching sports

**FAVORITE QUOTE:**  
*"We are the hero of our own story."*  
 — Mary McCarthy

I am looking forward to strengthening my new friendships and network of colleagues after graduation in June. Also, the knowledge I have gained through the Leadership program of our community and resources in Aurora will help me be a better liaison for the City of Aurora.

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## Andrea Williams



**FAVORITE QUOTE:**  
*"To the world you might just be one person, but to one person you might just be the world."*  
 — Jacques Pierre Ribault

My experience has been invaluable because it has opened my eyes to parts of our beautiful city that I had never seen before. I plan on using my knowledge and new contacts to help with non-profit organization in the area, and education challenges our city faces and develop my own small business.

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**BIRTHPLACE:** La Crescenta, CA  
**FAMILY:** Husband, Brent and our two boys Alexander and Lukas Wayne.  
**HOBBIES:** Travel, watching hockey, camping, any activity that I can do with my kids that will increase their knowledge or get them outside to play.

## Michelle Wilson





# 2010-11 Opening Retreat

## Road Map to Success



Leadership Aurora Class of 2011

### Creating an Effective Leadership Team

With much anticipation, excitement and anxiety the 2011 class of Leadership Aurora arrived for a beautiful fall weekend in Winter Park. We all arrived at orientation not really knowing what to expect. We knew we were going to meet 30-35 people and experience activities that were completely unpredictable. We very quickly "gelled" as a group and learned we had a lot in common. We also learned that we could embrace our differences to make us stronger – both as a group and individually. The team building activities proved that a group of leaders could work together to solve problems and accomplish some incredible feats.



We finished the weekend with more than we started, having been exposed to an incredible group of community leaders. We achieved a renewed sense of leadership, a stronger faith in our own abilities and a greater belief in the abilities of others.

What better way to kick off a nine month adventure than with some of the strongest and brightest minds that Aurora has to offer? The retreat came to an end Saturday with the group in disbelief that it had come and gone so quickly. We shared hugs goodbye, quickly made plans for our first social event, talked of community outreach we would share and planned for the adventures that were on the road ahead of us. The opportunity brought us together and created new friendships in our community as we look towards Aurora's success.



# COMMUNITY

## "Community Ties and You"

True leadership challenges us to build and strengthen the community in which we work and live. For our first session we broke into small groups to experience Aurora's community organizations in action. Our goal was to understand the resources needed to provide support services and meet the wide ranging needs of our residents.

We learned about youth outreach and advocacy groups such as Big Brothers Big Sisters®, Aurora Mental Health's Aurora Youth Options, Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA), Downtown Aurora Visual Arts (DAVA), and Excelsior Youth

Center. These organizations use community volunteers to inspire, mentor and advocate for Aurora's at-risk youth population.

We also learned about some of the support services available to the poor and homeless in our community. We explored the Salvation Army, Aurora Interchurch Task Force, Friends of St. Andrews, Comitis Crisis Center, ARC, Aurora Housing Authority, and Metro Community Providers Network. These support organizations provide emergency food, clothing, shelter, transportation, and medical assistance to struggling Aurora families.



*Visiting CASA during the Community Session*

It was a humbling experience to see others give of themselves to serve those who are less fortunate. We are awe-inspired at how much these organizations do for those in need with so little funding. It is important for each of us to support these organizations to move Aurora forward.



*Leadership Aurora "Angels"*

# POLICE

## "In the Line of Fire"

Many of us had a childhood desire to become a police officer. The Police Session had the potential to take us back to that childhood dream. Any feelings of apprehension we may have had was quickly erased by the opening comments of Police Chief Dan Oates. His officers work in high risk situations to protect the citizens of the City of Aurora.

The fast-paced action of the day was appealing and the speakers did not disappoint. We were exposed to crime on a very personal level. We heard from officers that arrest the offenders. They spoke of catching drivers

exceeding speeds of 100 mph (remember: do not go more than five miles an hour over the speed limit) and tracking down gang members. It was eye opening to learn that most places are actually touched by gang activity.

The most exciting part of the day was at the Aurora Police Academy. Securing the area within the warehouse was incredible and firing an M4 (with the supervision of a SWAT team member) was an added thrill. Being "attacked" by a trained police dog was exciting, but not an experience many of us would care to repeat anytime soon.

# COMMUNICATION

## Communication, Communication, Communication!

The Leadership Aurora class had the opportunity to get a new perspective on the media during the Media Session. What an experience we had on December 16, 2010! The day began with a mock press conference with Captain Terry Jones of the Aurora Police Department. Jones recaptured the investigation into the murder of Aaron Thompson, a little girl initially reported missing by her father. Jones' detailed account of the investigation, the evidence and interaction with the media made many of us feel as though we were there when the case was unfolding. It was also impressive

to realize all that unfolds behind the scenes and how deliberate much of the interaction with the media actually is.

The class then visited the television studio at CBS4 Denver, KCNC-TV. We were given a personal tour of the studios and the newsroom. It was very enlightening to see the "behind the scenes" effort that goes into daily news production. However, the highlight of the day was our visit to Aurora Channel 8, the television station for the City of Aurora. We learned about the different aspects of an in-studio television production; everything from what goes on in the control



*The class tours the CBS4 Studios.*

room, to running a studio camera and being interviewed. The Media Session concluded with an informational social media session.

By learning what it takes to bring the news into our living rooms, we all may have gained a greater respect for those who do that for a living.



# EDUCATION

## "21st Century Teaching and Learning"

The day began with a light breakfast at Hinkley High School and a heavy dose of the educators from Aurora Public Schools: Superintendent John Barry, Hinkley's Principal, Jinger Haberer and Director of the P-20 Campus Development, Rich Patterson. All discussed the veering patterns of education in Aurora and our city's educators choice to create 21st Century Teaching and Learning. The class was then briefed on PathWays partnering and the concept of VISTA 2010 - a 5 year plan for internal transformation in APS. We also learned that

VISTA 2015 is a vision to build on the 2010 version, which is about 95 percent complete.

The education session continued with a visit to Prairie Middle School, one of the jewels in the crown of the Cherry Creek School District, where we were welcomed by students shaking our hands at the front door. Superintendent Dr. Mary Chesley, Principal Dr. Kandy Cassaday, and Director of the Institute of Science & Technology, Richard Charles, all enlightened us about the vision, mission, and goals of the district.



*A sample of our DNA – me in a bottle*

The session ended after a visit to the Lowry Campus of the Community College of Aurora, where we had lunch with the "Food Guy" and interactive presentations in Disaster Management, Solar Technology and Bio-Technology/DNA Isolation.



*Class members and a Flight for Life helicopter*

The health care session for Leadership Aurora began with a 'disability breakfast' designed to help us experience various conditions that affect the day to day lives of thousands. Thanks to Spalding Rehabilitation Hospital, each of us was assigned a disability and helped through the process of navigating

# HEALTHCARE

## "World Class Healthcare in Aurora"

through just one meal as someone who needs some type of assistance.

The goal was to heighten the collective awareness for the health care services required and the difficulties faced by people with disabilities.

The group then listened to different speakers about subjects such as ethical choices faced by health care workers. Each of our tables was joined by a person who has been touched by serious medical problems. We discussed in detail how difficult it was to work through many of the situations and issues brought up by their medical conditions.

The group was then divided and half went to University of Colorado Hospital while the other half remained at The Medical Center of Aurora. At University, class members visited the WELLS Center where the hospital simulates clinical situations as a training method. The most current burn treatment techniques were demonstrated by the hospital's burn unit. At The Medical Center of Aurora, class members learned more about the hospital's emergency services for stroke and heart attack patients. After a tour of several different areas, each member of our class was allowed to experiment with a robot used for various surgical procedures.

# MILITARY

## "Pride & Presence"

"Military Day" for Leadership Aurora was informative and exciting. Many of us had no idea that Buckley Air Force Base is a city within our city. Nor did we realize its economic impact on the city of Aurora: Buckley contributes \$1 BILLION a year to the local economy. We may all have seen the "golf balls" at Buckley but what we may not have known is the base is responsible for constant surveillance as satellites circle the earth to protect us from harm. The teamwork required in the military was so evident and we were all provided with real world, life and death examples of why that teamwork is so important.

The highlight of the day was the flight in the KC135 cargo plane. The flight almost didn't happen due to high winds but thanks to the patience of the crew, we were able to fly. And that wait paid off with gorgeous Colorado skies and snow capped Rockies over which to fly. In the blink of an eye, six F-16 Fighting Falcons were flanking us. One by one, we lay down in the tail of the plane to observe a fighter pilot only 8 feet below refueling and waving hello. The afternoon ended with laughter among friends as we landed safely at Buckley and bounced with excitement.



*Colorado Air National Guard defending the skies*



# ECONOMIC & INFRASTRUCTURE

## "The Making Of An All-America City"

The Economic and Infrastructure Session turned out to be infinitely more interesting than many thought. Class participants walked away with a clear picture of the deliberate plan to insure the success of the city of Aurora. There are visionaries at the helm thinking about the future one year from now and 50 years down the road. Aurora is poised and ready to lead the way in renewable energy, world class health care, aero-sciences and public education.

It was eye-opening to take part in a mock city council debate. The

opportunity to learn about city government and how it operates built a new respect for elected officials, community activists and involved citizens.

The tour of the Wagner facility gave the class appreciation for how a solid company can be successful even during economic downturns. It was the chance of a lifetime to operate heavy equipment - giving us all a better appreciation for the finesse it takes to do the job.



Pam and Amy present at mock City Council meeting

## FIRE

### "Where There's Smoke, There's Fire"

Heat, oxygen, and fuel create fire and to put it out we have the the best fire fighters in Colorado, the Aurora Fire Department. Every fire vehicle proudly displays "Because Life Counts" which states how the Aurora Fire Department operates everyday while on the job. Fire fighters face many dangers and challenges while they serve the community. Spending the day with the department gave our class a true

appreciation for the courage, camaraderie and dedication they all have. Fire Chief Mike Garcia preaches, "seek perfection to reach excellence" and he has dedicated his career to making this come true. The vision of the department is "Be the Best" and in doing so they have formed a team with other agencies like the police department, emergency medical services, and Rural/Metro Ambulance to ensure the Aurora community is kept safe and in the case of emergencies will respond with the best while being the best.



Burn, baby, burn!

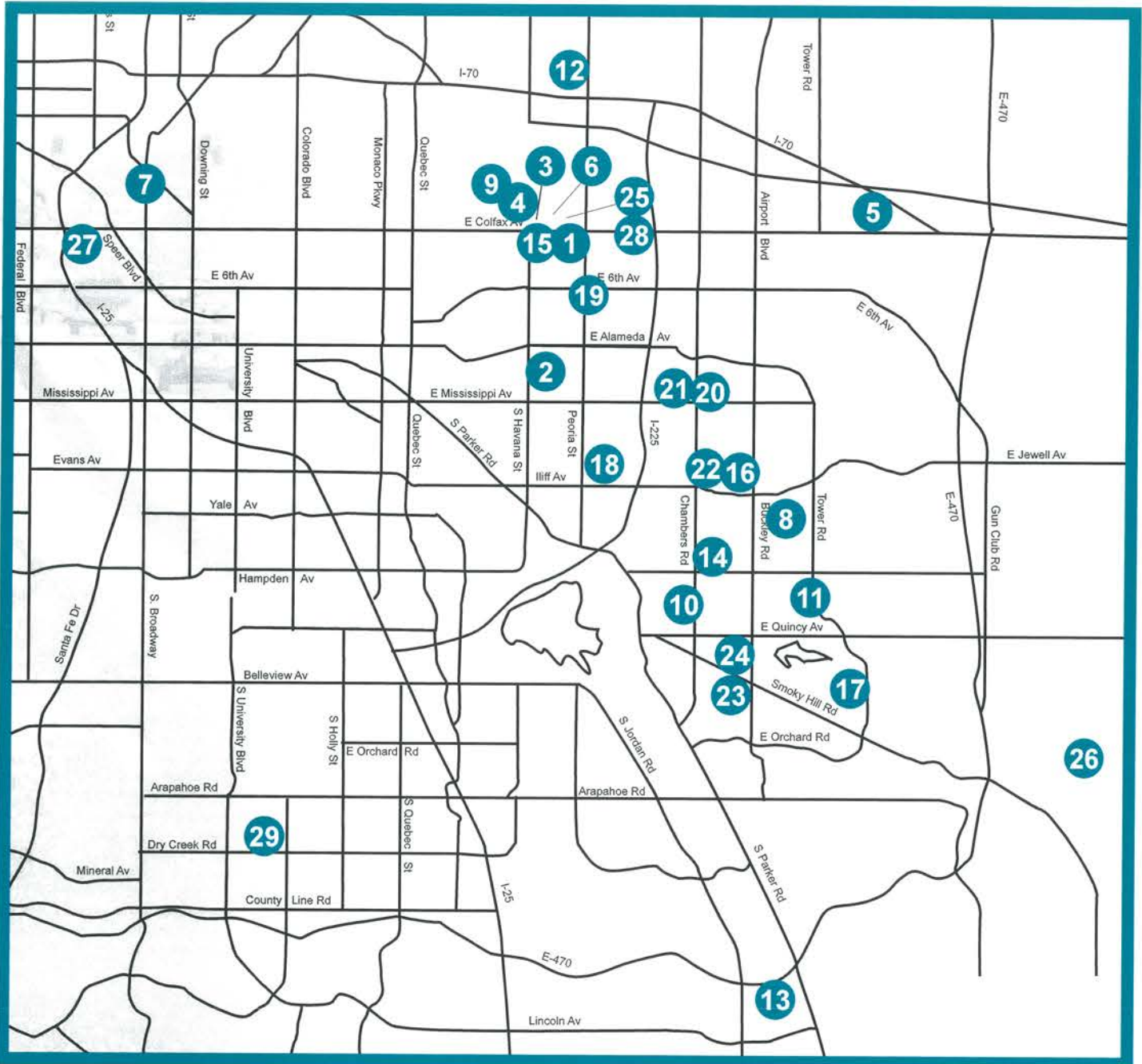


Chief Ducky



# Road Map to Success

## Class Project Community Impact



- |                                       |                                 |                                   |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1 Aurora Fox Theatre                  | 12 Lowry Family Center          | 23 Laredo Middle School (CCSD)    |
| 2 Aurora Housing Authority            | 13 Buckley Military Families    | 24 Independence Elementary School |
| 3 Aurora Interchurch Task Force       | 14 Mission Viejo Library        | 25 Aurora Warms the Night         |
| 4 Boys & Girls Club                   | 15 MLK Library                  | 26 Aurora Y.M.C.A.                |
| 5 Clyde Miller K-8 (APS)              | 16 Mrachek Middle School (APS)  | 27 Big Brothers Big Sisters       |
| 6 Colfax Community Network            | 17 Peakview Elementary          | 28 Habitat for Humanity           |
| 7 Colorado Coalition for the Homeless | 18 Prairie Middle School (CCSD) | 29 Project CURE                   |
| 8 Columbia Middle School (APS)        | 19 Salvation Army               | APS Kids Clinics (2 sites)        |
| 9 Comitis Crisis Center               | 20 The Arc of Aurora            | Elementary Schools (APS)          |
| 10 Excelsior Youth Center             | 21 Floyd House                  |                                   |
| 11 Horizon Middle School (CCSD)       | 22 Good Will                    |                                   |



# Class Projects

The Leadership Aurora Class of 2011 class projects began to take shape during our weekend retreat in Winter Park. As we learned about each other, we also talked about what inspired us and the challenges we faced and overcame throughout our lives. During our "Community Exploration Day," we learned about so many different needs of the people of Aurora. We settled on the idea of "Driving Aurora Forward" through a series of drives where we would each use our personal resources to receive donations of items, money and support for a variety of nonprofits that support Aurora residents. We began our aggressive goal during the holidays with our "Adopt-a-family" drive for November and December. January brought our "School Supply" drive. February was focused on reading and putting books into the hands of kids through our "Book Drive." March was our "Professional Clothing" Drive. April we focused on "Athletic Gear and Scholarships." May was our "Birthday Closet" Drive and our final drive was a "Food" drive to fill the pantries of the Aurora community. Our project was a group effort and we learned that every little thing we did, made a difference in the lives of those we touched. We are honored to have had the opportunity to interact with many of them.



**Leadership**  
A U R O R A  
Enjoy Reading Always, Leadership Aurora  
Class of 2010-2011  
"We need to help one another not alone."  
-C.S. Lewis



**Book Drive**

**Food Drive**

**Adopt A Family**

**School Supply Drive**

**Professional Clothing Drive**

**Sports Equipment Drive**

**Birthday Closet Drive**



# Leadership Aurora Socials

## "Playing Together"

The Leadership Aurora journey allows for so much more than a retreat in the Fall and a meeting each month for nearly a year. For unsuspecting applicants and future classmates, the chemistry was evident from the beginning. We value the partnerships that materialized not only in class studies, but in classmates' homes, local restaurants and along the gracious path of serving others. Developing

social and community ties is the backbone of what makes leaders realize the greater good. The "After Hours" presence in our vibrant class was well-attended. Whether in a formal or casual setting, the caliber of leaders and quality of friends in our Leadership Aurora class is evident. We hope to stay true to the class motto: Work hard. Play hard. Be kind to others. Always give more than you take.





# Committees

## Social Committee



*L-R Front Row: Terry Brown, Andrea Williams, Sharon Perry, Christy Jones, Melissa Clifford, Amy Kusek, Mike Tapp, David Cooper; Back Row: Eric Artis, Steve Sundberg, Richard Lewis*

## Yearbook Committee



*L-R Front Row: Noel Mink, Melissa Clifford, Rachael Gregoire  
Back Row: Erika Matich, David Barber, Barbara Morrow, Robert Joseph*

## Graduation Committee



*L-R Front Row: Pam Ninke, Maureen Barker, Mary Lewis, Cindy Andersen, Mike Garcia; Back Row: Andrea Williams, Diane Kirkpatrick, Casey Wardynski, David Cooper*

## Project Committee



*L-R Front Row: Eric Artis, Cindy Andersen, Christy Jones, Amy Kusek, Mary Lewis, Mike Tapp; Back Row: Derrick Fuller, Jack Criswell, David Barber, Casey Wardynski, Sharon Perry, Mike DiDonna*

## Photography Committee



*L-R: Michelle Wilson, Jeff Rauske, Adam Wehrle, Sue Wehrspann, Kim Sopoci, Humphrey Shin*

## Newsletter Committee



*L-R Front Row: Noel Mink, Rachael Gregoire, Michael Giles, Jack Criswell; Back Row: Erika Matich, Diane Kirkpatrick, Barbara Morrow*



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## **SPECIAL THANKS**

A special thank you to those class members who worked diligently in putting together the 2011 class yearbook. Barbara Morrow and David Barber shared the duties of chairing the Yearbook Committee. They both undertook the task of gathering and editing the information for class bios. Committee members Melissa Clifford, Rachael Gregoire, Robert Joseph, and Erika Matich wrote much of the copy for session descriptions and each committee member helped choose photos and made other various creative decisions.

A special thank you also goes to Sue Wehrspann and Adam Wehrle and the other members of the photo committee, Kim Sopoci, Jeff Rauske and Michelle Wilson who documented the class year with their cameras!

We'd also like to thank those companies who purchased advertising in this publication and to Rachael Gregoire who sold the advertising. You made it possible to provide additional funds for scholarships.

Mario Waller with Six & Six, inc. has been helping us with the design and layout of this yearbook for many years. We are thankful for the imaginative and creative ideas he has provided, as well as his patience over the years!

Also to Brad Mikel, Master Photographer, for his professional services on the class photos.

And, to Barbara Peck, In Your Element Photography, for her professional services on the Leadership Aurora board photo.



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IT TOOK EACH OF YOU TO MAKE THIS YEARBOOK A REALITY—  
THANK YOU! IT COULDN'T HAVE BEEN DONE WITHOUT YOU!!





- FREE ESTIMATES
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