

best
class
EVER



CLASS
OF **2015**



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INTRODUCTION

In 10 short months, Leadership Aurora class members experience an intensive mountain retreat, followed by monthly immersion in the best Aurora has to offer: medical facilities, educational institutions, nonprofit organizations, police and fire facilities, the military, city management, and more. The class also selects, plans, and implements projects designed to give back to the community.

The Aurora Chamber of Commerce has

supported the development of community leaders through the Leadership Aurora program for more than 30 years, and while many things have changed, the program continues to incorporate a laser focus on meeting the city's need for strong, skilled, and participatory leadership. The program is funded by The Chamber, in-kind donations, and class tuition. The Leadership Aurora Board steers the program, develops its curriculum, and oversees its success.

Ask a member of this year's class or an alumni of the program about their experience - you will be inspired.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Leadership Aurora class of 2015 acknowledges the many individuals and businesses that provide invaluable support to make this one of the most outstanding leadership programs in the United States.

Our appreciation goes to the guest speakers and personnel who took us behind the scenes of organizations throughout the city. Gratitude is also extended to the Leadership Aurora Board, Program Director Rene Simard,

Assistant Director Mitzi Schindler, and the Aurora Chamber of Commerce — for collectively cultivating this top-notch program.

As we graduate, we look forward to meeting the individuals who will join us as Leadership Aurora alumni in the years ahead. Together, we will take Aurora confidently into the future.

Special thanks to Dan Watkins, general manager of Romano's Macaroni Grill at Aurora City Place for providing

the Graduation dinner, and to Barbara Peck for the cover photo of the 2014-15 Leadership Aurora Best Class Ever, taken at the Winter Park, CO retreat, September 2014.



FirstBank Proudly Supports Leadership Aurora.



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BOARD CHAIR

Dear Leadership Aurora
Class of 2014-15,

I want to extend my sincere congratulations to the Leadership Aurora class of 2015, **"THE BEST CLASS EVER."**

It's been very rewarding to see this group come together. When this class started, most of you didn't know each other at all. Now, after 10 months, you have life-long friends you respect and love. As you graduate from this program, you can feel pride in your commitment to your own personal and professional development. It is an accomplishment and a testament to your dedication.

You've also demonstrated a commitment to the Aurora community through your numerous class projects for Aurora Warms the Night, Adopt-a-Road, and the Aurora Mental Health Center Community Garden. These projects enrich the community and broaden perspectives about serving others.

Many of the experiences you had in Leadership Aurora are once-in-a-lifetime. When else would you have the opportunity to experience first-hand how the Military, Police, and Firefighters serve, protect and function; see the inner workings of the City of Aurora; visit numerous charitable organizations;



role-play in a variety of government and media scenarios; operate construction equipment; visit local schools and see the potential of our incredible young people; or go behind the scenes of the first-class healthcare in our community?

Many graduates of this program refer back to their experiences in Leadership Aurora as life-changing. And, many

graduates who have taken leadership roles in the community remember this program as a catalyst for doing greater things – becoming leaders in their professions and giving back to the community.

I challenge you to think about how your experience in the Leadership Aurora program can benefit beyond the work you do to all aspects of your life. You might consider serving on a board in our community, or volunteering with a community group or organization.

I would like to thank the class, the Leadership Aurora Board of Directors, Program Director Rene

Simard, and the staff of the Aurora Chamber for making my role as chair an easy one. You were a delight to work with and I was honored to have had the opportunity to serve with and for such a great group of people. I certainly look forward to seeing what is accomplished in the future.

I also look forward to serving with Mike Garcia, Jr., as the 2016 Chair of the Leadership Aurora Board, and know he will be blessed with the caliber of individuals of this year's class and board.

Again, congratulations to the class of 2015! You're truly an amazing group - and please continue to improve the lives of others. Thank you.

Randy Berner

Board Chair 2014-15

CLASS PRESIDENT

I can still remember the excitement I felt driving home from Winter Park last September. I called my husband as soon as I left the resort and talked his ear off about the program to come, the leadership exercises (that I also couldn't wait to use with my own team), the panel member discussions, karaoke night (who was that crazy lady???), and so much else...but mainly about all of the amazing people I had just met. Never in my life had I been surrounded by more than 30 strangers who that quickly inspired me with enthusiasm and excitement for an adventure to come, and with whom I knew I would build lasting relationships. I suppose that is just what happens when you get that many motivated, good-hearted, bright, and fun-loving people together. That is how I would describe this class (aside from the *Best Class Ever*, of course.)

I will continue to remember that weekend in September fondly; and yet, that was only the beginning. As each month passed, the feeling of awe grew as we explored the amazing benefits of our community. Together we discovered that Aurora



is a community rich with resources, advantages, and protections to hold dear. We shed tears on Community day, developed new perspectives from City, Media, Education, and Healthcare Days, and enhanced our appreciation for the men and women providing us protection on Military, Police and Fire Days. With every memory I have of our adventures together...be it Mayor Bobby Pace rebutting Amanda Marosy's "factual"

information or Reporter Nikki Jackson's expertise on the mic or Police Officer Denise Denton's gun-happy car arrest ...they are all wrapped in laughter. Always laughter. The laughter that surrounded us during our Aurora discoveries also radiated through our conversations as we learned more about the incredible classmates that surrounded us. We discovered we have 34 new amazing people in our life we can depend on as colleagues, resources, and friends.

Thank you for the opportunity to be your

president. Thank you to Rene Simard for his dedication and support. Thank you to all of the board members who worked so hard to make this an incredible experience for each of us. Last but certainly not least, thank you to each of my classmates for bringing your "Insights" each and every month and making this an incredible and fun experience. I am proud to be a member of the Aurora community and proud to be part of the Leadership Aurora Class of 2015...the *Best Class Ever!*

Sarah Young

Leadership Aurora Class of 2014-2015 Class
President

Congratulations to the
Leadership Aurora
Class of 2015!



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Congratulations L.A. Class of 2015!



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2014-15

LEADERSHIP AURORA BOARD



Left to right, back row: Josh Hensley, Patrick Pogue, Deborah Jones, Antoinette Dow, Cassidee Carlson, Michael Garcia, Maureen Barker, Ryan Evans, Donna Greeley, Wendy DeBell, Christina Grooms, Christy Jones, Gary Wheat, Dave Mittan. Left to right, front row: Melissa Toering, Sarah Ellis, Randy Berner, Mike Garcia, Michelle Wolfe, Sarah Young.

Not pictured: Greg Baker, Rachel Banks, David Barber, Gigi de Gala, Randy Kehn, Amy Kusek, Chris Lockwood, Barbara Peck, Debra Scarpella, Michael Tapp, Rene Simard, and Mitzi Schindler.

Greg Baker

City of Aurora – Water
3151 E. Alameda Pkwy.
Aurora, CO 80012
gbaker@auroragov.org

Rachel Banks

Adams County Workforce
3155 N Chamber Rd.
Aurora, CO 80011
rbanks@adcogov.org

David Barber

Re/Max Unlimited
3300 S. Parker Rd., Suite 100
Aurora, CO 80014
djbarber@comcast.net

Maureen Barker

Citywide Banks
13731 E. Mississippi Ave.
Aurora, CO 80012
barker@citywidebanks.com

Randy Berner (Chair)

Adolfson & Peterson
797 Ventura Street
Aurora, CO 80011
rberner@a-p.com

Cassidee Carlson

Aurora Police Dept.
15001 E. Alameda Pkwy.
Aurora, CO 80012
ccarlson@auroragov.org

Wendy DeBell

wdebell@aol.com

Gigi de Gala

Aurora Mental Health Center
11059 E. Bethany Dr., Suite 200
Aurora, CO 80014
Gigi.degala@nelnet.net

Antoinette Dow

Providers' Resource Clearinghouse
14500 E. 35th Place
Aurora, CO 80011
antoinettedow@aumhc.org

Sarah Ellis

Lutheran Medical Center
8030 W. 38th Ave
Wheat Ridge, CO 80033
ellissarah@comcast.net

Ryan Evans

Advantage Security, Inc.
13693 E. Iliff Ave., #200
Aurora, CO 80014
revans@advantagesecurityinc.com

Mike Garcia

City of Aurora – Fire Dept.
15151 E. Alameda Pkwy.
Aurora, CO 80012
rgarcia@auroragov.org

Mike Garcia (Vice Chair)

Hurricane Grill & Wings
8025 W. Bowles Ave.
Littleton, CO 80123
mgarcia@hgwcolorado.com

Donna Greeley

Spalding Rehabilitation Hospital
900 S. Potomac Street
Aurora, CO 80011
Donna.greeley@healthonecares.com

Christina Grooms

510 South Aspen St., Suite 250E
Buckley AFB, CO 80011
Christina.grooms@us.af.mil

Josh Hensley

Aurora Public Schools
15701 E. 1st Ave., Suite 206
Aurora, CO 80011
jdhensley@aps.k12.co.us

Christy Jones

DPRA, Inc.
Rocky Mountain Arsenal
6550 Gateway Rd
Commerce City, CO 80022-1748
Christy.jones@dpra.com

Deborah Jones

University of Colorado Health
12401 E. 17th Ave
Mail Stop A028
Aurora CO 80045
Deborah.jones@uchealth.org

Randy Kehn

Colo. Air Natl. Guard/Buckley AFB
18860 E. Breckenridge Ave.
Aurora, CO 80011
Randy.keh@ang.af.mil

Amy Kusek

Energy Outreach Colorado
225 E. 16th Ave. Suite 200
Denver, CO 80203
akusek@EnergyOutreach.org

Chris Lockwood

Rural/Metro Ambulance
452 Sable Blvd., Suite D
Aurora, CO 80011
Christopher_lockwood@rmetro.com

Dave Mittan

First Bank
2300 S. Havana Street
Aurora, CO 80014
Dave.mittan@efirstbank.com

Barbara Peck

13250 E. Center Ave.
Aurora, CO 80012
inyourelement@mac.com

Patrick Pogue

Edward Jones Investments
16911 E. Quincy Ave., Unit A2
Aurora, CO 80015
Patrick.pogue@edwardjones.com

Debra Scarpella

Goodwill Industries of Denver
6850 N. Federal Blvd.
Denver, CO 80221
dscarpella@goodwilldenver.org

Mitzi Schindler

(Asst. Program Director)

Aurora Chamber of Commerce
14305 E. Alameda Ave., Suite 300
Aurora, CO 80012
Mitzi.schindler@aurorachamber.org

Rene J. Simard

(Program Director)
Aurora Chamber of Commerce
14305 E. Alameda Ave., Suite 300
Aurora, CO 80012
Rene.simard@aurorachamber.org

Michael Tapp

Aurora Mental Health Center
14301 E. Hampden Ave.
Aurora, CO 80014
MichaelTapp@aumhc.org

Melissa Toering

City of Aurora – Water
15151 E. Alameda Pkwy, Suite 2400
Aurora, CO 80012
mtoering@auroragov.org

Gary Wheat

Visit Aurora
15151 E. Alameda Pkwy.,
Suite 5200
Aurora, CO 80012
garywheat@visitaaurora.com

Michelle Wolfe

(Immediate Past Chair)
City of Aurora
15151 E. Alameda Pkwy. #5900
Aurora, CO 80012
mwolfe@auroragov.org

Sarah Young

City of Aurora – Water
15151 E. Alameda Pkwy.
Aurora, CO 80012
syoung@auroragov.org

2015 OPENING RETREAT

“Best Class Ever”



“I really valued the time spent in Winter Park for our retreat. I particularly enjoyed getting to know everyone and finding common ground across our different professional fields. Discovering more about how we all relate, work, and lead in the world through the Insights Discovery tool was affirming for me.”

— Brian Smith



2015

CLASS PROFILES



Zach Abdelbaki

Juvenile Assessment Center
7375 S. Potomac St., Pod #5
Centennial, CO 80012
zabedlbaki@arapahoegov.com

Birth Place: Denver, CO
Education: BS in Criminal Justice Metro State
University

FAVORITE QUOTE:

"If you live through defeat, you're not defeated. If you are beaten but acquire wisdom, you have won. Lose yourself to improve yourself. Only when we shed all self-definition do we find who we really are."

—Wu Tang Clan

Tyrone Adams

FAVORITE QUOTE:

"I like to see myself as a bridge builder that is me building bridges between people, between races, between cultures, between politics, trying to find common ground"
— T.D. Jakes

Birth Place: Denver, CO
Education: University of Northern Colorado 1992

Colorado Association of Realtors
309 Inverness Way South
Englewood, CO 80012
tadams@coloradorealtors.com



Marie Anderson

Visit Aurora
15151 E. Alameda Pkwy., Suite 5200
Aurora, CO 80012
marieanderson@visitaaurora.com

Birth Place: Wheeling, WV
Education: Regis University, Dual BS Business
Administration & BS Public Administration
& Certified Retirement Administrator

FAVORITE QUOTE:

"There is only one way to happiness and that is to cease worrying about things which are beyond the power of our will."
— Epictetus

Ryan Anderson

FAVORITE QUOTE:

"Never make a bad day make you feel like you have a bad life."

Birth Place: Minneapolis, MN
Education: Colorado State University, Construction
Management

Adolfson & Peterson Construction
797 Ventura Way
Aurora, CO 80011
ryananderson@a-p.com





Kevin Carlson

Kevin Carlson Golf
3700 Quebec St., # 100-353
Denver, CO 80207
kevin@kevincarlsonsgolf.com

Birth Place: Chicago, IL
Education: University of Florida International
University BBA & MBA

FAVORITE QUOTE:

"You should make less bogies, not more birdies."

— Kevin Carlson

Malona Cavanaugh

FAVORITE QUOTE:

"We cannot change our past. We cannot change the fact that people act in a certain way. We cannot change the inevitable. The only thing we can do is play on the one string we have, and that is our attitude."

— Charles R. Swindoll

Birth Place: Great Falls, MT
Education: BA in organizational communications
with emphasis in HR

Colorado Air National Guard
18860 E. Breckenridge Ave.
Aurora, CO 80011
malona.cavanaugh@ang.af.mil



Denise Denton

Aurora Health Access
11419 E. Cimmarron Dr.
Englewood, CO 80111
ddenton@aurorahealthaccess.org

Birth Place: Ft Hood, TX
Education: Master of Science in Human Resource
Management

FAVORITE QUOTE:

"You are where you want to be."

— My HS history teacher

JoAnne Dodson

FAVORITE QUOTE:

"I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel."

— Maya Angelou

Birth Place: Seoul, South Korea
Education: Denver School of Nursing, RN
BSN

Spalding Rehabilitation Hospital
900 Potomac St.
Aurora, CO 80011
joanne.dodson@healthonecares.com



Regina Edmondson

Community College of Aurora
710 Alton Way, West Quad
Bldg. 903 Room 110
Denver, CO 80230
regina.edmondson@ccaaurora.edu

Birth Place: Lakewood, CO
Education: Metropolitan State University, Life
Experience, Motherhood

FAVORITE QUOTE:

"My mission in life is not merely to survive, but to thrive and do it so with some passion, some compassion, some humor and some style."

— Maya Angelou





Brenda Eisenhauer

Parkside Animal Health Center
5001 S. Parker Rd. Suite 101
Aurora, CO 80015
brendadvdm@parksideahc.com

Birth Place: Tiffin, Ohio
Education: Doctor of Veterinary Medicine with
certificates in International Medicine and Public
Health

FAVORITE QUOTE:

"Just Keep Swimming"
— Dory, from Finding Nemo

Chance Folmar

FAVORITE QUOTE:
*"Security is mostly superstition. It does not
exist in nature, nor do the children of men as
a whole experience it. Avoiding danger is no
safer in the long run than outright exposure.
Life is either a daring adventure, or nothing."*
— Helen Keller

Birth Place: Redwood City, CA
Education: Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University,
BA Aeronautical Engineering
Florida Atlantic University, MBA

MITH Enterprises LLC
3164 W. 12th Ave.
Broomfield, CO 80020
chance@mith-ent.com



Cheryl Gailunas

Kaiser Permanente Colorado
2530 S. Parker Road, Suite 650
Aurora, CO 80014
cheryl.gailunas@kp.org

Birth Place: Northford, CT
Education: BS University of Connecticut

FAVORITE QUOTE:

*"Twenty years from now, you'll be more
disappointed by the things that you didn't
do, than by the ones you did do. So throw off
the bowlines. Sail away from the safe harbor.
Catch the winds in your sail. Explore. Dream.
Discover."*

— Mark Twain

Sebastien Garcia

FAVORITE QUOTE:
*"It's amazing what can be accomplished
when no one cares who gets the credit."*
— John Wooden

Birth Place: Denver, CO
Education: Associates Degrees Human Resource
Management & Financial Management

Colorado Air National Guard
18860 E. Breckenridge Ave.
Aurora, CO 80011
sebastien.garcia@ang.af.mil



Jordan Glist

Aurora Mental Health
14301 E. Hampden Ave.
Aurora, CO 80014
jordanglist@aumhc.org

Birth Place: Washington, DC
Education: University of Virginia, BS in Psychology

FAVORITE QUOTE:

*"Hydration is the key to success in all
things."*



Deb Gustafson

Navy Federal Credit Union
1125 S. Tower Road
Aurora, CO 80017
deborah_gustafson@navyfederal.org

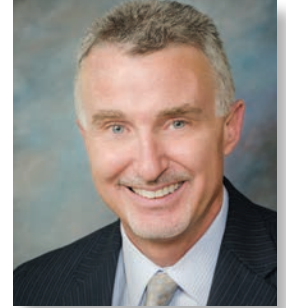
Birth Place: Mt Veron, IL
Education: Barnes Business College

FAVORITE QUOTE:

"Everything you can imagine is real."

— Pablo Picasso

David Henderson



FAVORITE QUOTE:

"I can do all things through Christ who gives me strength."
— Philippians 4:13

Birth Place: Cortez, CO
Education: University of Phoenix, BA Business Administration
The American College, Chartered Financial Consultant Designation

David Henderson CFP, CLU
8400 E. Prentice Ave., Suite 300
Greenwood Village, CO 80111
dhenderson@c1s.net



Chance Horiuchi

Aurora Chamber of Commerce
14305 E. Alameda Ave., Suite 300
Aurora, CO 80012
chance.horiuchi@aurorachamber.org

Birth Place: Wahiawa, HI
Education: University of Northern Colorado
Medical Anthropology and Biomedical Sciences

FAVORITE QUOTE:

"Do something today that your future self will thank you for tomorrow."

Biaze Houston



FAVORITE QUOTE:

"The question is not whether we can afford to invest in every child; it is whether we can afford not to."
— Marian Wright Edelman

Birth Place: Denver, CO
Education: Colorado State University, BA English;
University of Phoenix, MA Secondary Teacher
Education; University of Denver, PhD Curriculum and Instruction

Aurora Public Schools - Rangeview HS
17599 E. Iliff Ave.
Aurora, CO 80013
blhouston@aps.k12.co.us

Dominique "Nikki" Jackson



Sustainable Storytelling
104 S. Fraser Circle
Aurora, CO 80012
jacksnm@gmail.com

Birth Place: Detroit, MI
Education: Metro State University BA Communications; University of Denver, MA international & Intercultural Communications

FAVORITE QUOTE:

"Where there is love, there is life."

— Mahatma Gandhi



Shannon Jones

FirstBank
2300 S. Havana St.
Aurora, CO 80014
shannon.jones@efirstbank.com

Birth Place: Denver, CO
Education: University of Colorado Denver, BS
Business Management

FAVORITE QUOTE:

*"For I can do all things through Christ
who strengthens me."*

— *Philippians 4:13*

Jim Kirst



FAVORITE QUOTE:

*"We must face the choice between
what is right and what is easy."*

— *Albus Dumbledore*

Birth Place: Buffalo, New York
Education: Embry Riddle, BA Professional
Aeronautics; University of Oklahoma, Masters in
Human Relations

Aurora Veterans Affairs
19792 E. Oxford Dr.
Aurora, CO 80013
n0xca@msn.com



Jad Lanigan

City of Aurora, Police Department
15151 E. Alameda Pkwy.
Aurora, CO 80012
jlanigan@auroragov.org

Birth Place: Albuquerque, NM

Education: Bachelors of Science, Criminal Justice
and Criminology

FAVORITE QUOTE:

*"Relax, the handcuffs are tight because
they're new. They'll stretch out after you
wear them awhile."*

Bridget Lindemood



FAVORITE QUOTE:

*"All that is necessary for the
triumph of evil is good men do
nothing."*

— *Edmund Burke*

Birth Place: Greeley, CO
Education: University of Evansville,
BA in International Studies

Mile High United Way
2505 18th St.
Denver, CO 80211
bridget.lindemood@unitedwaydenver.org



Amanda Marosy

Amanda Marosy
Aurora Mental Health
14500 E. 33rd Place
Aurora, CO 80011
amandamarosy@aunhc.org

Birth Place: Aurora, CO

Education: University of Northern Colorado BA
in Psychology; MA in Rehabilitation Counseling,
Certified Rehab Counselor

FAVORITE QUOTE:

*"Anything is possible with hard work,
faith, a supportive team, and lots of Diet
Coke."*



Janet McCall

Citywide Banks
55 Madison Street, Suite 100
Denver, CO 80206
MCCALL@citywidebanks.com

Birth Place: Kearney, NE
Education: MBA American Graduate School of
International Management

FAVORITE QUOTE:
"Carpe Diem"

Bobby Pace

FAVORITE QUOTE:
*"Inspiration is for amateurs, the rest of
us just show up for work." —Chuck Close*

Birth Place: Richmond, VA
Education: BA Virginia Commonwealth University;
MA Virginia Tech; PhD University of Denver

Community College of Aurora
16000 E. Centretch Pkwy.
Aurora, CO 80011
bobby.pace@ccaurora.edu



Gene Roncone

Highpoint Church
6350 S. Southlands Pkwy.
Aurora, CO 80016
groncone@highpointchurch.us

Birth Place: Youngstown, OH
Education: Bethany University, University of
San Francisco

FAVORITE QUOTE:
"Fear is not real."

Angela Sims-Ceja

FAVORITE QUOTE:
*"Education is the most powerful weapon
which you can use to change the world."
— Nelson Mandela*

Birth Place: Baltimore, MD
Education: Regis University

City of Aurora, Information Technology
Department
15151 E. Alameda Pkwy.
Aurora, CO 80012
asims@auroragov.org



Brian Smith

Aurora Mental Health
791 Chambers Road, Suite 411
Aurora, CO 80011
briansmith@aumh.org

Birth Place: Waterloo, IA
Education: University of Iowa, Masters in
Social Work

FAVORITE QUOTE:
*"And the day came when the risk it took
to remain tight in a bud became more
painful than the risk it took to blossom."
— Anais Nin*





Helen Stampley

RE/MAX Unlimited
3300 S. Parker Road, Suite 100
Parker, CO 80014
helenstampley@remax.net

Birth Place: Waterloo, IA
Education: University of Iowa, Masters in
Social Work

FAVORITE QUOTE:

*"And the day came when the risk it took
to remain tight in a bud became more
painful than the risk it took to blossom."*

— Anais Nin

Jenn Stewart

FAVORITE QUOTE:

*"So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be
dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and
help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right
hand."*

— Isaiah 41:10

Birth Place: Modesto, CA
Education: MA in Organizational Leadership

American Cancer Society
2255 S. Oneida St.
Denver, CO 80224
jennifer.stewart@cancer.org



Gionni Thompson

Adams 14 School District
6500 E. 72nd Ave.
Commerce City, CO 80022
gthompson@adams14.org

Birth Place: Aurora, CO
Education: University of Colorado, Biochemistry;
University of Phoenix, Masters in Administration
and Leadership

FAVORITE QUOTE:

*"Criticism is the destruction
of Progress."*

— Phil Jackson

Rodney Weber

FAVORITE QUOTE:

*"The measure of who we are is what we
do with what we have."*

— Vince Lombardi

Birth Place: Fort Lee, VA
Education: Colorado State University, BA

City of Aurora, Fire Department
15151 E. Alameda Pkwy.
Aurora, CO 80012
rweber@auroragov.org



Sarah Young

City of Aurora, Water Department
15151 E. Alameda Pkwy.
Aurora, CO 80012
syoung@auroragov.org

Birth Place: Loveland, CO
Education: BS in Civil Engineering, University
of Colorado Denver

FAVORITE QUOTE:

*"The irony of commitment is that it's deeply
liberating-in work, in play, in love. The act
frees you from tyranny of your internal critic,
from the fear that likes to dress itself up,
and parade around as rational hesitation. To
commit is to remove your head as the barrier
to your life."*

— Anne Morris





Mile High United Way

CONGRATULATIONS BRIDGET LINDEMOOD AND THE AURORA LEADERSHIP CLASS



GREAT THINGS HAPPEN WHEN WE LIVE UNITED

COMMUNITY

“Community Ties and You”

“One of the days I enjoyed most was Community Day, while I work in the nonprofit arena it was wonderful to see my classmates be touched by the work that is being done in the community. It was a great reminder that not everyone experiences the same things on a daily basis that I do and that so many were inspired to get involved.”

— Bridget Lindemood



ECONOMIC & INFRASTRUCTURE

“The Making Of An All-America City”



“While I don’t live in Aurora now, it was my first home when I moved to Colorado 25 years ago. The All America City Day reminded me of why I loved Aurora then, and why it’s an even more diverse and dynamic city now. Aurora is a remarkable city, and it’s getting better with age. Leadership Aurora has given me the opportunity to learn more about myself, meet a lot of new people, and also to get reacquainted with a wonderful community.”

— Denise Denton



MEDIA

Communication, Communication, Communication!

“Our day with the Media was amazing – seeing the sets of the news stations, learning about how stories develop, and being in the “hot seat” through mock interviews and running the camera was so much fun!”

— Brenda Eisenhauer



EDUCATION

“21st Century Teaching and Learning”

“Education day was a really well balanced and diverse look at schools in Aurora and options for students. Working at a Mental Health School, it was fascinating to see the range of options open to kids who want to excel.”

— Jordan Glist



HEALTHCARE



“World Class Healthcare in Aurora”

“The Healthcare Day was most memorable to me. It was very fascinating to learn the different healthcare sections, meet the healthcare professionals who are so passionate about what they do, and to learn about the amazing technology. Healthcare is very confusing to most so this day did help with breaking it down for the average Joe.”

— Malona Cavanaugh

MILITARY

“Pride & Presence”

“Growing up in a military family, I wasn’t sure that I would be blown away by Military Day, but I was wrong. I was very impressed with all the operations of Buckley Air Force Base and amazed to learn about all the new technology that is utilized on a daily basis. It was amazing to talk with the men and women who dedicate their lives to protect the freedom and safety of our country. I came away with tremendous respect and appreciation for the Armed Forces.”

— JoAnne Dodson





POLICE

"In the Line of Fire"

"The media climate for today's police force is definitely heavy on the treatment of the civilian community that they protect and serve. I was impressed with the amount of training the APD goes through to not only apprehend criminals and secure the community. But how to do it with equal protection to the police officer and those being taken into custody."

— Sebastien Garcia



FIRE

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

"I was inspired by today's experiences and will always be so grateful. Fire day has opened my eyes to a whole new appreciation for men and women in the fire department. I have MAD RESPECT for what they do every day.... Because life counts."

— Chance Horiuchi





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CLASS PROJECTS

"The class projects were a wonderful opportunity to see the power of collaboration at work. It's what transformed our class from a group of individuals to a cohesive team."

— Gene Roncone



"I think the best part of LA for me was the service projects. The most fun I had was picking up trash on the side of Alameda Ave. and competing over who could find the most interesting items, and the thrill of being taught by some amazing women how to use power tools for the community garden project. I loved the service aspect of Leadership Aurora."

— Amanda Marosy

The Leadership Aurora Golf Tournament has been a signature fundraising event of the Aurora Chamber of Commerce for 17 years. The monies raised from the tournament help support the Leadership Aurora program that annually introduces class members to a variety of information about, and resources for, the Aurora community. Because of generous sponsors of this Pay it Forward event, The Chamber is able to



give financial assistance to incoming applicants, as well as fund the team building retreat that is so vital to the success of the program and its participants.

There are many ways to participate in the tournament, from volunteering to a variety of sponsorship options.

See details at www.aurorachamber.org/leadership-aurora/golf-tournament or contact

naomi.colwell@aurorachamber.org or rene.simard@aurorachamber.org

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HAVING FUN

"My biggest takeaway from the program are the truly impressive resources and expertise available to our community. From social services to healthcare, and from entertainment to education and public safety."

The citizens of Aurora are truly fortunate to live here."

— Sarah Young



Congratulations to Leadership Aurora Class of 2015 ***BEST CLASS EVER***

With knowledge and collaboration,
we can change the world!

Angela Sims-Ceja
City of Aurora, Information Technology Department



MORE FUN



"Leadership Aurora is an invaluable experience. The program allowed me to reconnect with my past, see the current state of our great city, and show how I can positively impact Aurora's future, all while enjoying the company of fantastic Aurora citizens, businessmen, and leaders. Thank you for this honor."

— Chance Folmer



Proud Participant
of the
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Helen Stampley

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LEADERSHIP AURORA CLASS OF 2015

"Seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I sent you. Pray to the Lord for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper."

Jeremiah 29:7 (The Bible)

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