



OUR EVERLASTING JOURNEY

Class of 2016-2017

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Aurora Central Recreation Center



Introduction

All within 10 months, Leadership Aurora class members experience an intensive mountain retreat, and monthly immersion in the best Aurora has to offer: medical facilities; educational institutions; nonprofit organizations; police and fire facilities; the military; city management; and civic engagement. 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 2017 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 Romano's Macaroni Grill at Aurora City Place for providing the Graduation dinner, and to Barbara Peck for the class photo of the 2016-2017 Leadership Aurora class, taken at the Winter Park, CO retreat, September 2016.





Get Your Degree in Community.

At Nelnet, we know the power of education and giving back. That is why we're a proud sponsor of Leadership Aurora. Join us in congratulating those who graduate today and thank them for investing in the communities in which we live and work.



Congratulations

LEADERSHIP

Aurora 2017 Graduates

www.WagnerEquipment.com



*"The most powerful leadership tool you have
is your own personal example"*

— John Wooden

Board Chair

The Leadership Aurora class always goes so quickly. It was that way for me, and that seems to hold true for every class.

You start in September, meeting your classmates — most of them for the first time — and wondering what you signed up for!

The events, speakers, and exercises of the Class Retreat offers opportunities to discover so much about each other and yourselves, and to begin the teamwork you demonstrate throughout the year. The Insights program offers some wonderful 'Ah-ha' moments about how personality differences can be managed once we have the tools that allow us to better work better.

The Class of 2017 began the process of coming together as a class right from the beginning. Electing a class leader – Omar Lyle – forming committees and showing genuine enthusiasm for the year ahead and your roles in the community you pledged to understand and support.

Each class day throughout the year, you came together to learn more about and experience first-hand the major aspects of

our Aurora community — from Education, Healthcare, Media, Police, Fire and Military, to the inner workings of the city government, and much more. You participated in some exciting activities that most citizens could never dream of. You took it all seriously and delved deeply into each session, peppering the speakers with thoughtful questions.

Throughout the year, you produced a great newsletter that informed the board and others of your plans and activities. You held the historically most successful "Pay it Forward" event – a silent auction at Stanley Marketplace that was remarkable in every way, including raising an astounding \$5,300!

Many of you gathered supplies for organizations that serve the homeless, held fundraisers and participated in numerous community events - showing your enthusiasm and support for the great work done in the



city of Aurora. Your committees came to consensus on numerous projects for your class to complete - a challenge every class has, as they realize the needs are so great.

As I write this, some of you are still planning to finish up your main projects. I'm confident that your support of Aurora Homeless Connect and the Sensory Garden

Project will be much appreciated now and in the future. It is our hope that you will continue to participate in the community in whatever ways you can. Aurora is better and stronger because of each person who makes a difference.

You should be proud of all you've done and the example you set for future classes and future leaders.

Sarah Ellis
Chair of the Leadership Aurora Board
2016-17

*A leader is best when people barely know he
exists, when his work is done, his aim fulfilled,
they will say: we did it ourselves.*

—Lao Tzu

Class President

Adaptation: Something, such as a device or mechanism, that is changed or changes so as to become suitable to a new or special application or situation.

Adaptation is not easy, because we all get stuck in our ways; we do what's comfortable because that's human nature. I am no different, but this year has forced me to adapt to situations that I am not used to facing.

Through thick and thin our class found ways to move past obstacles we were confronted with. Adapting to every challenge and learning our new roles within our new tribe. We've had struggles along the way, but we've had some great success as well. It has truly been my pleasure to lead some of Aurora's finest!

Omar Lyle
2016-2017 Leadership Aurora Class President



Class Vice President



When embarking down the path in a leadership journey, is it better to take a ladder or a compass? We often hear the term, "climbing the corporate ladder" when discussing business career development. However, climbing a ladder implies that one needs to step on others, or rungs, to get ahead. Taking a step back and focusing on relationships with both our community leaders and one another is the approach we mastered in our Leadership Aurora class this past year. Truly grasping the time with each other allowed us to mature and comprehend the "why" behind our personal motivations. All of us have achieved

success through various difficult paths and learning in each other journeys has been an education in and of itself. It's these experiences we have shared together that has created a foundation for our personal growth and been the compass to guide us on our leadership journey.

It has truly been a pleasure getting to know you all this past this year. I look forward to sharing in future development plans for our community and leading Aurora. Thank you.

Brandon Mencini
2016-2017 Leadership Aurora Class Vice President

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Class Projects

SENSORY GARDEN

As one of their major projects, The 2016-2017 Leadership Aurora class built a sensory garden at the Star K Ranch in Aurora. The garden provides an intimate space where young children — especially those with sensory processing disorders — can be immersed in the scents, textures, colors, and sounds of a tranquil, exploration outdoor space.



HOMELESS CONNECT

The Class of 2016-2017 partnered with the City of Aurora and a host of service providers to offer Aurora Homeless Connect — a collaborative, welcoming, and trauma-informed space that meets people experiencing homelessness with dignity and respect, allowing folks to meet their basic needs, while also engaging in housing and employment services that will support ending their homelessness. This first-ever event in Aurora took place at the newly renovated Aurora Day Resource Center, bringing together housing, health care, hygiene, pet services, employment, and food resources to be made available and in support of those currently in Aurora experiencing homelessness.



CART RACES

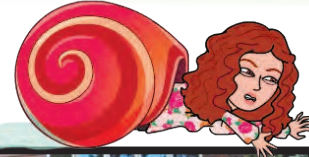
Members of The Class of 2017 participated in the annual Grocery Cart Races to benefit Comitis Crisis Center and Colfax Community Network. With their Hakuna Matata Hawaiian themed grocery cart, the team raised nearly \$800 for the cause.



Opening Retreat



Our journey begins...



The Leadership Aurora Retreat in Winter Park, CO was absolutely wonderful. I almost immediately felt like I had built lifelong memories with my LA team. This truly set the foundation for forming meaningful bonds by allowing us to build social and working relationships. There was a good balance of learning and fun and it makes me excited about the mixture of business and pleasure to come.

I was expecting two days of lectures and group discussions. This retreat was a warm welcome to the entire program.

Scott McLagan from the University of Denver's Daniels School of Business was amazing! I really enjoyed the rope challenge...not so much the pole challenge — but it was meant to be difficult. The Insights information is so useful, especially for work. So much of it is self-reflection and I really enjoyed learning about others. I find myself calling out colors now of people that I work with or know.

Thank you very much for treating us so wonderfully, and for giving this opportunity. We plan to make you proud.



Class of 2017



Our traveling companions...

The experience is priceless. I have a better understanding of how the city runs its government. Leadership Aurora provided me the light to see the beauty and the resources that is of abundance within the City - especially in the area of education. I hope to spread the word so kids can take advantage of the available educational opportunities.



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John Allen

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Memorable experience? Karaoke at the Retreat, and that strange guy rubbing Rene's head.

It was so impactful to meet the talented, motivated kids in our community on Education Day; and the men and women that protect our country, state, and city during Military, Police, and Fire days. And, all of our experiences - along with meeting amazing community members, is truly memorable.



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EJ Becker

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I don't know if this counts as a 'moment,' but the retreat was memorable for me. I enjoyed getting to know different folks in the community - people I wouldn't normally get to meet. Also, the "car chase" on police day was so much fun! And Heather's face when she was being eaten by the police dog. Those are pretty memorable moments!



Jessica Berry

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Education Day was a very powerful experience for me. The students and programs far exceeded my expectations. I loved having lunch with the students at Aurora Central High School and chatting with them about their futures in science and healthcare. Truly an amazing day - and I am proud to know them.

The visit to Buckley Air Force Base and witnessing take-offs and landings up-close was an exhilarating experience I won't soon forget.



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Gregory Cazzell

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My fondest memory is the shopping cart race to support Comitis Crisis Center. Our team consisted of Joshua, Natalie, Danielle, and I - along with a pit crew of support from Terry, Mitzi, and Todd. We were up against seasoned teams with corporate cash but we held our own and represented LA 2017.

The adventures we took in Leadership Aurora were once in a lifetime experiences that will forever change me! My most memorable experience was community day where we visited homeless shelters in Aurora and even went through a heartbreaking poverty simulation. My paradigm was completely changed, and I am beyond grateful. I will strive to continually serve this community.



Jennifer Dunn

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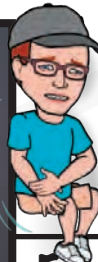
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I would have to say the most memorable part of Leadership Aurora is meeting all the different people, both in the class and at the monthly events. It's a great networking experience.

I really enjoyed having a 20 minute "personal" flyover by F-16 Falcons Multi-role fighter jets.



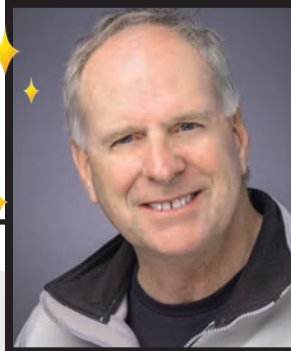
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I think that the Police Academy was perhaps the most impactful of all the opportunities offered. What it believe under the professionalism, abilities and high level skill competencies, I felt deep in my spirit the heart and emotion of these brave and professional people. The training, discipline and mind-set of these warriors were not just impressive but re-assuring that we are in well qualified and professional individuals!

One of my most memorable Leadership Aurora experiences has been the process of identifying and developing a class legacy project. The project homeless connect event was scribbled in marker on a dry erase board in October 2016 and in June 2017 will become the inaugural of many connect events to follow.



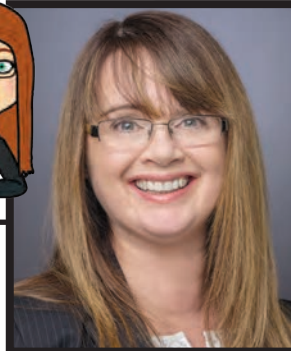
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Winter Park was where it all started for the 'Best LA Class' ever! The three days at the retreat were most memorable and a wonderful bonding experience. It was a great opportunity to meet my fellow classmates and start our journey in making a difference within our community.

I believe the most memorable experiences of Leadership Aurora are yet to come. Exploring Aurora was amazing, and I know that through the relationships I have created, there will be many more experiences to come.



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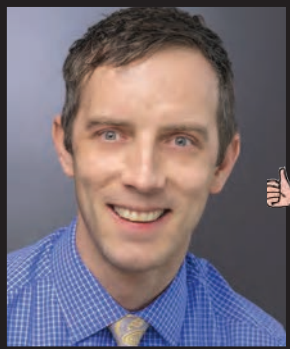
Jessica Jones

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My most memorable LA experience would have to be jumping up and down like a school girl when the F-16 jets flew right over our heads!

The grocery cart races benefitting Comitis Crisis Center was one of the most fun experiences I have had in a long time. Our class came together to raise money for a good cause and our cart team knocked it out of the park! So much fun!



Josh Kusch

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Jamie L. LaDuke

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To see inside one of the "white golf balls" on Buckley AFB, was truly amazing!

I so enjoyed creating a sensory garden for the community.



Danielle Lammon

Danielle Shannon Allstate Agency
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David Leski

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Watching Mary Meeks drop the mic after finishing her soulful rendition of 'We are family' at Karaoke night at the Retreat! It was magical...loved it!

My most memorable experience was -
beyond a doubt - getting to know one
another at Winter Park.



Omar R. Lyle

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Olga Mead

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The police car chases were awesome.
Each session never ceases to amaze me.
I wish it didn't have to end.

My most memorable experience was the
visit to University of Colorado Hospital. It
was amazing to see the technology and
innovative advancements available to the
community. I was particularly impressed
with the mobile MRI van.



Mary Meeks

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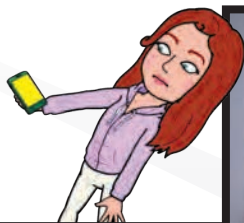
It has truly been a pleasure getting to know
you all this past this year. I look forward to
sharing in future development plans for our
community and leading Aurora.

What truly makes Leadership Aurora
memorable is the lifelong friendships I have
built. This is more than networking; I have
deeply bonded with fellow leaders in the
community from numerous industries, and I
know we will continue to make a difference
in Aurora as business partners and as friends.



Alexa Pecorella

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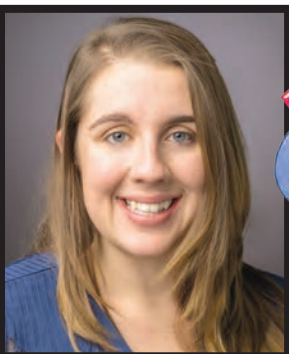
Susan Ruby

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I really enjoyed getting to know the city I live in.

My most memorable moment (well – event, I guess) was the retreat. I really enjoyed getting to know all of the unique and wonderful people that make up our class.



Josie Shea

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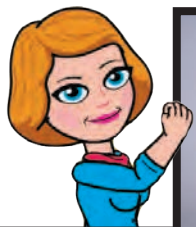
I truly appreciate watching and learning from some of the most amazing leaders I have ever had the chance to work with. The skills I developed by working with these individuals are worth the entire experience.

Most Memorable? Watching the F-16s at Buckley!



Ted G. Snow, PhD

Community College of Aurora
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Terry Spencer

Colin Spencer Productions
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Just a few words about my experience with Leadership Aurora: Incredible, Moving, Inspiring, Thought provoking, Meaningful, Welcoming, Supportive, and Collaborative. It's not just one memorable experience, it's a collection of adventures, conversations, smiles that all began with an uninhibited karaoke moment and ended with lasting friendships!

I really enjoyed the retreat and getting to know everyone. Brandon, Omar and I were roommates; we had a great time and learned a lot about each other!



Gill Thompson

Pickens Technical College
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Stephanie Webb

Mosaic in Denver
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My most memorable experience is Military Day. Buckley was awesome, and the team comradery was priceless. Enjoying time with the people we have been working with, and feeling the relationships build – is most memorable.

While being attacked (on purpose) by a K-9 dog, shooting an M-16, standing under an F-16 flyover, and learning about Aurora's health, education, social services, and city government was amazing, it is the lunches with new friends, mountain biking with classmates, and working together to execute class projects that are my most memorable moments.



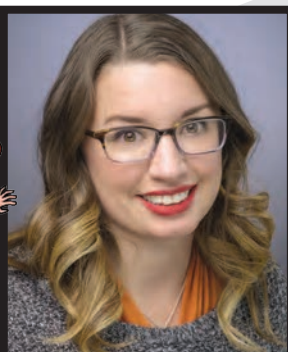
John Wolfkill

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Heather A. Wydock

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The friendships I have made are more valuable than anything I could have imagined heading to our first meet and greet. These friends have made an impact on my life that I'll never forget.

I loved getting in the 'bite suit' on Police Day. This was a bucket list item for me and Leadership Aurora made it possible!



Mandy Young

Jim 'N Nick's Bar-B-Q
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Our destinations...

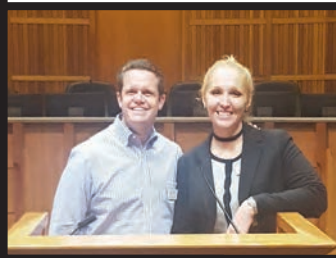
WOW. As an individual who has not personally experienced poverty, the poverty simulation during Community Day was eye-opening. The time and resource constraints made me actually feel the stress and anxiety, instead of trying to imagine how it would feel. This experience will be with me for years to come.

Community Day



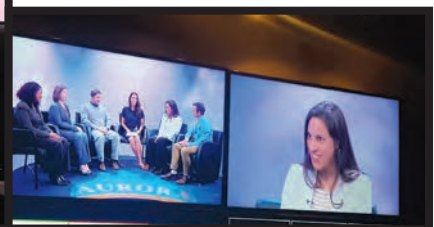
All-America City Day

Leadership Aurora offers an in-depth and interactive sneak-peek into our local government. This is a perspective that many citizens are not privy to, which gives us — as community leaders in the Leadership Aurora Program, a platform to teach and expand our knowledge to other community leaders.



Media Day

Such an incredible day filled with all the ins and outs of media. We spent the morning at Channel 9 KUSA. They gave us a true appreciation of what happens behind the scenes. The afternoon was spent at Channel 8 getting to practice everything from running the camera, producing, and even handling difficult interview questions. What a fun experience.





Education Day

How inspiring to witness first hand the innovative programs being offered to the youth in our community. It made me even more thankful to be raising my family in such a dynamic place!



Healthcare Day

Another 'outside the park' home run for the Leadership Aurora board's planning team. Loved the interaction, information, and amazing technology of the hospital — as well as the incredible staff.



Military Day

What an extraordinary privilege we have through Leadership Aurora to learn about what the Military men and women are doing at Buckley AFB. LA affords us the opportunity to learn about what's happening at Buckley, and to share with others — perhaps extending the respect that our service personnel so deserve through recognition, discounts, and appreciation. Thank you LA for providing us the gift of spending the day at Buckley.



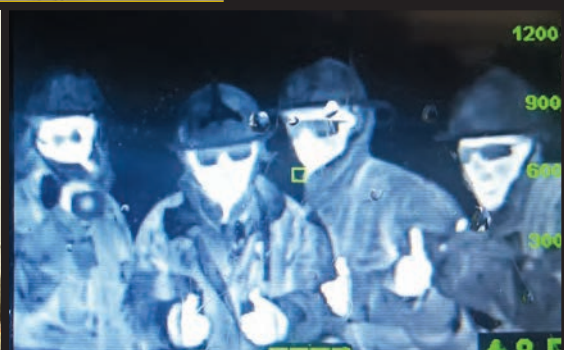
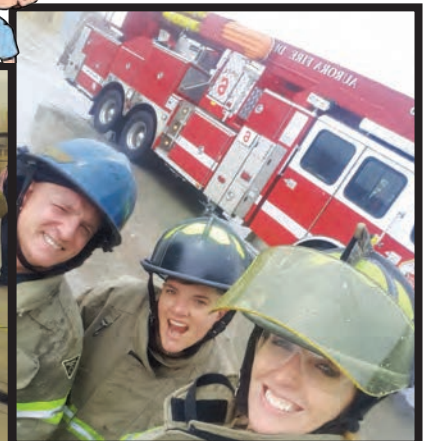
Police Day

Loyalty is the word that comes to mind for this day; a loyal officer to his city, a loyal k9 to his officer, and a loyal Chief to his citizens. And though it's exhilarating to shoot a taser; hold a semi-automatic rifle underneath your chin; simulate a shoot/don't shoot scenario to save a life; or have a very adorable but protective pup completely take you down — it's also a day to reflect on the commitment and sacrifices these men and women make to protect our city.



Fire Day

What a fantastic introduction to the fire service here in Aurora! The background on personnel, training and fire science was interesting and informative, and the hands-on activities were exciting and informative as well.



Having Fun



The Leadership Aurora Golf Tournament has been a signature fundraising event of the Aurora Chamber of Commerce for 18 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 <http://www.aurorachamber.org/leadership-aurora/golf-tournament> or contact rene.simard@aurorachamber.org

Special thanks to our premier sponsor for 2016-2017:



Proud to be part of our community.

I'm pleased to support our local
Leadership Aurora & Ambassador Teams.



Danielle Lammon
303-676-8071

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201623



COMMUNITY
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CONGRATULATIONS
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Congratulations! **Leadership Aurora** **Class of 2017**



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Congratulations to the
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Congratulations to the Leadership Aurora Class of 2017!

*As a long-time supporter of the
Leadership Aurora Program,
we at Aurora Mental Health Center
applaud you for your
commitment and accomplishment.*

Congratulations to the Leadership Aurora Class of 2016-2017!



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