



Leadership

A U R O R A

1984

35th
anniversary

2019



CONGRATULATIONS TO THE LEADERSHIP AURORA CLASS OF 2019.

When the communities we live in thrive, we all thrive. And no one knows that better than you — the Leadership Aurora Class of 2019. For the past 10 months, you have served your communities through leadership, stewardship, and active participation. **Thank you for making this community shine a little brighter!**





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 35 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 2019 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 Jim 'N Nick's BBQ for providing the Graduation dinner, and to Mark Smith for the class photo of the 2018-2019 Leadership Aurora class, taken at the Breckenridge, CO retreat, September 2018.



Board Chair



Rachel Banks

What an honor and privilege to see the Leadership Aurora Graduating Class of 2019 succeed. As the saying goes, "Best Class Ever."

I knew from the start at the retreat in Breckenridge, the vibrant and innovative personalities of this class would bring shared vision and

servant leadership to the Aurora community.

It has been an honor to watch and listen to Class President Caleb McNaughton and his entire team in action. Caleb was inspirational and encouraging by supporting the 2018-2019 group of highly skilled leaders to be engaged in active participation, and to devote the time and energy required to complete the Leadership Aurora 10-month program.

Class members were given the opportunity to experience first-hand the major aspects of the Aurora community, through Education, Healthcare, Media, Police, Fire, and Military. This is accomplished by attending all sessions and soaking in the amazingly rich culture, and by gathering at social events, getting to know each other, and even more importantly, completing projects to pay it forward for future class members.

As with my Leadership Aurora experience, this program is life-changing and a wonderful opportunity to share with others.

Thank you to the Class of 2019 for picking up the torch and carrying it further to light up those dark places for others to see.

I would be remiss if I did not thank those who have helped to make all of this possible: Chamber President and CEO Kevin Hougen, Leadership Aurora Program Director Rene Simard, Assistant Program Director Mitzi Schindler, and the entire Leadership Aurora Board. Your dedication in making sure all goals are reached and achieved makes this program successful.

Sincerely,
Rachel Banks
Leadership Aurora Board Chair
Class 2011-2012

Class President

Leadership Aurora
Classmates of 2018/2019,

It has been an absolute honor working with you all this year - from the retreat, the class time we've spent together, and all the enjoyable projects we have worked on together. You have done an amazing job!

It's certainly a lot of pressure to be the "Best Class Ever."

But it is not just about being the best.

It's truly about owning the knowledge that we have obtained through this experience. I am reminded of a quote by Rob Liano that says, "Knowledge is power? No. Knowledge on its own is nothing, but the application of useful knowledge, now that is powerful."

Now that we have had these experiences and gained this knowledge, we now have a responsibility to be cheerleaders and champions of this amazing community we are a part of. Aurora is a very special place, and we are blessed to call this place home.

I want to highly encourage you all to stay connected with each other and to continue the bonds and relationships that have been built here. Become Facebook friends, get together, have coffee or lunch. We all have something special that we can bring to Aurora. This experience is not over; this is just the beginning!

Caleb McNaughton
Leadership Aurora of 2018/2019
Class President



Caleb McNaughton



2018-19 Leadership Board



Left to right, back row: Chanell Reed, Alan Antolak, Jennifer Evans, Steve Sundberg, Tom Isaacson, David Barber, Eric Ward, Suzanne Pitrusu, Mike Garcia, Caleb McNaughton. Left to right, front row: Donna Greeley, Sunny Banka, Denise Denton, Molli Barker, Taylor Roberts, Yvonne Valdez, John Adams, Tricia Johnson. (Not pictured: Greg Baker, Rachel Banks, Kinder Blacke, Gigi de Gala, Christina Grooms, Mike Hanifin, Erika Matich, Marcia McGilley, Laura Noe, Mitzi Schindler, Rene Simard, Michael Tapp, John Wolfkill)

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Kinder Blacke

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John Wolfkill

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2018-19 Opening Retreat



Getting to know each other and learning how to work together to complete the task at hand.

Feeling honored to be part of the Leadership Aurora class of 2019, and yet not knowing anyone, or what to expect of the weekend - most of us made the trip up to Breckenridge with anxious thoughts. It was amazing how much knowledge and how many team building activities were squeezed into two days.

The trip back home came too quickly, but we were all feeling encouraged in knowing that the best was yet to come and new friendships were already forming.



Incredible classmates in beautiful surroundings — ready to share an awesome year together!



The group exercises showed us that we can accomplish anything... together.



Sometimes, 'classrooms' can be a bit boring... but not this one!

Class Projects

The 2019 Leadership Aurora Class selected two projects to focus efforts on, partnering with the Juvenile Assessment Center (JAC) and Aurora Mental Health Center (AuMHC).

The JAC has added a satellite location at the Aurora Municipal Center. The site annually allows more than 700 lower level offense youth to remain at this location, reducing time spent by Aurora Police transporting these youth to various facilities. Previously used as a jail, the project class took on remodeling the space to encourage positive and trauma-informed care to these youth.

The Class wanted to make the entryways at AuMHC's Stith Center and Viewpoint locations more welcoming and peaceful for its clients. The class took on goals including organizing foot traffic, low-maintenance xeriscaping, visually pleasing aspects that include colorful and vibrant diversity of landscaping, and native plants – all while being safety conscious. A number of studies have proven that contact with nature, calming spaces, and colors can have a positive psychological impact and calming effect on the human brain.





2018-19 Class Profiles



Manny Arias

Advantage Security, Inc.
marias@advantagesecurityinc.com

"Fire Day was better than Police Day."

City of Aurora – Aurora Water
mbrown@auroragov.org

"I had heard great things about Leadership Aurora since my arrival here seven years ago and I finally had the chance to go through the program. What a fantastic way to get to know others in the community and learn more about many things that help make Aurora great."



Marshall Brown



Beth Copic

Keller Williams Realty DTC, LLC
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"We make a living by what we get. We make a life by what we give."

— Winston Churchill

The Medical Center of Aurora
susan.davis@healthonecares.com

"In 10 months, Leadership Aurora has connected me with the community at a level that could have taken years! Thanks to The Chamber for providing this amazing program!"



Susan Davis



Arapahoe County Department
of Human Services
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*"Whether you think you can or you can't, either
way you are right."*
— Henry Ford



Georjette Dhlwayo



Benjamin Focht

Nelnet, Inc.
benjamin.focht@nelnet.net

*"No matter what people tell you, words and
ideas can change the world."*
— Robin Williams

Tri-County Health Department
hfritz@tchd.org

*"Let go of who you think you're supposed to be;
embrace who you are."*
— Brene Brown



Heidi Fritz



Martin Garland

City of Aurora -
Aurora Police Department-District 3
mgarland@auroragov.org

*"I made some great friendships in this class as well as learning things I did not know
about the city I have lived in nearly my entire life. Working with these individuals to
complete projects and events has been humbling... to see them constantly giving of
themselves to accomplish as a team. Thank you for the experience!"*

Pickens Technical College
algolden@aurorak12.org

*"For me, Leadership Aurora was an incredible experience — a great
introduction to so many aspects of Aurora that I knew nothing about—
and a wonderful opportunity to connect with colleagues and form
friendships that will last for years."*



Allen Golden



Fernando Gray

City of Aurora – Fire Rescue Department
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"I have really enjoyed the program and as someone new to the City of Aurora, I have a greater appreciation for our community."



Brooke Gregory

Cherry Creek Schools
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"Learning with others brings out the best leader in me. Thank you, Leadership Aurora, for an amazing experience!"



Allison Guerra

Wagner Equipment Co.
aguerra@wagnerequipment.com

"It's not the daily increase but daily decrease. Hack away at the unessential."

— Bruce Lee



Christopher Henry

Adolfson & Peterson Construction
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"The people I met and the things I experienced in Leadership Aurora will be something I keep with me for a very long time!"



Deb Kirschbaum

Priority Properties, Inc.
deb.kirschbaum@gmail.com

"Proud...enlightened...educated...challenged...informed...aware...fulfilled...gracious...content...pursuing...pleased."

2019



Colorado State University Global
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"If you want to be happy, be."
— Leo Tolstoy



Patrick Knolla



Katherine Larter

Kaiser Permanente
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"I will remember the incredible acquaintances and the experiences of a lifetime, particularly the behind the scenes events of the Aurora Police Department, K9 unit, and the SWAT team."

Aurora Public Schools – Aurora Central High School
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"Leadership is not a position or title, it is action and example."



Katie Law



Kynnie Martin

Xcel Energy
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"We are the Music Makers and we are the Dreamers of Dreams"

— Willy Wonka

Highpoint Church
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"Anyone can identify an issue, but it takes a dedicated and committed person to truly be part of the solution. Let's be part of the solution!"



Caleb McNaughton



Eric Mulder

Aurora Veterans Affairs Commission
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"Leadership Aurora has been a fantastic way to connect with members of the Aurora community and has given me an even greater appreciation for groups working to make this a home for everyone!"

Cherry Creek School District
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"Develop a passion for learning. If you do, you will never cease to grow."

— Anthony J. D'Angelo



Ty Muma



Scott Olguin

460th Space Wing, Buckley AFB
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"The key is not spending time, but in investing it."

— Stephen R. Covey



Dayna Ott

Avitus Group
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"Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me."

— Psalms 51:10



Michelle Pacheco

Community College of Aurora
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"Do the best you can until you know better. Then when you know better, do better."

— Maya Angelou

2019



Colorado Air National Guard
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*"My mission in life is not merely to survive, but to thrive;
and to do so with some passion, some compassion,
some humor, and some style."*
— Maya Angelou



Lisa Perry



Anne Petti

Community College of Aurora
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*"Some things cannot be taught; they must be
experienced. You never learn the most valuable lessons
in life until you go through your own journey."*
— Roy T. Bennett

Colorado Air National Guard
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*"Leadership Aurora provided a transformative experience,
growing my relationships with talented community leaders
and developing my understanding of the many dynamic and
inspiring facets in our Aurora community."*



Jamie Pieper



Krista Robinson

Downtown Aurora Visual Arts (DAVA)
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"Whatever you are, be a good one."
— Abraham Lincoln

Citywide Banks
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"She believed she could, so she did!"
— Unknown



Mary Sarah Schweiger



Greg Shields

FirstBank
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"Change will not come if we wait for some other person or some other time. We are the ones we've been waiting for. We are the change that we seek."

— Barack Obama



Sarah Troy

Juvenile Assessment Center (JAC)
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"The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others."

— Mahatma Gandhi



Shannin Wetzel

Falck Rocky Mountain
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"Question thoroughly, but never judge."



Victoria Wildhaber

Edward Jones
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"Not all of us can do great things. But we can all do small things with great love."

— Mother Teresa (Saint Teresa of Calcutta)



Nazan Wolfe

Aurora Mental Health Center
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"Work hard. Play hard."

2019

Community Day

Leadership Aurora's first gathering was an eye-opening experience that introduced the class to several organizations in Aurora.

Class members learned about the diverse nature of our community, and visited a wide range of organizations that are addressing many issues, including homelessness, mental health, and programs for youth. This day was a valuable, hands-on learning experience about the services and resources in our community that are dedicated to the needs of area residents.



"I thought this was an eye-opening experience for most of the class, which is awesome. It created a great discussion about the needs of our community."



City of Aurora Day

Class members were introduced to many of the aspects of the City of Aurora's complex economy, growing infrastructure, and government structure. Highlights included meeting with the Aurora City Manager and Mayor, participating in a mock city council meeting in the Council Chambers, and touring the incredible new Central Recreation Center.



"I really enjoyed this day! Learning about how the city actually runs at the governmental level gave us an important view of what is behind the politics."



Communication/Media Day

In the morning, class members got to go behind the scenes at the Denver7 television news studio. Later in the day, media specialists including radio hosts, journalists, and the Governor's Press Secretary led lively discussions about keeping up with the rapidly changing world of news and social media.



"I thought this class was invaluable to learn about the changing landscape of how information is dispersed and how to read between the lines."

Education Day

On Education Day, we learned about the diverse educational opportunities in Aurora, and the challenges such a diverse city faces in order to provide a consistent education to all its citizens.

We started the day at Cherry Creek School District's Infinity Middle School, and learned how the district is embracing technology and how teaching styles are evolving. At Pickens Technical College, we were given interactive tours in culinary, multi-media graphic design, HVAC operations/repair, and more. And at the Community College of Aurora, class members toured the Colorado Film School and also brainstormed with CCA students in "Shark Tank" style sessions, about how to kick start or expand their business ideas.

"Great jam packed day. I learned a lot about the schooling opportunities in Aurora, including the vast opportunities offered at CCA and Pickens Technical College."



Military Day

Have you wondered what those “Golf Balls” (Radomes) are, when driving by Buckley? We learned all about them during a behind the scenes tour. We also toured the flight line and were treated to F-16 flyovers. A panel discussion/Q&A with members of each branch of the military rounded out the day.

Military Day reaffirmed that Buckley Air Force Base is a pillar of the Aurora community. We were honored to have had the opportunity to visit the facility and learn about the history and potential future of the base.



“Buckley is an amazing resource for our nation — and it’s right here in Aurora. I was blown away by the level of knowledge and training every member demonstrated, and I have immense respect for what they do.”



Healthcare Day

Healthcare Day started at The Medical Center of Aurora, where we toured the emergency room, cath lab, the Flight4Life helipad, and an operating room.

At Children’s Hospital Colorado (CHC) we discussed simulated ethical situations in order to understand the tough decisions healthcare providers face, and during an informative tour of the SIM Lab, we saw how 3D printing is transforming options for prosthetic devices. At the end of the day, class members used their creativity to make blankets for patients at CHC.



“Healthcare day was a great experience. The tours and information certainly gave us additional appreciation for all that medical professionals do.”



Police Day

Class members participated in an action-packed day of training sessions with the Aurora Police Department. Activities with the K-9 unit, SWAT team, and vehicle pursuits provided incredible insight into how the APD protects and serves our community every day.



"We were the first class to have a member volunteer to be shot with a Taser. That definitely validates our claim to be the 'Best Class Ever!'"

Fire Day

On Fire Day, the class learned just how destructive fire can be, and witnessed demonstrations of chemical reactions that create fire. The afternoon's exercises included simulating activities that fire fighters regularly engage in, including car extractions, roof ventilations, paramedic runs, and using the hose to put out car and kitchen fires.



"Learning about the science of fire and experiencing simulated tasks that fire fighters are responsible for gave me new insight into what these brave men and women do to keep our community safe."

Pay it Forward Event

The 2019 Pay-It-Forward event celebrated the 35th Anniversary of Leadership of Aurora. Many alumni came to celebrate with the “BEST CLASS EVER,” and a fun night was had by all!



Social and Connections

While the focus of Leadership Aurora is learning about the various services provided in our community, class members benefitted by forming lasting relationships with each other. Social activities such as monthly happy hours, bowling, and an outing to an Avs game, made memories and friendships that will last well beyond our time together as “The Best Class Ever!”



Golf Tournament

The Leadership Aurora Golf Tournament has been a signature fundraising event of the Aurora Chamber of Commerce for 21 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. Contact Rene Simard for details, 303-365-4923 or rene.simard@aurorachamber.org



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Aurora
Class of 2019**

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89%
GRADUATION RATE FOR
THE CLASS OF 2018



140
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79%
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Dayna Ott and her classmates
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CONGRATULATIONS LEADERSHIP AURORA GRADUATES!

**PLEASE JOIN US IN CONGRATULATING
THE 2019 GRADUATING CLASS OF
LEADERSHIP AURORA!**

We commend and honor the new graduating class
of Leadership Aurora in your dedication to serving
our amazing community.

The Medical Center of Aurora has been proud to
serve the Aurora community for over 40 years,
and we look forward to continual service and
partnership with our new leaders.

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The Medical Center of Aurora
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Congratulations! Leadership Aurora Class of 2019




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A photograph of three graduates in graduation gowns. In the foreground, a young Black woman with a large afro hairstyle is smiling broadly. Behind her, slightly out of focus, are a young man with a beard and a young woman with glasses, both also smiling. They are all wearing dark blue graduation gowns over white shirts.

Nelnet Congratulates the 2019 Leadership Aurora Graduates.

Celebrating Diversity in Aurora

Thank you to the Aurora Chamber of Commerce and the Leadership Aurora program for emphasizing community engagement, celebrating our diverse community, and creating dedicated, passionate leaders of the future.

Congratulations to the Leadership Aurora Class of 2019! Nelnet looks forward to seeing what you continue to accomplish in our community.

Learn more about us at [NelnetCareers.com](https://www.NelnetCareers.com).





Proud to be Part of
Leadership Aurora,
Class of 2019!



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

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Aurora, CO 80015
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Thanks to 2019 Class Member...

Eric Mulder

for designing the
Yearbook cover and graphics!

And thanks to Mario Waller of Six & Six, inc.
for always putting it all together and making it look great!



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