



# DECEMBER 2022 NEWSLETTER

LA Class of 2023

## LA CLASS OF 2023 HITS THE TOWN FOR COMMUNITY DAY

To learn about the organizations making a positive impact and changing lives in our own backyard, the Leadership Aurora (LA) Class of 2023 visited 12 community nonprofits on Thursday, Oct. 20.

The class split into groups of four, each group visiting three locations, to hear the history, mission, purpose and logistics of each organization, along with who they serve and the challenges they face. The nonprofits visited address a variety of community needs, from homelessness to mental health to youth programs. Each organization hosted tours for LA and shared their involvement in the Aurora community.

The class not only received the opportunity to understand why these nonprofits exist and experience their work in person, but also walked away with ideas for how to tackle projects for these groups as part of their Leadership Aurora service. After the tours, the class reconvened at the Summit Conference & Event Center to share out their findings with the full group, including the missions, challenges, and potential project ideas for each organization.

A huge thank you to the following organizations for hosting the LA Class of 2023 at your facilities, sharing your important work, and continuing to serve and build up the community of Aurora: Aurora Day Resource Center Aurora Youth Options, Aurora YMCA, CEDS Finance, Comitis Crisis Center, Downtown Aurora Visual Arts (DAVA), Judi's House, Juvenile Assessment Center (JAC), Ready to Work Aurora, Ronald McDonald House, Salvation Army Aurora Corps, and Village Exchange Center and Aurora Welcome Center.

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**People don't care how much you know, until they know how much you care.**

**-John Maxwell**



# PROFESSIONAL RESOURCES: BECOME A SALARY-NEGOTIATING PRO!

Some of the most stressful work-related conversations are salary negotiations. Did the employer offer you the salary you were hoping for, and if not, how do you go about asking for fair compensation based on the value you bring? For those who want to stay at their current position at a higher pay rate, how do you effectively raise the topic of your salary with management and guide the conversation? These conversations can be tricky to navigate, especially if you've never done it before. Dr. Vanessa Ann Claus discusses how to become a pro at salary negotiation. [View the full webinar here.](#)



## RETREAT WAS A SUCCESS!



On Thursday, September 15th, the 30 new members of the Leadership Aurora Class of 2023 gathered at the Beaver Run Resort in Breckenridge for a two-day retreat focused on building community, exploring leadership styles, and learning more about the upcoming 10 months as a Leadership Aurora participant.

The retreat kicked off with a program overview, including descriptions of the various committees and the responsibilities of the class president. That evening, class members had the opportunity to get to know one another through a fun, yet competitive, ice breaker event in which they had to identify a random fact about each person - who would have guessed there was a descendant of Bonnie Parker in the room!?

The following morning, the class was introduced to Franco Marini, an adjunct professor at the University of Denver's Daniels' School of Business, who immediately encouraged the group to "grow corn." (This may not have been what Franco meant by "grow corn," but who can resist this kid?! [It's Corn \(YouTube Video\)](#)) Through the use of examples, experiential activities, and humor, Franco facilitated an engaging day in which participants explored the power of setting intentions and making declarations in addition to taking a deep dive into their leadership styles through the results of their [Insights Discovery](#) profiles. Franco additionally touched on the brain's influence on leadership, utilizing the [SCARF model](#) which highlights the five domains of human social experience (a.k.a., the drivers of our behavior) – Status, Certainty, Autonomy, Relatedness, Fairness. Lastly, [Kouzes and Posner's Leadership Practices](#) were introduced to the group before they headed outside to, once again, allow their competitive sides to shine in an experiential activity, share ideas with one another on how to tackle a skill they struggle with (i.e., delegating, giving feedback, organization, and more), and make commitments to one another for how they plan to show up in the months to follow. A cocktail reception and delicious food at Fatty's Pizza capped off the day.

The last day of the retreat featured committee sign-ups along with hearing from Leadership Aurora Alumni – Sylvester Brandon (LA Class of 2009), Cassidee Carlson (LA Class of 2012), and Mike Garcia (LA Class of 2005) – which helped give participants ideas on how to make their time in Leadership Aurora a valuable experience for themselves and the community of Aurora. Additionally, the Leadership Aurora Class of 2023 President was elected – congratulations, Andréa Wright! Much was learned about being a leader during the two days in Breckenridge, but, more importantly, a new community of individuals coming together to leave a legacy was formed.





## PAY IT FORWARD STATUS UPDATE

We are happy to announce the class of 2023 Pay It Forward committee participants; Candice Kmetz-Parkinson – Chair, Robyn Hills – Co-Chair, Tony Krenz, Jimmy Knoch, Alec Quaid, Rick Elsinger, Eren Corapcioglu, Sammy O'Neill, and Charlie Watts. The Pay It Forward committee is eagerly awaiting our collaboration kickoff on December 2nd at the Logan Coffee House at Stanley Marketplace. We have several different ideas we are considering to show how our group is going to take the cake in setting the future of Leadership Aurora up for success for years to come. Success in this comes from selfless impacts, in both small and big ways, over time.

## CLASS PROJECT UPDATE

The class project is beginning to solicit information from the class on ideas to select from so that a class project can begin to take shape. The deadline for choosing a class project is fast approaching as it is due by December 5. There was a survey that was sent out that asked for ideas and suggestions for the class project. The committee would like to find out if there is interest in one large project or multiple smaller projects and then will be compiling the results from the survey and will then move forward with a rubric style design so that the class will be able to compare the submitted recommendations and make comments.

The class projects will be presented to the class and electronic voting will be sent out to be completed by December 1<sup>st</sup> to all class participants. Once the voting has been tabulated and the class project(s) have been decided upon, they will be announced to the class on or before December 5. Additional planning and preparation will then begin so that Andréa will have time to prepare for her presentation of the project(s) to the Leadership Aurora Board on December 21.

The Class Project Committee wishes to thank you for your participation in the survey and they look forward to sharing the results with you and getting your feedback.

## FROM THE PEN OF THE PRESIDENT

Hello LA Class of 22-23!

Welcome to our first class newsletter! Here's a quote to get us started: "There is immense power when a group of people with similar interests gets together to work toward the same goals." — Idowu Koyenikan

I look forward to working with such a devoted, creative and already impactful class this year. The work we will do will not go unnoticed as we aim for a title greater than "the best class ever" and shooting beyond that. Throughout the history of the Leadership Aurora program, leaders have taken the opportunity to make a difference by giving back to the community in which they live and work – and now it is our turn! There are varieties of underfunded community projects that need attention and Community Day shed some light on just a few. As we begin to narrow our focus on what our class project(s) is going to be, I wanted to remind us all of the LA Mission and Goals:

**Mission:** Educate and prepare community leaders who are committed to shaping Aurora's future.

**Goals:** Develop an awareness of the Aurora community; Create a network of informed leaders; Encourage greater community involvement.

Regardless of what projects we embark on, our work will make a difference for Aurora!

Best,  
Andréa Wright



## CLASS SPOTLIGHT: RICK ESLINGER

**Q: Tell us about your job**

A: I own and operate Aurora Collision Center at 403 Laredo Street in Aurora. Every day my job is to help people get back into their car.

**Q: How did you get into this line of work?**

A: I have been into cars my whole life. Although I have always had a passion for hot rods and muscle cars, collision repair was always a way to make good money while doing something I love. I started in collision repair 21 years ago. Owning a business was never a part of the plan, but the owner wanted to retire and so we had an opportunity to buy the business.

**Q: Do you have any muscle cars?**

A: Yes, I have seven, though currently only two of them run. My favorite car is my '66 Pontiac. It was my first car and I still have it. My next project is a '70 Chavel. This was my mom's first car that she still has and I want to get it back out on the road.

**Q: What is something you are most proud of?**

A: How can you say anything other than your wife and kids?! A close second is owning my own business.

**Q: What do you like to do in your free time?**

A: First, I love to spend time with my kids—my daughter loves model trains. And my son used to do Quarter Midget racing (It's like sprint cars for kids), and soon my daughter will be old enough to race.

**Q: What is a characteristic you think every leader should possess?**

A: There are obviously many characteristics that a leader should possess, but I think first and foremost you should be a people person. Trying to get everyone to work together, to work toward a common goal, can be harder than it seems.

**Q: What is your favorite thing about Aurora?**

A: Hands down, I love the diversity. When I moved here 40 years ago, there wasn't a lot out here. From the food, to the people, to things to do, you have everything you could need in one community.

**Q: What is something you would change about Aurora?**

A: Crime. What I see a lot of is car thefts. While my business benefits from this, it is not something I like to see in my community.

**Q: Tell us about your pet!**

A: My wife came with a pet! I came with a child, and she came with a pet. Our dog, Millie is a jack russell beagle mix, she is about 12 years old and she's kind of a pain! She snores really loudly. Also, when our daughter was born, we brought her home and Millie wanted nothing to do with her. Now, they are best friends, because my daughter drops food!



## NEWSLETTER COMMITTEE

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## SUBMISSIONS

Have any ideas on what you'd like to see in future Leadership Aurora newsletters?

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Leadership Aurora is a 10-month community engagement program organized by the Aurora Chamber of Commerce and designed to develop an awareness of the Aurora community, create a network of informed leaders, and encourage greater involvement in the community

[AuroraChamber.org/leadership-aurora](http://AuroraChamber.org/leadership-aurora)

## UPCOMING EVENTS

Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
				1 Class Project Survey due	2	3
4	5	6	7	8 Defense Council Special Meeting, 3:30-5p & Chamber of Commerce Holiday Party, 5-8p, Denver Airport Marriot at Gateway Park	9	10
11	12	13	14	15 LA Media Day	16 Snow Pile Set-up Day, 12:30-4p, Children's Hospital Colorado (Aurora)	17
18	19	20 Snow Pile Outpatient Day, 11-5p, Children's Hospital Colorado (Aurora)	21 Snow Pile Inpatient Day, 9-2p, Children's Hospital Colorado (Aurora)	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31 LA Community Explorations due

