



FEBRUARY 2023 NEWSLETTER

LA Class of 2023

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Leadership Aurora Mission:

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

CITY DAY RECAP

On Thursday, November 17th, the LA Class of 2023 participated in City Day at the Aurora Municipal Center. The day began with a leadership panel featuring Mayor Mike Coffman, Council Members Alison Coombs and Steve Sundberg, and Deputy City Manager Jason Batchelor. There were additional presentations given by Marshall Brown (Aurora Water General Manager) and Jacob Cox (Office of Development Assistant Manager), offering participants an in-depth look behind the scenes.

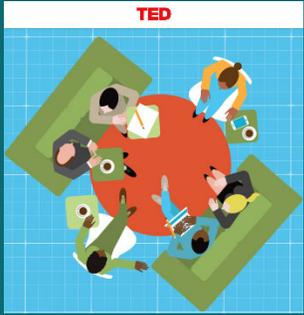
Mid-morning, a mock council session was held to help class members understand the purpose and structure of City Council meetings. LA participants were assigned various roles (i.e., council members, members of the public, City Clerk) to address a real issue the Council had grappled with in 2021 regarding a camping ban in the city. Ultimately, the mock council chose to move forward with the camping ban.

The day wrapped up with a fun activity aptly named "Go Fund the City" in which class members were paired off and tasked with distributing \$1000 "Aurora Bucks" to various City Departments after learning about what they did for the city. Four adorable puppies from the Housing and Community Services Department stole the show, resulting in a landslide victory.

Sadly, the weather was not cooperative that afternoon, causing the tour of the Binney Water Purification and Southeast Area Maintenance Facility to be canceled. Despite the change in plans, participants still walked away from the day with a greater understanding and appreciation of the inner workings of Aurora and what makes it so great.



THIS JUST IN: LEADERSHIP AURORA CLASS TAKES A SPIN AS NEWS ANCHORS



Check out [TED's blueprint for diversity in the workplace](#). This playlist of 12 TED Talks from different speakers around the world discusses how to nurture and manage groups of people with different backgrounds and perspectives -- on a micro and macro level. Topics include how diversity makes teams more innovative, how language shapes the way we think, how to foster true inclusion at work, and more – all in accessible 10-20 minute videos!

Lights, camera, action! On Dec.15, the Leadership Aurora (LA) Class of 2023 returned to the Aurora Municipal Center, but this time, their focus was not on the City. For Media Day, the LA class learned the behind-the-scenes effort and planning that goes into sharing important news with our community and the individuals who make it happen.

The day's tour included two stops, starting at Kroenke Sports & Entertainment Studio in Denver, home of Sports Radio. The group heard from both producers and hosts about the ins and outs of running a successful radio show and how to keep listeners engaged to stay a step ahead of the competition. In addition to the presentation, the session included a tour of the studios and a sneak peek at their equipment.



After learning the radio ropes, the class returned to the Aurora Municipal Center to tour Aurora TV, the municipal television station for the City. However, before the class got a chance to stand at the coveted anchor's desk, some preparation was required. The class was split into small teams, and prior to Media Day, was tasked with reviewing a press release on homelessness in Aurora and pulling out the most relevant information into a 90-second fair and balanced news story script. Each team then chose two anchors to go "on-air." Unknown to the class, all LA participants would end up trying their hand at being a news anchor. Each group took turns reading their news story, directing the news floor, and operating the cameras. To learn from the pros, teams rotated through the control room to watch the recordings in real-time and host a viewing of their attempted anchor reading. It is safe to say there was no shortage

of laughter!

In addition to Aurora TV, the class heard from the City's Communications and Marketing Department experts: Deputy Director of Media Ryan Luby, Sr. Media Strategist Michael Brannen, and Public Relations Manager Michael Bryant, who shared how the team handles reputation management and ensuring accurate news reaches community members about City initiatives.

Perhaps most importantly, Media Day also included the award presentation of the "Fund the City" winner, the Housing and Community Services Department, from City Day! In the end, the class left with much more knowledge and extra appreciation for how news reaches our community.



PAY IT FORWARD STATUS UPDATE

The Pay It Forward committee has held recurring monthly meetings. During these meetings the team has brainstormed event ideas and worked through many challenges.

The first event was held at Pickens Technical College during an Open House event where high school students and parents toured the facility to get a better idea of what Pickens has to offer.

Volunteers shared a bit about Leadership Aurora with parents, kids, and teachers alike. We may have only received one donation from our own committee member, but it was a great test run for the events planned in the near future at the Business After Hours celebrations. The class is excited to have our wonderful photographer, Mark, volunteer his expertise in providing Head Shot sessions in real time for \$75. Proceeds will go to Pay It Forward. Be on the lookout for flyers to help improve our turnout.

CLASS PROJECT UPDATE

The LA Class of '23 project continues to gain momentum. After deciding to take on one large project with robust opportunities for volunteerism and class involvement, the Class Project Committee turned to evaluating project ideas. Class members submitted some great ideas, including a community career fair and first responder mental health support. Ultimately, with the help of the Leadership Aurora Board, the Committee ascertained that supporting the Salvation Army in launching a Family Dinner Night Program was the best opportunity for class involvement, impact, and legacy.

The Family Dinner Night event will provide Aurora families an opportunity to share a healthy meal and quality time with each other and also learn about community resources available to them – as well as have a little fun at the Salvation Army facility! The Class Project Committee anticipates fundraising approximately \$4,000 to launch the project. Volunteer opportunities for the class will include cultivating sponsorships, fundraising, helping to procure food (and maybe a celebrity restaurant chef!), planning activities for families, and connecting with community resources.

The Class Project Committee, which will be chaired by Brian Clark, anticipates planning the event for an early April time frame, allowing us to enjoy (hopefully) nice weather and even outdoor activities at the event. Stay tuned for opportunities to lend a hand as the project planning ramps up!

FROM THE PEN OF THE VICE PRESIDENT

Good day and hello Class of '23!

We are well on our way and celebrating our second newsletter. Leadership Aurora is an amazing community that embraces a quote that I came across by Jean Vanier, “One of the marvelous things about community is that it enables us to welcome and help people in a way we couldn’t as individuals.” I am so glad to be learning and serving with all of you!

The Salvation Army class project was a great presentation that was unanimously accepted by the Chamber. Plans are being made and the work has begun to serve in partnership with great people and organizations throughout Aurora.

The Pay-it-Forward Committee has been hard at work planning fundraising events. The most recent was a fun event at Pickens Tech and their Open House for students and families. Please do not forget that each class member needs to source one item for the upcoming silent auctions for the PIF committee.

The Social Committee has begun luncheons weekly to encourage conversations and connections!

The Education Day was a fun and competitive adventure in learning. The resources available to students in the Aurora area are quite impressive. February brings us Healthcare Day. It will be great to learn more about all of the amazing resources that are housed in our community to provide care of all types and levels for our residents and employers.

Let’s continue to be “servepreneurs” (entrepreneurial servants) for our community!

Be well.

Julie



CLASS SPOTLIGHT: MICHELLE KAYE



Q: Tell us about your job

I am the Founder/Executive Director/Marketing/Operations/Fund Raiser/Program Director, basically all of the above, for Operation Equine. We are a 501c3 that founded just before Covid. We help Military Veterans, First Responders and their families heal, live and communicate through the help of neuroscience and horses. One thing that really differentiates Operation Equine from other equine therapy organizations is that we also work with the families of our Military Veteran and First Responder participants.

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

Two of my greatest passions throughout my life have been helping others and being around horses. I often say that I have been counseling others since I was 8, so I thought, eventually, I should get a degree! Horses saved me at an early age. I went to camp in the summers and horses taught me about community, relationships, self-confidence, and work ethic. Eventually I received my degree and became a school counselor. I then helped to start a charter school, as a counselor for homeless youth, former gang youth and teen parents. Eventually, horses came calling again, so I got certified in equine therapy. At that time, I met a Military Veteran, who has become one of my best friends. He encouraged me to bring my equine therapy to the Military Veteran community. After a wonderful time working as a counselor on military bases, I decided to evolve what I was doing to include equine therapy.

Q: What is something you are most proud of?

There are two things I am most proud of—

1- Operation Equine works with The Marcus Institute for Brain Health on the Anschutz Campus – We are part of their 3-week intensive outpatient program for Military Veterans. Operation Equine provides a full day session on the 1st Saturday of the program. This has been a huge success and we look forward to growing the program!

2- The WARRIOR Pack Trip Program is something else I am so proud of. This is a six-day experience. We provide groundwork at Wild Song Ranch, followed by a 3-day pack trip with AJ Brink outfitters in the Gypsum Flat Tops Wilderness, followed by one more groundwork day at the end.

Q: What is your favorite thing about Aurora?

I love the diversity—Especially in the cultural arts. Specifically, I have been so impressed to learn about the collaboration between the library and cultural arts center. I believe this is something that truly ties the community together. Also, I am really enjoying the Leadership Aurora program, my classmates, and learning about Aurora through the eyes of the people and organizations we meet.

Q: Do you have a Pet? If so, what is it?

I don't own a horse, but I work with so many. One is a huge draft horse name Teyha. She was beaten and sent off to a kill pen a few years ago but was luckily rescued by Allegiance Ranch. She is now so happy on the ranch working as a therapy horse.

Something fun about Teyha—one time, I brought one of my participants who is a 'tough nut' to the arena. Teyha is her favorite horse, so I encouraged her to find some energy in herself, let everything go, and find her playful self with the horse. After just a few minutes together, my participant was running around the rink laughing out loud. This was so amazing to see!



NEWSLETTER COMMITTEE

UPCOMING EVENTS

FEBRUARY

Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
			1 Transportation Committee- City of Aurora Transportation Meeting 7:30-9a	2 LA Lunch, 12p, Qdoba (Southlands)	3	4
5	6	7 Arts + Science = Entrepre- neurship at the Denver Museum of Nature and Science, 7:45a-9a	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16 LA Healthcare Day	17	18
19	20	21	22	23 Business After Hours, 5-7p	24	25
26	27	28 Women in Business Committee, 11:30a-1p, Aurora Chamber of Commerce				

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Alec Quaid

VICE CHAIR
Jimmy Knoch

MEMBERS
Clayton Coker
James DeHerrera
Candice Kmetz-Parkinson
Stephanie Marnocha
Amy McDermott
Julie Stewart
Jenna Tarleton

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