



WINTER, 2018-19

Aspen Mine Center, Cripple Creek, Colorado

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AMC teams with UCCS for improved outreach study

It happens nearly every day, and we're constantly amazed by it. One or more people will stick their heads inside our doors, look around wide-eyed, then come in and ask one of our staff, "What is this beautiful place? What do you *do* here?"

After we've happily explained what we're about, a pretty normal response is, "That's incredible! I never knew something like this existed here!" And all the while, we're quietly thinking, "Gee, we've been doing this for sixteen years in this building, and this is still happening??? We *really* need to find a better way to get the word out!"

Bringing this into better focus is exactly what will happen starting in February, as Community of Caring/Aspen Mine Center partners with the Communications Department of University of Colorado at Colorado Springs in undertaking a Strategic Communications Campaign Study together. We provide our goals toward increasing community awareness that we are right here and ready to help those with various needs, that we wish to make more potential donors aware of us

and how they can help, that we seek to overcome the difficulties of reaching *all* citizens of Teller County despite the fact that many are isolated and/or do not have or use computers or any other electronic access to the Internet and social media. The students of a UCCS Communications class will make this their spring semester's project, feeding us innovative ideas and solutions designed to boost awareness and outreach.

It's a challenging task for both sides. Ted Borden, our Executive Director, heads up our team. Katie Sullivan of the UCCS Communications Department is overseeing the class's participation and workflow. We'll be working together for the next four months to improve on how we can reach all of you, how we can better make you aware of the many ways we can help you when you need it, and how those of you capable of helping us to succeed in our mission can do so.

Stay tuned, we'll have ongoing updates in our next 2019 newsletter issue this spring.

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THANKS, Cripple Creek and Teller County! You rock!

A great big THANK YOU, Cripple Creek, for your overwhelming support of Ballot Question 2A on last November's City ballot! The question passed with over 82% approval, continuing our current 0.3% share of City sales tax revenue dedicated to the nonprofit work of the Aspen Mine Center.

An equally large THANK YOU goes out to all of Teller County for making our Salvation Army Christmas Kettle Campaign a huge success! Your incredibly generous donations of more than \$23,000 will allow us to assist well over 100 Teller County families. Our deepest appreciation to Pikes Peak Rotary Club and all the organizations, families, individuals and location providers who volunteered their time and resources. We couldn't have done it without you!

From the staff, volunteers and Board members of Community of Caring Foundation and Aspen Mine Center, we are very grateful to you all. Wishing you a very Happy New Year!

AMC Success Stories: Employment Help for Young Adults

Finding employment can be a frustrating, fruitless task for young adults, especially if you've experienced personal difficulties or made mistakes during your formative years. Here's a true story that will give you the hope and direction you need to succeed.

Upstairs in the Aspen Mine Center is a branch of the Pikes Peak Workforce Center. Headed by Employment Specialist Hank Nelson and skillfully assisted by Brent Kennedy, all ages are welcome to employment assistance and solutions for work-related issues here.

A local 17-year-old young man came to our Workforce office seeking employment help. He got all of that, and much more. To protect his privacy, we'll just call him "J". J comes from a low income



family, was a high school dropout, had no employment history, no prospects, and no transportation available. But what he did have were invaluable assets toward finding and holding employment: desire, commitment, and the willingness to learn.

Hank did a comprehensive background evaluation with J, advising a primary goal to be undertaken immediately: improve your

education level. Get a GED, the equivalent of a high school diploma; it will help with procuring a job. Hank then introduced J to a Workforce program called Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act (WIOA), a federally-funded program designed to assist teens and young adults, 16 through 24, who need extra help attaining their education and career goals.

The WIOA Teller County Youth Representative arranged for enrollment in the Teller County GED class closest to J's home. J also received WIOA Workforce mentoring in résumé building, job interviewing skills, and how to dress for success. To that end, J was guided to Aspen Mine Center's Clothes Closet, where he selected quality clothing appropriate for interviews. All for free.

It gets even better. J earned his GED. Hank then found a three-month internship for J—a *paid* position—increasing J's (*cont. p. 7*)

SUPPORT FOR SENIORS:

Need a Social Security benefit verification letter?

BY REBECCA BLAIR

Question: I have applied for LEAP (the Colorado Low-Income Energy Assistance Program) for help with my winter home heating costs. I received a letter back from them stating that they could not use my bank account statement for verification of income and that they need a copy of my Social Security benefit verification letter. I have no idea where that is or if I have even received one. What do you advise? I really need help with winter heating costs!

Answer: I called and spoke with the head manager on call that day at LEAP, Melinda, and asked her the very same question, as this is a common predicament I find my

clients in—not knowing where their Social Security benefit verification letter is or if they have even received one.

Because the state of Colorado contracts with Goodwill to run the LEAP program, Goodwill does not have clearance to the state database that would allow them to verify your income if you are receiving other state benefits like SNAP or Medicaid. While it seems difficult, it is necessary for you to supply a copy of the benefit verification letter from Social Security showing the monthly amount you are receiving.

You can log in to your Social Security account online and print it out immediately or you can call and request one and it will come in the mail in about 10 business days. I would strongly advise that you put it in a safe place so you can find it

whenever it may be needed to verify your income.

LEAP started taking applications in November, 2018, and will still be taking them until April 30, 2019. You can call HEAT HELP at 1-866-432-8435 for answers to any questions about the LEAP program.



Rebecca Blair is a Senior Advocate at Aspen Mine Center. Contact her with questions on or help with senior living in Teller County at (719) 689-3584, ext. 101 or her email at rebecca@aspenminecenter.org

Director's Corner

by Ted Borden

"Building a healthy community." I have said this phrase a thousand times in the past 16 years. This, of course, is part of the Mission Statement for Community of Caring. It means something different to everyone. I have come to realize, however, that this statement has grown to mean more to me over the past year than ever before. As I reflect on 2018, I am struck by the great responsibility these simple words imply. A *community* is made up of the interrelationship of all living things in a particular environment. Each action of each individual affects the welfare of the whole. If I think about the vast personal responsibility this implies, it makes me stop in my tracks. Every choice I make, both the mundane and most complex, not only affects my life, but every other life I touch!

In order to build a healthy community, we have get past the currently accepted idea that life is always about us!! I believe that personal happiness cannot be realized if it is pursued. Happiness is a byproduct of the journey, not the destination. Chances are if you are not happy living life day to day, you will certainly not be happy once your dreams are fulfilled. In fact, I believe that our only true fulfillment as humans must come through communion with others. The only true happiness occurs when the "self" is no longer the most important thing, and the greater good is magnified!

At the Aspen Mine Center we give clients an opportunity to give back and help others. It is amazing to watch the transformation when folks are given the chance to get outside of themselves in the midst of personal crises. The connection

they feel is palpable and positive. They are in the moment, experiencing great contentment, even joy. It also reminds them that the crisis is not the monster they thought it was.

I believe strongly that we all have a need to serve in some way. I think that unless this need is realized, then personal fulfillment is absent. Unfortunately, the evolution of today's society is creating more temptation for individual isolation and is quelling the focus on community. We see constant fixation on the "self" through social media and other substitutes for true connection with others.



So this is my challenge to you: Put the cell phone down, put the video game away, turn off the TV and iPad, take the ear buds out. Get outside and play ball with the kids, visit your neighbor, go to the high school basketball game, shovel a senior's walk who lives down the street, buy breakfast for a perfect stranger, volunteer at the Aspen Mine Center, take a dinner to the shut-in around the corner, and most important of all: connect with others and expect the best out of them. Sometimes, all people need is an invitation to shine. This is my invitation to you. Let's get back to our commitment to building a healthy community. Here's to a wonderful new year!

Ted Borden
Executive Director, Community of Caring

NEW! Donate to COC on mobile devices! GIVE4TELLER to 44321

Make a contribution to Community of Caring today!

☐ \$25 ☐ \$50 ☐ \$100 ☐ Other \$ Or donate using PayPal, click here [PAYPAL](#)

Name Address

City State Zip

Mail to: Aspen Mine Center, ATTN Veldean, PO Box 1587, Cripple Creek CO 80813 or online @ www.aspenminecenter.org

AMC Christmas 2018 ~ ❄️ Christmas Tree

*'Twas the month that holds Christmas, and here in the Creek,
Festivities abounded nonstop for a week!
The Aspen Mine Center proved second to none,
Hosting parties and good times that pleased everyone!
There was laughter and friendship and, oh, so much more,
Each day brought a new wave of joy through our doors.*

*The spirit of Christmas is the spirit of giving,
To each and to all, making lives more worth living.*

*So here is our pledge, and this is our creed,
To be here, to help in a time of great need.
To lighten the burdens, to lessen the load,
To lift from the darkness, rediscover the road.*

*Comfort and caring can come in all styles
From a hug to a good deed or just a warm smile.
Don't forget how important they are, and remember
That comfort and caring aren't just for December.*

*Because comfort and caring are easy to give,
And deeply enriches the way that you live.
Every day of each winter, spring, summer and fall,
To give of yourself is the best gift of all.*

**11/23 Not yet Christmastime,
but what a warm up....**



A FREE Thanksgiving feast? Well worth the short wait!



*Our Community Thanksgiving Dinner, open to all locals.
We served over 350 meals!*

12/6 Winter Wonderland Reception gets it all going....



Setting up. Da Boss guides traffic while Dave mourns a broken bulb.

*Starting to look good.
Ted and Linda hash out details and final touches.*



Aaahh...SUCCESS!! Winter Wonderland Reception event features trees endowed with the decorative brilliance of local artisans. They are for sale, with many artists generously donating some or all of proceeds to the Aspen Mine Center.

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More Winter Wonderland....



Thinking w-a-a-y out of the box created this baby. And—SOLD! to Captain Kirk for holiday festivities on the Starship Enterprise. Live long and prosper, Cap.

November's Tea Fundraiser Luncheon delivered awesome appetizers, a room filled with friendly folks and plenty of great prizes to the 160 attendees.

December 7th's Soup for the Soul saw local kitchen wizards show off their favorite chili and soup recipes to more than 75 delighted tasters and judges.

We thank all of you for your generous donations and faithful participation!

And more events....



...leading up to the 12/8 grand finale—the Cripple Creek Christmas Parade!



*AMC's float rolls by AMC's home.
Thanks, kids, you were great!*



Special thanks to AMC's Linda Lyons, who planned and guided all our events, helped immensely by our staff, volunteers and devoted friends. Great job, Linda and everybody!

And from all of us at the Aspen Mine Center and Community of Caring, we wish you a joyous, loving and fulfilling HAPPY NEW YEAR!



Hey Santa! All I want for Christmas is a couple nice, fat, juicy reindeer!!



Cresson kids are cooking up somethin' good

Cresson Elementary School, late afternoon, mid-December in Cripple Creek. Outside, it was a cold, cloudy, blustery, gray day that promised worse to come as twilight began to further dim the fading sunset and usher in a raw winter's night.

But inside, all was sweetness and light. Literally. Because although the school busses were long gone and the halls were quiet, one band of happy, fascinated children remained, safely and snugly settled in the warmth of the school's cafeteria, continuing to do what children do best: playing, creating, learning, enjoying.

As had happened each Wednesday since the fall semester opened, an innovative and valuable after-school event was again in full swing. The Cresson Cooking Class was in session, and young lives were changing for the better.

This December afternoon, sweetness was abundant...a pre-Christmas extravaganza featuring learning how to make and bake holiday cookies, followed by instruction in how to whip up yummy Velveeta fudge. When the cookies had cooled it was time for decorating, but we all know that setting a ton of frosting and sprinkles in front of a gang of children in the throes of intense creativity guarantees some pretty chaotic results, so your best bet is to just grin a lot, keep a mop and pail handy and there you go. Let's just say that a whale of a time was had by all, and the ratio of decorations making it onto cookies

versus what ended up on the floor was somewhere on the high side of 50-50.

On the surface, it's all about having fun with food. But underneath lies a much higher purpose: empowering children with useful life skills and self-sufficiency. How to enjoy healthy, nutritious foods and how to prepare them safely and well. How to safely use kitchen tools and appliances. How to safely open canned goods, then dispose of empty cans properly.

Every week offers a new recipe, a new cooking experience, a new way for a child to build self-confidence and independence. Spaghetti and meatballs, tortilla soup, Philly cheese steaks, muffins, biscuits and gravy, fun "finger" hot dogs and "spider" cookies for Halloween...an ever-growing collection of healthy, easy-to-make dishes that children *can* create and then fully enjoy the results of their efforts.

Cresson Cooking Class is masterminded and guided by AMC's Client Services Assistant, Denise, our very own ever-bubbly woman-child, whose boundless love for children and endless enthusiasm for everything keeps each session playful and lively for the kids. She is assisted each week by Cayla, AMC's newest intern, Annie Durham, fine arts guru for both Cresson and CC-V High School who is affectionately known to all as "Miss Annie", and Chris, a parent volunteer.

The class is open to all Cresson third, fourth and fifth graders. The only requirements for participating are simple: a parent's permission, and the parent's guarantee that the child will have transportation home immediately following the end of every class. There are no fees; all

food and materials are provided. Current enrollment stands at 20. Nearly all attend each session.

Says Denise, "The one thing I'd like to see coming from this class is more parent engagement and involvement at home. A parent can actually see firsthand what their children are capable of and how they can be helpful at home. It's another great way to bond with your child, to build trust and respect for their abilities."



Budding Picasso meets baked goods.



Hey! We need more sprinkles over here!!



Cayla and Denise, The Fudge Twins.

BREAKING NEWS! Cresson Cooking Class has been such a success that Denise is starting one for adults, last Friday of every month, 10-11 a.m. during Commodities Day, beginning in February!

Free tax filing help at AMC

The Aspen Mine Center will host two sessions: **Saturday, February 23, 9 a.m.-1 p.m. and Saturday, March 23, 9 a.m.-1 p.m.** You must make an appointment. Call (719) 229-9868 to reserve a spot and get answers to questions like what documents you'll need to bring, what these sessions can and cannot help you with, and more. You'll also find detailed information online at the Vita Tax website www.irs.gov/individuals/free-tax-return-preparation-for-you-by-volunteers (be sure to click "What you should know" feature while you're there). Any problems? Contact Veldean, AMC's Executive Assistant, at (719) 689-3584 ext. 118.

Do IRS tax forms make your head spin? Have you ever just given up and not filed anything? AMC can help take the terror out of your tax time troubles.

AMC Success Stories

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

work experience skills while he earned much-needed money. WIOA helped J to enroll in Pikes Peak Community College, has also provided funds for transportation to school and purchasing textbooks for classes.

J is currently attending college faithfully... learning, mentally growing, being exposed to interesting and profitable careers. The difference between where he started and where he is now is night and day.

It happened for him, with Workforce help and caring. It could happen for you.

Pikes Peak Workforce Center helps both employed and unemployed Teller County residents of all ages. For assistance, contact Hank Nelson at (719) 667-3806 or hanknelson@elpasoco.com

The Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program offers free basic income tax return preparation and electronic filing to qualified individuals. Great, reliable help with your tax needs is provided by volunteers trained and certified by the IRS.

Qualified individuals are people who generally make \$54,000 or less, persons with disabilities, and limited English speaking taxpayers who need assistance in preparing their own tax returns.

A second program, Tax Counseling for the Elderly (TCE), will also be available. It offers priority help to seniors, particularly those who are 60 years of age and older, and specializes in questions about pensions and retirement-related issues unique to seniors.

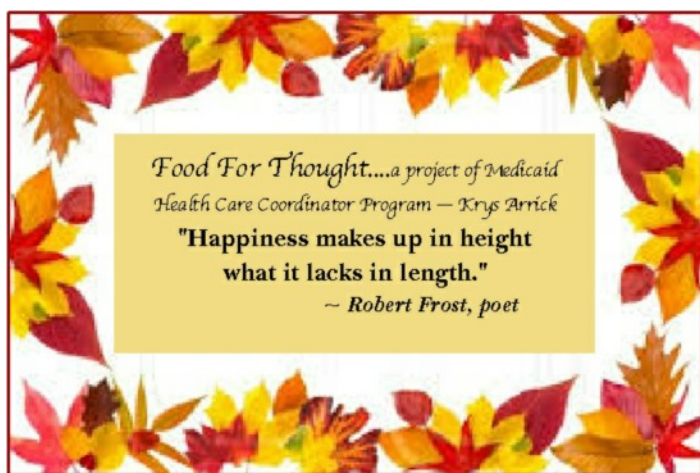


Who would you nominate for Teller County's BEST Volunteer?

Now's your chance to honor the many hardworking, deserving, and often unsung volunteers in Teller County. It's your golden opportunity to recognize the individuals, service groups and organizations who have provided extraordinary volunteer service to our local communities.

The 2018 Teller County Cares Volunteer Service Award Nominations are now open to all in Teller County. You may submit one or more nominations for various categories of volunteer service, including two Lifetime Achievement awards as well. Nomination forms are available at the Aspen Mine Center in Cripple Creek, or call AMC's Veldean at (719) 689-3584, ext. 118, for assistance in obtaining forms. Forms must be submitted by March 1, 2019 for consideration.

The Awards committee will select the awardees from those nominated and you will be notified by April 1st if your nominee will receive an award. If so, you are eligible to attend the annual Awards Breakfast where the awards will be presented and (cont. p. 8)



Community of Caring welcomes new members to Board of Directors

The new year of 2019 brings changes and new additions to COC's Board of Directors. After a long and invaluable period of service, Marc Murphy, General Manager of Bronco Billy's Casino, has resigned. We cannot thank Marc enough for his many contributions to our efforts and his leadership in furthering a strong working relationship between the Aspen Mine Center and Cripple Creek's casino industry.

We are blessed with the addition of four new Board members. Each one brings to our table a wealth of experience in areas vital to the health and positive growth of Cripple Creek and all of Teller County. Their insights, ideas, problem-solving abilities and commitment will be of great value to us as we seek innovative ways to expand and improve existing social services programs and create new ones helpful to us all.

Our new additions to the Board are:

- **Scott Porter**, Director of Operations for Triple Crown Casinos of Cripple Creek. Scott will ably fill Marc Murphy's shoes in advancing our relationships with the casinos.
- **Marc Dettenrieder**, Teller County Commissioner. Marc is simply wonderfully well-versed in all things Teller County.
- **Crystal Petersen**, Assistant Principal, Cresson Elementary, CC-V School District RE-1. As a dedicated advocate of our youth, her passion lies in involving the community to elevate its expectations of children and support valuable educational programs. She is committed to the school's involvement in community initiatives and the promotion of strong family values. Our children, and those yet to come, are our future.
- **Mike Rulo**, City of Cripple Creek Police Chief. With his finger on the pulse of what's happening in our community, Mike offers special insight into improving overall safety, early recognition of a growing problem among a particular portion of our population which needs addressing, and ways we can help to prevent a local issue from becoming a serious problem.

We thank our new arrivals for their passion toward creating a better place for us all to live in. Here's to a long and fruitful journey together!

Best Volunteer nomination

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7

you can join in honoring your nominee.

The Award Breakfast will be held on Wednesday, April 10, 8-10 AM at the Ute Pass Cultural Center in Woodland Park. Make reservations by emailing mhbarrowman@prospecthch.org. Selected Award Volunteers and Nominators can plan to attend this wonderful expression of appreciation for those who have done so much, so quietly, to benefit all of us.

The Aspen Mine Center
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Crystal Petersen
Scott Porter
Mike Rulo

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Open Mon-Fri 8-5

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Veldean Myers, Admin. Asst.
Angie Trelstad, Client Services
Director

A complete list of our services,
agencies, partners and affiliates
is on our website:

www.aspenminecenter.org

A comprehensive contact list of
helpful area resources is also found
there. Or call us for assistance.