



WINTER, 2019-20

Aspen Mine Center, Cripple Creek, Colorado

Vol. 10, No. 1

Community of Caring paves the way for Aspen Mine Center expansion, acquires new building and land in Cripple Creek

In a move that promises exciting new possibilities and conveniences for our Teller County clients, friends and neighbors, Community of Caring Foundation's Board of Directors has approved and finalized the purchase of the former Madame June's Casino, along with approximately a half-block of undeveloped land on Bennett Avenue adjacent to the building.

The two-story structure—a foreclosed property which has sat vacant for a number of years—will be fully renovated and upgraded to once again become an asset to the community and yet another functioning Victorian jewel on Cripple Creek's main street.

Said Ted Borden, COC's Executive Director, "This is an incredibly exciting moment for all of us here at the Aspen Mine Center, and we're still getting used to the idea that this is actually happening.

There is so much more that we have wanted to do, so many ideas and plans waiting to be executed when the time was right. Now it's real, and we can't wait to get started, offering more than ever before to all of Teller County."

Borden spoke of how educational programs can be augmented, how staff and clients will enjoy increased office space and privacy, the convenience that both on-street and private lot parking right next to the building will bring, along with a host of thoughts regarding new and improved usages for both buildings and ways to develop the land to benefit the city's residents.

"The best part is we've worked it out so paying for the property will have no effect at all on our

social services budget. There's much more to come and we're ready to rock!"

Stay tuned, we'll keep you posted in future issues.



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Red Kettle Bell Ringers score BIG!

A giant THANK YOU goes out to all of Teller County for making the Pikes Peak Rotary Club's 27th annual Red Kettle Campaign for the Salvation Army a huge success! Your incredibly generous donations totaled over \$19,000. Aspen Mine Center's share will allow us to assist well over 75 Teller County families and residents facing temporary emergencies.

On January 30, an awards ceremony was held in Woodland Park to honor those who participated in the November-December campaign. Ted Borden, AMC's Executive Director, served as master of ceremonies.

A special expression of appreciation went out to each and every volunteer
(cont. on p. 8)

AMC Success Stories

The Ultimate Success: Saving a life

Emergencies are a way of life at the Aspen Mine Center. Hungry people need food. Shivering souls need warm clothing. A destitute family's sick child needs urgent medical attention.

These are everyday occurrences here, handled by our staff with speed, creativity and compassion. Our rewards for helping when it's needed most arrive in simple but wonderful ways...a plate of homemade cookies, a new and appreciative volunteer, a handwritten note expressing gratitude, an in person heartfelt and sometimes tearful "Thank you so very much."

But nothing can match the magnitude of what happened to one of our team just a few short months ago.

AMC had recently created a new staffing position, Reassurance Caller/Senior Case Worker, designed to increase our ability to provide much-needed constant attention to seniors with ongoing health problems and independent living challenges, and to assist our Senior Advocate, Rebecca Blair, with the ever-growing case load in her department. Dawne Diamond came to us complete with the experience, skill set, personality and

dedication making her the perfect person for the job. She quickly became an invaluable asset. But no one here had any idea just how valuable she would soon become until the day she discovered an elderly client—whose anonymity we'll protect by calling her "Ms. A"—was helplessly facing a life-or-death situation.

The Reassurance Caller portion of Dawne's job is a critical addition to our senior outreach efforts. She maintains and adds new names to a list of seniors who, for a variety of reasons ranging from ongoing health issues to shut-in status to pure loneliness, need and appreciate frequent contact with her. She also wants to ensure that her family of seniors are all right, have no urgent needs, and are as comfortable and happy as possible. Some seniors only need and want one contact weekly; others who are at greater risk require a daily call or will check in daily so that Dawne knows all is well.

Ms. A lives alone, with only her two large dogs for companionship. There is a daily phone call made between her and Dawne, initiated by either party. On a Friday and Saturday, Ms. A had left voicemails for Dawne saying everything was fine. Then, on Sunday, Dawne received no call. Not especially unusual or concerning, as sometimes a client will misplace their phone or forget to charge it.

(continued on p. 4)

Support for Seniors

How to deal with a confusing benefits letter

By Rebecca Blair

Question: I've received a letter from the State of Colorado Department of Human Services about my benefits and I don't understand what they are asking me. I know that I'm supposed to be careful of scams and I'm not sure this is even a legitimate request. How should I proceed?

Answer: If you receive any correspondence through the mail from the State of Colorado Department of Health and Human Services about any benefits you are receiving such as food stamps, old age pension, Medicaid, etc., be sure to NOT IGNORE it, even if you are confused and the directions

aren't clear. The best first step is to call your case manager, whose name is on the letter and who is local to Teller County – their phone number should also be in the letter. But be aware that some of the letters are being generated at the state level without the local case manager's knowledge, so when you call you may have to give them all the details of what the letter is asking for in order for them to look it up and help you.

If you are still confused, get an advocate such as another family member or trusted neighbor to call or go in with you to the Teller County DHS office to discuss the letter. You can also call and make an appointment with your Senior Advocate, either myself in Cripple Creek at 689-3584 x101 or Sharron Hahn at Teller

Senior Coalition in Woodland Park at 687-3330.

Requirements are changing all the time, so be sure to explore what is needed and don't wait to act on any correspondence you may receive.



Rebecca Blair is a Senior Advocate at Aspen Mine Center. Contact her with questions on and help with senior living in Teller County at

*rebecca@aspenminecenter.org
or (719) 689-3584 ext. 101*

Director's Corner

by **Ted Borden**

What an amazing holiday season it was. Hard to believe the new year is already a month old! Like nearly everyone I talk with about the passage of time, it seemed to crawl by when I was a child...looking forward to being old enough to do the things my older brothers and sister got to do like ride my bike on faraway streets in the neighborhood by myself, have a BB gun or play hide 'n' seek after dark.

Then somewhere in my late 30's the whole "time passing me by" thing began. I started to be amazed and a bit freaked out by the pace of life, by the fact that nearly half my life was over. Now, on the downhill side of my life's journey, I do everything I can to slow time down. I pay more attention to things that matter--to my wife's playful comments, the grandchildren at play, to sunsets, to laughter with friends, the dogs' playful romps. Now it is all about paying attention to every little moment and squeezing every last drop of experience out of each one. I have discovered the more I pay attention to each perception, to each experience, the fuller each moment becomes and the slower time passes.

I also find that the older I become the more I appreciate every experience. I absolutely treasure life. I have less drama and more gratitude. I recognize that life is this amazing gift and it is utterly and completely up to me and only me to

make of it what I will, knowing that no one else can control my happiness or misery but me. It only took me 58 years to really know what that feels like.

The world around me is an amazingly precise intricate miracle. It is there for me to behold: each blade of grass, each cloud in the sky, every rock and tree and mountain, every bird, insect and wild beast. All of life is there before me to behold. Everything that exists is completely up to me to perceive, interpret and respond to. Every other human, every word, every thought, every relationship, all up to me and only me to decide how it will affect me, and it is up to me to decide through my words and actions how I will outwardly project my interpretation of this life to others. All of this is completely and utterly my choice.

I choose to embrace it, to be thankful for every bit of it.

Ted Borden
Executive Director, Community of Caring



If the sight of the blue skies fills you with joy, if a blade of grass springing up in the fields has power to move you, if the simple things of nature have a message that you understand, rejoice, for your soul is alive.

– Eleonora Duse, Italian Actress

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 Success Stories

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

But on Monday, Dawne wanted to know that her client was still OK. Four or five calls during the day went unanswered. At that point, Dawne decided to stop on her way home at Ms. A's residence to personally check on her.

Knocks on Ms. A's door brought no response, other than starting a loud commotion by the dogs. All doors around the home were deadbolted and windows locked. Having visited the home before, Dawne knew its layout and also knew Ms. A has no transportation, so she should have been home. She went to the bedroom window and began banging on it, calling Ms. A's name. Finally, she heard Ms. A's voice give a barely audible, weak response: "Help me."

Dawne loudly said, "It's me—Dawne—Ms. A. Tell me what happened." A frail, agonized answer came back. "I fell....and I've been here on the floor a long time."

As a former Cripple Creek Police Dispatcher, Dawne is no stranger to 911 emergency calls and how to handle a situation calmly and correctly. She immediately went into action, calling the police and saying, "I am outside the home of an elderly female who has been injured and down inside her locked home for an extended period of time. I need the fire department to force entry on deadbolted doors and medical assistance immediately."

Turning back to the window, Dawne restarted the conversation with Ms. A. Whenever there was a lapse in Ms. A's response time, Dawne would bang on the window and call her name until a response was given, making sure that the incapacitated senior was still conscious and aware that Dawne was still with her and in contact. When Ms. A began fading out, Dawne called the police again saying, "Step it up. I'm losing contact with her."

The fire department rolled up shortly thereafter. They expertly managed to open the front door carefully enough to save it from having to be replaced. Dawne entered first, quickly controlling and securing the dogs while medical personnel moved to the patient's location. Hurrying to Ms. A, Dawne found out that the woman had fallen Saturday afternoon and had been down on the floor for nearly two full days, unable to move.

As the medics began their examination and treatment procedures, Dawne held Ms. A's hand, talking with her calmly and reassuringly. That continued as the patient was put onto a gurney and taken out toward the ambulance. Dawne ran back into the house, gathering

Ms. A's cane, wallet and other items she knew the patient would need at the hospital, along with a list of her medications so that the ambulance crew would know what proscriptions she was taking.

With a final visit to Ms. A, now safely in the ambulance, Dawne once again held her hand and offered more words of support and comfort. As the ambulance pulled away, Dawne then returned to the house to let the dogs out into the back yard to relieve themselves, fed and watered them and locked them safely inside the home.

The next day, Dawne tracked down where Ms. A had been taken: Memorial Hospital in Colorado Springs. She called and chatted with the patient to find out how she was doing (resting comfortably but needing further treatment), and to let her know her dogs were safe and sound.

Ms. A ultimately required considerable further medical attention, hospitalized for nearly a month. For the first several weeks of that period, Dawne visited the dogs twice daily, letting them out to do their doggie business and get some exercise, then feeding and watering the pair. Friends were finally found who would care for and house the pets until Ms. A could return home. And Dawne did all this while maintaining a full work schedule and honoring her daily list of senior contacts.

During Ms. A's hospitalized period, Dawne called her every day to continue supportive contact. After nearly a month, Ms. A was released, is now home and, in her own words, "feeling better than I have in a long time."

The rewards mentioned early on in this story which members of our AMC staff receive periodically for their good deeds are always welcomed as a reminder of how fulfilling it is to do what we do for others. But after the fear, pain and turmoil of Ms. A's incident had receded, Dawne received a reward that was as powerful and intensely personal as her involvement in the "life in the balance" incident itself had been.



Dawne Diamond

Dawne drove to Colorado Springs for an in person visit with her recuperating senior friend and client. While Dawne sat at her bedside, Ms. A made it a point to introduce her to every member of the hospital staff who entered the room, in this way: "I'd like you to meet Dawne. She is the angel who saved my life."

***When you enrich the lives of others, you enrich your own as well.
Help us help others. Become an Aspen Mine Center Volunteer.***

AMC Christmas 2019 ~ "Portraits of Christmas"

*'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.*

There was music....



Summit Singers



WP Wind Symphony High Altitooters



Colorado Springs Chorale

There was laughter and feasting....



A packed house for Aspen Mine Center's FREE Community Thanksgiving Dinner.
396 meals served!



AMC S'mores. GREAT GLORIOUS GOOEY GLOBS OF GOODNESS!!



Only two more weeks till Christmas morning! YEAH!!

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

....And Christmas events galore!



Hubby wins Soup for the Soul trophy with "My Wife's Soup"

November TEA FUNDRAISER LUNCHEON
Dec 13 SOUP FOR THE SOUL & BEST GOLD CAMP COOKIE CONTEST
Dec 13 WINTER WONDERLAND & RECEPTION/SILENT AUCTION
Dec 13 LIGHTED HEADFRAMES TOUR
Dec 14 WINTER WONDERLAND FUNDRAISER LUNCHEON & AUCTION BID WINNERS
Dec 14 SANTA'S HERE! GINGERBREAD ORNAMENT DECORATING
Dec 18 AMC HOSTS NEWMONT GOLDCORP COMMUNITY CHRISTMAS DINNER

Gorgeous, and up for bids



Downstairs, upstairs, walkin' in a Winter Wonderland

What's Christmas without a parade?

KEEP THAT STRAW BALE CLEAR!



Anybody who thinks this couple lives in a frigid place has obviously never been to Cripple Creek.



Mary Bielz, our founder, and Mr. B get ready to roll on the AMC float



You'd be dino-SORE too if you walked as far as I have in these stupid shoes!!



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!**



Free tax filing help sessions at AMC

The Aspen Mine Center will host two sessions: **Saturday, February 22, 9 a.m.-1 p.m.** and **Saturday, March 21, 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. Detailed information is also online at Vita Tax website www.ColoradoVITA.org (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.

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 \$56,000 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.



Editor's note: Aspen Mine Center sessions are filling up fast. As of this writing, the February 22 session is full, only several slots left for March 21. VITA sessions are also available at the Woodland Park Library, every Thursday starting Feb 6 through April 9, plus a last-minute session on Tuesday, April 14. Call (719) 229-9868 for appointment.

A similar tax help program sponsored by AARP, AARP Tax-Aide, is also available in Woodland Park. Sessions are every Tuesday, 10am-3pm, starting February 4 through April 7 and are held at 900 Evergreen Heights Drive. Call (719) 351-6600 for an appointment.

Annual Job Fair May 14 at Aspen Mine Center

Calling all Teller County residents who are work-ready job seekers! Whether you are unemployed, underemployed or now hold a job, this is your opportunity to connect with 20 or more companies offering solid jobs and a career-building transition.

On Tuesday, May 14, from 11am-3pm, AMC's Pikes

Peak Workforce Center branch office will partner with its parent PPWC in hosting this life-changing event. Talk with company representatives about positions they seek to fill, learn about job training they offer, discover how you may be able to obtain a more fulfilling and financially attractive work experience.

Our local branch office can help you be fully prepared to present yourself to best advantage. We offer assistance with sharpening your resumé, improving inter-

view skills, and how to dress for success. Contact our branch supervisor Employment Specialist, Hank Nelson, at (719) 667-3806 or send him an email to hanknelson@elpasoco.com for an appointment. Hank or his expert Employment Specialist assistant, Brent Kennedy, will be happy to help you put your best foot forward.

Veterans will receive preference at this event, being able to meet with companies starting at 10:30am. Good luck to you all!

Salvation Army Bell Ringers

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

bell ringer, all of whom braved frigid weather, snow and icy streets to raise money toward helping their fellow citizens. Team certificates of appreciation went to City Market, American Legion Post No. 1980, St. David of the Hills Episcopal Church and the Pikes Peak Rotary Club.

Certificates were also given to a number of dedicated folks who took on multiple 2-hour shifts and repeatedly endured difficult conditions to help fill the kettles. These hardy souls shared heartwarming stories with those in the room about why community involvement and the Salvation Army were so important to them.

Other individuals, service clubs and managers of participating businesses received Honorable Mention for their time, efforts and valuable contributions to the cause.

We extend our deepest appreciation to Pikes Peak Rotary Club and all the organizations,

families, individuals and location providers who volunteered their time and resources at collection points in Woodland Park, Divide, Cripple Creek and Victor. We couldn't have done it without you!



Photo courtesy Pat Hill

Ted Borden, right, presents certificate of appreciation to one of the many bell ringers who went well beyond the call of duty.

AMC hosts Newmont's Community Christmas Dinner

Once again, Newmont Goldcorp's way of saying thanks to Teller County for being great neighbors hit the spot in more ways than one.

Newmont had a terrific idea. Aspen Mine Center had the dining room and kitchen facilities. It only took one phone call from Newmont, describing what they'd like to do, to make it happen.

So on a chilly December 18th midday, Newmont threw what hopefully will become the first of an annual event—a FREE Community Christmas Dinner, open to all in our area. And what a meal it

was. A catered extravaganza of fabulous baked ham with all the holiday trimmings.

The room was packed with delighted patrons. Newmont was thrilled, we were thrilled, and we both can't wait to do it again next year. Thank you, Newmont, it's always a great pleasure to work with you anytime we can be of help.



A friendly holiday smile comes with every serving as Newmont personnel dish out a meal to remember.



ARF! MEOW!
Please remember us.
We're hungry too!

THE AMC FOOD PANTRY NEEDS DONATIONS IMMEDIATELY FOR PEOPLE AND PETS!

It's being a long, cold winter. A LOT of hungry folks and their pets need emergency assistance to survive. Our reserves are depleted. The hungry are still out there.

Bring canned and packaged goods for people and pets to us for distribution to the needy, "Best if used by" date still fresh. Open Mon-Fri 8-5. We and they thank you for your kindness.

Aspen Mine Center's Bucket List

Volunteer help and donated items we need **NOW!**

CLOTHES CLOSET- WINTER WEAR: jackets, parkas, hoodies, boots, knitted hats, gloves & mittens, woolen neck wraps, sweaters for immediate donation. All sizes from toddler to adult. Clean blankets and fleece items too.

DINING ROOM- Urgent need for volunteers for Wednesday lunches. Light duty cleanup & tidying during & after meal, only a couple hours weekly. Also possible special events.

LENDING LIBRARY - Books, paperbacks, DVD or VHS movies always welcome.

COMMODITIES DAY - Last Friday of each month, 9 a.m.-2 p.m., volunteer for all or part. Voucher takers at counter, runners (help load groceries in cars).

See or call Receptionist, main floor, (719) 689-3584

VOLUNTEER!

Just bring your time and a smiling face.
Call 719-689-3584 or see our Receptionist.

**Fill those quiet hours on chilly evenings
with a good book.**

Our Lending Library is open
Mon-Fri 8:00 a.m.-4:30 p.m.
We also usually have DVD and
VHS tape movies available.

FREE bookmarks too!

The Aspen Mine Center
Community Clarion newsletter
is published by the
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www.aspenminecenter.org

Open Mon-Fri 8-5

**Ted Borden, Executive Director
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.