



FALL, 2019

Aspen Mine Center, Cripple Creek, Colorado

Vol. 9, No. 4

Special Success Stories Edition

Some problems are easy to fix. Some are not. Here at the Aspen Mine Center, we see all kinds and give each one equal care and attention. What we do here isn't magic. It's real. Sometimes uncomfortably real and demanding for both our clients and our dedicated staff.

Illusions and magic wands can't fix what's broken. Only compassion, honesty, expertise, open discussions made with open hearts, and a client's unswerving commitment to faithfully do whatever is required to overcome his or her personal darkness leads to success. Here are stories simple to complex, but all with a happy ending. It's what we live for, and what we strive to do.

Success Story #1. A messy divorce brings financial downfall. AMC helps bring her back.

To protect her privacy, we'll call her "Ms. X". An extremely difficult divorce and its aftermath left her drowning in debt and burdened with an abysmal credit score, crushing her personal self-esteem as well. Now a single mother with three children, she has struggled

for several years to recover her stability, her sense of dignity and self-respect, and her ability to adequately care for her family.

She came to AMC seeking assistance in overcoming these problems but, most importantly, she also came with the personal qualities she needed to make her life whole again...perseverance and the willingness to follow through.

Counseling with Angie Trelstad, AMC's Client Services Director, created priorities, goals and direction. X began regularly attending the Pikes Peak United Way Financial Health Class, learning about money management, debt reduction and more. She has now accomplished a complete makeover of her personal finances. X's credit score is up more than 100 points and climbing. She has paid off old debt. After holding several jobs over the past few years, she has currently worked her way up to a managerial position for a casino hotel, with greatly increased income.

She is now applying to purchase a home in this area. For her children and herself, X has come fully back.

(Next Success Story, see Page 2)

What's Inside

AMC Success Stories	Starts Page 1
Support For Seniors	Page 2
Director's Corner	Page 3
Thanksgiving Dinner Record!	Page 5
AMC & City Christmas Events	Page 6
More AMC Christmas Events	Page 7

VOLUNTEER BELL RINGERS NEEDED!



Ring a bell for the Salvation Army this holiday season!

90% of all proceeds stay local to benefit Teller County residents in need. Bell ringer locations include Woodland Park, Divide and Cripple Creek. Just click on the Kettle image and you will be taken to a signup page to reserve your time slot.

It's fun, it's easy, it's incredibly rewarding to you and the many you'll help. You can dress up in your tackiest Christmas sweater, wear crazy Christmas glasses, costume as

Santa or Mrs. Claus, an elf or reindeer—*anything* to draw attention, cause a friendly laugh, start a conversation!

Other signup methods: Text **bellring** to 31996; call (719) 689-3584, Michelle ext. 124 or Ted ext. 132;

go to website <http://www.aspenminecenter.org/bellringing.htm>

Ring a bell....help change a life!

Success Story #2. Fixed-income disabled couple can't afford much-needed items. AMC comes to the rescue.

A disabled couple living in Teller County is in a frustrating financial situation. They live on a fixed income, enough to cover their absolute necessities—food, utilities, firewood, medicines and such—but their monthly income is enough to barely prevent them from qualifying for many benefits or types of assistance which are available to others who make just a bit less.

Many of us have been there at one time or another in our lives, right? Things go pretty well as long as nothing breaks, disappears, or the refrigerator goes *clunk* when you can least afford to replace it. Something like that happened to this couple.

Our AMC Senior Advocate, Rebecca Blair, had been in touch with these folks for some time. But because of this couple's monthly income level, she had been unable to give them any kinds of the help she has accomplished for so many others. In early October, Rebecca and her Senior Associate, Dawne, drove out to visit the couple, hoping a chat might uncover something over-looked or changed that could lead to offering help. Turned out their timing was perfect.

Mr. and Mrs. live some miles off the nearest main highway, on a primitive back road that's tough enough to negotiate in good weather. But in the *winter*...well, you get the idea. During the chat, they mentioned that they could really, really use some snow tires for their car. BINGO! Rebecca was off and running.

Because the husband is a veteran, Rebecca's first thought was that the Veterans Services in Woodland Park might be able to help. No go, snow tires weren't on their help list. She then called Storehouse Ministries, who said, "Maybe...how much do they cost?" Next call went to Teller Tire, which provided an estimate. Then a conversation with Ted Borden, our Executive Director, who called Salvation Army, an agency partner of AMC with whom we work closely.

Bottom line: Storehouse and Salvation Army combined to cover the cost. Best news was it all got done in less than a week, before the first big snowstorm hit. The couple was ecstatic. It meant they could make their many ongoing medical appointments, he could travel repeatedly to the VA Hospital in Colorado Springs, recurring chores like shopping could be done—all *safely* and without fear of being isolated in bad weather. Rebecca, give a satisfied smile. You certainly earned it.

(Next Success Story, see Page 4)

SUPPORT FOR SENIORS: How LEAP Can Help With Heating Assistance

BY REBECCA BLAIR

Question: This winter is starting early, and I'm worried about heating my home for the next six or seven months and what that may cost me. Are there any assistance programs I should know about?

Answer: there are important changes to the Low Income Energy Assistance Program (LEAP) in Colorado this year.

LEAP is a federally-funded program that helps eligible Colorado families, seniors and individuals pay a portion of their winter home heating costs. New income guidelines will now include many families and individuals who previously did not qualify. Applications became

available November 1, so there is plenty of time to apply.

The 2018-2019 LEAP income guideline for a household of one person was a monthly gross income of \$1,670. This year, 2019-2020, that monthly gross income guideline is \$2,371. For a family of two, it was previously \$2,264; this year, it's \$3,101 – a large jump.

Pick up an application at Teller County Department of Human Services offices, 800 Research Drive, Woodland Park, or at Aspen Mine Center, 166 E. Bennett Ave., Cripple Creek. You can also find and download the application at: colorado.gov/pacific/cdhs/how-do-i-apply.

We at the Aspen Mine Center can help you fill it out and scan it, along with required documentation such as a Colorado driver's license, proof of income (pay stubs, Social Security award letter, etc., but not

bank statements) and a current heating bill, and email it to LEAP. I've only included the first two tiers of eligibility here, so be sure to get an application to see if you or your larger family qualify. LEAP is intended to assist with heating and is not intended to cover the entire cost of heating a residence, nor does it cover portable heating systems. Applications are accepted through the end of April, 2020.



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

As I was driving to work this Monday morning, I realized from a commercial on the radio that the date was November 4. Other than the penetrating shock that time was continuing to pass me by at a frightening pace, the other significant thought I had was that it was my mother's birthday. Mom would have been 90 years old today! Mom passed eight years ago in August. While Dad is still kicking at 91 and continues to inspire us in many ways, for this article I want to share with you a bit about my Mom.

Mom was always the one who inspired patience, compassion, forgiveness, generosity, and most of all sacrifice; she didn't do it through preaching, bragging, self-praise, or for personal gain. In fact, in all the years I knew Mom I never heard her boast about herself in any way. Nor did I hear her complain that she never got a moment to herself, even though with seven kids this was certainly true. I never heard her gossip, never an unkind word under her breath, never a complaint about wanting more money, more possessions, a better car, a nicer husband, or better treatment from others. Mom was and still is to me the embodiment of grace, a class act, a beautiful human being in the very best sense of that phrase. Mom was forever our northern star of morals and values.

Mom had a special place in her heart for people who endured great trials and tribulations and who did not wear their troubles on their sleeves, but instead used their resiliency to quietly, not boastfully, inspire others. In a world where people seem to be in competition with each other for who can publicly endure self-created drama or make themselves look best in the eyes of their friends on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter, Mom walked quietly down a path seemingly unaware of the Godliness with which she lived her life. Today we idolize sports-gods and worship and inflate the egos of TV drama kings and queens who are so full of themselves that they believe their abhorrent behaviors should be celebrated. Mom walked the path of one who we know suffered terribly in many ways but she knew true humility, not the manufactured or manipulative humility

of modern day heroes who play the ironically hypocritical game of "I am more humble than you".

Mom was our true hero, still is. She raised the seven of us on Dad's modest wage, taught us how to give, not to judge, to be accountable for every word, action and decision we made, to own up, not make excuses, take care of each other, not gossip, never put ourselves above anyone, keep God first, love our enemies, not cuss (okay, that one was a bit hard for us to keep), throw a baseball, shoot free-throws, eat ice cream, be kind to everyone, and work hard...no matter how much we were being paid (if anything) or how menial the task. I fall miles short of being the example Mom was to me but am so very thankful for having her as my inspiration. I pray daily for clarity of vision, for even a fraction of the grace Mom demonstrated daily. Mom was not perfect, though in my eyes she was pretty darn close.



Today we are expected to compromise the values taught to us as kids. Today we are expected as a society to endorse a culture where the self, the ego, is celebrated above all else. Social media not only promotes an obsession with self-focused actions, but emphatically implies that we cannot survive as a culture without putting ourselves first! Rubbish! Mom continues to teach years after her passing, and without words spoken, that the only way we can hope to heal this suffering world is to absolutely abandon self-centered behaviors through genuine service to others, and to be thankful for every breath we take in this miracle of life. Thank you, Mom, for your constant love and inspiration. Happy Birthday!

Ted Borden
Executive Director, Community of Caring

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

Success Story #3. Turning your life around isn't a part-time job. How a lost soul grew to become one of our AMC family.

Every Success Story that has ever been achieved here at the Aspen Mine Center involves a client who came to us as a stranger, received our help in some way, and then either exited with problem solved or continues with counseling and other forms of assistance designed to provide the foundations for a better, healthier, more productive lifestyle in that client's world.

All except for one. A very special one to us. Because this client came in as a stranger and after all was said and done, never left. She is still here. But no longer as a client. She has grown to become an invaluable, joyous part of our AMC family...a member of our staff team whose personal experiences give her a unique insight into those who come to us burdened with hopelessness, self-destructive actions taken, and crumbling lives. Because she was once one of them.

This is the story of a young woman's life gone terribly wrong, turned into one going wonderfully right, much of it told in her own words.

Denise had a rough start very early in life. Her family consisted of a single mother working two full-time jobs--which made her largely absent and incapable of properly raising her children--and a younger brother and sister. "By the time I was just eight years old, I basically had been forced into taking the parent role for my brother and sister. I don't remember much of childhood. I never did any fun things, because I was always taking them to do *their* fun things." That lasted until she moved out at 16, moving in with two uncles whom she describes with a wry smile as "flamboyant".

That situation, however, did give her some breathing room. She managed to graduate high school, "steering clear of drama and drugs." That's when she went out on her own, relocating to Colorado Springs, which turned out to be the first in a series of brutally bad choices.

"I met the wrong crowd at the wrong time, living a bad existence. I ended up getting involved with a couple people who were very bad news crooks. It's probably not a good idea for several reasons to talk about exactly what we were doing to make money, so I'll just say it involved big box stores and some creative but highly illegal moves that let us all live pretty comfortably for awhile. One of the stores eventually got wise and turned me in. I had multiple felony charges. Did 3 months in jail on the first charge and about 6 and 1/2 months in jail on the second, then out on felony probation. I got no deals or breaks at all." She was 24 at the time.

Just 28 days following her release, Denise was in trouble again. "I rented a hotel room for another guy I met on the Internet. I just wanted to hook up and get high. I was already going back into the same wrong loop

I had already been in. Turned out we were in a stolen vehicle, he was wanted in 4 states for 7 different crimes like kidnapping, murder and extortion. There were drugs, guns, credit cards and IDs in the car, lots I wasn't aware of. My name was on the hotel register so I was automatically arrested and they wanted to pin everything on me."

"I got a really good lawyer. But especially, the guy manned up and decided to take responsibility for all his bad stuff. My charges were dropped to a single felony drug possession. I did 3 months in jail on that one but my probation was increased to 4 years supervised, plus 148 hours of community service."

It was during this stretch in jail that Denise got her wake up call. "I remember the exact moment. The guy I was going with brought my 1 and 1/2 year old son to visit me. My precious little boy spent the entire time trying to touch the TV monitor screen prisoners and visitors communicate through, trying to reach Mom. That's when I lost it."

After getting out of jail, Denise came back to Teller County. She knew about us, believed in our mission and decided to do her community service here. The first day she walked through our doors, her life changed for the better. Ours did, too. We all just didn't know yet how deep the strength of our mutual relationship would end up becoming. "I took over the Clothes Closet, then went to the Food Pantry to help there. Interesting work, and the best part was I got to help out people that really needed those things."

AMC's Client Services Director, Angie Trelstad, was noticing how hard Denise was working, her great attitude and willingness to always be of assistance. Angie & Denise started working more closely together. Denise became a substitute front desk receptionist and additionally learned the hows and whys of all other AMC departments, eventually working her way into the offices as staff support. Concurrently, she was also taking an extensive series of financial and lifestyle classes through Colorado Department of Human Services and Community Partnership, expanding and further stabilizing her personal life as well.

Ultimately, Denise was offered a permanent job at AMC which has evolved into Client Services Specialist, becoming a priceless asset along every step of the way.

"Angie is my mentor, my teacher, my friend. I can't thank Angie and Ted enough for taking a chance on me. I'm very proud of what I've accomplished. It's the drive and the motivation not to mess that up that keeps me always trying to grow, improve and keep moving forward. It's a lot of hard work, but if you want the help and are ready to deal with it, Aspen Mine Center is the place to be. But above all, it's for my son."

Denise, your beautiful smile, boundless energy and great heart brightens every day for all of us.

Late Breaking News! AMC Thanksgiving Dinner Sets All-time Record!

In a glowing Success Story of a different kind, our annual Free Community Thanksgiving Dinner, held last Wednesday, November 27, served 396 delectable turkey dinners in a 3 and ½ hour span. To everyone who joined us, thank you so much for your support. And to the many volunteers and the AMC staff who worked so hard to make this event possible, your fabulous help was beyond belief.



Early birds gathered well before our official opening time...a sure sign we were in for a big day.



AMC staffer Denise chats with those in line, making the short wait feel even shorter.



OK, everybody, it's time! PLATES UP!! COME AND GET IT!!



Plates piled high with a full-on feast.



Hey, Mom! Baby food sucks! This here is a REAL meal!!



What's a Thanksgiving dinner without a big finish. Is that.... pumpkin pie? And whipped cream, too?? Way cool!!!

Community of Caring founder Mary Bielz and Executive Director Ted Borden talk turkey as the festivities roll on behind them.

CRIPPLE CREEK PORTRAITS of CHRISTMAS in the Gold Camp

Schedule of Events

City Park Decorating Party - November 22—2:00 pm-5:00 pm

City Park Tree Lighting Ceremony—November 23—5:00 pm

Lighting of the Headframes—November 24—January 1— evenings after dark

Butte Theater “All I Want for Christmas is More Olio!” - November 22-December 29

Aspen Mine Center Community Thanksgiving Dinner—November 27—11:30 am-3:00 pm

DECEMBER 7

Colorado Springs Chorale—CC Baptist Church—December 7—3:30 pm-5:00 pm

The Lighter Side of Christmas Parade—Woodland Park—December 7—6:00 pm

DECEMBER 13

Soup for the Soul & Gold Camp Cookie Contest—Aspen Mine Center—11:30 am-1:30 pm

Winter Wonderland Reception—Aspen Mine Center—4:30 pm-7:00 pm

Lighted Headframe Tour—Aspen Mine Center—5:15 pm

12 Redneck Days of Christmas Parade—Victor—6:00 pm

DECEMBER 14

8th Annual Gold Camp Christmas Fair—CC Parks & Rec Building—9:30 am-3:00 pm

Ongoing Events at the Aspen Mine Center

PORTRAITS OF CHRISTMAS PARADE—Bennett Ave—12:00 pm

Visits with Santa—Aspen Mine Center—12:30 pm (after the parade)

Newmont Community Christmas Dinner—Aspen Mine Center- December 18—11:30 am-3:00 pm

Toys for Tots—CCV High School Cafetorium—December 18 —4:30 pm-6:30 pm

Christmas Eve Noon Service—Carr Manor—December 24—12:00 pm-1:00 pm

XMAS HAPPENINGS AT THE ASPEN MINE CENTER!

Dec 13 11:30 am-1:30 pm SOUP FOR THE SOUL and BEST GOLD CAMP COOKIE CONTEST. Soup cook off & cookie competition

Dec 13 4:30-7:00 pm WINTER WONDERLAND RECEPTION
Make your Silent Auction Bid on incredible decorated Christmas trees and baskets created by local artisans

Dec 13 5:30-8:00 pm TOUR OF LIGHTED HEADFRAMES
Shuttle service provided, departing 5:30 pm

Dec 14 11:30 am-2:00 pm WINTER WONDERLAND FUNDRAISER LUNCHEON. 1:15 pm - All events participation awards. Trees & baskets Silent Auction Bid winners announced

Dec 14 12:30-2:00 pm SANTA'S HERE! after City Christmas parade. Gingerbread ornament decorating

Dec 18 11:30 am-3:00 pm NEWMONT COMMUNITY CHRISTMAS DINNER

The Aspen Mine Center Community Clarion newsletter is published by the Community of Caring Foundation, a 501(c)3 organization.

Our Board of Directors:

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***Happy holidays to all of you
from all of us at the
Aspen Mine Center***

**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

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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.