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Aspen Mine Center, Cripple Creek, Colorado

Vol. 11, No. 1

# AMC WEST OPENS, A NEW ERA IN TELLER COUNTY COMMUNITY SERVICES BEGINS

For the past 20 years, the Aspen Mine Center has done everything in its power to serve the needs and lessen the burdens of those in our community who were struggling in one or more ways. We did it every day, knowing that every life we helped to take a step forward meant we were one step closer to creating a happier, healthier community for all to live in, a community that could bloom and flourish and be proud of what it was accomplishing.

Most of all, we did it because it was the right thing to do. The challenges of living in a growing gaming town which was becoming a major tourist destination,



the difficulties present in everyday living in a rugged rural area – there was much for us to learn, much to process, much to act upon. We responded by increasing our staff whenever possible, finding new ways to help and reinventing our services over and over again, trying to keep pace with all that was happening around us.

The pandemic proved to be the tipping point. Our client list swelled. Their needs were many, their lives in upheaval. We had reached a crucial moment in our ongoing efforts to maintain our goals and our mission. We were bursting at the

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seams and it was time to grow once again, this time in a very substantial way.

What we needed was obvious: more space. Room to function efficiently, to effectively provide the services an ever-growing client list required. Room to be able to look far into the future knowing we were prepared for whatever was to come.

As fate would have it, the answer was just half a block away from the Aspen Mine Center. A Victorian gem of a building, the former Madame June's Casino, which closed in 1992. Essentially unused and slowly wasting away for nearly 30 years, it had seen only brief periods of occupancy by several transient businesses who used the facility mostly for storage. And it showed. But under the layers of dust, peeling wallpaper, spider webs and debris, it showed promise. And part of the package was half a block of adjacent unimproved land on Bennett Avenue offering great possibilities.

*Continued on page 4*

## Help for Seniors: Medicare Extends 2022 Deadline For New Enrollees

If you were eligible to sign up for Medicare and tried to do so after January 1 of this year by telephone but were unable to connect with them during their normal enrollment period which ended March 31, you're not alone. You're also not out of luck.

Medicare had huge problems with their phone system, leaving a multitude of folks seeking Medicare coverage out in the cold. A newly-issued bulletin from them says this:

***The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services is providing equitable relief to individuals who could not submit premium-Part A or Part B enrollment or disenrollment requests timely due to challenges contacting us by phone.***

***This relief applies to the 2022 General Enrollment Period, Initial Enrollment Period, and Special Enrollment Period. If you were unable to enroll or disenroll in Medicare because you could not reach us by phone after January 1, 2022, you will be granted additional time, through December 30, 2022.***

Medicare is our country's health insurance program for people age 65 or older. Certain people younger than age 65 can qualify for Medicare too, including those with disabilities and those who have permanent kidney failure. Medicare Part A (hospital insurance) helps pay for inpatient care in a hospital or limited time at a skilled nursing facility (following a hospital stay). Part A also pays for some home health care and hospice care. Medicare Part B (medical insurance) helps pay for services from doctors and other health care providers, outpatient care, home health care, durable medical equipment, and some preventive services.

Most people age 65 or older are eligible for free Medical hospital insurance (Part A) if they have worked and paid Medicare taxes long enough. Enrolling in Part B is optional, but very helpful. There is a cost, but one option is to explore and acquire a Medicare Advantage Plan through a private insurance company. For the same cost, a private plan will offer more comprehensive benefits than Medicare's Plan A + Plan B. Your Plan B cost is simply deducted from your monthly Social Security benefit check and sent directly to your private plan to fund it. There are many more options available. For enrollment assistance and further information, call 1-800-772-1213.

## Can Medicaid Increase Your Health Benefits?

### Here's Who to See at AMC to Find Out.

Meet Katelynn Brown, one of our newer staff members, who serves as AMC's Medicaid Health Care Navigator. She's at your service to help you discover all things Medicaid. Do you qualify for Medicaid assistance? Can seniors receive both Medicare and Medicaid at the same time? Why is Medicaid such a valuable addition to your range of health benefits? Does Medicaid cover not just you, but even your children?

Colorado's Medicaid program is officially known as Health First Colorado. It offers seniors and low-income families and individuals an astonishing array of services either free of charge or with co-pays costing just a very few dollars. Health care primary provider and specialist visits, laboratory services, surgery, hospitalization, emergencies, dental and vision, maternity and newborn care, mental and behavioral health, substance use disorders, physical therapies, wellness services, family planning services and much, much more.

With Katelynn's navigational guidance, you'll be able to avoid those speed bumps of confusion and uncertainty you may have and find a smooth, comfortable road toward a healthier, happier life. Katelynn knows her stuff. Prior to joining us, an extended period as front office manager for Cripple Creek's Medical Plaza prepared her well for her duties here.

Our Medicaid Health Care Navigator wears many hats. Katelynn helps her clients understand what their Medicaid covers and how to use it, finds care providers and connections to other resources in Teller County, helps schedule appointments and any needed transportation to providers and for pharmaceutical pickups.

Katelynn says it best, in her own words: "My goal is to reach out to all low-income families and individuals here in Teller County and anybody who has questions about Medicaid or wants to apply for it. I want to make sure you have your health care. I want to make sure you have everything that is accessible to you that you might not know is available."



*Katelynn can be reached at her work phone (719) 452-1986 or email her at [katelynn@aspenminecenter.org](mailto:katelynn@aspenminecenter.org)*

# Director's Corner

by **Ted Borden**

Community of Caring's dedicated team of employees and volunteers named 2022 the year to focus on gratefulness. We have done this not as a casual or passing exercise, but to make it part of the fabric of our day to day operations. Gratefulness is not merely thanking someone for something nice they have done, although this is truly important, rather it is a disciplined adoption of a new way of life, a choice to be sensitive and deeply committed to seeing the abundant blessings in our lives each day.

As an older adult, when I look back on my own life, I recognize that I really took so many things for granted: my health, my youth, my family, the neighborhood I grew up in, the school I went to...it was truly not until the last 5 or so years that I began looking at life with great reverence and awe.

It is difficult today, in this world focused on division and conflict, to make the choice to be grateful; to look for and appreciate our great blessings and to seek out the good in those around us. I believe it is our responsibility, our duty, to model gratefulness for the people put along our path; even to be grateful for the trials we are given to learn from each day. Media and the norms set down by society would have us believe that life should be worry free; that if we just focus more on ourselves, on satisfying our desires and dreams, that life would be better, that we would be happier, more content. I have observed in myself that if I pursue a path of self-fulfillment, rather than a life of service to others, that the opposite is true. True joy, contentment, is realized as a by-product of service to others. It may be pursued, but it cannot be captured, and only seems to be when our pursuit of it is abandoned. In fact, the more I think about it, the more I realize that I am only truly happy, truly joyful when I am focusing on others...not on myself!



The consistent message in today's society is that "life is not fair". In looking within myself I now recognize that life is absolutely fair! It is *my* negative perception, *my* poor decisions, *my* self-obsessions and *my* lack of sensitivity to the intricate creation around me that causes me to see life as not fair. When I am grateful for every breath, every sunset, every opportunity to touch the heart of another, every smile on the face of a child and every dawn of each new day I see my life differently, I see it as a great gift. I recognize that it is *my* responsibility every moment to perceive, interpret and act in a way that most benefits those around me.

I can choose to see life as unfair, as something to fear. I can listen to those who tell me that life is a struggle. I can justify my poor behaviors, my cynicism, my unhappiness and my victimhood as my neighbor's, society's or the politician's fault, but this is just self-deceit. It is I who ultimately decides how I am affected by the events in my life and what actions I will take as a result. If I model negativity, cynicism, ungratefulness and entitlement to those around me, these actions can corrode and destroy opportunities for others to see life as the greatest miracle of all.

There is no denying the astounding balance inherent in the miracle of life. From the smallest organism to the vastness of the universe there are no accidents in life's intricate order. It is ultimately up to each of us to choose to live life in harmony with the universe around us, or to struggle against the miracle of creation and that divine order.

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](http://www.aspenminecenter.org)



*A NEW ERA Continued from Page 1*

In late 2020, we purchased the property and the adventure began in earnest. The right architectural firm to redesign the building to our specifications was quickly found. But months were spent as an open bidding call to general contractors for interior remodeling resulted in every bid being far beyond our budget, which then resulted in us having to rethink portions of the project. Then another call for contractor bids, this time resulting in finding quality workmanship at a price we could afford. Then deciding on and acquiring desks, chairs, cabinets, electronic gear upgrades and accent pieces for staff offices, reception area, conference rooms and rooms to be used for special purposes.

The list went on and on. Nearly a year passed before work finally began. About six months later, after endless hours of major construction, painting, repairing, new wiring and plumbing installations and a thousand more things, work was finally completed. And a few weeks ago on May 23<sup>rd</sup>, we christened our new facility AMC West, opened the doors of our shiny new expansion to receive clients and realized at long last the dream had come true.

It's time to say a huge THANK YOU! To the key players who made this all possible. To Tony Perry and his team at Park State Bank for creating a workable selling price and mortgage on the property. To Paulson Architects PC in Colorado Springs for an outstanding interior design. To Hartland-Reliant in Colorado Springs, our general contractor, whose crew transfigured what started as two open floors of casino into the amazing configuration it is today. To the City of Cripple Creek, the sponsoring entity for the DOLA block grant and its payment processing. To Deb Downs for grant contract administration. To Teller County for funding the engineering, purchase and installation of a new elevator. To Colorado Department of Local Affairs (DOLA) for providing the enormous grant which covered the major part of the interior remodeling. To Newmont Mining for funding a new roof. And to private donors and foundations for their invaluable financial assistance. We could never have done this without you.

**The Results**

AMC West has been transformed into a jewel of sleek, modern functionality while retaining much of its original Victorian charm. Two stories and six

thousand square feet fully staffed and equipped to deliver the social services you need.

Enter our spacious reception area to find yourself surrounded by period reproduction carpeting and wall paper, the original and now fully refurbished pressed tin ceiling, and a carpeted staircase with a banister of fine woods leading up to the second floor.

To ensure client comfort and privacy, every staff member and all resident agencies now have individual private offices. No more partitions!

Private Special Situation rooms offer quiet, relaxing atmospheres for mental health and substance abuse counseling and therapy; a telehealth location for private conversations with medical personnel; a staff conference room; conference rooms for community meetings of all kinds.

Fully upgraded Men's and Women's restrooms on both floors. Disability equipped and ADA compliant.

A brand new elevator and completely rebuilt shaft meeting all current safety codes, ADA compliant.

Large private parking lot adjacent to the building. On-street parking next to building on 1<sup>st</sup> Street also available.

Two posted disabled-only parking spots in parking lot, fully paved, spacious, adjacent to an easy access paved ramp leading directly to building's rear door. Elevator is located just a few feet from the door.

**So which AMC building now does what?**

Our original Aspen Mine Center facility is located at 166 East Bennett Avenue.

Our new AMC West facility is located at 100 West Bennett Avenue, across from the Courthouse. The two AMC buildings are separated by the City Park.

**Located at AMC West:** All Case Management staff. All resident partner agencies. Pikes Peak Workforce Center, Hank Nelson Memorial Branch. Client Programs Director. Family & Adult Advocacy Manager.

**Located at Aspen Mine Center (AMC East):** Community of Caring administration offices. Gift & Thrift Shoppe. Food Pantry. Clothes Closet. Lending Library. Wednesday Meal Program and all Community Holiday Meals. Senior Club. Showers.

## AMC West Photo Album

### *The Transformation*



*From this...*



*...To this.*



*Reception. Gutted, ready for a serious overhaul.*



*Reception restored. Moving in, almost ready for action!*



*Left: Touching up.  
Gotta be perfect!*

*Right: What used to be a casino's open floor space is now a series of private offices.*







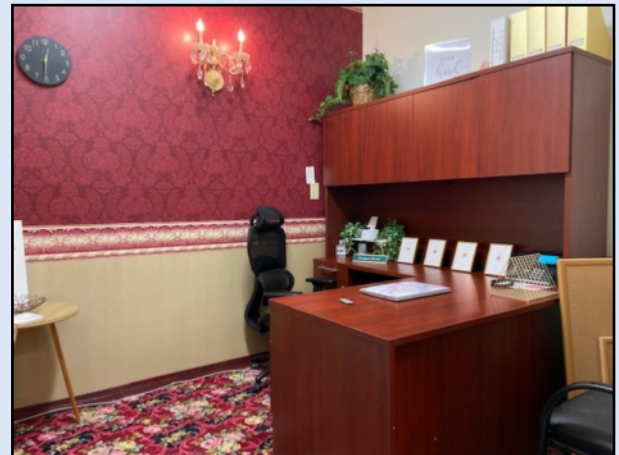
*When you open a door as artistic as this one, you just know what's inside has gotta be good.*



*A ready-to-move-in office, with a delightful view of the park.*



*WOW! Looks even better with furniture!*



*What a warm and comfy place to work in. Nice sconce, yeah?*



*Our smaller conference room for more intimate meetings.*



*The Pikes Peak Workforce Center, Hank Nelson Memorial Branch. Hank would've been very proud of these new digs.*



*Staff kitchen & break room. A bit rough yet, but let's see what happens.*



*Whooo-eee! I could get used to hangin' out here!*



*A Willow Bends...one of our resident partner agencies. A secluded spot at rear of building for drug testing. And just a couple steps away from a bathroom.*



*Speaking of bathrooms, all of ours pretty much look like this one. Nice. ADA compliant, too.*



*Handicap parking right next to our building. Easy access to a safety-fenced ramp takes you right to our back door...*



*...where you'll immediately see our spiffy new elevator.*



## The Community of Caring Capital Campaign Building Our Future to Continue Building a Stronger Community

We spend every day helping everyone we can to achieve a healthier, happier, more productive and meaningful life. Now we're asking you to help us respond to the increasing needs that go hand-in-hand with our growing community.

For 20 years, Community of Caring's Aspen Mine Center has admirably served us in helping those who have come to us for assistance. But the past two pandemic-plagued years have proved to be a significant challenge. The number of clients who reached out to us and the many services required to prevent them from suffering poverty, helplessness and hopelessness have soared.

We needed to continue growing in order to ensure that the growing needs we were seeing could be fulfilled. We needed to improve our service delivery and maintain the positive impact it creates on troubled lives. We needed to Build Our Future toward our ultimate goal of expanding our mission to meet ALL of Teller County's needs and beyond. The pandemic, coupled with the projected growth of local casino hotels, has increased the need for social services.

So we purchased and have recently completed renovating a long-vacant casino just a half-block from our existing facility in Cripple Creek. Six thousand square feet now brimming with new life, with hope, with capabilities, with promise for all who enter. We christened it AMC West, and our doors opened on May 23<sup>rd</sup>.

The two-story building offers space for mentoring and training the homeless, the impoverished, the unemployed, anyone down on their luck, providing a meaningful pathway to acquiring skills leading to higher wages, full-time employment and, ultimately, family security and stability. It will change burdens on society into contributing, productive members of our community. There are abundant and comfortable rooms for our Client Specialists to more effectively and efficiently serve an ever-increasing number of clients, for expanded Mental Health services to rebuild damaged souls, for our partnering agencies to further help our clients to become self-sufficient, and space to host informative community meetings of all kinds.

All of this does come at a substantial cost, but there is no question it will prove to be worth every dollar and much, much more to all of Teller County. Grants from supportive charitable foundations, the state of Colorado and other donors have been a godsend in greatly reducing our existing obligations to this project. Now we need our community and other supporters to help us complete the funding for AMC West.

Community of Caring's Capital Campaign seeks to erase our remaining debt of \$280,000. Community of Caring is now certified as part of Colorado's Enterprise Zone Tax Credit Program. Colorado allows you to take a **tax credit** for 25% of your donation. You will receive the full 25% tax credit for your donation to us **in addition to** other qualifying deductible charitable donations you have. Any Colorado taxpayer can support an Enterprise Zone project. You do not have to live or work in an Enterprise Zone to invest.

Each day, we strive to provide a step forward for those in our community who are struggling. Each day we watch our clients experience positive changes. Join your compassionate friends and neighbors who support our efforts. Team with them to become a vital part in creating a vibrant, economically robust and pleasurable community for you and your loved ones to thrive in.

The minimum donation to Community of Caring through the Enterprise Zone is \$100 per year. Please give as much as you comfortably can. Make check to Enterprise Zone, on the memo line write "Community of Caring" PLUS the last 4 digits of your Social Security number or complete business EIN. Mail check to Community of Caring, PO Box 1587, Cripple Creek, CO 80813. You will receive a Colorado tax credit certificate for use in filing your Colorado income tax return.

We thank you so much for your support. To qualify for an Enterprise Zone tax credit, please contact:

Ted Borden, Executive Director at (719) 351-0462, [ted@aspenminecenter.org](mailto:ted@aspenminecenter.org)

Mary Bielz, COC Board Chairperson at (719) 287-8532, [mary@aspenminecenter.org](mailto:mary@aspenminecenter.org)

Veldean Myers, Financial Services Director at (719) 689-3584 ext 118, [veldean@aspenminecenter.org](mailto:veldean@aspenminecenter.org)



## A Look Inside Community of Caring's Board of Directors: Who they Are, What They Offer, How They Got Here, and Why What they Do Shapes Aspen Mine Center's Commitment to Enhancing Our Teller County Community

A very worthy suggestion by our Executive Director Ted Borden has its birth in this issue and will continue in the issues yet to come. All who come through our doors interact with our amazing staff who solve their problems, offer hope and straighten out broken lives...always with words of support, ideas and ways to create a brighter future, often accompanied by a smile or a hug that can do so much in helping to heal a wounded soul.

But why do we do what we do day after day, year after year, always seeking to do it better, more abundantly, more efficiently, with purpose and determination and compassion? It requires a guiding light, a vision of what AMC should be and will strive to become, an unswerving devotion to improving the lives and happiness of the friends and neighbors with whom we share this very special part of the world we live in.

Every great enterprise, every majestic building, every worthwhile effort is built upon an unshakeable foundation. Ours is Community of Caring's Board of Directors. A small group filled with diverse talents, a long history of successful endeavors, the drive to succeed, and the wisdom and wit to enjoy every minute of it. Today we'd like to introduce you to one of them...a remarkable man named Rich Ingold.

Growing up on a farm in rural Kansas taught Rich how to work. And work he did, graduating from college with a Bachelor's degree in math and a minor in physics, followed by a Master's degree in math. Shortly thereafter, it was either be drafted or volunteer for military service. Rich joined the Air Force, commissioned as a second lieutenant. Assigned to Strategic Air Command in Omaha, he wrote and used Minuteman missile targeting software.

And so began a 20-year Air Force career that brought much traveling, increasing responsibilities and a series of jobs only a Hollywood screenwriter could dream up. Military intelligence, working on the nation's war plan. A stint at NSA, intelligence programs and project management. Defense Intelligence Agency, writing software used for acquiring data on foreign satellites to determine their missions. Numerous other assignments filled with defense program creation and management. The journey ended in Colorado Springs, heading a team responsible for all the ground system software for space surveillance, missile warning and satellite operations around the world.

Rich then retired, only to become a defense contractor, private consultant and program manager for the next 22 years. Vast experience with proposals, business development, budgeting, program execution, and all the technical stuff that makes contracts work. He brought it all with him when he and his wife, Barb—who oversees operations at our Gift & Thrift Shoppe—discovered the Aspen Mine Center and began to volunteer in various ways.

Their involvement grew, until one day about 5 years ago Rich was invited to become a COC Board member. He's been invaluable in more ways than any of us who work with him can count. From developing our strategic planning to revising and augmenting our employee handbook as well as our organizational policy & procedures manual to being the guy who researched, found and worked to procure and develop what has become our new gem of an additional facility, AMC West, Rich never slows down, stops thinking, or misses an opportunity to contribute in a hundred ways. We hope he never does.



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

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

It's been 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 9-4. We and they thank you for your kindness.*

## The Guv Drops In for a Friendly Visit to AMC

Late last year, Governor Polis undertook a series of trips to a number of Colorado's smaller counties to let them know they were just as important as the big ones were to the state's overall growth, economic development and quality of life. It was time to catch up on what the rural folk were doing, to look for problems they might be having, and to discover solutions they'd found that could prove valuable to our citizens in other areas large and small.

When Teller County's turn came, the governor met at the Centennial Building with local officials to discuss various aspects of life in our corner of the world. One of those officials was Dan Williams, a Teller County Commissioner, who is also a Community of Caring Board of Directors member. At the meeting's end, Dan suggested that if the governor wanted to see a shining example of local problem solving, he ought to experience the Aspen Mine Center.

A quick stroll down Bennett Avenue brought him to our doors, where he was warmly greeted by Ted Borden, our Executive Director, and Mary Bielz, Community of Caring's founder. A tour of the building followed, with explanations of the multitude of ways AMC provides help to Teller County families and individuals in need of assistance to prevent poverty, maintain healthy lives, find employment, solve behavioral problems and much more. Introductions to staff members led to conversations about their specialties and successes with clients. Governor Polis was impressed with AMC's "one stop shop" concept, declaring it to be a model that would significantly improve community life in towns of many different sizes.

It was a rewarding and fruitful afternoon, enjoyed by all.



*Gov. Polis chats with AMC staff and volunteers as he tours our facility.*

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

Our Board of Directors:

Mary Bielz  
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Tony Perry  
Dan Williams  
Miriam Mondragon  
Chris Allen

### The Aspen Mine Center

166 E. Bennett Ave.

AMC West

100 W. Bennett Ave.

Cripple Creek, CO 80813

(719) 689-3584

[www.aspenminecenter.org](http://www.aspenminecenter.org)

Open Mon-Fri 9-4

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**Ted Borden, Executive Director**  
**Veldean Myers, Financial Services Director**

**Lisa Noble, Client Programs Director**  
**Angie Trelstad, Family & Adult Advocacy Services Manager**  
**Nicole Walker, Senior Advocacy Program Director**

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



Our Lending Library is open Mon-Fri 9:00 a.m.-3:30 p.m. We also usually have DVD and VHS tape movies available.

FREE bookmarks too!

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

[www.aspenminecenter.org](http://www.aspenminecenter.org)

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