



WINTER 2022-23

Aspen Mine Center, Cripple Creek, Colorado

Vol. 12, No. 1

## Community of Caring Campaign Pays Off Remaining Debt on AMC West Building

In May of 2022, a gala ribbon-cutting ceremony christened the opening of our beautiful new addition to Aspen Mine Center's ever-growing menu of community services to Teller County. We named it AMC West, which seemed appropriate because it was located at 100 West Bennett Avenue in Cripple Creek, just a half-block west of the original Aspen Mine Center.

The project was an enormous undertaking for Community of Caring, both financially and physically. The former Madame June's Casino had lain essentially unoccupied for nearly thirty years, becoming a deteriorating shadow of what was once one of Cripple Creek's finest two-story Victorian masterpieces.

The building's purchase—which also included an adjacent half-block of prime undeveloped lots—plus a complete reconfiguration of both floors to become

private offices for our entire client services staff and numerous rooms for special needs, ended up creating a 1.4 million dollar commitment for turning our dream into reality.

The next goal became how the heck to pay it all off as quickly as possible. Help came from a whopping

grant supplied by the Department of Local Affairs and sizable contributions from charitable foundations, local businesses and private donors. By last fall, the debt had shrunk to \$288,000.

Major progress, but not satisfying enough for Mary Bielz, COC's founder and Board of Directors Chairperson. Mary is simply an unstoppable dynamo of ideas and action. And when Mary declared, "We're gonna completely pay this thing off by December 31<sup>st</sup>," it was written in stone.



*AMC West today, debt-free.*

A VIP Fundraiser dinner and auction of fine items was rapidly organized, bringing in better than \$40,000. An alliance with a Colorado program offering tax advantages for charitable donations made in Enterprise Zones spurred another round of found funds. By December 31, our remaining balance owed on the AMC West project was zero.

With doubled capacity to provide help and hope for those in need and increased capability to implement new and exciting programs, we are committed to making our Teller County community an even better place to live and thrive in.

## Aspen Mine Center renovations continue, much done with more to do

Ongoing improvements to our parent building since late February are moving along nicely. Structural strengthening of portions of the first floor has been completed and the entire floor now boasts attractive new carpeting.

This portion of the project unavoidably required complete closure of the main floor for six weeks while repairs and upgrades were proceeding.

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## HELP FOR SENIORS

Things to do, Places to go, Valuable lifestyle tips and knowledge to learn

### **Saturday, April 29, 9:00am-2:00pm – Golden Bridge Network Hosts FREE Senior Expo at the Woodland Park Senior Center**

The Golden Bridge Network Senior Expo is open to anyone 50 years of age or older. Join us and make new friends as experts in fields of vital importance to seniors talk about ways to protect your safety, learn new and rewarding skills, and how technology and feelings of isolation can interact both positively and negatively. The event's lineup of speakers and their topics include:

- 9:15-9:30 0 - Dan Williams, Teller County Commissioner, Introductory Welcome
- 9:30-10:10 Sheriff Jason Mikesell speaks on Scams, Frauds & Exploitation
- 10:30-11:10 Valerie Belding speaks on Gardening Large & Small
- 12:00-12:40 Jay Teague speaks on Emergency Preparedness
- 1:00-1:40 Brandon Schaff speaks on Technology and Isolation

**FREE LUNCH PROVIDED! MANY LOCAL VENDORS ON SITE! GIFT BAGS PROVIDED FOR PARTICIPANTS!**

You must reserve your spot for this event and can do so by calling the Woodland Park Senior Center at (719) 687-3877. The Center is located at 321 North Pine Street, Woodland Park, near City Hall.

Stop by any weekday between 9am and 1pm to check out activities they currently provide that might interest you and to suggest additional activities for our community! Golden Bridge Network's mission is to keep seniors happy, healthy and active.

### **Victor Elks Lodge #367 will be serving soup for Victor Residents**

who might need a free hot meal on Sundays at 1:00 PM, continuing until the soup runs out. Each week will feature a different soup or it might even be chili, or beef stew...who knows? But guaranteed to be yummy and nutritious.

The Lodge is located at 367 North 3<sup>rd</sup> Street in downtown Victor.

### **Colorado State University Extension offers FREE virtual Caregiver Workshops March through December. FREE to the public.**

One each month, Wednesdays 10:30am-noon. Many of us find ourselves in the role of caregivers but don't have the information we need to navigate the complexities of this role. CSU Extension is partnering with Jane Barton, founder of Cardinal, LLC, to share a series of life-changing webinars for caregivers of aging family members or friends, or anyone who will be called to care. The monthly workshop series will cover topics such as: aging solo, age friendly health care, spirituality and health, and THE conversation.

To receive more detailed information and register to participate:

[https://colostate.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_cIx4pQdJNETewZM](https://colostate.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_cIx4pQdJNETewZM)

**See more starting on Page 6**

# Director's Corner

by Ted Borden

It is a remarkable thing to look back on the past year in order to put together Community of Caring's Annual Report. We tend to get so caught up in the whirlwind of activity that we often minimize the significance of what has been accomplished. We tend to not be able to see the forest for the trees, as the old adage goes.

The fact that we completed the renovation of our new client services facility midyear, named it "AMC West" (it being just down the street from the Aspen Mine Center), and transitioned into that new facility with minimal service interruptions is pretty remarkable in itself.

Moving 13 staff members including six case managers, 2 additional senior advocates, a Client Program Director, two employment program specialists, one website designer and one newly hired receptionist into the facility is no simple task. To that, add moving six partner agencies including the Department of Human Services, three counseling agencies and adding two new partners all providing services in a new location and WOW...did that all really happen??

I am truly so proud of our staff for their flexibility, dedication, patience and...sense of humor. I am equally grateful to the countless community volunteers who helped make it come together as smoothly as it did.

In addition to moving into this new location, we are currently undergoing upgrades and renovations in the Aspen Mine Center. We will increase the footprint of the Gift Shoppe, provide better offices for our Admin Team, and renovate the second floor

to create a community training and education center. The renovations will better accommodate the senior club and activity center and will greatly improve the community meal program services and access. We hope that most of the upgrades to the Aspen Mine Center will be complete by 2023 year end,

Now for one of the most astounding and remarkable accomplishments of 2022. Thanks to the incredible generosity of many foundations, other funders, local government sources, businesses, individual donors, as well as an extremely dedicated fundraising committee and Board President named Mary Bielz, **Community of Caring paid off the entire remaining balance for the loan on the new AMC West facility!!! We are, once again, debt-free!**



Community of Caring has always made having minimal long-term debt a top priority. The commitment to pay off this note in order to pass the savings from the loan interest on to our client services and emergency assistance programs is paramount. As the Executive Director for this great organization, I could not be more proud of the dedication of our staff and volunteers, nor more humbled by the incredible support of this community. Thanks to all of you for a truly great year!

Sincerely,

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)



**AMC RENOVATIONS** Continued from page 1

The Gift & Thrift Shoppe was closed, requests for showers and emergency food boxes were shifted to AMC West to administer, and other activities were either held to a minimum or temporarily shuttered.

We are happy to report that the main floor is now back in action. Reception area has been rebuilt, the Gift & Thrift Shoppe has been reopened with new amenities, showers and emergency food boxes requests are being handled at that reception desk along with other main floor activities being reinstated.

Upgrades to the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor and basement will continue

throughout the year, with the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor beginning in May to include new carpeting, improvements to the dining room kitchen and reworking some areas to become adequate, comfortable spaces for upcoming group educational opportunities, trainings and community conferences.

These upgrades will likely affect ongoing activities like Wild Wednesday Lunches and Senior Club gatherings from time to time. We'll do our best to make that happen as little as possible.

Look for notices on our front doors and on Facebook advising of any interruptions to normal services.

**The Gift and Thrift Shop Has Reopened as of Tuesday, April 11<sup>th</sup>!**

**NEW HIGH-END STORE LOOK, SAME TINY PRICES!**

**NEW! DEDICATED ROOMS FOR FURNITURE,**

**MEN'S CLOTHING AND WOMEN'S CLOTHING!**

**Open Tuesday-Saturday, 10am-4pm**

**Donations accepted Tuesday-Saturday, 10am-3pm**

**AMC Staff Members Score Big Grant to Address Medicaid Changes**

***You may be in danger of losing your current Medicaid benefits or unable to enroll in Medicaid if you have not already done so. If you were allowed to enroll in Colorado Medicaid during the federally-declared Public Health Emergency (PHE) or are uncertain if you can qualify for Medicaid, it is urgent that you read this article fully.***

The PHE due to the Covid pandemic is now winding down to termination. PHE rules for Medicaid insurance coverage increased the monthly income amount one could earn and still be eligible for Medicaid. It was designed to allow more people at modest income levels to obtain health insurance coverage in Medicaid, thereby greatly reducing potential financial catastrophe and hardships caused by virus infection, hospitalization, etc.

First, some helpful info to set the stage for what follows. The formal name for Colorado's Medicaid Program is Health First Colorado. HFC serves all of Colorado with regional organizations who manage multiple counties in a portion of the state.

Teller County and seven other geographically-linked counties are served by a regional org called Colorado Community Health Alliance (CCHA). CCHA administers health and behavioral benefits and coordinates care and services for its Medicaid members in these eight counties. As the resource hub of Teller County, Aspen

Mine Center is contracted with CCHA to coordinate community involvement and CCHA services for our county.

Now the good news that matters to you. In the spring of 2022, a CCHA supervisor informed our Katelynn Brown, AMC's Medicaid Health Care Coordinator, that agency funds were available for a Medicaid community involvement program. Katelynn quickly told Lisa Noble, AMC's Client Programs Director, about this and the two teamed up to write a grant proposal and submit it. A grant of \$59,442 was awarded in March of this year.

Katelynn and her team of Medicaid-trained staff members will offer any Teller County citizen the help they need to refile for coverage if their Medicaid has been terminated as the PHE ends, or assist in establishing a new claim for the uninsured. Many low or no-cost alternative programs for health coverage are available to cover those who will no longer be eligible for Medicaid when the maximum monthly income amount drops back to its pre-pandemic level. The team will also attempt to contact every person in Teller County now on Medicaid, advising of upcoming changes and offering assistance.

**Contact Katelynn for an appointment at (719) 452-1986 or email [katelynn@aspenminecenter.org](mailto:katelynn@aspenminecenter.org).** Don't delay, do it NOW! Protect yourself and your family from disaster with affordable health care coverage.

## How to Avoid Tax Scammers

It's tax season, and while that may mean you're drowning in forms and paperwork, for scammers it means millions of taxpayers they can potentially dupe out of refunds or scare into making irrational moves. Here's what you need to know about tax return scams and how to avoid them.

### How the scams play out

In a tax return scam, a fraudster steals a taxpayer's personal information and files a fake tax return on their behalf. The scammer will direct the refund to be deposited into the taxpayer's checking account. After the refund is deposited, the scammer will call the victim, impersonating the IRS and claiming the refund was mistakenly inflated. They'll instruct the victim to return the alleged extra funds via gift card or wire transfer. Of course, this money will go directly into the scammer's pockets.

In another variation of a tax return scam, a fraudster steals a taxpayer's personal information and files a fake tax return on their behalf, as described in the first scenario. However, instead of directing the refund to be deposited into the victim's account, the scammer has the funds deposited into their own account. When the taxpayer tries to file a legitimate return, the IRS will inform them they've already filed one – and collected the refund.

Unfortunately, tax return scams are relatively easy to pull off. Scammers need only to get their hands onto a victim's name, Social Security number and date of birth. All other information, including income and employment details, can be fabricated. Often, scammers get the information they need for the scam from employees who work at the same company as the target and are willing to sell information about their co-workers to fraudsters.

### Protect yourself

Fortunately, there are steps you can take to limit your vulnerability to tax return scams. Here's how to keep your money and your information safe this tax season:

- File early. This gives scammers less time to use stolen information.
- E-file with care. Only use a secure computer to file an electronic tax return. Do not use public Wi-Fi to e-file your taxes.
- Keep your tax returns in a secure location. Remove your returns from your computer after you've filed, and store hard copies of all tax forms in a safe place.
- Never download links or attachments from unverified sources. These may contain malware, which can infect your computer and deliver your information right into the scammer's hands.
- Never share personal information with an unknown contact over the phone or online. Personal information should always be kept personal.

It's also important to be aware of the following information to help you identify possible scams:

- Refund checks will never be deposited into a taxpayer's account if they have not filed taxes. If a refund lands in your checking account and you know you haven't yet filed taxes, you are likely the victim of a tax return scam.
- The IRS never demands payment by a specific method. If you're asked to wire money to the "IRS" or pay by gift card, you're talking to a scammer.

### If you've been targeted

If you receive a phone call or letter from someone claiming to represent the IRS and informing you that you owe tax money, you can verify the claim by calling 1-800-829-1040. Emails allegedly sent by the IRS are scams, as the IRS does not reach out to taxpayers via email.

If you haven't received your tax refund within one month of filing, you can check your refund's status on the IRS web page: [www.irs.gov/individuals/tax-withholding-estimator](https://www.irs.gov/individuals/tax-withholding-estimator). If the site shows that your refund was issued but you haven't received it, you may be the victim of a tax return scam and identity theft. Alert the IRS at 1-800-908-4490.



## **Legal Overview Presentations with Aspen Mine Center**

### **Estate Planning 101**

**April 24<sup>th</sup>**  
10am-12pm

### **Family Law & Protection Orders**

**Sept. 28<sup>th</sup>**  
2-4pm

### **Housing 101**

**Oct. 25<sup>th</sup>**  
2-4pm

**All Presentations at 166 E. Bennett Avenue in Cripple Creek**



***Presentation to be followed  
by a brief Q&A***



# UNDERSTANDING ALZHEIMER'S AND DEMENTIA

An education program presented by the Alzheimer's Association®



## **ALZHEIMER'S IS NOT NORMAL AGING.**

It's a disease of the brain that causes problems with memory, thinking and behavior.

### **Join us to learn about:**

- » The impact of Alzheimer's.
- » The difference between Alzheimer's and dementia.
- » Alzheimer's disease stages and risk factors.
- » Current research and treatments available to address some symptoms.
- » Alzheimer's Association resources.

**Tuesday, May 16  
10:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.**

**Mountain View United Methodist Church  
1101 Rampart Range Rd  
Woodland Park, CO 80863**

Visit [alz.org/CRF](http://alz.org/CRF) to explore additional education programs online and in your area.

alzheimer's  association®

## Meet a COC Board of Directors Member

Here's another in our ongoing series featuring one of Community of Caring's Board members. Our Board is made up of wonderfully diverse individuals, each having specialties of expertise, differing areas of interest and positions in our community which compliment each other and provide the Board with endless valuable ideas, insights and action-based plans to help AMC create new programs, improve existing ones and further our goal of making this community a better place to live in.

Meet Miriam Mondragon, an educator with a long background in many aspects of the field, and one with an unwavering commitment to help make children and youngsters approaching adulthood all that they can be.

Miriam moved to Pueblo, Colorado with her family when she was in high school. After graduating from Central High School she attended CSU Pueblo, studying education and earning a Bachelor's degree in social science, then a teaching degree.

Miriam then spent nine years teaching 3<sup>rd</sup> grade at a Pueblo elementary school. During that time she also earned two master's degrees, one in Arts & Education and the other in Education Administration.

Miriam fell in love with Cripple Creek and Victor the first

time she saw it in the early 2000s. And in 2011, she achieved not only her administrative goal, but her desire to settle here as well. She was hired as the principal of Cripple Creek's Cresson Elementary School, holding that position through 2018.

The need to help care for her seriously ill mother caused a break in her career for two years. When that ended, fate stepped in to return Miriam to the career she loved. The principal's job at Cresson was again open. Miriam was rehired. Shortly after that, the superintendent position became available, and Miriam was chosen to lead the CC-V school district, a job she still holds today.

Miriam relishes describing her passion for and commitment to education. "I love our kids. I love finding new ways to interest them in thinking about and acting on who and what they can become. We have wonderful students and a staff who truly care about these kids. Our kids are bright. They're hands on. Bolstering our career and technical ed programs, really helping them discover *their* passion, means when they walk out of here they're ahead of the game. I love being on the Board and strengthening our collaboration with Aspen Mine Center. I love these people, this atmosphere, this place. I look forward to every day." Miriam, you are truly a gem.



**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 8-4. We and they thank you for your kindness.*

## AMC Hosts New Sunday Church Service in Cripple Creek

### Cripple Creek Community Church

Every Sunday morning at 10:00

Upstairs at the Aspen Mine Center,

166 East Bennett Avenue

Non-denominational.

Offering worship, fellowship, teachings and encouragement through the words and messages of the Bible.



Pastor Ryan Wickstrom







## *Forget-Me-Not's* Grief Support Group

Join us for coffee, conversation, and companionship during the dark days of bereavement and beyond.

10am on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday of the month at the  
Aspen Mine Center Coffee Shop

166 E. Bennett Ave, Cripple Creek, CO 80813

Call Krys Arrick 719-661-3539 for more information

The Aspen Mine Center  
Community Clarion newsletter  
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Our Board of Directors:

Mary Bielz

Reed Grainger

Joan Rook

Martha Hubbard

Scott Porter

Mike Rulo

Tony Perry

Dan Williams

Miriam Mondragon

Chris Allen

**When you enrich the lives of others,  
You enrich your own as well.**

**VOLUNTEER!**

**At reception desks or call (719) 689-3584**

**The Aspen Mine Center  
166 E. Bennett Ave.**

**AMC West**

**100 W. Bennett Ave.  
Cripple Creek, CO 80813  
(719) 689-3584**

[www.cocamc.org](http://www.cocamc.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  
Stephanie Egan, Senior Advocacy  
Program Manager**

**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.cocamc.org](http://www.cocamc.org)

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