



Stronger Together



Class of 2023





CONGRATULATIONS!

**Colorado Access would like to
congratulate and celebrate all the
2023 Leadership Aurora graduates,
including our own:**

MAYRA ZUNIGA & DAWN GISSENDANNER

ABOUT COLORADO ACCESS

We are the largest and most experienced public sector health plan in the state. As a nonprofit organization dedicated to more than just providing access to care, we are dedicated to advancing meaningful, measurable improvements in the way health care is delivered to create healthier lives.

INTRODUCTION

In 10 short months, Leadership Aurora class members experience an intensive mountain retreat, followed by monthly immersion in the best Aurora has to offer: medical facilities; educational institutions; nonprofit organizations; police and fire facilities; the military; city management; and more. The class also selects, plans, and implements projects designed to give back to the community.

The Aurora Chamber of Commerce has supported the development of community leaders through the Leadership Aurora

program for 39 years, and while many things have changed, the program continues to incorporate a laser focus on meeting the city's need for strong, skilled, and participatory leadership. The program is funded by The Chamber, in-kind donations, and class tuition. The Leadership Aurora Board steers the program, develops its curriculum, and oversees its success.

Ask a member of this year's class or an alumnus of the program about their experience – you will be inspired!

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Leadership Aurora class of 2023 acknowledges the many individuals and businesses that provide invaluable support to make this one of the most outstanding leadership programs in the United States.

Our appreciation goes to the guest speakers and personnel who took us behind the scenes of organizations throughout the city. Gratitude is also extended to the Leadership Aurora Board, Program Director Rene Simard, Assistant Director Mitzi Schindler, and the Aurora Chamber of Commerce – for collectively cultivating this top-notch program.

As we graduate, we look forward to meeting the individuals who will join us as Leadership Aurora alumni in the years ahead. Together, we will take Aurora confidently into the future.





Alan Antolak

CHAIR LETTER

What an exciting (and mostly normal) year! I have been honored to be part of the journey of this year's Leadership Aurora Class of 2023. After the

past three years of classes showing resilience, resourcefulness, flexibility, but most importantly maintaining the passion of this great program, this year's class was able to participate and embrace the full Leadership Aurora experience.

Introducing the class to Leadership Aurora and to each other, started at the class retreat in Breckenridge in September 2022. It is amazing to witness the energy when you bring leaders from all different walks of life and how quickly they gel and the excitement they bring to want to explore and contribute to their community together. Andréa Wright brought compassion and supportive leadership as this year's class president. Her servant leadership allowed the class to flourish with several initiatives throughout the year. It was amazing to watch this class grow with every session, as they continued their education about and amazement of this great Aurora community.

I want to personally thank each and every one of my fellow Leadership Aurora Board Members. It is truly an honor to be part of such a hardworking and engaged group of leaders, that are striving to make the program they care so deeply about even better than their experience in the program. This board's passion and dedication is the reason this program has maintained its excellence over the last four decades. I would like to acknowledge Jennifer Evans, our past board chair, and Yvonne Valdez, our incoming chair, for all their guidance and support, but most importantly keeping this program fun! I also want to thank the Aurora Chamber staff for their guidance and efforts all year round. Rene Simard, Mitzi Schindler, Kevin Hougen, and the rest of The Chamber staff's tireless commitment makes this the top-notch leadership engagement program in the Metro Area.

Thank you, Leadership Aurora Class of 2023, for allowing me to share in your experience. May it make a long-standing impression on your life as it has for me and many other Leadership Aurora graduates.

Congratulations,

Alan Antolak
Leadership Aurora Chair

PRESIDENT LETTER

Hello friends!

It has been a blessing and an honor collaborating with such strong leaders during our 2023 Leadership Aurora class!

In September of 2022, thirty complete strangers gathered, and quickly formed a bond. We learned our differences, how they make us individually unique, and how to embrace the fluidity of our union. This journey made the bond unbreakable.

Like any journey, there were some ups and downs, but we persevered. We learned and formed relationships with our Aurora leaders and heard about their missions. We made connections that became a legacy by contributing to a supportive community space and bringing together families over food. We raised funds for great causes, including supporting future Leadership Aurora classes, and we supported each other. We did it our way, and for that, we are the best class ever!

We experienced ten educational and thought-provoking class sessions and hundreds of heartfelt conversations.



Andréa Wright

At the end of our official time together, I believe that we all can guarantee that these will not be our last moments together, as our families have intertwined, and our paths will be forever connected. We will see each other again, laugh about the good days and acknowledge our accomplishments.

During our time together, when uncomfortable feelings arose, we conquered those together too! When doubt told us we couldn't wake up at five or six in the morning, we did it anyway. When we doubted being vulnerable, we did it anyway; When things didn't look like they were aligning, it all came together; When one person didn't know, someone else was right there to help.

Our leadership connections, knowledge, and abilities grew along the way. I now ask my classmates to look back and notice – and let me be the first to congratulate you - we did it! Together we made mountains move, together we created new legacies, together we graciously became stretched... and remember, when we didn't think we could make it through these ten months, we realized we were Stronger Together. I love you all.



Dr. Julie Stewart

VICE-PRESIDENT LETTER

Good day to all.

Leadership Aurora has been one of the greatest community programs I have ever participated in. I have been honored to meet, work with, and attend events with City of Aurora leadership

in all roles. I appreciate the opportunities to go behind the scenes and experience what first responders such as police, fire, and EMS professionals do on a day-to-day basis. I was given the chance to take part in City government convenings and hear from the community and industry about what the most pressing issues are. I am honored to say that I have met some of the most impactful people in Aurora as friends, colleagues, and professional networking connections that have had - and will continue to have - an impact on improving our community and ourselves.

The diversity of the organizations and individuals that I learned from, and with, is remarkable. I appreciated the candor and accountability that my classmates

expected from me. The experiences have supplied great opportunities for self-evaluation and awareness of the immense responsibilities we have as citizens and community members. Through these networking partnerships, participation in these responsibilities have been exciting and fun, and have nudged me outside of my comfort zone to explore innovative ways to enhance the City of Aurora and to understand how my contributions can encourage others to go out there and serve.

The Leadership Aurora staff and board of directors are by far some of the most amazing visionaries and global thinkers I have had the pleasure of sharing time with. The experience has encouraged me to explore continued opportunities to serve the Aurora community. I am thankful for the opportunity to be chosen as a class member and would encourage those looking to experience the City of Aurora from a hands-on leadership and immersion perspective to apply and participate fully in the amazing programming that is Leadership Aurora.

I wish you all well in your future endeavors and ask that you please continue to partner with me to make Aurora great!

Dr. Julie Stewart

OPENING RETREAT

We gathered at the Beaver Run Resort in Breckenridge for a two-day retreat focused on building community, exploring leadership styles, and learning more about the Leadership Aurora program to come. We got to know one another through fun icebreakers and team building exercises, and we were fortunate to have Franco Marini, an adjunct professor at the University of Denver's Daniels' School of Business, facilitate an engaging day exploring the power of setting intentions and making declarations. He also had us take a deep dive into our leadership styles through the results of our Insights Discovery profiles. We heard from Leadership Aurora alumni about their experiences and selected our class president, Andréa Wright! Much was learned about being a leader during those two days, but, most importantly, a new community of individuals coming together to leave a legacy was formed.





"The retreat was a great experience getting to know the class members."

— Anthony Krenz

"My favorite experience has to be the retreat. We all went into this as strangers and The Chamber did such an amazing job with fun and engaging activities that at the end of it all we had all gotten to know each other so well. The connections made in that short amount of time will last a lifetime. I am forever grateful for the opportunity given to go on this wonderful journey with such an amazing group of leaders."

— Mayra Zuniga

CLASS PROJECT

For their class project, the Leadership Aurora Class of 2023 partnered with the Salvation Army for the kickoff of the organization's Family Night Fridays. The class provided meals for families who attended the event on May 19, 2023, which served 50 people. Food was sponsored by Dickey's Barbecue in Longmont. UCHHealth also provided sack lunches for kids to take home for the following day.

Games and activities were set out for families to enjoy for the evening; and with the intention of further supporting the community, the class provided resource guides to all families with information about local resources to support their needs.

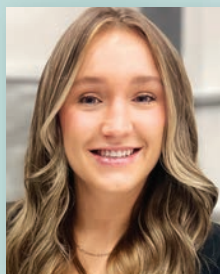
The Leadership Aurora Class of 2023 wanted to leave a sustainable class legacy project, so they provided a list of future volunteers, as the dinners are set up to occur quarterly. Other community organizations will host future events with continued support from the Leadership Aurora Alumni.



CLASS OF 2023



Katie Anthony



DoubleTree by Hilton
Katie.Anthony@hilton.com

"Leadership Aurora has made me realize how incredible Aurora truly is. Each day has impacted me differently. I have a newfound appreciation for where I live, work, and play!"

African Leadership Group
Ousman.ba@usalg.org

"Leadership Aurora has impacted me in many ways. I have learned so much about our community. From Community day to Police day, I got to see services and opportunities that are here in my city that I was not aware of before. In addition to that, I got connected with some pretty cool classmates."



Ousman Ba

Brian Clark



Adolfson & Peterson Construction
bclark@a-p.com

"Leadership Aurora really opened my eyes to the different resources within our community as well as what a positive impact so many people are making."

Falck Rocky Mountain
Clayton.coker@falck.com

"Leadership Aurora definitely broadened my view of the city I serve daily."



Clayton Coker

Kennady Copeland

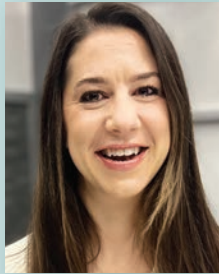


FirstBank
Kennady.copeland@efirstbank.com

"Through Leadership Aurora, I was able to connect with so many influential people within the Aurora community."

Nelnet
Eren.corapcioglu@nelnet.net

"Leadership Aurora has made a deeper impact on me than I ever would have expected. From the professional to personal side of things, I'll be walking away a better person. I'm so thankful for all the connections and friendships I've made, on top of learning more about our Aurora community. From Community day to Education day, I feel so in awe of this community and how everyone wants what's best for all communities."



Eren Corapcioglu

James DeHerrera



City of Aurora, Aurora Water
jldeherr@auroragov.org

"Leadership Aurora has given me the opportunity to connect with our very diverse community in ways no other program can. I now have connections in various industries that I know I can call upon if ever needed and we can work together to continue to better our city and help our residents."

Colorado Air National Guard
Daksen9@gmail.com

"Leadership Aurora has enabled me to reflect on my own leadership skills and instills in me a greater proactive and constructive role in the local community."



Mody Diop

Rick Elsinger



Aurora Collision Center
rick@auroracollisioncenter.com

"I've seen a side of Aurora I would have not experienced otherwise. I learned about homelessness in the community and how the city government runs, along with many other things."

Eva Gergely



Rocky Mountain Regional VA Medical Center
eva.gergely@va.gov

“Leadership Aurora really helped me gain a better understanding of how much of an impact the City of Aurora has on Colorado, along with the many resources the City of Aurora has.”

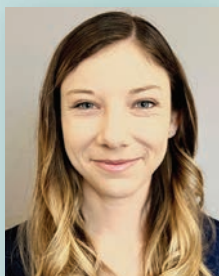
Colorado Access
Dawn.gissendanner@coaccess.com

“The Leadership Aurora impacted me by creating an atmosphere of trust and respect.”



Dawn Gissendanner

Robyn Hills



Aurora Public Schools Foundation
rlhills@aurorak12.org

“I have learned a ton about my community, built relationships with other leaders, and learned about myself in the process.”

Colorado Air National Guard
Kamal.kaaoush.1@us.af.mil

“The impact of this program comes from the relationships and understanding of my fellow leaders in Aurora. There’s an old adage that “You can’t surge trust...” This program has built trust between our various agencies and backgrounds to form lifelong partnerships and create positive change in the community.”



Kam Kaaoush

Operation Equine
Michelle@OperationEquine.org

“The Leadership Aurora program contributed greatly to my local civic education and definitely opened my eyes to some of the urban complexities I hadn’t been exposed to in a long time. I was honored to be in a class with talented, professional individuals from a variety of industries who also brought so much to my learning. In addition to bringing excellence to what they do in their work lives, they’re also truly good human beings who are endeavoring to bring their goodness into their communities – both personally AND professionally.”

Michelle Kaye



UCHealth/UCHospital
candice.kmetzparkinson@uchealth.org

“Leadership Aurora has opened my eyes to so many aspects of the community I had no idea about. It has strengthened my knowledge of what it takes to run a city. There are so many things we all take for granted. The appreciation I now have, for things I had no prior clue about, helped to change my perspective about our community. It has also changed my perception on how I can be a part of positive change in a bigger way.”



**Candice
Kmetz-
Parkinson**

**Jimmy
Knoch**



Citywide Banks
jknoch@citywidebanks.com

“Meeting such a passionate group of people from across the community is what has been most impactful for me. To learn from such a diverse group of people is something I genuinely appreciate!”

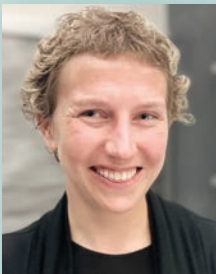
Aurora Fire Rescue
akrenz@auroragov.org

“Leadership Aurora has significantly impacted me through new connections with leaders within Aurora that deeply care about the success of the City of Aurora for today and the future.”



**Anthony
Krenz**

**Stephanie
Marnocha**



Juvenile Assessment Center
smarnocha@arapahoegov.com

“Leadership Aurora has given me a greater appreciation for the community I serve in addition to providing me with new connections across various sectors.”

Pickens Technical College
skoneill@aurorak12.org

“Leadership Aurora has been such an amazing experience! I've loved getting to know my classmates more, learning about my community, and partnering with The Chamber. I've definitely made some forever friends from this group and look forward to continuing our connections!”



**Samantha
O'Neill**

**Christine
Polak**



Nelnet
Christine.polak@nelnet.net

“I've gained many new friendships and networking colleagues.”

American Portfolios Denver
aquaid@americanportfolios.com

“Leadership Aurora has given me a much better sense of what is going on in different parts of the community. It has certainly helped shape and, in some cases, changed my outlook on things. It has also broadened my network greatly with awesome people across many different industries.”



**Alec
Quaid**

**Mark
K. Smith**



PhotoSmith Colorado
Photo_smith@comcast.net

“Through Leadership Aurora, I gained a greater awareness of my community.”

Minsoo Song



City of Aurora, Office of Immigrant
and International Affairs
msong@auroragov.org

“Leadership Aurora helped me to expand
my horizon of the Aurora community.”

Community College of Aurora
Julie.stewart@ccaaurora.edu

“Leadership Aurora has impacted me in
many ways. I have learned so much about
the different resources available that I
can now network with for my students
and colleagues. I have made amazing
partnerships with other LA members.

There was such a breadth of experience
and industry knowledge in the class. It has
provided opportunities to mentor others but
also to be mentored. It is a great program.”



Julie Stewart

Jenna Tarleton



CSU Global
Jenna.tarleton@csuglobal.edu

“Participating in Leadership Aurora has
been one of the most informative, unique,
and just plain fun experiences I have had. I
feel more connected to my community and
am grateful for all of the behind-the-scenes
tours and lessons that have given invaluable
insight into the vital organizations and
individuals that make up Aurora.”

Advantage Security, Inc.
atate@advantagesecurityinc.com

“I have made lifelong connections and
friendships through the program. I also
gained a lot of knowledge about various
aspects and areas of the city that few people
have access to.”



April Tate

Charles Watts



Aurora Federal Credit Union
cwatts@auroracu.com

“Leadership Aurora has introduced me to the greater Aurora community and many outstanding local leaders who are now my friends.”

City of Aurora, Youth Violence Prevention Program
AWright1@auroragov.org

“Leadership Aurora has had a major impact on me. I met lifelong friends and had life-changing experiences.”



Andréa Wright

Colorado Access
Mayra.Zuniga@accessenrollment.org

“Leadership Aurora has been such an incredible experience. I learned so much more about the community I serve. From organizations that we can support to incredible classmates that are serving the same community. I am forever grateful for the friendships made and the knowledge gained. This is an experience I will forever brag about – the class of 2023 was and will forever be the best class ever!!”

Mayra Zuniga



COMMUNITY DAY

We were grateful to learn about the organizations making a positive impact and changing lives in our own backyard by visiting 12 community nonprofits. We heard the history, mission, purpose, and logistics of each organization, along with who they serve and the challenges they face. These nonprofits address a variety of community needs, from homelessness to mental health to youth programs. We not only had the opportunity to experience their work in person, but also walked away with ideas for how the class could potentially address their needs. Thank you to the following organizations for hosting us at their facilities: Aurora Day Resource Center Aurora Youth Options, Aurora YMCA; CEDS Finance; Comitis Crisis Center; Downtown Aurora Visual Arts (DAVA); Judi's House; Juvenile Assessment Center (JAC); Ready to Work Aurora; Ronald McDonald House; Salvation Army Aurora Corps; and Village Exchange Center and Aurora Welcome Center.



"I enjoyed all of the Leadership Aurora days, but the most memorable day for me was the Community day when we visited local organizations that are making an extraordinary impact on the people of Aurora. Our community faces many challenges and the efforts of local non-profits like Ready to Work, Comitis Crisis Center, Judi's House and others are making a huge difference for the people of Aurora."

— Charlie Watts

"It is difficult to choose a favorite day, but Community day left a lasting impact on me. It gave me exposure to the hard work non-profits perform day in and day out in our community and highlights their goal of helping others."

— James DeHerrera

"Community day was my favorite session, as I became even more aware of the needs of Aurora."

— Mark Smith

"It's difficult to determine which day was my favorite as every day spent with Leadership Aurora has inspired me to be a better citizen and has awakened feelings of wanting to do more for the community. I was really impressed with our healthcare infrastructures and the Aurora police department's role/impact in the community."

— Mody Diop

CITY OF AURORA DAY

At the Aurora Municipal Center, Mayor Mike Coffman, Council Members Alison Coombs and Steve Sundberg, and Deputy City Manager Jason Batchelor joined us for a panel to discuss their roles and answer our questions. We also heard from Aurora Water General Manager Marshall Brown and Office of Development Assistant Manager Jacob Cox offering an in-depth look behind the scenes. We were excited to participate in a mock council, serving in various roles to address a real issue the Council grappled with regarding a camping ban in the city. During the “Go Fund the City” activity, we were tasked with distributing \$1,000 “Aurora Bucks” to various City Departments. The Housing and Community Services received the highest votes and took home the cash.



“It’s hard to say which day was my favorite. Each was special in its own way. I loved City and Military days the best because of the pride that everyone has in the city that they work in and for.”

— Christine Polak

“My favorite day was City day, where we got to meet people from some of the amazing departments that are providing resources to the community. I was able to connect with many services across the city. It was good to hear about some of the developments that are happening in the city within the next 10 years, which I am excited for.”

— Ousman Ba

“So far, my favorite has been City day because I got to learn about so many different resources throughout the city – and there were puppies!”

— Robyn Hills

MEDIA DAY

L ights, camera, action! For Media day, we learned about the behind-the-scenes effort and planning that goes into sharing important news with our community, and met the individuals who make it happen. The day included two stops, Kroenke Sports & Entertainment Studio; learning the ins and outs of running a successful radio show, and Aurora TV; the municipal television station for the City of Aurora. We were tasked with preparing a fair and balanced news story, and serving as news anchors, news directors, and camera operators in the Aurora TV studio. Finally, we heard from the City's Communications and Marketing Department experts, Deputy Director of Media Ryan Luby, Sr. Media Strategist Michael Brannen, and Public Relations Manager Michael Bryant, who shared how the team handles reputation management and ensures that accurate news reaches community members about City initiatives.



"My favorite Leadership Aurora day was Media day. It was very informational, and everyone was so honest and humble. You could tell that they had a real passion for what they were doing! It even sparked a passion in me to make it a hobby."

— Andréa Wright

"My favorite day was Media day. It was so interesting learning about the media and communication avenues Aurora uses to connect the community. It was very fun being a part of a broadcasting session and reading from the teleprompter."

— Katie Anthony

"Favorite day? That's a tough question to answer! There were aspects of each day that were truly impactful. So for purposes of doing my best to keep it "short and sweet," I'll say it was a toss-up between Media day and Police day. I really liked the interactive nature of both of those days, working together in teams, and really getting a "back stage" look into both of those industries, while also getting to try it out, ourselves (We definitely need to go back into the Police Simulator Training room to learn how to get it right.)"

— Michelle Kaye

EDUCATION DAY

We were grateful to get an inside look at a few of the innovative and inspirational educational institutions in our community that are teaching the next generation of leaders. We toured the Cherry Creek Innovation Campus, which provides educational experiences focused on career readiness for high school students. We learned about their pathways including advanced manufacturing, infrastructure engineering, hospitality and tourism, and health and wellness. At Pickens Technical College, which offers more than 25 certificate programs for adults and high school students, we enjoyed lunch prepared by students from the Pickens Culinary Art Program. Final stops for the day included the Community College of Aurora, where we toured the EMS and fire training facilities, and the Colorado Film School, where we received a special viewing of student Diamond Fierro's short film *Cholo*.



"Education day is a day that will forever resonate with me. I was blown away with how many programs Aurora has to offer for students of all ages. The amount of time and energy put into these courses, classes, etc. that they offer – on top of making it personal for each individual student – shows the commitment these programs have to do right by their students."

— Eren Corapcioglu

"Education day was my favorite. I was so glad to see all different options to support our community – especially our next generation."

— Minsoo Song

MILITARY DAY



We had the amazing opportunity of visiting Buckley Space Force Base and spending the day hearing from individuals in different branches and rankings of the military. They provided a perspective on what is done on the base and gave us an inside look into the different operations each branch carries out. We even got to go “behind-the-fence” and tour the “golf balls.” Other highlights included witnessing the F-16s up close, seeing crews practice loading a missile, and learning about the Colorado Freedom Memorial. Many agree the best part of the day was standing on the runway and watching four F-16s take off right in front of us!

“Military day was my favorite because it was awesome to be on the base and learn about the many different operations that take place.”

— Alec Quaid

“Military day was my favorite because it is not every day that you get to interact with the military or tour the facilities that we were exposed to.”

— Brian Clark

“Military day was hands down the best day for me! I had wanted to join the Air Force when I was younger. Becoming a young single mom, prohibited that from happening. Through this day, I felt I was able to live out a dream of being in the military.”

— Candice Kmetz-Parkinson

“I really enjoyed Military day. It was so educational and done in a fun way to really help us understand about the different tenants on base and all the day-to-day operations that impact the entire world.”

— Eva Gergely

“Standing on the runway with jets taking off. It doesn’t get much cooler than that.”

— Rick Elsinger



“My favorite day was visiting Buckley Space Force Base for Military day. Getting to tour the “golf balls,” sit in the pilot’s seat of a Black Hawk and a Chinook, and watch F-16s take off from the runway were once-in-a-lifetime experiences. Everyone on base was incredibly welcoming, friendly, and excited to meet with us. Learning about the important work they do at Buckley was captivating.”

— Jenna Tarleton

“I enjoyed giving Leadership Aurora a glimpse of what we do in the Military and COANG. I love to show off the hard work of our men and women in uniform.”

— Kam Kaaoush

HEALTHCARE DAY

We had the privilege of touring some of Aurora's largest healthcare campuses and receiving an exclusive look at the important roles that healthcare professionals serve in our community. At The Medical Center of Aurora, we heard from COO Hallie Woods and toured the ED, Cath Lab, and ICU. We visited Spalding Rehabilitation Hospital, which supports patients on the road to recovery with physical and cognitive rehabilitation and has a mock grocery store, kitchen, etc., to help patients re-learn how to perform everyday tasks. We were fortunate to visit the UCHHealth University of Colorado Hospital, the largest academic health center in the Rocky Mountain region, and hear from Chief Diversity Officer David Mafe, and tour departments including Radiology, EMS/ED, CAPE/RT, and the UCHHealth LifeLine helicopter landing pad. We practiced many hands-on tasks (all on dummies of course) such as drawing blood, clearing a breathing tube, and administering CPR.



"I was very interested in the other aspects of Aurora healthcare other than the emergency healthcare I'm interested in."

— Clayton Coker

"My favorite day was Healthcare day. On this day, I learned a lot of new things about The Medical Center of Aurora (TMCA) and Spalding Rehabilitation Hospital – which are both part of HealthONE, and the University of Colorado Hospital (UCH). TMCA has an awesome behavioral health team that assists with helping patients find mental health resources. They are also a level II Trauma Center hospital that can assist with any type of condition in their 24/7 Emergency Department. Spalding Rehabilitation Hospital, which has been treating patients for 50 years, offers physical and cognitive rehabilitation to help patients on their path to recovery. UCH is continuing to implement a variety of things, including supporting the community, and taking care of patients to make sure employees are being acknowledged to increase employee retention. All three facilities are going the extra mile to listen to what is being said in the community, and going above and beyond to make sure that they take the proper steps to meet the needs of patients and the community. To me, that is what is most important about being a leader."

— Dawn Gissendanner

"Healthcare day was my favorite. I was in the medical field before transitioning to higher education, and being back in the hospital environment brought back great memories. The hands-on experiences were numerous and very challenging. All of the facilities we visited were so welcoming and the people were so passionate about the work they do. It was invigorating."

— Julie Stewart



POLICE DAY

For an action-packed Police day, we began at the City of Aurora Public Safety Training Center (CAPSTC), where Interim Chief of Police Art Acevedo provided a rousing overview on the state of the Aurora PD, followed by a presentation by the Aurora PD Employee Support Unit and its inspirational wellness initiatives. We received a glimpse into the daily lives of police officers, including training on use of force, arrest control demonstrations, Precision Immobilization Technique, and less lethal munition options simulator. With the Aurora SWAT and K9 teams, we participated in exciting, hands-on demonstrations included SWAT rifle target shooting, a SWAT equipment tour to learn about drones, SWAT vehicles and weapons, and K9 demonstrations where the class interacted with the heroic Aurora PD dogs.



"Police day was by far my favorite. The interactions with the entire team was positive and they spent a lot of time educating us on the many divisions within the department. They have the impossible task of keeping our community safe with little support from the community."

— April Tate

"I really enjoyed Police day. This was a glimpse into a world I honestly know little about. To hear from and learn about the hard work and dedication of the Aurora PD community was inspiring."

— Jimmy Knoch

"Thus far, Police day has been my favorite day of the program. I had so much fun shooting guns and getting attacked by dogs!"

— Kennady Copeland

"Police day! It was so cool getting the inside scoop on all things APD. This day really helped me gain a better understanding of our police and what types of experiences they have."

— Sammy O'Neill

"My favorite day was Police day because we had the opportunity to spend time with the K-9 unit along with getting to ride in a police vehicle while an officer drove their road course."

— Stephanie Marnocha

FIRE DAY

The class was fortunate to hear from Aurora Fire Rescue's Deputy Chief Rod Weber – who is on the Leadership Aurora Board, retired Captain Mike Ackman, and Captain Jeremy Sones, about the current state of the organization, its history in our community, what causes fires and how they spread, and the important preventative measures everyone can take. After everyone got the opportunity to put on the very heavy fire gear – including coats, boots, and helmets – we walked through medical and auto extrication scenarios and checked out the new thermal imaging cameras.



"Fire day was a great experience, and getting dressed up in firefighter gear was a lot of fun! The pants, jacket, and helmet were so heavy that I developed an even greater respect for the firemen and women who wear this every day and risk their lives to protect the citizens of Aurora."

— Charlie Watts

"It was such a great experience to learn about the amazing things Aurora Fire Rescue does for the community. It is quite obvious that the dedicated personnel of AFR embodies the Core4 values in all they do!"

— James DeHerrera





LEADERSHIP AURORA GOLF TOURNAMENT



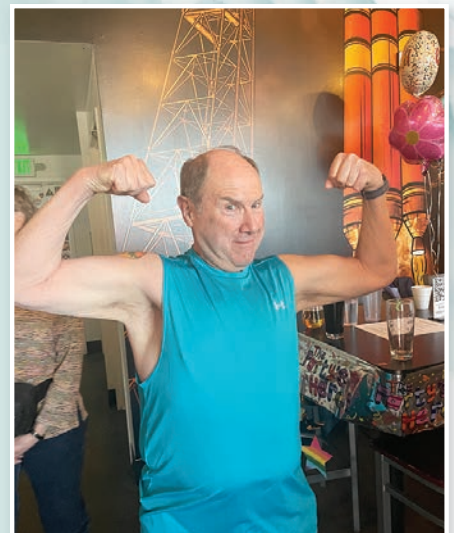
The Leadership Aurora Golf Tournament has been a signature fundraising event of the Aurora Chamber of Commerce for 25 years. The monies raised from the tournament help support the Leadership Aurora program that annually introduces class members to a variety of information about, and resources for, the Aurora community. Because of generous sponsors of this Pay it Forward event, The Chamber is able to give financial assistance to incoming applicants, as well as fund the team building retreat that is so vital to the success of the program and its participants.

There are many ways to participate in the tournament, from volunteering to a variety of sponsorship options. Contact Rene Simard for details, 303-365-4923 or rene.simard@aurorachamber.org.





SOCIAL AND HAVING FUN





LEADERSHIP AURORA BOARD

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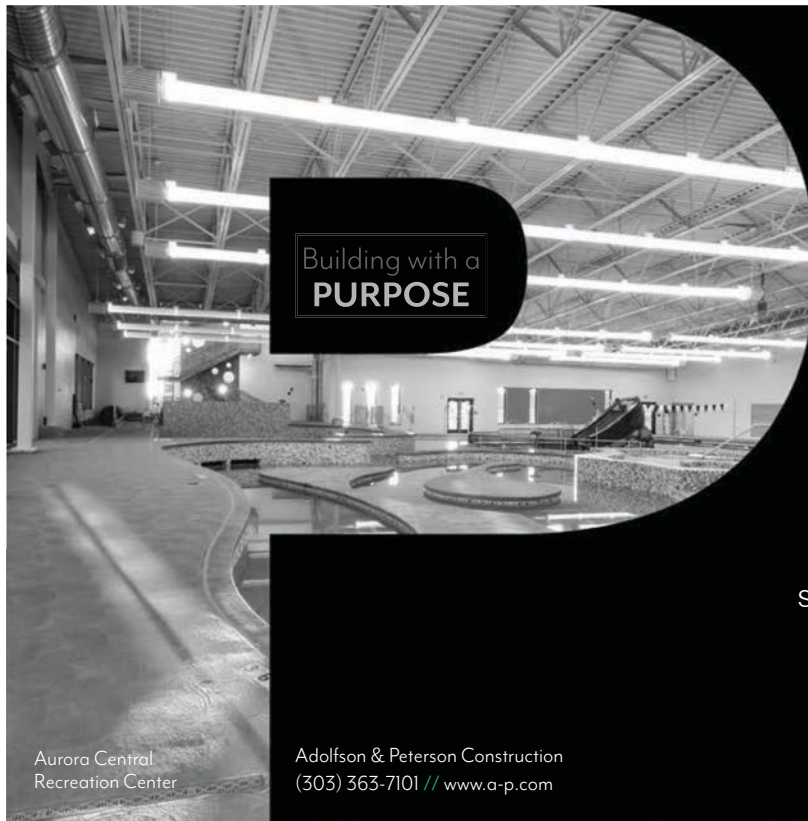
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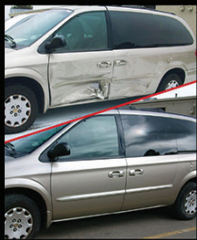
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Congratulations Dr. Julie Stewart,
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Nelnet Congratulates the 2023 Leadership Aurora Graduates.

Celebrating Diversity in Aurora

Thank you to Leadership Aurora for emphasizing community engagement, celebrating the diverse community, and creating dedicated, passionate leaders of tomorrow.

Congratulations to the Leadership Aurora Class of 2023! We look forward to seeing what you continue to accomplish in the Aurora community.

Learn more about us at [NelnetCareers.com](https://www.nelnetcareers.com).

