



Collective  
Achievement



Community  
Connection



Shared  
Experience



Leadership Class  
of 2024-25



# INTRODUCTION

In 10 short months, Leadership Aurora class members experience an intensive mountain retreat, followed by monthly immersion in the best Aurora and the Eastern Metro Area have to offer: medical facilities; educational institutions; nonprofit organizations; police, fire and emergency services; 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 41 years, and while much has 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 a graduate of the program about their experience - you will be inspired!



# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Leadership Aurora Class of 2025 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.

# CHAIR'S LETTER

**W**hen I first met you in Breckenridge, we discussed the importance of showing up, leading with vulnerability, and recognizing that every person in this class has earned the right to be counted among Aurora's leaders - and will grow as a human being during their Leadership Aurora journey. Thank you for holding space for each other, for elevating the ideas of your classmates, for celebrating one another, for working hard together, and for leaving a lasting impact on Aurora.

It has been a joy and an honor to watch this class engage with leaders throughout Aurora and across nonprofit, local government, economic development, education, healthcare, police, fire, and military sectors. Your thoughtful questions and collective desire to strengthen Aurora is inspirational. As you get more engaged in our community and experience success in your careers, may your Leadership Aurora class members continue to be a "circle of wisdom" from which you gain insights and encouragement to tackle new challenges. Just as you made a commitment to each of your classmates during the retreat, may you intentionally set a new declaration for living your legacy and having an impact on Aurora. I say thank you because your collective brilliance and your individual greatness have left me and our community better than you found us.



**John Wolfkill**

I want to end with gratitude for the other leaders who helped make this last year possible. Thank you, Chamber President & CEO Naomi Colwell; Leadership Aurora Program Director Rene Simard; Assistant Program Director Mitzi Schindler; Vice Chair of the Board Natalie Artibee; Past Chair Yvonne Valdez; and the entire Leadership Aurora Board - who planned the sessions and dedicated their time and passion to the Class of 2025. Your leadership and efforts continue to make Aurora stronger year after year. Thank you!

In Solidarity,

John Wolfkill  
*Leadership Aurora Board Chair & Class of 2017  
Community College of Aurora (CCA) Foundation*

# LEADERSHIP AURORA BOARD

**Mehran D. Ahmed**

AXL Academy

**Ryan Anderson**

Adolfson & Peterson Construction

**Natalie Artibee** (Vice Chair)

Nelnet

**Maureen K. Barker (Mo)** (Secretary)

**Casey Bloyer**

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**Jordan Clark**

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**Sarah Ellis**

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**Shaunna King**

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**Candice Kmetz-Parkinson**

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**Teina McConnell**

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**Sam McGhee**

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Downtown Aurora Visual Arts (DAVA)

**Priscilla Sandoval**

Home Mortgage Advisors

**Michael Schaefer**

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(Assistant Program Director)  
Aurora Chamber of Commerce

**Mary Sarah Schweiger**

UMB Bank

**Rene Simard** (Program Director)

Aurora Chamber of Commerce

**Yvonne Valdez** (Past Chair)

UMB Bank

**Ana Valles**

Fitzsimons Credit Union

**Lynne Winchell**

Community College of Aurora

**John Wolfkill** (Chair)

Community College of Aurora  
Foundation

**Andréa Wright**

City of Aurora, Housing and  
Community Services

**Mandy Young**

Aurora Public Schools

**Sarah Young**

City of Aurora, Water Department

The Leadership Aurora Golf Tournament has been a signature fundraising event of the Aurora Chamber of Commerce for 27 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 can 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](mailto:rene.simard@aurorachamber.org)

## Leadership Aurora Golf Tournament





## CLASS PRESIDENT and VICE PRESIDENT

### **Bill Johnson & Lauryn Gray**

Leadership Aurora has been more than just a community engagement program. It has been a shared journey of discovery, connection, and purpose. Over the past ten months, we've had the opportunity to step outside our daily routines and dive deep into the heart of Aurora.

We met individuals and organizations doing extraordinary work in every corner of the city, many of which we had never heard of before. These weren't just eye-opening moments; they reminded us of the powerful impact happening quietly, passionately, and consistently around us. Whether exploring public health systems, visiting local nonprofits, or learning from the leaders shaping Aurora's future, we walked away with insight, inspiration, and perspective.

But what truly made this experience exceptional was each other. We came from diverse backgrounds, industries, and stories - but became a team. Together, we listened, challenged, supported, and

grew. The energy and dedication each of you brought to every session created a space where vulnerability, learning, and laughter thrived.

Our ABC Community Hub project wasn't just a group assignment. It was a chance to give back and leave something behind that we hope will continue to serve the community long after graduation. Channeling our collective passion and leadership into something with lasting impact was an honor.

Thank you to The Chamber, the Leadership Board, and all the guest speakers, hosts, and volunteers. Your commitment to this program, to Aurora, and to the developing servant leaders was evident in every detail. You gave us a truly transformative experience, and we are grateful.

We should all carry forward this same sense of curiosity, service, and connection. The lessons we've learned here are just the beginning. The Leadership Aurora Class of 2025 may be wrapping up its time together, but the work and the impact we are capable of creating are only beginning.

Congratulations to the Leadership Aurora Class of 2025, the most notorious class ever.

— Bill Johnson & Lauryn Gray



September 12-14 of 2024, the Leadership Aurora Class of 2025 met at Beaver Run Resort in Breckenridge for a retreat that officially kicked off the program.

As everyone slowly poured into the Beaver Den, the conference room overlooking the mountains started to fill with a shy excitement only a group of new friends could evoke. As we all got to know each other, LA board members welcomed us to the program and spent the first day briefing us on how the program would work and what we would be doing together over the next ten months.

On the second day, Franco Marini took us through our Insights Global personality test packets, and we all got to know each other on a more personal level. We took our class picture together, and made commitments to ourselves, each other, and the program.

At the end of the day the class got to have dinner at Fatty's Pizza, and you wouldn't have been able to tell that most of us had just met the day before. On the third and last day of the retreat we elected our class president Bill Johnson and signed up for the various committees. We closed the day out with an insightful leadership panel before going our separate ways in anticipation of Community Day in October.

Hunter Campbell

# OPENING RETREAT



*(Retreat group photo by PhotoSmith Colorado)*



# CLASS PROJECT

## **ABC Collective**

formerly Paris Elementary School

The LA Class of 2025 chose ABC Collective as our class project. Paris Elementary closed its doors in June 2023 after the Aurora Public School Board voted to close it down due to low enrollment. In June 2024, the former school found a new life as ABC Collective.

ABC Collective is a community hub for education, workforce development, community support and overall wellbeing. They strive to educate teens and young adults in building sustainable resources for life skills, and healthy relationships and careers through arts, sports, and other activities.

ABC Collective offers unique spaces for mental health and wellness professionals - including a music studio, fashion lab, podcast suite, gaming corner, and barbershop. The unique spaces allow youth to connect to therapeutic services when they might otherwise shy away from therapy in a usual, common setting.

Choosing ABC Collective as the class project was a huge undertaking because the space is massive. We were able to tour the building and gain an understanding of what spaces the staff and clients wanted refreshed. The patio, the girl's room, and the meditation space were identified as the spaces to design and furnish. We were also able to relocate the library and refresh the signage. We met the young ladies that would use the Girls Room to get an idea of how the space would be used and what they wanted in their space.

Leadership Aurora is thrilled to be a part of the genesis of this community space, and we hope the ABC Collective has a positive impact on the community for years to come.

Suzette Randolph

(See accompanying photo montage of the project!)



### **Thanks to the Yearbook Committee!**

Left to right: Courtney Butler, Daphne Brownlee, Sherrie Bedonie, Adrienne Shabandarian, Elizabeth Gillitzer-Gallardo, Carla Simoneau, Suzette Randolph (committee chair), and Covin Picone (token male on the committee)

# Yearbook Committee

# CLASS OF 2025



**Sherrie Bedonie**

Colorado Access

*"We talk together in beauty."*

— Sherrie - Navajo - Hozo  
meaning peace, balance, beauty, and harmony

**Robin Bingham**

UCHealth

*I've worked in Aurora for nearly 20 years, and it took this experience for me to realize the amazing businesses, community resources and individuals that make Aurora so special! I'm so grateful for this opportunity to not only connect this year, but to learn where I can plug in and contribute in the years to come.*

— Robin



**Justin Bock**

City of  
Aurora Police  
Department

*"Everything you thought was drowning you, actually taught you how to swim."*

— Unknown



**Jack Bissonnette**

AXL Academy

*"Attitude reflects leadership, captain."*

— Julius Campbell



**Joel Boyd**

Town Center at Aurora

*"It takes a deep commitment to change and an even deeper commitment to grow."*

— Ralph Ellison

**Joana Brown**

SitBeFit

*"Never get so busy making a living, that you forget to make a Life."*

— Unknown

**Daphne Brownlee**

Holistic Insight, LLC

*Leadership Aurora has been a transformative journey. As a newcomer to the city, it deepened my love for Aurora and equipped me with the knowledge, connections, and confidence to serve this community with purpose and heart.*

— Daphne



**Courtney Butler**

Community College of Aurora

*Leadership Aurora has been a great experience. Networking and building relationships throughout this process has been my favorite part. It's great to know I have new connections and resources across the city!*

— Courtney

**Hunter Campbell**

Aurora Public Schools

*Leadership Aurora has opened my eyes to all the wonderful things the greater Aurora community has to offer to all of us. I've also realized how much we all have in common. I don't just feel more connected to my work, I feel more connected to the community as a whole.*

— Hunter



**Eric Carlson**

Adolfson & Peterson Construction

*"If you want to go quickly, go alone. If you want to go far, go together."*

— African Proverb



**Michelle Crawford**

City of Aurora

*"Be the change you wish to see in the world."*

— Mahatma Gandhi

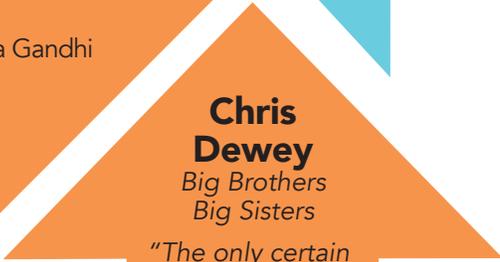


**Stephanie Crookston**

UCHealth

*"Have no fear of perfection-you'll never reach it."*

— Salvador Dali



**Chris Dewey**

Big Brothers Big Sisters

*"The only certain happiness in life is to live for others."*

— Jon Krakauer

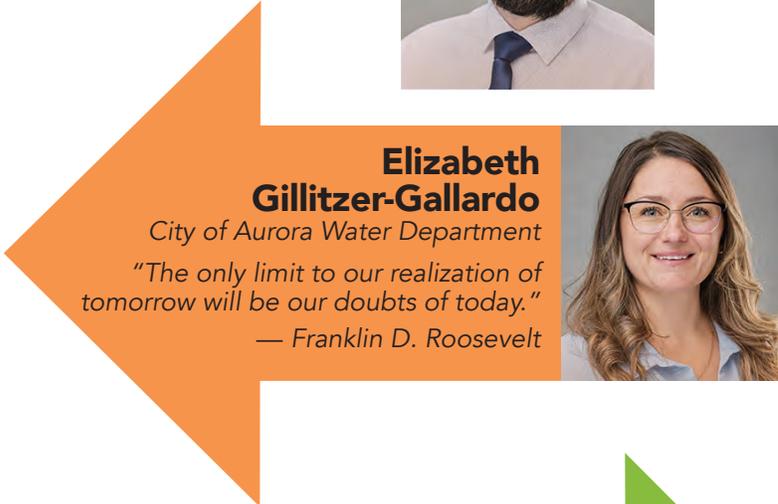


**Stephen Elkins**

Prime Data Centers

*I herd cats.*

— Stephen

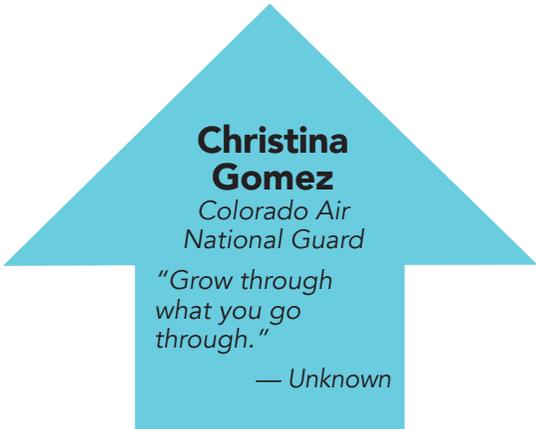


**Elizabeth Gillitzer-Gallardo**

City of Aurora Water Department

*"The only limit to our realization of tomorrow will be our doubts of today."*

— Franklin D. Roosevelt

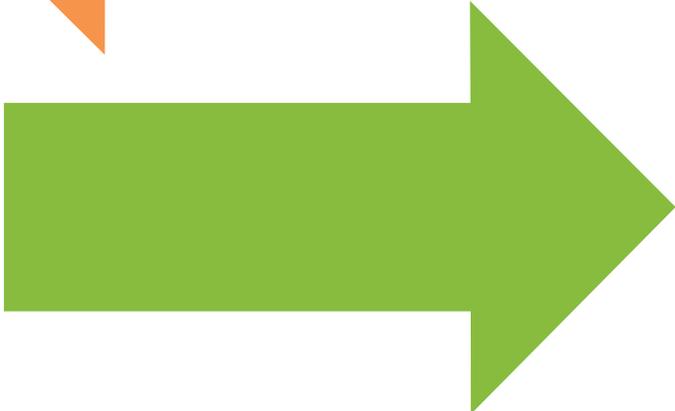


**Christina Gomez**

Colorado Air National Guard

*"Grow through what you go through."*

— Unknown





**Lauryn Gray**

Aurora Public Schools

*Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.*

— Lauryn

**Gerard Harris**

Colorado Air National Guard

*"Laissez les bons temps rouler."*

— Unknown

**Rachel Heilbronner Adkins**

Aurora Public Schools Foundation

*Leadership Aurora has given me the unique opportunity to explore the vibrant, diverse, and thriving city of Aurora. Even more meaningful has been meeting inspiring changemakers – those shaping the community and my fellow classmates in the Class of 2025 – who are driving real, positive change.*

— Rachel



**Jill Henden**

Cherry Creek Schools Foundation

*Leadership Aurora has opened my eyes to what an amazing, diverse growing city Aurora is. I have truly enjoyed connecting with other leaders and learning more about how a city operates.*

— Jill



**Bill Johnson**

Nelnet

*A community without leaders is like a foot without a big toe.*

— Bill



**George Makhoul**

The Medical Center of Aurora

*Dream big, stay positive, work hard, and enjoy the journey.*

— George



**Ana Martin-Mejia**

Community College of Aurora

*Participating in Leadership Aurora has been an enlightening journey that has reinforced my commitment to fostering positive change and collaboration within our community.*

— Ana



**Wonder Moore**

Colorado Access

*Be soft enough to love, strong enough to stand, and brave enough to speak for those who cannot. A kind soul is not a silent one — it's a force wrapped in compassion.*

— Wonder



**Alberto Nava-Enriquez**

Citywide Banks

*"Sometimes you will never know the value of a moment until it becomes a memory."*

— Dr. Seuss

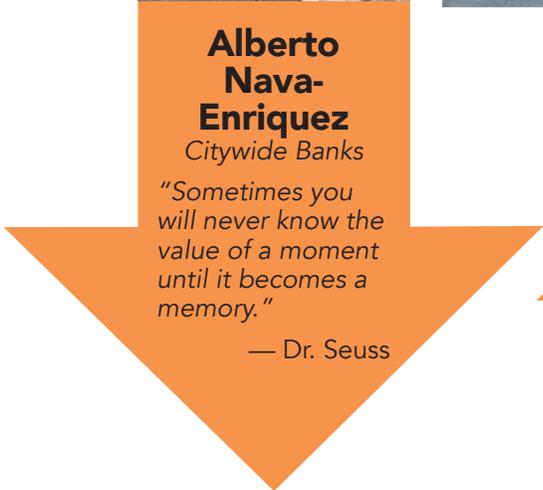


**Leo Morales**

Arapahoe County Juvenile Assessment Center

*A Leader is not who walks in front of the team, but who walks amongst the team into victory.*

— Leo

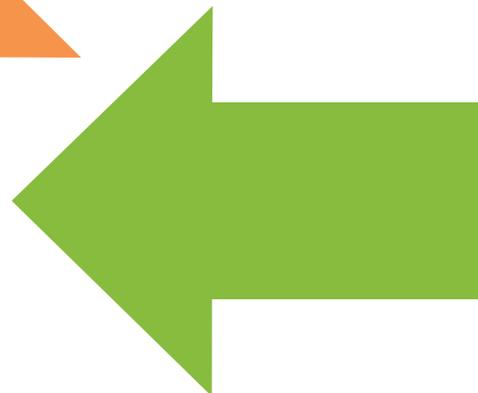


**Dawn O'Neil**

Aurora Mental Health & Recovery

*"Grace cost you nothing."*

— Abby Jiminez



**Steve Phillips**

Aurora Chamber of Commerce

"Be the change you wish to see in the world..." or Aurora.

— Gandhi / Steve



**Covin Picone**

Advantage Security

"Step aggressively towards your fear – that is the step into bravery."

— Jocko Willink



**Suzette Randolph**

Advocates for Children, CASA

"It only takes one person to mobilize a community and inspire change. Even if you don't feel like you have it in you, it's in you."

— Teyonah Parris



**River Ray**

Falck Rocky Mountain

You always think you know your city until the opportunity presents itself to dive deeper. Leadership Aurora has afforded me the privilege to experience things I didn't know that I didn't know. It's truly been an honor.

— River



**Scott M. Rose**

City of Aurora - Aurora 911

"Leave it better than you found it."

— Unknown



**Brandon T. Sauder**

City of Aurora Fire Rescue

The relationships have been amazing!

— Brandon



**Adrienne Shabandarian**  
Community College  
of Aurora

*"The greatness of a community is most accurately measured by the compassionate actions of its members."*

— Coretta Scott King



**Carla Simoneau**  
Nelnet

*This journey of learning and growing with an amazing group has been life-changing. As Helen Keller said, "Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much."*

— Carla/Helen Keller



**Jacob Sinderman**  
Edward Jones

*"Reality happens to be, like a landscape, possessed of an infinite number of perspectives, all equally veracious and authentic. The sole false perspective is that which claims to be the only one there is."*

— Genpo Roshi



**Lauren Snell**

Cherry Creek School District

*Leadership Aurora has shaped me in unexpected ways, walking with me through life's biggest changes and showing that growth, service, and community only deepen when life and learning intertwine.*

— Lauren



**Ginger White Brunetti**

City of Aurora Library and Cultural Services

*I'm proud to work alongside other leaders who value collaboration and partnership to build a future where everyone can thrive.*

— Ginger



(Class photos by PhotoSmith Colorado)

# COMMUNITY DAY



On a crisp and beautiful fall morning in October, the Leadership Aurora Class of 2025 met at the People's Building to kick off Community Day AND our Leadership Aurora experience.

Community Day was an exciting day, not only because of the anticipation of our very first Leadership Aurora session, but because we had the opportunity to become reacquainted with our LA-2025 class that we had not seen since the September retreat in Breckenridge.

Community Day allowed our class to become familiar with the tapestry of local organizations serving the City of Aurora and the myriad of resources provided by these agencies.

Our class was divided into five groups in order to visit 15 local organizations, and learn all about the vision for their business, their mission, and the services they provide for their clients. Our eyes were opened to the real-life struggles faced by some Aurora families, and the dedicated organizations that come alongside them to be a buffer and a support.

We capped off the day with a visit to the beautifully serene Colorado Freedom Memorial. Its glass panels reflect the blue sky above and the Colorado Mountains. Over half of the men and women honored in the Memorial never returned home. For families that never had a cemetery to visit, the Colorado Freedom Memorial is their place to grieve and heal.

The Community Day experience was like no other, and it was definitely the ideal starting point for Leadership Aurora Class of 2025. BEST CLASS EVER!

Suzette Randolph







# CITY OF AURORA DAY

The City of Aurora Day provided the class with an in-depth look at the city's dynamic economy, infrastructure, and governance. The day began with a thought-provoking conversation with Council Members Françoise Bergen and Steve Sundberg, who shared their journeys to elected office and insights into their roles. Attendees had the opportunity to ask questions and learn about the exciting projects driving Aurora's continued growth.

We then heard from Marshall Brown of Aurora Water, who discussed the city's water management strategies, and Jacob Cox from the Office of Development Assistance, who detailed the city's development processes and future projects near Denver International Airport.

A mock City Council session gave the class a hands-on experience of local government, followed by a "Go Fund the City" fair where teams allocated mock funding to various departments, adding a fun twist to the learning experience.

The day concluded with an emotional visit to the 7/20 Memorial, followed by informative tours of the Binney Water Purification Plant and the Southeast Area Maintenance Facility. These experiences offered a deeper understanding of the city's essential services and a first-hand look at how Aurora works to serve its residents.

We are incredibly grateful to all the speakers, partners, and organizations that made this day so engaging and informative.

Courtney Butler and Daphne Brownlee



# BUSINESS/ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DAY



Our Business and Economic Development Day began with a presentation by City Council member Steve Sundberg, Aurora Chamber President and CEO Naomi Colwell, and Pelsue CEO Chris Munson at Pelsue's Aurora headquarters. This discussion covered how companies are incentivized to bring their operations to Aurora.

Munson then introduced Pelsue's business model, highlighting its role in engineering and manufacturing safety and telecommunication equipment. We toured the facility to see their design and production processes firsthand.

Next, we visited Stanley Marketplace, where we enjoyed lunch hosted by Visit Aurora and heard from COO Randi Morritt about tourism's impact on local business growth. A scavenger hunt helped us explore the diverse businesses within the marketplace, a community hub for more than 50 small businesses.

At the Town Center at Aurora, we participated in a Q&A with mall management and learned about operations and community engagement. We also enjoyed dessert from local business, La Micochana.

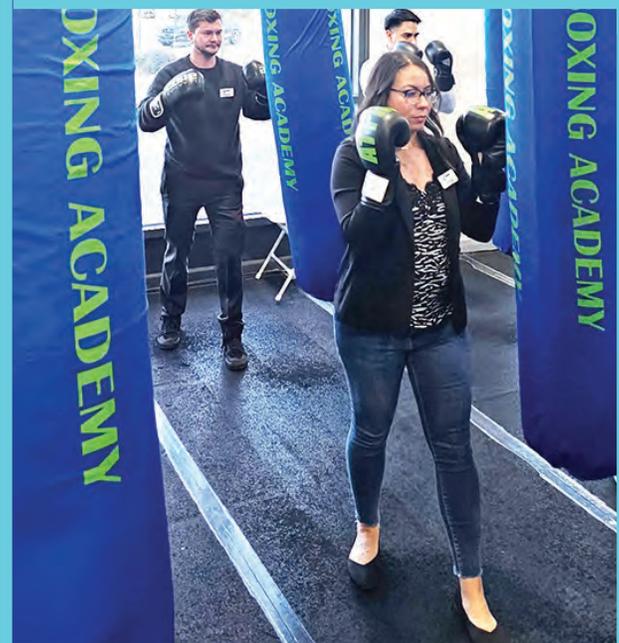
While at the Town Center, we visited Local Love, a shoe store run by Nigel Hines, who shared his buy-sell-trade business model and philanthropic efforts, including donating 1,000 pairs of shoes annually to kids in need.

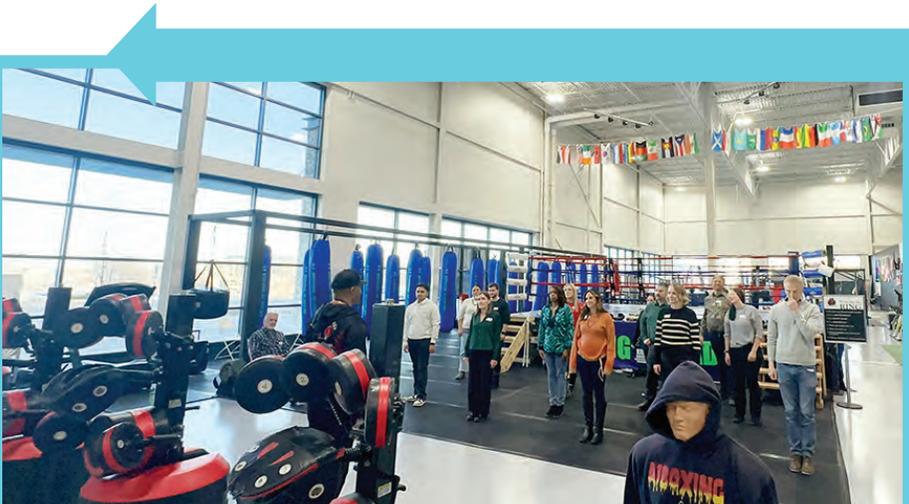
Our next stop was the field house, where we experienced activities at A1 Boxing and Shoot 360, both offering skill-building opportunities for kids and adults.

The day concluded with a happy hour at Ka-Ko Jo's, featuring drinks and pizza from Peppinos.

Overall, the day provided valuable insights into Aurora's diverse business landscape, showcasing both large and small enterprises that make economic contributions to the community.

Carla Simoneau & Chris Dewey







# EDUCATION DAY

Education Day kicked off at the Cherry Creek Innovation Campus, where the class explored an impressive range of career pathways — from aviation to cybersecurity to hospitality. Many of us joked that we wanted a high school “do-over” just to be part of these forward-thinking programs!

After a guided campus tour, we headed to Pickens Technical College. Lunch was a treat, prepared and served by students from the Culinary Arts program, and gave us a taste of the talent being cultivated there.

After lunch, we heard from a panel of Pickens students who shared honest and inspiring stories about their educational journeys, goals, and the real impact of hands-on learning. We wrapped up the day at the Community College of Aurora, where we learned about the CCA Foundation and the wraparound services available to students — from a basic needs pantry to a mobile food market. A hands-on medical workshop followed, where we practiced applying tourniquets and performing CPR to the beat of “Stayin’ Alive” (yes, complete with ah, ah, ah!).

We ended the day watching powerful, student-made films and participated in a thoughtful Q&A with the filmmakers. Final remarks from CCA’s President Dr. Mordecai Brownlee, capped off a day filled with innovation, insight, and inspiration. We walked away with a deeper understanding of Aurora’s educational landscape — and a renewed appreciation for the dedication behind every student’s success. It was a day filled with innovation, inspiration, and how Aurora’s educational institutions are building pathways to success.

Adrienne Shabandarian



# HEALTHCARE DAY



Healthcare Day was a bit of an eye-opener for many of us.

We started the day at Children's Hospital Colorado. Chief Strategy Officer Raphe Schwartz welcomed us with a summary of what happens at this amazing hospital. The class was then introduced to the hard-working Child Life Specialists and the MD's they work with. MD's as in Medical Dogs, not actual doctors but in some ways just as helpful. Then, we toured the hospital and some of the specialized care sections: The Gait lab; Fetal Care Center; Simulation "sim" Lab; and the Pediatric Mental Health Institute.

After a quick group project of making cheer cards and cozy fleece blankets for patients, we headed to the Rocky Mountain Regional VA Medical Center.

We were welcomed at the VA with an overview of all they do for veterans. This was followed by an insightful discussion about suicide prevention for veterans.

We learned about the Fisher House, a "home away from home" for Veterans' families, and visited the Spinal Cord Injury Unit. Then, we were given an "exclusive" tour of the facility, including the massive underground hallways, which connect everything.

To wrap up this amazing day, we were joined by VA Interim Director Paul Roberts, who has a passion to help as many veterans as possible. At times he brought tears to my eyes and goosebumps to my arms. And as I looked around at veterans in our class, I saw genuine joy and pride in their faces as Roberts spoke of his goals for this sometimes-forgotten group of warriors.

Covin Picone





# MILITARY DAY

For the Leadership Aurora Class of 2025, Military day gave us a detailed look into some of Buckley Space Force's unique history, and present-day declassified missions.

Formally established in June of 1941, the War Department named the base in honor of Longmont veteran 1Lt. John Harold Buckley. Over the course of its history, Buckley was an Air National Guard Base, Air Force Base, and most recently has become a Space Force Base.

While it has been dedicated to multiple branches of the armed forces, Buckley houses members from all branches of the military, with a substantial portion being Airmen. Outside of learning some history of the base and being briefed on missions like Space Delta 4, we also got to tour the 140 WG Flightline hangar.

After lunch, we listened to an exceptional panel of Junior Enlisted armed forces members, who shared their personal journeys of joining various branches of the military, and what their jobs were.

My personal favorite part of the day was our last activity where we visited the Army Aviation Facility and got to go inside Black Hawk and Chinook helicopters!

Hunter Campbell



# POLICE DAY

Police Day for Leadership Aurora Class of 2025 was a fun-filled and packed day!

We had opening remarks from Deputy Chief of Police Chris Juul. He provided great insight on the Aurora Police Department and statistical information about the department, as well as sharing some of the struggles they are facing – and what they are doing to overcome them.

In addition to Juul's presentation, we learned about the great opportunities the Employee Support Unit provides to officers and their families. They have many means to help officers including a physical therapy program, confidential help lines and services, and taking care of armed forces families while deployed.

There was a presentation about the Victim Advocates program that is offered to victims of a crime. We learned that Ronald Reagan played a significant role in establishing victim rights.

The first half of the day continued with more exciting activities, including pitting cars and watching demonstrations of arrest control.

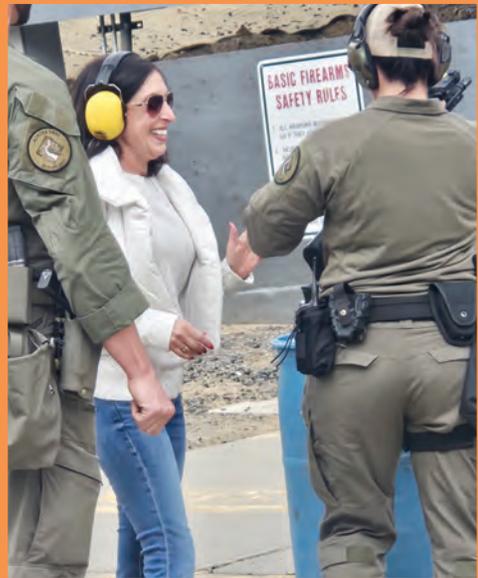
In the second half of the day, the class received a presentation on the Special Operations Unit from Lt Baginski and Sgt McElroy. The class got the opportunity to see a swat vehicle and the drones used in hostile events, and we watched K9 demonstrations – which some class members participated in by putting on the 'bite suit!'

We got to shoot at targets with semi-automatic guns (under the close supervision of trained professionals), and to finish the day the class got to watch the SWAT team blow off a door utilizing a breaching charge.

I loved every part of this day! It was highly informative and interactive.

Elizabeth Gillitzer-Gallardo







# FIRE DAY

At Fire Day, we learned firsthand that firefighters operate in high-stakes situations, often going from sleep to fully geared and en route to an emergency in under a minute. Their work also carries serious health risks — cancer from gear exposure, heart disease, and PTSD among them. To support wellness, Aurora Fire Department has a peer support program and plans to add a therapy dog. In addition, an on-site physical therapy clinic supports firefighters with 3,500 annual visits, reinforcing wellness and resilience.

Aurora has 17 fire stations, with crews working 24-hour shifts followed by 48 hours off, plus a “Kelly Day” every sixth shift (an extra day off they would normally work in in the 28-day work cycle).

The Aurora Fire Department fleet includes water-only engines, six ladder trucks, and six rescue units. Firefighters pivot quickly from downtime to intense calls. They also collect and analyze call data to improve services, and veteran staff mentor new recruits.

Diversity efforts continue at the Fire Department, as only 36 of the department’s 466 members are women, and overall diversity is under 20 percent. To support the effort of recruiting more females, Lt. Kathleen Hancock leads “Camp Spark,” an empowerment camp for girls aged 12–18, now in its sixth year. It teaches skills like confidence, professionalism, and eye contact, with a counselor supporting participants’ mental health.

Fire Chief Alec Oughton shared the department’s mission, focusing on expert, human-centered care, along with a vision of national leadership and strong community ties.

Sherrie Bedonie



# SOCIAL AND HAVING FUN

The agenda is packed on Leadership Aurora session days. We spend long days learning all there is to learn about our fair city. We also make time to have a lot of fun with our Leadership Aurora counterparts.







# Aurora

Mental Health & Recovery

## Same-Day Mental Health Services

Get the care you need:

Crisis Services

Addiction Recovery

Mental Health Referrals

No appointment necessary!

## Two Walk-In Locations

**Crisis Walk-In Clinic (24/7)**

2206 Victor St., Aurora, CO 80045



**Stith Center**

**Connect to Care Clinic**

791 Chambers Rd., Aurora, CO 80011



**[AuroraMHR.org/get-help](https://AuroraMHR.org/get-help)**

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**Nelnet  
Congratulates  
the 2025  
Leadership  
Aurora  
Graduates.**



**Leading with Purpose**

Thank you to the Aurora Chamber of Commerce and the Leadership Aurora program for your continued success in developing engaged, informed community leaders. Your commitment to civic involvement, leadership development, and shaping Aurora's future is a powerful example of leadership in action.

A special congratulations to the Leadership Aurora Class of 2025 from all of us at Nelnet—your dedication to learning, connection, and service will help guide our community forward.

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





*Responsible people...Responsive management*

## Congratulations Covin Picone - Leadership Aurora Class of 2025!

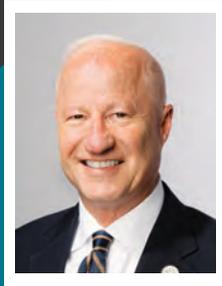
Advantage Security is proud to be a supporter and sponsor of the Leadership Aurora program.

And congratulations to all 16 of the previous Advantage Security graduates of the program:

Mitch Stillman (2024); April Tate (2023);  
Pete Torres (2022); Phillip Pacheco (2020);  
Manny Arias (2019); James Rowley (2018);  
Todd Sigler (2017); Noah Lawonn (2016);  
Wayne Thompson (2014); Sandy Carter (2013);  
Jeff Anderson (2012); Jeff Rauske (2011);  
Jennifer Evans (2010); Christian Read (2009);  
Ryan Evans (2007); Susan Johnston (2006);

# Congratulations

for being an **AURORA LEADER**



**Mike Coffman**  
Mayor



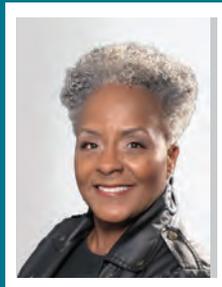
**Steve Sundberg**  
Ward II (Mayor Pro Tem)



**Crystal Murillo**  
Ward I



**Ruben Medina**  
Ward III



**Stephanie Hancock**  
Ward IV



**Angela Lawson**  
Ward V



**Françoise Bergan**  
Ward VI



**Alison Coombs**  
At Large



**Curtis Gardner**  
At Large



**Danielle Jurinsky**  
At Large



**Amsalu Kassaw**  
At Large

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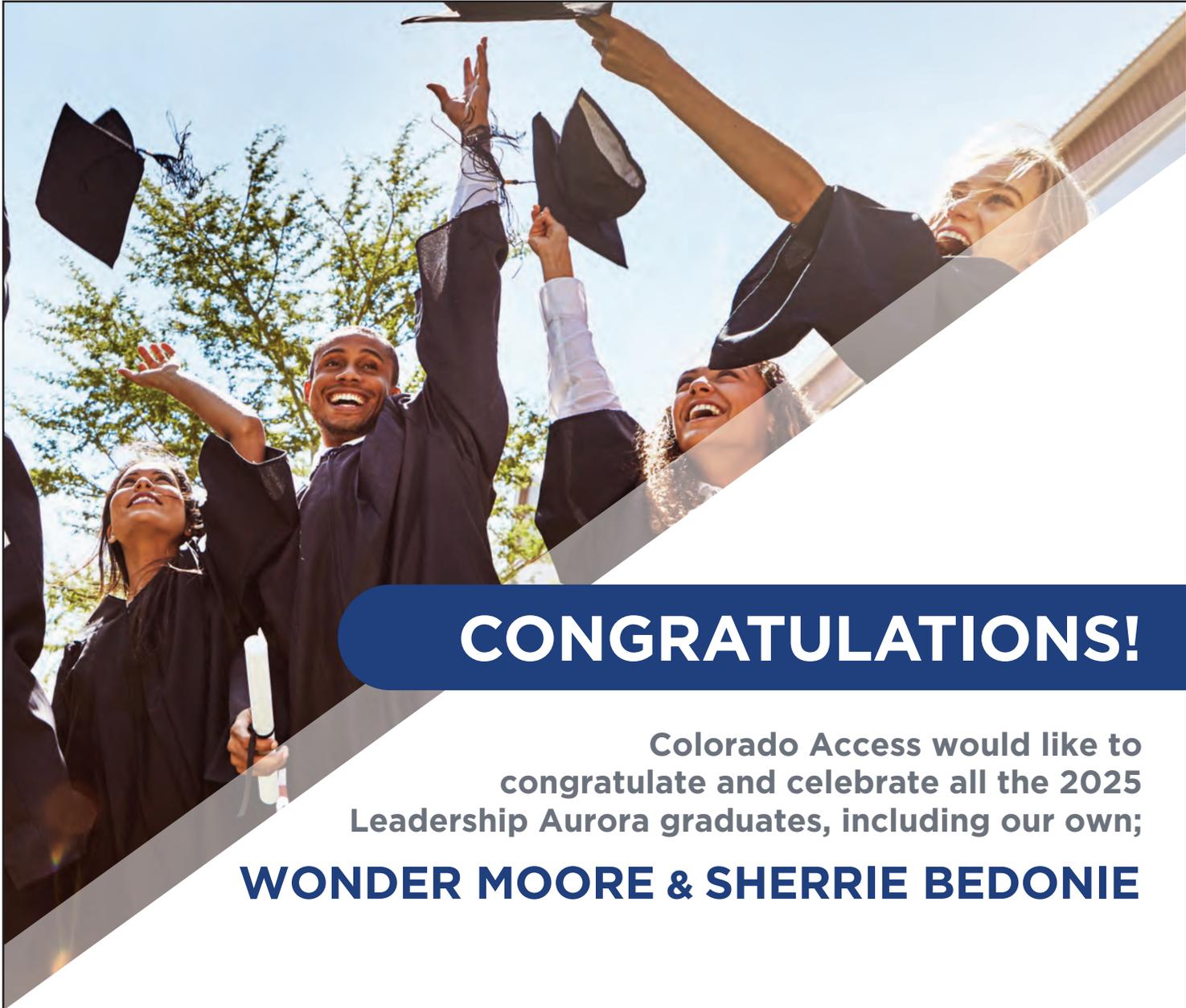


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Congratulations to the "Best Class Ever 2025!" It has been an honor and a privilege being with you in this unique journey.

Joana Brown,  
SitBeFit CEO Founder/  
Veteran Advocate



# CONGRATULATIONS!

Colorado Access would like to congratulate and celebrate all the 2025 Leadership Aurora graduates, including our own;

**WONDER MOORE & SHERRIE BEDONIE**

### ABOUT COLORADO ACCESS

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## Saluting the leaders of tomorrow

To those who have found the  
courage to inspire others, to  
make a difference, and to  
shape the future ...  
Congratulations.



**FALCK**



*Live like there is a tomorrow.*

**ALWAYS LOOKING FORWARD.**

Adonye Jaja was photographing a wedding when it was discovered that an orbital mass had formed on his right eye. After emergency treatment saved his eye, he knew he wouldn't lose his creative vision.

Learn more about Adonye's story at [uhealth.org/tomorrow](https://uhealth.org/tomorrow).

**uhealth**

LIVE EXTRAORDINARY



# I Honor Your GREATNESS!

Congratulations to each of you on graduating from Leadership Aurora and using your strengths, service, and leadership to impact Aurora. I am honored to serve with you.

Learn more about CCA Foundation at [WWW.AURORAGIVES.ORG](http://WWW.AURORAGIVES.ORG)



## CONGRATULATIONS LEADERSHIP AURORA CLASS OF 2025!

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## COANG Chiefs' Council



Applications are now being accepted for the **Leadership Class of 2025-26** Due by July 15, 2025

[www.aurorachamber.org/leadership-aurora/](http://www.aurorachamber.org/leadership-aurora/)

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**COLLEGE**  
of AURORA

## *Congratulations to Our* **CCA LEADERS!**

Three exceptional CCA employees have completed the prestigious Leadership Aurora program—a 10-month journey focused on civic engagement and community leadership.

Please join us in celebrating:



**COURTNEY BUTLER**

Director of Strategic Communications  
and Special Initiatives



**ANA MARTIN-MEJIA**

Dean of Academic Success in Effectiveness  
and Instructional Support



**ADRIENNE SHABANDARIAN**

Director, TRIO Upward Bound Program

*Once a Fox, Always a Leader.*