BOULDER COUNTY AT-A-GLANCE

POPULATION*: 319,177
Total ACREAGE in the County**: 474,347
Preserved OPEN SPACE and conservation easement acreage:** 103,147
Number of HOUSEHOLDS: 124,615
FAMILY Households: 72,269
NON-FAMILY Households: 52,346
MEDIAN AGE 36

RACIAL/ETHNIC Makeup
78%  Anglo
14%  Latino (any race)
5%  Asian
0.6%  Black or African American
0.4%  American Indian and Alaska Native
1%  Some other race
3%  Two or more races

Percent of People Who SPEAK A LANGUAGE Other than English at Home: 17%

EDUCATIONAL Attainment:
95%  High school graduates
61%  Bachelor’s degree or higher
27%  Graduate degree

2015 MEDIAN FAMILY INCOME: $103,037
2015 POVERTY LEVEL for a family of four: $24,600

INDIVIDUALS BELOW poverty: 13%
Families with KIDS BELOW poverty: 8%
CHILDREN BELOW poverty: 12%

*Population data from Colorado State Demography Office
**Boulder County | All other data from the 2015 American Community Survey, 1-year data

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ON THE COVER: Shely Meraz immigrated to Lafayette from Durango, Mexico in high school. Now the mother of three is ensuring success for her children and the community’s children as an assistant teacher at Head Start. She credits the Community Foundation’s ELPASO program for helping her find her way. Read her story on page 28.

Photo by Barbara Colombo
INFORMED DECISIONS

Through informed decision-making, we inspire ideas, ignite action, and mobilize resources to improve the quality of life for all.

Key to informed decision-making, we listen. We listen to our nonprofit partners, community leaders, business leaders, philanthropists, professional advisors, and residents countywide. And we always welcome your insights and contributions toward a shared knowledgebase and a stronger community.

Additionally, our biennial TRENDS Report shines a light on our community’s most challenging concerns and most promising potentials – as well as the unique strengths that make this community a great place to live, work, and play. TRENDS drives smart grantmaking for maximum impact, informs smart leadership on key community issues, inspires smart philanthropy that solves community challenges, and ignites smart action among community members who want to make a difference.

We compile TRENDS as a community resource for you, and for everyone who calls Boulder County home. We invite you to plug into local data, share what you’ve learned, and get engaged for a better Boulder County.

Learn more about the work of your Community Foundation on page 86, and visit us online at commfound.org/TRENDS.
TRENDS: A Call to Action

Welcome to the latest edition of TRENDS.

The Community Foundation Boulder County was four years old in 1995 when it “incubated” the Civic Forum and supported the work that led to TRENDS.

Today, the Community Foundation – your foundation – is a trusted community catalyst that ignites action by making informed decisions, being responsive and believing we accomplish more together than we do alone.

TRENDS, the foundation’s flagship resource, continues to inform and engage our community on the issues most important to Boulder County. But this edition is different. We listened when you told us facts are absolutely necessary, but they can also be overwhelming. All the data are now accessible and searchable at commfound.org/TRENDS.

In this edition of TRENDS, you’ll meet people who are writing their own narratives about critical issues in Boulder County. These stories are about Finding Our Resolve to overcome – and change – the odds.

As the Community Foundation uses TRENDS, it continues to ask the questions: “Who are we talking about?” and “Who’s not here?” The foundation strives to fulfill its values of standing with the most vulnerable, advancing equity and supporting leaders living the reality of the prevailing issues in our community.

We hope you will follow the Community Foundation’s blog, attend a TRENDS presentation and financially support this important work.

TRENDS tells us what we need to know about ourselves. It is a compass that gives us direction and points the way to solutions. And as we find our resolve, we recognize resolve alone is not enough. TRENDS is fundamentally a call to action. We look forward to working with you in this place we call home.

Yours in community,

Jeff Hirota
CEO, Community Foundation Boulder County
Executive Summary

Wait til you meet Shely Meraz, the parent on the cover of this edition of TRENDS. She appears on page 28 of our Education chapter to tell her story of resilience in the face of long odds.

Like so many of the Boulder County residents featured in these pages, Meraz shows us what it’s like to live at the center of some of the toughest issues challenging our community.

Each of the following issue-themed chapters profiles people who possess the hard-earned wisdom you can only get from living through tough times. We sought out their stories after carefully analyzing more than 150 indicators of our community’s social, economic and environmental health. Their stories breathe life into the data, and help us arrive at the recommendations we provide in each chapter about how you can help.

Following is a summary of the findings and recommendations that their stories bring to light.

Who Are We?

Demographically, we are becoming more diverse, adding vibrancy, new ideas and variety to our community. One in four Boulder County residents identifies as a person of color. More than 50% of Latinos here are younger than 25. Yet, only four of our county’s 108 elected officials were people of color in 2017. Is this representative democracy? We must work to build a pipeline of diverse leaders.

Life expectancy in the first world has increased dramatically over the last 100 years. Our population is also aging and will require more services in the years to come. Many of our elders live in single family homes, making it more difficult to avoid isolation and sometimes making them house-rich, but cash-poor. We must awaken to the needs of our elders.

Our Education

Graduation rates are soaring among minorities and students from low income families, in Boulder County and across the state. That’s great news on the one hand. But more and more of the students earning their high school diplomas graduate unprepared for what comes next.

We remain home to one of the state’s largest achievement gaps between Latino and Anglo students. The disparities start early, before children even enter school. The Community Foundation’s School Readiness Initiative has helped double preschool and full-day kindergarten, increased local school funding by nearly $1 billion, and launched ELPASO, a new nonprofit Latino parent engagement movement.

There is so much left to do. Economically disadvantaged students need nearly twice the support as their more well-off peers to compensate for the experiences their families aren’t able to afford them. We must find ways to dramatically increase funding for public education and student support services, and we must help parents find the skills, knowledge and power of advocacy they need to ensure success for their children.

Our Health & Human Services

Health care coverage for lower-income people more than doubled after The Affordable Care Act, or “Obamacare,” took effect, although Latinos and those without a high school education still lagged behind. As of mid-2017, however, not only the ACA, but Medicaid itself, which covers people below the poverty line, were on shaky ground in Washington.
Fewer than half as many teens are getting pregnant as they were 10 years ago, locally and across the state, since gaining increased access to the most effective methods of contraception – implants and IUDs.

Most Boulder County residents are healthier than average, although our obesity rates, while low, are increasing. And our suicide rate is higher than the national average. While Boulder County has a reputation for openness to LGBTQ concerns, such students are more than two times more likely to report feeling sad or hopeless and more than three times more likely to consider suicide, according to recent surveys.

The need for a connected community has never been greater. We must continue to find ways to connect with and care for one another.

Our Economy & Housing

Boulder County’s stunning natural landscape and our national reputation as a center of innovation and entrepreneurship has attracted a highly educated populace and helped keep unemployment extremely low. On the other hand, our area’s desirability and population growth is pricing out lower- and middle-class residents, even in Longmont and our growing suburbs.

Despite a growing reputation for affluence, our poverty rate remains on par with the national average. About 1,500 children in Boulder County experience homelessness each year. Their families are typically doubled up, couch surfing with friends, living in cars or sleeping in tents in the mountains.

You could make a strong argument that almost all of our struggles flow downhill from the high cost of housing. Helping vulnerable people get on their feet to afford a place to live, and at the same time creating more affordable housing, should be community-wide priorities.

Our Environment

Just look at these mountains. Our trails and bike paths beckon us outside, connect us to nature and keep us healthy. Many of us here are determined to protect the environment, both locally and globally.

Our ambitious climate goals promise to keep the fracking and municipalization debates alive for the foreseeable future. However, not everyone is part of this conversation. Our county’s low-income neighborhoods are generally far less connected to bike paths, trails and even safe sidewalks.

A promising initiative spearheaded by Thorne Nature Experience is building parks and trails to ensure all Lafayette youth live within a safe 10-minute walk to nature. We must all find ways to enjoy and steward our environment.
Our Arts & Culture

Boulder is home to more artists per capita than anywhere in the country outside Los Angeles and Santa Fe, according to the National Endowment for the Arts. But will a new generation of innovative, not-yet-established artists flock to Boulder County when the rent for even the darkest basement apartment is too expensive?

Recently, full-price ticket sales have climbed above even pre-recession levels. However, let’s not forget the hit the arts took locally around 2009, when corporate sponsorships and attendance simultaneously receded.

Go see live music or a play. Drop by an exhibit. Get into the act. Supporting the arts helps keep our creative class afloat, and keeps our minds open, especially when we experience art for social change.

Our Civic Participation & Giving

The 2016 election was a flashpoint for many, calling into question how we view the world and care for the most marginalized. It may come as a surprise to some that locally, we are not very open to racial and ethnic minorities and refugees, according to the most recent Community Foundation survey. Openness to senior citizens is also waning locally, our survey found.

We are generous with our time, volunteering for non-profit work to better our community and others. However, we are much less generous with charitable donations of much needed cash. Our secular culture, a high turnover rate amongst residents, and a small and diffuse local fundraising infrastructure are part of why we’re less generous.

Those who do give generously tend to feel called by a sense of social justice or a spiritual motivation. They have a desire to “pay it forward.” They are committed to community. They understand that a high quality of life for everyone is in everyone’s self interest. Many of them were raised by parents who taught them to give back.

How will you give back? What will you resolve to do?
TRENDS: un llamado a la acción

Bienvenidos a la más reciente edición de TENDENCIAS (TRENDS).

La Fundación para la Comunidad del Condado de Boulder (Community Foundation Boulder County) tenía cuatro años de existir cuando “incubó” el Foro Cívico y apoyó el trabajo que luego se convertiría en TRENDS.

Hoy, la Fundación para la Comunidad – tu fundación – inspira confianza como catalizador comunitario que enciende y promueve a la acción, tomando decisiones bien informadas, siendo receptiva y atenta a las necesidades de la comunidad, y creyendo que podemos lograr más trabajando juntos que solos.

TRENDS, el eminente medio de información de la fundación continúa informando, involucrando y comprometiéndose a nuestra comunidad con los temas más importantes para el Condado de Boulder. Pero esta edición es diferente. Estuvimos atentos cuando nos dijeron que los hechos y datos reales son absolutamente necesarios, pero que también pueden ser abrumadores. Ahora, todos los datos los puede encontrar con facilidad en commfound.org/trends.

En esta edición de TRENDS, podrá conocer a personas que plasman sus propias narrativas acerca de temas críticos para el Condado de Boulder. Estas historias tratan acerca de Encontrar Nuestro Arrojo para sobrepasar – y revertir – las expectativas.

Mientras la Fundación para la Comunidad sigue usando TRENDS, también continúa haciéndose las preguntas: “¿Sobre quién estamos hablando?” y “¿Quién falta?” La fundación obra para cumplir con sus valores de ayudar a los más vulnerables, fomentar la equidad, y apoyar a los líderes que viven la realidad de los asuntos preponderantes en nuestra comunidad.

Esperamos que se mantengan al tanto del blog de la Fundación para la Comunidad, asistan a una presentación de TRENDS, y apoyen financieramente estos importantes esfuerzos.

TRENDS nos dice lo que necesitamos saber de nosotros mismos. Es una brújula que nos muestra un sentido y nos señala el camino hacia las soluciones. Y a medida que vayamos encontrando nuestro arrojo, nos damos cuenta de que el arrojo, por si solo, no es suficiente. TRENDS es, fundamentalmente, un llamado a la acción. Estamos deseosos de trabajar con ustedes en este lugar al que llamamos nuestro hogar.

Suyo, en comunidad,

Jeff Hirota
CEO, Fundación para la Comunidad del Condado de Boulder
Resumen Ejecutivo

Pronto querrá conocer a Shely Meraz, la madre de familia que aparece en la portada de esta edición de TRENDS. Ella aparece en la página 28 de nuestro capítulo sobre Educación, contando su historia acerca de la resiliencia al enfrentar grandes dificultades.

Como tantos de los residentes del Condado de Boulder que aparecen en estas páginas, Meraz nos explica lo que significa vivir en el epicentro de algunos de los asuntos más difíciles que debemos enfrentar en nuestra comunidad.

En cada uno de los siguientes capítulos, cuyo tema se basa en algún asunto específico, se perfil a una persona que posee aquella sabiduría que sólo se puede adquirir al enfrentar tiempos difíciles. Fuimos en busca de sus historias luego de un análisis minucioso de más de 150 indicadores acerca de la salud social, económica y ambiental de nuestra comunidad. Sus historias dan vida a los datos, y nos ayudan a llegar a las recomendaciones que hacemos en cada capítulo acerca de cómo usted puede ayudar.

Lo que sigue es un resumen de las conclusiones y recomendaciones que estas historias traen a la luz.

¿Quiénes Somos?

En términos demográficos, nuestra diversidad aumenta, lo cual a su vez nos hace una comunidad más vibrante, con nuevas y variadas ideas. Uno de cada cuatro habitantes del Condado de Boulder se identifica como persona de color. Más del 50% de los latinos son menores de 25 años. Sin embargo, solamente cuatro de los 108 funcionarios electos en 2017 nuestro condado son personas de color. ¿Es ésta una democracia representativa? Debemos trabajar para construir una fuente que nos asegure diversidad en nuestros futuros líderes.

La expectativa de vida en el primer mundo ha incrementado dramaticamente durante los últimos 100 años. Al mismo tiempo, la población ha ido envejeciendo y necesitará de mayores recursos en los años venideros. Muchos de nuestros ancianos viven en casas unifamiliares, lo que facilita su aislamiento, y muchas veces los provee de buena vivienda, pero con poco dinero. Debemos abrir los ojos a las necesidades de nuestros ancianos.

Nuestra Educación

El índice de graduación se ha disparado para las minorías y los estudiantes de bajos recursos en el Condado de Boulder y en todo el estado. Por un lado, éstas son buenas noticias. Sin embargo, una proporción cada vez mayor de los estudiantes que obtienen su diploma de bachiller se gradúan sin contar con la preparación necesaria para enfrentar lo que viene después.

Seguimos siendo cuna de una de las mayores brechas de aprendizaje y rendimiento entre estudiantes latinos y anglos. Las divergencias comienzan temprano, incluso antes de que los niños tengan la edad suficiente para ir a la escuela. La Iniciativa de Preparación para la Escuela, de la Fundación para la Comunidad, ha ayudado a duplicar los programas de preescolar y día completo de kindergarten, incrementar el financiamiento a escuelas locales en cerca de $1.000 millones, y a lanzar ELPASO, un nuevo movimiento sin fines de lucro cuyo objetivo es involucrar activamente a los latinos en la preparación escolar de sus hijos.

Todavía queda mucho por hacer. Los estudiantes económicamente menos aventajados requieren casi el doble del apoyo que sus colegas con más recursos, para compensar las experiencias que no pueden brindarles sus familias. Debemos encontrar maneras para incrementar de manera dramática el financiamiento para la educación pública y los servicios de apoyo estudiantil, y debemos ayudar a los padres de familia a adquirir las habilidades, el saber, y el poder de apoyo que necesitan para asegurar el éxito de sus hijos.
Nuestra Salud y Nuestros Servicios Humanos

La cobertura de seguros de salud para gente de bajos recursos aumentó en más del doble luego de que tomara efecto la Ley de Cuidados de Salud Asequibles (ACA), o “Obamacare,” aunque para los latinos y aquellos sin un bachillerato el aumento fue menor. Para mediados del 2017, sin embargo, no solamente la ACA, sino incluso Medicaid, tambaleaban en Washington.

Hoy quedan embarazadas menos de la mitad de adolescentes que hace 10 años, tanto localmente como en todo el Estado, desde que tienen acceso a los métodos anticonceptivos más efectivos – implantes y dispositivos intrauterinos.

La mayoría de habitantes del Condado de Boulder son más saludables que el promedio, a pesar de que nuestro índice de obesidad, si bien aún es bajo, sigue aumentando. Y nuestro índice de suicidios es mayor al promedio nacional. Si bien es cierto que el Condado de Boulder goza de buena reputación con respecto a nuestra apertura en lo concerniente a la población estudiantil LGBTQ, dichos estudiantes son doblemente más propensos a reportar tristeza y desesperanza, y triplemente más propensos a considerar el suicidio, según encuestas recientes.

La necesidad de una comunidad conectada nunca ha sido mayor. Debemos continuar buscando maneras de conectar con, y cuidar de, cada uno.

Nuestra Economía y Vivienda

El imponente paisaje natural del Condado de Boulder y nuestra reputación nacional como centro de innovación y espíritu emprendedor ha servido para atraer una población de alto nivel de educación y mantener extremadamente bajos los niveles de desempleo. Por otro lado, el atractivo que ofrece nuestra región, sumado a su crecimiento poblacional, está haciendo que el costo de la vida sea prohibitivo para residentes de clase baja y media, incluso en Longmont y nuestras crecientes zonas suburbanas.

Se podría argumentar que casi todas nuestras dificultades derivan del alto costo de la vivienda. Ayudar a que personas vulnerables sean capaces de adquirir una vivienda y, al mismo tiempo, crear más viviendas de precios asequibles, deberían ser prioridades de la comunidad entera.

Nuestro Medioambiente

Simplemente fíjese en estas montañas. Nuestros senderos y rutas de bicicleta nos llaman a salir, nos conectan con la naturaleza y nos mantienen sanos. Muchos de nosotros estamos decididos a proteger el medioambiente, tanto local como globalmente.

Nuestras ambiciosas metas climáticas prometen mantener vivos los debates acerca de fracking y municipalización por un plazo largo. Sin embargo, no todos tomamos parte en esta conversación. Los vecindarios de menores recursos en el Condado se encuentran, por lo general, mucho menos conectados a los senderos y rutas e incluso a aceras seguras.

Por medio de una prometedora iniciativa impulsada por Thorne Natural Experience, se construyen parques y senderos para que toda la juventud de Lafayette viva a menos de 10 minutos de la naturaleza, a pie. Debemos encontrar maneras de gozar y cuidar del medioambiente.

¿Como brindara usted su ayuda? ¿Que acciones va usted a tomar?
**Nuestro Arte y Cultura**

En Boulder habita el mayor número de artistas per cápita del país, a excepción de Los Ángeles y Santa Fé, según el National Endowment for the Arts. Pero ¿querrá una nueva generación de potenciales artistas mudarse en tropel al Condado de Boulder cuando hasta un pequeño departamento en un oscuro sótano puede ser demasiado caro?

Recientemente, los precios por entradas a un evento han alcanzado niveles incluso más altos que antes de la recesión. Pero no olvidemos el efecto adverso que debieron sufrir las artes a nivel local en el 2009, cuando disminuyeron tanto los auspicios corporativos como los volúmenes de asistencia.

Vaya a ver música en vivo o una obra de teatro. Asista a una exhibición. Participe de algún acto. El apoyo a las artes ayuda a mantener a flote a nuestra clase creativa y mantiene abiertas nuestras mentes, especialmente cuando se trata de experiencias de arte por un cambio social.

**Participación Cívica y Filantropía**

Las elecciones del 2016 significaron un punto crítico para muchos, causándonos un cuestionamiento acerca de cómo vemos el mundo y el cuidado de los más marginados. Puede causar sorpresa a muchos que localmente no estamos muy abiertos a las minorías étnicas ni los refugiados, según la última encuesta de la Fundación para la Comunidad. Según halló la encuesta, nuestra actitud positiva hacia los de la tercera edad también va decreciendo.

Somos generosos con nuestro tiempo, ofreciéndonos como voluntarios en labores sin fines de lucro para beneficiar a nuestra comunidad y a los demás. Sin embargo, somos mucho menos generosos con donaciones caritativas en dinero. Nuestra cultura secular, una alta tasa de rotación de la población, y una infraestructura muy pequeña y difusa de recaudación de donaciones son parte de la razón por la cual somos menos generosos.

Aquellos que sí dan con generosidad tienden a sentirse llamados por un sentido de justicia social o por una motivación espiritual. Tienen un deseo de dar en agradecimiento a su propia situación afortunada. Se sienten comprometidos con la comunidad. Comprenden que una buena calidad de vida para todos va en beneficio de cada uno. Muchos fueron criados por padres que les inculcaron aquellos valores.

**Nuestro Llamado a la Acción**

¿Cómo brindará usted su ayuda?

No debería ser así de difícil prosperar aquí, en una comunidad tan abundante en cuanto a sus recursos humanos y naturales.

Los capítulos que siguen están llenos de historias, hallazgos y recomendaciones. Todo lo que usted ve aquí, además de una base de datos con facilidad de búsqueda, con más de 150 indicadores acerca de la salud social, económica y humana de nuestra comunidad, está disponible en commfound.org/TRENDS.

Las personas que llenan estas páginas nos sirven de inspiración, y nos recuerdan que, a pesar de nuestra lucha, estamos encontrando nuestro propósito.

Ahora depende de nosotros que cambien las condiciones adversas. ¿Qué acciones va usted a tomar? ¿Cuál será su siguiente paso?
Who Are We?

Families move east as Boulder County ages and becomes more diverse

Who are we? Ask that question in Boulder County, and you’ll likely get different answers. You also find some common threads.

In Lafayette and Erie, which are growing at the fastest clip, you might hear that Boulder County is a great place to raise kids, as what was once prairie has become cul de sac. If you’re in Longmont, cultural diversity might get the nod. In Boulder, it might be the very high percentage of people holding a bachelor’s degree or higher, although the entire county is more educated than the United States as a whole.

That education level is one of the county’s attractions and one reason you’ll likely find a fair number of people in your neighborhood who aren’t from Colorado. As with the rest of the state, Boulder County is a magnet for people from other places. While that can lead to grudging – or proud, depending on your viewpoint – “Colorado Native” bumper stickers, it also makes for a place a little less set in its ways than locales that don’t see many new migrants.

Plus, you’re more likely to know a scientist or a tech entrepreneur than you would if you lived someplace else.

While Boulder County is sitting pretty compared to many communities, it will also undergo profound changes as the century wears on.

Stories by Cindy Sutter

A housing boom in eastern Boulder County is reshaping where families live. Here, former Boulder resident Sharon Collinge plays with her children, Jacob and Savannah, in front of their new home in Lafayette.

Photo by Barbara Colombo
The population is growing older. That’s partly because of the large and aging wave of baby boomers, but also due to the fact that boomers and the generations that have followed live longer than those from previous generations.

“I think people forget that they age every year,” said State Demographer Elizabeth Warner. “So they look at Boulder and say, ‘That’s not that bad.’ Give them five more years, 10 more years. Those (now) 65 will be 70, 75. They’re going to need more services.”

She added that while many seniors may own houses that have appreciated substantially in Boulder County’s hot real estate market, they don’t necessarily have more money to cover expenses.

“Some of them have only their house equity,” Warner said. “Can they get the goods and services they need to stay here? Will it be cost-prohibitive? Will people cash out and have to move a little bit farther east?”

An additional question seniors may be pondering: If they move out of county to a smaller, cheaper place, will they have access to services as comprehensive as the ones they can get in Boulder County?

The county is also becoming more diverse. The contributions of people with different cultures and backgrounds offer a broader view of what Boulder County is and can be.

Yet, there are challenges.

Currently, Latinos, the largest minority, have lower levels of education and are more likely to live in poverty than the population as a whole. The recipe for success that worked for a largely homogenous population will require rethinking as Boulder moves through the coming decades.

“If there is an achievement gap, why does that exist?” asked Community Foundation Trustee Carmen Ramirez, who manages Community and Neighborhood Resources for the city of Longmont. “What systems along the way continue to feed that? It’s hard to figure out where the change has to happen.”

She added, though, that the effort is crucial to our community’s resiliency.

“It really pushes us to think beyond, to think deeper,” she said. “To recognize people’s gifts also means to recognize our differences.”

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**Booster County Population Forecast by Age**

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Source: Colorado Department of Local Affairs 2017
Eat, play, love

We love our dogs in Boulder County, especially when they wow us with amazing tricks like diving for a Frisbee as Socks did here.

Want some evidence? Public pools such as Scott Carpenter pool in Boulder and local rec centers allow canines to take to the water for a day at end of season or during closures for yearly cleaning. In Boulder, since a law was passed in 2009, dogs’ best friends are called guardians instead of owners.

But you don’t need fun facts to discern the human-dog bond in these parts. Look around you. Dogs are everywhere – on Open Space trails and streets, not to mention in most of your friends’ homes and apartments.

YOUR COMMUNITY FOUNDATION – MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Leadership Fellows diversify passions and perspectives

Shifting demographics and increasing cultural diversity in Boulder County call for resident leadership that responds to – and anticipates – the needs and opportunities of our changing communities. Leadership Fellows Boulder County – a joint leadership development and networking program of the Community Foundation and the Boulder Chamber – represents our long-standing commitment to leadership development right here at home.

The 11-month program offers up-and-coming transformational leaders across sectors a broadly-based overview of Boulder County’s economic, civic and cultural drivers. “One of the things I learned is to be inclusive of all the different passions and perspectives at the table,” said former fellow Eliberto Mendoza, now a Community Foundation Trustee and Director of Boulder County Community Action Programs.

Added Meca Delgado, who serves on the board of the YMCA of Boulder Valley: “The diversity of people you meet opens doors, builds relationships and develops connections that last for many years.”

To date, within six months of graduation, 81% of Leadership Fellows reported joining a nonprofit board; 26% reported joining a government board or commission; and 13% reported working on a local campaign for a candidate or issue. Another 62% of participants said they planned to apply for a new board or commission, or work on a campaign within a year.

Eliberto Mendoza (left) and Meca Delgado
Seeking larger house, family moves to Lafayette

Sharon Collinge and Joan Laubacher bought their Martin Acres home in Boulder in 2001, planning to stay there.

“We didn’t have children (at the time), and we weren’t thinking of having children,” Collinge said.

But as their family grew – their son Jacob is now 10, and daughter Savannah is 8 – their 1,175 square-foot home began to feel cramped, a situation made more difficult because the house has only one bathroom. They enclosed a garage seven years ago and explored other expansion options, but they were cost-prohibitive. So was buying a larger home at Boulder prices.

Too bad, because they loved their neighbors and the community feel of South Boulder. However, when her gym moved to Lafayette, Collinge started visiting the town regularly. She realized Lafayette also had a sense of community, as well as bigger houses at lower prices. They looked around and decided to move.
Towns such as Erie and Lafayette, which have vacant land on which to build, have seen continued growth as people within and outside Boulder County choose them as comfortable places to raise their families.

“It was really coming down to wanting to have a home that could grow with our needs,” Laubacher said. She also likes that Lafayette is more ethnically diverse than Boulder, making it similar to the small town in California where she grew up.

Said Collinge of the move: “I think it’s going to be a really nice place for our children to finish growing up.”

The new house is 2,700 square feet with four bathrooms – two full and two half.

“When we first move in, we’re all going to flush the toilet at the same time,” said Laubacher with a laugh.

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I think it’s going to be a really nice place for our children to finish growing up.”

– Sharon Collinge

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**BOULDER COUNTY CITIES AT-A-GLANCE, 2015**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Boulder</th>
<th>Longmont</th>
<th>Lafayette</th>
<th>United States</th>
<th>Colorado</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Population</strong></td>
<td>107,291</td>
<td>92,633</td>
<td>27,548</td>
<td>321,418,821</td>
<td>5,456,574</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Median age</strong></td>
<td>29</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Latino</strong></td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Speaks a language other than English at home</strong></td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Median home value, owner-occupied homes</strong></td>
<td>$583,600</td>
<td>$282,800</td>
<td>$342,700*</td>
<td>$194,500</td>
<td>$283,800</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Lived in the same house one year ago</strong></td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lived in another county one year ago</strong></td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Foreign born</strong></td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Births per 1,000 women aged 15-50 past 12 mo.</strong></td>
<td>15</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Population with a disability</strong></td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Population under 18 with a disability</strong></td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>3%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Population 65 and over with a disability</strong></td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Population over the age of 3 enrolled in school</strong></td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<td><strong>High school graduate (25+)</strong></td>
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<td>89%</td>
<td>95%</td>
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<td>91%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Bachelor’s degree or higher (25+)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Living below poverty</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Families</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Families with related kids under 18</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Individuals**</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Children</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 65 +</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*American Community Survey 1-year supplemental estimate
**Includes students

Median home value is for all owner-occupied homes based on ACS data. For sales-prices figures on single-family homes, see the Economy & Housing chapter.

Source: American Community Survey 2015 1-year data, with 5-year data for Lafayette; Local population counts from the Colorado Department of Local Affairs.
Claudia Sánchez, like many immigrants before her, saw education as the key to her children’s success. Here, she helps her own son Anthony, 10, with his homework in their Boulder home.

Helping parents help their kids

As a 15-year-old, Claudia Sánchez gave up her quinceañera to help her family be together. Then still in Mexico, the family needed the quinceañera money to join Sánchez’ father who had already immigrated to Boulder.

Sánchez started at Boulder High, learning English and becoming a good student. She married a year after high school, and she and her husband have three children. Sánchez worked as a restaurant cashier, but also volunteered first at Head Start, where her daughter went, then at the Family Learning Center, which her boys attended. She continued to volunteer at Whittier Elementary, and she and her husband attended their soccer practices and games, sometimes volunteering as coaches.

“I was trying to be with them wherever they go,” she said, adding that she also taught first communion classes at Sacred Heart of Jesus.

Sánchez’ family is one of an increasing number of Latinos raising children in Boulder County. In fact, Latinos in Boulder County are now 50% more likely to have been born in Colorado than our county’s Anglo residents.

One of Boulder County’s challenges in the 21st century is welcoming its growing diversity and working with parents to help them feel valued and empowered in the county’s two school systems. Sánchez remembers her own experiences after moving to Boulder.

“My mom didn’t speak any English, my dad either. They couldn’t
help us with homework,” she said. “Many families want to help their kids, but they can’t do it.”

Sánchez first began teaching other mothers through Boulder Housing Partners in the Tres Pasos (Three Steps) program for children ages birth to 5. She now works for EL PASO (Engaged Latino Parents Advancing Student Outcomes), a nonprofit launched by the Community Foundation, helping parents to become deeply involved in their children’s lives and advocate for them.

It sounds so simple: If you have a question, ask it. If you need help, request it.

However, as Sánchez explained: “They feel embarrassed ... They feel they have no voice to say something in front of a teacher.

They feel like everyone is doing it for them without asking what they want.”

The change she sees in the parents participating in the program is profound: “Just them building that confidence in themselves, so they’re not afraid to ask,” she said. “You see it in the kids right away. After Mom goes to even one meeting, I feel they will do more, because they know the parents will see what they’re doing.”

Recently, Sánchez’ daughter, Yareli, had her quinceañera. It was a day of pride for the whole family.

“For Mexican culture, it’s just a big, big deal. (We were) saving money for many years for that,” Sánchez said. “She had so much fun. She had a very good day.”
Lilly Darcy relaxes after a grocery delivery from Boulder County CareConnect.

**Aging in place – with some help**

Lilly Darcy gets her groceries delivered by volunteers from Boulder County CareConnect’s Carryout Caravan and gets regular visits from aides who clean and help her with tasks such as washing her hair.

“I don’t get around very well,” said the 87-year-old, who has lived in her Louisville apartment more than 10 years. “I use a walker. I don’t have good balance without it.”

Darcy’s daughter, Linda, lives nearby, and friends in the building check on her regularly.

The way Darcy lives – independently, but with some help – is a good example of how many seniors may be be able to live in Boulder County in the next decades with a wave of people growing older and aging in place. Currently, about 14 percent of Boulder County’s residents are 65 or older. By 2050, the percentage will grow to roughly 23 percent, close to a quarter of the population.

Chrysti Britt, Interim Executive Director of CareConnect, said the agency’s services include grocery delivery, taking seniors to medical appointments, yard work and snow shoveling. A fix-it program provides home repairs, puts grab bars in the shower and even programs smart phones or TV remotes.

“We exist to keep adults age 60-plus in their homes with no-cost services, which might otherwise require them to move out,” she said.

Linda visits her mother weekly or more frequently to help out, but the other services Darcy receives mean the visits are not all about chores.

“It’s keeping the burden down so that when they do come over, they’re filling in the cracks,” Darcy said, of her family. That means more enjoyable time together.

Recently, they went on an outing to the mountains for a picnic.

“The Rockies put on a show,” Darcy said. “When we came down the hill, I sang a Scottish song (to my daughter). ‘These Are Our Mountains.’”
Mary Doyle works out at the North Boulder Rec Center.

Keeping a home and giving back

Mary Doyle has lived in her Boulder home since 1984. Like many long-time homeowners in the county, she has seen her home grow greatly in value, but Doyle won’t see the benefits unless she moves to a less expensive area.

Median housing prices have risen all over the county, but the trend is particularly evident in Boulder where prices rose nearly $100,000 between 2015 and 2016. More than half of Boulder’s housing stock is in single family homes, where many of the city’s seniors hope and plan to age in place.

The situation was brought home to Doyle a few years ago when the now-63 year old had to have four joint replacements. Unable to take care of her yard, she called Boulder County CareConnect. She was grateful for the help.

“I thought ‘These people need a good-sized donation, but I don’t have the money to contribute,’” she said. “Living in a town with a fairly high income, I don’t have that income.”

She decided to volunteer, just as she had donated time to her daughter’s school and her church when she was younger. Doyle had been a bookkeeper since she was 19 and had her own business for 17 years, but was no longer able to sit for more than 40 hours a week. She began working in the CareConnect office.

While many seniors such as Doyle will need services as the population continues to age, some, also like Doyle, will be able to volunteer their time.

“We have volunteers all the way up into their 90s,” said Chrysti Britt, CareConnect Interim Executive Director.

Doyle recently joined the group’s board of directors, while continuing to work as a freelance writer.

“I’m a firm believer in volunteering,” Doyle said. “I think the world cannot exist without us helping each other.”

KEEPING YOUR INDEPENDENCE AS YOU AGE

As you get older, do your best to keep yourself in shape. If you are unable to get up from the floor unassisted, work on strengthening your legs. Local rec centers offer classes under the Silver Sneakers program. A physical therapist can also help with balance and strengthening exercises that will take into account any health issues you might have.

Make sure you have clear paths in your home for getting around. Get any loose tiles, boards or other tripping hazards fixed. Remove rugs or carpet runners that you might slip on. Get shower bars installed.

Don’t isolate yourself. Keep in touch with friends and family.

If you’re able, volunteer at a nonprofit that’s meaningful to you.

I’m a firm believer in volunteering. I think the world cannot exist without us helping each other.”  – Mary Doyle
Government labs have a big economic impact on Boulder County’s economy.

A University of Colorado Boulder Leeds School of Business study released in March 2017 estimated that government research facilities in Boulder generated $1.1 billion for the county, employed nearly 4,000 people and supported close to 8,000 other jobs.

The numbers were particularly crucial in 2017, when the labs – the National Institute of Standards and Technology, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the National Center for Atmospheric Research – were in danger of losing perhaps a sizeable amount of federal funding.

The loss would be more than just jobs and dollars, however, said Brian Lewandowski, Associate Director of the Business Research Division of CU’s Leeds School of Business.

“We talk about clusters … we have here of people and unique industries. (It’s made us) a place known for innovation, entrepreneurship, start-ups and venture capital,” he said.

Local history writer Carol Taylor said the labs also have been a key element in making Boulder County what it is today, helping to shape many of the demographics tallied in this 2017 TRENDS report.

Before the Central Radio Propagation Laboratory came to Boulder in 1954, the biggest companies in town were Western Cutlery and Crockett’s Bit and Spur, she said.

“Young people were leaving Boulder for better opportunities,” she said, a marked contrast to the county’s economy today.

In mid-2017, Boulder County had the lowest unemployment rate in the nation, according to Lewandowski.

A major factor in luring that first lab, a forerunner of NIST, was the commitment of Boulder citizens.

“The Chamber of Commerce got the effort going,” Taylor said, adding that numerous private citizens and small businesses stepped up to donate land.
Meanwhile at CU, President Robert Stern saw other universities investing heavily in their science departments and did the same. What followed were Ball Aerospace, IBM, NOAA and NCAR.

Boulder County can thank its own citizens’ efforts, CU, these labs and companies, as well as the companies and entrepreneurs that followed, for its well-educated populace – 27 percent with a graduate degree, compared to 12 percent nationwide.

“It was quite a coup for Boulder,” Taylor said of that first lab coming to Boulder County. “It didn’t have a great workforce. It wasn’t the Boulder we know now.”

With funding for the labs now uncertain, Lewandowski cautioned that Boulder County’s cutting-edge culture of business, academia and government research that took decades to build could be seriously affected.

“Once you break up these teams, I don’t think it’s anything you could put back together again,” he said.

Lee Shainis, left, and David Hernandez practice with the Intercambio dance team to prepare for La Fiesta de Intercambio: World Party, the multicultural party that serves as the organization’s fundraiser.

**WHAT CAN I DO?**

Volunteer or make a donation to a nonprofit that helps elders. Almost any expertise can be useful, from carpentry to financial planning.

Know your neighbors, especially older folks who live alone. When you have a relationship, it’s not awkward to ask if they need something at the store or if it would be a help to cut their grass. Let them know they can call you in an emergency.

Volunteer with Circle of Care Project, which uses volunteer drivers to give seniors access to the arts and cultural events.

Teach your children to respect others and offer help when needed. Make your home a place of tolerance, and let them learn the concept of community by doing.

Consider volunteering at Intercambio Uniting Communities or a similar organization to learn about other cultures and perhaps teach English to residents from other countries.

Volunteer to read with young students at local schools.

### EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT, 2015

**High School Graduates**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Boulder County</th>
<th>Colorado</th>
<th>US</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td>87%</td>
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**Bachelor’s Degree or Higher**

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<th></th>
<th>Boulder County</th>
<th>Colorado</th>
<th>US</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>39%</td>
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**Graduate or Professional Degree**

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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: American Community Survey, 1-year data
Our Education

High school graduation rates soar, but are poor and minority students more prepared for college?

High school graduation rates hit a six-year high in 2016, both in Boulder County and across the state, in large part because more Latino and economically disadvantaged students were graduating on-time.

That’s a promising trend for poor and minority students, their families, our schools, our teachers, and everyone interested in educational equity. However, it’s important to note that graduation requirements vary by district, and in recent years with the help of technology, “e-credit recovery” courses have helped students catch up more quickly than they were able to in the past.

In the absence of any fundamental, systemic change, you have to look at these factors, said St. Vrain School District Superintendent Don Haddad. In his school district, approximately 90% of students at the traditional high schools graduate in four years. But because the district has both relatively high graduation standards and lots of alternative high school options for struggling students, the overall 4-year graduation rate is approximately 85%.

“It’s a double-edged sword,” he explained. Overall graduation rates would be higher if school districts did not provide alternative paths for students needing more than

Stories by Chris Barge

Preschoolers line up at Boulder’s Family Learning Center. Boulder County, and Boulder Valley School District in particular, is home to one of the widest achievement gaps in Colorado between Latino and Anglo students.
four years to graduate, but these efforts really benefit our students.

The fact remains that many Latinos and students from low-income families continue to struggle mightily to earn their high school diplomas, here and across the state. They are far less likely than their peers to enroll in college and earn a four-year college degree. Those who do enroll in Colorado’s colleges and universities are more than twice as likely to enroll in remedial courses.

This disparity starts early, and is glaringly evident by the third grade, when Latino and low-income students across Boulder County are less than half as likely to be reading proficiently as their Anglo and more affluent peers.

“The true measure of a school district is how well are you preparing your poor kids?” said Brenda Lyle, Founder and Executive Director of The Family Learning Center in Boulder.

A “no excuses” approach

Lyle grew up in the projects of Los Angeles. She knows what it’s like to have limited income, limited tools, limited access and limited opportunities.

Since founding the Family Learning Center in 1981, Lyle and her staff have provided 14,000 of Boulder County’s low-income, culturally diverse children and families lifelong learning tools for self-sufficiency and success.

“(BVSD’s) stats are really great,” she said. “But if you break it down, poor and minority kids are not doing significantly better than anywhere else, because really this district takes credit for the work of parents. Our kids (at the Family Learning Center) don’t have those same resources, and so then our kids start internalizing that they are not smart. What we try to do with our kids is say ‘You’re not stupid. You don’t have the same outside resources as your more affluent peers.’”

Kids from poor families aren’t going on family vacations. They’re not being tutored. And so the job of The Family Learning Center is to fill in those gaps with a “no excuses” approach to helping students achieve master skills.

Many of Boulder Valley’s struggling students are offered free re-tests if they don’t pass the first time, and they are graded on an overly generous curve, Lyle said. “It’s that narrative where you tell kids they’re doing better than they are.”

Approximately 16,800 students in Boulder County’s two school districts qualify for free or reduced lunch. That’s one quarter of the student population. About one third of all students are students of color, and most of those students are Latino.

Their disparate outcomes start early, before they even enter school.
Skills mastery must start early

Roughly 29 percent of kids in poverty are not enrolled in any kind of preschool before they go to kindergarten, Boulder County’s Head Start programs estimate. That’s almost 2,500 preschool aged children in Boulder County per year. But at least that many more children in families living close to the poverty level are not enrolled in preschool, either.

Compounding the problem, only 29 percent of kindergartners in Boulder Valley School District attend a full-day program, a rate dramatically lower than the state average of 74 percent. St. Vrain Valley kindergartners attend full-day programs close to the state average, at 68 percent. The main difference is that St. Vrain offers full-day kindergarten and preschool at every elementary school. Boulder Valley offers full-day kindergarten at only eight of its schools, and does not offer preschool at every elementary school.

That means many minority and poor children are waiting until first grade before they receive full-day instruction. By then, their teachers must work mightily to catch them up with their Anglo and more well-off peers, many of whom have benefited from six years of enriching early childhood experiences, including a college-educated, English-speaking home environment and shelter from the stresses of poverty.

Our local struggles with the achievement gap aren’t fundamentally different from what we see nationally. They stem from low expectations and a lack of master skills, Lyle said. “A child doesn’t have high self esteem without mastery. You’ve got to feel like you’re good at something, like you’re competent at something.”

Lyle sees a troubling trend across Boulder County, and in Boulder in particular: The high cost of living is quickly turning this into a place of “haves” and “have-nots.” “There is more hopelessness than I’ve seen in years,” she said.

More kids are getting into drugs, smoking pot, going to parties, she said. And she said she anticipates federal budget cuts that will gut every social safety net program, including afterschool programs. “They say there’s no evidence that any of these programs work, and yet there is evidence everywhere,” she said.

At The Family Learning Center, “We have extremely high expectations of our kids and of our families,” she said. “While we’re building up kids, we’re building up families. We’re letting parents know: You are the master of your child’s destiny. You have to be their case manager and know where you want your kids to be.”
Lluvia Macias and her mother, Rosalva Arellano, outside their home in Boulder. She credited the Obama-era DACA program in part for her success, until President Trump announced he would rescind it.

“"A rebel to the norm”"
“It made me feel so good that he felt proud,” Macias said. “He said it was intimidating for him to walk in here with so many professional people, in an office environment.”

Macias relates to feeling intimidated. At Fairview, “I didn’t see anyone who looked like me, who had brown skin,” she said. Freshman year was hard. But she listened to her family, who told her, “It’s possible. This is the reason we’re here.”

Macias started a Latino Leadership Club at Fairview and was elected its president. During high school, Macias held down a part-time job working at a dry cleaner’s. She was also active in other extracurricular activities, including Boulder’s Youth Opportunities Advisory Board, Health Occupation Students of America, the Spanish Honor Society and Knight Crew, a leadership program for high school seniors to mentor freshmen.

Her cousin, Alexia Arellano, was the first in her extended family to attend college by enrolling in Metro State University in Denver. “She’s amazing,” Macias said, teary-eyed. “She pushed me and everyone around her. Not like a ripple of water, but like a ray of light.”

Macias was invited in high school, at her teacher’s recommendation, to join the “I Have A Dream” Foundation’s Pre-Collegiate Program. She received tutoring and help with her college applications. “Without them, I don’t think I’d have known how to work through that and do everything else,” she said.

Now she wants to become a neurosurgeon. She likes the idea of being a “rebel to the norm,” as a woman of color who immigrated to the United States as a toddler and has exceeded every expectation. “I’m not scared of hard work, thanks to my parents, and i’m not scared of late nights, either,” she said.

“She is one of our star students,” said Krishna Pattisapu, Director of College and Career Programs for the “I Have A Dream” Foundation of Boulder County. “She’s always first to take advantage of opportunities we offer her. She’s one student I never worry about in terms of follow-through; I know she’s going to be a doctor someday.”

Macias was invited to give a speech at her high school graduation. Her parents were in the front row. “My brown skin is the most valuable accessory I own,” she told the crowd. Then she addressed her parents directly, in Spanish: “A echarle ganas y para Adelante,” she said. “Keep trying and move forward.”

### PERCENTAGE OF 2015 GRADUATES PURSUING HIGHER EDUCATION (ACROSS BOTH SCHOOL DISTRICTS)

![Graph showing percentage of 2015 graduates pursuing higher education](source: Colorado Department of Higher Education)

### Post-Secondary Degree in 4 years, High School Class of 2012

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<th>Latino</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
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<td>35%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>40%</td>
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<tr>
<td>SVVSD</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colorado</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data for CO grads enrolled in CO institutions

Source: Colorado Department of Higher Education
A parent at the center of a movement

Shely Meraz remembers the parent-teacher conference like it was yesterday.

“What’s going on with David?” the teacher asked.

At first, Meraz thought something must be wrong with her son. But then his fourth grade teacher showed her a graph charting David’s progress. During that school year alone, his reading skills had raced forward two grade levels. He was completely caught up.

Meraz smiled and quickly realized what was going on. “It’s because now I’m involved,” she said.

Meraz, who moved to Lafayette from Mexico in high school, credits ELPASO for her son’s success. The training, knowledge and resources she received to help her work with her youngest child had a halo effect on her eldest.

ELPASO – short for Engaged Latino Parents Advancing Student Outcomes – is a program with a vision that Latino families will form a community movement in which their children have the same opportunities to succeed as all other children.


Meraz is one of nearly 100 Latino parent leaders who graduated from the program in its first three years. Like all the leaders, Shely was recruited by one of ELPASO’s four School Readiness Coordinators.

Each day in Lafayette, Longmont and Boulder, the coordinators knock on doors in low-income, Latino neighborhoods, presenting parents with facts about childhood development.
and the achievement gap. They provide information about community resources available to Latino parents and refer them to community social programs that meet their needs.

All of the coordinators moved to Boulder County from Mexico and are raising their children in Boulder County. Their conversations are entirely in Spanish. They establish trust quickly with parents, and they are smart about how they do this.

Lafayette School Readiness Coordinator Veronica Sangabriel met Meraz by telling her son, who was playing in the yard outside his house, that she had free children’s books. She asked him to go get his mom so she could ask if it was OK to give him one.

After 10 minutes of talking, Meraz invited Sangabriel inside. “I really would like to help the community one day, but I don’t know how,” Meraz told her.

Sangabriel invited her to become an ELPASO leader. Over the course of the next school year, Meraz and the other leaders gained skills, knowledge and critical information about the importance of early childhood education. They immediately put their skills to use by sharing information learned in the classroom with other community members, during house meetings, or “cafecitos.”

The combination of door-to-door visits and cafecitos helped ELPASO reach more than 3,000 Latino parents of young children in the program’s first three years.

Richard Garcia, founding Executive Director of the Colorado Statewide Parent Coalition, has been working to improve Latino parent engagement for 40 years. He helped create ELPASO, which he said he believes is a partial answer to closing the achievement gap.

“I’m excited about ELPASO because it’s going to provide the momentum we need,” he said. “I’m hoping someday we’ll have that voice for the Latino kids that need those services the most.”

Like many of the ELPASO alumni parent leaders, Meraz is committed to doing her part. Since graduating, she has become an assistant teacher at Head Start, which recently sent her and her 2½ year-old son to Washington D.C., to advocate for quality, affordable childcare.

“My community really needs Hispanic people from Mexico, who know what they’re going through,” she said. “They just need a voice that really relates to them.”

For more information about ELPASO, or to donate, visit elpasomovement.org.

ELPASO’S IMPACT AS OF 2017

| 100 | Parent leaders trained in early childhood parenting skills, information and advocacy |
| 500 | Cafecitos held at the homes of parent leaders with their family, friends and neighbors, benefiting several hundred additional children |
| 3,000 | Latino parents of 0- to 5-year-olds in Boulder County interviewed by our School Readiness Coordinators and referred to resources benefiting their children |


Photo courtesy Shely Meraz
School Readiness Initiative strives for educational equity

Since 2008, the Community Foundation has catalyzed partnerships to close the achievement gap with dozens of nonprofits, government agencies, and business and faith leaders. Together, we mobilize resources and ignite action to ensure a better future for all Boulder County kids.

The School Readiness Initiative has:

**Developed, launched, incubated** and spun off ELPASO – Engaged Latino Parents Advancing Student Outcomes – a movement designed to build the Latino parent voice for improved early learning outcomes.

**Helped double** preschool and full-day kindergarten in Boulder County

**Helped secure** more than $850 million in school construction bonds and annual public funding to our schools.

**Catalyzed** collaborative efforts to close the achievement gap, such as BVSD’s Success Effect, Dream Big and The Raising of America Partnership in Boulder County.

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The Community Foundation helped double preschool and full-day kindergarten in BVSD between 2010 and 2017.

### Percentage of Kindergarteners in a Full-Day Program

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<tr>
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<td>28%</td>
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<tr>
<td>SRVSD</td>
<td>68%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Colorado</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>54%</td>
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Source: Annie E. Casey Foundation, Kids Count Data Center, Boulder Valley School District

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### 2016 PERCENTAGE OF THIRD GRADERS MEETING OR EXCEEDING READING EXPECTATIONS*

**St. Vrain Valley School District**

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>Non-FRL</th>
<th>Latino</th>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Latino</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anglo</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>52%</td>
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<td>52%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>54%</td>
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**Boulder Valley School District**

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<tr>
<th></th>
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<th>Non-FRL</th>
<th>Latino</th>
<th>Anglo</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FRL</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>57%</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>65%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anglo</td>
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<td>50%</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Total</td>
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**Colorado**

<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2016</th>
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<th>Latino</th>
<th>Anglo</th>
<th>Total</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>FRL</td>
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<td>47%</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Latino</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anglo</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>37%</td>
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Sources: Colorado Department of Education, St. Vrain Valley and Boulder Valley School Districts

*Colorado school districts in 2015 began using a new testing instrument aligned with national standards to measure students’ progress at the end of the school year in English language arts, math, science and social studies. These results are from the 2016 Colorado Measures of Academic Success (CMAS), which was developed with the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC).
Equity depends on relationships

An old newsletter article written by a former student hangs on Alphonse Keasley’s office door. It’s title: “Cautious Keasley Kicks Butt.”

“He may look like a pushover, but behind those Bambi eyes is a serious teacher with the ability to ‘kick butt’ if necessary,” the student wrote.

“I don’t mind having that reputation,” said Keasley, Associate Vice Chancellor in the Office of Diversity, Equity and Community Engagement at the University of Colorado at Boulder. “I’ve always had the philosophy in the classroom that kids are capable and we will find what level they are able to achieve. If they’ve never been given that opportunity to be fully engaged as a fully involved human being, then I think we’ve cheated them.

“Why kids aren’t succeeding in the learning environment, when the kids are capable, just makes me so concerned that we’re still living out what those of us in education call the deficit model – that because a kid has brown skin, they’re not capable,” Keasley said.

Ultimately, closing the achievement gap comes down to relationships, he said. Here’s how Keasley recommends people get involved:

**Join** the Board of Trustees for a nonprofit organization working to promote educational equity.

**Donate** to such organizations. Good examples are The Family Learning Center in Boulder, the “I Have A Dream” Foundation of Boulder County and the Hispanic Education Foundation of the St. Vrain Valley.

**Offer** an internship to a minority student at your place of business.

**Authentically** involve kids from communities that are not typically present, in everything you do.

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**“** Why kids aren’t succeeding in the learning environment, when the kids are capable, just makes me so concerned that we’re still living out what those of us in education call the deficit model – that because a kid has brown skin, they’re not capable.”

— Alphonse Keasley

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**WHAT ELSE CAN I DO?**

**Support** ballot measures that help to fund schools, particularly early childhood education

**Read** with your child 20 minutes every day

**Volunteer** at your local public school

**Mentor** a student
Every stakeholder “all-in” in St. Vrain

Diane Lauer had a driveway moment, listening to a story on Colorado Public Radio about a camp for dyslexic students. It got the Assistant Superintendent of Priority Programs and Academic Support thinking about what St. Vrain Valley School District could do.

She called her colleagues together. “I walked into that meeting and said, ‘How are we supporting students with dyslexia in St. Vrain?’”

They studied what the district had done for dyslexic students in the past. They researched available funding streams. They tapped parents of dyslexic students to form a taskforce. Together, they hatched a 3-year, comprehensive plan to provide universal screening, progress monitoring and additional targeted support for students who have characteristics of dyslexia.

It’s one of several examples of how the school district has worked with the community to leverage resources and create innovative approaches to some of the biggest challenges students face.

“Generally what I’m most proud of is the people in our community and the way they have coalesced around educating all of our children,” said St. Vrain Superintendent Don Haddad. “Every stakeholder group is all-in, in terms of education for all students. This is reflected in their actions. It goes well beyond words.”

Other examples abound:

**District leaders formed** a taskforce with Latino parents to address emerging and persistent stress and needs after the 2016 election.

**The district launched** an “In Focus” program to provide mental health supports in K-8 schools. The program uses mindfulness strategies to tackle such issues as how stress impacts teachers and their students.

**The district is serving** more students with autism and social-emotional needs, and paying for the services with the savings associated with not having to bus the students to special schools outside the district.

**A new partnership** with the Lena Research Foundation in Boulder and the OUR Center in Longmont has launched a new initiative to improve kindergarten readiness by encouraging parents to talk more with their children. “LENA Start” features parent classes in English and Spanish that employ LENA “talk pedometer” technology to measure how much parents are talking with their children, and how much children are responding.

**District leaders worked** with scholars at CU’s Bueno Center to develop a new biliteracy curriculum piloted in all of the district’s low-income schools.

Lauer gives St. Vrain teachers credit, too, for teaching a strong, standards-based curriculum. Each teacher receives 2.5 hours of professional development per month to collaborate and deepen their practice.

“They’re very professionally minded educators who value that time to collaborate and to improve their craft,” Lauer said. “I think that has a dramatic impact on student achievement.”

Superintendent Haddad said everyone in the school district has worked hard to build a culture of collaboration and innovation, both inside the district and with community partners.

“When you’ve got an entire community bought into our children and our schools, you can achieve amazing things,” he said.
Richard Garcia, center, listens to ELPASO School Readiness Coordinator Veronica Sangabriel at the Latino Parent Summit at Boulder’s Casey Middle School in 2016.

**BVSD’s gaps to remain “until we do something different”**

Richard Garcia still can’t erase from his mind something he saw more than 30 years ago.

He was observing Latino elementary school students who did not yet speak English. For most of the day, they sat quietly, unable to understand what the teacher and their classmates were saying.

“The only way I can explain it is, they were deaf and mute because they couldn’t participate,” Garcia said.

Once a day, a specialist who spoke Spanish would pull them from the classroom, to help them learn English.

“It was the difference between day and night, like someone opened a faucet,” Garcia said. “That was pretty heartbreaking.”

Garcia went on to found The Colorado Statewide Parent Coalition – a nonprofit organization committed to closing the achievement gap between Latino and Anglo students through parent engagement. He was elected to the Boulder Valley School Board in 2015.

Garcia said that poverty and having to learn a second language are the main drivers of the achievement gaps amongst students in Boulder County.

Today, BVSD has two dual language immersion schools, plus a bilingual transitional program at a third school. Other schools have specialists who pull out English language learners and use such programs as Reading Recovery and Leveled Literacy.

Yet, huge achievement gaps persist.

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**Boulder County School Districts At A Glance**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>2016-2017 Number of Students</th>
<th>Percentage Increase 2007-2016</th>
<th>Fall 2016 Full Time Teachers</th>
<th>2016 Pupil/Teacher Ratio</th>
<th>2016-2017 Free and Reduced Lunch</th>
<th>2016-2017 English Language Learners</th>
<th>Fall 2016 % Students of Color</th>
<th>Fall 2016 % Latino Students</th>
<th>Fall 2016 % Teachers of Color</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>St. Vrain Valley</td>
<td>32,171</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>1,775</td>
<td>18.43</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>36.4%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boulder Valley</td>
<td>31,189</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>1,697</td>
<td>18.42</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>30.9%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Colorado Department of Education
“These programs work, but I think they’re limited,” Garcia said. “Until we do something different, I’m not sure we’re going to make a whole lot of gains in terms of the achievement gap.”

To make progress, he said, the district needs to start asking these questions: “Where are the gap kids? Who are they? What are the interventions? Are they really making a dent on the achievement gap?”

The achievement gap can be closed by keeping kids interested in the classroom, said Ron Cabrera, Assistant Superintendent of Instruction and Equity. Cabrera, who was the only Latino person in the superintendent’s cabinet, retired in June 2017.

“In the classroom, if they sense they belong, students are going to be more receptive to learning,” Cabrera said. “Students who’ve beaten the odds have always encountered a teacher or several teachers who really spoke to them about what their talent was or what their capability was.”

He cited an example of work being done at Centaurus High School in Lafayette and at Boulder High School to interest students of color in the field of education.

“Almost to a person, they talked about how a teacher had pushed them, given them hope,” he said.

Cabrera pointed to several efforts underway in Boulder Valley that he thinks could help close the gap. They include emphases on equitable instructional practice, oracy and early childhood education.

BVSD leaders recognize parents matter, too.

“It’s really about drawing out that power that families have,” said Madeleine Case, BVSD’s Director of Parent Family Partnerships.

During the 2016-2017 school year, the district offered “Know your rights” and family preparedness presentations for Latino families. It offered teachers professional development opportunities to learn more about family engagement and poverty. It helped launch a Latino parent leadership program called PARITY. It piloted family-educator teams at high poverty schools.

“Ultimately we’re all here for the same reason,” Case said. “I think much more can be accomplished in terms of academic success if both educators and families have that relationship.”

Partnerships “Dream Big”

A sign with the words “Dream Big” hangs over Lori Canova’s desk. It’s a message the President and CEO of the “I Have A Dream” Foundation of Boulder County lives by.

About 600 of the 16,800 students from low-income families in the Boulder Valley and St. Vrain Valley school districts are currently “Dreamer Scholars.” They are mostly Latino students in multiple cohorts sponsored by the foundation, which hires a program director for each cohort to help the students and their families find success in school, all the way through college.

Canova says the key elements of “I Have A Dream’s” success are the program director, the long-term relationship with the child and family, and offering the hope of a brighter future and college.

Still, she said, “There’s so much more to do.”

Lately, Canova has focused a lot on increasing community partnerships, so that more students receive the academic, social and emotional resources needed to succeed. This partnership is called Dream Big. It’s a collaborative of Boulder County nonprofits, government agencies, Boulder Valley School District, businesses and other community organizations, including the Community Foundation Boulder County.

“We need Dream Big because it takes more than one organization to close the achievement and opportunity gaps,” Canova said.
The vision of Dream Big is that by 2040, all children in Boulder County are succeeding academically and reaching their full potential.

Across Boulder County, agencies are partnering to close the achievement gap, starting as early as possible:

Boulder Housing Partners is offering Bringing School Home – an innovative new program that brings together quality, affordable housing and educational opportunities for families with children 0-5 years old in partnership with Emergency Family Assistance Association and “I Have A Dream.”

Boulder County Public Health is leading the Raising of America Partnership in Boulder County. Government agencies, nonprofit organizations, business and families are working together to engage the community in supporting families and young children.

The Family Learning Center hosts a monthly roundtable with nonprofit and government partners to collaborate on summer learning opportunities for children from low-income families.

Bright EYES Longmont is a city-based initiative to promote quality programs for preschool-aged children.

“How can we provide more high-quality childcare for Hispanic and low-income families?” asked Melanie Kelsey, Longmont’s Community Coordinator for Early Childhood.

Longmont runs a free lunch program in city parks during the summers. Partner agencies are invited to attend the lunches and offer their services to those who need them.

“Families come to get a free lunch, but they’re accessing other services,” Kelsey said.

She recalled a family that came to the park to receive a free lunch. While there, the parents registered their preschooler for the Mayor’s Book Club, which mails a free book to participants’ homes each month until the child turns 5. Their teenager connected with a bilingual counselor to help him deal with some difficult issues at school.

“Seeing a family like that, I find the program to be a really big success,” Kelsey said.
Our Health & Human Services

County’s uninsured rate cut by two-thirds in four years

Look around Boulder County and you’ll be struck by the number of active people: cyclists with sponsorships, people who bike to work and shower there, runners, climbers and everyday people walking on miles of Open Space trails.

But until the expansion of Medicaid under the Affordable Care Act (ACA), a different reality lingered behind these lifestyle-magazine worthy tableaus. A sizeable number of folks, including nearly 30 percent of the county’s Latinos, did not have health insurance.

With ACA implementation, health care coverage for lower-income groups more than doubled, although Latinos and those without a high school education still lagged behind. As of 2014, a stellar 98 percent of children were insured.

However, as with adults, the future of health insurance for children was politically uncertain in mid-2017. Not only the ACA, but Medicaid itself, which covers people below the poverty line, were on shaky ground in Washington. Even the very popular ACA mandate that insurance companies cover people with pre-existing conditions was potentially on the chopping block.

Stories by Cindy Sutter

While adults in Boulder County rank high on health indicators, children’s obesity rates are only mid-pack nationally.
In March 2017, all three Boulder County commissioners wrote to U.S. Sen. Cory Gardner urging him to vote to continue funding Medicaid and the Medicaid expansion.

“In Boulder County, Medicaid is the cornerstone of our safety net,” wrote Commissioners Deb Gardner, Cindy Domenico and Elise Jones. “Although Boulder County is considered affluent, many of our residents are not and have been living without health coverage.”

Even as those affected by potential cuts continue to be apprehensive, much of the county and Colorado is healthy, as measured against the rest of the nation. The state has the lowest obesity rate nationally, and 88 percent of Boulder County residents ranked their health good to excellent.

Statistics largely back up their evaluation: Boulder County has lower death rates than the national average from cancer, heart disease, diabetes and pneumonia. Another bright spot is that poor 40 year-olds here are likely to live 2.2 years longer – to 81.6 years, than their impoverished U.S. counterparts, according to data in the Journal of the American Medical Association.

Mental health ratings are also largely positive. Nearly two-thirds of those surveyed said they had no poor mental health days a month.

Yet, some dark clouds loom. Nearly a quarter of Colorado children are obese, and fewer Latinos rate their health as good to excellent. Poverty also takes a toll. About one-fifth of those making $25,000 a year or less reported eight or more poor mental health days in a month, almost twice the number in the general population.

In addition, the suicide rate in Boulder County is higher than the national average and higher yet in Colorado than it is in the country as a whole. Suicide is the 7th leading cause of death in Boulder County compared with 10th nationally. For reasons that aren’t clear, nine western states – Montana, Alaska, Utah, Wyoming, New Mexico, Idaho, Nevada, Colorado and South Dakota – consistently have higher suicide rates than the rest of the country.
This Family Learning Center student is apparently in training to become the Best Doctor in Town. We’ll need him. Colorado’s Medicaid expansion under Obamacare has provided health coverage to nearly 20,000 additional Boulder County residents.

**Gerry Emmerich and his wife both work and had health insurance. Hers was through Kaiser, and he had a policy purchased in the marketplace.**

When she got pregnant, they qualified as a family for Colorado’s Medicaid expansion. In 2015-2016, the average monthly enrollment for Medicaid in Boulder County was 52,000 people. Nearly 20,000 of them received coverage under the Medicaid expansion.

The couple, who live in Boulder, found out they were having twins. They also learned the twins shared a placenta and had a rare condition called Twin to Twin Transfusion Syndrome. The complication means that one twin receives too little blood, causing dehydration and potential developmental delays. The other gets too much blood and is in danger of high blood pressure and heart failure. The condition is often fatal to both.

Soon they found themselves going to appointments as often as twice a week at the Anschutz campus of Children’s Hospital in Aurora for ultrasounds.

“We’re two extremely healthy individuals. With our normal insurance, we would have had to pay tons of money,” Emmerich said. “We’re both working people. For a lot of people, it’s shocking when you have an incident like this to see what kind of costs are associated with it.”

Despite the excellent care they received, they lost the pregnancy.

“My wife is pretty much ...” Emmerich’s voice trailed off. “It’s something we’ll always be thinking about going forward, probably for the rest of our lives.”

One thing that won’t be weighing on them is potentially bankrupting debt, since the improved coverage they received under Medicaid expansion took care of their bills.

“I don’t think people realize how awful a situation can be ... if they don’t experience it themselves,” Emmerich said. “I hope they don’t experience it themselves.”

As the health care debate raged in mid-2017, he likened his family’s experience to people who dislike another country without knowing anything about it.

“Have you ever been there?” he said. “How can you comment on a situation if you’ve never been put in it before?”

**Medicaid expansion provided care, covered cost in “awful situation”**
Our Health & Human Services

Turmoil in insurance markets leaves kidney donor worried

Kate LaCroix donated a kidney in 2016, feeling safe in the knowledge that pre-existing conditions were covered by her health insurance under Obamacare.

LaCroix, who lives in Boulder, owns her own integrated marketing business, Kontently, and purchased health care for herself and her family in the Affordable Care Act marketplace.

While the premiums on her policy are relatively expensive, the ACA allowed her to have her own business with the assurance that a health crisis wouldn’t cause a terrible financial hardship and that pre-existing conditions would be covered.

As of 2017, that assumption may no longer be valid, with the stated goal of a Republican president and GOP members of Congress to repeal and replace the ACA.

"Under the new regime, I would be a pre-existing condition," LaCroix said in the spring of 2017. “I find that a really bitter pill to swallow, not only because it seems like I’m being penalized for a generous act. I had to be in a remarkable state of health, head to toe, to be able to donate. Statistically, I’m supposed to outlive people who have two functioning kidneys.”

LaCroix decided to donate after reconnecting through Facebook with her former therapist.

“I got engrossed in her page. I read about it. I called and said, ‘If I can do it, I’ll do it.’” LaCroix said. “As a therapist, she was like ‘It’s a big decision. Really think it over.’”

LaCroix donated her kidney in December 2016 after a years-long process. While she wasn’t a match with her therapist, she was able to donate through a paired exchange program in which donor kidneys matching different recipients are swapped.

Some states offer incentives such as tax credits or paid time off for donating. LaCroix has been writing to lawmakers urging them to make such incentives more common.

In the meantime, she watches the battle in Congress over the health care bill. When the first round of repeal and replace passed the House, she went back to National Kidney Foundation and discovered her donation would indeed be considered a pre-existing condition under the bill.

“It made me feel really angry. It also made me feel really fragile,” she said. “I’m sure it’s how people who had long had a pre-existing condition had always felt. I feel like I’m a part of that now.”

YOUR COMMUNITY FOUNDATION – MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Expanding healthcare access through collaboration

In the ever-changing healthcare environment, the Community Foundation catalyzes action locally. Specifically, the Boulder County Health Improvement Collaborative (BCHIC) aims to improve health outcomes among our community’s most vulnerable adults by recruiting specialists willing to treat Medicaid and uninsured patients, and by streamlining the referral system for providers and care coordinators. BCHIC’s strategy includes building a community-owned referral database that addresses many of the barriers identified by specialists in seeing underinsured patients.

“We convene and facilitate dialogue among health leaders – patient advocates, physicians, healthcare administrators, safety-net providers, hospitals, and public health and human services leaders,” said Morgan McMillan, who spearheads the initiative. “And with support from the Colorado Health Foundation and our local hospitals, we’re ramping up recruitment of participating practices, and piloting a referral database. Over the next three years, we hope to expand our pilot to include at least 10 specialty areas, and extend access to more than 500 Boulder County residents in need of care.”

Initially, BCHIC emphasizes the following specialty areas: orthopedics, dermatology, oncology, gastroenterology and endocrinology. “The data says these areas are in greatest demand, and have tremendous potential for high impact on patients and our community,” McMillan said. “We believe we can meet much of our community’s unmet needs with broad and evenly-distributed provider participation.”
Preschoolers race across the playground at the Family Learning Center – one of 17 agencies to receive a share of $950,000 in proceeds from the first six months of Boulder’s new soda tax in 2017.

Photo by Julia Vandenoever

Yes, there’s childhood obesity in Boulder County

If you look around at many of the adults in Boulder County, it makes sense that statistics show Colorado is the least obese state in the country. But the numbers on children who are overweight and obese in Colorado paint a different picture.

Nearly a quarter of Boulder County children, 24 percent to be precise, are overweight or obese.

“We’re lowest (in obesity) for adults, but not for children and adolescents. We’re mid-pack when it comes to that,” said Bonnie Jortberg, an assistant professor in the Department of Family Medicine at the University of Colorado School of Medicine.

Jortberg, who lives in Boulder and raised two daughters here, said the county and state, where childhood obesity is 27 percent, will see the effects when the kids grow up.

“Unfortunately with these kiddos, if they’re obese as children, they have a greater than 70 percent chance in being obese as adults,” she said.

She praises the changes Boulder Valley has made in its school lunches.

“They’ve taken out a lot of sugary, fatty, salty junk foods,” she said.

In addition, the city of Boulder passed a tax on sugar-sweetened drinks in 2016. The tax of 2 cents per ounce on the distribution of beverages with added sugar was initiated by voters. Proceeds will go to wellness programs and chronic disease prevention.

Even with such programs in place, Jortberg said many children still eat too much fast food.

“If you’re not doing anything to burn that off, you’re going to end up obese,” she said. “What’s really interesting is we’ve made some headway with young kids and grade school kids. But we’re seeing obesity rates go up ... when they’re in high school, if they’re not in an organized sport. Particularly (we see it) in girls. Many have quit growing. If they’re still eating (and not moving), there will be weight gain.”

In addition, childhood has changed. Sedentary distractions beckon in every house, and children’s leisure time is more organized. Jortberg remembers growing up in Phoenix and playing outside no matter how hot it was.

“There wasn’t anything on TV,” she said. “If you didn’t run around outside with your friends, there was nothing to do.”

Now, when she works at home and goes out for a run, she often sees parents driving their children to the bus stop.

“I see a line of cars. I know where some of them live, literally two blocks from the bus stop,” she said. “I want to scream, ‘Just let your kids walk!’”

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CHILD HEALTH DATA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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Sources: Colorado Health Indicators, 2012-2014; *Source: American Community Survey 2015.
Being a lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or queer kid isn’t getting any easier. While Boulder County has a reputation for openness to LGBTQ concerns, numbers from recent surveys in both school districts indicate that such students are:

**More than two times** more likely to report feeling sad or hopeless

**More than three times** more likely to consider suicide

“Look at these numbers. It’s like a house on fire,” said Mardi Moore, Executive Director of Out Boulder County.

Out Boulder County has increased its outreach to teens, with groups aimed at teens in Boulder and Longmont. The Longmont group has continued to grow.

“We’re pulling kids from Weld County, Frederick, Mead and Niwot,” Moore said.

The organization has also worked to reach out to kids who are Latinx and to transgender youth, who can attend dance classes. The goal is to let LGBTQ teens express themselves in the many different ways they feel comfortable.

Yet, there is still work to do.

One program Out Boulder County is working to set up is active bystander training, in which students and others who may or may not be LGBTQ are taught how to speak up when they see harassment or bullying.

“It will just make you a great responder and also give you the skills to respond to racial hate,” Moore said.

She added that Out Boulder goes to about 60 Boulder Valley schools a year to speak to students and has now been approved in St. Vrain, although the group would like to see more teachers reaching out. In addition, Out Boulder County has a dedicated phone line for LGBTQ youth to call.

Still, Moore said, Boulder County is not as comfortable a place as many people assume.

“I’m a 54-year-old lesbian, and I won’t hold a woman’s hand walking down Pearl Street or taking Uber,” she said.

For young people growing into their sexuality, just being in the world can be difficult. That’s something Out Boulder County wants to give teens the space to do.

“There’s nothing wrong with LGBTQ kids,” she said. “It’s the world around us.”
Blazing a trail by being herself

Meet Shannon Axe and here’s what you’ll see: a confident, open young woman. Bright, funny and eager to get through the last couple of years of high school and out into the wider world.

What you won’t see is what the doctor who delivered Shannon saw: a boy. A boy in the way our society sees gender – genitalia first.

From a young age, Shannon knew better.

“Inside my heart, I knew it wasn’t right, I’m a girl. I’ve always been a girl,” she said.

Shannon had another asset beyond her certainty about her gender: a family who loved and accepted her, a family who was there for her on her journey. That included moving to Boulder County to enroll Shannon in Boulder Valley schools.

“It was drastically better than Highlands Ranch,” Shannon said.

In the third grade, she told everyone at school about being trans, but in middle school, she initially tried something different.

“(I decided to) go stealth and not be out, but I just couldn’t take it. Hiding something was so much a big part of it,” she said. “To fit in with the cool group (I had to) be this Barbie doll.”

“(I thought) I have to come out and make sure everybody knows.”

The school arranged for an assembly for each grade, with teachers supporting Shannon. Shannon’s mother, Karen, who led support groups for eight years, told her part of the story.

Then Shannon spoke.

“I told the sixth graders, ‘This is who I am, and I’m proud of it.’ Then they brought in the seventh graders. No one could blab. Then the eighth grade class,” she said. “The hardest part was being the center of attention.”

Shannon plans to study law, specializing in civil rights. She also talks with younger kids who are trans.

“I love meeting little kids, love hanging out with them,” Shannon said. “I’m like their older sister. I tell them it’s going to be OK.”

She said she has been lucky to have a family that supports her, and she has a message for other parents who have a trans child:

“You have to love your kid. That is your job,” she said. “Just saying, ‘I love you. We’ll work through it’ can change a kid’s life.”
A preventive approach to alcohol and hopelessness in BVSD

Alcohol remains the largest substance abuse problem amongst high school students in the Boulder Valley School District. The 2015 Healthy Kids Colorado survey found that 38 percent of high schoolers had at least one drink in the past 30 days, compared to 30 percent across Colorado.

Alcohol also remains the first substance Boulder Valley students tend to try, with 12 percent having consumed alcohol before age 13. By that early age, 4 percent have smoked marijuana, 3 percent have smoked a cigarette, and 2 percent have had sex, according to survey respondents.

Boulder Valley high schoolers were on par with their peers across the state on a variety of other measures, including the 28 percent who reported feeling sad or hopeless in the past year almost every day for two weeks or more in a row, compared to 30 percent statewide and nationally.

“Hopelessness connects to a risk of substance abuse,” said Lee Scriggins, Community Substance Abuse Prevention Manager for Boulder County Public Health. “People use substances to handle feelings and create relationships.”

The county’s call to action is for adults to build relationships with young people, and to see young people as an asset, while modeling how to deal with stress, without violence and without abusing substances, Scriggins said. A sense of belonging and connection are protective factors against substance abuse and for better mental health, she added.

Boulder Valley School District is responding with an holistic and preventative approach that starts as early as possible. The district hired 10 new elementary school counselors and a supervisor for the 2017-2018 school year. It also hired two new behavioral health advocates, bringing the total to five.

“The data shows when you focus on students’ social-emotional well-being, their academic performance can increase dramatically,” said Andy Tucker, BVSD’s Director of Student Support. “I think we are responding very, very well. We also are doing everything in our power to put resources in schools for prevention.”

The Healthy Kids Colorado survey found 18 percent of Boulder Valley high school students reported being bullied – 10 percent because of their race or ethnicity, and 7 percent because of sexual orientation. Also, 15 percent reported online bullying.

“It’s worth noting that young people bully on factors that are socially stigmatized in the adult culture,” Scriggins said. “All the research is very clear that young people listen when we talk.”

St. Vrain report card: bright spots and areas to work on

The majority of St. Vrain students are doing relatively well, according to a December 2016 survey of high schoolers, grades 9 through 12.

In a presentation to the school board in February 2017, Superintendent Don Haddad said the good news is that most students report a positive school culture. More than 75 percent said they feel safe to express who they are at school and more than 80 percent feel like they are a part of the school. In addition, alcohol, drug and tobacco abuse was not a big factor. An encouraging 97 percent said they have not driven under the influence of alcohol, and 90 percent have never smoked a cigarette.

However, the survey, which was anonymous and voluntary, also pointed to areas that need more attention. Most concerning were results from the survey that showed that 15 percent of students had contemplated suicide and that 5 percent had attempted suicide. More than half of students said they are not comfortable talking about feelings with other people, and more than a third said they do not have healthy ways to manage stress. In addition, 15 percent said they have been threatened, hurt or harassed at school.

In addition to various programs designed to address this issue, the district held community meetings in the spring and summer of 2017 and continued to train high school teachers on a “Sources of Strength” curriculum, which is designed to teach resiliency. The schools also are working on promoting inclusivity and respect, including gay-straight alliances at all high schools and middle schools.
Teen pregnancies reduced by half

Boulder County clinic served as pilot for teen pregnancy reduction program

In 2007, Susan Buchanan, Executive Director and CEO of Boulder Valley Women’s Health Center, was presented with an opportunity that would gladden the heart of many a nonprofit executive.

“When we initially got involved in the planning, the question from the funder was: ‘If money were no object, what would you do to expand access to marginalized populations?’” Buchanan said. “It was like every executive director’s dream. We got to dream big, think outside the box.”

The private funder wanted to test strategies to change the fact that nearly half of all pregnancies were unplanned. High upfront costs meant access to the most effective methods of contraception – implants and IUDs – stood in the way of women being able to choose these methods.

“... If you can make sure pregnancies are intended and planned for ... (a young woman) can complete her education, form a stable relationship, get her feet wet in the job market,” Buchanan said. “In fact, you have healthier babies, too.”

The results have been stunning. The teen fertility rate was cut almost in half in Boulder County and more than cut in half in the state of Colorado. Preventing unplanned pregnancies helped avoid up to $70 million in public assistance costs. Most importantly, more young women are charting their life’s course, rather than having babies too early.

These results would likely have been considered too much to hope for, when Buchanan and others began thinking about how to implement the program. Among the things they worked on: training more providers to place IUDs and contraceptive implants; developing effective ways to educate teens to think about and take action to protect their own health and various steps to ensure that women are satisfied with their contraceptive choices. It also included outreach to let teens know where they could access care and information, including about their best contraceptive options.

“We started out with one key question: ‘Do you intend to be pregnant in the next year?’” Buchanan said.

That question came from the clinic’s direct experience. Teens were often ambivalent about being on the pill, what Buchanan describes as “if it happens, it happens.”

Asking about pregnancy as an intention with a time frame made many teens see things differently.

“It forces you to say, ‘No, not really.’ A lot of the time, women weren’t thinking in those terms, ‘What would I do if I got pregnant next year?’” Buchanan said.

Boulder Valley was first to launch this effort – and soon after it expanded statewide, with an integrated program of expanded health care services at 69 clinics, public education and advertising, community outreach and more.

Buchanan said she worries that the change of administration in Washington will set back family planning efforts, which she regards as crucial.

“Some of the things we know are that (women with) unintended pregnancies are more likely to be victims of domestic violence, the child is more likely to experience child abuse and more likely to enter school not ready,” Buchanan said. “I always say we do the most important work in the world. If we solve this problem, we solve so many other problems.”

Photo by Christina Bonfanti courtesy Boulder Valley Women’s Health
Addiction to heroin, prescription opioids is here

Boulder County has not been immune to the national increase in opioid abuse and addiction.

On average, 30 Boulder County residents die each year of accidental opioid overdose. Prescription drug overdose death rates are highest in Longmont, while heroin overdose death rates are highest in southeast Boulder County, which includes Lafayette, Louisville and Superior.

“We’re hearing of a lot of people taking a shift from prescription drugs to heroin,” said Jamie Feld, an epidemiologist with Boulder County Public Health.

Boulder County Public Health has responded to the problem in several ways, both preventive and life-saving. On the preventive side, the county added six drop off spots for household medication in January 2017 to decrease the opportunity for teens to experiment with leftover prescription opioids in their parents’ medicine cabinets.

The county has also made available Naloxone, which reverses overdoses and has offered training sessions in how to administer it. Since February 2017, 42 Naloxone kits have been distributed to the public, and law enforcement has received 375 kits. Since 1916, the county has tallied 48 reports of clients administering Naloxone.

The number of unique clients in Boulder County’s needle exchange program, called Works, has skyrocketed, serving 1,335 in 2016. That’s nearly nine times the number the program served in 2010. This eye-popping increase is even greater when you consider that each person served provides supplies for 2.5 people on average.

Feld noted one particularly disturbing contributor to this trend.

“There’s a misperception that injecting (drugs) is safer,” she said. “Users think, ‘They do it in the hospital. It’s not doing harm to the nose.’”

The Works program is working with clients to prevent them from initiating others into the practice, said Carol Helwig, program coordinator. She added that many users ritualize injecting the drug. She has known of addicts who get sober, but inject water, because they were addicted to the ritual, as well as the drug.

“If you’re snorting, stick to snorting,” she said.

Getting hooked, getting clean

Colt Smith calls it a pause button.

It’s the feeling of relief he experienced when a doctor prescribed opioid pain relievers after knee surgery when he was in the 10th grade.

“I have this really weird ability to feel very alone even if I’m surrounded by friends. It just takes so much work, time and effort to connect with someone,” he said. “I have these weird racing thoughts, fears, anxiety. I don’t know what it’s supposed to tell me, what I’m supposed to learn.”

Smith works with teens at iThrive, a Longmont-based early intervention program for substance abuse that requires participation by both teens and parents. Teens who receive tickets for smoking pot at school are often directed toward iThrive classes. In the teen sessions, Smith shares facts about various drugs, tells his own harrowing story and listens to theirs.

Before his knee surgery, Smith was using alcohol and cannabis, building up tolerance. After his surgery, he began lying to various doctors to get more pills.

Another surgery in 11th grade brought more drugs and also a crushing blow: Smith was attending a military boarding
school in Texas in hopes of becoming a career Marine, as his grandfather had been. After the second surgery, the Marine Corps said he was out.

The next year, another surgery, more prescriptions. With a 3.5 grade point average, Smith thought his drug use was under control. But by this time, he was not only doctor shopping, but crossing the nearby border into Mexico to buy opioids there.

Smith went to college at age 17, where he took up bass guitar. He was good. Good enough to get a gig touring with a rock band.

“Everywhere we went, there was someone there begging me to do their drugs,” he said.

Mostly, he took pills, but also smoked opium and even injected on occasion.

“We lost our drummer to an overdose. I was in the hotel room with him when it happened,” he said. “We hired another. Three or four months later, housekeeping at the hotel found him overdosed behind a locked door.”

The band broke up, and Smith moved to Seattle, where his money ran out.

“My using progressed. I find myself in a world of hurt,” he said.

When he was almost 23, he overdosed.

“A friend of mine found me in my bed, but couldn’t find a heart rate or breathing,” he said. “They came out and revived me with Naloxone.”

The hospital induced a coma for four days to allow him to go through withdrawal for what they called a “poly-substance overdose.”

Smith went through drug treatment and was discharged.

“Really quickly, the same despair and pain finds me,” he said.

As they always had, drugs beckoned.

He went to a second treatment center. After another relapse, he entered treatment for a third time.

“Society has a stigma on people who choose to use. Inside the recovery community, the stigma is on people who relapse,” he said. “I felt tons of guilt and shame. I’m not just a screw-up because I used, I’m also a screw-up because I can’t stop.”

Smith found a sober living community. After six months, he was offered a job there and stayed for 18 more. He went back to college on a partial scholarship to study drug addiction and recovery. He graduated, got married and moved to Colorado.

Now he works with teens to plant a seed early, before they destroy relationships and careers with drug use.

“If I can give these teenagers a chance to have a conversation with someone who has experience and knowledge, in a way they’re not able to (with others) ... if they can safely explore ideas and express concerns ... without fear of judgment, it shows me I’m in the right place at the right time.”

WHAT CAN I DO?

Walk or ride your bike to school or work.

Be an ally: Speak up against bullying and encourage kids to do so too.

Volunteer with Moving to End Sexual Assault to help stop rape in our community; or with Out Boulder County to support LGBTQ communities.

Talk to your kids about risky behaviors like drinking alcohol or having unprotected sex.

Tell your kids you love them, no matter the challenges they face.

Talk to a counselor if you have problems quitting drinking or smoking.
Our Economy & Housing

Boulder County’s high intellectual capital means good pay for many, but not all

City planners try to lure companies that complement their community’s strengths. They hope these companies work together to create jobs that pay well, while providing intellectual capital that brings in similar companies.

From this perspective, Boulder County’s cities are thriving. Strong private-public partnerships drive a great deal of the county’s economic activity and continue to make it attractive to firms that might be interested in moving here.

The flip side to our strong economy, however, is that rising housing costs leave some families struggling to fulfill basic needs.

“Typically higher paid jobs create lower paying jobs,” said State Demographer Elizabeth Garner. “You have lots of jobs at higher incomes. What do they want to do? Buy coffee. Go out drinking. Go out eating. Use dry cleaners rather than doing their own laundry. As they create $100,000 jobs, they’re creating $25,000 jobs.”

Those on the bottom end of the income ladder struggle. More families are applying for food stamps (SNAP) now than they were during the Great Recession.

Stories by Cindy Sutter

Francisca Amaya, right, and her mother, Adela Loya, bought a home together in Longmont after a yearlong search. In 2017 in Boulder County, there were virtually no homes costing below $250,000, even in Longmont, which once provided more affordable housing for many. “Every time I found a house, someone would come in behind me and offer more,” Amaya said. If she had it to do again, she would look outside Longmont, she said.
Our Economy & Housing

The need for food assistance is partly driven by the recent spike in home prices and rents. The latter has amped up pressure on lower income families. It has also made it virtually impossible for even middle income families to buy a home. Adding to these problems, a disparity in median household income between Latinos and Anglos is worse here than in the country as a whole.

Julie Van Domelen, Executive Director of Emergency Family Assistance Association said housing costs are considered sustainable when they are 30 to 50 percent of income. She adds that EFAA is seeing clients with situations that are much less viable.

“If you’re renting in the market and don’t have a (housing) voucher, the average (EFAA client) is spending 72 percent of income on housing costs,” she said. “That means there’s nothing left for anything. There’s very little cushion if you have an extra health bill or get your hours cut.”

Yet, because poverty is not concentrated here as it would be in urban areas, it remains largely hidden. The stories in this chapter shed light on this quiet but persistent struggle.

All this is not to underestimate the very great value of Boulder County’s highly educated and entrepreneurial workforce. It’s what makes Boulder County’s economy hum. And it’s easier to ameliorate social problems with a growing, rather than a shrinking, tax base.

The top job sector in Boulder County is professional, scientific and technical services, with government jobs, including federal, state and local occupying the second rung. Both have continued to grow over the past 10 years.

These sectors primed Boulder County to emerge from the 2008-2009 recession more quickly than some other cities did, said Brian Lewandowski, associate director of the Business Research Division of the Leeds School of Business at the University of Colorado.

“It was partially a matter of luck that the industries that were hot nationally post-recession are also what Boulder County has particular strength in,” he said.

“A lot of that strength comes from having a trifecta of private industries working in space, as well as CU, as well as the federal labs in Boulder and around the county. Together, they create an R and D (research and development) foundation in the area that brings together some of the brightest minds in the world.”

The MEDIAN SINGLE-FAMILY HOME SALES PRICE in Boulder County from 2003 to 2016 shows a steady increase in prices. The graph visualizes the data from the Boulder Area Realtor Association, indicating a growing real estate market in the area.

Source: Boulder Area Realtor Association
It was no easy feat for Francisca Amaya to buy a house in Longmont.

She, her two kids and her mother lived in a trailer before the 2013 flood hit. With flood relief money she received, she and her mother began looking for a home with her Realtor Marta Loachamin of ERA Tradewind Real Estate in Longmont.

As home prices in Boulder County rise, Loachamin said being a Realtor can be about “figuring out how we can be creative.”

Amaya works at Rudi’s Bakery in Boulder, and her mother, Adela Loya, works “cleaning in the afternoons” at IBM. Amaya said. By combining the flood relief money, a down payment assistance program and their two incomes, they were able to qualify for a loan. Even so, there was a lot of competition for homes in the price range they were searching for.

“I had to look around for a whole year for a house with a price I could qualify for,” Amaya said. “Every time I found a house, someone would come in behind me and offer more.”

Her advice for others: “I would tell them to look outside Longmont.”

The creative path to homeownership

and townhomes in Longmont are over. This was confirmed by a 2017 home affordability study in Longmont.

“There is no entry level housing being constructed and there hasn’t been any for several years,” concluded the report’s authors, Amy Aschenbrenner, CEO, Longmont Association of Realtors, and Kyle Snyder of Land Title Guarantee Co.

“Now there’s not a single family home available that doesn’t need work,” Loachamin said. “Do they have to widen their search, add a commute to their daily lifestyle, which has a cost in time, gas money and car maintenance?”

One of Loachamin’s clients who qualified for an affordable housing program, but who didn’t want to get on a waiting list made a different choice: “Now, he’s living in Greeley.”

Amaya said what kept her in Boulder County was the assistance she got that she was able to add to her and her mother’s income.

Despite the difficulties, she likes the family’s new home.

“The thing I like about the house is it’s not too big or too small for my mom, a girl, a boy and me. We’re all very happy.”
What’s it like to be poor?

Eliberto Mendoza, division manager of Boulder County Community Action Programs, does a poverty simulation every year for the volunteers in the Circles program, that pairs “leaders” in the community – those in need – with “allies” who work with them on the goals they set.

The Circle leaders, who experience the difficulties of poverty, pose as social workers in various agencies, bankers, homeless shelter employees, pawn shop owners and others.

“We tell the Circle leaders, ‘Treat people as you have been treated,’” said Mendoza, who is also a Community Foundation Trustee.

Each ally experiences a taste of going through the various agencies and businesses necessary to try to make ends meet.

“What the middle class fails to understand is that being poor is a full-time job,” Mendoza said. “One of our past Circle leaders (commented on) how dehumanizing it is to share your story with so many people you don’t know.”

Christina Pacheco Sims, division manager of Children, Youth and Families for the city of Longmont, said that just providing the most basic needs for your family can be exhausting and consuming.

“I think it goes back to Maslow’s hierarchy of needs,” Pacheco Sims said. “In theory, it sounds great to say everybody should go back to high school or college. If your children are hungry, (feeding them) is going to be your primary concern.”

What the middle class fails to understand is that being poor is a full-time job.” – Eliberto Mendoza
How the Circles program helped one woman change her life

Kat Goldberg was 39 when her husband died of an overdose.

He had become addicted to prescription drugs after being hit by a drunk driver. They had been separated, and she had placed a restraining order against him before he died.

She had three kids, 5, 6 and 9, to raise alone. Her middle son is autistic, and she couldn’t find a daycare that would take him. They were living in Lafayette off her late husband’s Social Security.

In 2012, three years after her husband died, she joined Circles, a program that pairs clients such as Goldberg, who they call “leaders” with people they call “allies” to help with goal-setting and problem-solving. She had once worked in medical billing and thought about going back to that.

One problem: “I knew there was no way I could support myself and three kids on that salary,” she said.

She decided she wanted to go back to college.

“Who can argue with something like that? But it’s easier to say you want to go back to school than to do it,” she said.

Goldberg didn’t know where to begin.

“My allies went with me to Front Range. We talked to an academic advisor to see what I needed to do to get in,” she said. “It meant the world to me. I was so intimidated by everybody.”

She met with her allies a few months later and they asked her what her goals were. Goldberg hadn’t really thought of setting something specific, but she replied: “I’d like to have my associate’s degree by the time my daughter graduates high school.”

In that one day, they sat down and planned how many classes she could take at a time and still be able to have time with her kids. They helped her consider things she hadn’t thought of, like not taking science and math at the same time.

They then helped her get her student loan out of default. That led to good news. Many of her previous courses would transfer. She received a fellowship from the University of Colorado, Denver, and is set to graduate in 2018 with a degree in communications.

Now she is an ally with Circles, her daughter is set to graduate high school, and her autistic son goes to school in Boulder, taking the bus himself.

“I call it the 30 year plan. If you had told me this is what I would be doing five years ago, I would have rolled my eyes and wondered what drugs you were on,” Goldberg said.
Our Economy & Housing

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Source: American Community Survey, 1-year data

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<th>2015 MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME</th>
<th>Boulder County</th>
<th>U.S.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anglo</td>
<td>$75,802</td>
<td>$61,394</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latino</td>
<td>$46,388</td>
<td>$44,782</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: American Community Survey, 1-year data

More to homelessness than meets the eye

Mention the homeless and some may think of someone holding a witty sign at a busy intersection.

What many don’t realize is that more than 1,200 children in 2017 were registered as homeless in the Boulder Valley and St. Vrain Valley Schools. Add in the 0-5 population not picked up in those numbers, and the estimate grows to 1,500 Boulder County kids going through an episode of homelessness each year.

“This is what people don’t understand about family homelessness,” said Julie Van Domelen, Executive Director of Emergency Family Assistance Association. “They think of the homeless as sleeping in parks.”

The less visible truth is that these families are typically doubled up, couch surfing with friends, living in cars or sleeping in tents in the mountains.

“They burn through relationships, bouncing around,” said Van Domelen. “This creates a lot of instability for the kids. You see this in their outcomes. They’re at higher risk for truancy, developmental delays, learning problems, behavior issues.”

Edwina Salazar, executive director of the Our Center in Longmont, said her basic needs organization, which helps people move toward self-sufficiency, is also serving more and more homeless families.

“We are finding for the first time several families from our community living in their cars with small children,” she said. “I’ve been here 18 years, and we have never seen the preponderance of homeless families having to live in their cars. Usually, we are able to find options quickly, but there are so many, we are out of options.”

The numbers sound small – five or six families at a given time – but Salazar said in the past, Our Center would go periods of time seeing no families in such dire straits or possibly one or two.

“When you think of the weight on the children and the vulnerability of children, it’s a significant number,” she said. “We are not an urban area. It’s unusual for families to be living in their cars.”

In the city of Boulder, 80 percent of the 4,800 clients who have received services for homelessness used them less than 10 times, for a shelter bed or a meal, for example, said Isabel McDevitt, executive director of Bridge House, a nonprofit offering a range of opportunities for homeless men and women to improve their lives.

“They resolve (the issue) very quickly,” McDevitt said. “On the flipside is the hard core group. They’ve been around the community a very long time.”

This 20 percent of people uses about 80 percent of the services, she said.

In addition, Boulder has experienced a national trend toward more “transition-age” youth homelessness. Youth aging out of foster care, the fact that Colorado is a Medicaid expansion state and the legalization of marijuana have put our state on the radar for young adults seeking a better life.

“Boulder County seems like a place to try to get a foothold,” said McDevitt. “It’s not just the use of marijuana that attracted people. (They thought) they could get a job in the industry and arrived with no plan.”

Salazar said the same trend is evident in Longmont.

“We are seeing increased numbers of single homeless people coming from outside our community,” she said.

“Many are from outside Colorado. A significant amount are from states like Florida and Texas, which is unusual because those are warm states. They’re coming to a colder climate.”

In addition to transient young people and families, more seniors are becoming homeless. Some have aged
A volunteer from HOPE (Homeless Outreach Providing Encouragement) reaches out to a man living on the streets in Longmont. The nonprofit’s core service is nighttime outreach to help with basic needs such as food and blankets, to treat the people they encounter with dignity and to help them access services. HOPE reaches out to an average of 100 people a night, and in 2016 saw a 50 percent increase in the number of people they served, according to Executive Director Lisa Searchinger. “Most of the people we serve are working,” she said. “They simply are unable to make ends meet and rely on HOPE when they are in crisis.”

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“Within the system, but many seniors in Boulder are very housing insecure, and can no longer afford to live there.

“All it takes is a death or a family break-up, being on a fixed income when rent keeps going up,” McDevitt said.

Longmont, once considered an affordable alternative for housing, is also seeing seniors pushed out by high rent, including increased numbers living in their cars. As many as 10 seniors, many of them women, are now living in their cars in Longmont, Salazar said.

“They were stable two or three years ago, but rents have increased so significantly, that the rent is higher than their incomes,” she said.

“They weren’t living large,” Salazar added. “If you have a $1,200 (a month) income from Social Security, and you’re paying $800 (in rent), you’re paying too much. If your rent goes up to $1,200, you can’t live in that unit.”

### FAMILY INCOME DISTRIBUTION, 2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Boulder County</th>
<th>U.S.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than $25,000</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$25,000 to $49,000</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$50,000 to $99,999</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$100,000 to $149,000</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$150,000 to $199,999</td>
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<td>$200,000 or more</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median family income</td>
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<td>$68,260</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: American Community Survey, 1-year data
Sarah Marquez and her son Zack relax at Marquez’ apartment in Boulder. Marquez lost herself in drugs and also lost custody of Zack. After being homeless and spending time in a halfway house, Marquez joined the Ready to Work program through Bridge House. Now, she has a job, a place to live and is on a path to regain custody of her son.

**The long road home**

**Sarah Marquez, 34**

*Where she was:* “I was addicted to substances for a very long time. That led me to losing my kids and my family. I went down a road of committing crimes. That led me to drug court. They weren’t able to find a placement. That led me to a halfway house.”

*What changed:* “They gave me an opportunity to go to Ready to Work. Once I got in there, I completed my probation. They got me into the kitchen. I’ve been able to stay sober. I can’t even tell you what Bridge House and Ready to Work have done for me – being able to work hard, to be stable ...”

*How it started:* “I was born in Boulder and raised in Longmont. I’ve never been out of the state. ... I smoked marijuana and drank up until age 22. ... (My kids) were 5 and 3. I ended up pregnant again. I gave that child up for adoption, because of my

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**$75,906**

The per year self-sufficiency standard household income for two adults with one child in school and one preschooler in Boulder County.

**$51,341**

Household income amount the same family would need in Pueblo County.

Source: Colorado Center on Law and Policy, 2015 Report
inability to talk to my family and stand up to my family, I hid my pregnancy. That wasn’t the best idea. I didn’t get educated on the effect that adoption and post-partum has on a person. That led me down the road to drugs. ... I went down ... I started using meth and coke. With meth, all my feelings were disconnected. I no longer felt. That’s the ultimate goal, right?”

“Right after, a couple months after, I lost custody of my children.”

Marquez had another child, Zack, now 10. Her grandparents took custody.

Finding her voice: “I’ve had to lose connection with my family. Everyone in my family used some kind of substance ... I don’t talk to my mom now, to my siblings, because of their drug use. ... Back then I was not strong enough to talk about what I was going through.”

“There were not the resources then. I don’t blame the system. I take a lot of responsibility. I didn’t have the courage and strength and hope to speak up with my situation.”

A different, better life: “I’m going to have physical custody (of Zack), while we work on legal custody. He’s counting down the days (till) ‘when I live with Mommy.’ I started therapy again. I’m starting a situation back with my son. I want ... to do it right. I have a therapist to talk about it and make sure I’m processing things good. I don’t want to go back to being overwhelmed and that same person.”

Marquez is engaged to be married. She met her fiancé on her journey to recovery.

“It’s the (Ready to Work) rule I broke – getting into a relationship. There have been a lot of relationships that didn’t work out at the house. I’m proud to be able to maintain my sobriety, to go against the odds. Me and him made it through. He’s a good man.”

Inside and out: “I wake up at 5 a.m. I go to the Y for a half hour to train for a 5K. Health has been the biggest thing of my life. I’ve got my insides healthy. Now I’m trying to focus on the outside. I’m trying to get bariatric surgery. There’s a lot of things I continue to focus on instead of idle hands. I don’t want to become the person I was. I don’t like that person.”

“I’m proud to be able to maintain my sobriety, to go against the odds.” – Sarah Marquez
Our Environment

Progress, worries on environmental issues

When you think of Boulder County, environmental consciousness comes to mind. Its large tracts of Open Space preserve both mountain and prairie.

Bike lanes, bike shares – Longmont opened a bike share program in 2017 – and accommodations for bikes on public buses encourage alternative means of commuting.

Miles of trails offer an invitation to engage with nature on foot or on a bike. However, not everyone takes part. Families with limited finances, unusual work hours or simply a lack of tradition tend not to enjoy the wilderness that surrounds us.

One piece of good news, climate-wise, is that Xcel Energy's Valmont power plant in Boulder burned its last load of coal in March 2017. Boulder County Commissioner Elise Jones says this is one of the positive local environmental developments recently, along with an increase in the number of charging stations for electric vehicles.

The Flatiron Flyer rapid bus transit route between Boulder and Denver has shown a 50 percent increase in ridership compared with the previous bus runs, she added.

Stories by Cindy Sutter

The Flatiron Flyer has shown a 50 percent increase in ridership over previous bus routes from Boulder to Denver. Here, passengers board in Boulder.
“That’s really our bus rapid transit line,” she says.

“Something that’s being forecast is doing arterial bus rapid transit on (Colorado State) Highway 7, the Diagonal and (U.S.) Highway 287.”

Still, more progress is needed. Water consumption is close to the national average.

And despite the many inducements to use alternatives, we still love our cars. In 2015, 111,000 or 66 percent of workers drove alone to work, compared to 77 percent nationally.

Bike commuting from necessity

Cindy Torres bikes to work every day.

Every day means every day in her case.

“I live in Mapleton Mobile Home Park. I don’t travel far, 1.8 miles each way,” said Torres, who works as a custodian at the University of Colorado. “I go to work at 4 o’clock in the morning, every single day – rain, snow, shine, flood.”

Torres is among the 4 percent of Boulder County residents who commute to work by bicycle, often for environmental reasons combined with enjoying the ride. It’s probably safe to say, though, that many bike commuters might take the occasional snow day off.

It’s different for those who work during off hours.

“For folks who don’t have a car or have the money for a parking pass, for those folks who work nontraditional hours when the bus doesn’t run, when we got to go to work, we got to go on a bicycle.” Torres said.

“These aren’t fancy bikes,” she added. “I want Boulder to recognize how many people riding to work who aren’t … professional people riding for fitness.”

When it snows, the streets aren’t usually plowed yet when Torres leaves for work.

“If I can get my bike out, I end up dragging it,” she says. “I’ve run a marathon. There are times when I dragged my bike to work that it seemed more physically demanding than that.”

Still, sometimes there are compensations.

“Sometimes during work, I’ll wear ear plugs when the vacuum is loud. When I do that I can hear myself breathing, hear internal stuff, my heart beating. It’s kind of like that,” she says, of riding before dawn. “You can almost hear the snow falling on the leaves, the snow falling on the ground, the creek running. It’s beautiful.”
Shannan Reese likes working at home because it allows her to get more work done and spend more time with her family.

Photo by Barbara Colombo

The advantages of working at home

Shannan Reese is one of the 12 percent of the Boulder County population who works at home.

“I love the flexibility. I feel like I also get more work done, because I’m by myself,” said Reese, who is senior account director for Denver-based Feed Media, which specializes in clients that include restaurants and other food and cocktail providers.

She also likes that skipping the commute to Denver from her Superior home saves not only money and car wear and tear, but also time.

“I like being a little more accessible to my family,” she said.

Roughly 59 percent of workers who live in Boulder County work in-county. Denver County ranks next as the workplace for 10 percent of Boulder County workers, with the remaining workers dispersed among other counties.

Reese goes to Denver once a month for a staff meeting and sometimes also travels there to work with clients.

“When I go to Denver, I try to take the bus as much as I can,” Reese said. “I get that 20 or 30 minutes to catch up on emails, doing a little work. If I had to commute (every day), it would be a big stress on myself, my car, my time and my money. When I just do it once in awhile, it’s so much easier.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Commute Time for Workforce Not Working at Home, 2015</th>
<th>Less than 10 minutes</th>
<th>10 to 29 minutes</th>
<th>30 to 59 minutes</th>
<th>More than an hour</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lyons</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>27%</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boulder</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Longmont</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>50%</td>
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<td>6%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Louisville</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Lafayette</td>
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<td>26%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Erie</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: American Community Survey, 5year data

Your Community Foundation – Making a Difference

Donors connect to impact environment

The Community Foundation’s Environmental Affinity Group (EAG) provides connections and inspiration to donors who are passionate about protecting and promoting our shared environment locally, regionally, nationally, and worldwide.

“With the leadership of the Community Foundation, and its role as a community convener and facilitator, EAG is bringing together people who really care about the environment, and who want to make a difference,” said Joellen Raderstorf, an EAG participant with a particular passion to address climate change. “We have more climate scientists, wealth managers and folks who work in natural foods than anyplace else in the world. How can we capitalize on that, learn and get inspired by each other and make an impact by putting our passions and our funds together? We’re interested in building a more resilient, inclusive community, and coming together to serve the community at-large in terms of caring for the environment.”

Among participants, survey results show 67 percent interested in climate change, 61 percent in energy, and 56 percent in population growth; other top areas of interest include environmental education, water, and pollination.

Since 2014, local environmental philanthropists have granted more than $2.3 million through Donor-Advised Funds at the Community Foundation, in addition to more than $149,000 in environmental grantmaking to Boulder County nonprofits through the foundation’s Community Trust grant cycle.
Grade on ozone pollution – a big, fat F

The American Lung Association released its annual air quality report on Boulder County in April of 2017, and the results aren’t pretty. The report, which pulls from three years of data, 2013, 2014 and 2015, gave Boulder County an F on the number of high ozone days. A bright spot is that the county received a grade of B on particle pollution over a 24 hour period and that it recorded five fewer high ozone days compared to 1996.

In 2016, the Denver-Aurora metro area, which includes Boulder County, ranked eighth in the nation in ozone pollution, according to the ALA. Our hot summers and the topography of the Denver metro area – basically a bowl at the foot of the Rockies – has proven to be a problem for ozone for more than 30 years.

Ozone is formed by burning fossil fuels such as gasoline, oil and coal and when solvents and other chemicals evaporate. When those chemicals mix with sunlight, ozone is created. Reducing ozone-causing emissions – from industrial power plants to residential gas-powered lawnmowers – would have an impact, environmentalists say.

High ozone levels are particularly hard on the elderly, the young and those with respiratory problems such as asthma. Working or exercising outdoors on high ozone days can exacerbate problems.

Ozone pollution has actually been improving in Colorado, according to the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment. The lower levels have come even with the state’s strong population growth. However, at the same time, the Environmental Protection Agency has tightened standards, meaning that more alerts may take place.

Save our precious water

In so many ways, Boulder County is a land of natural abundance – plenty of sunlight and breathtaking scenery at every turn.

One thing there isn’t a lot of, though, is water.

Boulder County per capita water use ranges from 76 gallons a day in Louisville to 86 gallons in Longmont and Superior. The national average is about 80 to 100 gallons.

We need to do better, and the Center for ReSource Conservation in Boulder offers several ways in which county residents can reduce consumption. The nonprofit estimates its programs, in partnership with more than two dozen utilities along the Front Range, saved more than 232 million gallons of water in 2016 alone.
Boulder, Xcel in protracted fight over municipalization

Who will provide electricity to residents of the city of Boulder in the future? It’s a question that remained unanswered as of this writing.

The city of Boulder set a goal to use 100 percent clean energy by 2030 and an 80 percent reduction in carbon emissions by 2050 and has taken several actions to that end.

Voters in 2006 passed a carbon tax, and the city began negotiating with Xcel Energy. The city decided not to renew its contract with Xcel in 2010.

The next year, voters approved paying for an evaluation of costs and effects of the city of Boulder taking over the utility. Boulder created a transition plan in 2014, after the evaluation confirmed the feasibility of the city taking over the utility.

Further steps as of mid-2017 could have included additional negotiations with Xcel to purchase its assets or for the power company to adjust its plans to fit Boulder’s goals.

Fracking at the forefront of environmental debate in Boulder County

Some communities are looking for ways to further regulate drilling as oil and gas interests push to ramp up drilling operations, especially when they’re close to housing developments and schools.

A fatal house explosion in Firestone caused by a leaking abandoned gas line helped galvanize anti-fracking activists in 2017. A series of moratoria on accepting new applications for oil and gas operations in unincorporated parts of Boulder County had been in place since 2012. The last ended in 2017. However, the Colorado Supreme Court struck down moratoria in Fort Collins and Longmont in 2016.

Colorado has more than 50,000 active oil and gas wells, as well as 36,500 inactive wells, with thousands of miles of pipelines, according to the Denver Post. State regulators historically relied on companies to self-report problems. In 2016, the Colorado Oil and Gas Conservation Commission deployed three inspectors statewide to monitor wells and pipelines.

Advocates and foes of fracking are likely to continue to clash in local government meetings, at the ballot box, in courts and on the streets.

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**Xcel Energy’s Colorado Energy Supply**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2021* projected</th>
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<td>Coal</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>46%</td>
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<td>Renewables</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural gas</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Projected | Source: Xcel Energy

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**50,000**

Number of active oil and gas wells in Colorado
**Teaching a love of nature**

If you live in Boulder County, a reverence for nature seems intuitive. All you have to do is turn your face to the west where the foothills of the Rocky Mountains beckon.

Turns out, it’s more complicated than that. Limited family finances, parental work hours or simply a lack of tradition are barriers to nature for many of our community’s youth.

Thorne Nature Experience, a Boulder based environmental education center founded in 1954, is leading an effort to reduce barriers to accessing nature by coordinating and funding a 27 organization collective impact project in Lafayette. The Nature Kids project starts early with kids and also gets families deeply involved. Thorne Executive Director Keith Desrosiers has a ready-made description to encompass the project’s reach.

“It’s pre-K to high school, back yard, back country, family-integrated, environmental education and outdoor education programming.”

The phrase is a mouthful, because the project is many-faceted, said Desrosiers.

What does that look like?

Marycruz Pineda’s family initially became involved through her daughter, Leidy, when she was in the fourth grade at Alicia Sanchez International Elementary School in Lafayette.

It started out with Leidy, now 16, going to a yearly camp, but now the whole family – Pineda and her husband and their kids David, 11, Bryant, 8, and Diego, 2 – participates.

“We were at the family camp at Cal-Wood, my own children, a lot of neighborhood people we know,” Pineda said. “We were finding a lot of common ground.”

Her family learned a lot.

“They gave us a lot of instruction on how to camp, where we can camp, where we shouldn’t camp, where we can have a fire,” she said. “We learned mountain biking, how to cook our food over the fire, ... how to shoot with a bow and arrow, also about different plants and trees in the woods.”

Carlos Lerma, Nature Kids community engagement manager, said the project starts with young kids experiencing nature near where they live and moving farther away as they get older.

“We believe that having kids experience nature closer to home is more relatable to them, especially when they’re younger,” he says. “They get to see how nature is a part of everyday life. As they get older, you can start introducing them to more complex subjects and the ideas that relate to the environment, nature and science.”

That can include trips to the Rocky Mountains where rafting can prompt lessons on how water is used in Colorado or the effects of climate change. Eventually high schoolers can get internships to work with younger children, Lerma said.

Marycruz Pineda said involvement in Nature Kids has meant a great deal to her family.

“It has been very rewarding. What I really liked is it has given us a better quality of life,” she said. “As the kids are getting older, it has provided not just volunteer opportunities, but they are also exploring work opportunities. They are able to get insights into jobs and careers in nature.”

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**Open Space Time Continuum**

**1898**
The year Boulder began setting aside land for Open Space, using a bond issue to pay for the land that is now Chautauqua Park.

**1959**
Boulder passes charter amendment, mandating a “blue line” above which city water would not be supplied, a strategy to prevent extensive development of mountain areas.

**1964**
After citizen protests of a planned luxury hotel on Enchanted Mesa, the city of Boulder condemns the land to buy it. Donations from the community fund the purchase.
Brainard Lake, located between Nederland and Ward in the Roosevelt National Forest, has a popular hiking trail suitable for most skill levels.

WHAT CAN I DO?
- Ride or walk to work, school and other destinations.
- Fly and drive less
- Conserve water with xeric (waterwise) landscaping, water-saving toilets, shorter showers, and running your dishwasher only when full.
- Conserve energy by getting an energy audit for your house, considering a swamp cooler instead of A/C, lowering your thermostat in winter and converting to LED bulbs.
- Take action by supporting environmental nonprofits, voting for pro-environment candidates and causes, and weighing in on your city government’s plans and actions.

Preserving land for the public

Boulder County has nearly 64,000 acres of Open Space of which 61 percent is open to the public, 30 percent is preserved for agriculture and 9 percent is closed for various reasons. Nearly 40,000 acres of privately owned land are protected by conservation easements.

Much of the land west of the Peak to Peak Highway to the Continental Divide is owned by the U.S. Forest Service and the National Park Service. Parts of the Roosevelt National Forest, Indian Peaks Wilderness and Rocky Mountain National Park are in Boulder County.

1967
Boulder voters OK a .40 sales tax to fund Open Space purchases, the first city in the United States to do so. Since then, citizens have continued to vote to tax themselves to buy Open Space.

1973
Boulder County buys its first Open Space land.

Sources: bouldercolorado.gov, bouldercounty.org
Nо 19. Сцена у балкона
Our Arts & Culture

Artists flock to Boulder County, but struggle to make ends meet

Does Boulder County’s stunning scenery have anything to do with the fact that it’s considered an arts cluster?

Charlotte LaSasso, Executive Director of the Boulder County Arts Alliance, thinks so.

“I’m reminded every morning as I get up and head out to work – these are my mountains,” she said.

The conclusion that Boulder County is attractive to artists comes from more than a contemplative gaze at the Flatirons. In 2016, a National Endowment for the Arts study found that Boulder had the third highest per capita rate of artists in the country. Only Los Angeles and Santa Fe had higher rates. In addition, ticket sales and donations to the arts have risen, and the city of Boulder has increased its support for local artists.

Americans for the Arts conducted a national survey in 2015 on the impact of investments in the arts. It found that Boulder’s nonprofit arts and culture organizations generate nearly $70 million and provide more than 1,800 jobs with a total of nearly $48 million in income for households.

LaSasso adds that the arts are growing all over the county.

Stories by Cindy Sutter

The Colorado Music Festival Orchestra has performed a wide variety of music at Chautauqua every summer for six weeks for more than 40 years.
“Longmont is a different city than it was 10 years ago. It’s very interested in highlighting the arts,” she said. “Lafayette and Louisville are getting more organized.”

However, the flood of 2013 hit Lyons particularly hard and took a toll on the arts community there. “It’s been a really vital arts community. It’s interested in retaining that status,” LaSasso said.

She worries about artists being priced out by the high cost of living. The average wage of Boulder County residents working in the art, entertainment or recreation industries was less than $24,000 in 2015.

La Sasso is also concerned about a drop in the resources local media are able to devote to the arts, although she does see local artists and arts organizations doing more to promote their work.

“How do we get the word out?” she said.

LaSasso also said she’s glad the city of Boulder upped by 50 percent the amount it will spend on local artists and art organizations in 2017 as part of its community cultural plan.

That’s in addition to funds Boulder County and other communities in the Denver metro area receive from the Scientific and Cultural Facilities District. In 2016, the sales tax funding for the district was overwhelmingly approved by voters, meaning Boulder County and others will receive funds through 2030.

She said she’s hoping to see more effort in spotlighting local arts events.

“Most cities have signage to promote the arts,” she said.

Despite these quibbles, LaSasso is optimistic about the future of the arts in Boulder County.

“This is an amazing community, the intelligence that lives here,” she said. “It’s incredible how many off-the-charts smart people there are, the creativity. ... There are so many pieces. If we can put them together properly, we’ll really have something.”
Lafayette Police Chief Rick Bashor reads an autobiographical monologue written by Mexican immigrant Victor Galvan, right, during a sold-out performance of “Do You Know Who I Am?” Galvan moved to Colorado with his family when he was 8 months old.

Using the arts to promote social change

Art helps us tell stories that define who we are as a people. These stories can be used to promote social change or for propaganda to dehumanize people.

“We don’t believe that art is ever neutral,” said Kirsten Wilson, Executive Director of Motus Theater in Boulder. “How Motus Theater uses art is to make sure the voices that are often marginalized in our community because of historic inequality are amplified so that more of the stories of our community are told.”

Motus Theater is amongst several Boulder County organizations using the arts for social change. One of its projects, “Do You Know Who I Am?,” is a one-act show featuring autobiographical monologues written and performed by undocumented immigrant youth. The show took a unique twist in Spring 2017 when the Boulder County district attorney, the county sheriff and police chiefs from Longmont, Lafayette and Louisville took on the roles of these immigrants for a single performance.

“It felt like the most important thing we could have done after the election,” Wilson said. “Boulder County has awesome law enforcement leaders who are very outspoken about the need to have separation between immigration enforcement and policing. We thought if we could get some of these leaders to tell the stories of undocumented community members, we could support them in this time of stress but also be part of the national law enforcement conversation and let people know there’s no association between being undocumented and being a criminal threat.”

More than 10,000 people live-streamed the sold-out performance at the Dairy Arts Center. And 3 million listeners heard a feature story about it on National Public Radio. Wilson said she plans to make a film of the performance for law enforcement officers across the country to use for educational purposes.
Ana Maria Hernando moved to Boulder 22 years ago because the city had a contemporary art museum, and because she thought it would be a good place to raise her three young children after a divorce.

After growing up in Argentina, the artist first came to the United States to attend the University of California, Berkeley. From there, she moved to Boston, then to Boulder, which she found collaborative and welcoming.

“When I moved here, I felt how much things were waiting to be done. There were a lot of possibilities,” she said. “People were very open. They didn’t have the attitude you would find on the East Coast. I loved that.”

Hernando also began to paint flowers when she came to Boulder, a subject matter that has become a core of her work.

“Nature is very important in my works and my beliefs. It grounds me,” she said.

But why flowers?

“First, they are beautiful,” she said. “Even though I paint flowers, I do it more from the abstraction – the enchantment they have in their movements, their grace, their lines and also what they mean for our hearts.”

She adds that flowers are a “beautiful mirror of what life is. (It’s) a very concentrated and quick way of seeing from birth all the way to death, the recycling of those energies going back into the earth. It feels very much like generosity. In life, they are intended to be all about beauty.”

Hernando also does installation work, usually including fiber art. This is about what she calls “women’s work,” meaning the way in which women come together to create. The first group she worked with were cloistered nuns, who embroidered fabric for her. She also works with women artisans in the Andes.

“I have mostly used their wares for my installations,” she said. “They are all very spiritual women that are in the world bringing beauty also connected to the spirit.”

Hernando believes that modern culture makes it harder to find such things.

“The computer, the phone, in some ways they shatter us, make our measure so much smaller,” Hernando said. “Nature and the spirit expand us. That’s something in my work … I would like for people to feel that.”
A touch of Shakespeare in the foothills

The Colorado Shakespeare Festival marked its 60th season in 2017. The season also marked the second time the country’s second-oldest Shakespeare festival completed Shakespeare’s entire canon, a feat achieved by only a few other companies in the nation.

That meant staging the rarely seen “Henry VI, Part 3” in addition to crowd pleasers.

“It’s rarely produced. The last time we produced it was in the 1960s,” said Timothy Orr, Producing Artistic Director.

The festival’s serious approach makes it one of the significant institutions that helped make Boulder County the cultural and arts center it is today. It doesn’t hurt that most of the plays are staged in the picturesque Mary Rippon Outdoor Theatre.

“(Boulder) is just an amazing place to live and work,” Orr said. “It’s an inspiration for the artist to be here among all this natural beauty, to be in a well-maintained and preserved town at the foot of the Rocky Mountains,” he said. “We have one of the most beautiful outdoor theaters in the United States.”

Flying for a living

How’s this for finding your bliss? Reliving your favorite childhood pastimes in a more artistic way.

Here’s what Nancy Smith, Founder of Frequent Flyers in Boulder, had to work with as source material:

“I spent my childhood climbing trees, swinging on swings and going around till I got dizzy,” she said.

Smith said aerial dance is a relatively new art form, that got its start in New York in 1967, then moved to the West Coast in the mid-1970s. Smith first saw a performance in Seattle, then brought it to Boulder in 1988. She was attracted to the city’s creativity and openness. “It’s a big, innovative community,” she said.

Now it’s a mainstay, and one of 64 Boulder County arts organizations that shared $2.5 million in 2015 funding from the Scientific and Cultural Facilities District – a 0.1 percent sales tax renewed by Denver metro area voters in 2016.

“It’s very hard even now to put (what aerial dance is) into words if someone has no frame of reference,” Smith said, adding that some initially found the concept hard to grasp. “Its roots are from modern dance. When people see it, they understand what we’re doing.”

“I spent my childhood climbing trees, swinging on swings and going around till I got dizzy.”

– Nancy Smith
“Gigging for a living since 2001”

Alex Johnstone works in the gig economy, but not in the most recent sense of the term, which often means driving for Uber.

He plays music, specifically fiddle and mandolin, with a group called RapidGrass.

“I’ve been gigging for a living since 2001,” he said.

It’s easier to make a living playing bluegrass in Colorado than it is in other places, partly because the music is more experimental and jam band-ish in Colorado than it is in Appalachia, according to Johnstone. That makes the appeal broader.

“We are often hired to play corporate events and weddings, more than rock bands or jazz bands,” he said.

That’s because RapidGrass, which has a vocalist, also has musicians familiar with various genres.

“We can play the Pachelbel Canon,” he said, but the band also takes requests such as “Can you play Neil Young’s ‘Harvest Moon’?”

That said, making a living is a relative term.

“I’m not making incredible house-buying money or anything,” Johnstone said. “I make somewhere between $20,000 and $30,000 (a year). It takes a lot of gigging to make that money.”

His income is about par with the average: about $24,000 in Boulder County for the sector that includes arts, entertainment and recreation. It helps that Johnstone is single, with only his own mouth to feed. He also supplements his musician income by filling in as a caregiver at Imagine!, which provides various levels of support to developmentally disabled people in Boulder and Broomfield counties.

Johnstone got his start at the Princess Wine Bar in Crested Butte when a ski bum asked him to play with him.

“He liked what I could do …” Johnstone said. “I played “The Devil Went Down to Georgia” and “Orange Blossom Special.”

The latter is sometimes known as the fiddler’s national anthem for its displays of fiddling virtuosity, some of which includes train sounds.

“We started making tips off the Texans,” Johnstone said. “It started there.”

He went on to form a band with friends called Spring Creek, which produced four albums, and along the way he moved to Lyons. In mid-2017, as he and his band members prepared for their eighth Clear Creek RapidGrass Bluegrass Festival in Idaho Springs, Johnstone said he’s happy to be where he is.

“There’s always been a ready and willing fan base for the jam band approach to bluegrass in Boulder County,” he said. “It’s how I continue to make my living.”
WHAT CAN I DO?

Visit museums and galleries, support local musicians and go to concerts and plays.

Donate time or money to arts organizations.

Teach your children to appreciate the arts by taking them to cultural events.

Buy art from local artists.

Take a class at a local arts organization.

YOUR COMMUNITY FOUNDATION – MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Fund helps artists find their footing

We’ve come to know that many people at home in Boulder County want to make a difference beyond their lifetimes – for generations to come: people like Martha Kate Thomas whose fund for artists, established with the Community Foundation in 2012, supports those with unforeseen needs due to special circumstances.

“I was really in my stride just before the 2013 floods,” said Priscilla Cohan. “In Lyons, my block was flooded – my house, and the studio behind my house. The studio had the most water – about three feet – and silt.” With 20 years’ immersion in the arts as a potter, painter, performance artist, community art activist and more, Cohan is experienced in many mediums – from wood and clay to metal, plaster, rubber, and concrete.

Recovering from the floods cost more than Cohan anticipated. “With support from the Martha Kate Thomas Fund, it was great to get my studio back online, first,” she said. “Receiving funding made it possible to even think about going back to my artwork again. It’s great practically, and it’s also really great psychologically.”

Since 2013, the legacy gift from Thomas’ estate grants $25,000 annually to the Boulder County Arts Alliance which, in turn, makes grants to individual artists. By 2017, the fund had granted a total of $125,000.
Our Civic Participation & Giving

Survey: We are least open to minorities, immigrants and seniors
Generous with our time, but not our money

The 2016 presidential election created a flashpoint in the way many people across the country perceive the world. The same was true in Boulder County.

“It’s one of those moments in contemporary history when all of our values are drawn into question,” said Nicole Melaku, Executive Director of the Colorado Immigrant Rights Coalition (CIRC).

CIRC is a statewide, membership-based coalition of immigrant, faith, labor, youth, community, business and ally organizations founded in 2002 to improve the lives of immigrants and refugees by making Colorado a more welcoming, immigrant-friendly state.

If our openness to marginalized communities is an indication of our values, we’ve got some work to do locally.

The most marginalized of Boulder County’s residents continue to be racial and ethnic minorities and immigrants from other countries, according to respondents to the Community Foundation Boulder County’s 2017 survey on civic participation and giving.

Stories by Chris Barge

Elizabeth Malo was among hundreds of people who hoped to get inside Boulder High School to caucus on the evening of March 1, 2016. Several hundred registered Boulder County Democrats gathered in and around Boulder High School as part of the party’s statewide caucuses.
We are also a less welcoming community to senior citizens than we used to be, according to the survey. However, we are reportedly very open to gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people.

We continue to have high volunteer rates, especially amongst older, middle- and upper-class women. But as generous as we are with our time, we are stingy with our money when it comes to giving to nonprofit causes. We give less as a percentage of our income than two thirds of Colorado counties, in a state that gives less than all other Western states.

Why don’t we give more? Respondents to our survey continue to say it’s mainly because they can’t afford it, or they volunteer their time or administrative costs are too high. And while the idea that people in Boulder County don’t need it remains the last reason given, more than three times as many respondents added that rationale to their list compared to the survey two years before.

How to support immigrants and refugees

Build authentic, firsthand relationships by volunteering for organizations such as Intercambio.

Join a rapid response network.

Invite an organization to speak to your congregation or school about what’s at stake for so many.

Find out where your elected officials stand on issues impacting immigrants and refugees. Urge them to focus on the issue.

Give money to organizations advocating for immigrants and refugees.

PERCENTAGE OF BOULDER COUNTY RESIDENTS WHO SAY WE’RE VERY OPEN OR OPEN TO THE FOLLOWING GROUPS

- Gay and lesbian people: 72%
- Young adults without children: 67%
- Families with young children: 64%
- Recent college grads: 56%
- Senior citizens: 46%
- Immigrants from other countries: 42%
- Racial and ethnic minorities: 37%

Source: Community Foundation Survey 2017

“All of our values are drawn into question.”

– Nicole Melaku
Marta Moreno isn’t surprised to hear that racial and ethnic minorities and immigrants from other countries remain Boulder County’s most marginalized populations.

Every day, the founder of el Comite de Longmont helps immigrants by referring them to legal assistance, addressing their basic needs, promoting advocacy and empowerment and building community bridges.

“With this new administration, we have no news but bad news,” she said. “People fear that if they go anywhere for help, immigration enforcement will be there to meet them.”

As a result, immigrants in Longmont and elsewhere aren’t feeling welcomed and they are not accessing services that could help them, she said.

El Comite has responded by ramping up learning sessions helping immigrants understand what they can do to empower themselves and navigate the system. Moreno is also personally pushing every immigrant who is a permanent resident to become a U.S. citizen, “because it’s going to get bad, and people need to become citizens.”

“I tell people, ‘I can’t do it myself. You have to march. You have to call. You have to sign up,’” she said.

Moreno said el Comite continues to struggle to pay the bills. That’s not the case with the Colorado Immigrant Rights Coalition. It’s among a handful of local organizations serving immigrants that have seen a “Trump bump” in volunteers and donations. Volunteers and donors in the city of Boulder, in particular, see the issue of immigrant rights as a humanitarian issue as opposed to the policy debate it’s often presented as in Washington, said Nicole Melaku, Executive Director of CIRC.

But outside the city of Boulder, “it’s a little bit harder to have these conversations,” she said.

The challenge to grassroots organizers working on behalf of marginalized populations now is that they have been running on adrenaline and are exhausted. “This is going to be a long ride and we need to take care of ourselves,” she said. “We have an opportunity to draw a line in the sand and answer the question of who we want to be as Coloradans for the next 20 years.”
Pick an issue and get involved

Let’s just say Denice Walker is civicly engaged.

Since moving to Boulder County in 1980, she has had a career at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, received a Master’s Degree in religious studies and a PhD in media studies – both from The University of Colorado – and lived in Boulder, Louisville and Lafayette.

Now she’s half-retired, lives in an affordable senior living community for active adults, teaches in CU’s Women and Gender Studies Department, serves on the board of directors of the Safehouse Progressive Alliance for Nonviolence, is a member of the League of Women voters, and serves on both the Chancellor’s Advisory Committee for Women at CU and the Lafayette Human Rights Commission.

“I think in complexity and I think in terms of intersectionality,” she said. “I’m intrigued by and aware of the fact that there are no simple solutions to these complex problems.”

Walker, 65, was one of hundreds of Boulder County residents who attended one of about 50 listening sessions in 2017, hosted by the Community Foundation Boulder County’s new CEO, Jeff Hirota.

She said she’s not surprised to learn that Boulder County’s openness to senior citizens is waning, according to the Community Foundation’s latest survey.

“My sense is, it isn’t so much hostility toward seniors, but more like benign neglect,” she said. “We’re invisible. The assumption is you’re either young and working up to age 40 or 50 or you’re fully retired. The reality is there are more and more people like me – not fully working, but not fully retired, either.”

She cautioned that while three-quarters of respondents reported locals were “open or very open” to gay and lesbian people, her experience as a member of the LGBT community has taught her otherwise. “I’d say open but not very open,” she said.

Walker teaches a course called “Disney’s Women and Girls.” Once, a student pulled her aside at the start of the course to tell her she heard other students were worried she was teaching the class because they suspected she was a lesbian. “I don’t feel like I can be entirely open,” Walker said.

It also concerns her that nearly every time she picks up the paper, someone is outraged over a community push for some sort of affordable housing.

“I just get beside myself,” she said. “I get outraged. This is what government is supposed to do. When I see people resistant to that, it signals a whole attitude. They always say, ‘It’s not that I’m opposed to affordable housing,’ and then there’s the inevitable ‘but.’ For me, that’s not a welcoming attitude.”

Walker holds out hope, however, that since the 2016 election, something has shifted. Many people have realized their involvement matters. “Our challenge is to help the public realize it’s in their best interest to be interested and supportive,” she said.

Denise Walker’s advice on how to get involved:

Work locally. Don’t be distracted by the political drama on the national level.

Choose a local cause you feel passionate about and focus on helping that one cause.

Be willing to live with a slower pace of change.

Tell the story of the local cause you care about.
A volunteer with Boulder County Care Connect arrives at the home of one of the many people aged 60-plus who the nonprofit organization helps to stay in the comfort of their homes.

Photo by Michelle Maloy Dillon

More than half of us volunteer

Local volunteer activity remained high in 2017, with 55 percent donating their time to some sort of organization, according to the Community Foundation’s survey. This was up from 45 percent volunteer participation in 2015 and 51 percent in 2013.

The national volunteer rate was little changed at 24.9 percent for the year ending in September 2015, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported. About 62.6 million people volunteered through or for an organization at least once between September 2014 and September 2015. The national volunteer rate in 2013 was 25.4 percent.

IN THE LAST YEAR, DID YOU...

Vote in the election? 96%
Volunteer to help a friend or neighbor outside of an organization? 89%
Work with neighbors to improve your community? 58%
Attend a public meeting? 50%

Source: Community Foundation Survey 2017

YOUR COMMUNITY FOUNDATION – MAKING A DIFFERENCE

A fund to support LGBTQ needs

While Boulder County is generally perceived to be open to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer people, our LGBTQ community faces persistent challenges. That’s why donors like Tom Hay and his partner, Mark Hinson, have designated a portion of their estates to support the Community Foundation’s Open Door Fund.

“The fund supports the whole gamut of issues and concerns facing the LGBTQ community – from teenagers at risk of being bullied to seniors without a partner or other family members to care for them,” said Hay, who helped launch the fund in the early ‘90s.

Since the fund’s founding in 1996, grants totaling more than $400,000 have been distributed to local agencies and programs serving Boulder County’s LGBTQ community, and an endowment of more than $900,000 has been established for future needs. The Open Door Fund grants approximately $50,000 annually to local nonprofits serving Boulder County’s LGBTQ community.

“One of the beauties of an endowed fund is that – while we don’t know what challenges we’ll face in the future – we can help prepare for them,” added Bob Morehouse, founder and CEO of Vermilion Design + Digital, and a longtime supporter of the Open Door Fund. “When you look at some of the gains we’ve made in extending rights, and when we realize how fragile those gains can be, it’s really important to look ahead and mobilize resources to meet future needs.

“We’re in an era where giving locally feels more important than ever.”

$400,000
Total amount of grants awarded by the Community Foundation’s Open Door Fund
The importance of becoming uncomfortable

Jennie Arbogash’s parents struggled to make ends meet. And yet, she was raised in a generous family and community.

“Even when we had very little when I was young, my mom still drove seniors to doctor’s appointments,” she said. “I wouldn’t be here today without the childhood priest who put money in my backpack so my family could afford to eat.”

These values stuck with her, and inform how she lives today. As the Executive Director of Social Venture Partners Boulder County, Jennie works with civically engaged donors who want to improve their communities. She also donates money to causes she cares about, including the Community Foundation, which she has named in her will.

“I don’t feel like you have to have had a challenging childhood to feel like you want to pay it forward,” she said. “You don’t have to go through it, so long as you witness it.”

She recalls a trip she took to South Africa with a nonprofit group. Everyone was middle-class, educated and successful. But two of the participants were black, and they were treated far worse than everyone else. It was a profound experience for her and her travelling companions.

“Are you willing to go to that uncomfortable place and struggle with this reality?” she asks. “Whether we like it or not, this is the reality for many in our community. How can we be present for that?”

One of the most important things we can do in community is to step outside our comfort zone, and show up at events and activities that we may not feel relate to us, she said. In this way we will educate ourselves and transcend simple, theoretical perspectives. We can learn how to be good allies and advocates for those different than ourselves.

Since the 2016 election, Jennie has noticed a distinct change in how people are getting involved in our community:

First, people who have never considered being active in a political party or running for office are getting involved.

Second, a lot of people are trying to figure out a way to have civil conversations with people who have perspectives different from their own.

Third, people are trying to take action to make sure underprivileged people have a voice.

Finally, people are volunteering more.

“I’ve noticed a change regardless of political proclivity, race or age,” she said.

Are you willing to go to that uncomfortable place and struggle with this reality?”
– Jennie Arbogash
Five reasons people give

What motivates people to give of their time, talent or treasure? Why do people commit to making a difference in the world? Although there are hundreds of stories about why people give, Jennie Arbogash believes they fall into five categories:

- **A sense** of social justice or a spiritual motivation
- **A desire** to “pay it forward”
- **A commitment** to a high quality of life for everyone in one’s community
- **An understanding** that a high quality of life for everyone is in everyone’s self interest
- **An upbringing** in the distinctively American ethos of giving back

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Source: Community Foundation Survey 2017

Inspiring entrepreneurs to push the status quo

Inspiring early-stage corporate philanthropy, Pledge 1% Colorado is a network of entrepreneurs who share a common commitment to give back. A movement with roots at the Community Foundation, Pledge 1% connects young companies’ future success to philanthropy by allowing them to easily pledge 1 percent of equity, 1 percent of employee time to volunteerism, 1 percent of product and 1 percent of profit to local communities.

Since its first member exit in 2008, Pledge 1% Colorado has contributed more than $6 million to Front Range nonprofits and hundreds of hours of volunteer service. Based on its local success, the Community Foundation partnered with Salesforce, Atlassian, and Rally for Impact to launch a global version of the program – Pledge 1% – named Most Innovative Not-For-Profit by Fast Company (2017).

“I’ve seen first-hand the Community Foundation’s crucial role in providing the foresight, expertise and resources needed to test the premise and scalability of the Pledge 1% model,” said Seth Levine, an advisor to Pledge 1% Colorado.

Pledge 1% Colorado was on track to reach 200 member companies by the end of 2017, with even greater growth anticipated in 2018. The program’s disruption of traditional philanthropy models continues to inspire entrepreneurs to push the status quo.
Building a culture of giving

T.J. Heyman noticed something was different about Boulder County soon after moving here from the San Francisco Bay area in 1993.

“I was surprised to hear little talk of giving back – as had been my experience in other places I’ve lived or worked. Not only in San Francisco, but also in Boston, Dallas and other communities,” he said. “I read with shock that – while Boulder is one of the wealthiest, best educated, happiest and most fit communities in Colorado, or anywhere – we were below the state and national averages in giving.”

So Heyman reached out to the Community Foundation and helped launch the Culture of Giving campaign along with other partners including Sterling-Rice Group. The effort has long since become a central part of the Community Foundation’s mission.

Both Heyman and his wife Jane McConnell have served on the Community Foundation’s Board of Trustees. And they have been involved as donors and volunteers for many other nonprofits, including the “I Have A Dream” Foundation of Boulder County, Intercambio and ELPASO – Engaged Latino Parents Advancing Student Outcomes.

“Our investments locally have mostly been focused in the area of education, because we believe that education is the best path to breaking the cycle of poverty and creating opportunities to achieve equity,” McConnell said.

The parents of four also have worked hard to instill their values in their children, who reciprocated by raising money for nonprofits with hot chocolate stands and ski-a-thons, and by asking friends to bring a gift for a child in need to their birthday parties. Their oldest son ran a sports camp in their backyard in the summers and invited students the family had met by sponsoring a class through the “I Have A Dream” program.

Their youngest son became good friends with one of the Dreamers, who taught him important life lessons about being a team player and public speaking.

“It really has been a two-way street,” McConnell said. “They’ve gotten as much out of it as they’ve given.”
The power is in the asking

Giving back is in Leslie Allen’s blood.

“Both of my parents were teachers,” she said. “Both came from exceedingly challenging circumstances. One was abandoned as a baby, raised in an orphanage, and drafted to the front lines of Korea. My mother’s mom died early and her dad was an alcoholic. Yet my parents always were giving of their time and helping others.”

Today, Allen continues her family’s legacy of giving by helping nonprofits raise money through the company she co-founded, Front Range Source.

It’s not always easy in Boulder County, where our giving ratio places us 44th out of 64 Colorado counties, according to The Chronicle of Philanthropy. Colorado residents also give less as a percentage of income than all their Western neighboring states.

Local nonprofits face several challenges that are unique to our area, Allen says.

First, our community is less religious than most places – and much of charitable giving remains religion-based. A Gallup Poll in 2013 found that Boulder was virtually tied with Burlington, Vermont, as the least religious city in the United States, with 61% of residents polled saying they were “not religious.” The most religious metro area was Provo-Orem, Utah, where 77 percent of those polled qualified as “very religious.”

Correspondingly, Utah is one of the most generous states, were residents give 6.61% of their adjusted gross income to charity. That’s an average annual contribution of $6,182. Boulder County residents give just 2.72%, or $3,052 on average.

“That’s got to be the Mormon influence,” Allen says of Utah. “In every religion you can think of, there is some sort of tithing that is almost automatic.”

Allen also points to the fact that lower income people give a higher percentage of their income to charity than wealthier people. “That could be a factor here in Boulder County where the cost of living continues to climb,” she says.

Another challenge nonprofits face is the fact that many of our residents of Boulder County aren’t from here originally. They still give, but they give to their alma mater out east or an international charity based in San Francisco. “Might they give more overall if they felt more connection to our community? I think so. Giving is really local,” she said. “It’s inspired by what you see and experience. People who move here may want to give locally but if they aren’t connected to the Boulder County nonprofit community, they won’t even know who to give to.”

In addition, Allen points to the fact that Boulder County’s nonprofit sector is made up of a lot of smaller organizations. “We have so many smaller nonprofits. They do great work, but they don’t have the budgets to hire fundraising staff to build relationships with donors,” she said. “Why do people give? Because they are asked.”

More than half of Boulder County’s residents volunteer, according to the Community Foundation’s civic participation and giving survey. This is more than twice the national volunteer rate. It should translate into donations, but it doesn’t, “and the reason why it doesn’t is because you don’t have sophisticated fundraising operations to actively steward and solicit those donors,” Allen said. “We need more people out there fundraising to inspire more people to give to their passions.”
BOULDER COUNTY’S CHARITABLE GIVING

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Charitable Giving: Comparison of Nearby States

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<td>Colorado</td>
<td>2.87%</td>
<td>$3,013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arizona</td>
<td>3.06%</td>
<td>$3,111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kansas</td>
<td>3.57%</td>
<td>$3,111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nebraska</td>
<td>3.67%</td>
<td>$3,276</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Mexico</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
<td>$3,276</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oklahoma</td>
<td>4.46%</td>
<td>$4,584</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utah</td>
<td>6.61%</td>
<td>$6,182</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wyoming</td>
<td>3.45%</td>
<td>$4,088</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


We, the people?

Boulder County’s elected leadership, and its advisory boards and commissions, are not reflective of the racial and ethnic diversity of the county as a whole.

In 1990, 93 percent of the county’s residents were Anglo, or non-Hispanic white. By 2015, more than 20 percent of the county identified as a person of color.

Yet in 2017 only four out of the 106 elected officials in Boulder County were people of color, according to a review by the Boulder County Commissioners’ Office. That included all city and town councils, county officials, school boards, RTD, statehouse and Congressional leadership.

In addition, only 42 of the 833 volunteers serving on advisory boards and commissions around the county were people of color – just 5 percent.

This disparity between who we are and who leads us raises a fair question: When will our marginalized populations truly be heard?

WHAT CAN I DO?

Attend your town or city’s elected council meeting

Vote in the election

Give of your time, or your treasure, to a local nonprofit

Read the local newspaper

Campaign for an issue you care about

Why not give more to charity? (% strongly or somewhat agree)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2017</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>You just can’t afford to give more money</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You volunteer your time</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You think most charities have administrative costs that are too high</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You just don’t know enough about charities</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You already give to your church</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You already support too many charities</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You’re not sure charities are effective</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boulder County doesn’t need it</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Community Foundation Survey 2017
“Feelin’ the Bern” but failing to vote

The City of Boulder has a reputation for being a liberal political stronghold. The county has that reputation as well, to varying degrees.

While Republicans dominated the 2016 election nationally, Democratic support locally picked up steam.

Registered Democrats increased from 40 percent to 43.9 percent of the county’s voters between 2015 and 2017. Meanwhile, registered Republicans fell from 18 percent to 16.8 percent. At the same time, the county’s registered voters who were unaffiliated fell from 40 percent to 37.3 percent.

Were some local voters “feelin’ the Bern” but not “ready for Hillary?” Were others turned off by Trump? Only 89 percent of active voters bothered to cast a ballot in the general election, down significantly from the 96 percent who voted in 2012, when Barack Obama won re-election.

Then-presidential candidate Bernie Sanders addressed a crowd of about 9,000 on the CU campus in October, 2016.

Source: Boulder County Elections Division

*Voting changes were implemented in 2016 eliminating polling places but allowing in-person ballots to be cast in the two weeks leading up to the election.

**Note:** Ballots could be cast in-person at the Boulder County Clerk & Recorder’s Office and at any Boulder County Library during regular business hours in the two weeks leading up to the election.
TOGETHER, WE INSPIRE IDEAS

Subscribe to our blog (commfound.org/blog) and follow us on social media to discover who our community is today and who we are becoming. We regularly feature news, announcements, and the innovations and impact of grantees dedicated to aid and empower the most vulnerable among us – as well as stories of inspired giving from donors and partners. Together, we inspire improved quality of life for all.

TOGETHER, WE IGNITE ACTION

Since the first TRENDS Report was published in 1998, we've been refining the indicators we track to more effectively guide and rally our community around our shared values. Because the better we understand our home – the gaps and gifts that set Boulder County apart – the better we work together to identify solutions, and build on our strengths. Together, we ignite community change.

TOGETHER, WE ACCOMPLISH MORE THAN WE DO ALONE

The Community Foundation Boulder County since 1991 has granted more than $75 million to nonprofits focused on health and human services, education, civic engagement, arts and culture, and animals and the environment.

Through competitive grant cycles, we provide funding and create connections between community-minded nonprofits and the resources they need to address local issues. We know that when informed and committed community members come together, inspiration strikes and transformation happens.

Your Community Foundation catalyzes community by facilitating collaboration and partnerships, connecting emerging leaders across sectors, and building networks that advance inclusivity countywide. We convene health organizations working together to improve quality and access
Your Community Foundation to care countywide. And we support and enhance the lives of our LGBTQ population, as well as the quality of life for local Latinos. Additionally, we promote community engagement and leadership among local youth and drive early-stage philanthropy among local entrepreneurs. Together, we create opportunities for a stronger, more equitable community.

WHAT CAN YOU DO TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE? A LOT.

Your donation makes a local impact you can see – whether your passion is helping students get ahead, keeping the arts vibrant, protecting our environment, ensuring access to healthcare, tackling mental health concerns, advancing women, preventing violence and poverty, advocating for LGBTQ rights, or working to overcome walls of division. Learn more about our programs and initiatives countywide: commfound.org/our-impact/programs-initiatives

We invite you to make a gift to the Community Foundation, or establish a fund with a variety of assets – from cash, check or credit card to tangible personal property, real estate, business interests, planned gifts, and more. Learn more about ways to give at commfound.org/giving, or send us an email to get started: PhilanthropicServices@commfound.org

Bookmark the full, digital version of TRENDS as your searchable, go-to community guide: commfound.org/TRENDS.

DEFINITIONS TO HELP INTERPRET THE DATA

This report uses a great deal of data from the American Community Survey (ACS), a nationwide survey to provide communities updated information in between decennial censuses. The most recent data available through the ACS as of mid-2017 was 2015, thus, unless otherwise noted, data reported reflects 2015 numbers.

Slight differences between the Census and the ACS methodology may make for imperfect comparisons. The ACS collects data for all 12 months of the year, not for just a single point in time. Further, while the Census works to count every single person, the ACS is distributed to a population sample and produces estimates more at risk for statistical error. The bulk of the ACS data used here is derived from 1-year estimates.

The terms “Latino” and “Anglo” and “of color”

In this report we use the term “Latino” to encompass people identified as “Hispanic” or “Latin” by the American Community Survey, or other similar data collecting organizations. People who identify their origin as Spanish, Hispanic, or Latino may be of any race. We use the term “Non-Hispanic white” or “Anglo” to refer to people who self-identify as white and do not claim Latino heritage. We use the term “people of color” to refer to individuals who identify as something other than Anglo.

Students

Since 2006, the ACS has included group quarters like dormitories or sororities and assisted living facilities in certain data tables. Students living on campus are NOT counted in poverty estimates. In contrast, students living off campus have been counted in the data as individuals, including in information on poverty, household income, health care access, etc., since the start of the ACS program. Such students have also been included in decennial Census numbers.

Income vs. Wages

“Income” includes wages, salary, bonuses, self-employment income, gifts, tips, investment income, transfer payments such as social security or food stamps, pensions, rents, and interest income.

“Wages” include only payments received from an employer in an employment relationship that is reported to the State of Colorado for purposes of unemployment insurance. Wages do not include self employment income.

“Per capita income” is calculated by taking all the income earned in the county and dividing this number by the population.

THE HISTORY OF THE TRENDS REPORT:

The TRENDS Report grew out of The Boulder County Civic Forum, which was launched in 1995 as the Boulder County Healthy Communities Initiative “to promote healthy decision-making that will sustain the environmental quality, livability and economic vitality of the Boulder County Region.” More than 400 community members came together then to identify four visions for a healthy community, including a vision for the people, for the environment, for the economy and for culture and society. Many of those 50 indicators are included in this expanded TRENDS Report, 22 years later.

The TRENDS Report has been a production of the Community Foundation Boulder County since 1999. This report relies on more than 150 indicators of our community’s social, economic and environmental health, plus in-depth community reporting. Together, they form the stories, findings and recommendations you see here. All this, plus a searchable indicators database, is available at commfound.org/TRENDS.
TRENDS CONTRIBUTORS:

TRENDS is published by the Community Foundation Boulder County, with help from the following contributors:

**Chris Barge** – The Community Foundation’s Vice President of Strategic Initiatives, Chris provided editorial and management oversight of this report, wrote the “Executive Summary,” and reported and wrote the chapters on “Our Education” and “Our Civic Participation & Giving.”

**Barbara Colombo** – A freelance photographer with more than 20 years of experience, Barbara shot many of the photos for this edition.

**Barbara Green** – A former Community Foundation staff member who wrote a prior edition of TRENDS, Barbara compiled the research and updated all of the statistics for this year’s edition, both in print and online.

**Jeff Hirota** – CEO of the Community Foundation as well as a former documentary filmmaker, Jeff provided editorial guidance and wrote the Letter from the CEO.

**Sabine Kortals** – A member of the Community Foundation’s communications team, Sabine wrote the stories on the Community Foundation’s impact in this edition.

**Gretchen Minekime** – The Community Foundation’s Vice President of Communications, Gretchen spearheaded the redesign of this year’s TRENDS Report, wrote pieces on the Community Foundation and managed various aspects of the project.

**Seth Rose** – A Community Foundation intern, Seth wrote the captions for all the indicators found at TRENDS online.

**Cindy Sutter** – A freelance writer who worked as an editor, reporter, writer, wire service aggregator and copy editor during a newspaper career spanning 26 years, Cindy reported and wrote the chapters “Who Are We?,” “Our Health & Human Services,” “Our Economy & Housing,” “Our Environment,” and “Our Arts & Culture.”

**Julia Vandenoever** – Special thanks to this former photo editor at Skiing, Backpacker and Outside magazines, who shot the photos at The Family Learning Center and provided them to us, pro bono.

**Aspen Media** – Conducted and analyzed the Community Foundation’s survey, the results of which appear in Our Civic Participation and Giving chapter.

**Sweet Design** – Mary Sweet and Nicole Bizzarro were the lead designers for this report.

**Daily Camera** – Our thanks to The Daily Camera for contributing many of the photos in this report, pro bono.

The Community Foundation 2017 Board of Trustees:

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On the back cover: Shannon Axe, who is transgender, walks at Waneka Lake in Lafayette. Her advice to parents of other transgender kids: “You have to love your kid. That is your job. Just saying, ‘I love you. We’ll work through it’ can change a kid’s life.” Read more about her on page 43. Photo by Barbara Colombo.
The Community Foundation is a community catalyst that inspires ideas and ignites action to improve the quality of life in Boulder County. We make informed decisions to respond to immediate needs and anticipate future challenges. Join us to make a difference. We can accomplish more together than alone.