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COLORADO COMMISSION ON AGING



Advocating for Seniors

Annual Report

2017 - 2018



Mission Statement

The Colorado Commission on Aging was established in 1964 to inform and advise decision makers and to advocate for the quality of life of all seniors.



COLORADO
Office of Community
Access & Independence
Division of Aging & Adult Services

Report from the Chair

The mission of the Colorado Commission on Aging (CCOA) is to inform and advise decision makers and to advocate for the quality of life of older adults. Each year, the members of the CCOA work diligently to accomplish this mission.



Commissioners come from all parts of the state, including two from each congressional district, one at-large member and two legislators, to collaborate and support the mission of serving older adults.

The CCOA members hear presentations on the challenges of serving seniors in both urban and rural settings, such as healthcare, housing, transportation and socialization. The CCOA members also provide advice, networking and support to organizations that serve older adults in Colorado.

CCOA members travel across the state to hear about outstanding programs like new affordable housing projects in Belmar, Age-Friendly processes in Colorado Springs and updates on the No Wrong Door and Affordable Care Collaborative. This year the CCOA members also got to visit Brighton and

Alamosa to hear from local senior service providers, as well as honor centenarians in Alamosa and recognize the efforts of Simona Gallegos, the Allen Buckingham Award recipient in Brighton.

The January 2018 CCOA meeting was a collaboration between CCOA and members of the Colorado Association of Area Agencies on Aging (C4A) to discuss challenges the C4A directors face and provided an opportunity, in small group settings, to discuss and collaborate on solutions. The newly appointed Governor's Senior Advisor on Aging, Wade Buchanan, also attended this meeting.

Coming up in the next year, CCOA is eager to welcome a new administration and to assist in any way we can. We will continue to collaborate with state agencies and both non-profit and for-profit organizations that serve older adults and find ways to support those efforts around the state.

—Jody A. Barker, Chairman 2017-2018

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jody A. Barker".

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Colorado Commission on Aging Celebrates Senior Day at the Capitol

Seniors from all over the state converged on the State Capitol on March 21, 2018 to celebrate aging, show their passion for senior issues and meet with elected officials. This yearly event, sponsored by the Colorado Senior Lobby, brings together legislators, elected officials, Senior Day supporters and companies to educate Colorado seniors about programs and legislation impacting older adults.

The morning events included presentations by Wade Buchanan, Colorado's Senior Adviser on Aging, Governor John Hickenlooper and Denver Mayor Michael Hancock as well as numerous legislators, lobbyists and the Colorado Commission on Aging.

Governor John Hickenlooper talked about the increase in the senior population in the seven years he has been in office. "When I took office in 2011, our Colorado senior population was 16 percent of the total population of the state. Currently, in 2018, our senior population is approximately 1.1 million people over the age of 65, which represents a growth

to 20 percent of the population. With improvements in medicine we are all living longer, healthier lives," stated Hickenlooper. He answered several questions from the audience about education, infrastructure, housing costs and housing tax.

In addition, Governor Hickenlooper spoke about the contributions senior citizens have made to the state of Colorado through their wealth of experiences and knowledge in the development of public policy, sharing their time and talents and advancing the needs of the less fortunate.



Colorado Commission on Aging recognizes Colorado Centenarians for lifelong contributions

In May 2018, the Colorado Commission on Aging hosted the annual Centenarian Celebration in Alamosa. This event honors Centenarians throughout the state through a recognition luncheon, a signed certificate from the Governor and introductions by commission members. This year, seven Centenarians and their families from throughout southern Colorado were recognized at the annual luncheon.

One of the Centenarian honorees was Blanche Krell. Blanche is 100 years old. Her husband of over 72 years just died in January at the age of 101. Blanche stated, "I attribute our long life to the fact we walked everywhere. We walked back and forth to work every day and during lunchtime too." She met her husband when she was a secretary and he was a mechanic at a dealership. Soon after meeting her husband, he was drafted to WW II. She waited four years for him to come home, writing at least 3-4 letters per week. Many times, his letters would have sections of the letters cut out, in the event he was writing about sensitive military information. They were married within a few weeks of him returning from the war.

Our keynote speaker, Joyce Gunn, a community member and historian at the San Luis Valley Museum shared the history of the Alamosa area. She stated, "Make sure you get in touch with your elderly family members. The best aspect of their lives they can share with you are their stories and your family history. Our cell phones provide an instant recorder of both voice and photos. It is very important we learn about their stories, games, hardships and triumphs."



Colorado Commission on Aging Commissioner, Connie Ring, from Springfield, Colorado presents the Centenarian Award to Blanche Krell at the Centenarian Celebration in Alamosa. Governor John Hickenlooper named May 18, 2018 Colorado Centenarian Day through a Proclamation.



Debra Herrera, left, from the Colorado Commission on Aging, reads from a certificate that honors Ophelia Espinoza at the Centenarian event. Espinoza, 102, has lived in Fort Garland for most of her life.

Allen Buckingham Awards

The Colorado Commission on Aging hosted the Allen Buckingham Senior Leadership Legacy Award Ceremony in Brighton, CO on November 17, 2017. This recognition is presented annually to an individual who has made a noteworthy contribution to seniors in Colorado. This year, the award was presented to Simona Gallegos of Las Animas, Colorado for her leadership which has promoted and contributed to the well-being and quality of life for seniors through her employment and numerous volunteer activities.

Simona has been active with seniors since 1977 when she started her career with Senior Ink. She stated, "I am now helping children and grandchildren of the people I helped back when I started." Her goal has been to assist seniors and keep them active.

Simona delivered meals and recruited others to deliver meals to older adults unable to leave their homes. When Simona saw the senior center meal site needed napkins, bread and other items she purchased the items with her own money and without reimbursement. She is known in the community as the "tooth fairy" because she has helped many seniors with dental applications to private and public organizations. Since her retirement, she has not slowed down. She continues

to help people with rent and tax rebates, long term care Medicaid and food stamps applications and continues writing grants for home repairs for senior low income housing in Las Animas.

About the Annual Award: Allen Buckingham served on the Colorado Commission on Aging from 1986 to 1998. The Commission's annual Senior Legacy Award was awarded posthumously to Allen in December 1998 and the event was renamed in his honor.



Simona and her family attended the annual Allen Buckingham Awards ceremony.

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CCOA Meeting Schedule

September 20-21, 2018 La Junta, CO
 October 18-19, 2018 Breckenridge
 January 24-25, 2019 Denver
 March 12-13, 2019 Denver
 May 16-17, 2019. Denver
 July 18-19, 2019. Parker