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WELCOMING WEEK
is an initiative of
WELCOMING AMERICA
JOIN US FOR A
CELEBRATION OF
OUR COMMUNITY!

WELCOMING WEEK UNITES COMMUNITY

10,000 people reached with messages of inclusion and acceptance



City of Denver Council President Albus Brooks participates in Welcoming Week

In September 2018, the Denver Y joined Y-USA to celebrate Welcoming Week, a growing movement to fully embrace new Americans and their contributions to the social fabric of our country. Welcoming Week 2018 resulted in new connections between the YMCA of Metro Denver, new Americans, community leaders, mayors and city councils. And this year more than 10,000 people across the Metro area were reached via events and social media.

At all Denver YMCA branches, staff provided refreshments, gave out education material and led events and programs to encourage Y members who are new Americans and refugees to share their heritage and to welcome other new Americans to visit and learn about the YMCA.

The Y is looking forward to next year's Welcoming Week and seeking new opportunities to promote inclusiveness for everyone.

Special thanks to these community leaders:

Bob LeGare
Mayor, Aurora

Joel Kruschwitz
Rotary Club of Aurora

Linda Witulski
Rotary Club of Aurora

Francoise Michelle Bergan
Aurora City Council

Kelley Neumann
Deputy Director of Planning and
Engineering at Aurora Water

Kendra Black
Denver City Councilwoman

Nancy Ford
Arvada Councilwoman

Scott Norquist
Glendale City Council

Storm Gloor
Glendale City Council

Patricia Cronenberger
Former Mayor of Littleton

Susan M. Thornton
Former Mayor of Littleton, Chair of
Immigrant Pathways Colorado

Helen Thorpe
Author of The Newcomers



The Duncan YMCA celebrated Welcoming Week with members, staff and volunteers



Kelly Brough,
President and
CEO of the
Denver Metro
Chamber of
Commerce is a
welcomer



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BRIDGE BUILDER

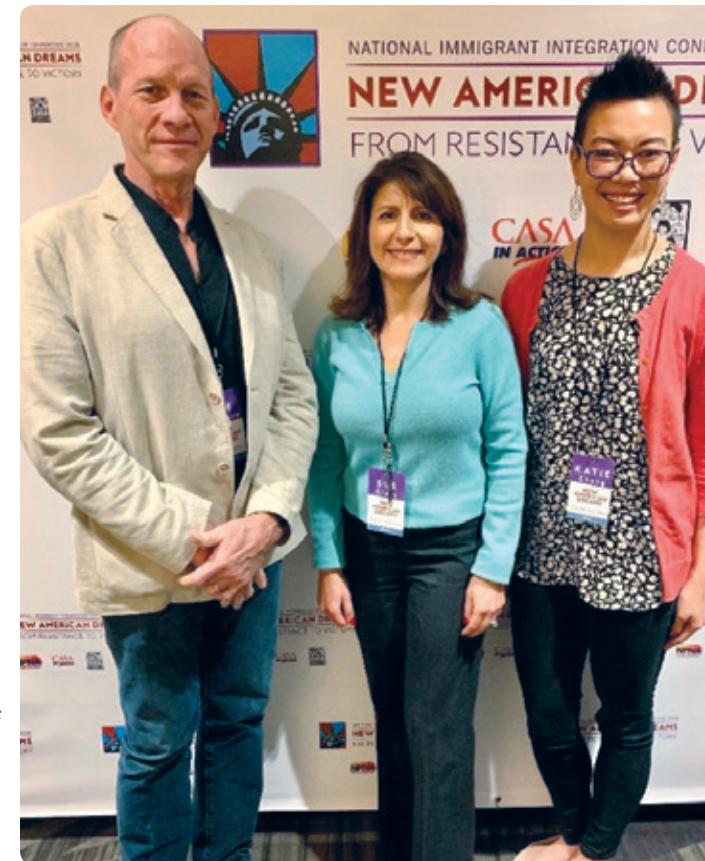
A newsletter of the YMCA of Metro Denver's
Diversity, Inclusion, and Global (DIG) Innovation YMCA
March 2019 Eighth Edition

INSPIRATION TO CONNECT AND GROW

Denver Y Leaders Attend the 2018 National Immigrant Integration Conference

In December, Denver Y leaders joined Y-USA at the National Immigrant Integration Conference, the largest conference on immigration in the United States. Now in its 11th year, the conference plays a central role in the broad immigrant and refugee rights and integration field. Insights gained at the conference will help the Denver Y welcome and serve the growing number of new Americans in our community. In 2014, more than 530,000 Colorado residents were born abroad!

Denver YMCA CEO Sue Glass (center), Director of Evidence-Based Programs Katie Cannon (right), and DIG Committee Chair Joe Sprague (left) were able to attend the Arlington, Virginia, conference with the support of scholarships from Y-USA. They joined policymakers, members of academia, corporate and community leaders, researchers and practitioners, faith and labor leaders and funders in three days of sessions to discuss important contributions of all immigrant groups.



Y-USA President Kevin Washington described a vision shared by all attendees of "cohesive communities where all individuals achieve a high level of health, confidence, connection and security at every stage of life."

Sue said the conference was an opportunity to gain resources, insights and successful models from

other cities across the country. "It was inspiring, and it solidified the importance for the YMCA of Metro Denver to serve the immigrant and refugees in our communities."

Katie agreed. "The energy was invigorating. It was great to see so many organizations working to protect and advocate for new Americans."

Make A World of Difference

The DIG Committee of the YMCA of Metro Denver is committed to gaining a better understanding of the world around us. Support our work with underserved communities and help us respond to key issues in Denver by making a tax-deductible donation at www.DenverYMCA.org/Donate.

AN INTERNATIONAL WELCOME

YMCA guests from abroad raise global awareness and appreciation

Through several outings with guests from YMCAs overseas, Y staff both here and abroad learned more about how the Y reaches out internationally and shared the stories and experiences that unite us all.



Last August, Antonela Lojacono from the YMCA of Argentina in Buenos Aires visited the Denver Y. Antonela joined members of the DIG Committee in touring Denver and meeting Y staff and volunteers.

Through her visits to YMCA of Metro Denver locations, Antonela learned about our impact and shared how the YMCA of Argentina is extensively involved in education and providing travel opportunities.

Susan M. Duncan Family YMCA Board Member Pat Lawler said the visit helped widen the perspective of the Arvada Y and the Y's goals toward inclusivity and global outreach. "Having an international Y visitor certainly broadens our experience of how the Y reaches out beyond our walls."

Through arrangements by DIG Committee member Dave Ferrill, Antonela also met with Andrea Blankenship, the Director of International Tourism for the Colorado Tourism Office, took a tour of Union Station and Downtown Denver, and went to a Rockies game. She also visited with Elena Tejero-Cardas from the Jeffco Columbine Library and YMCA DIG Committee member Abby Wedlick.

Top: Patricia Lawler (left), Antonela Lojacono (center) from the YMCA of Argentina in Buenos Aires and Duncan YMCA Executive Director, Jen Spettel (right) share YMCA perspectives before Antonela meets Dinger at the Coors Field.



In November, Ramon Lopez, Luciana Torres and Claudio Laborde of the YMCA of Uruguay visited the Denver Y. We were honored to reciprocate the hospitality, as two Denver Y staff members, Claire Eades and Amy Louvier, visited the Uruguay Y in February 2018.

In addition to attending the annual awards ceremony for the Denver Peace and Justice Committee and a Denver Nuggets basketball game, and visiting the Colorado History Museum, the guests met with the DIG Committee and received a tour of the Schlessman Family YMCA. We were excited to show up-close how we make a difference in the lives of families, seniors and children throughout Denver, and our guests expressed a caring spirit for our community.

Claudio said, "We are so grateful to you and the Denver YMCA that we can't express it in words. We're just sorry we can't stay longer."



YMCA of Metro Denver volunteers and staff welcome our visitors from the Uruguay YMCA. From left to right: Joe Sprague, volunteer, YMCA of Metro Denver; Luciana Torres, Uruguay YMCA; Sue Glass, CEO, YMCA of Metro Denver; Claudio Laborde and Ramon Lopez, Uruguay YMCA; Gloria Price and Debbie Ford, YMCA of Metro Denver.

IT'S A Y WORLD: A Trip to YMCA of Greater Vancouver

by Katie Sterk



YMCA supporter Katie Sterk finds common ground at the YMCA of Greater Vancouver.

During a recent trip to Vancouver, Canada, I was able to take part in the YMCA of Metro Denver's "Friends Abroad" program, an international exchange

program that encourages Denver Y supporters to gain understanding and build relationships with YMCAs worldwide.

The program began with DIG Committee member Julie Hill, who wanted to develop a formal structure to learn about new cultures, observe programs, and discover common goals, while promoting and strengthening the YMCA values that we all share. With this mission in mind, I set out to make the most of my visit to the YMCA of Greater Vancouver.

Founded in 1886, the Vancouver Y was welcoming and friendly. I learned they offer many traditional Y programs and activities, and that they are the largest childcare provider in Vancouver. They also offer immigrant services, an initiative for youth-teen engagement, an alternative suspension program, and health management services, which include mental health programs and chronic disease prevention. Since 2004, the YMCA of Greater Vancouver has also partnered with the YMCA of Ethiopia in HIV/AIDS education and prevention.

I saw first-hand how this YMCA helps people of all ages, and how they are a global community. I was so impressed by their work I contributed to their Strong Kids Campaign, which helps support programs, such as youth sports camps, and provides three healthy meals a day to children in impoverished communities.

**It was an honor to visit the Vancouver YMCA!
It truly is a Y World!**



ABOUT DIG

Led by YMCA trustees, YMCA of Metro Denver representatives and community volunteers, the Diversity, Inclusion, and Global Innovation Committee is dedicated to ensuring that everybody feels welcome at the YMCA. To learn more please contact Debbie Ford at dford@denverymca.org.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

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DIG Chairman

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YMCA of Metro Denver, Staff

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Aurora Family YMCA, Staff

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Katie Cannon
YMCA of Metro Denver, Staff

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