



News Release

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Arapahoe County celebrates volunteers as greatest 'natural resource' *Volunteer service hours reach 22,000 hours in 2012*

Littleton, Colo. — Arapahoe County celebrated the volunteers who served their local government in 2012 at an appreciation event on Earth Day, April 22.

"We believe that the citizens who contribute their time and talents to Arapahoe County are our greatest natural resource," said Arapahoe County Commissioner Bill Holen. "Our volunteers help us to keep the costs of our services and programs low and make a difference in the lives of their neighbors. The County truly relies on their support and contributions as a critical resource."

More than 400 citizens contributed 20,606 service hours in 2012, which translates to more than \$449,000 in budget relief for Arapahoe County, as determined by national average wage statistics.

In honor of National Volunteer Week in April, the County's Volunteer Connections program thanked its volunteers at a special event, which featured a barbecue dinner, bingo games, a caricature artist, gifts and door prizes, courtesy of many generous sponsors.

A record-high 47 volunteers received the Presidential Service Award, a national recognition issued by the President's Council on Service and Civic Participation to adults who donate 100 or more hours of service and youth who serve 50 or more hours in a year to a certifying organization. Together, these 47 volunteers contributed almost 12,000 hours.

In addition, Arapahoe County presented its own Exceptional Volunteer awards to the following volunteers for their exemplary contributions in 2012:

- **Carl Best** of Centennial was honored for his service at the Judicial Services Division, where he supported the front desk and handled more than 200 phone calls daily from clients in the Pretrial Supervision, Community Service and Community Corrections programs. Best helped citizens to get connected to services in the judicial system and resolve sometimes sensitive and urgent issues.
- **Heather Martin** of Aurora received the award for her volunteer contributions at the 2012 Arapahoe County Fair. The high school student worked all five days and took on any task with enthusiasm, including answering fairgoer questions at the information booth and assisting with kids' contests.
- **Peggy Sparacino** of Aurora was recognized for her service at the Arapahoe/Douglas Works! Workforce Center, where she assisted mature job-seekers with their résumés, job-search, computer

skills and interviews. Sparacino helped to motivate and reassure job-seekers in each step of their job search.

- **Gina Young** of Deer Trail was honored for her contributions to the County's humane trap/neuter/release program to control the feral cat population in Byers and Strasburg. Young's tireless fundraising and support has resulted in hundreds of felines being neutered, preventing the birth of homeless cats in the community.
- **HungerFree Colorado** received the Exceptional Volunteer Group Award for its volunteers' contributions at the County's Human Services buildings, where the group helped citizens to apply for public assistance benefits online at new computer kiosks.

Arapahoe County offers a wide variety of volunteer positions to fit all skill levels, interests and availability. Citizens can commit to a day, a month or even a role that lasts all year. To learn how to get involved, please visit www.arapahoe.gov or call Volunteer Connections at 303-738-7938.

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To download photos click on the following link: <ftp://www.co.arapahoe.co.us/Pub/CM/Photos/Volunteer/>

Check.jpg – Arapahoe County Commissioners Nancy Jackson and Rod Bockenfeld accept a symbolic check from Volunteer Coordinator Carrie Olinger for more than \$449,000, representing the value of 20,606 volunteer hours donated to the County in 2012.

Carl.jpg - Carl Best of Centennial (right) received the Exceptional Volunteer Award for supporting clients at the County's Judicial Services Division. [Pictured with Commissioners Rod Bockenfeld and Nancy Jackson.]

Heather.jpg – Heather Martin of Aurora received the Exceptional Volunteer Award for supporting children's activities and the information booth at the 2013 Arapahoe County Fair. [Pictured with Commissioners Rod Bockenfeld and Nancy Jackson.]

Peggy.jpg – Peggy Sparacino of Aurora received the Exceptional Volunteer Award for supporting job-seekers at the Arapahoe/Douglas Works! Workforce Center. [Pictured with Commissioners Rod Bockenfeld and Nancy Jackson.]

HungerFree.jpeg- Volunteers from Hunger Free Colorado received the Exceptional Volunteer Group Award for helping citizens apply for public assistance benefits in county lobbies. [Pictured from right: Hannah Rodgers of Hunger Free Colorado, Human Services Volunteer Coordinator Julie Schilling, Commissioners Nancy Jackson and Rod Bockenfeld.]

Note: Gina Young of Deer Trail was unable to attend the event.