

Volunteer Highlight



Since 2008, I've volunteered at DEC. I help out in the classroom and work one-on-one with students who are struggling with math basics or those who are close to passing their math test and just need additional help.

I choose to volunteer because I want to make a difference in my community. My background--a business degree and appraisal business--gave me math skills. I want to help students who don't like math. I want them to at least end up seeing they can do math and, every once in a while, find it helpful in life.

Over the years, I've worked with a variety of students, ranging in age from 16 to probably 65. EVERY student I've worked with has been my most memorable. I learned from each of them and they learned from me. One that particularly stands out was a single mom of 4 boys (ages 6 months to 8yrs.), who was living in the shelter while she was attending classes. She managed to attend regularly, took careful notes, and learned everything I taught her. She was quite an inspiring young woman!

I continue to volunteer at DEC because I believe that the teachers and staff are improving lives in our community. I am blessed with each interaction I have. I enjoy seeing students go from being totally confused or uninterested in math to the 'light bulb' moment when they understand what they're learning. I believe everyone at DEC is making a difference and I'm happy to be a part of it!

Sally Olsen, Volunteer

"EVERY student I've worked with has been my most memorable."

2014 Donors Literacy Friends and Sponsors Continued

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Barbara Lynch	Tom & Bonnie Miller	Charlotte Pirnat	Jackie Stahlecker	<i>This represents donations</i>
Eric & Teresa Malone	Kay Neal	Howard Poe	Kathy Tonnessen	<i>received in 2014. We apologize</i>
Sweetie Marbury	Steffi Neiman	Marsha Porter-Norton	Ellen Turiel	<i>for any inadvertent omissions.</i>

I am eager to help the Durango Education Center!

___ \$50 Literacy Friend ___ \$150 Student Sponsor ___ \$250 Literacy Advocate *

___ \$500 Literacy Leader* ___ \$1,000 Literacy Champion* ___ \$ Other

___ Check enclosed. Payable to **Durango Education Center** - 701 Camino Del Rio, Ste. 301 Durango, CO 81301

___ Donate on-line at: www.durangoedcenter.org

___ Credit Card

Card # _____ Expiration _____ Phone _____

Name _____ Signature _____

Billing address _____ City _____ Zip code _____

Email address (needed for receipt) _____ Please sign me up to receive DEC e-newsletters _____

The Durango Education Center is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization. Your contribution is tax deductible.

* Donations of \$250 and greater may qualify for Enterprise Zone Tax Credit. 2015 will be the last year DEC will be eligible to offer the

Enterprise Zone Tax Credit.

Thank you for your support!

Upcoming Events

May 28
GED Graduation
Durango Public Library - 6 pm

June 15 - July 9
GED Science Summer Program

August 31
Fall classes start

DEC Mission Statement

The mission of the Durango Education Center, a caring learning community, is to fill educational gaps by equipping adults, children and families with the skills and knowledge necessary for 21st century careers, post-secondary education, and social and economic mobility.

Community Involvement



Community support in action! Every year Mountain Waters Rafting Company donates an Animas River Rafting Trip for our ESL and GED students, most of whom have never experienced the river. Thank you for providing an amazing opportunity for these learners.



We are a participant and proud supporter of a living wage in Durango.

DECLARATION

Spring 2015 Newsletter of the Durango Education Center



A caring learning community

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Chief Professional Officer for the Boys & Girls Club of the Southern Ute Indian Tribe

Terry Swan
Retired Colonel and Professor
2014 Volunteer of the Year

When Education Alone is Not Enough

Boosting Opportunities & Occupations for Self-Sufficient Transitions (BOOST)

Beginning this July, learners seeking to transition from adult education into college or into the workforce will have additional support from the Durango Education Center. Low-income parents and individuals will have the opportunity to receive wraparound support to maximize the skills and knowledge they gain through our adult education programs. Students will receive guidance along



every step of the process to becoming self-sufficient, beginning with career planning, lasting throughout education and training, and culminating with job placement.

The launch of DEC's BOOST Program is the result of multiple efforts now in collaboration. In 2014 a needs assessment was conducted with the support and vision from a philanthropic couple new to Durango, to determine whether self-sufficiency services were needed in our community. The result was yes, this program would fill the gaps between several existing programs and could make a difference in breaking the cycle of poverty. Simultaneously, DEC, after

years of recognizing the need for services beyond secondary education, added a self-sufficiency goal to its strategic plan and began in earnest preparing for implementation.

Modeled after the highly effective Project Self-Sufficiency (www.ps-s.org) in Larimer County, Colorado, DEC's BOOST Program will provide learners with individualized case management

that promotes problem-solving and accountability. Early in the program, learners will develop a realistic self-sufficiency budget that will serve as a guidepost throughout their participation. As learners are progressing through the program, they will have access to scholarship funds to assist with education and living expenses that are unmet elsewhere. That way they can stay on track and meet their goals.

With generous start-up funding from the Michael and Elaine Moravan Foundation, the BOOST Program will assist individuals in moving from poverty to economic self-sufficiency. Participants will receive counseling, emotional support, and crisis intervention, as they transition away from housing programs, food stamps, temporary aid, and other services and into independence. Adult learners often

Continued on following page 2

the BOOST Program will assist individuals in moving from poverty to economic self-sufficiency

Return Address Requested





Director's Note

Another academic year is coming to a close at the Durango Education Center; each day has been filled with little successes that are meaningful to our learners.

A mother improves her reading skills by four grade levels in one semester. Not only are we improving her literacy, but that of her children as well. Another student, barely an adult, with no parental support or stable housing, earns his GED. He is now considering college, which was never an option before.

Yet another student advances 3 levels in English speaking and listening. He can now communicate with international companies and broaden opportunities for his company upon his return to Columbia.

We couldn't do any of this without you. Your ongoing support allows us to help each and every one of the 250 adult students that we will serve this year. Your contributions ensure that our community's at-risk learners receive an excellent education.

Our center's test success rate is one of the highest in Colorado. In 2014 we had a 100% passing rate in both the Science and Social Studies exams and very high in Reasoning Through Language Arts (96%) and Math (89%). Our learners are getting a solid education because our community invests in education for all.

Nationally, adult education is in flux, learner expectations are shifting, and funding is at risk. I am confident that our learners will continue to thrive because of your commitment to literacy. Together we are truly making a difference!

With appreciation,
Teresa Malone, Executive Director

BOOST Program *Continued*

lack the support network and resources they need to overcome some obstacles that many of us view as minor. The BOOST Program provides participants with a champion and mentor to help them complete their goals.

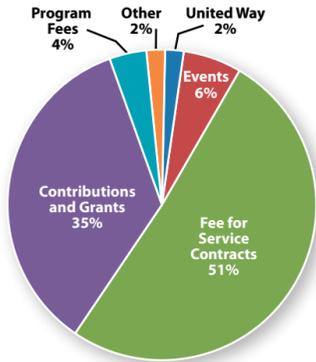
Not only do people experience an improved quality of life when they become self-sufficient, they also positively impact our local economy. "We anticipate a high success rate among participants," states Teresa Malone, Executive Director. "The additional support for our learners will make a big difference in their lives. We look forward to sharing our participants' success with the community."

The start-up funding has been absolutely essential in launching this program. As participants begin to explore self-sufficient career choices, employer involvement will be another critical piece. We will be reaching out to local businesses for short-term job shadow experiences specific to our participants' career goals, seeking employer feedback on participants' resumes, and looking for input on skill gaps. If you are an employer willing to help, please contact DEC's Executive Director today!

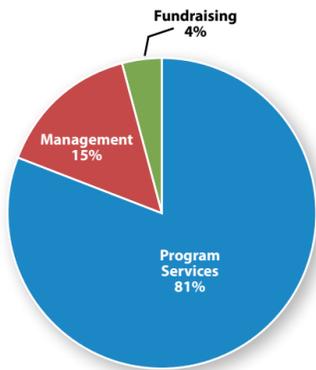
Financial Report

2014 Financial Highlights

- 79% of revenues are from local sources
- 42% of income comes from individual and corporate donors



Income Total: \$857,90



Expense Total: \$681,778

Program Updates

GED Is No Longer the Only Option

The GED, or tests of general educational development to measure high school equivalency, started in 1942 when the military requested the American Council on Education to develop the tests for soldiers who had enlisted before completing high school.

The tests have changed four times since then, the most recent being in 2014 in conjunction with the merging of the non-profit American Council of Education with the for-profit Pearson Publishing company. The result is a more rigorous, more expensive, computer-only exam that has resulted in the emergence of two additional high school equivalency exams (*see chart*).

Nationally, the number of GED graduates plummeted in 2014. Approximately 482,000 fewer learners in the US earned the GED in 2014, an 89% decrease from the previous year. This trend affected us locally; in Durango we went from 82 graduates in 2013 to ten in 2014.

The changes in the GED have led other states to adopt alternative tests to better serve their learners. While Colorado has been slow to respond, adult education leaders in Colorado are working on legislation to adopt another test alternative. "We need a more appropriate option for those who want better jobs or technical training; the GED is only appropriate for our students who are planning on continuing immediately with their academic studies to earn a two or four-year degree," states Stephanie Moran, Program Manager.

At the DEC, we continue to offer the GED since it is currently the only option for our students. We teach people from across the secondary academic spectrum, from the truly illiterate and up to high school-level skills. Improving skills across grade levels in literacy and numeracy helps all learners reach important goals that improve the likelihood of passing the GED, being better prepared for the workplace, and increasing the academic success of their children.

	GED	HiSET	TASC
Publisher	Pearson Publishing	Educational Testing Service	CTB/McGraw Hill Publishing
Business	For Profit	Non Profit	For Profit
Cost	\$120 + state fees	\$50 + applicable state fees	\$90 or less
Test on computer only?	Yes	No	No
Number of states using exam*	40	14	6

* Some states offer more than one exam option

ESL Expands to Silverton

This spring several students have been traveling Hwy 550 from Silverton to Durango for their bi-weekly English classes. They are motivated to improve their job prospects, communicate with their children's school, and be part of the community.

Residents of Silverton have long been interested in improving their English skills. "Thanks to the El Pomar foundation, we were able to send an ESL teacher to Silverton last summer," said Libby Baumchen, ESL Program Coordinator. "Those funds have been spent, so we are now looking for volunteer tutors to provide local instruction so that Silverton students won't have the added burden of travel," she said.

Curriculum and ongoing support will be provided to ensure learners are making steady language progress and meeting their goals!

If you are interested in volunteering in Silverton, please contact Libby Baumchen at 385-4354 X19.



2014 Donors

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Community Foundation Serving Southwest Colorado
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Continued on back...

WAYS TO DONATE

Thank you for considering a donation to the Durango Education Center. Because the Center is a non-profit organization, most donations qualify for federal and state tax benefits.

- On-line at www.durangoedcenter.org
- Mail to: 701 Camino Del Rio, Ste. 301 Durango, CO 81301

Donations of \$250 and greater may qualify for 25% Colorado Enterprise Zone Tax Credit.

2015 is the last year DEC will be eligible to offer this credit.

OUR BELIEFS

We believe that:

- All people have inherent worth.
- A sense of belonging is a building block for a stronger community.
- All people have the potential to create positive change.
- Education empowers the individual to achieve positive character attributes, social and economic mobility, and self sufficiency.
- Literacy and cultural competency are essential to thrive in this interconnected world.
- Family and culture impact the development of each individual.
- The right of every person to have and make choices is basic to freedom.
- Each individual has unique learning capabilities.
- The entire community benefits from an educated populace.
- A top priority of humanity is to create a better, more compassionate world.