

Tidings

Spring 2017 Newsletter of the Durango Adult Education Center



Durango Adult Education Center
Serving Southwest Colorado

The DAEC Turns 30

In 1987, the year the Durango Adult Education Center formed, our hairstyles were made of cartwheels and our clothes were borrowed from Candy Land. Pixar made its first computer animated short film. Green Day jammed for the first time. And “going viral” meant sending messages on a Listserv.

A lot can change in 30 years.

The DAEC has certainly changed—maturing, expanding, and adapting. ESL, high school equivalency, career enhancement, and technological enrichment are but a few of our programs added or adjusted for evolving community needs. With change comes greater success. For instance, we continually exceed state and national pass rates for the GED! Whereas 80% pass the exam nationally, and 87% succeed statewide, 96% of our students rock the test with excellent scores. No wonder the Durango Area Chamber of Commerce named the DAEC 2016 Nonprofit of the Year.



Nonprofit of the Year Award ceremony

The organization Helen James founded in 1987 looked very different. Using free meeting rooms in churches and the police station, the first volunteers coached students on rudimentary English literacy and fluency—enough to better navigate life in town and, later, attain citizenship. Today, the organization relies on its outstanding volunteers, as well as award-winning full-time teaching staff.



DAEC's first home 1990-1993



DAEC's 2nd home 1993-2007



DAEC's current home 2007-present

In 2005 the El Pomar Foundation presented the DAEC with an Award of Excellence in recognition for our outstanding contributions to the community and the state of Colorado. Two years later, in partnership with the Southwest Conservation Corps, we formed the Southwest Institute for Education and Conservation (SIEC)—also named “Nonprofit of the Year” in 2007 to purchase and transform The Commons building into an epicenter of adult learning and job skill enhancement.

In celebration of these many benchmarks, we are launching our “30-for-30 Challenge”—that is, 30 ways you can support the DAEC as we march gallantly forward into the next 30 years. No. 30 on the list: attend a GED Graduation ceremony. Most graduates overcome tremendous obstacles to earn their high school equivalency diploma. We honor their persistence at a special ceremony each May and December. The May 2017 ceremony is **Thursday, May 25th, 6-7:30 p.m. at the Durango Public Library.**

You can find the other 29 fun, rewarding, and surprising 30th Anniversary challenges on our blog at: www.durangoadulted.org. And regardless of whatever happens to our hair and clothes three decades down the road, we will always be a caring learning community making meaningful changes.



Director's Note

We're heading west! After thirty years of primarily serving La Plata County learners, DAEC is expanding to Montezuma County. Through a competitive process, we were selected by the Colorado Department of Education to be the adult education provider for the southwest Colorado region.

Beginning this fall we will bring our highly successful High School Equivalency preparation program and our very effective English as a Second Language program to Cortez and Mancos. More details to follow but rest assured we plan to serve as many of the region's adult learners as we can.

We've also expanded in Durango. We now have room for 8 students in our nearby housing, doubling our capacity from last fall. As you can imagine, this housing has been invaluable in helping our learners complete their academic goals, and it is inspiring to see them succeed.



Dorm-style housing within walking distance of DAEC

We continue to refine our purpose and measure our impact on the people and the communities we serve. Check out our updated strategic plan and more by visiting our blog, available on our website or Facebook page, to keep in touch with all that we're doing!

With sincere appreciation for your support and partnership,
Teresa Malone, Executive Director

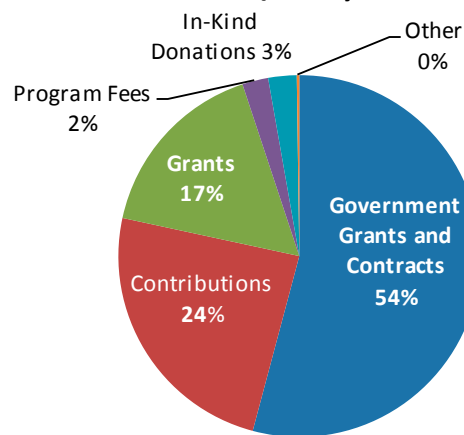
2016 Learners



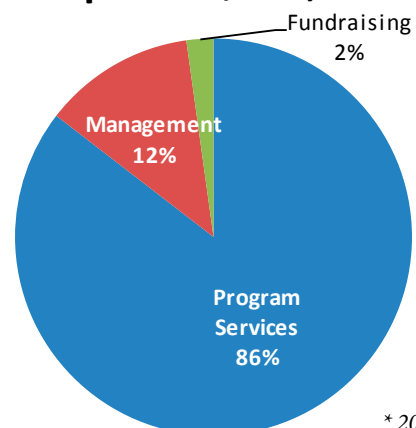
- 107 students from other countries learned English
- 17 different countries were represented by our ESL students
- 30 children were taken care of in childcare
- 53 individuals were served in BOOST Program
- 157 students studied for their GED
- 503 tests were administered at our Pearson Vue Testing Center
- 810 volunteer hours were donated to helping our students succeed

2016 Finances*

Revenue: \$810,176



Expense: \$707,906



* 2016 Audited Financials

The Impact of Your Support

BOOST Expands Housing & Scholarships

Last fall, we secured a dorm-style apartment for our students who were housing insecure to provide them a stable living situation so they can finish their studies. The first ever DAEC apartment has been a major success. We are very proud to report that all of the initial students were able to save up money and secure permanent housing in their own apartments in fewer than four months. With the success of the first apartment, we have secured another four-bedroom apartment right next door. We have four students ready to move in. Three of those students were housing insecure, and one was sleeping outside, so it is great to be able to provide them more stable housing.

BOOST has continued to remove other barriers for our students. We have been able to help fund two students with their citizenship application, and with graduation coming up we will be awarding five scholarships to assist some students with their post-secondary education.



Eveling Renteria,
*ESL student living at the
DAEC student apartment*

English as a Second Language Students Get Involved

The ESL Program recently held two successful events last month to enrich the learning experience of our English learners.

The inaugural Citizenship Day was held on April 8th. DAEC partnered with Colorado Immigrant Rights Coalition (CIRC), Compañeros, local immigration attorney Beth Padilla, and 15 volunteers to assist participants with their questions and applications for naturalization.

The 2nd Annual Library Night held in partnership with the Durango Public Library happened on April 20th. The event focused on the many ways non-native speakers can use the library to learn and practice English. Students took a library tour and sampled various library materials and resources.

The next few months will be very busy for the ESL team as they plan for their fall expansion of classes in Cortez. Due to the recent award of the competitive grant from the Colorado Department of Education, the much-needed English classes will resume and will serve those students who were previously on the long waiting list.



ESL student at Library Night

New Post-Secondary Scholarships

Earlier this month, DAEC added a new program to help early childhood professionals meet the Colorado licensing requirements to work in that field. This program assists early childhood providers become teacher and director certified and receive financial support to complete the required college courses. This program, in its 18th year funded by the Buell Foundation, is much needed in the region as there is an ongoing shortage of licensed child care capacity. Not only will DAEC students benefit from this opportunity, but it is open to all child care providers in the five-county southwest Colorado region.

If you are a childcare provider in southwest Colorado and are interested in obtaining your Colorado Early Childhood Teacher Certification or are trying to complete your Directors Qualifications, the Early Childhood Professional Training Project offers scholarships for ECE providers to go to college and assists with:

- Scholarships
 - Assistance in navigating Colorado licensing requirements in regards to required college coursework
 - Academic advising
 - Assistance in selecting college courses
 - Financial aid assistance
 - Support for completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)
- Please contact Program Coordinator Sierra Di Marco at (970) 259-2094 or sdimarco@durangoadulted.org for more information.



Regina Wells,
DAEC childcare providers

The Impact of Your Support continued

GED Students Continue to Soar

The High School Equivalency (HSE) team is always in a high state of excitement in May as we move closer to our bi-annual graduation. Our graduates will round out at about 20, and we have several students who have studied for two years with us (second language learners) who have finally achieved the GED diploma! Many of our students work outside the home and are also parents, so this accomplishment is that much more outstanding, and we are so thankful for our many experienced teachers and tutors who work every day, week in and week out, for months, supporting students, practicing reading and writing skills, reinforcing social studies and science content, and bringing high-level math to light for students, sometimes sparking a newfound sense of potential and real confidence in our adult learners that they can succeed beyond the GED.



Furthermore, seven of our graduates have earned scores that qualify them to earn actual college credit by institutions that partner with the GED Testing Services; these students “may be eligible for up to 3 credits in Math, 3 credits in Science, 3 credits in Social Studies, and 1 credit in Humanities.” Students who score 175-200 (*on any subject test*) have demonstrated skills that could qualify them for the benefits at the GED® College Ready level and enable them to earn a recommendation to receive college credits when they enroll in a participating postsecondary institution. All of the community colleges in Colorado recognize the CR+Credit level.

GED® College Ready or GED® College Ready + Credit scores

We’re also pleased to have regained our La Plata County Jail program after a hiatus of a few years. We have two dedicated teachers along with four volunteers who help tutor the inmates. Between them, we now have two students who have passed a Science and a Reasoning Through Language Arts GED test and are moving towards attaining their GED. With much enthusiasm, we look forward to the inmates completing their studies at our Center upon their release.



Meet Averi Kremer. She started classes at the Center last August after she dropping out of DHS at the end of her Junior year. In 8 short months of hard work, Averi attained her GED in March and will be attending Fort Lewis College this fall. Please come to the GED graduation to celebrate Averi and other recent graduates on their accomplishment!

Why I Volunteer

My name is Thomas Skurky and I am a tutor to English as a Second Language (ESL) students at the Center. Before I retired, I taught at Fort Lewis College for 32 years as a Professor of Psychology.

I chose to volunteer here because I read that they offered courses to help students become more proficient in the English language and the opportunity to teach students of different cultures was quite appealing to me. Also I had heard about the Center from some friends and they had nothing but good things to say about the staff and programs.

I have been volunteering at the Center for over two years because each day that I teach and laugh with my student is a rewarding day and one in which I feel something significant has been accomplished. I have always found education to be a two-way transformative experience, one in which the teacher and student have the opportunity to grow intellectually, emotionally, and personally. Volunteering in an educational setting seems quite natural to me. I will keep coming back here because I continue to enjoy the teachers and staff and their invariable kindness and help.

*-Thomas A. Skurky
ESL Volunteer*



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investing in the
next 30 years of
our educational
growth.





Durango Adult Education Center

Serving Southwest Colorado

701 Camino del Rio, Ste. 301
Durango, CO 81301

Upcoming Events

May 21

Taste of Durango Beneficiary
Main Ave., Durango

May 25

GED Graduation
Durango Public Library - 6 pm

August 16

Community Concert Series Beneficiary
Rochester Hotel, Durango

Late August

Fall Registration & Classes Start
Cortez, Mancos (SCCC) & Durango

DAEC Mission Statement

Durango Adult Education Center, a caring learning community, fills educational gaps by providing the skills and knowledge necessary for livable wage careers, post-secondary education, and social and economic mobility.

Did You Know?



By 2018, **63%** of all US jobs will require education beyond high school. **Educateandelevate.org*



In La Plata County (1 in 5) and Montezuma County (1 in 4) **adults lack a high school diploma/ equivalent or speak English less than very well.**

**US Census Bureau - 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates*