

# Tidings

Spring 2018 Newsletter of the Durango Adult Education Center



Durango Adult Education Center  
Serving Southwest Colorado

## Learning Bone-Deep: Stephanie Moran Retires

The children ogled the cow carcass. They poked through its guts and prodded the white bones smeared red. The fifth graders called out the names identifying particular muscles and organs. Their new teacher, Stephanie Moran, sparked discussion and fielded questions about the carcass donated by the local butcher for anatomical exploration.

“As good as my first year was is how awful my second year was. If my second year had been my first year, I would have walked away,” Moran admits with a rueful grin. Luckily, she found her groove. “The art of teaching is not about knowing stuff. It’s about translating information...enough so that it inspires learning about more things. Helping people make connections and say: I never thought of it like that.”

More than three decades later, Moran approaches her official retirement from the education field. (Pssst... everyone’s invited to the party which follows on the heels of the **Durango Adult Education Center’s Graduation Ceremony, May 30th, 6-7 pm at the Durango Public Library.**) After various teaching stints across different grade levels around the U.S. at public schools and universities, Moran settled into the DAEC where she became a vital force for 18 years.

Hers was the office students sought when they needed an ally. Hers was the advice they wanted when making major life choices or career decisions. Hers were the eyes—the exact color of wisdom and compassion—they wanted looking straight into their hearts and seeing their truth.

Humble by nature, Moran tilts the spotlight on her DAEC colleagues and leaders, calling them the most committed and caring professionals. They are the reason why the DAEC remains nimble and open, despite operating on a shoestring budget. In Colorado, less than a million dollars are allotted for adult education for the entire state, whereas neighboring states invest five to ten times that amount.

Fortunately, Durango possesses a generous community whose donations are central to the DAEC’s success.



Stephanie working with two sisters

Moran asserts, “The doors are still open and students return to us. They trust us to be here for them. The community respects us. They respect our students. They understand we need an alternative to the four-year trajectory.”

As Moran sees it, mutual trust defines the teacher-student relationship. As Program Manager of the High School Equivalency Program, Moran made it her mission to make all students feel welcome and safe at the DAEC. No matter what, they could trust the Center and its mission to equip individuals with the knowledge they need to lead productive lives, to better contribute to the local economy, and to the overall health of the community.

*Continued...*



## Director's Note

Spring has fully arrived! All the signs are here. As I bike the river trail to work, I am in awe of the synchronous timing of sprouting leaves, emerging daffodils, and wild birdsong happening all at once.

How did I know now was the right time for me to depart as Executive Director of the Durango Adult Education Center? Because all the unmistakable signs were there. In the five years I have served this outstanding organization, the DAEC has transformed. It has constantly adapted and expanded services to accommodate what the community needs and requests. Its teachers have proven nimble and agile, adjusting their methods so that adult learners are always equipped to succeed.

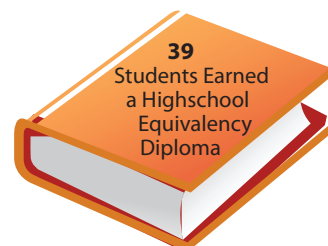
We are so proud of our learners, graduates, new citizens, and college entrants that you'll read about in this newsletter. None of our many accomplishments would be possible without the support of our donors, partners, volunteers, and board of directors.

A search for a new Executive Director is underway as I depart for new challenges. Our Center is primed and ready for new leadership to harness this momentum and channel it into a fruitful and verdant future. My heart is heavy as I prepare to leave, but that same heart beats with a sense of hope that springs eternal.

With sincere appreciation for your support and partnership,

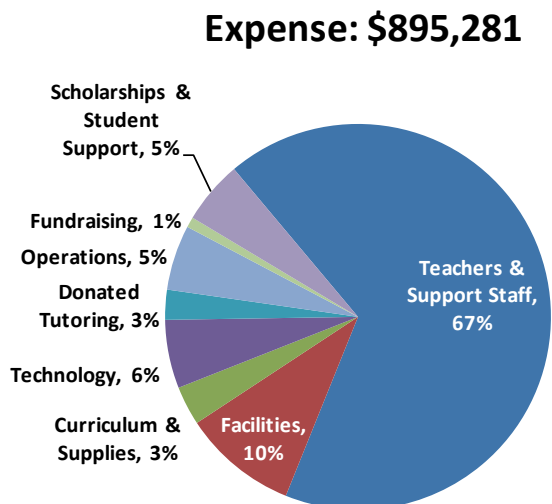
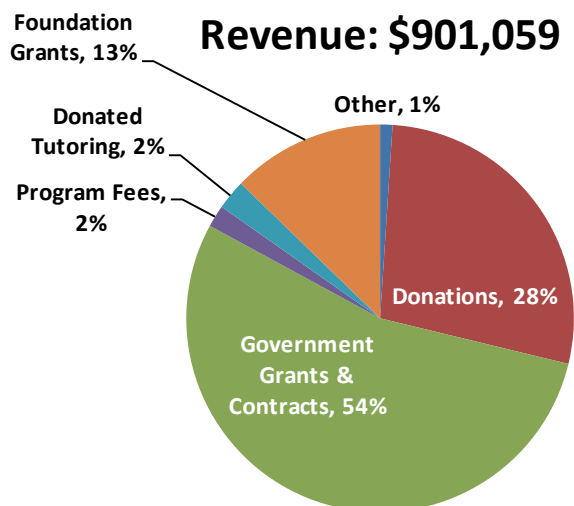
*Teresa Malone*

## 2017 Accomplishments



- 87 students from other countries learned English
- 14 different countries were represented by our ESL students
- 45 children received care while their parents attended class
- 101 individuals received career & support services through the BOOST Program
- 212 students studied for their high school equivalency
- 469 tests were administered at our Pearson Vue Testing Center
- 869 volunteer hours were donated to help our students succeed
- GED Pass Rates: DAEC- 96% us. National - 89%

## 2017 Finances *(unaudited)*



# The Impact of Your Support

## Step-by-Step: Making Educational Strides in Cortez

Monica Ramirez had a slight problem. She needed to teach a Google Basics computer course for the Cortez Adult Education Center—the DAEC’s new satellite location—but she had no way of knowing how many people would enroll or what their technological skill levels might be.

She wound up with 11 students spanning a wide range of ages, demographics, and abilities. Together, they investigated the online Google tools such as Mail, Calendar, Docs, Sheets, and Slides.

Christina Adams was perhaps the youngest student in the class. For Adams, taking the Google Basics class was a natural extension to her blossoming education. She was already enrolled in the CAEC’s High School Equivalency program, attending classes all day, every day of the week. After she earns her GED, Adams plans to attend community college and become a diesel mechanic. Maybe one day, she and her husband William, can own and operate their own repair shop.



*Christina Adams  
GED student*

You might not know it by looking, but Adams is a diligent mother of four. Her first child came along while she was teenager, which meant she had to quit high school.

“I had to take responsibility for being a mom,” Adams explained. “But it [graduating] has always been something I wanted to do.”

When she first enrolled at the CAEC, she felt certain she would not get anything but hassles and, no doubt, she would bomb her first tests. However, what she did not anticipate was the stunning commitment and quality of the teachers and staff at the CAEC.

“They are really helpful,” she said. “They are so like: You’ve got this! You can do this! It’s so encouraging.”

Now, Adams stands on a significant brink. With only one subject test left to pass, a fork in her ancestral road may form, making her the first in her family to not only complete, but also expand her education. “No one in my family ever graduated high school, except my grandma. My sisters dropped out. I dropped out. My aunts and uncles dropped out. I mean everybody just gave up on it.”

Understanding the magnitude of this achievement may be elusive to anyone who has seen their siblings, parents, or extended relatives go on to get diplomas and degrees. The path they walk has footsteps to follow. Not so for Adams and countless thousands like her. For them, the way forward is uncharted and unlit.

That her footprints are likely to be followed by her children is not lost on Adams, which is a big reason why she will continually add to her learning, even though it makes life at home a tad more chaotic. Whether she’s taking high school equivalency courses or learning about Google tools, Christina Adams sees the impact her learning has every time her seven-year-old delights in doing homework while his momma also does her homework.

Adams noted, “I wanted to show my kids: Look, I did it. And I did it under these conditions. You can do it, too.”

Interestingly, of all the challenges Monica Ramirez tackled when designing her Google course, she had no way to know the skills she shared would contribute so much and so deeply to one family’s future.



*Christina  
studying in a GED class*

# The Impact of Your Support

## Students Continue to Be BOOSTED

After three years, the BOOST program continues to make a huge impact in the lives of our students. From academic advising to assistance to job placement to financial education, the program offers life skills needed to succeed after students attain their GED or achieve English proficiency.



*Students last month with their Cooking Matters completion certificates*

\* 10 students learned basic money management and healthy cooking through our 7-week Cooking and Money Matters course.

\* \$33,000 was awarded to 35 students in 2017 for post-secondary scholarships for early childhood certification and a variety of educational pathways.

\* 2017 GED graduate Gabriella Gething recently was awarded the Philanthropic Educational Organization (PEO) Colorado State Scholarship Award for \$3,750 to help her continue her studies in Early Childhood Education. Gabriella was one of only 17 students awarded this scholarship in Colorado. P.E.O. is a philanthropic educational organization for women built upon service and philanthropy. PEO's mission is to promote educational opportunities for women. Three local PEO chapters award scholarships to our qualified GED graduates to assist with post-secondary education.



*Gabriella speaking at her GED Graduation*

## Stephanie Moran continued

Moran departs from education just as the entire field undergoes tumultuous tremors across the nation. Students lead marches and walk-outs to protest school safety amidst an onslaught of shootings and proposals to arm teachers. To make matters worse, recent decades have produced increasingly sparse state and federal coffers for education funding. In several states, teachers are demonstrating for higher wages.

"Here's part of my philosophy," she says, "much can be taken from us; people can be taken from us, houses, cars, places that we lived. But your education...nobody can ever take that from you. This is what I tell students: This is yours. You earn it, you keep it."

When asked to reflect on what makes her most proud in her nearly 20 years, Moran's voice softens, grows very tender, when she says, "I am just incredibly proud of our students. They go on to own businesses. They support families. They give back to the community. They teach us with their empathy. They make us who we are."

All of which suggests Moran's stance is more than mere Pollyanna platitudes. Her hope for the future has real meat on real bones.



*Stephanie honored as 2016 Adult Educator of the Year*

# 2017 Donors

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Karen & Jerry Zink  
Sidny Zink

This represents donations received in 2017. We apologize for any inadvertent omissions

Ways to support the Center: contributing through Amazon Smile, Kroeger/City Market reward programs or making a direct donation.



**Durango Adult Education Center**  
*Serving Southwest Colorado*

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

Return Service Requested

## Upcoming Events

### May 20

Taste of Durango Beneficiary  
Main Ave., Durango

### May 30

GED Graduation  
Durango Public Library - 6 pm

### May 30

Stephanie Moran Retirement Party  
Durango Public Library - 7-9 pm

### August 15

Community Concert Series Beneficiary  
Rochester Hotel, Durango

### August 27

Fall Classes Start

## DAEC Mission

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.

## Why We Donate

Linda and I choose to donate to the Durango Adult Education Center (DAEC) because education is a well-documented avenue to a better life.

The DAEC doesn't just offer a highly successful program for earning a high school equivalency degree but includes teaching individual life skills for all ages and backgrounds to their students. If you want to see the joy and impact of earning a high school equivalency degree at DAEC, please attend a DAEC graduation ceremony where students, their friends and family celebrate this milestone.

We are fortunate to have an IRA to supplement our income in retirement. There is a way to minimize taxes on mandatory IRA withdrawals after age 71 1/2. Contact your IRA administrator about Qualified Charitable Donations (QCD) to see how to take advantage of a QCD when you donate to the DAEC.

*-Tom & Linda West*

