

Karina Hill - Student - Karina is a student at Chatfield High School with a dedicated ethic for helping others and serving under-represented groups. She is involved with a variety of school and community organizations that perform diverse service learning projects throughout the community. Karina has planned and implemented a variety of very successful proms and social events for both developmentally disabled students and the elderly in the Jeffco community. Her leadership and commitment to "A Day Without Hate" has led to a third year of its implementation at Chatfield High School. Through Karina's hard work the Chatfield feeder elementary and middle schools are now a part of the effort. Karina also served on the district steering committee for "A Day Without Hate" coordinating presentations and the creation and distribution of 10,000 t-shirts district wide. Karina is passionate about working with people to break down barriers and build positive relationships across culture, ethnicity, gender, ability, age, sexual orientation and economic status. She sees people for who they are and what they can do for the support and improvement of our world community. Karina has also recently received the 2011 Cherry Creek Diversity Conference Student Scholarship Award for her work in diversity, with the elderly and with special needs populations in the Colorado Community.

Alexandria Ralat - Teacher - Alexandria Ralat began a lesson one day in her 3rd grade classroom at Molholm Elementary about the difference between a person's wants and needs. She drew a wishing well on the chalkboard and asked her students what they wanted to write in it. After a series of wishes for Nintendos, iPods, laptops, and Gameboys, a neatly dressed, young man with big bright eyes said "to eat dinner every night." Over 90% of the students at Molholm Elementary qualify for free or reduced breakfast and lunch. Alexandria knows that hunger is in our backyards, on the Colfax corridor and in her classroom. She believes that when you're feeding a child you're contributing to their academic and social success. Last March, Alexandria Ralat and her husband Richard Archer launched a non-profit "Feeding Minds Enriching Lives" to purchase food at a discount for distribution at the Molholm Food Pantry. Every Friday Alexandria along with her 6th grade class and student volunteers feed 51 families. Students come with empty backpacks and leave with frozen chicken, ham and sausage patties, vegetables, fruit and canned goods for their dinner tables. Alexandria's food pantry moves 7,000 pounds of food every two weeks. Alexandria tells her students, "I'm giving this to you so that someday you will give to others. It's the right thing to do." Alexandria has recently received the 2011 Hispanic Salute Adult Award for supporting Hispanic and Latino families in her school community.

Darl G. Hobson – Community Member – Darl G. Hobson is a community advocate with one eye on human growth and development and the other on supporting Jeffco Schools. He is an active member of the Kiwanis Club and has used that connection to provide Jeffco students with support systems for decades. Darl and the Kiwanis Club in partnership with Jeffco Schools, raised the funds to build the Gates telescope structure complete with a mechanized roof and solar viewing room at Mt. Evans. They expanded these efforts with the “Share the Stars” project where Darl and the local Kiwanis Club solicited support from other national Kiwanis Clubs to construct the Kiwanis Astronomy Center at Windy Peaks. These combined efforts have brought the stars and universe above us to all of our students in Jeffco. Darl’s community service has also included mentoring students at Stein Elementary, being a Court Appointed Special Advocate for foster children and helping in Head Start morning classrooms. Through a partnership with the Jeffco Action Center, Darl and the Kiwanis Club have provided “The Write Stuff” school supply program for Stein, Eiber and Molholm Elementary Schools for the past 12 years with the addition school supply distributions in January for the past 3 years. Darl feels that “making sure kids are safe, secure and have access to learning are the most important things any person can do.”

Teresa Sena Klava – Parent – Teresa Sena Klava is a product of Jeffco Schools. She attended Fairmount Elementary, Drake Middle and Arvada West High School and was one of three Hispanic families in her schools at that time. Being one of the very few followed her to college where she was the only Hispanic female in the C.U. Boulder Engineering Program. After two years she had a change of heart and Majored in Elementary Education with a Bilingual Education Minor. Teresa worked in Denver Public schools 9 years as a teacher and staff developer as a Math Instructional Specialist and 4 years as a school administrator. During this time she became aware of a difference in herself. One difference was forged in tenets of education and another in her culture and ethnicity. She has straddled these two worlds all her life and has chosen to give a voice to those who have none, especially to students of color. Teresa has worked on PTA’s and Accountability Councils in all the schools her four children have attended throughout their years in Jeffco Schools including the Advisory Council at Arvada West. Today Teresa is principal of Valverde Elementary School in Denver where all but 12 of her 400 students are Hispanic, Latino or Mexican and all but 8 are on free or reduced lunch and service programs. Teresa feels that, “you need to stay the course for what you believe and believe in all people no matter their race, ethnicity, background, or belief system. You must believe in humanity to save humanity.”

Jeffco Action Center – Community Organization - Mag Strittmatter, Executive Director Since 1968, the mission of Jeffco Action Center has been to provide an immediate response to basic human needs and promote pathways to self-sufficiency for the poor, working poor and homeless in Jefferson County. In 2009-10, the Action Center served more than 28,000 unduplicated individuals who accessed more than 100,000 separate services – an average of 156 households each day. Whether a client has experienced a temporary setback or has never been able to “make it” on their own, the Jeffco Action Center lends a hand with programs focused on intervention, prevention and connection. Each day more than four tons of food is distributed from the food pantry. Clients also access the clothing bank, bus tokens and personal care items while others use the 22-bed homeless shelter. All of the Jeffco Action Center’s intervention programs help to stop households from falling deeper into poverty, maintain or re-gain stability with short-term or seasonal support and prevention services, and help these families ward off a crisis before it occurs. Seasonal programs like the School Supply Distribution, Thanksgiving Food Boxes and Santa Shop promote pathways to self-sufficiency by connecting clients to resources and other programs in the community. The Jeffco Action Center gives help, provides hope and builds dignity while breaking the cycle of poverty.

Jeffco Office of Dropout Prevention and Recovery – Department – David Kollar, Director, Jason Firestone, Assistant Director, Alyssa Gill, Assistant – The Office of Dropout Prevention & Recovery is dedicated to re-engaging students who are at-risk of dropping out or who have dropped out of school. This office supports a network of caring adults actively involved as teachers, mentors, coaches and neighbors to develop and nurture the educational efficacy that builds marketable skills. Through a variety of options, students who need these supports are empowered to examine their current situation and develop future goals and plans for success with their families. The Office of Dropout & Recovery helps students find the best educational options possible through resources in the community that will ultimately help at-risk students be successful. Since its inception in 2007, the Office of Dropout Prevention & Recovery has successfully reduced dropout rates in Jeffco by over 50%. This office works to connect students and families to the educational, social, and community supports that prepare them for a successful future.

Tracy Phariss – Teacher – Being an openly gay role model at Golden High School has come with many challenges for Tracy Phariss. His focus on helping represent GLBT youth keeps him doing the work he does. Tracy has been the voice for GLBT students and their needs for well over 30 years. As the Co-chairperson of GLSEN, the Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network of Colorado, Tracy works tirelessly to coordinate gay straight alliances and support educational information access across the state. Being a general resource for teachers and students on GLBT issues and concerns opens the door to understanding, removes misconceptions and helps people realize that every person deserves the same opportunities and access. Tracy has seen the growth of GLBT concerns since he was a student in Jeffco himself. Tracy said that he “teaches at the same school that he was bullied at as a student so many years ago.” “It’s hard for students to be openly gay and not be ridiculed, threatened or ostracized but there are protective measures that when put in place make schools safe places for GLBT students.” Tracy is a state and national speaker on GLBT support strategies and has dedicated his career to the sustainability of GLBT rights, effective inclusion strategies and as a sounding board for GLBT advocacy. Tracy feels that “Love and acceptance come from the heart. Hatred has to be learned. We need to help students learn to love acceptance.”

Dr. Alonzo F. Rodriguez – Parent – In 1990 Assistant Superintendent Dr. Wayne Carle asked Dr. Al Rodriguez to look into forming a diversity advisory committee on Multicultural issues and concerns that were growing because of the changing demographics in Jeffco Schools. In 1991 this committee was officially organized and Dr. Al Rodriguez was elected the first chairperson of that committee. The committee did research, collected data and made recommendations on a variety of topics and issues that related to the growing multicultural population in Jeffco. A priority they noted was the lack of teachers and administrators of color in Jeffco at that time and recommended that Jeffco Human Resources concentrate on recruiting and retaining more minorities in the workforce. Under Al’s leadership the committee started the Multicultural Teacher Resource Center at Lakewood High School and made recommendations on services and interventions regarding dropout prevention and equity issues. The Board action and the work of Al Rodriguez’s committee set the precedent for multicultural education in Jeffco. As a result of this work Al went on to participate in a myriad of diversity projects including content standards task forces, CDM committee meetings, advisory councils and PTA endeavors. Al has served on the Board of the Jefferson Foundation and countless community organizations furthering the multicultural cause. Dr. Al Rodriguez feels that “all kids matter and that together we will create an inclusive society in our multicultural world. ¡Si se puede!”

Dexter Meyer – Administrator – Born in Kentucky and raised in the grass roots of Civil Rights, with strong black women leaders as mentors and a focus on the right thing to do, Dexter Meyer grew up knowing that serving the community would be his calling. Throughout his career he forged partnerships with community agencies and mental health services to address this calling long before there were hotlines or national programs for intervention and prevention. His partnership with Jeffco Schools and the Jefferson County Education Association (JCEA) initiated and implemented the creation of bilingual support materials, posters and intervention supplies that reached out to underserved populations and helped Jeffco create welcoming environments where every person could feel culturally empowered and respected. These materials and information are still accessible on the JCEA website and continue to help create work and learning spaces that are engaging and culturally responsive. In his work addressing issues of youth suicide prevention in gay and Hispanic populations, Dexter became part of a task force that generated conversations about how to help students thrive in Jeffco. For the past 20 years these conversations have led to programming, classes and workshop opportunities that have served thousands of parents, kids and families in the Jeffco community via “Helping Kids Thrive” events. Dexter believes that “the more you connect and grow with people who are different from you, the more their multiple perspectives can enrich your work and make you a better person.”

Tim Miller – Teacher – Two years ago Tim Miller had an exhibition of portraits of the homeless. The buyer of one of his pieces worked at an area soup kitchen and recognized a homeless man in a portrait. The connection to the world of the homeless sparked a fresh direction in Tim Miller’s work both as an artist and as an art educator. Using the social action themes of poverty and homelessness to drive instruction, Tim renewed artistic passion in the work of his students at Golden High School. They went downtown and met street people, individuals from realities far different from their own to build compassion, eliminate misconceptions and bridge understanding about the human experience. Students worked in teams and introduced themselves as artists working on visual narratives with the charge of telling the stories of life on the street and capturing the essence of how homeless survival plays out every day of the year. Relationships were established then photographs were taken to guide the highly textured pencil and charcoal drawings created by his students. All the works of every student were displayed as each one told a very different and powerful story. This work was so significant to his students that their desire to continue telling stories in drawing has moved them to work with the elderly. Tim Miller’s students are now working with an assisted living center to learn those stories and tell them in visual narratives and memories.

Boys and Girls Club of Metro Denver –

Lakewood Branch – Community Organization

Jefferson County's first Boys & Girls Club opened at O'Connell Middle School in August, 2010. A dedicated task force of civic and community leaders began work on the project in 2007 and as the 2010 school year began, their dream became a reality. Boys & Girls Clubs have been shaping young lives in Colorado since 1961, offering a safe and positive place for kids to go after school. Boys & Girls Clubs offer sports, recreation, fitness activities, as well as programs that focus on character development, leadership and life skills. Jefferson County's Boys & Girls Club uses O'Connell Middle School facilities during the after-school hours to provide affordable quality youth development activities for kids in surrounding neighborhoods. This is the result of an extraordinary partnership between Boys & Girls Clubs of Metro Denver, Jefferson County Public Schools, government officials, and community and business leaders. The members of this partnership are:

Scott Storey, Jefferson County District Attorney

Bob Murphy, Mayor, City of Lakewood

Kevin Paletta, Police Chief, City of Lakewood

Doug McBee, Chief, West Metro Fire Rescue

George Valuck, Executive Director, Alameda Gateway Association

Kathy Hartman, Jefferson County Board of County Commissioners

Sue King, Lakewood City Council

Pam Anderson, Jefferson County Clerk and Recorder

Pam Russell, Jefferson County District Attorney's Office

Tom Ashe, President West Metro Fire Civil Service

Shawn Hegarty, Insurance of Denver, Incorporated

TROOP - Total Respect Of Other People – Student Group – Riley Robert Hawkins – Social Worker/Sponsor – The TROOP Step Team is one of five programs developed by Positive S.P.I.N. (Supporting People In Need) a non-profit founded at Jefferson High School in 2003. The philosophy of TROOP is "where there is a negative there is always a positive." The step team was the first of its kind in Jeffco Schools. It promotes gang resistance, boosts self esteem, unity and cultural diversity through percussive dance, spoken word, and handclaps using a curriculum that focuses on respecting oneself and others while reducing prejudice. Supported by the 21st Century Grant, TROOP in partnership with Cleo Parker Robinson Dance Company competes throughout Colorado in Step competitions spreading the word for respect of all people. The Wayne Carle Award represents all the efforts of every past TROOP participant in our Step Program all of which are graduates from high school and universities. The current TROOP Step Team members are Shonnyesha Sallis, Sharlene Columbus, Talisha Bedwell, Micha Ellerson, Deajana Leaks, and Savannah Von Berckefeldt. TROOP is especially thankful to Elizabeth Yantorni, Edlyn Rodriguez, Fred Davis and Dance Coaches from the Cleo Parker Dance Company, Cedric Hall, Malik Robinson and Katie Swenson.

A Day Without Hate - Student Group – Benjamin Reed – Benjamin Thompson – Keary Sullivan - Teacher/Sponsors – After hearing about the tragedy at Virginia Tech in 2007, a small committee of students and teachers felt that they had to do something...anything to make a difference, big or small, or at least draw attention to the more frequent acts of school violence and ideas on how to stop it. They decided to set up "A Day without Hate," the first--and probably hardest--step to ending violence in schools. In May of 2007, they encouraged everyone in Standley Lake High School to wear white and join in on all the small "activities" they planned to show their commitment and trust in each other. The day was an overwhelming success. Since then, students across Jefferson County, Colorado, and the nation have decided to take this incredibly positive day to their communities to say that they will not tolerate violence or prejudice, and they will reach out to their friends and acquaintances and say, "We're all in this together." The "**Founders**" of "A Day Without Hate" are: Daniel Bullock, Matt Davis, Adam Baca, Dan Mager, Kaitlyn Roach, Kristina Nordman, Megan Hudson, Stephanie Klinger, and Rachel Haseman. Major participants in "A Day Without Hate" in Jeffco are: Dakota Ridge: Molly Zwisler, Columbine: Olivia Leyshock, Chatfield: Karina Hill, Ralston Valley: Kailee Himes, Arvada West: Alec Kochmann, Green Mountain: Gage Crispe, Wheat Ridge: Theresa Dixon and Kami Barnett, Standley Lake: Shelby King, Kelsi Hamdorf, and Jordyn Clark.

Brenda Somerville – Administrator – During the time Brenda Somerville received her M.A. in Special Education from George Washington University she joined a sorority that would change the course of her career. The Alpha Kappa Alpha (AKA) was a primarily Black 100 year old sorority that was grounded in social action and service learning projects with an eye on multicultural leadership development and promoting and nurturing ethnically different populations. Brenda took this spirit with her throughout her career to develop and promote leadership in minority educators and weave multicultural education tenets throughout the instruction in the schools she works in. She has served as a mentor, staff developer, dean, college professor, colleague and principal with a firm commitment to getting minorities involved and pushing her protégé’s through the ideals of multicultural education, fairness, character development and dedication to diversity. Brenda is a member of the Jeffco Cultural Proficiency Team, has worked closely with the JCEA Minority Steering Committee and has been a member of the Jeffco Minority Educators Committee for the past 20 years. As Brenda never had children of her own, she feels that the children in the schools she works in are her children. Brenda is dedicated to the supporting and promoting diversity and multicultural education.

Dr. Cynthia Stevenson – Superintendent of Jeffco Schools – Legacy Award – Dr. Stevenson has the heart of a teacher and the soul of a warrior. She moved to Colorado from eastern Montana and grew up in Jeffco Schools. Dr. Stevenson taught 1st grade in Jeffco schools the fall after her graduation and began her administrative journey after 11 years as a classroom teacher. In 2010 Dr. Stevenson was named Colorado Superintendent of the Year and was one of four finalists for the national award. Dr. Stevenson knows and understands the Jeffco community. She is committed to transparency and keeping schools and residents informed of Jeffco’s work, protocols and strategies. This warrior of the people continuously battles to sustain academic excellence in the face of severe economic challenges while she builds capacity and strives to ensure a positive future for all of Jeffco’s employees and community. Dr. Stevenson believes in Jeffco and fights for every child, every learner, and every employee, everyday! Under her leadership the Cultural Proficiency Team and Office of Culture and Diversity have been put in place to champion the work of diversity and implement support systems based on the democratic ideals of equality and individual empowerment. Dr. Cynthia Stevenson believes in an inclusive learning environment where all individuals have the equal opportunity to learn and experience individual and cultural empowerment. For Dr. Stevenson, “ALL MEANS ALL.”