



Educate  
Empower  
Succeed



CAP Newsletter  
July 2018

## Farewell



### MARK YOUR CALENDARS:

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**Circles Recruitment**  
Thursday, July 19  
6:30 - 8 p.m.  
Old Chicago Restaurant  
1805 Industrial Circle  
Longmont, CO 80501  
[circlesinfo@bouldercounty.org](mailto:circlesinfo@bouldercounty.org)

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*Note: After more than seven years with Boulder County Community Action Programs, Eliberto Mendoza recently stepped down as Director of CAP to take a position with the City of Longmont. He shared some comments with us before he left.*

### **When did you first start working with CAP?**

Eliberto: I started in January 2011, so about seven and a half years ago. I came in to take on the Circles Coordinator position. I had been working for Intercambio and been both a PIE and PERL client and was very familiar with CAP. We actually used our PIE money for a down payment towards our Habitat for Humanity home in Longmont.

*Continued on last page* →

# Gaining an Education Through PIE

Last December, Deja Loa Forsythe graduated with a degree in Marketing from Metropolitan State University of Denver. She always knew she wanted to get a degree, and when she found herself struggling to pay for school, she looked to the Personal Investment Enterprise (PIE) program for help.

“My aunt told me about the PIE program when I was trying to figure out how I would be able to finish college. I’ve always been good with my finances but the matching funds were really key. I was able to not work so many hours and concentrate on my school work,” Deja said.

The youngest of six children, Deja has had a difficult family life in recent years and was considered ‘at-risk’ during her time in high school, but her parents always stressed the importance of getting an education and completing college. “My parents would always tell me, you can be successful without a formal education, but so many more doors and opportunities are open to you when you have a degree.” Today, she is already working in her field, specializing in digital marketing.



*Deja Loa Forsythe*

“I thought about going into music or psychology, but I wanted something a bit more practical. Marketing interested me because it is business-oriented, but you can also be creative in your day-to-

day work.” She found a paid internship while she was attending school that turned into a full-time job upon graduation. With that and the PIE program, she was able to purchase books, get hands-on experience in her field and not graduate with so much debt.

Deja is proud of what she has achieved. She is the first in her family to graduate college and she knows she will be a good example for the younger generation in her family. “I want to create something that I am proud of. I want to volunteer with at-risk youth, giving back to the community which helped me so much. There is still a lot for me to learn and accomplish.”

The PIE program currently has openings for savers in homeownership, business and education.

To learn more contact Nino Gallo at Boulder County Community Action Programs, 303-441-3998 or at [ngallo@bouldercounty.org](mailto:ngallo@bouldercounty.org).

*Article Provided by Foothills United Way.*

# Tracey Jones Receives District Attorney’s Commitment to Justice Award

Boulder County Community Action Programs Board Chair, Tracey Jones, recently received the District Attorney’s Award for her Commitment to Justice. On May 2, Tracey was presented the prestigious award by District Attorney Michael Dougherty. Over the course of two trials she was able to help the DA’s office secure a guilty verdict in a difficult case. Even though it was incredibly challenging to testify not once, but two times, she persevered with grace. Her courage and bravery did not go unnoticed by the DA’s office and Victims Assistant Program. Tracey Jones is a launched Circle Leader, PERL graduate, Circles Volunteer, Getting Ahead Facilitator and CAP Board Chair. Her commitment to justice, CAP and the Boulder County Community, is much appreciated. Thank you and congratulations Tracey!



## PERL Graduations

Congrats to all the 2017 P.E.R.L. graduates as well as our new Spring 2018 Class. We will be conducting our 2018 Board and Commission update survey this summer. The Fall P.E.R.L. session will begin Sept. 3 in Longmont so keep an eye later this summer for more details!



**Spring 2017:**  
Cibonet Salazar  
Jeff Hastings  
Mary Golden  
Joseph Cartlidge  
Heidi Markus  
Jeneuse Geula  
Dana Samani  
Kevin Bennett  
Moya Rice – **EFAA Development Board Committee**

**Fall 2017:**  
Joel Martinez  
Shawna Sanchez  
Veronica Orona  
Silvana Munro  
Michelle Crain  
Dara DiRito  
Jennifer Vincent  
Suzie Banks  
Darlene Owsiany  
Namarta Bhasin – **Safehouse Progressive Alliance for Non Violence Board of Directors**

**Spring 2018:**  
Claudia Burkholder  
Lydney Kujawa  
Jennifer Diaz-Leon  
Sepideh Miller  
Michelle Villeneuve  
Bhola Katuwal



# Spring Poverty Simulation

Saturday, May 12, might have been a rainy day, but the Circles Program and the 40 community members who were inside the United Church of Christ in Longmont gathered together to both learn and teach about poverty in Boulder County. Circles has hosted the bi-annual Poverty Simulation for many years, and it continues to attract those interested in connecting with their community and understanding more about poverty. This hands-on education is a step toward spreading empathy and insight within the community about those that struggle daily with the realities of

poverty. During the Poverty Simulation participants are given common situations those in poverty face, and have the chance to either sink or swim. The experience was stressful -- as some community members mentioned -- and more members of the community sank rather than swam.

The simulation can be an eye-opening experience that dispels many common misconceptions about poverty. The most impactful portion of the simulation is the discussion after, where the community members get a chance to

exchange stories with the volunteers, primarily Circle Leaders who have experienced poverty, along with the Circle Allies. This discussion creates much needed understanding, support, and healing, and helps plant the seeds for change. In Boulder County there are many who are willing to be vulnerable and curious enough to connect and reflect on the need for change, and many who turn their reflection into action. The possibilities are endless when communities better understand each other. Join us in the next Poverty Sim, coming Fall 2018!

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## Farewell - continued

### **What did you want to accomplish when you started here?**

Eliberto: Circles was a brand new program when I started with the county, and I wanted to make it a success. We didn't have a standing with the community or a client or volunteer base then. I've always been committed to the idea of building community, and what excited me about Circles was that it built a structure around building a community.

When I became CAP Director in July 2014 I really wanted to take CAP to a different level, to become a more community-wide leader around poverty issues. We've had moments of brilliance in those efforts. The THRIVE Conference is a great example of community work around poverty and building assets. We also recently convened a gathering with legislators to discuss poverty. Those are successes at the micro level, but on the macro level there is still work to be done.

### **What are you most proud of about your time with CAP?**

Eliberto: There is a lot, but I'm going to try to keep it to just a few. The first is the fact that we now have a strategic plan for the organization. That was a lot of work from our boards, staff and myself. We now have a systems improvement plan in place for all the programs, where we do evaluations and use logic models to move the work forward.

I'm also very proud of the fact that I took CAP to a more professional level. Before CAP was an amazing agency that was run at a very grassroots level. What I've tried to install in CAP is a more professional structured framework, which has been good for the organization.

I think Circles has taken leaps and bounds forward, especially in the framework of how it is implemented. Our results are really beginning to show how that improvement has benefited our clients.

I've continued to increase the Board's engagement in CAP. Our board members are out there more than ever in the community doing what we need them to do, like finding sponsors for the MCAB and engaging the community.

There are also a lot of incremental but valuable steps that we've taken to help CAP be a better organization. That includes the programs that I've gotten started, like the THRIVE Conference and the Opportunities to Compete program in Circles.

### **What words of wisdom would you leave with the people who take the CAP work forward?**

Eliberto: With the transition of my leaving, CAP now has the opportunity to re-envision their priorities, goals and roles in the community. CAP can build on the success we've had and can continue to improve.