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The Loneliness Crisis We Don't Talk About

And the Horses Helping Heal It

A thousand-pound horse lowered his nose gently into the chest of a woman who had barely spoken in twenty minutes. She began to cry. Not because the horse had performed a trick. Not because anyone had told him to. But because, for the first time in a long time, she felt seen.

Moments like this happen more often than people realize at the ResqRanch—a sanctuary nestled in the foothills near Evergreen—and the team there, connected with Aspen Park Vet, has made it their quiet mission to let them keep happening.

Most of us know the feeling. The phone buzzes before you've opened your eyes in the morning. The news cycles through catastrophe after catastrophe before breakfast. You've got 400 unread messages and a calendar that looks like a game of Tetris. You're technically more "connected" than any generation in history, and yet somehow, many people have never felt more alone.

Anxiety is rising. Burnout has become a badge of honor. And the kind of quiet, non-judgmental presence that humans have always needed—the kind that asks nothing of you, judges nothing about you, and simply is—has become almost impossible to find. Almost.

Horses don't care about your follower count. They're not impressed by your job title or your income. They won't scroll past you. They respond to something older and more honest than any of that: your nervous system. Your breath. Your presence.

As prey animals that have survived for millennia by reading their environment with extraordinary precision, horses are essentially expert body-language interpreters. They sense tension before you've consciously registered it yourself. They mirror calm when they find it. And in a world where most of us have learned to mask, perform, and push through, that kind of feedback can be startling—and deeply healing.

At the ResqRanch, the approach to working with horses is built on this understanding. Rather than traditional methods that rely on



dominance and submission, the philosophy centers on positive reinforcement—reward-based learning that builds genuine trust between horse and human.

"When people stop trying to dominate horses and start learning to communicate with them, something incredible happens," says the team. "The humans change too."

Clicker training, patience, and emotional safety form the foundation of every interaction. And the results speak for themselves—not just in calmer, more confident horses, but also in the people who spend time with them. It doesn't take a dramatic breakthrough. Often it's the smallest things.

A nervous horse, rescued and unsure, taking a piece of carrot gently from an outstretched hand. A child who arrived clutching a parent's leg, laughing twenty minutes later as a horse nuzzles her hair. A volunteer who came out after a brutal week at work, sits quietly outside a stall, and finds—without quite knowing how—that the noise in her head has gone still.

Or the moment a person realizes that the horse on the other side of the fence has relaxed

completely, and then notices, with something like wonder, that they have too.

These moments don't make the headlines. But they're happening in Evergreen, in the foothills, in this community; and for the people who experience them, they matter enormously.

The vision at the ResqRanch stretches well beyond the fence line. This is a place being built for the whole community—for families looking for meaningful, screen-free experiences; for young people who need mentorship and confidence; for veterans and seniors who want connection and joy; for anyone who has ever felt the particular exhaustion of modern life and wondered if there was somewhere quieter to go.

Upcoming clinics, community events, educational programs, and volunteer opportunities are all part of a growing effort to create something rare: a genuinely welcoming space where humans and animals heal together; where kindness is modeled, not just talked about; where learning happens because everyone—horse and human alike—feels safe enough to try.

The partnership with Aspen Park Vet brings a layer of professional, compassionate animal

care to every aspect of the work, ensuring that the rescue animals at the heart of this mission receive everything they need to thrive.

In a noisy world, horses still speak the ancient language of trust. Maybe that's why so many people leave the ResqRanch feeling lighter than when they arrived. Not because anything in their lives has changed—the emails will still be waiting, the calendar still full—but because for an hour, they were somewhere real, present, connected to something that didn't ask them to perform.

Sometimes healing doesn't begin with words. Sometimes it begins with a soft nose, a quiet breath, and the simple, grounding feeling of being fully here. That is what you get when you join one of our ResqRanch Experiences. We also have a few scholarships, through the recent donations we received after our successful Kentucky Derby party. Thank you to all who have supported us and believed in me. We are finally starting to get some traction in this community, and I am so grateful. My dream, my vision all along, has been to share this magical place, and these magical animals, with you.

Our next event is having a booth at the Evergreen Rodeo (we could use volunteers to staff the booth), and we plan to walk in the parade that Saturday morning, Father's Day weekend; come walk in the parade with us!

Remember, when it comes to your animals, whether it's your pets dealing with chronic conditions where there seem to be no hope, or whether it's improving your horse training and behavior skills, or just looking for connection with animals, we are here for you! Thanks for reading and God bless! DrQ and the crew of Aspen Park Vet Hospital and the ResqRanch.

Aspen Park Veterinary Hospital is located at 25871 Duran Ave. Conifer, CO 80433.

You can call the hospital at (303) 838-3771 (838-DrQ1) or visit them at www.DrQandU.org.

— KELLER WILLIAMS FOOTHILLS REALTY —

Making Memories

BY LISA PLUMMER SMITH

“If your family still plans time to travel together, you are truly blessed.”

**All we get is
time and choice.
Be wise with
both.**



As I write this it is early May, and overnight a heavy wet spring snow fell. After a mild winter I think we were waiting to see if it was finally going to happen, or if we were going to just get rain!? It was a gamble; is it a false spring, or can we put out the plants and de-winterize? Or not? The storm was forecast days prior and began with fog and rain, then mist, then steadily built to big fluffy flakes — overnight 10–14 inches fell. I woke to that pristine quiet that a big snowfall brings and the landscape artfully drenched in snow.

The kids are delighted with this late snow day. I shake the snow off my budding lilacs, wondering how they will fare in the storm. Hallelujah! The plow guy is here; it makes my day better to be able to get out of our driveway. With everyone online at home today, our

internet is struggling, so I am listening to my dang radio, the one I keep with our emergency supplies. Today I am thankful for the company it provides. My family teases me because I give them radios, headlamps, and emergency ponchos for Christmas.

In our family, my aunt would tell a story of my dad hiking the Resurrection Trail in Alaska (a multi-day hike) with her and the younger cousins. My dad showed up late with my wee sister in tow, with steaks and canned goods in his backpack. Instead of sleeping bags, my dad had brought them space blankets to sleep in. The crinkle, crinkle all night long nearly drove everyone in that cabin mad!

Family vacations are an art; if your family still plans time to travel together, you are truly blessed. Spending time as adults with siblings and other family members takes a new level of commitment and effort—but it is absolutely worth it. Time slips away. Maybe you visit a beloved relative once a year. If you play that forward for the next 20 years, that only makes 20 visits; don't you want more time with your loved ones? I sure do!

I recently bought a used travel trailer, and after my first outing I knew it was a good decision for me. I love road trips, adventuring, and seeing parks and nature—and gathering with my family. Hopefully they are happy to have me come visit and join me for some adventures. I feel a different kind of peace and satisfaction rolling down the road on an experience I've carefully crafted.

The crackle of the static of this radio is taking me back. Isn't it nice how sounds, smells, songs, and experiences can take us back to a moment from the past? They take us to stardust memories full of detail and emotion, like a brief visit with the pillars who formed us but are now gone. Reminiscing over a well-lived past sometimes requires that I consciously bring myself back to the present to value the moment I am in.

With summer celebrations and time spent with loved ones comes a special energy. Tap into it, and make the memories. Breathe and take a mental photograph to somehow imprint

these moments on your brain. It also requires showing up and participating; even if things don't go as planned, there will be a story to tell. Perhaps a day or two spent with friends or family experiencing a new setting would provide a refreshing reset.

Mix it up, try something new, and make your days different somehow. I read that when we vary our daily routines, rather than repeating things from our everyday life, it somehow creates a stronger memory. Explore something out of your comfort zone; you just might like it.



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connection to the past



*“Rediscover the joy of learning;
Seek meaning in life;
Adapt to the world as it is;
Prepare for the world that might be;
Create the world as it ought to be.”*
—the five goals of Open Living Schools

A TALE OF TWO SCHOOLS

BY ELAINE HAYDEN

If Ann (Mauch) Herr were to attend a high school class reunion in 2026 as a spry 96-year-old, she would likely be the sole representative of her class, a class that graduated from Evergreen High School in 1948 and whose student body consisted of 13 students: 9 girls and 4 boys, representing early Evergreen families of Clark, Ault, and Knoll, among others. Ann graduated the same year the Evergreen Volunteer Fire Department was formed and the year El Rancho Restaurant was built. Ann spent her junior year of high school at the old red brick school, then moved on to become a member of the first graduating class at the newly built temporary high school. The building that housed the high school where Ann graduated was sandwiched, in a chronological time frame, between the historic red brick school at the site of the present Evergreen library and the current high school campus off Buffalo Park Road.

Ann was an eyewitness to Evergreen’s development and is still watching. She was fortunate to have parents who were resourceful enough to find employment with some established families in the Evergreen summer colony, providing Ann the pleasure of mountain living. The economic outlook in Colorado in the 1930s–40s mirrored the rest of the country, with few jobs and opportunities while the country navigated its way through the Great Depression, the Dust Bowl years, and a world at war.

Having been born in 1930, Ann was unaware of the economic climate. She was raised in Kansas until she was 9 years old, when her family moved to Englewood, Colorado. From that point on, Ann describes her family’s lifestyle as “yo-yo-ing” back and forth between Englewood and Evergreen. Ann and her family savored their time spent in Evergreen as her parents offered their services to Herb Wallower of Upper Bear Creek Road (UBCR), as well as some of the summer residents on the Evans Ranch, including Louise Elbert, descendant of Gov. Samuel Elbert. It was while spending time at the Elbert Ranch with her parents that young Ann met the author, Ada Claire Darby, Louise’s niece, who was researching a book featuring Anne Evans. It is not known whether that effort came to print.

As years passed, Ann and her family came to live year around in a house on UBCR, across the road from “Glendora,” the Wallower home, and a short distance from Troutdale-in-the-Pines

Resort. Ann recalls joining other young folks walking or riding horseback to listen to the big band music from outside the ballroom at Troutdale. Ann attended Evergreen schools at a time when there was no bus service. The wife of the foreman at the Evans Ranch, Marge Brasel, would stop by Ann’s house on UBCR to give her a ride to school. In the small car, it was necessary for Ann to hold Brasel’s son, Tommy, on her lap for the short trip to the Evergreen school, which she did as an unwilling participant. Ann recalls that she impressed the principal of the school with her business skills and was recruited to work in the school office during her senior year of high school. Following graduation, Ann attended Colorado Women’s College in Denver. Her family changed residency with a move to the newly developed Hiwan Hills and on to Shadow Mountain, then to Florida, Denver, and finally returning to Evergreen around 1955. Over time, local businessman Dave Scruby pegged Ann to assist him in opening the Evergreen National Bank that thrives today as the hometown bank located less than a mile from Ann’s alma mater. Ann’s contribution to Evergreen’s historical narrative is not overlooked. She remains a trustworthy resource and is a proud Evergreener, living independently at the age of 96 years. Ann’s empirical knowledge and oral history have helped to fill gaps in the log of Evergreen’s development.



Abandoned Evergreen School in service from 1922 – 1947

Herein lies the second tale of the historic building that housed Ann’s high school and, subsequently, the Mountain Open Living School (MOLS). The late Phoebe Granzella, a 35-year teaching veteran at Jeffco schools and a local historian, referred to the masonry building as Evergreen’s fourth school in her book that focuses on the history of Jeffco mountain schools. The masonry building was located near

the red brick building that housed the Evergreen elementary and high school grades from 1922 to the late 1940s on the site of the present Evergreen Library parking lot. As Evergreen’s population swelled, the masonry building was erected in 1946–47 to temporarily accommodate the high school students. As new school districts were formed, the Jeffco School Board approved the building of a new and larger high school off Buffalo Park Road at its current site. As high school students migrated up Buffalo Park Road in 1954, the elementary students followed the movement 8 years later, to a new school, Wilmot Elementary, in 1962. These moves ushered in a period of uncertainty for these two former school buildings at the site along Hwy. 73. While the red brick building was utilized for the Department of Motor Vehicles offices and played host to many community events, the masonry building was largely unused.



Abandoned masonry school, housed EHS and MOLS

By the late 1960s, a new and, by some accounts, a radical concept in educational reforms emerged. The notion of an alternative teaching method was introduced in 1970 in Arvada and was named the Open Living School. The model proved to be a success and was in such high demand that the Jeffco School Board allowed for two more Open Living Schools for pre K-6 grades in Edgewater and in Evergreen. It was, indeed, a radical idea for Evergreen, but it was quickly accepted and proven to fill a need for all area students. The new school adhered to Jeffco school district protocols and was fully accredited and even adopted a new name for the school cafeteria, “Munchie Central”! The Evergreen school was opened in 1971 as the

Mountain Open Living School (MOLS) for high school grades and was housed in the masonry building that was the former home to Ann Herr’s Evergreen High School. Over time, the elementary open living school in Golden, Tanglewood, united with the MOLS in 1989 and relocated to 7655 W. 10th Avenue in Lakewood.

The concept of the student-led teaching method adopted by the open living schools is based on a five goal and principal standard: Rediscover the joy of learning; Seek meaning in life; Adapt to the world as it is; Prepare for the world that might be; Create the world as it ought to be. The first school principal at MOLS was Arnie Langberg, who helped lead and promote the development of the school and its students for over 10 years. The MOLS masonry building and the historic red brick school were demolished in 1992 to facilitate building of a new Jeffco library. In this instance, the paradise that was for some the MOLS had been paved to put up a parking lot.

Former instructor at the MOLS Hannah Hayes recalls the joyful relationship with learning displayed by the diverse student body and the passion the instructors had for teaching. Hannah taught at MOLS for four years and recalls that the staff hiring and interview panel consisted of and was led by students, parents, and staff, thus creating a collaboration that assured a diverse atmosphere. Hayes remains a proponent for the open-living teaching method and has family members who, as alumni, continue to support the mission of Open Living Schools.

Ann Herr is a local treasure and a pioneer who graduated in the first class from the masonry building that housed Evergreen High in 1948, just as MOLS is treasured as being the first open-living school that occupied the building all those years later beginning in the 1970s in Evergreen. While Ann and MOLS do not occupy a common space on the Evergreen school’s historic timeline, Ann and MOLS have a shared appreciation for the school building that remains today in memory only.

Sources:
Granzella, Phoebe. *A Century of Jefferson County Mountain Schools*, 1993.
Hayes, Hannah. Interview 2026.
Herr, Ann. Interview 2026. Personal archives.
jeffcopublicschools.org Website
The Cub. 1948 Evergreen High School Yearbook

History Evergreen is a newly formed non-profit organization whose mission is to acknowledge the rich history of our community and to foster an appreciation of historic preservation. Through publication of books, articles, social media and pamphlets we endeavor to maintain the historic record in a sustainable and inclusive manner for all to enjoy.



I'm Just Sayin'...

June 21, 2026 – Father's Day

“The thing that comes to mind [regarding Father's Day] more than anything is: lead by example.”

Jeff Smith owner/publisher

Father's Day—a day that brings back so many wonderful memories. The thing that comes to mind more than anything is: lead by example. My dad worked hard and built a business, spent time with my brother and me, and provided for our family, but never said much. He just did it. In trying to emulate him I probably failed many times, but I still believe in that approach and see it in my son with his four children. Happy Father's Day to all those who are trying.

Father's Day also brings the Evergreen Rodeo. This is a great family event. One of my granddaughters excelled in the mutton busting a couple of years ago. There is something for everyone. If you have never been, you should definitely try it.

Finally some rain! I think we are all a little nervous about this summer and the fire hazards. The ponds, lakes, and rivers are all down, so some summer activities will be limited. Please be responsible out there with campfires, cooking out, etc.

On the way down the hill yesterday the traffic was backed up due to a motorcycle accident. One of those crotch rockets was mangled by the side of the road. I don't know what happened to the rider; but they are usually traveling a high rate of speed, so he was probably hurt badly or worse. They have become a menace, especially going through the canyon on 285.

Avalanche – Two down and two to go. Inconsistency is their biggest enemy right now. They need to play their best hockey from here out. GO AVS!

Nuggets – Out in the first round. Very disappointing. With all that talent they should have done better!

Rockies – Just another Rockies year. They do have a lot of injuries, especially in their pitching staff.

Quackadilly says:
“My father didn't tell me how to live; he lived, and let me watch him do it.”
—Clarence Kelland

NEWS ON THE POSITIVE SIDE

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DOGS WELCOME

— LOAN ZONE MORTGAGE —

Line of Credit for Dad?

BY WANDA NORGE, MORTGAGE CONSULTANT

“Why not use your home’s equity to make your life easier?”

Many seniors over age 62 have a lot of equity in their homes—their biggest asset. Most want to age in place. I know that is what my parents wanted. Some homes are not conducive to aging in place, with narrow doorways, steps to navigate to bedrooms or bathrooms, or other safety issues.

If you or your parents own a home free and clear and want to have more cash on hand due to recent market instability, a good loan product may be a HELOC (Home Equity Line Of Credit) for Seniors®. This loan is designed specifically for senior homeowners aged 62 and over. This line of credit remains an interest-only payment, with no switch to an amortized higher payment at a later date as with most bank HELOCs. The line does not have to be repaid until the home is no longer the primary residence.

You can use it to consolidate high-interest credit card debt, medical bills, or pay for travel to go on those vacations you have been dreaming about. Some seniors have taken out personal loans or high-interest-rate credit cards instead of using available equity in their own home at lower rates.

There is a fixed rate assigned to each draw taken, eliminating the risk of payment spikes that come with variable bank HELOCs. You can

*“Some homes are not conducive to aging in place.”*

re-access credit again and again, up to your full limit. You qualify based on your home’s equity and assets, even if you are on a fixed income. No appraisal is required, and funding can be completed within a week in most cases.

Perhaps you are going through a divorce and need funds to buy out your spouse so you can retain the home. This can be a great option to access funds.

If having any kind of payment is too much to worry about, another option is the regular reverse mortgage. Why not use that equity to make your life easier? The house is still owned by you, just as with a regular 30-year fixed loan, but there is no monthly mortgage payment. You still leave the home to your heirs, who can repay the reverse at time of sale. Reverse loans have options to pay you a monthly figure, a line of credit, a lump sum amount, or a combination of these options. Don’t get scared away from a reverse mortgage because of comments from people who don’t understand the product. It isn’t for everyone, that is true, but can be a life saver for the right folks.

Call to find out more about these products or other options. I’m happy to chat about your situation and run scenarios for you with no obligation.

Wanda Norge, Certified Mortgage Advisor (CMA), Certified Divorce Lending Professional (CDLP), Loan Zone Mortgage, LLC (NMLS: 1870102), 23 yrs exp, 28 yr Evergreen Resident, Phone: 303-419-6568, loans@wandanorge.com, www.wandanorge.com (NMLS: 280102).

The Sasquatch Chronicles

BY JIM MYERS

For me, another season of expeditions, horseback journeys, and late-night hikes into the Colorado wilderness is far more than a business venture or weekend adventure—it feels like coming home.

As much as I enjoy creating videos or speaking publicly about Sasquatch encounters, nothing compares to being deep in the woods beneath the pines, far from city lights and distractions. That is where I feel most alive, most grounded. In many ways, it feels like stepping back into the world we were originally designed to inhabit before noise, schedules, and glowing screens consumed our attention.

I especially enjoy bringing newcomers with me—people who have never camped before, or who have certainly never stepped into the forest with the possibility of a Sasquatch encounter lingering in the back of their minds. I’ve camped all over the world: across Africa, in the mountains of France, and throughout the United States. Yet Colorado remains one of the most breathtaking places I’ve ever experienced. The mountains have a presence to them. And perhaps that’s why stories of the Forest People persist here.

Two important events took place in late May that I’m excited to share with you. The first was a workshop and retreat at Glen Isle Resort in Bailey, called Teachings of the Forest People. I was invited to speak about my own encounters and experiences in the Bailey area, where unusual activity has continued for years. But this retreat went beyond simply discussing sightings or footprints. It explored a question many people quietly wrestle with after their own experiences in the woods: What if Sasquatch are more than just undiscovered animals?

Participants spent the weekend exploring the spiritual dimension often associated with these beings, including the phenomenon many refer to as “Mind Speak”—an apparent form of silent communication that countless witnesses claim to experience. Skeptics may dismiss such ideas immediately, and perhaps that is understandable. But those who have spent enough time deep in the wilderness know there are moments that defy easy explanation. The most meaningful



part of the retreat, however, happened away from the conference room. Together, we ventured into areas where activity has been consistently reported and put these ideas into practice beneath the trees, in the darkness, where certainty often gives way to experience.

The second event was one I had recently announced for Bailey residents. I offered a massive 60% discount for one of my multi-day camping expeditions, and four brave souls accepted the invitation. Over Memorial Day weekend, we headed into what I consider the most active Sasquatch region in the state. And when I say active, I mean active.

The Sasquatch in this area have no hesitation approaching camp during the night. They interact with tents. They vocalize from the darkness. Sometimes they even help themselves to leftovers from dinner. Experiences like these can be exhilarating—but also deeply unsettling, especially at two in the morning when something large is moving just beyond the thin fabric of your tent.

Because of this, I have one strict rule on all my expeditions in this area: no one sleeps alone. Everyone will share tents in pairs or groups. That rule may sound silly, but there’s an important lesson hidden inside it. Fear grows strongest in isolation. When we sit alone in darkness, our imagination can quickly become our enemy. But the presence of another person changes everything. Shared fear becomes courage. Shared uncertainty becomes adventure.

Maybe that lesson applies to more than just camping. Perhaps one of the reasons people are drawn to the mystery of Sasquatch is that it reconnects us to something modern life has nearly erased: wonder. Not certainty. Not proof. Wonder. And in a world where nearly everything is explained, categorized, photographed, and mapped, maybe wonder itself has become one of the rarest experiences left.

**49 Main Street in Bailey. Open every day.
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— EVERGREEN HEALTH INSURANCE —

Important Updates for ACA Individual Plans

BY ED REGALADO

In May, Cigna announced they will exit the individual ACA market at the end of this year. Cigna stated that current members will remain covered through the end of the year, but if you are a Cigna subscriber, you’ll need to find a new plan with another carrier starting January 1, 2027.

If you’re currently enrolled in a Cigna individual plan through the Market Place (Connect for Health Colorado), continue to pay your monthly premium. Starting in November, you will be able to select a new carrier and plan for 2027, but the enrollment period has been reduced and will end December 31, 2026, rather than January 15, 2027.

With Cigna’s withdrawal from the individual market, five other carriers remain: Anthem, Elevate, Kaiser Permanente, RMHP (UnitedHealthcare), and Select Health. You may wish to check with your doctors to see which of these carriers they work with. Most people will want to select their plan based on whether your PCP is in network with that carrier and how your prescription drugs are covered by each plan offered. We won’t have the 2027 plans available to review until probably October, and since there will be many people forced to change carriers and plans, it should be a very busy period.

On another front, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services issued approximately 1.3 million new cards in March and April. This was done to enhance security following a 2025 data breach and is aimed at protecting users from potential fraud. If you received a new card with a new number and are concerned, you can call 800 MEDICARE for confirmation. Medicare will never call you, so if you get a call from someone

*“We are here to help!”*

identifying themselves as a Medicare representative, it is a scam. Do not give them any personal information, just hang up.

More seniors are selecting Medicare Supplement plans in 2026 despite the recent rate increases. I believe this is because of all the negative press Medicare Advantage plans have received, especially about problems with prior authorization.

Selecting which Medicare option is best for you will depend on your particular medical needs and your budget. Supplement plans are very strong coverage;

and since Original Medicare is your insurance, there are no networks and the plans are accepted by 98% of non-pediatric doctors.

Advantage Plans usually have a network, but some carriers offer PPO Advantage plans which allow out of network coverage. This may change in 2027. The general benefit of Advantage plans is that most have \$0 monthly premiums and have some extra benefits not offered by original Medicare such as dental, vision, hearing, gym memberships, and Over the Counter Benefits.

If you are turning 65 soon, you can apply for your Medicare Parts A & B three months before your birth month. If you are over 65 and leaving your employer group plan, you can do the same prior to your termination from your plan.

Give us a call if you have any questions or need assistance. We are here to help!

**Ed Regalado is a certified broker.
The office is located at the Stone House at
1524 Belford Court in Evergreen. Ed can be
reached at 303-674-1945 or send an email to:
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Congratulations to the 2026 Bootstraps Recipients

THANK YOU TO ALL THE INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES, BUSINESSES, AND CIVIC ORGANIZATIONS WHO PROVIDE FUNDING FOR THE SCHOLARSHIPS AND LOANS WE AWARD TO OUR LOCAL STUDENTS! WE COULD NOT DO OUR WORK WITHOUT YOU!

The Bootstraps Board of Directors, parents of students, generous supporters, and community members celebrated the 2026 Bootstraps Awards Recipients at the Evergreen Lake House on the 5th of May. Each recipient received special recognition and had the opportunity to meet and thank the people who are responsible for helping them pursue their educational dreams. It was a fabulous and another snowy gathering celebrating our local students and the Bootstraps supporters!



- Josie Allen - Evergreen High School
- Chris Alvarez - Conifer High School
- Maria Baker - Evergreen High School
- Zach Boyle - Evergreen High School
- Delaney Buchanan - Evergreen High School
- Will Carlin - Evergreen High School
- Mackenzie Carroll - Evergreen High School
- Molly Clapp - Evergreen High School
- Seth Coffman - Platte Canyon High School
- Brennan Conley - Conifer High School
- Harper Conley - Conifer High School
- Donavin Cortese - Evergreen High School
- Wyatt Cox - Evergreen High School
- Taylor Daniels - Evergreen High School
- Zander De Jager - Evergreen High School
- Giada De Manna - Conifer High School
- Holly Dykema - Conifer High School
- Alaina Falzer - Conifer High School
- Emma Ferguson - Conifer High School
- Keller Fiore - Evergreen High School
- Noelle Flowers - Evergreen High School
- Kiera Ginter - Clear Creek High School
- Garrett Hammond - Platte Canyon High School
- Aiden Hardgrove - Evergreen High School
- Charlize Hargrove - Conifer High School

- Jack Harris - Evergreen High School
- Emily Heidarsson - Evergreen High School
- Eli Hoffman - Evergreen High School
- Lila Janowiak - Evergreen High School
- Anaya Johnson - Conifer High School
- Seth Kaulback - Conifer High School
- Chris Kozel - Evergreen High School
- Andrew Krajewski - Evergreen High School
- Ethan Krajewski - Evergreen High School
- Avery LeRoy - Conifer High School
- Jordana Logue - Platte Canyon High School
- Edie Marion - Evergreen High School
- Alana McClellan - Evergreen High School
- Collin Molfatt - Evergreen High School
- Korben Morris - Conifer High School
- Olivia Orton - Evergreen High School
- Annika Ramsey - Conifer High School
- Ben Scheck - Conifer High School
- Holly Shapleigh - Evergreen High School
- Charlotte Sweatman - Evergreen High School
- Campbell Thomas - Evergreen High School
- Luke Tritsch - Chatfield Sr. High School
- Patton Truchel - Evergreen High School
- Libby York - Evergreen High School

Thanks to our donors and supporters, we awarded over \$350,000 to the 49 students we just celebrated, and 35 continuing students.

The volunteers who serve on the awards committee worked thoroughly and thoughtfully reviewing each application. Each candidate's application included essay questions, teacher recommendations, academic information, extracurricular activities, community service, and work experience. Awards are made based on merit and financial need.

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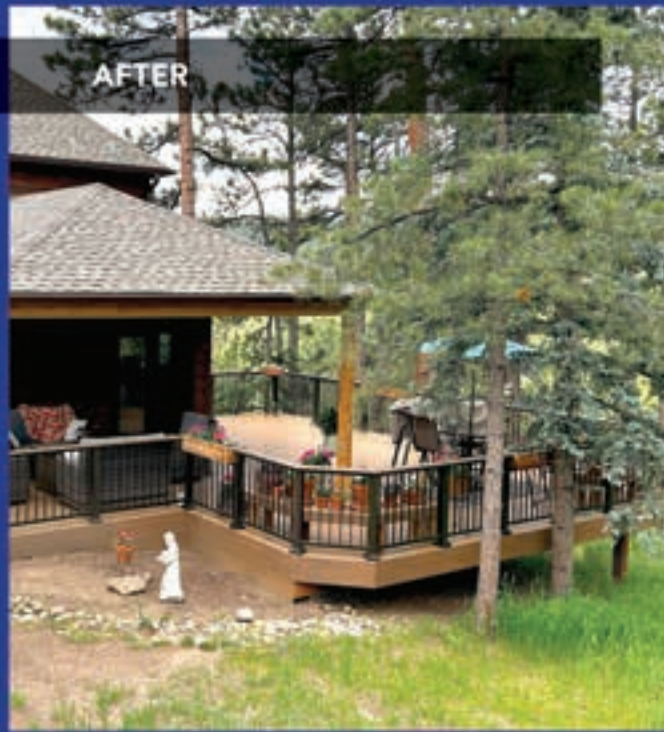
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— ON THE MOVE FITNESS —

How To Stay Motivated

BY DEB BROWN, NSCA CPT, CWC, CNS

We are all in various places on our fitness journeys. Some people have been working on optimal health for decades. Some folks are just starting out. No matter where you are, it's important to stay motivated and focused all along the way. Once you have figured out what your goals are, it's important to figure out why you are motivated to start working on these goals and what is going to keep you focused for the long term.



It's common to start off with a bang, feeling super energetic and committed. As weeks turn into months, it gets harder to adhere to workout schedules, structured goals, and clean eating. As personal trainers, we know a thing or two about how to keep our clients motivated, not just for a few months, but for years and years. Here are some tried and true strategies:

- 1. Examine your commitment.** What is it, exactly, that you want to accomplish? Why? Ask yourself how committed you are, how hard you are willing to work, how much you are willing to sacrifice. Be honest with yourself. "Wanting" to lose weight is very different from being truly "committed" to losing weight. Understand the difference.
- 2. Find a way to seamlessly fit physical activity into your life.** Workouts do not have to be an hour long (or longer). You can get a wonderful workout in 20–30 minutes if you stay focused and work at a higher level of intensity.
- 3. Notice when you are procrastinating or making excuses for not staying on track.** If that becomes a habit, take a step back and reassess your path. Do you need to change something?
- 4. Have a realistic eating plan that will work long-term.** If what you're eating is too

structured, it is going to be unrealistic to stick to it long term. Instead, create a plan that works for you, with your schedule, in your environment. Keep a food journal to help you stay on track.

- 5. Enlist a support system.** Exercise with friends or family, or attend a class. Communicate with your family what you are trying to accomplish. Ask for their support and be specific with what you need.

- 6. Put in the work!** If you work hard, and consistently, you will get results. There is nothing that reinforces personal motivation like getting results. It gives you the mental and emotional boost you need to keep re-committing day after day.

- 7. Re-evaluate your goals periodically.** Adjust as needed to adapt to changing life situations.

- 8. Reward yourself for attaining your goals with whatever is special to you.** Give yourself something tangible to really celebrate: a spa day or nice outfit, etc.

- 9. Register for an event.** There is nothing like signing up for an event, for example a 5K, and plunking down your \$25 registration fee. All of a sudden, you are "in training," not just "working out." This gives you a whole new focus and can really energize you!

- 10. Write down your goals on paper.** Yes, in this day and age of technology, writing down your goals using old-fashioned paper and pencil works like a charm to get you focused and motivated. Try it!

If you would like support with your health and fitness goals, please contact us at 303-816-1426 or visit us at www.onthemovefitness.com. We have been serving the local community for over 20 years!

Deb Brown is an NSCA Certified Personal Trainer and the owner of the On The Move Fitness Personal Training Studio located in Conifer. For more information about how we can help you get in shape for summer fun, please visit www.onthemovefitness.com or call us at 303-816-1426.

Get Together Then

BY KAARSTEN TURNER

"I feel lucky my dad is still around."

We all have a father, biologically speaking. You wouldn't be reading this now if you didn't. You inherited 50% of your nuclear DNA (23 chromosomes) from him, and the Y chromosome is passed exclusively from father to son. If you've been around for a while you might recall me writing about my own dad before today. My dad turned 89 in January this year, wearing a black graphic t-shirt with white words, "I have two daughters. You can't scare me." The shirt is fading to gray and threadbare at the collar. I feel lucky my dad is still around. Even with his aging, questionable balance, and fading memory, he is a predictable and steady father to me.

Last weekend two girlfriends, sisters, visited me from out of town. Some time had gone by and we were catching up on family news. Their own dad had progressive dementia and passed on a few years ago. I knew Clive too, and I leaned in real close at my kitchen table to listen to the stories they shared about him. As the dementia made things fuzzy, Clive filled in those blank spaces with his own imagination. Sometimes those spaces were really funny. For example, once while watching the US Open Clive believed he too, would be playing a match the next day. Agitated and confused, he hollered across the living room, "I don't know where my tennis shorts are anymore. I can't do that." Then, there were the times Clive would walk outside to the paved street and create an imaginary lawn mower, time traveling to his house in Iowa when he had green grass to mow. Our memories are powerful things.

One of my favorite songs of all time is *Cat's in the Hat*, by Harry Chapin. It was released



"We'll get together then, Dad. You know we'll have a good time then."

—Harry Chapin

in 1974, a poignant folk-rock ballad about a father too busy for his son, only for the roles to reverse later in life. I was four when I heard the melody playing on the radio. My own dad had a complicated relationship with his father too. We called our grandfather Tommy. He lived about an hour away from us, and to get to my grandparents' house, we drove across the Golden Gate Bridge and through a tunnel painted like a rainbow. Upon arrival, Tommy would set out his poker chips and give me permission to eat See's Candies from the crystal bowl on the coffee table. Then he would pour my mom and grandmother gin gimlets and hand my dad a beer. I don't remember much else about those visits except that it

was my job to stay real quiet and entertained by those poker chips. Tommy died when I was fourteen. He didn't want a funeral, and my dad dealt with the death quietly with his two younger sisters, privately.

The nation's first Father's Day was celebrated on June 19th, 1910. However, it was not until 1972, two years before Chapin's song was released, that President Nixon made it a nationwide holiday. Now it is the tradition to honor the sacrifices the fathers and father figures make for their families. Families can be complicated things. And so this month, let's amplify the words of Harry Chapin, "Get together then." I hope you "Have a good time then."

Kaarsten is a forester, a mama to two boys, a sunchaser, a writer, and a lover of chocolate. She's lived in Conifer for a while now.

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Penny for your thoughts Juba's Slant on the Warthog

BY PENNY RANDELL

Juba here, with my monthly animal observation. I hope all is well with you readers out there during this period of unprecedented warmth and dryness. My subject is not the most cuddly critter – and even rather unpleasant at first glance. It's the warthog!



Their most obvious feature is the large tusks they sport, which can reach a length of 10 to 25 inches on males, with smaller versions on females. The desert warthog differs from its common cousin with a larger snout, curled ear-tips, and lack of incisors. Its head is more egg-shaped with more hook-shaped wattles and thickened facial features.

More on the desert denizen: the Horn of Africa is its home, and it once had a relative called the cape warthog (which did not refer to its outfit). This variety went extinct in 1871. Desert warthogs don't venture far from watering holes and frequent dry plains with sparse vegetation. They are smaller than their common relative, with males growing to over 4 feet and up to 286 lbs. Females are shorter and lighter.

While the male desert warthogs live alone or with a few other males, the females form "sounders," which are groups including their young. An older female is the leader, and the collection inhabits about four square miles, ordinarily in close proximity to a water source. They are diggers, often commandeering previously excavated burrows and occasionally sharing a burrow with another warthog sounder.

Desert warthog diet includes grasses, flowers, fruit, and leaves. They employ their digging skills to root out bulbs, tubers, and rhizomes, eating insects when necessary, and even the occasional bit of dung (yum!) or bark, which they rip from the tree. In the breeding season (usually March through May), estrus occurs every six weeks. Female urine signals availability, and gestation is about 170 days. The young are mobile at about

3 weeks and remain closely attached to mom for many months.

Predators include lions, leopards, cheetahs, and hyenas. The mother alerts the group with specific grunts, then may freeze first, but will move out with speeds up to 34mph. They dive into their burrows with the kids going head-first, but parents backing in to face their attacker and defend the babies with their tusks. They become mature at 12–18 months and live to 10 or more years in the wild.

Now for the common warthog, which can grow much larger (up to 330 lbs.) than its desert counterpart. Again, females are smaller (up to 165 lbs.). Their two pairs of tusks are powerful weapons, with the lower set sharpened against the uppers each time they close their mouth. Those blades can inflict some substantial damage on an adversary.

Female common warthogs also live in sounders with their young. Males stay within their home territory but form their own sounders before adulthood, then go solo as adults. The males only join a female sounder for mating purposes. There are two mating techniques, staying and roaming. Staying involves a male's defending a female and her brood. Roaming boars seek out available females and challenge other males for breeding rights. Gestation is 5–6 months, with females often raising foster babies if they lose their own. Common warthogs' lifespan in the wild is 7–11 years, but increases to 21 years in captivity.

In an attempt to find a way to curtail African swine fever, desert warthogs were deliberately infected with the virus. Tough critters that they are, those pigs didn't show any signs of the disease themselves, but were found to be contagious to domestic pigs for up to 33 days. Although many warthogs were killed to eliminate the risk to domestic livestock, when it was

later discovered that the actual culprit was a tick, the conclusion was that shooting the animals was not helpful. Dodged that bullet—literally!

On a more serious note—for the desert warthogs at least—they were found to be a host for the tsetse fly (nobody's favorite insect), and an attempt has been made to reduce their population due to this fact. Hosting that fly proved quite dangerous for the pigs as well, as they suffered severe complications because of it.

Conservationally speaking, the desert warthog is listed to be of "least concern." There are no significant threats to its existence, and its population is considered stable. It is prevalent throughout numerous wildlife sanctuaries and national parks. Even hunting and competition have not caused a concerning reduction in numbers.

Common warthog population in Africa in 1999 was estimated at 250,000. This species is impacted by hunting (oftentimes with some of my relatives assisting), which may cause localized extinction, although common warthogs are also omnipresent throughout protected areas.

To their dubious credit, these varmints have also achieved the status of invasive species. Apparently fugitives from some game ranches, a number of these renegades have infiltrated the state of Texas and other areas of the southern United States and are running wild and free like the real cowboys they are at heart. Even I have to admit that sounds like a hoot! Or an oink! Those are some tenacious little (not really) devils!

Well, we've come the end of another wildlife saga. Be sure to check out the population of warthogs the next time you visit sub-Saharan Africa. Or you can just venture to southern Texas and hit the 4-wheeler. Stay tuned for next month's feature when I take on another interesting critter from the wide, wide world of animals.



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BE AN OUTSIDER

BY FRANCESCA ARNIOTES

“Life is too short to waste a meal eating something unworthy.”

Summertime and the livin' is easy. The sun in the west lingers long and it's light until far into the evening, so even after work it feels like we have a day. But we still get hungry and, as I have said here more than once, life is too short to waste a meal eating something unworthy. So it's time to celebrate the ever-lovin', easy-livin' grill. Beef, chicken, pork, lamb, whole trout and branzino, salmon steaks and shrimp skewers. Vegetarians, I see you. Cauliflower steaks, portobello mushrooms, vegetable kabobs, stuffed peppers or zucchini. I recommend you parboil the whole cauliflower in salted water for about 4 minutes and then slice. Dry it, oil, season as you wish and grill. I'd stuff the mushroom caps with any combination of spinach, cheese, breadcrumbs, chopped Campari tomato, an egg to bind it and for added protein. Use a corer to hollow out zucchini and stuff with the same kind of filling, and/or cooked rice and some mint if you like. Oil up the outside and grill on foil so you don't lose stuffing. You can use a grill basket for the veg and you'll need to use it for fish.

If you love meat, seek out the best, and then refrain from slathering it with spices and marinades so you can savor the flavor of good, well-raised, and properly processed beef, pork, and lamb.

Dry-aged, pasture-raised beef is very expensive. We should limit consumption anyway, so when we treat ourselves, we enjoy the exquisite flavor undisguised. A quick, hot grill to rare or medium, even the pork should be a bit pink, and then a sprinkle of salt and a drizzle of extra virgin olive oil, let it rest 5 minutes and enjoy the juicy meat with the olive oil carrying the flavor all over your mouth. Cook fish to 120°–125°, as there will be carryover cooking, and overcooked shrimp will be rubbery and fish will dry out. Salmon should be 115° in the middle. If you grill tuna, lightly oil and simply and quickly sear so the inside still looks raw and feels just warm. Let rest, then slice thinly and serve with a salsa of minced parsley and garlic, scallions, oregano, vinegar or lemon juice, a generous amount of salt, and lots of olive oil.

Chicken is a different story. The demand for chicken has led to the selection of fast-growing breeds, processed young and tender, but unfortunately at the sacrifice of flavor. When we are in Italy each fall, we are treated to the flavorful poultry we remember from childhood. It is really as satisfying as beef. There are a few heritage breed birds available here from time to time, but then they also are harvested while still too young to have developed full flavor. So with poultry you can get jiggy with marinades, herbs, and spices, and enhance that more or less blank canvas to your heart's content.

Whip up a simple livin'-is-easy barbeque sauce to brush on while grilling with a half cup of ketchup, some Worcestershire sauce, a good splash of vinegar, salt, pepper, and a teaspoon of curry powder. Add hot sauce if you like it hot or a pinch of brown sugar if you like it sweeter.

Grill a whole chicken and get a crispy, addictively tasty skin by first spatchcocking the bird

so it lies flat on the grill and magically cooks the breast to 150 degrees and the legs and thighs to 170 degrees. Use kitchen shears or a knife to cut the backbone from the chicken. You'll cut down along each side of the neck and each side of the tail. Turn a bit in towards the middle at the top side of the thigh where you'll see the bulge of that delicious “oyster” that sits in a concave bone you'll have to go around, not through. The backbone goes into a baggie and into the freezer for a rainy day off when you want to make a little pot of chicken soup. You can loosen the skin with your fingers and put fresh herbs, salt and pepper under it. You can salt and spice up the

skin, but that won't flavor the meat. But if you like the skin, go for it. Crispy skin is very hard to achieve on most commercially raised chickens, which are processed using vats of ice water. They float around in there and get waterlogged. The packages will tell you there is 5% or sometimes up to 8% retained water. That water also contains chlorine because, well, it's gross. A better choice for fantastic, crispy skin and clean eating is air-chilled chicken. Available at Natural Grocers and Whole Foods, brands like Pine Ridge and Mary's are affordable and well worth making the switch. Then enjoy this taste of a Paris market rotisserie poulet.

PARIS MARKET ROTISSERIE POULET

Combine in a gallon Ziploc bag:

4 garlic cloves, finely minced, with
2 full teaspoons sea salt
2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
2 tablespoons lemon juice
2 tablespoons white wine
2 teaspoons yellow or Dijon mustard
1 tablespoon honey
1 Tbs harissa, sriracha, or Asian chili paste
1 tablespoon tamari or soy sauce

Add your spatchcocked chicken and slosh some marinade under all the skin down into the thighs. Set the bag on a dish and refrigerate for up to three days, turning the bag over a few times.

Remove from bag 30 minutes before grilling. Place on center of grill breast down for 5 minutes, then turn bird over, turn off middle burner so heat is indirect and check temperature of breast and thighs in 30 minutes.



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GETTING CLEAR ON FATHER'S DAY

BY ANNE VICKSTROM

“I was so delighted at that moment! I felt like I was seeing the image for the first time, and in a sense, I was.”

Recently, I came across a pile of old photographs. Not wanting clutter, I picked up my iPhone, snapped a photo of each, then tossed them into the trash bin. The quality of the images, to say the least, was lacking. So, in Google Photos, I adjusted the light, contrast, and other available edits. However, I came across one that was causing me angst. It was of my parents and my sister when she was a baby. The image was red, as though it had been dipped in cherry juice. No matter what I did with the color combinations, I couldn't get the image to look even half-decent.

Then I saw it: along the bottom of the image, a window I had not noticed before, labeled AI ENHANCE. Knowing that anything I did to the image could be reversed, I clicked it, and the image became blurred, the little circular line inched around and around, and suddenly a new,

almost-perfect depiction delighted me! There was my father's image when he was a brand-new dad, gazing on the face of his first child—little did that expression foretell that there would be three more little faces to follow.

I was so delighted at that moment! I was so excited! I felt like I was seeing the image for the first time, and in a sense, I was. I quickly scrolled to the top of the collection, wishing I had discovered that magic button 30 images earlier, and ran each photograph through the AI program to see what would happen.

For the most part, images were sharper, and details were defined. However, I also found that if the original was too dark, the AI took a stab at what those faces and backgrounds looked like and failed miserably. I decided to sharpen what I could in the old editing tools, but to leave history alone.

Well, not in every case. I admit, I decided in one photo that I would mess with history. In a photo of a picnic, my mother, sisters, and I were all on one side of the table; three total strangers were on the other. Who were these people who were interrupting our wonderful family time? No one I know, so out they went. With a few clicks, that man, woman, and child vanished. History be darned!

AI can be a frightening and intimidating thing, but in this case, it has given me a clearer picture of my family's past and even a tool to discover things I had no way of knowing. For years, I have tried to find the address where my grandparents lived in Boulder when I was a little girl. I had tried researching the old yellow pages, postal routes, and newspaper reports, but nothing gave me the information I wanted. Using these photo tools, I asked Google Photo Lens where a photo was

taken. It told me the name of the development. Still, that wasn't enough. But with this latest AI tool, I discovered an image of my sister standing in front of their home, and there, behind her, clear as day, was the house number. I don't know which street, but I'll be heading up to Boulder soon to search for that number in the neighborhood, with a particular mountain in the background, and I'll be able to return to the place that holds so many special memories.

While I hate the notion of AI writing books, creating music, art, and other creative endeavors, I do love that it's there to instantly give me the history of a place I want to visit, a person I want to know more about, or other aspects that, in days before AI, would have taken me endless time to track down.

It's going to be a wild ride ahead with AI, but right now I'm using it to help me, not control me, and if that can always be the case, there's no stopping my partnership with it.

Meanwhile, I have a collection of striking images of my father, who passed 30 years ago, that on this Father's Day will bring me the joy of seeing his wonderful smile in sharp focus.

Anne Vickstrom proudly started her writing career with *Your Mountain Connection*. She has written for regional and national publications, and has published books, including *Depths of Devotion – A Love Story Across Continents and Cultures*. She loves living in Evergreen where she and her husband raised three children and six dogs.

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Elevation
celebration

return to the
70's

Evergreen Chamber Ribbon Cuttings and News



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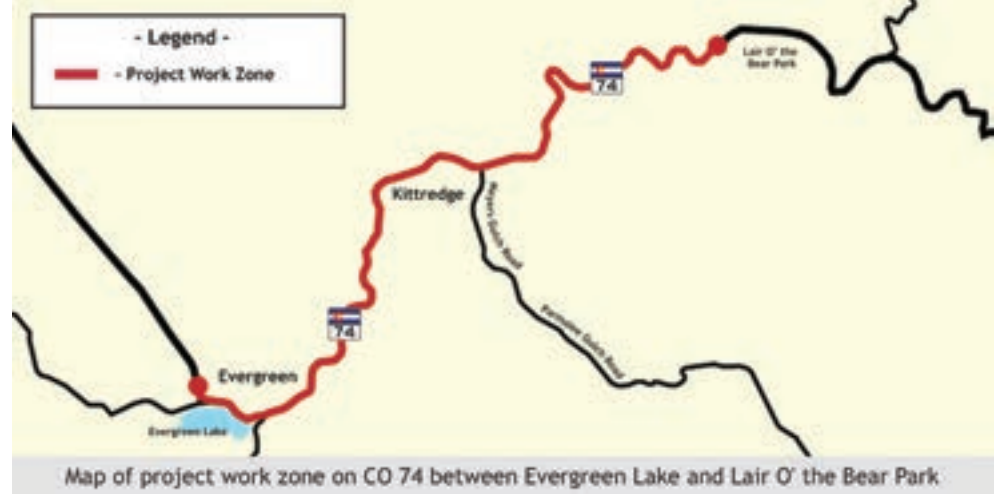
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Pardon Our Progress — Downtown is Open for Business

BY ERICA SPRENKEL



Growth and progress are exciting signs of a thriving community, and while downtown construction may bring temporary inconveniences, it also represents investment in the future of our town. Anyone who lives in a mountain town knows that strong communities are built by people who continue showing up for one another, especially during challenging seasons.

Downtown construction can certainly test our patience. Detours, limited parking, and changing traffic patterns can make it tempting to avoid the area altogether. But behind the cones and construction equipment are the small businesses, restaurants, boutiques, galleries, and service providers that continue showing up every day to serve our community, and they need our support now more than ever.

While the roads may be under construction, downtown is still very much open for business.

For many locally owned businesses, the summer season is critical to their success. These are the businesses that help create the unique charm and character that make our mountain community so special. Construction may be temporary, but the impact on small businesses can

be lasting if we don't continue to shop and dine locally during this time.

Now is the perfect time to intentionally support businesses in Evergreen. Grab coffee with a friend, enjoy lunch or dinner at a local restaurant, browse a boutique or make a point to attend a local music event. Even sharing a business on social media, leaving a positive review, or encouraging friends to visit can help remind people that downtown is alive, vibrant, and worth supporting.

For those looking for the most current updates on traffic patterns, closures, and construction progress, please visit the <https://www.codot.gov/projects/co74evergreenresurfacing>

As always, Shop, Support & Love Local.

Follow us on Facebook. Visit our website EvergreenChamber.org. Call us anytime 303-674-3412.

For over 50 years the Evergreen Area Chamber of Commerce has proudly been serving the mountain community. Our mission is to grow the local economy by building business relationships, promoting the community and representing local concerns with our county government.



The Stone House
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EvergreenChamber.org

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- 2026 SUMMER CONCERT SERIES DATES**
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 - JULY 8 BUCHANAN PARK FIELD
 - JULY 22 DEDISSE PARK AT EVERGREEN LAKE
 - AUGUST 5 BUCHANAN PARK FIELD
 - AUGUST 19 DEDISSE PARK AT EVERGREEN LAKE

2026 Summer Concert Series
Join us for the 2026 EPRD Summer Concert Series on Wednesdays throughout the summer. This beloved community event where family, friends and neighbors come together to enjoy music, food and drink in a beautiful mountain setting is free to all to attend!

Conifer Chamber Ribbon Cuttings and News

Summer in Conifer

BY BETH SCHNEIDER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Summer in our community is packed with opportunities to connect, explore, and enjoy everything that makes this area so great. From outdoor festivals and live performances to educational workshops, volunteer projects, networking events, and wellness experiences, there is truly something for everyone this season. The Conifer area continues to offer a growing calendar of activities that bring neighbors, businesses, nonprofits, and families together throughout the summer months.

One of the best resources for staying connected to everything happening locally is the **Community Event Calendar at GoConifer.com**. The calendar is constantly updated with local happenings including community celebrations, classes, fundraisers, arts and culture events, business gatherings, volunteer opportunities, and family-friendly activities. Whether you are looking for a weekend event, a way to meet new people, or a chance to support local organizations, the calendar makes it easy to discover what is happening close to home.

The Conifer Area Chamber of Commerce also has a full lineup of events designed to support local businesses and strengthen community connections. Upcoming Chamber events include monthly membership meetings, networking mixers, and Power Team meetings that provide opportunities for businesses and professionals to collaborate, share referrals, and build relationships throughout the region. These events continue to be a valuable resource for both new and established businesses looking to grow their visibility and connect with other local leaders.

Two exciting community events are also coming up later this summer. **The Wild & Well — Mountain Wellness Fair** will take place on Saturday, August 29. This event will focus on whole-person wellness with local wellness providers, educational opportunities, interactive

experiences, and resources that support physical, mental, and emotional wellbeing. Wellness fairs continue to grow in popularity because they create opportunities for community members to explore services and connect with providers in a welcoming environment.

The Chamber will also host the **Volunteer Fair** on Wednesday, September 23. This event is a wonderful opportunity for local nonprofits and community organizations to connect with residents who want to make a difference. Volunteering is one of the strongest ways to build community, support important causes, and meet others who are passionate about helping the mountain area thrive.

While exploring events, don't forget that GoConifer.com is also home to the Chamber's business directory. The directory is a trusted resource for finding local businesses, services, restaurants, contractors, healthcare providers, retailers, and more. Supporting local businesses strengthens the entire community and helps keep this area vibrant year-round.

This summer, take advantage of all the opportunities happening right here in our backyard by checking the calendar regularly, attending local events, and supporting the businesses and organizations that we depend on.

Beth Schneider
Executive Director
Conifer Area Chamber of Commerce

If you have any membership questions, please contact the chamber office: director@GoConifer.com, 303-838-5711. Thank you for your continued support and thank you for shopping local!



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The Conifer Area Chamber of Commerce is dedicated to making our community the best it can be. We are here to support our local businesses and create opportunities for them to grow and get connected to our community.
www.goconifer.com

WE SUPPORT LIVING LOCALLY

Elevation Celebration 2026

Peace, Love, and Mountain Air Highlight Music and Street Festival

The 13th Annual Elevation Celebration, presented by Foothills Community Collective, returns to Conifer, July 25-26. The festival brings together music, food, and family fun for locals and visitors alike, running 10 am-8 pm Sat., and 10 am-6:30 pm Sun. The weekend kicks off Saturday morning with the annual Elevation Run/Walk, presented by Crossfit Conifer, setting the stage for two days of summertime fun. Admission is free for all ages.

This year's theme is "A Return to the '70s," a theme that harkens back to Conifer's roots as a close-knit community, a spirit that continues to this day. Headlining the festival entertainment are Grateful Dead tribute band Young and Dead and the Tyron Benoit Band, with '70s disco tribute band Boogie Machine bringing the festival to a high-energy close Sunday evening.

"The '70s theme suits this event because it celebrates our eclectic mountain community while giving our artists, musicians, and entrepreneurs a vibrant stage on which to shine," said event coordinator Melissa Baker. "Our focus is on creating a space where neighbors, local businesses, and volunteers can connect. Elevation Celebration is a testament to the vibrant spirit

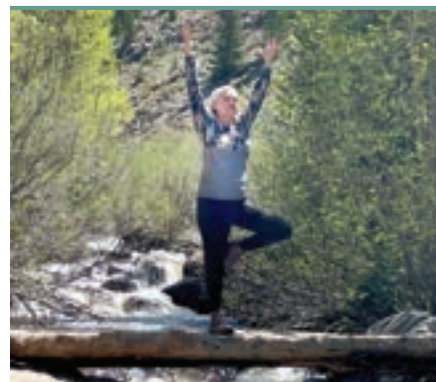
that makes Conifer such a special place to live and visit."

Elevation Celebration includes a craft fair featuring local and regional artists, the Laidback Lounge, a hidden speakeasy, and a wide range of food and drink options. "Kid Zone" activities include face painting, games, a bounce house, and aerial acts from Peak Academy of Dance. In all, more than 90 vendors will connect with the community and promote their brand through sponsorship opportunities.

Festivalgoers can look forward to live performances from more than 20 bands and performers across three stages, showcasing a diverse lineup that covers bluegrass and blues to '70s, '80s, and '90s favorites, southern rock, Latin rock, reggae, and alternative.

The Elevation Run/Walk on Saturday morning, July 25, is a fundraiser for the Conifer Lobos Unified Boosters and Conifer Area Council Trails Team. It features a 10K, a USATF-certified 5K, and a 2-mile Family Fun Run. For more information about Elevation Celebration, visit elevationcelebration.org. Registration for the Elevation Run/Walk, presented by Crossfit Conifer, is available at elevation.clubchcs.org.

The Foothills Community Collective is a new nonprofit organization rooted in the spirit of Conifer and led by local business leaders and area volunteers. The collective's mission is to foster a strong, resilient community by creating opportunities for people to connect, collaborate, and build lasting relationships. When local businesses prosper, musicians and artisans share their talents, and neighbors support one another, our entire community flourishes.



Yoga in the Park with Carrie Brewer Bergener

Join us June 25, 6-7:30 pm, at the Conifer Peace Park, 26215 Sutton Road, behind the Aspen Park Community Center. Bring a yoga mat and small ground cloth.

Carrie Bergener, MHA, RN, RYT, is a freelance healthcare writer and yoga instructor who integrates her passion for a strong, balanced body, mind, and spirit into her work. She specializes in Vinyasa yoga and holds additional certifications in children's yoga, trauma-informed yoga, and meditation.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

June 2, 9, 16, 23, 30

The original Evergreen Farmers' Market, 25+ Years. 10 am–2 pm at Church of the Cross, 28253 Meadow Dr. Evergreen (next to Hiwan Heritage Park and Museum). Fresh-picked organic and conventional produce, microgreens, raw French cheeses, Loredana's Italian foods, Great Harvest bread, Healthy Harvest EVOO, Honduran coffee, handmade pies, and more! Enjoy Middle Eastern food at the market cafe. The market shares its space with the beautiful Hiwan Park and trail. www.coloradooutdoormarkets.com

June 2, 9, 16, 23, 30

The Evergreen Farmers Market is back at the Center for the Arts parking lot every Tuesday from 10 am–2 pm. Swing by to stock up on fresh produce, local goodies, and handmade treats while supporting Colorado growers and makers. Center for the Arts Evergreen, 31880 Rocky Village Drive, Evergreen.

June 3

Wine, Women and Wealth. Meet other amazing women, and learn about money! 6:30–8 pm at Willow Creek Restaurant, 29029 Upper Bear Creek Rd., Evergreen. FREE, RSVP is required. Text or call Amelia at 720-722-0094 or go to <https://www.meetup.com/wine-women-wealth-evergreen-co/> register.

June 4

Join Evergreen Sustainability Alliance (ESA) for a showing of the film Beyond Zero, Thur., 6 pm, at Center Stage Evergreen. Written and produced by JeffCo local Nathan Harvey, Beyond Zero follows a CEO's journey from causing environmental harm to becoming an industry leader in sustainability and positive change. Paul Polman (former Unilever CEO, UN Global Compact board) called it "a fascinating story... the message that needs to be told." Adult tickets (15 years & up) \$20; youth tickets \$10. Visit sustainableevergreen.org

June 4

Chillax Om, 5–7 pm, kick off our 6-week healthy habits challenge. Get custom lifestyle design with Dr. Andrea, along with accountability for 6 weeks, to make 1–3 healthy habits stick in your lifestyle, habits that you actually like and can do long-term and that can give you permanent results to achieve and maintain your health goals! Plus win prizes like gift private treatments and self-care tools based on your participation. Visit <https://chillaxom.com/6-week-healthy-habits-challenge/> to register and attend this first group class, live or virtually, and then attend weekly one-hour group meetings, live or virtually, for 5 more weeks; providing accountability, Q&A, and tips and tools to support your success.

June 4, 11, 18, 25

Thirsty Thursdays at the Blackbird Cafe, from 4–7:45 pm, for local live music, appetizers, and drinks. 25940 Highway 74 in Kittredge.

June 4, 11, 18, 25

TrailBlazers Class at the ResqRanch, Thursdays from 4:30–6 pm, for horse lovers of all ages. We are on a mission to increase the number of people skilled in Positive Reinforcement (R+) training. Single 90-minute session: \$52 or 10-session pass: \$430. <https://www.resqranch.org/trailblazers-a>

June 4

Preschool Adventures at Evergreen Nature Center, weekly on Thursdays, 9–10 am. Develop early childhood readiness skills through nature exploration. Designed for children ages 2–5 years old. Must have an adult in attendance. Come dressed to explore the outdoors. FREE, no registration needed. <https://evergreenaudubon.org/events/preschool-adventures-at-evergreen-nature-center/>

June 5

Sounds of Silents: The Cameraman, 1928. 6:30–9 pm at Center Stage, Evergreen. Deemed by the National Film Registry in 2005 as being "culturally, historically, or aesthetically significant," starring Buster Keaton and Marcelline Day.

June 5–28

StageDoor Theatre prepares for DISASTER!, a musical of crazy chaotic comedy and 1970s hits! Written by Jack Plotnick and Seth Rudetsky. Performances Friday and Saturday at 7 pm, Sunday at 2 pm. Tickets \$37, with five-dollar discounts for seniors, students, and educators. Performed by our adult company. Directed/musical directed by Tanner Kelly, choreographer Heather Westenskow, and stage manager Lyat Conyers. Info at www.stagedoortheatre.org. Stagedoor Theatre is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit community-based theatre, open to everyone.

June weekends

Ongoing FREE weekly acupuncture, Saturdays 1–5 pm and Sundays 11 am–4 pm. The Chillax Om Foundation, Inc., a 501(c)(3) non-profit charity, provides essential healthcare and trauma recovery with FREE group ear acupuncture, \$30 group custom body acupuncture, and self-care training. Walk-ins welcome (no need for an appointment) at our clinic at 4600 Plettner Lane, Unit 1C, Evergreen. Make a donation to our local foothills community for stress and pain relief, resiliency, and peak performance. Visit <https://chillaxom.com/wellness-hour/>

June 7

Hispanic History in Colorado, 1–3 pm, Conifer Historical Society. Ticketed event about El Norte, the crossroads of several cultures, and featuring Angel Vigil. <https://www.simplertix.com/e/hispanic-history-in-colorado-tickets-272763>

June 11

Four ladies can Chillax at Chillax Om, 4–8 pm, with group acupuncture and mocktails while our clean-makeup artist Stephanie provides 45-minute professional makeup sessions followed by professional headshots by Sue Ryan. Dr. Andrea, Sue, and Stephanie will also share their tips on how to relax, get camera ready, and make the most of photo shoots. Tickets \$75, include 4 hours free parking validation, refreshments, and are tax deductible as a fundraiser for the Chillax Om Foundation providing FREE Ear group acupuncture on weekends at 4600 Plettner Ln, 1C, Evergreen. Visit <https://chillaxom.com/head-shots-clean-makeup-jun-11-2026/>

June 11–18

Center for the Arts Evergreen Art on the Menu opening reception June 11, 4–7 pm. Exhibition runs June 11–18. This exhibit explores food as both sustenance and symbol, celebrating the tastes, rituals, and memories that shape our cultures and communities. evergreenarts.org

June 12–13

Mark your calendars for **The Deer Creek Valley Ranchos Community Garage Sale,** 9 am–2 pm, Deer Creek Valley Ranchos neighborhood (near Bailey, CO). Dozens of homes throughout the neighborhood will be participating, offering everything from household goods and tools to furniture, kids' items, outdoor gear, and more. Shoppers can pick up printed maps at neighborhood entry points or access online maps to help navigate participating homes. To make browsing easier, additional garage sale signs will be placed throughout the neighborhood, and participating homes will mark their driveways with balloons. Also visit the **Art Barn,** a special space where local makers and artisans will showcase and sell handmade arts and crafts.

June 13

Ongoing FREE 2nd Saturdays Holistic Happy Hour. The Chillax Om Acupuncture Clinic space and Tea House is a beautiful and relaxing setting to enjoy your FREE group Acupuncture with PEMF and LED therapies Chillaxing experience along with herbal medicine teas, mocktails, and hors d'oeuvres. 4–7 pm, in downtown Evergreen at the intersection of HWY 73 and Bear Creek Rd. Visit <https://chillaxom.com/monthly-2nd-saturdays-4p-7p-holistic-happy-hour/>

June 13

Birding Bio-Blitz Event! Saturday, 7–10 am. Join Evergreen Audubon and Mountain Area Land Trust (MALT) for a first-of-its-kind bird counting event in Fairplay, to help uncover the diversity of bird species in Colorado's South Park region. Birds help us understand how healthy our environment is, and by collecting data, we can learn how to better protect them and our local ecosystems; but we need your help to make this happen! Spend the morning with experienced birders as we count as many birds as we can. There will be two groups: one at MALT's Sacramento Creek Ranch and another at MALT's Pennsylvania Mountain. Following the survey, birders will meet up to share findings and exploration stories from the morning. Where: Sacramento Creek Ranch, 2234 Busch Run, Fairplay. RSVP: <https://savetheland.org/events/birding-bio-blitz-event/>

June 13

The BIG Create, Center for the Arts Evergreen. Introducing CAE's newest event—a free celebration of creativity, with hands-on art activities for all ages. evergreenarts.org

June 18

Wild Aware, an Evergreen Colorado non-profit organization, invites you to join us for a wild evening of celebration and connection at the **Open Aware Meet and Greet** on the third Thursday of

each month from 6–7:30 pm at the Evergreen Brewery, 2962 Evergreen Parkway, Suite 201, Evergreen. wildaware.org

June 20

285 Highway 2026 Clean Up. It's time to think about cleanup after our windy winter. We pick up from Foxtton Road to Meyer Ranch. Thank you, we appreciate you! 8 am–10 am. Meet at Aspen Park RTD at 8 am.

June 25

Yoga in the Park with Carrie Brewer Bergener, 6–7:30 pm at the Conifer Peace Park, 26215 Sutton Rd., behind the Aspen Park Community Center. Bring a yoga mat and small ground cloth. Carrie Bergener is a healthcare writer and yoga instructor who specializes in Vinyasa yoga and holds additional certifications in children's yoga, trauma-informed yoga, and meditation.

June 25

Enjoy an artful living ladies night out, 6–8 pm, while you Chillax and learn Feng Shui design principles applied to your own life goals infused into a beautiful terrarium you create and take home to help you focus on living into your dreams. 20 tickets available with mocktails and charcuterie at Chillax Om clinic, 4600 Plettner Ln, 1C, Evergreen, plus free 4-hour parking with validation. Tickets are \$55 and tax deductible as a fundraiser for Dr. Andrea's Charity that provides weekly FREE Ear group acupuncture on weekends. Visit <https://chillaxom.com/feng-shui-artful-living-ladies-night-out-jun-25-2026-fundraiser/> to purchase your ticket.

June 26

Morning Birds and Brews with Evergreen Audubon and Nature Center, on the last Friday of each month, 8:30–10 am at the Evergreen Nature Center, 27640 CO-74. Let's see what birds we can find! This event is geared toward adults, but all ages and birding abilities are welcome.

June 26

Wild Aware, an Evergreen, Colorado, non-profit organization, is actively recruiting volunteers, new and old, for their **Last Friday Coffee.** Our gatherings begin at 9 am in the Evergreen Bread and Cocktail Lounge, 1260 Bergen Pkwy, Evergreen. Come meet new friends and make an impact in your community! wildaware.org

June 2026



June 3

Block Therapy™ Trauma Release 5:30–6:30 pm. Trauma (physical and emotional) becomes trapped in your body and leads to pain, aging, and disease. This powerful self-healing practice unlocks the restrictions and adhesions that block blood and oxygen flow and releases trauma at a cellular level. All levels. Wear comfortable clothes. Bring a yoga mat if you have one and a water bottle.

June 10

Meditative Sound Bath 5:30–6:30 pm. Join Brenda for a transformative vibrational meditation to harmonize emotions and thought patterns while soothing tensions in the body. Sensation is integrated with mindful intention to enliven energy centers and internal wisdom. Wear comfortable clothes, bring a water bottle, head pillow, and yoga mat (if you have one).

June 14

Mindfulness Walk 10 am. Join Kathy at Pine Valley Ranch (30400 Crystal Lake Road, Pine) for gentle walking, grounding, and reflection. Whether you are feeling called to reconnect, reflect, or simply enjoy a calm morning, all are warmly welcomed. Bring layers for the weather, water, and an open heart.

June 26

Hike Flying J Ranch, 9661 HWY 73, Conifer, Friday, 9–11 am. Discover the history of the original Flying J Ranch homestead, explore the landscape, learn about Mountain Area Land Trust's Conservation work in the region and understand why forest health and mitigation matter. Free public event. **Registration requested. Register at <https://savetheland.org/events/>**

June 26–28

The Venue Theatre presents **High School Musical Jr.** It's the first day after winter break at East High where the basketball team captain, Troy, discovers that the brainy Gabriella, a girl he met singing karaoke, has just enrolled at East High. Find out what happens when they both decide to audition for the high school musical! June 26–27 at 7 pm, and June 27–28 at 2 pm. Tickets \$15 to \$25 can be purchased at www.thevenuetheatre.com. And don't miss out on SUMMER CAMP; we're still enrolling 3rd through 9th grade students for this fun and inspiring experience, including acting, singing, dance, and puppetry! The Venue Theatre is at 27132 Main Street, #K-100 (near Safeway), and is a 501(c)(3) non-profit, whose leadership has a combined 55 years of professional theatre experience, and which welcomes everyone!

June 27

Honoring Our Heroes. Free event at the Conifer Historical Society, featuring speakers on our area military history, the USO and a band playing military songs. <https://www.simplertix.com/e/honoring-our-heroes-free-event-tickets-272783>

June 27

Spring Clean Recycling Event, 10 am–2 pm, at Evergreen High School. Evergreen Sustainability Alliance is hosting its annual spring clean recycling event for hard-to-recycle items. We will accept barbed wire, scrap metal, paint cans, electronics, books, CDs/records, block Styrofoam, and plastic dental and shaving products. Some electronic items have costs associated to be paid directly to the recycling vendor. All other items are free with a suggested donation of \$25 to support local sustainability programs. Visit sustainableevergreen.org for more information.

PeaceWorks, Inc. offers a complimentary Community Wellness Program as part of our advocacy for personal wellbeing, healthy relationships, and safe homes. All are welcome. Attend in person at Taspen's Dragonfly Studio, unless otherwise noted. Register www.taspenshealingcenter.com under Events, or online (Zoom details on website) peaceworksinco.org/events

June 17

Dance Party 5:30–6:30 pm. Step into a vibrant sanctuary of sound and movement at our community wellness dance party, where Sabrina and Brenda invite you to shift from performance to presence. This gathering encourages you to drop out of your head and into your heart, using the rhythm as an anchor to deepen your connection with each intentional breath. As the music builds, you'll find the space to shake off stagnant energy and enliven your spirit. It's a rhythmic celebration designed to leave you feeling grounded, radiant, and authentically connected.

June 24

Dru Yoga 5:30–6:30 pm. Dru has a focus upon maintaining a healthy spine, through activation movements in the beginning of class and throughout a Dru session. A typical Dru Yoga class includes energy block release sequences, classical asanas (yoga postures), pranayama (breath work), mudras (gestures), positive affirmations, and also empowering visualizations. Dru classes are tailored to the student and their individual level, which makes it great for everyone.

Submit your calendar events to *Your Mountain Connection* via Marty Hallberg (news@yourmtnconnection.com). Calendar Events are published as space allows. Information must be received by the 10th of each month prior to the actual date of the event.

If your group is no longer meeting, please let *Your Mountain Connection* know via Marty Hallberg (news@yourmtnconnection.com).




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Ben has steadily built a loyal following and currently has ten employees. He estimates that he and his techs combine to reflect about 100 years of experience, and it is important to note that 30 of those years are his.

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