

# City of Westminster Inclusivity Programs

## Westminster Inclusivity Board

In early 2015, the Westminster City Council formed the Inclusivity Task Force to help guide the city as it examined a potential permanent board or commission that would consider issues of inclusivity, diversity and other issues in our community. In October, the Inclusivity Task Force provided recommendations to City Council on the formation of an Inclusivity Board. On Nov. 9, City Council unanimously approved the formation of the Westminster Inclusivity Board.

The Inclusivity Board first began meeting in summer 2016 and will assist City Council in proactively addressing inclusivity issues in the City of Westminster. The Inclusivity Board envisions a diverse community where everyone understands the city belongs to them and their participation matters. The mission of the Board is to work with City Council to advocate for all voices within our community and to ensure everyone is treated with fairness, dignity and respect.

## Bilingual Merit Pay Program

The City of Westminster's Bilingual Merit Pay Program encourages and rewards benefited employees who are conversationally fluent in Spanish, Hmong, or Laotian. As the City's population continues to grow, one of the definite by-products of this growth, locally and nationally, is a significant increase in the number of customers who speak Spanish, Asian dialects and other foreign languages. Our ability to communicate more effectively with our non-English speaking residents, customers and visitors to the city, strengthens our overall service delivery system, enhances customer service, and makes us more responsive and friendly to the many different customers we serve.

## City Council Outreach

The City Council Outreach Plan outlines, at Council's request, increased inclusive practices at Council community meetings, "The city will provide child care and language interpretation and translation of the meetings and communications about them." To meet this goal, staff in the Communication and Outreach Division have begun expanding the multi-lingual communications they do with the City Council's outreach program. In September 2015, City Council hosted the kick-off event of the Sunday hours at the Irving Street Library. At this event, Mayor Pro Tem Alberto Garcia spoke, and Spanish language interpretation of his speech was provided. In January 2016, City Council hosted the South Westminster City Council Community Meeting at the MAC where outreach information was translated in Spanish prior to the event, and Spanish interpretation was provided at the event. These practices have continued for subsequent council outreach events.

## Top Spin and Takraw Courts:

- Westminster has the first top spin court in the nation. The game is commonly known as "tuj lub" and is played locally by members of the Hmong community, many of whom have deep roots to Southeast Asia. The game also goes by the names top spinning or topspin. During play, large tops are flung by a stick and string onto a metal sheet. The court is located at Skyline Vista Park. Westminster has a team of top spin players that compete nationally.
- Parks staff met with members of the Hmong community back in late March 2016 at Skyline Vista Park to allow them to provide feedback and suggestions on the upgrades and improvements they would



like to see. Staff has taken this feedback and is now working with a number of vendors to obtain some price estimates to see how we can maximize the use of the current available funding.

- The members of the Hmong community who we met with also provided some information on Takraw courts. This would be an amenity they would like to see, but they made it very clear that their number one priority would be to upgrade the top spin court to artificial turf and if future funding was available add a Takraw court.

### **City presentation to HMAAC Board**

In January 2016, the City Manager invited the Board of Directors of the Hmong American Association of Colorado to a presentation about the city, including our history, services and future directions. The City Manager hosted approximately 15 board members in collaboration with our City Council and department heads. This was a successful event that allowed the city to connect with HMAAC in a way they had not yet before, sparking discussions and questions.

### **The Lao Buddhist Temple of Colorado**

The temple is located in Westminster and staff across departments and City Council have been continually connected with the members at the local Lao Buddhist Temple. We are happy to be welcoming one of their members as a member of our newly forming Inclusivity Board. The temple burned down three years ago and the city has been working closely with the community in their rebuilt efforts.

### **Spanish Swim Lessons**

The Latino community is at a higher risk of drowning. In order to combat the statistics the City of Westminster developed a Spanish swim lesson program for youth and adults. This program was featured on Telemundo, and we had participants from all over the Denver Metro area attend our program. The program has sold out every session we have offered it.

### **Summer Lunch Program**

This is a continuation of the USDA Free & Reduced Lunch Program. The City of Westminster offers this program in partnership with the Westminster Public School, Kaiser Permanente, and Community Enterprise. Leveraging the Promotoras model we reach in to disconnected communities, provide employment, training, and assistance, to connect families to our Summer Lunch Program. At the Summer Lunch Program we provide enrichment opportunities to reduce the “summer slide” and supplement nutrition with USDA approved lunches.

### **Summer Camp Program**

In partnership with Adams County Housing Authority, Westminster Public Schools, and the Colorado Childcare Assistance Program, we are able to provide a summer camp experience for as little as \$4 per week depending on income level and childcare assistance. This camp includes breakfast, lunch, field trips, swimming, crafts, and enrichment. Participating families who send children to the summer camp from the housing authority receive an additional \$50 housing voucher.

### **Spanish Movie in the Park**

In 2015, the city of Westminster partnered with El Comercio de Colorado to present the first “Spanish Movie at the Park.” The movie presented was “No Instructions Included/No se aceptan devoluciones.” Over 1,000 residents attended the movie at the park. In 2016 two Spanish movies at the park took place.



### **Latino Festival**

The first Westminster Latino festival took place on July of this year. The city partnered with El Comercio de Colorado for this event.

### **Westminster Public Library (WPL) Programs**

*Note: There is no registration or charge for any of the programs listed below.*

#### **About WPL Programs**

Our programs are recognized as very effective and popular with the community. We have been approached by different groups to share our program as models for other groups. We have shared how our Speak English Program works when requested faith communities & non-profits who model the programs that they are creating on ours. We have also been recognized by USCIS as making an important contact with University of Colorado, Boulder for the first Citizenship Preparation Class offered on that campus.

**Drop-In Computer & Technology Help in Spanish** is offered on the second Wednesday of every month from 3:30 to 4:30 pm at Irving St. Library. All the basics are covered in this free class including navigating with a mouse, surfing the Internet and communicating with email. No registration required.

The weekly **Citizenship Class** is held at Irving Street Library every Saturday from 10-11:30 a.m. Skilled volunteer instructors prepare students for all aspects of the USCIS Citizenship Test using USCIS materials. The class can serve as a quick civics lesson for the community.

Our **ESL conversation groups (Speak English)** are also free and no registration is necessary. Participants can drop in as it is convenient for them. Speak English has morning and evening sessions at both College Hill and Irving St. libraries and runs from September through the first week of June each year. We have 15 different first language groups represented in our Speak English group. Participants come from Eastern Europe, Asia, Northern Africa and many Spanish speaking countries.

We were asked to not just have our English conversation groups. And we responded with adding the **Spanish conversation group** that meets at College Hill Library. It was more a push-back against offering services for the immigrant community but was met in a very skillful way by offering another conversation group in the most requested other language – Spanish.

Adams County Colorado Workforce Center came to both the College Hill Library and the Irving Street Library to present the **Governor's Summer Job Hunt**, a statewide program to match young adults 14-24 with employers, and assist them in their job search. Job Hunt Help is every Wednesday from 5 to 7 p.m. at the Irving St. Library. Skilled volunteers work one-on-one with participants on every aspect of a job search including creating resumes, finding and applying for positions online, brainstorming career ideas and preparing for an interview. [Our Job Hunt Help volunteers were honored with a 7 Everyday Hero Award.](#)

Because we listened to the community who are continually seeking family programming – not just only adult and just only children programming, rolled out **Kids and Family Art Sundays** partnering with the South Westminster Arts Group once a month on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of each month at Irving Street Library. This free, drop-in program has been popular with the community.