Photos in this report are courtesy of:

- John Abramson (cover image)
- Alex Kolesnikov (pages 8, 10, 11, 12)
- Dottie Bond (pages 6, 7, 10, 11)
- Andy Bonura (page 9)
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Dear Friends of ECDC African Community Center – Denver,

We are pleased to provide you with this copy of ACC’s 2019 annual report. Within these pages you will find an overview of ACC’s work during the past year, and you will gain a better understanding of the impact this work is having in the lives of the community members we serve. This report provides you with brief descriptions of ACC services and activities, some of the quantifiable outcomes ACC achieved, an explanation of how ACC’s work was funded and a few words from community members whose lives were touched by ACC during the year.

What you won’t find in this report are many of the things that make ACC special. Within these pages you won’t experience the warmth, dignity and respect offered to every individual who enters ACC’s doors. For that, we invite you to visit us and experience it first-hand.

This report won’t include the many times that staff and volunteers go beyond normal expectations to help refugees and immigrants rebuild safe and sustainable lives in Denver. Having worked as part of this team for the past six months, I can assure you that this special group of men and women go beyond the call of duty time and time again.

Nor will this report provide an adequate sense of how the mission of ACC burns deeply in hearts of individuals, compelling them to achieve the reported outcomes in the face of decreasing resources and other challenges.
No, this report will never be able to provide you with the whole picture, for that requires an engagement between you and ACC that goes beyond printed words and photos.

We hope that this report, even within its limits, inspires you toward that level of engagement in our community, and helps bring focus to new ways you can be involved. We hope that this report encourages you to join us in thanking every person and every organization who supported ACC in 2019 and invested in the life-changing work described herein.

With gratitude and hope as we look toward 2020,

Ron Buzard, Managing Director
ECDC African Community Center - Denver
Welcome

Mission:
To help refugees and immigrants rebuild safe, sustainable lives in Denver

Vision:
To be an integrative center of multicultural exchange where community members feel a sense of belonging and actively contribute to an inclusive society

Values:

Belonging
We foster security and trust by building welcoming and diverse communities based on relationships of reciprocity.

Empathy
We offer friendship, compassion, and understanding to individuals from all communities.

Imagination
We are committed to creative pursuits that exceed the status quo.

Integrity
We consistently exhibit honest and just actions that affirm our promises.
A Year in Review

At the East Colfax Youth Center...
355 students attended programming in FY2019. 15 students participated in and completed the Ambassadors Program, a 10-week leadership program for high school seniors designed to grow their leadership skills, engage with their biases, and develop their communication skills while earning a scholarship. This year, 12 students received $1,000 college scholarships; 2 students received $5,000 scholarships; 1 student received a full ride scholarship.

In We Made This...
82 women were trained in FY2019. We Made This is an employment skills training program for refugees providing 12-week introductory, intermediate, and artisan sewing classes structured around developing and strengthening sewing and communication skills, hands-on production, and familiarization of business needs.

In Ready for American Hospitality...
40 individuals were trained in FY2019. This program is a collaborative training program with the University of Denver (DU). Refugee students are paired with students from DU’s Fritz Knoebel School of Hospitality and establish a mentoring relationship. Throughout the program, RAH students gain knowledge, skills, and experience working in the food service industry while gaining a better understanding of work culture and expectations in the U.S.
This family of 8 is a picture of resettlement success. Within a few months, all 8 members of the family began working, including the high school student. The two daughters completed a CNA course in pursuit of future careers in the medical field.

The entire family has been involved in the greater community, made close friends, and found opportunities to explore the city and state. Regardless of the challenges they face, this family demonstrates a joyful and humble spirit in all they do. They work hard, are dependable, and have future dreams they are pursuing.

You welcome new families to Colorado. Because of your support, ECDC ACC continues to welcome families to Colorado and provide them with the necessary services to become established and thrive as new Americans.
"Compared to other American students, students who have English as their native or first language, I have more problems doing my homework and understanding the concepts.

Written by Sana,
Arrived to the U.S. in 2018

The East Colfax Youth Center helped me throughout my freshman year at high school, and with their help, I ended up getting all A’s in my first year of school in the United States. The Youth Center not only helps me with homework but strengthens my communication skills and social engagement."

The East Colfax Youth Center offers multicultural connection, academic assistance, and life skills support to youth as they navigate their transition to adulthood.
The Presidential Determination capped refugee arrivals at 30,000 for Fiscal Year 2019. As a result, ECDC ACC resettled fewer arrivals than ever before. In total, ECDC ACC resettled 88 Refugees and 40 SIVs. Others served by ECDC ACC includes 54 Asylees, 2 Cuban Haitian Entrants, 47 Secondary/Transfer Refugees, and 8 Secondary/Transfer SIVs.

Despite more barriers to refugee resettlement, ECDC ACC served 239 new community members and a total of 1,459 individuals in 2019.
Average Days Until New Community Members Secure First Job

- FY 2015: 151
- FY 2016: 121
- FY 2017: 116
- FY 2018: 78
- FY 2019: 69

Breakdown of Community Member Jobs by Employer Industry

- Manufacturing: 20%
- Transportation: 21%
- Service: 21%
- Other: 17%
- Retail Trade: 12%
- Healthcare: 9%

Jobs Secured:
- 322

Average Hourly Wage:
- $14.31

92.4% of jobs were retained for at least 90 days from start date.
ECDC ACC is a branch of the Ethiopian Community Development Council (ECDC). Reception and placement activities that ECDC ACC conducts are paid for, in part, through financial assistance provided by the Department of State through ECDC. ECDC ACC also receives funding from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office of Refugee Resettlement via ECDC and the Colorado Refugee Services Program, a division of the Colorado Department of Human services.
Summer Soirée
The Summer Soirée is ECDC ACC's annual fundraising event. This year nearly $52,000 was raised to support the We Made This program! The event featured a fashion show by several current and previous students in the program highlighting We Made This items for sale and traditional dress from several students' countries of origin.

14th Annual Refugee First Thanksgiving
This was ECDC ACC's largest event yet! Over 1,000 guests and volunteers were in attendance; 8 faith groups prepared and served both traditional Thanksgiving food and multicultural cuisine; 5 restaurants in Mango House served their signature dishes; and 8 local businesses supported the event. Join us again next year to celebrate welcome, diversity, and a coming together of communities!
Get Involved!

Donate, Volunteer, Advocate!

There is more than one way to support the mission of ECDC ACC! As a nonprofit organization, ECDC ACC relies on donors and volunteers to serve community members well! Whether you offer a financial or in-kind donation, you are supporting the resettlement and welcome of new Americans. There are several opportunities available to volunteer; see our website for current needs! ECDC ACC also welcomes and relies on your voice to advocate for a more welcoming country!
Thank you to all government and foundation contributors, as well as all private donors! Our mission could not be achieved without you.

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Helping Refugees and Immigrants

Rebuild Safe, Sustainable Lives in Denver

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