

WEST COLFAX LATELY

Lakewood's Perspective on Colorado's Most Famous Avenue | Issue 7



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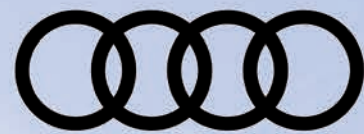
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Photo: Kathryn Zeigler

Our team photo (above) with Christopher Weed's award-winning sculpture "Connected" speaks to our perspective on our role in the community. We are all connected... and the more we work together, the more we can achieve. During 2020-2021, we found our way through a global pandemic, economic and social turmoil, remote work, illness, and financial hurdles by staying connected with our community and by working as team to allow us to continue to celebrate Lakewood's historic West Colfax corridor in these pages.

In this issue, we celebrate what some didn't think was possible—an Arts District on West Colfax Avenue. 40 West Arts turns 10 years old this year! We look back at that accomplishment with an extensive photo essay to commemorate this milestone. And we look forward to "What's Next" with a collaborative article from community leaders who share their perspectives on what's on the horizon for West Colfax. We close with some fun with tattoos and a thoughtful reflection, a tribute to 40 West Champions, in our Final Stop.

After this trying year, we are so very thankful for our small, nimble team, and its commitment to community service. They are special—Thank you! You for make a difference. And ditto for our boards and committees—volunteers all who are invaluable and enable us to aim high and strive to innovate. And to our colleagues at the City of Lakewood: Every department had a hand in landing the multi-million dollars CDOT West Colfax Safety Project grant that will—in three short years—transform an east section of West Colfax forever! Thank you to you all!

Bill Marino, Publisher/Editor-in-Chief
Chief Executive – Lakewood-W. Colfax BID
Board Chair – 40 West Arts District

Liz Black, Managing Editor
Executive Director – 40 West Arts District



MAYOR'S NOTE

Even amid the pandemic, West Colfax celebrated another year of milestones. While we acknowledge the work that still needs to be done—we celebrate the progress we've made: a major grant to improve safety and make West Colfax more attractive with streetscaping and placemaking, progress on plans to extend the energy and rejuvenation further west along Colfax, and the local West Colfax-based organizations buying a noteworthy building right on West Colfax for their forever home!

Working together makes all the difference in the world. This community is on the forefront of collaboration, which results in the unique events and remarkable accomplishments in the district that makes this part of our city so special. I know we are going to continue to work together, to help each other, to continue its resurgence with the same energy, creativity, and collaboration that sparked the launch of Lakewood's state-certified creative district ten years ago! Happy 10th Birthday 40 West Arts. We all look forward to the next 10 years—and beyond!

Mayor Adam Paul
City of Lakewood

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Photo: Will Strathmann



Photo: 40 West Arts



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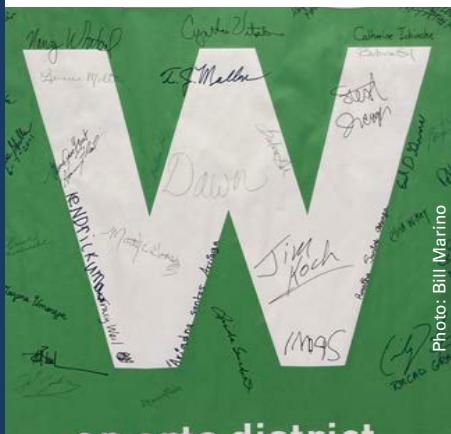


Photo: Bill Marino

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40 WEST ARTS Celebrates 10 Years

A DECADE THAT MADE A DIFFERENCE

By Bill Marino

40 West Arts' 10th birthday is a big deal. Of course, there were nay-sayers! Those who thought it wasn't possible to form an arts district on West Colfax. But now, we've made it to double digits—and survived a global pandemic. It's a big deal—not for any individual, but for all who have been involved along the way. This selection of photos and captions highlight a hint of the first 10 years of what Colorado Creative Industries Director Margaret Hunt called “the little arts district that could” for the scrappy, bootstrapping manner we became known for on our way to becoming Lakewood’s state-certified creative district. The formation of 40 West Arts was an intentional act—performed with a passionate purpose—a collaborative strategy to restore vibrancy to West Colfax, to once again allow it to shine with its special brand of glitter and grit. For more “inside scoop,” talk to the “40 West Champions” many of whom are responsible for the formation and underpinnings of 40 West Arts and are depicted on the following pages.



In the summer 2011, after a series of community meetings at Molholm Elementary designed to build on the recommendation from a 2006 Action Plan to start a West Colfax-based arts district, RMCAD graphic design students and faculty unveiled the original brand for 40 West Arts District to a crowd of 200+ people at a garden party on the historic campus of Rocky Mountain College of Art + Design.

In the early days of 40 West Arts (before any gallery opened) our first arts programming called “Art Along Colfax,” placed local original artworks on easels in publicly accessible locations in businesses for patrons to enjoy. Rockley Music (pictured here in 2011), FirstBank, Powell Insurance Agency, and the newly opened BID office were among the early adopters. Before the program ended shortly before 40 West Gallery opened on Teller Street in late 2012, 40 West Arts had 19 participating art venues along West Colfax Avenue.



Photo: Barb Gal



Photo: 40 West Arts



Photo: City of Lakewood

Community interest grew at every meeting held at Molholm Elementary as locals rallied around the notion of starting an arts district along West Colfax the meetings, spearheaded by Roger Wadnal (above, standing on right) and his team from the City of Lakewood’s Research & Comprehensive Planning Division, started in February of 2011 with a handful of attendees and soon expanded to dozens in subsequent meetings—culminating in a special unveiling event on the lawn at RMCAD. Simultaneously, organizers were working to form a local business improvement district to provide a funding mechanism. Both 40 West Arts and the Lakewood-West Colfax BID were officially formed later that year. The BID took the lead in operationalizing the arts district.

Photo: 40 West Arts



Photo: 40 West Arts



Photo: William Marino



Photo: 40 West Arts

With strong and growing community connections, the milestones started mounting up. In late 2012, due to the generosity of Jerry and Gloria Enger of Enger Enterprises, longtime property owners on West Colfax, 40 West Arts was able to open its community gallery—a game-changer—giving the new district a place to hold events and to host programming. Above: In the back warehouse of the original gallery (before there was a theater), 40 West Champions, who nurtured the early days of 40 West Arts, make a celebratory toast as a packed house listens to what's next—applying for state certification as an official Colorado Creative District.



Left: A 40 West Champion and a fervent supporter of all things 40 West Arts, Judy Cybuch, shown here in her gallery with then state representative Andy Kerr (now Jeffco Commissioner), opened The Gallery of Everything, the district's first gallery in 2012. Originally on Ammon Street, the gallery was eventually re-located to Lamar Station Plaza, and converted to Red Herring Art & Supply in 2019 under the new ownership of another 40 West Arts champion, Kris Autobee.



Photo: Bill Marino

From the very beginning, 40 West Arts relied on partnerships with the community to build momentum. The West Colfax Community Association played an integral role in supporting and promoting the emerging arts movement, and continues to do so. Above: (left to right) Nina Rockley, Bunny Malm, and Maddie Nichols—all active WCCA board members at the time were invaluable advocates of the new arts district. Left: A group of WCCA volunteers celebrate helping The Action Center paint its shelter on West Colfax.



Photo: 40 West Arts



Photo: Dave Rein

Above: Lakewood Arts Council, the oldest arts organization in the city, (est. in 1988) made the decision to move to Lamar Station Plaza in the core of 40 West Arts in 2014, and helped build on the growing momentum of the arts movement on West Colfax. The plaza owners, Broad Street Realty, provided the incentive—five years of free rent. Lakewood Arts became the 3rd gallery in the district, following The Gallery of Everything and 40 West Gallery.



Another major milestone was the opening of RTD's W Line in April 2013. Above right: 40 West Arts held a pop-up festival on Lamar Street to celebrate the opening; Top and above: Renowned Lakewood Artist Lonnie Hanzon created the iconic "Lakewood Legacy Trees" art installation at Lamar Station that recounts Lakewood's history in the corridor. Middle right: Always strong supporters of the arts initiative on West Colfax, Lakewood City Manager Kathy Hodgson and then Lakewood Mayor Bob Murphy enjoy the first trip on the W Line.





Photo: Kathryn Zeigler

As the first few years progressed, the impact of 40 West Arts became more visible in the corridor—from the many artistic box wraps along light rail and at local intersections to the ever-growing number of new murals in the corridor, like the one (directly below) on Lamar Street along light rail (“Omning Birds” by Bobby Magee Lopez) and the sculpture in the new Lamar & 14th Ave. roundabout (bottom center: “Connected” by Christopher Weed)—both award-winners in 2015. Also in 2015, (left and below right) new median monuments were commissioned by the BID to mark the district core.



Photo: Richard Eversley



Photo: Benjamin Waldman



Photo: Will Strathmann

In 2014, Mayor Murphy cuts the ribbon for the first mural in 40 West Arts’ COLorFAX program (an initiative to bring color to Colfax). The idea was conceived and implemented by Lakewood folk artist Johanna Parker (center right), a board member at the time, who designed the mural and led volunteers in painting the wall on the King’s Rest Motel.

It wasn't long after creative district certification that 40 West Arts and its partners started to rack up awards, including leadership awards from CBCA and American for the Arts, multiple accolades from Westword and 5280 magazine, and this one (right): the ULI Impact Award in the INSPIRE category for their partnership in creating the 40 West ArtLine. Left to right: Kevin Yoshida, Vanessa Zarate, Roger Wadnal, Alexis Moore, Bill Marino, and Jeff Temple.



Photo: LWCBD



Photo: LWCBD



Photo: Bill Marino

Above: Rick and Patty Yaconis (front row on right) brought live theater to the district in 2013 with the E Project's EDGE Theatre. Theater board members along with local dignitaries cut the ribbon on the set of the first production in the new 80-seat theater (built in the warehouse in the back of 40 West Gallery). Middle Right: Benchmark Theatre took over the space in 2018 and continued the tradition of compelling live performances in the district.



Photo: Bill Marino



Left: In 2012, Julie Byerlein (center right) and Johanna Parker (right) received the first “Making Your Mark” awards at a 40 West Arts fundraising gala and variety show on the Mary Harris Auditorium stage at RMCAD.

Below: Joe and Luanne Margotte light up the dance floor during 40 West Arts’ 2014 gala at the Elks Lodge, while others (middle left) look on and enjoy the dueling pianos show.



Left: Mayor Bob Murphy, 40 West Arts Board Chair Bill Marino, and CCI Director Margaret Hunt celebrate the news that 40 West Arts was granted the official designation as a state-certified Colorado creative district in June 2014 and (Bottom right opposite page) later that year, 40 West Champion and board member Julie Byerlein and then Gov. John Hickenlooper pose in Salida, the venue for the first official convening of Colorado Creative Districts.

Photo: Dave Rein



Photo: Kathryn Zeigler



Photo: Kathryn Zeigler



Right: Friends Win Doak, Brittany Truman, Jaia Lovett, and Katy Zeigler enjoy the sights and sounds at 40 West Studio, a welcome addition to the district that opened in 2016. Middle and far right: During a 2021 First Friday visitors to the Studios enjoyed family fun and a free classical guitar performance by Alfredo Muro.



Photo: Bill Marino



Photo: Bill Marino



Photo: Miranda Samon

From its inception, 40 West Arts focused on creating community arts events and experiences that everyone can enjoy—from Colfax Art Crawls and outdoor festivals to family friendly hand-on activities. Far left opposite page: A smiling Mayor Adam Paul—always a great promoter of West Colfax. A crowd at ArtFest 2018 at Lamar Station Plaza enjoys the music of Graham Good and the Painters. Middle left: The ever-popular “Bad Astronauts” bring their unique performance that includes dance, music, and lights to a 2017 Colfax Art Crawl. Left: Liz Black leads a troupe of circus entertainers through the district on First Friday. Below & bottom right: The Handsome Little Devil’s series of Joy Bomb parades in 2020 & 2021 featured entertainers that delight the crowd at every stop along the route.



Photo: Miranda Samon



Photo: Kathryn Zeigler



Photo: Bill Marino



Photo: Gary Reed

Right: A group of volunteers prepare to cut the ribbon on the 40 West ArtLine. Funded in part by a National Endowments for the Arts grant, the ArtLine launched in June 2018. This exciting amenity in the district is a 4-mile walking and biking outdoor art experience connecting three area parks with 80+ art installations. It continues to grow in popularity as the City, 40 West Arts, and the BID work to add even more art and activities along the route. Recent additions include Katy Casper's series of murals, called "Wild Urban Medicine" on multiple buildings at Lamar Station Apartments, funded by the owners. Below right: City Planner and 40 West Arts board member Alexis Moore has been a steadfast advocate for 40 West Arts and a Champion for the ArtLine.



Photo: Will Strathmann



Photo: Kathryn Zeigler



Ryan Mathews was the first Artist in Residence for 40 West Arts. This award-winning program in partnership with Metro West Housing Solutions (Lakewood's Housing Authority) delivers free arts programming to kids and families throughout the district. Bottom right: Volunteers finish up a "Kaleidoscope Crossing" along the ArtLine at the intersection of Pierce Street and W. Colfax Avenue.

NEXT Gallery migrated to West Colfax in 2017, soon followed by Pirate Contemporary Art, EDGE Gallery and eventually Core New Art Space, Kanon Collective, and Flourish Galleria as well. The district gained significant attention due to its family friendly art walks, free arts programming, and popular co-op galleries. In the 2018 Westword's "Best of" issue, 40 West Arts District was named metro Denver's "Best Suburban Arts District."



Photo: 40 West Arts



Photo: 40 West Arts



Photo: Clarke Reader / Lakewood Sentinel



Photo: Will Strathmann

Many have contributed to the success of 40 West Arts: from the committee that put forward the notion of an arts district in the 2006 West Colfax Action Plan, to the Lakewood staffers who believed it was possible and brought the budding idea to a series of community meetings to cultivate it. We were fortunate to have supportive city leaders and the 40 West Champions that met twice a month for two years to nurture it with the newly formed business improvement district. We're grateful to the early artists that signed up and the galleries that believe in our vision enough to move here, and thankful for neighborhood "regulars" that always encourage us and came out to support the district. Many people helped put 40 West Arts on the map. Yes, this 10-year anniversary is a big deal. Our community showed what's possible when we work together. Kudos to you, West Colfax community, and to all who shared in making this dream a reality.

WE ASKED: What's Next for West Colfax?

HERE'S WHAT WE LEARNED...

This pandemic era challenged us all ... the social and economic impacts of this time affected organizations large and small. As our community turns our collective attention to renewal, reconnections, and recovery, we look to our community leaders to chart a course to a brighter future. This group of leaders—from elected policy makers to civic-minded business influencers to nonprofit leaders—all play a role in shaping West Colfax corridor's future. We asked them to share their thoughts on what's on the horizon.



Mayor Paul (left) celebrates at the 2019 West Colfax Lately Luncheon with Roger Wadnal, a longtime advocate of West Colfax (and 2019 LEGEND Award Winner) who led the team at the city that secured the major CDOT grant for Lakewood. Photo: Kathryn Zeigler

CITY OF LAKEWOOD - MAYOR ADAM PAUL

While all five Wards and all 156,500 residents in our city are important in our policy and budgetary considerations, the West Colfax corridor, as our oldest commercial strip, holds a significant place in Lakewood's history and culture and clearly plays an important role in our future.

West Colfax is simultaneously one of our greatest success stories and most daunting challenges. While we will cover milestones and accomplishments worthy of celebration in the subsequent paragraphs, we need to acknowledge that West Colfax suffers from many of the same problems as other neighboring cities (and society at large): homelessness, mental illness, and addiction, and their very real impact on crime in our community. The city is not only dedicating resources to address these issues directly, but also rallying support from the county to work in unison to develop new and better ways for community policing that will lead to more positive outcomes. Even our infrastructure issues



The W-Line Light Rail travels along the West Colfax corridor to connect Lakewood and Golden to Denver.
Photo: City of Lakewood

acerbate this situation—but upgrades are in the works—including flood mitigation along North Dry Gulch and street and pedestrian improvements along the stretch of the avenue with the highest incident of pedestrian-vehicle accidents. As our partners with the Lakewood-West Colfax BID indicate, there is still much to do along West Colfax, as is clearly stated in the recent community review of The West Colfax VISION 2040 Action Plan.

A focus of the city is to continue to build on the success with our active partners—WCCA, 40 West Arts, the BID, and our neighborhood organizations to assist and continue the ongoing renaissance. Such is the case with the West Colfax Safety Project in progress on the east end of West Colfax (from Teller to Sheridan). After years of collaboration among city departments and community stakeholders, the Denver Regional Council of Governments awarded a \$10 million grant to the City of Lakewood to implement West Colfax Avenue safety and beautification improvements. Lakewood pledged \$2+ million in matching funds, making this a \$12.5 million investment in the future of this historic corridor. This project is one of 30 others funded in the metro area by \$58.9 million in CDOT grants as part of State of Colorado's Safer Main Streets Initiative.

While this is a major win for our community, we are not only focused on the two overarching goals of \$12.5M West Colfax

Safety Project: 1) to make this area of West Colfax Avenue a safer and more beautiful experience for residents, business patrons, and all users; and 2) to manage the construction process to minimize the disruption to local businesses and their patrons, (learn more at: <https://www.lakewoodtogether.org/westcolfax>), but we are also working to rejuvenate our westside along West Colfax and attract new businesses and amenities around RTD's Oak Street Station and influence the revitalization of the Westland Center. We have also applied for funding from The American Rescue Plan Act of 2021, and these funds are earmarked for improvements further west along Colfax.

With strong local leadership in place, we are following a similar formula of planning, visioning, and productive engagement that was successful in the 40 West Arts' core. Speaking of the 40 West core, the 40 West ArtLine—the 4-mile walking and biking art experience that connect three area parks with 80+ art installations along the way—continues to be a major success—both as a free outdoor arts experience for locals and as an attraction to visitors, giving them a new reason to frequent West Colfax galleries, eateries, and other entertainment destinations. Our aim is to continue to enhance and grow this unique experience and attract further investment in mixed-use development in the 40 West Arts core that support our community objectives, as we

build critical mass for Lakewood's state-certified creative district and attract more creatives and more patrons to support our local businesses.

Rocky Mountain College of Art + Design (RMCAD) and its historic campus, listed on The National Registry of Historic Places, is also within the 40 West Arts core. As with all our institutions of higher learning, we want to see them all grow and thrive as they prepare the next generation of leaders for our community and the world.

Before I close, I would like to wish a Happy 10-year Anniversary to 40 West Arts District. What a remarkable achievement for our community ... we look forward to the next 10 years of creativity!

I invite you to join in our community conversation. The city offers multiple ways for to participate in city government. Visit <https://lakewoodspeaks.org/> to learn more.

ROCKY MOUNTAIN COLLEGE OF ART + DESIGN - BRENT FITCH, PRESIDENT



As Rocky Mountain College of Art + Design prepares for our fall semester, the first time we welcome students back since March of 2020, our leadership team is focused on four near-term priorities.

Returning students back to our historic campus. First and foremost, we are thrilled to welcome students back to campus. Our



The RMCAD campus is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Photo: RMCAD

team of dedicated faculty and staff have been preparing for this return since summer and we are excited to welcome students to our campus this fall. To better support on-campus students, we are creating a support center for excellence, which will help our students find support for their non-classroom activity needs.

Enhancing our employee and faculty experience. We are leveraging the lessons learned from the pandemic to create a robust hybrid workplace. We have faculty and staff located in multiple states, so we are ensuring our technology infrastructure is well suited for a productive hybrid work environment. In addition, we continue to invest in our campus including current remodels to several administrative areas— always mindful of the historic character of our campus that is listed in the U.S. National Registry of Historic Places. By learning from our past and appreciating our post-pandemic journey, we move toward the future with hope and excitement.

Enhancing our online student experience. Many may not know that we have a number of our students who study online. We continuously seek to empower our online students with the best resources by enhancing



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online tools and support services. To bolster students' online academic experience, we are testing something new this fall: digital textbooks that are fully integrated in the course outline from our student portal. This eliminates the inconvenience of physical textbooks. We will evaluate this pilot program later this year.

Expanding our brand and programs to support our student population. We believe RMCAD is on a positive trajectory, and we are working to showcase our unique learning experience and historic campus as we continue to invest in both to support our students.

That investment includes launching a new academic program later this year: an online BFA program in Music Production. This new program will showcase the creativity of our faculty and students in new ways. We have been working on this for a few years and are excited to add this to our other eleven degree programs.

Additionally, we continue to support student interest in our mainstay academic programs, including our Interior Design degree program—one of only two such programs in the United States, accredited by the Council of Interior Design Accreditation (CIDA).

These four priority areas are a subset of the goals we are putting in place in our updated five-year strategic plan. We are proud to invest in improvements which support our students, employees, and faculty.

When I accepted this position more than a year ago, I was delighted to find this historic campus as the setting and a growing creative district as our neighbor. I am grateful for the very warm welcome I received from the RMCAD team, Mayor Paul and the Lakewood staff, and the entire 40 West Arts creative community. The level of engagement and commitment of the RMCAD team has never been higher. We look forward to our path forward together in the Lakewood community and to our mutually beneficial future.

JEFFERSON COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION - JANSEN TIDMORE, CEO

The Jefferson County Economic Development Corporation (Jeffco EDC) may be a well-known name to some of you and completely new for others. As the countywide economic development organization, we focus on attraction, retention, and expansion of primary jobs – and we sometimes find ourselves more behind the scenes than on the front page. Both are places we are very comfortable, but it is important for you all to know that the



economic development table is one you are invited around, too. We are working hard, every day, to build opportunities for all our Jeffco residents, and we are proud of the work we have accomplished.

Jeffco is fortunate to have a lot of work being done, concentrating on creating opportunities for employment. As an EDC – we focus on five primary sectors and three target sectors:

Primary sectors consist of industries with a strong and growing presence within our county that exceeds national averages for that industry type. Our primary sectors include Aerospace, Bioscience, Beverage Production, Energy, and Engineering.



Among Jeffco EDC's many goals is attracting and retaining major employer such as FirstBank and Terumo BCT. Photo: First Bank

Target sectors consist of growing sectors in our economy but have not reached the national concentrations yet, and include Aviation, IT/Telecom, and Advanced Manufacturing – specifically within electronics and outdoor recreation products.

From 2017 to 2020 Jeffco added 8,173 new jobs and \$1,539,000,000 in investment to our primary job sector, with 2020 setting a record amount of investment of \$842,000,000. We know, now more than ever, we must carry that momentum forward.

A primary function of any economic development organization is to be the keeper of reliable data. One of the systems we use frequently is called Buxton, which really helps us better understand consumer behaviors and information – i.e., all of you, our residents. In looking at our latest data, we have seen a rise in Jefferson County average household income to an impressive \$104,509; with median income equaling \$78,340; and per capita hitting \$42,912. As community metrics go – these are impressive numbers. Over 50% of our population hold a college degree, and we have a diverse talent pool in terms of fields and training. Our job creation focuses on these strengths – looking

to build opportunity for those that live here rather than a need to import talent to fill the roles. We want to make sure all have an opportunity to live, work, and play in our beautiful community.

However, we recognize these numbers alone are not the whole story. We work with many community partners from education; our county workforce center; Community First Foundation and more to discuss our underrepresented and underemployed populations. Over the next few months, you will start to see initiatives targeting

these disparities with a goal of economic opportunity for all our residents.

Economic Development has also found itself around many community-issue tables. COVID-19 demonstrated many strengths we have as a community, but also highlighted our flaws. As we look at the needs of our small business and entrepreneurial community, we see an opportunity to engage and enhance this critical sector of our Jeffco economy. There are over 41,000 businesses in Jefferson County with 40,000 of those employing fewer than 50 individuals. It is one of the reasons you see us focus on sectors instead of sizes of companies. We know that every large company started with a single person with an idea. Jeffco has a storied history of entrepreneurs and small businesses becoming global leaders – and we want to make sure we are continually encouraging that ecosystem of growth. While still taking its form of what that means and looks like in Jeffco – we are working with our community partners to shape and build how we provide for success in these vital small business and entrepreneurial sectors.

In addition, we are working hard to put better context around what development means for Colorado. It seems to get a bad “rep” in some circles. When I look at the social issues we face as a community, it often comes back

to me as a need for economic opportunity. Who has been afforded it? Who has not? I am a believer that education coupled with career opportunities, are the cornerstones for a healthy and cohesive community. This is why you see us partnering heavily with our K-12 system; community colleges; and 4-year institutions to align those opportunities with the talent being developed. There is no better talent than that which you develop, and our role is to provide that chance for individuals

to take those skills into our workforce community. From our perspective, we need to embrace development—thoughtful, smart, and contributing development.

Our strategy is built around being an opportunity beacon for Jefferson County. And remember, our strategy table is not full. You are always welcome with your thoughts, encouragement, and dissent. That is what a healthy community is built upon.

THE ACTION CENTER - PAM BRIER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Walking into The Action Center in Lakewood is like suddenly entering the elves' workshop. There are boxes lined up on tables and volunteers packing all kinds of food. In the midst of these tasks is a busy volunteer with a unicorn hugging his midsection. It's a blowup unicorn meant to keep a child afloat. While another determined worker is introduced as the "fun officer."

Despite the fun atmosphere, the staff and volunteers are working purposefully to get boxes of fresh, healthy food ready for struggling neighbors to pick up in the drive-through.

A staff member says she's embarrassed by all the stuff piled in the main entrance. All I see are happy people filling boxes with care and hard work. But I never saw the main entrance before the pandemic. Many things changed with the pandemic and The Action Center needed to adapt on a dime in order to keep helping the community.



Luckily, this wasn't its first rodeo. One year before the City of Lakewood was incorporated, a group of volunteers who were concerned about struggling families in their community formed The Action Center. The year was 1968. The Smithsonian calls it, "the year that shattered America."

Reporting on the newly formed organization, the Colorado Transcript from June 9, 1968, said that The Action Center would "meet problems of culture, deprivation and social disorganization in areas described as 'comfortable suburbia.'" No matter where you lived, 1968 was not a "comfortable" year and concerned neighbors decided to do something about it.

Sometimes history finds ways of repeating itself in supremely inspiring ways. The Action Center did just that when it faced the socially shattered year of the COVID pandemic with determination, grace, and real grit. And yes, magic, too.

COVID Response

Before March 16, 2020, people could "shop" at The Action Center as if it were a regular grocery store with beautiful cases full of fresh food. The COVID restrictions changed



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that. The staff and volunteers had to adapt quickly. They came up with a drive-through solution that let people come for fresh food

the constant flux of changing protocols and quarantines to keep people safe.



U.S. Rep. Ed Perlmutter speaks at the Program Services Building on The Action Campus that includes the mural ("Stardust" by Marth Pinkard) donated by the Lakewood-W. Colfax BID and 40 West Arts. Photo: 40 West Arts District

that's pre-packed in boxes ready for pick up. At the peak of the pandemic, The Action Center supplied 250 households with a week's supply of groceries every week! More than 35,000 households have been served in the drive through with more than three million pounds of food.

Everyone else in the world who wasn't on the front lines were told to stay home, but The Action Center staff and volunteers couldn't stay home. They are passionate and want to give, but they never thought of themselves as frontline workers in that way. They took the risk to themselves and their families and managed to change the way the organization works by doing jobs they'd never done before.

Adapting wasn't a piece of cake. Many of the volunteers were the age of the folks who were at highest risk. Many of them had to stay home, so the staff had to quickly recruit new volunteers and contend with

During this past year, these amazing volunteers contributed 35,000 hours of work. Besides providing critical food support during the pandemic, The Action Center provided over \$2 million for rent or mortgage assistance to help struggling families. This program is expected to continue for the next year. There has also been nearly \$375,000 provided for

utility assistance, and hundreds have come to The Action Center to pick up their mail. (The Action Center also provides those experiencing homelessness with a mailing address.) This allows people to receive critical mail regardless of their living situation.

Going Forward

When you're in a routine and seeing what isn't working it's hard to stop and say we're changing. But COVID forced a reflective disruption that translated into action for The Action Center. That disruption of routine helped the staff realize that going forward they needed to focus more on members of the community who are the hardest to reach. The next step is moving outside the walls and bringing food and services to them. Also, adding diverse staff and board members is an important step that will not only serve the community, but partner with it more inclusively. To jumpstart this new focus is a pilot program that reaches out to five schools in the area as points of contact.

As COVID restrictions are lifted, one of the short-term goals for The Action Center is,

transitioning back into the building to serve people more personally and deeply. At its peak during COVID, The Action Center served 250 households a day – now it's down to 150 households per day, which is about double what it was pre-COVID. In order to continue meeting the larger needs and provide personal assistance, the center will offer two days a week where people can come inside for self-select groceries and/or connect with an advocate, and two days a week where we continue drive-through service. Early October is the target date to start the new plan. Very nimble, indeed.

The next big thing has been to hire a housing navigator who will work with the

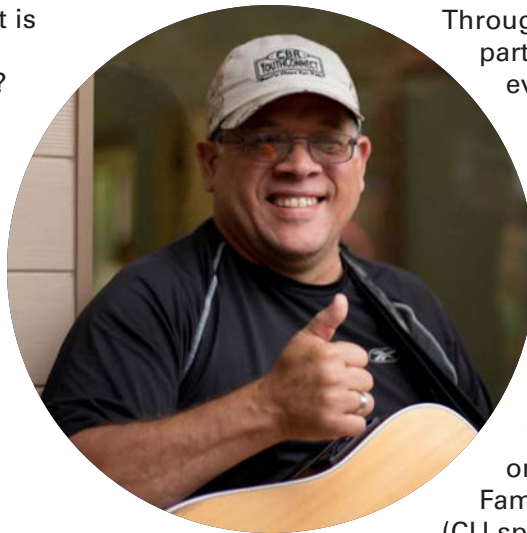
rent assistance staff to help participants stay housed and stable, while working with families to find more affordable housing. With the cost of living rising and almost 6% of our Jeffco neighbors unemployed, these are services that can make all the difference. The whole community becomes healthier from the ground up.

The Action Center started in a tumultuous year as a grassroots organization that was volunteer and community based. That continues to be its strength today, along with some brass-tacks magic that gives people a tangible stepping-stone to stability, community connection, and vitality. Unicorns couldn't do a better job.

MOUNTAIR CHRISTIAN CHURCH - REV. RUBEN RODRIGUEZ, PASTOR

One might ask, what is a church doing in a publication like this? My answer is my contribution to this article—and I am grateful to be invited to do so.

Mountair Christian Church (MCC) is a non-profit organization dedicated to the spiritual and physical wellbeing of our Two Creeks/Mountair neighborhood and beyond for the past 100 years. We are part of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) denomination, but what really defines us is the faithful dedication to our community. Did I mention that we have been in the same area for 100 years? From the humble beginning in a meeting at Mountair High School, to the building of a sanctuary at 1400 Ames St., to the development of the current location at 1390 Benton St., we have been within four



blocks of where we started since 1921. That is faithful dedication. In church lingo, its steadfast love for a neighborhood.

Through this journey MCC has participated in many community events and activities. Some of our members were involved in the beginning of The Action Center, the annual Thanksgiving dinner that provides more than 500 meals (now in its 38th year), and we have maintained a food and clothing pantry for more than 50 years. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, 17 ministries and civic entities were using our building. Meals on Wheels (Volunteers of America), Family Leadership Training Institute (CU sponsored effort), PASO (an early childhood education program from Colorado Statewide Parent Coalition), Brown Bag Ministries and Jeffco Eats, all operated out of our space. Community organizations, like the Two Creeks Neighborhood Organization (TCNO), and several other homeowners' associations have used our space. We can't forget Zumba! In addition, we have a room for police with 24 hours a day access. All these are free of charge or for voluntary contributions.

Churches used to be at the center of community life, and we continue to think of ourselves as a vital element of the community. We are making progress in recovering from the pandemic and reopening to full capacity. The congregation has been meeting online and in a hybrid format through the pandemic, overcoming the technology phobia and maintaining this vital connection that feeds the soul. Our volunteers have worked through the pandemic with all the precautions established by the County. Our goal is to continue collaborations and partnerships that will improve the welfare of our neighbors. Along with some current church improvements in progress, we are in the infant stages of creating a family resource program with a Lift Zone to provide internet access. Not bad for a small non-profit whose average attendance on Sundays is 50 people. All due to relationship building—connecting with the faith community, like-minded local civic leaders, the business community, as well as with the City of Lakewood and Jefferson County.

As the growth continues in these areas, we realize that our efforts to reach others are imperative. The changes in our community have displaced some and attracted others. This has created a vacuum of relationships that begs for more than a social media band aid and screams for real human connections. Our work is focused on providing forums for those connections, whether through the arts, music, or simple game and movie nights. We are already having monthly BBQ's where all are invited, working also with Two Creeks

Neighborhood Organization, the Lakewood-West Colfax BID, and the Mountair Park Farm (Sprout City Farms) on community events. These fill a need, but there are deeper necessities in life. We want to have a relationship with those in our community. To be there to celebrate joys and to provide support during struggles. A church can be a parish, both in the religious sense and the civic sense. We want to bring diverse groups together and create a sense of unity in a divided world—for those who are religious and those who are not. We are working to establish programs with 40 West Arts in a way to feed the soul in multiple ways.

I personally arrived in Colorado in 2014, at the beginning of all the changes the neighborhood and the state have experienced. Having lived in Puerto Rico, Florida, Washington State, Kentucky, Georgia, and with my journey originating in New York, I realize that every place has blessings and struggles, with history and narratives that are embedded in the minds and souls of its inhabitants. That dynamic creates challenges. I think it is good to have those, but not if they are swept under the rug, because that is a formula for more division. In my view, through MCC's history, our church has been a miracle—because it brings together people who otherwise would not be. Could it be that the church is part of the answer for the unity that is needed? I believe so. And MCC, a small non-profit in the community, will work towards that end, as we continue to serve, perhaps even for the next 100 years.



Volunteers prepared a thanksgiving meal for members of the community at Mountair Church.
Photos: Ruben Rodriguez

40 WEST ARTS CREATIVE DISTRICT - LIZ BLACK, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

On a recent First Friday in July of 2021, 40 West Arts, in many ways, exemplified the vision, mission, and ideals of a district that only ten short years ago seemed like just an incredible dream. Families meandered on sidewalks playing ground games along the 40 West ArtLine. A dozen galleries opened their doors to the summer heat, encouraging patrons to check out exhibitions and installation art. Vendor tents dotted the street, filled with artisan goods, local foods, and even a booth with unusual plants, whose tendrils spilled through the edge of the white canvas, inviting visitors to come take a look. The outdoor market was the brainchild of Creature Arcade and Tattoo, a newcomer to the 40 West Arts movement but one that immediately hit the ground running with new ideas and sweat equity. On the other end of the parking lot a small skateboard ramp enticed boarders to test their skills, while musicians on a temporary stage kicked off a set. This gathering, through local business TH!S Print & Design, merged with the art market, creating one large district event with multiple community members, artists, visitors, and guests in attendance. The vision for 40 West Arts has always been one created by, for, and through the individuals and groups who yearn for a space to play and create. And it's always been one of artistic inclusivity, whether that means art in the form of skateboard tricks, or the art of tricking an exotic plant to grow in the dry, sometimes harsh climate of Colorado. 40 West Arts has weathered a global pandemic and emerged stronger and ready to redouble our efforts for the next decade (and beyond).



Key strategic initiatives for 40 West Arts:

Equity: 40 West Arts recognizes the continued need for a focus and vision that includes all people. We acknowledge that we still have more work to do in reaching underrepresented groups. Our goal is to create a space for creatives of all types, from all backgrounds. 40 West Arts will work harder in 2021 and beyond to fulfill our goals to create an equitable environment for all artists, and to develop, market, and implement our events to ensure equitable access for all individuals, particularly our underserved neighbors who live in and around Lakewood's West Colfax corridor.

Community: 40 West Arts will continue to encourage, utilize, support, and promote our partners throughout the West Colfax corridor and beyond. We recognize that everyone has something to bring to the table, and that we would not be where we are today without our many partners, from newcomers like Solstice Ink, All Its Own and Mint & Serif Coffeehouse, to long-time collaborators like Lamar Station Plaza, Colorado Mills, Metro West Housing Solutions, Rocky Mountain College of Art & Design, and the Lakewood-West Colfax BID. Partnerships and community-building will continue to be at the core of what we do.

Exploration: The 40 West ArtLine has physically transformed the look and feel of Lakewood's West Colfax corridor. Our many galleries, from NEXT to Pirate: Contemporary Art have hosted exhibitions and openings that challenge, inspire, and (sometimes) overwhelm. Art is a dialogue, a feeling, a statement on current times and historical messages. The global pandemic offered many lessons but one of the most important is this. Art is essential. Art is indispensable. Art is exploration.



Kids and adults play on interactive ground murals along the 40 West ArtLine. Photo: Will Strathmann

Permanence: With real estate escalating, 40 West Arts' partnership with the Lakewood-West Colfax BID to purchase a building will create a dynamic, lasting destination for locals and visiting patrons to explore hands-on arts experiences, a venue for creatives to gather, display, and sell their work, and a

place to host activities and events that the whole community will enjoy. 40 West Arts deeply recognizes the need for perpetual space for artists, galleries, and creative businesses and we are grateful to have a business improvement district in our corner who acts on these goals. The newly acquired 40 West Arts building will serve as a forever home for our district and an accessible hub for our community.

Our goals are big, our vision is grand and yet, we are ready for the future. And personally, I would like to sincerely thank the Boards of Directors of 40 West Arts and the Lakewood-West Colfax BID, and our small, but mighty staff: Katy Zeigler and Morgan Cameron, you are both a gift to our organizations. Your passion and commitment to our district does not go unnoticed. We salute you.



THE LAKEWOOD-WEST COLFAX BID - BILL MARINO, CHIEF EXECUTIVE

What a year we've all just been through! It's refreshing to turn our attention to the future and brighter days. And for our little group of tight-knit organizations based here along West Colfax, including 40 West Arts, West Colfax Community Association (WCCA), and the Lakewood-W. Colfax BID (the BID), we remain focused on our core mission: Re-energizing historic West Colfax corridor.

As 40 West Arts celebrates its 10th anniversary this year, this arts and culture nonprofit is really spreading its wings, and with its



Lakewood-W. Colfax BID board at a community event in 2018 (left to right) Gloria Enger, Chris Marconi, (Marino), Stu Wright, Nina Rockley, and Kevin Yoshida (not present: board member Tom Yockey). Photo: Lakewood W. Colfax BID

partner venues throughout the district, 40 West Arts continues to make a difference by providing free arts experiences that the whole family can enjoy. While the BID provides sustainable funding to 40 West Arts, supporting its ongoing positive impact within the community, it is noteworthy to report that the district has become an SCFD-funded Tier III nonprofit—a significant milestone for any nonprofit in the seven-county service area. Liz Black, in the 40 West Arts section earlier, highlighted the focus areas for Lakewood’s only state-certified creative district, and a significant West Colfax success story.

The BID was created to provide predictable funding for a community vision of a new arts district along West Colfax and to rejuvenate West Colfax’s oldest community association (WCCA). The BID provides predictable funding to 40 West Arts, so it can bring arts and culture programming to the city and county at large, with an emphasis on this historically underserved area, and to help continue the resurgence of West Colfax as a commercial and entertainment destination. Funding for 40 West supports the BID’s goals for arts & culture, but it’s an economic development strategy as well. The BID also funds WCCA to support its business-related and community engagements goals, providing this all-volunteer organization the capacity to hold its mainstay monthly WCCA’s meetings (every

provides micro-grants and support to local civic and neighborhood organizations and allows WCCA to take on a number a small business beautification projects every year.

The BID’s mission also includes several strategic initiatives:

Vision 2040: The development and review of the community conceived and city-council adopted West Colfax Vision 2040 Action Plan (adopted in 2015), which since the 2020-2021 updates to the plan includes initiatives around future planning for the award-winning 40 West ArtLine and efforts to revitalize the west end of the corridor around the Oak Street Station area and to influence the redevelopment of the Westland retail site. Conversations are in process with the Westland ownership group and others who own tracts of land in the area. We envision a potential site for redevelopment that could include the type of retail and entertainment amenities desired by local neighborhoods, shared during the Vision 2040 plan review. As a potential people-centric entertainment district with its own green spaces and destinations, this area would leverage and connect arts and cultural programming activities of 40 West Arts District, such as: live performances, arts markets, and festivals—and eventually have a themed art trolley to take patrons to and from popular West Colfax destinations.

A Building to Repurpose for Community Use:

Through a convergence of opportunities, the BID was able to purchase a building at 6501 W. Colfax in the core of 40 West Arts District. This long-term goal was a major milestone. The Lakewood-West Colfax BID teamed up with 40 West Arts and other partners to acquire the building (the old Drumstick Restaurant). While it needs much work, it signals that 40 West Arts and its creative partners have achieved a goal for long-term sustainability as a Creative District—a building that they own and call home. After the planned 10-month construction effort for the adaptive reuse to reactivate the building, the renovated facility is slated to serve as the headquarters of 40 West Arts District (and its gallery), the West Colfax Community Association, and the eventual new location of its monthly community meetings, and the main office for the Lakewood-West Colfax BID. And that's not all: Once improvements are completed, the building will house several district galleries that are also looking for a more sustainable location, a number of other local nonprofits, civic groups, and neighborhood organizations, and potentially additional creative retail and food uses as well.

Multi-million dollars Improvements coming to West Colfax: And finally—not the least which—is the BID's support for the implementation of the scheduled \$12.5 million of improvement planned for West Colfax between Sheridan and Teller on West Colfax. As the Mayor stated, our overarching goal for the improvements is to make this area of West Colfax Avenue a safer and more beautiful experience for residents, business patrons, pedestrians, and all users and to assist the city in managing the process with the least amount of disruption to local businesses and their patrons. This project,

funded in large part by a major CDOT grant, will be completed in less than 3.5 years and is proposed to include: an evaluation of the best use of the third travel lane, wide-ranging transportation infrastructure and technology to improve safety, more lighting, landscaping, art, and other placemaking elements to buffer sidewalks from vehicles, improvements to sidewalks and accessibility ramps, and enhancements to bus stops with pull-outs

for safer and faster unloading, brighter, more attractive waiting areas; and more directional and informational signs for pedestrians and motorists.

As always, our three West Colfax-based organizations have many balls in the air—but with so much good news in the works (such as the potential for the creators of South Park to invest in our community and revitalize Casa Bonita!), and clearly so much work to still do, we wouldn't have any other way.

The genesis of the transformation that is underway along West Colfax is a tribute to all the citizens who supported

the vision more than 10 years ago and all along the way. Not only did they support the vision, but also they rolled up their sleeves and volunteered to help—whether that was showing up to paint a storefront, planting flowers to add color to Colfax, helping with an art installation on the ArtLine, showing up early to set up tents for a festival, or just helping to pick up trash before the Colfax Marathon to put our best foot forward for a special event—they did the work! Without a supportive community, none of this happens. We need the support to continue the journey and achieve the next stage of the vision. There is more to do. Let's all work together on What's Next for West Colfax!

“

The purchase and renovation of this noteworthy building gives us so much more control of our own destiny. Having this facility will help us better serve our community and help other local nonprofits as well... Our goal is to make this building a must-see arts and culture destination and a vibrant community hub on West Colfax!

- BILL MARINO

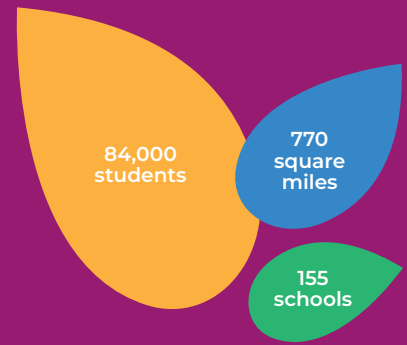
40 WEST ARTS



Elevating Creativity for 10 YEARS

Lakewood's Only State-Certified Creative District
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Inspiring generations
– for over –



70 years

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- Communication
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We Work as a Community

We collaborate with families and communities to ensure all students have supports to be successful while learning and in their lives after high school. This work happens when our leadership, our highly qualified educators, and our dedicated support staff work together in an environment alive with enthusiasm for education.

Exciting Improvements Throughout Our District

In 2018, Jefferson County voters passed mill levy override and bond ballot measures to support operations and improvements around our district. Since then, we have invested in our schools, facilities, programs, and people, transforming our district to ensure we continue our mission to provide high-quality, innovative education opportunities for every Jeffco student. Learn more about all district projects at JeffcoBuilds.org.



Jeffco Generations - See For Yourself

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Arts & Altruism

How 40 West creatives are making a positive impact in their community and beyond

by Tess Emslie

To many who have lived there for a long time, West Colfax conjures images of old neon hotel signs, drive-up motels, dive bars, diners, and cowboys. The longest commercial street in the United States boasts an eclectic culture and history. Although the West Colfax corridor's landscape has shifted over the past decade, many changes are attempting to both preserve the historic integrity of the neighborhood and provide new opportunities for the creative community. Many creative businesses, galleries, and artists who have transitioned out of other Denver neighborhoods due to financial pressures and market forces have found a welcoming home in 40 West Arts District.

40 West Arts is home to craftspeople, artists, educators, creative place makers, and visionaries whose innovations and influence reach far beyond the local neighborhood. In 40 West Studios alone, you can find hand-crafted classical guitars made using 100-year-old methods or contemporary plexiglass fine art pieces inspired by the old west. Local artists are bringing their knowledge and experience to serve on boards or run thriving businesses that serve artists. Just a block east from the 40 West Studios at the Rocky Mountain College of Art + Design (RMCAD), educators and artists are re-imagining arts education with innovative public programming. Through their curiosity and investment in their communities, these local creatives are creating a lasting impact that reaches far beyond West Colfax.

One such creative is classical guitar-maker, Wilson Burnham, whose studio is located in 40 West Studios. Surrounded by pine and cedar trees while growing up in North-Eastern California, he developed an appreciation of

natural resources and a desire to build a guitar at a young age. After studying classical guitar and modern dance, followed by careers in horseshoeing, carpentry, and as a park ranger in nine different national parks, Burnham returned to his first love, the classical guitar.

Having spent nearly two years at 40 West Arts and only five years making guitars full-time, Burnham's guitars are gaining notable



40 West Studios Artist Wilson Burnham strums away on a handcrafted acoustic guitar of his own creation. Photo by: Tess Emslie



This lifesize plexiglass saddle, by Maeve Eichelberger, sits on display at the 40 West Studios. Photo by: Tess Emslie

attention. "It's just something I've always wanted to do because I've been passionate about classical guitar since I was twelve. It's always been there," says Burnham. His guitar-making philosophy draws on his many experiences as a musician and an outdoorsman. To build a guitar from start-to-finish takes about three months total and requires a delicate balance of humidity and patience. This tedious and delicate process incorporates hundred-year-old methods, traditional hand tools, and all-natural ingredients resulting in a healthier and more sustainable process. Each type of wood and finish is carefully selected and informed by tradition to fit the intended sound, aesthetic, or musician.

Burnham's intimate knowledge of the craft, use of traditional methods, and exquisite finished products make his practice unique, but it is his passion for facilitating opportunities for



Photo Courtesy: Maeve Eichberger

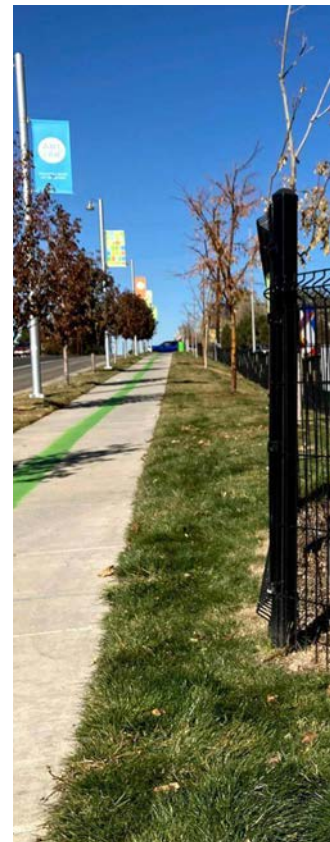
talented young musicians to play his guitars that is particularly inspiring. As well as inviting young

classical musicians to visit his studio for the rare chance to play a concert guitar, Burnham has donated multiple guitars in support of music foundations. His sponsorship includes the Twisted Spruce Music Foundation in Colorado Springs, an organization working to promote collaboration between classical guitarists and composers.

Down the hallway is Maeve Eichelberger, a Colorado artist who grew up on a ranch in Larkspur and is greatly inspired by the outdoors, specifically, the American West. The artist's three-dimensional collages are comprised of carefully layered photographs and etchings on plexiglass. Photographs and shapes are inspired by the big skies, trucks, animals, and ranches of the artist's childhood and the urban surroundings of her life in Denver. Eichelberger is currently creating a large format saddle etched with yucca paint and flowers to send to Rare Gallery, Jackson Hole. Eichelberger's work can also be found in some curious site-specific locations, with artwork etched into plexiglass screens in bars in Denver (Pony Up) and Boulder (Frasca Food and Wine), and more recently, adorning hospital walls in Parker Adventist Hospital. When she is not creating art, Eichelberger is an art educator at RMCAD, Regis University, and Think360, a Colorado organization working to integrate the arts into education.

Eichelberger has been at 40 West Studios for over two years. "I absolutely love it. The camaraderie from the other creatives is inspiring and welcoming. Each of us has a different craft and yet we are constantly learning from one another and supportive of one another's creative endeavors." She is also fond of a herd of friendly dogs, affectionately referred to as the 'Odd Paws'. Eichelberger is looking forward to creating more work for

Sean Doherty sports a colorful smock & hat in his outdoor studio space at the 40 West Studios during a First Friday Art Walk. Photo: Kathryn Zeigler



galleries in Vail and Jackson Hole, where she is currently represented, and for the Coors Western Art Show.

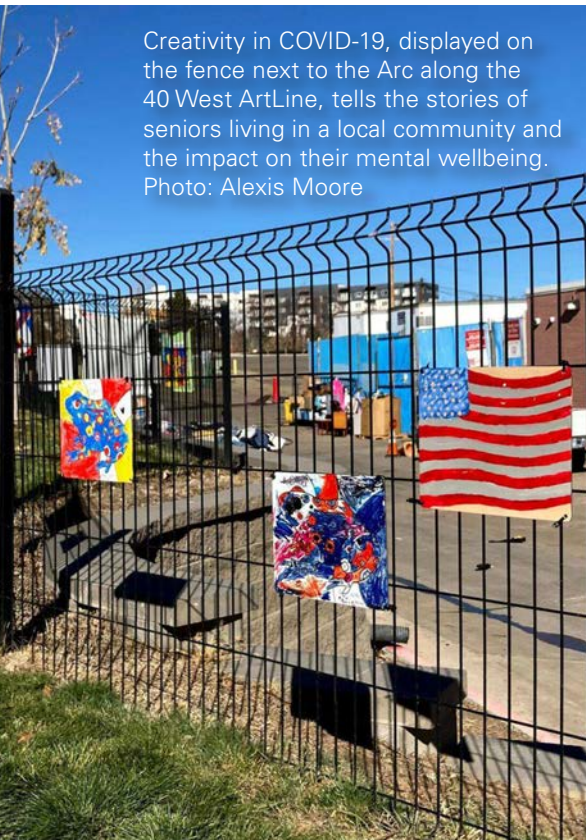
A mainstay at 40 West Studios is Sean Doherty—a longtime advocate of the transformational power of art. Doherty is a Colorado-based artist, sculptor, and teacher working in metal, wood, and paper, typically based on recycled material. His energy and approachable style convey his search for joy and humor in everyday life. Doherty has been a part of art scene in metro Denver for decades, having worked and practiced his up-cycled style of art in Englewood on South Broadway, BuCu West in the Westwood neighborhood, among other venues before coming to 40 West Arts District and taking up residence at 40 West Studios. The shop (and storage area) in which he fabricates his art is affectionately referred to by many as the “Third World” due to all the material and project remnants stored on site. On any given visit to the area, you will see giant 12-foot metal flowers, makeshift robots, and other playful works-in-progress—with a sign that says: ‘Best Field Trip Ever’! That’s a testament to his extensive work with underserved children, which he regularly entertains with his

engaging art classes in which every attendee walks away with a free piece of art. These often come in the form of an upcycled flower, crown, or tiara. “Visiting Sean on site is like going to a theme park and an immersive art experience in one,” explained Bill Marino, 40 West Art board chair who offices in the studios. “If Sean Doherty Art were a streaming video, it would be must-seeTV!”

Doherty, one of the original artists who moved to the studios on Reed Street has seen 40 West Arts evolve. “The vision and support provided by the Lakewood-West Colfax Business Improvement District,” said Doherty, “has made all the difference in world. The financial unpinning ensures the art movement’s sustainability, but the perpetual drive to achieve what’s next in the vision is a constant and tangible force from the BID’s leadership.”

Doherty has been a part of that evolution and vision with art installations at Eiber Elementary (as well as other locations in Lakewood) and an AARP-grant funded collaborative art installation in which residents from a Metro West senior housing community worked with Doherty to complete paint-by-number art kits expressing their feeling about living through a pandemic.

Creativity in COVID-19, displayed on the fence next to the Arc along the 40 West ArtLine, tells the stories of seniors living in a local community and the impact on their mental wellbeing. Photo: Alexis Moore



40 West Arts Board Member & Artist Gary Reed takes a selfie while at work in his home studio. Photo: Gary Reed



The work is on display their on Piece Street along the 40 West ArtLine. That is quintessential Sean Doherty—along with his unassuming air that is apparent through his typical farewell: “Keep a smile!”

Like Eichelberger and Doherty, local artist and fine art printer Gary Reed draws inspiration from the 40 West Arts community. Reed moved from Ohio to Colorado in 1979 to follow the dream of becoming a photojournalist and traveling. Photography is now just one step in the many intricate layers and mediums of Reed’s art practice. Reed’s process is a hybrid of digital and traditional arts, starting with photographs that are then hand-colored and layered using encaustic materials such as beeswax and resin. Reed also supports the practices of local-to-international artists as the general manager for Reed Art & Imaging, now located at 8000 West Colfax in the 1950s vintage Lakewood Theater. “It’s amazing how much beautiful and creative work is being made all around us here locally.”

A veteran of the Denver art scene, Reed has served on numerous boards. Notably, Reed performed the role of Treasurer and Vice President of Denver’s Art District on

Santa Fe for twelve years and witnessed the transformation of a grassroots art community into one of the first certified creative districts in the state. After moving to Lakewood, Reed took a brief hiatus but soon found himself on the board for 40 West Arts District. He wouldn’t have it any other way and is excited about the “energy, creativity and hard work from all of our district members, staff, and current board of directors. The West Colfax Community Association (WCCA), the local business improvement district, and support from Mayor Paul and the City of Lakewood is allowing us to launch some big and exciting plans for growth and to expand our reach through innovative programming and more opportunities for our local artists.” Projects include new murals, sculptures, and fence art, along the 40 West ArtLine, a designated art walk that highlights public art throughout the neighborhood. Among many other locations, Reed’s artwork can be found in the Mint & Serif coffee shop and 40 West Gallery.

In addition to 40 West Arts’ local studios and galleries, creative influencers can be found in the heart of the district on the historic campus of Rocky Mountain College of Art + Design (RMCAD)’s and its Visiting Artist, Scholar, and

Designer (VASD) program. The program, curated and directed by local artist Gretchen Marie Schaefer since 2014, provides a unique opportunity for students and the public to engage directly with leading artists, scholars, and designers.

Past series have each embodied themes such as “Patterns,” “Fictions,” or “The Senses” for events and programming in which visiting creatives provide mentorship and encourage curiosity and conversation. “There is always a great takeaway in every presentation,” said Liz Black, Executive Director for 40 West Arts. “We are grateful to RMCAD for bringing these perspectives. It is a gift to our creativity community.” The VASD’s recent theme, “World Building,” celebrated a decade of programming with guest artists Kevin Beasley, Alisha Wormsley, and Nico Wheadon hosting free public online talks and providing virtual workshops, studio visits, and other events for students.

Despite a year of isolation for many, creatives in 40 West Arts District are finding new ways to connect, explore, innovate, and make a difference. Artists within this community support and inspire not only one another but the greater west metro area and beyond. Their art, businesses, ideas, and conversations are reaching local, national, and even international audiences. As the district re-emerges from the pandemic, local artists and creative venues look forward to welcoming the community back into their spaces for First Fridays and Colfax Art Crawls to share their creativity and their stories.



Above: Kevin Young speaks to the community as part of RMCADs free programming to connect art and the real world. Photo: Amanda Tipton Photography. Below: Andrea Zittle of Third Dune Productions gives a lecture to students during a RMCAD Visiting Artist, Scholar, and Designer lecture. Photos: Rocky Mountain College of Art + Design

Schaefer hosted Project Runway star, Armando Guerra, on campus at RMCAD. Photo: LWCBID





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Past projects at Colorado Mills include this 2019 mural titled Winter Bloom by artist Julia Williams, a.k.a. the Designosaur, which was designed and painted specifically to frame artist Nestor Fedak's flowering sculpture Everbloom. Photo: Katy Zeigler, 40 West Arts

Curated at Colorado Mills

A Partnership between 40 West Arts and Lakewood's Premier Outlet Shopping Destination

By Liz Black

How many people does it take to carry a 300 pound, 12-foot metal cactus into a shopping mall, tilt it into place and bolt it to the ground? The answer is five and artist Greg Wasil's 'Whispering Cactus' can be viewed in Colorado Mills indoor walkway near entry 2, now through Spring of 2022.

Spreading art and creativity throughout Lakewood's West Colfax corridor has always been foundational to the mission of 40 West Arts District. 40 West Arts prides itself on being Lakewood's only Colorado certified creative district and Sarah Vickers, Board Vice

Chair puts it plainly when she states, "we see ourselves as a City-wide amenity. Our mission is to bring artistic experiences to the entire stretch of Lakewood's West Colfax corridor and our vision is to welcome residents from all of Lakewood, Jefferson County and beyond." Sarah further asserts, "40 West Arts is more than a place, it's a movement to celebrate the arts far and wide within Lakewood and the entire West Metro region."

Curated at Colorado Mills is a longstanding partnership between 40 West Arts District and Colorado Mills to bring art, exhibitions,



Artist Greg Wasil's artwork has delighted patrons at Colorado Mills for multiple years with his whimsical, family-friendly sculptures including *Whispering Cactus*, located near Entrance 2. Photo: Wendy Manning, Colorado Mills

has been a passionate supporter of the arts for many years, sponsoring multiple sculpture and mural opportunities, and converting Hallway 4 ½ into an exhibition space with rotating shows. Both 40 West Arts and Colorado Mills are located along Lakewood's historic West Colfax Avenue, linking these two amenities to an iconic and important stretch of road. The Curated at Colorado Mills partnership allows 40 West Arts to further its mission of delivering arts programming throughout the West Colfax corridor, and deepens the connection of arts and economy within the City of Lakewood.

The partnership, which continues into its fifth year in 2022, has yielded seven on-loan sculptures, seven murals, multiple gallery exhibitions and a few laughable moments. In addition to navigating that 12-foot cactus onto a dolly and through the doors of the mall, there was also an incident in 2021 where an artist accidentally spilled an entire bucket of jet black paint onto a hallway floor. The stain was promptly covered with a rug, the art project finished, and new carpet tiles affixed into place. As I reflect on this, I can't help but laugh... you can't make art without a few paint splatters! But in all seriousness, we're grateful for Colorado Mills' deep understanding of how art and commerce intersect, and their commitment to partnering with 40 West Arts to bring artistic elements to the places where people are already gathering, shopping, and doing business."

Patrons to Colorado Mills can look for a new window installation and 3D painted sculptures of hikers going up in the summer of 2021. You can also keep an eye out for 'Whispering Cactus' although most likely, it will be pretty hard to miss.

“

The Mills is a perfect place for an art program because the space is so big. It means lots of room for large sculptures, murals, artworks and installations, with thousands of people visiting each day. This has been an amazing experience for me as an artist.

- GREG WASIL

”

events, and more to Lakewood's premier outlet shopping destination. Colorado Mills is home to over 160 stores and restaurants, with daily visitorship in the thousands. The Mills

THIRTY MINUTES

MADE EASY

By Brittany Hopkins

You've heard it all before...you should sit less and move your body more, drop the sugary beverages and drink plenty of water, switch your chips for a carrot, get outside in the sunshine and smell those roses to stimulate your mind. All wonderful things, however, they can seem daunting if you don't know where to start.

So, if you're looking for a starting point, begin here!

Begin with a 7-day commitment to 30 minutes a day focused on your wellbeing:

- 5 minutes spent on inquiry and self-reflection.
- 5 minutes spent on stillness or meditation.
- 20 minutes spent on mindful movement.

I've got some prompts and ideas for you in the article below.

Morning Inquiry: Self Reflection Practice

Before or shortly after you get out of bed, grab your journal and follow these prompts (5 minutes):

1. Right now, I'm feeling... (Fill in the blanks with any physical/emotional sensations)
2. I am grateful for... (Fill in the blanks with anything from, "having a bed with pillows and blankets" to people or situations in your life.)
3. Today I am open to the possibility of feeling... (Fill in the blank)

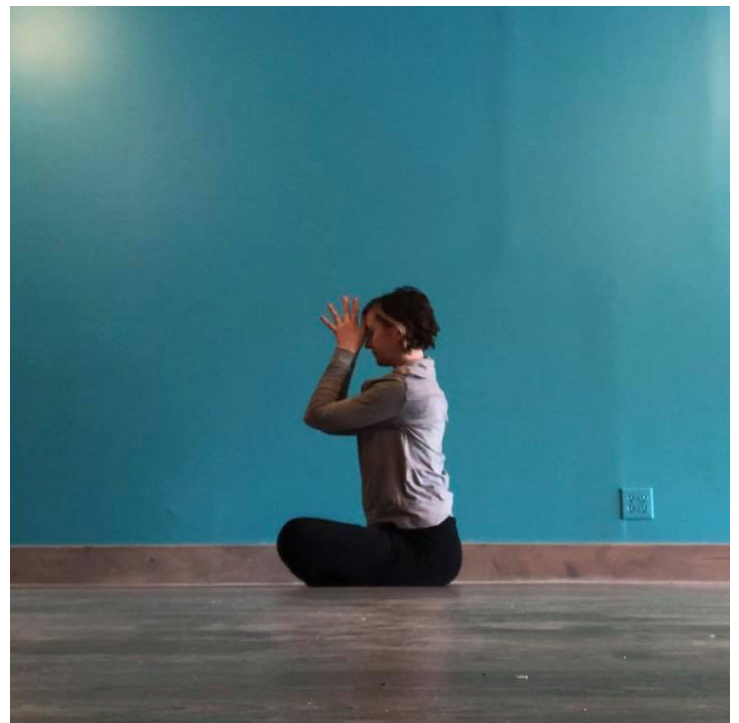
NOTE: Try this not with the feeling you expect to feel or think you should feel, simply what would feel nice if you did. Example: I'm open to the possibility of feeling ease as I move through my day.

Morning Stillness: Meditation Practice

Studies conducted by Brita Hölzel of Harvard Medical School have shown consistent mindful meditation can help support the part of the brain responsible for learning and memory; so let's start the week with 5 minutes of meditation.

To begin, sit yourself upright in a quiet space. You should be comfortable and in a space where you can focus.

Next, pick your meditation type. There are so many guides out there, including apps like Calm or Headspace, that can help with guided meditation. I also offer a free guided meditation course on my website to help you get started. (www.cc360denver.com)



Photos on this spread courtesy of Brittany Hopkins, Container Collective YOGA

All that's left is to press play and begin! Practicing meditation takes time, and patience, but the results can help you feel amazing.

Morning Mindfulness: Movement Practice

To finish your half hour of morning wellness, the last 20 minutes will be spent on physical movement. This is a good time to find a friend to join you and make it a priority in your day.

Walk or jog, head to a rec center near you for a swim, or roll out a yoga mat and try out a free asana practice on YouTube. Whatever you choose to do, getting your muscles moving will help align your physical wellbeing with your mental wellbeing.

Making sure the whole you is taken care of is the main goal of all wellness, and physicality is a cornerstone of maintaining you!

Bonus: Maintaining Awareness

A first step you can take in investing in a healthier, more revitalized you is gaining a greater awareness of your body's relationship

with food. No need to change your diet or the food you consume!

Instead, it may be beneficial for you to record your mood or physical feelings after eating. Are you bloated, energetic, lethargic or feeling fueled? I personally find that I develop canker sores after consuming gluten, a connection I never would have made without staying aware!

If you think it would be helpful, make the effort to take a physical or mental note of how you feel around meal time. This is a great resource to provide to your doctor when discussing the right wellness path forward for YOU.

When it comes to changing our attitudes around wellness, it takes time. Everyone starts somewhere.

You are worth it! You are worth the effort of 30 minutes a day to a healthier and more energized you!

Brittany Hopkins is an E-RYT 500 and 1,200-hour Certified Baptiste Yoga Instructor. She is an active member of 40 West Arts, WCCA and the owner of Container Collective Yoga (est. 2014) in Lakewood, CO.

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Issue 7



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Think Ink: West Colfax and the Art of Tattoos

By Liz Black

West Colfax Avenue has long been a haven for tattoo enthusiasts. Within 5 miles of the 40 West Arts core, no fewer than 18 shops can be counted... so, if you're getting inked, head West my friend (just West of downtown Denver, that is).

Colfax and tattooing go hand in hand for a lot of reasons. Both are cool, and somewhat mysterious to people new to the game—but that's West Colfax! They're both unique and can be experienced in a multitude of ways. And let's be honest, both were seen as a little dark and somewhat scandalous until recently (Colfax and tattoos, we feel bad for labeling you as 'gritty' and saying "back in the day our mothers would never let us near you!" Our apologies—but times have changed).

In recent years, however, tattooing has been recognized as the art form that it is. Come on oil painters, imagine trying to get the right shading on an unsteady freckled canvas that simultaneously gives you its life story while telling you to go a little faster. Easy, I think not! Colfax and tattoos also share transportation as a critical component of their histories. Colfax Avenue has always been a primary route from Denver to the mountains, even as far back as the mid 1800's during the Gold Rush period, when Colfax was rutted dirt cart path was called the "Golden Road."

Tattooing also has a rich, and even longer history that dates back thousands of years including evidence found in ancient Egypt, China, Mongolia, Sudan, Russia, and the Philippines, among others. Travel was a key component of how tattooing made it to the United States. Indigenous populations, those in the Polynesian Islands, introduced Western voyagers to the art around the 1700's and soon sailors were inking themselves and making their way back to the states. So, I guess you can say that both tattoos and Colfax Avenue have travel embedded in their United States

roots (or *routes*, get it). Here's to the history of these incredibly unique Lakewood creative venues and to making their legacy a celebrated and indelible mark (or line drawing or arm sleeve) along Lakewood's West Colfax corridor. Certainly, in the case of that tattoo, it will almost undoubtedly be permanent.

It's also essential to us to feature the people and places doing the real work.



Illustration by
Elle Powell

Check out these three local tattoo shops, artists, and their thoughts on the art of the tattoo.

Creature Arcade Tattoo & Illustration

Ben Theisen, Owner & Tattoo Artist
creaturearcade.com

Why did you choose Lakewood's West Colfax corridor to open a tattoo shop?

West Colfax holds a special place for us. When we first heard about a creative community being assembled in this spot we knew we wanted to be a part of what was happening. It didn't happen right away, but we are beyond stoked to have finally made it here.

What's the hardest thing about running a tattoo shop?

I think with any creative business it's the business side. We would much rather be building, painting, tattooing, or creating something as opposed to the serious stuff.

Tattooed heart with a huge 'Mom' in the middle. Recommend or warn against?

Whenever we have a client who says, 'my mom's going to be so mad' our response is, get a mom heart. Who could really be mad to be immortalized as the number one on your body?

I'm out with my friends and on a whim, I decide I want my first tattoo. Should I go for it or wait a few days to make sure?

Getting a tattoo on a whim can be some of your favorite tattoos and some of your most regretted; none of us can say which. With that said, some of our favorite pieces were on a whim. Palm tree to celebrate a California trip, poker chip to celebrate you and your friends in Vegas, those can be awesome reminders for you, a permanent souvenir of an amazing memory.

Fallen Owl Tattoo

Adam Rose, Owner & Tattoo Artist
fallenowltattoo.com

What's the hardest thing about running a tattoo shop?

Tattooing has changed drastically over the years. Like any other business we need to be constantly evolving to keep up. Social media didn't exist when I started tattooing. Street shops where you go in and pick #6 off the wall have been replaced with custom shops where all designs are drawn specifically for each client. We are seeing a lot more people with fine arts degrees entering the tattoo industry.

What's one of the weirdest requests you've ever gotten for a tattoo?

One of our favorite clients was an 86-year-old woman coming in for her first tattoo. Assisted living brought her in. When asked why she was getting her first tattoo at 86 she replied, "My husband and son didn't like them... they're both dead. Now, I can do whatever the hell I like."

What should people know prior to getting their first tattoo?

We do an extensive consultation with clients to make sure we get the client exactly what they want. Not everything that looks good on paper translates to skin. As artists we want to work, but if we are saying "no" to something, it's because we know it's a bad idea. (Hint: Take tattoo artist's advice!)

Significant other's name. Recommend or warn against?

Names are the kiss of death; we cover them up all day long.

Solstice Ink

Shawn Denoyer, Owner & Tattoo Artist
solsticeink.com

Why did you choose Lakewood's West Colfax corridor to open a tattoo shop?

Long before I even had a thought of owning a business, I always wanted to work in the bicycle shop Campus Cycles where I purchased my very 1st bicycle! Now my business is in that building!

What's trending in tattoos right now?

Simple line work as well as watercolor and anime.

How many tattoos do you have in total?

I am pretty much one back-to-back tattoo! Last I counted I had over 600 hours of tattoo work on my body. I lost count of exactly how many—let's just say: a lot!

What's one of the weirdest requests you've ever gotten for a tattoo?

The weirdest? A man once wanted a pork chop on the inside of his arm ... I'd say that's pretty weird!

Here's to the art of ink and to the growth and momentum that tattoos and West Colfax have seen in recent years. In fact, going to West Colfax and getting a tattoo are one-in-the-same. Once you've done it, you'll leave with an awesome story and a lifelong memory ... and maybe a funky design (like a porkchop) cemented on your arm.



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See our upcoming events at rmcad.edu/events

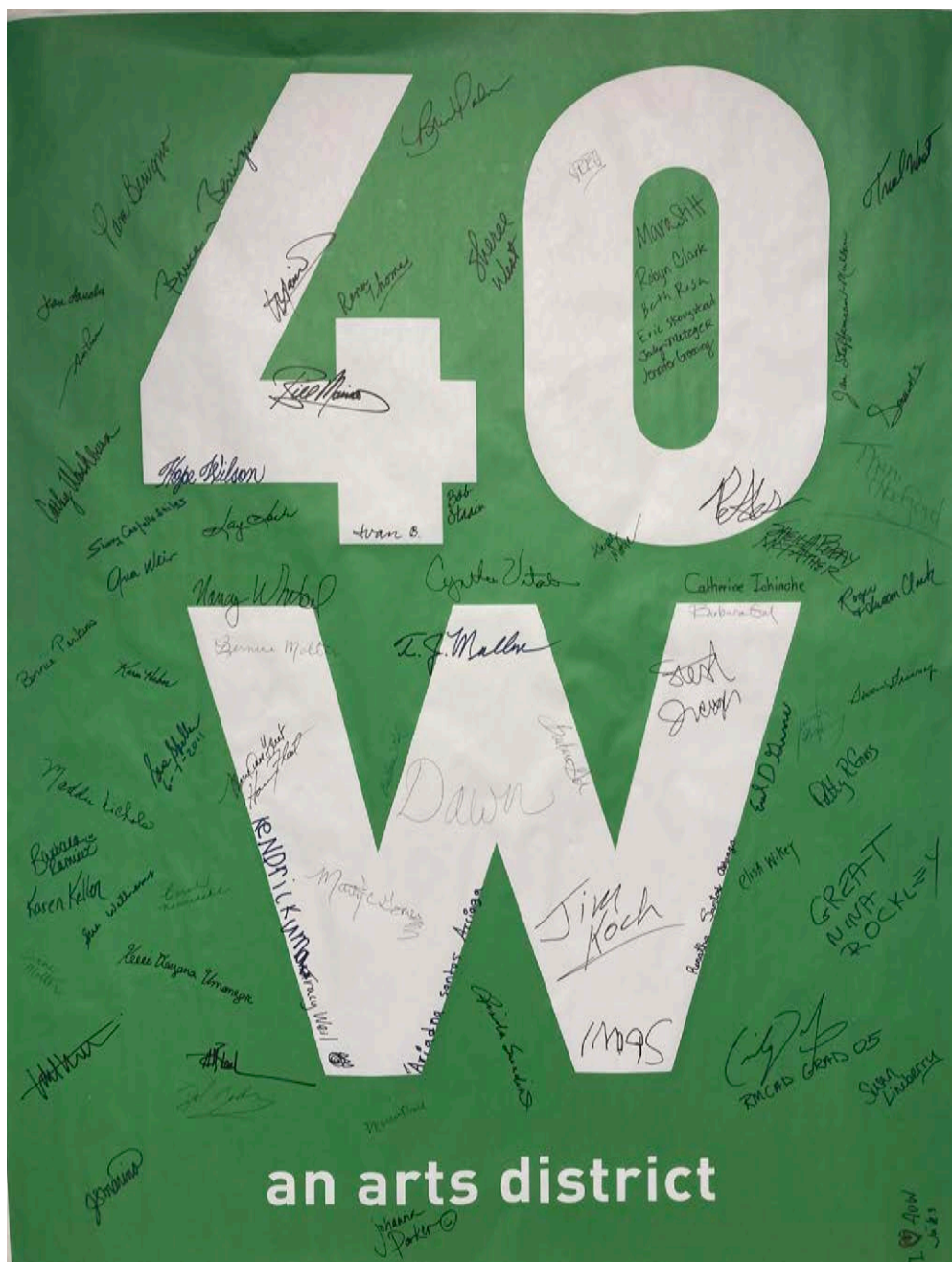
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Illustrative Design	+	+
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Photography	+	+

The poster to the right was presented to the community in June 2011 at the launch of 40 West Arts District. It was signed by those who became known as 40 West Champions. As referenced in the celebratory photo essay in this issue, these volunteers were not only followers of the West Colfax art movement—they were the believers and doers that made it happen! This Final Stop is tribute to all of them—and the many others that followed in their footsteps.



To all 40 West Champions, Past, Present, and Future:
 May we have the Courage to keep Creating.
 May we continue to celebrate the Spark of the Divine within us,
 That soul-touching, spirit-lifting, curiosity-inspiring energy of the Arts
 And may we continue to do so—Together!
 Together—we can Change the World.

- Bill Marino

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- 5 **Wheat Ridge**
7495 W 29th Ave | Wheat Ridge, CO 80033

