

# American Education Week #aew2015

**Monday, November 16: Kickoff Day** Schools will celebrate excellence in education all week!

**Tuesday, November 17: Parents Day** Schools will invite parents into the classroom for a firsthand look at what the school day is like for their children. Thank a parent for their activism!

**Wednesday, November 18: Education Support Professionals Day** Education Support Professionals keep schools running and students safe, healthy and ready to learn. Check out our website for videos!

**Thursday, November 20: Educator for a Day** Invite your community to experience the day as educators and experience the challenges of teaching and the fulfilling the needs of all students.

**Friday, November 21: Substitute Educators Day** Substitute educators play a vital role in the maintenance and continuity of daily education. Take a moment and thank your subs!

## CSEA Fall Leadership Summit

### Attention Building Reps and Elected CSEA Leaders!

It's time for our Fall Leadership Summit! Are you interested in getting more involved and becoming a rep? Give Vicki at the CSEA office a call! **Then, join us at our Leadership Summit!**

**When:** Saturday, November 21  
10:00 A.M. -1 P.M

**Where:** JCEA—1447 Nelson Street  
Lakewood, 80215

Please RSVP.  
Lunch will be served.

**Details on our website or scan the QR code:**



next  
issue:

Get to know your  
Sub-Association!

## Welcome new Jeffco Board of Education!

### **Brad Rupert – District 1**

Brad has dedicated nearly twenty years to community service in northern Jefferson County. Brad's two children graduated from Ralston Valley High School. Brad earned his undergraduate degree from Colorado State University and earned an MBA and law degree from the University of Colorado at Boulder.

### **Susan Harmon – District 2**

Susan moved to Jefferson County in 1997 to start her family with her husband, Larry. They have two children who attend their neighborhood public schools, Dunstan Middle School and Rooney Ranch Elementary. Susan has been practicing law for 22 years. She earned her undergraduate degree from the University of Colorado at Boulder and her law degree from the Santa Clara University School of Law.

### **Ali Lasell – District 3**

Ali has spent 25 years teaching in Adams County District 12. Ali and her husband, John, have two boys who attend Maple Grove Elementary. She is an active member of the Maple Grove PTA and accountability committee. Ali earned her undergraduate degree in elementary education from Iowa State University, a master's degree in curriculum and instruction from the University of Colorado at Boulder, and her principal's license from the University of Denver.

### **Amanda Stevens – District 4**

Amanda was born and raised in Lakewood, and attended Bear Creek High School. Amanda taught for eight years in Chicago, Illinois and in Sheridan, Colorado. Amanda also earned a master's degree in education. She has spent her years since leaving the classroom serving as chair of her school's accountability team, a member of Jeffco's Choice and Strategic Planning Advisory Committees, a Great Education Colorado volunteer, and a volunteer tutor at a women's shelter. She moved back to Jeffco to raise her family with her husband, Gene. They have two children who attend Kendrick Lakes Elementary.

### **Ron Mitchell – District 5**

Ron spent 40 years working for Jeffco Public Schools, serving as a principal of two high schools, and also working in central administration. Ron graduated from Arvada High School and holds a master's degree in School Administration.



Classified School Employees Association

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Stay in Touch!  
Give CSEA your Contact Info!  
<http://bit.do/jcsea>



WHAT'S INSIDE:



Read about a few of the people who contributed to a victory for Jeffco and get to know a school superhero.  
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Get involved and attend our leadership summit. Welcome new School Board Members  
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To educate, unify and advocate  
for the Education Support Professionals of Jeffco Public Schools

# THE classified VIEWPOINT

## Winning with Relationships: My Election 2015 Experience

*Annie Bitsie, Para at Rooney Ranch Elementary*

It's been a week since the School Board Recall and Election and many of us are rediscovering normal every day life, no more phone banking, door knocking, house parties, delivering signs or starting up conversations about the importance of this election with the person next to us in the grocery store line.

I have to admit, three and a half years ago I didn't give much thought to our school board. But after the 2013 election, I started attending board meetings and was angered and appalled at what I witnessed. After each meeting I left feeling like I had just been in some bizarre episode of the Twilight Zone. I couldn't get over the level of disrespect towards our district employees, our parents, students and community members. It's important to me to have our voices as employees heard and valued and I did not see that happening either. The lack of transparency and accountability to the community was just as frustrating. I could see how decisions that were being made at the board table were not good for kids or for district employees.

Reflecting, I couldn't help but think, if we had just worked harder we would never be in the mess we're in now. I was no longer going to be one to sit on the couch and moan and groan about the discord that was happening, or be one to say "I'm too busy." It was time to take action.

I started as a Para Educator in 2007 and this is pretty much my dream job. In eight plus years there has not been one day that I didn't wake up and look forward to going to work. I love my school, my coworkers and the children I work with. Our work as Classified Employees is



Annie Bitsie with teacher Lisa Lee

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## CSEA Organizing Committee: Building A Culture of Success!

The CSEA Organizing Committee has played a key role in helping our Association build our collective strength and involve our members and our community in our work. We have taken a unified message to multiple audiences, gathered input, and asked our members to help. We have been able to educate the community, elected officials, and our coworkers about who we are and what we do: **We are caring professionals who keep our students safe, healthy, and engaged!**

Politics is key when you are a public employee. The people who handle the money have tremendous power and are elected by community members like us. We on the Organizing Committee got active in politics simply because there is no other option.

We also recently applied for a grant from NEA and hired two organizing interns to work part-time during the fall. They did an amazing job! Read both of their stories in this issue of the Viewpoint.



important. It matters to every single student. If things were going to change then we were going to have to help and make it happen.

CSEA, Jeffco United and other organizations like Support Jeffco Kids offered many opportunities for us to get involved in and I took advantage of as many as

## A CSEA ORGANIZING INTERN: My 8-week journey with CSEA

Ray Lopez, CSEA Organizing Intern

I'm a newer employee in Jeffco, and I'm one of two district glaziers. We are the people who handle all district glass, which is important to the safety of our students. I got involved with CSEA almost right away as part of the Organizing Committee.

I started an organizing internship with CSEA in September. I have spent the majority of my working life working in organized labor, but I was never an active member prior to CSEA. At times I was inactive for valid reasons, and other times inactive with bad excuses.

I really had no idea what I was getting into when I got hired as an Organizing Intern with CSEA. It turned out to be quite a ride. I did school visits and made calls to members to hear from you all on important issues. I helped recruit CSEA members to walk and knock to inform and encourage Jeffco residents to vote. I also walked

and knocked the 7 Saturdays prior to the election.

It was encouraging and eye opening to experience how the Jeffco community (teachers, retired teachers, parents, retired veterans, concerned citizens and education support professionals like us) rallied around a worthy cause. I'm still in of awe of the overwhelming victory that was produced through the hard work of these people.

However, we all need to realize that the work is not done. We need to regain what so many long time employees have lost the last few years: respect, vali-



Organizers Ray Lopez and Bil Valdez

ation as professionals in your respective fields, and last but not least, compensation. Plus, there's another election in just two years.

Please, take some time to investigate why CSEA was mentioned in a short list of organizations who contributed to the success of this election, to change education, not just locally but nationwide. It was a privilege to work for you and this worthy cause!

## School Superhero: Custodian's priority: student safety and health

Derek Lehmkuhl is a self-described "clean freak." "Ever since I was little I liked everything really clean, organized, and secure." Derek brings these qualities and more to his job as a night custodian at Elk Creek Elementary

School in Conifer. "I have nearly ten years in the district along with extensive experience in the private industry and I can tell you absolutely that making the school tip top and secure for these great little kids are my two top priorities every day, year round," says Derek. "The students, staff, and

community all know me on a personal basis, of which cannot be replicated by any corporation I can think of. I've come to realize that the Union ultimately keeps all of us happy, and as a happy employee I am ten times more effective and responsible than a low wage, no benefits worker.



New BOE member Ron Mitchell with Derek Lehmkuhl at CSEA Barbecue

Ultimately, this helps the kids, and that's how I sleep at night."

Thanks, Derek, for making students your priority!

## Retired Member Returns to help CSEA

Bil Valdez, CSEA Organizing Intern

I have been asked to reflect back on the last 8 weeks that I have spent with CSEA and the work I have done. The first thing that comes to mind is the amazing ensemble of people I have met and worked with. Granted, I have know some of them for many years having been a part of Jeffco and CSEA for my entire career of more than 25 years. I retired from custodial services last May and when I had a opportunity to return to CSEA and help out I couldn't pass it up. I still believe in the work that this organization is doing and it is important that you all know the value CSEA volunteers have for the ESP's who work so hard to provide the best education of our Jeffco students. I have seen people work 20- 40 hrs a week at their regular jobs and then volunteer another 20 hrs a week to stand up and represent on behalf of all classified employees: members and non-members alike.

Your CSEA representatives and coworkers have been out knocking on hundreds of doors, passing out stacks of flyers, putting boots on the boule-

vard, and yes I admit we made those awful phone calls that we all hate to get. But look at the results and ask yourself, "If it weren't for those people going out and reaching beyond their normal daily lives, would the message have been as clear and loud as it was on election night this year?" We all heard the taunts of the former school board majority claiming that they were doing the job of education reform that the community overwhelmingly elected them to do. Well that was then and this is now. YOUR voice made a difference. Thank you everyone who voted yes!

I would like to shout a word of thanks to each and everyone of you who stood up, who took that challenge and who gave of their own time to be a part of a stronger and more positive circle of influence, to the single individuals that set out on their own and bonded together in the end as a unified Jeffco community. It was a great win to be part of!

## Jeffco Employee Assistance Program: A great resource for all of us!

Steve Gaskin, Bus Driver, JCTA President

I'm often telling folks my personal EAP story because I think we miss out on this fabulous resource due to misconceptions. It's easy to think we should call them when we've hit bottom in our lives and it's the last resort. That's true but incomplete. I heard they helped with career planning, or specifically interview coaching, so I made a date.

The session was loaded with more tools, tips and personal guidance than I could even use. The best outcome was it worked really well. If you

want to sharpen focus on a goal, get along with challenging coworkers or anything you're leaning into or maybe moving away from, run it by the outstanding EAP staff. You won't be sorry!

Jeffco EAP offers a variety of services. Contact EAP at 303-982-0377.

Member Editor:  
Steve Gaskin, JCTA

CSEA welcomes your comments,  
suggestions and article submissions.

“Although the world is full of suffering, it is also full of the overcoming of it.”

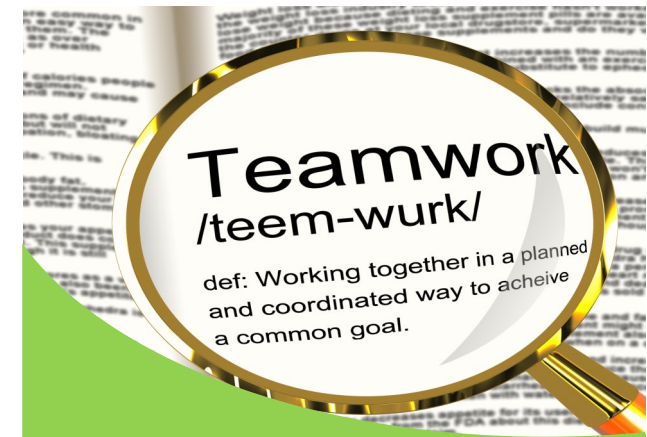
Helen Keller

possible. I've made such wonderful connections and friendships with other CSEA and JCEA members as well as parents and others in the community. This experience has strengthened our community in ways I never thought possible and I feel blessed to have been a part of this action that has us on our way to moving this school district forward in a positive direction for our students and our schools.

I'm honored to have met so many individuals who value what's best for our students, our schools and employees. It was great, working alongside these folks, knowing our work was making a difference.

If you haven't already, I encourage you to get involved in the future in whatever way that works for you. We can sit back for a moment and enjoy what we've accomplished, but the work of advocating for our students and employees as well as educating our community will continue.

We are Jeffco!



Celebrate  
National ESP Day!  
Wednesday, November 18

Rebecca Stonebraker,  
Adams Food Service Mgr,  
JSCSFA Vice President

Education Support Professionals are the backbone of our schools. The day starts with the transportation department. Mechanics keep the buses safe, and our drivers and assistants get kids to school on time. Students then come to a clean, welcoming learning environment thanks to the Custodial and Maintenance Departments who work behind the scenes keeping our building running. Students and parents are greeted by the smiling faces of your office staff and our amazing campus supervisors.

Paraprofessionals and Paraeducators are with students daily providing teachers with extra classroom help. The Food Service Department makes sure students are provided a healthy meal for the day—for many students, this is only whole meal they will receive for the day. Our clinic aides take care of much more than bumps and bruises, and we have tutors, notetakers, and interpreters, providing extra help and a lot of heart to their students. There are a whole range of other behind the scenes staff, keeping our copy machines and computers running, our test materials ready, our budgets correct, and our paychecks on time. There are over 150 job classifications in total!

These jobs are all filled by individuals who love students and perform great deeds daily. Please take this day to recognize all of your coworkers who are sometimes forgotten!