

# PLATT PARK *Post*

The Official Newsletter of  
Platt Park People's Association  
January/February 2023  
[www.3pa.org](http://www.3pa.org)



## District 7 City Council Candidate Forum

by Jennifer Beason, 3PA President

3PA is collaborating with seven other neighborhood associations and the Broadway Merchants Association on a forum for candidates in City Council District 7. The forum will be held Wednesday, February 8 at 6:30 p.m. at Godsman Elementary, [2120 W. Arkansas Ave.](http://www.3pa.org)

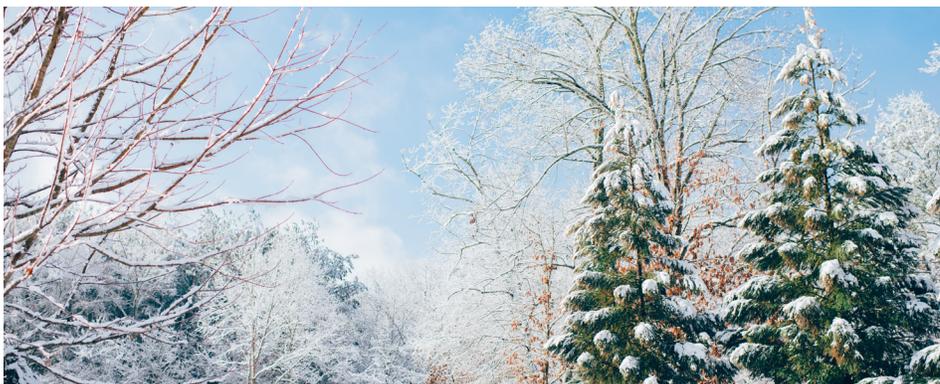
If you would like to attend the actual event or participate virtually, please click on the appropriate link below. Please note, there is no cost or ticket required to attend. The Eventbrite links below are used to gauge needs for attendance and participation.

Yes, I plan to attend this event in person: [CLICK HERE](https://www.eventbrite.com/e/in-person-attendance-for-denver-council-district-7-forum-tickets-508020782837).  
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Current District 7 councilmember Jolon Clark said he has decided to pursue other life goals and will not seek reelection.

The Fair Elections Fund Act was passed in 2018. Donations of \$50 or less are matched at a ratio of 9-to-1 for candidates who agree to raise money in lower amounts and take contributions only from individuals and small donor committees. Participating candidates must participate in community sponsored debates, such as the February 8 forum.



The Platt Park People's Association, a city of Denver Registered Neighborhood Organization, serves more than 3,000 homes and businesses in the neighborhood bounded by Broadway on the West, Downing on the East, I-25 on the North and Evans on the South. 3PA membership is open to all neighbors and business owners who live and own property within these boundaries. Have a voice in your neighborhood and with the city: Join 3PA.

Check out our website. Stay informed, learn about upcoming events, and more!

[www.3pa.org](http://www.3pa.org)

For all 3PA and Platt Park Post communications email: [Board@3PA.org](mailto:Board@3PA.org)

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### This Month's Contributors:

Jolon Clark  
Kit Eschner  
Jen Grauer  
Melina Hodzic  
Ingrid Hoff  
Nia Jakubowski  
Greg Pulliam  
Tom Snyder  
Elizabeth Walters

# Neighborhood Notes

A year ago, my snow shovel had a fine layer of dust and cobwebs as snowfall seemed rare around here. Not so this year. Snow from early December is still hanging around my yard in February! Saw a desperate fellow out with a giant pickaxe attacking what used to be his north-facing sidewalk, which was quickly becoming the foundation for the next ice age. The current ice ruts in my alley make driving it akin to running a bobsled course. Where are we, Minnesota?

Well, if all that snow shoveling makes you thirsty then I've got good news for you, Platt Park is now home to its fourth microbrewery. **Public Offering Brewing Company**, 1736 S. Broadway, recently opened its doors to the public.



Owner Cody Higginbottom, a West Washington Park resident, has been honing his craft for over ten years,

most recently working at Station 26 Brewing Company in Park Hill. The name Public Offering is a nod partially to Cody's background in investment banking but is also intended to reflect his desire for the space and feel of the brewery to bring people into the whole "Public" brewing experience. The large room (a former firehouse oh so long ago) with barrel ceilings is very warm and open. Guests are encouraged to wander around to view the beer-making process from beginning to end. There is also a 2,000-square-foot patio that when warmer weather arrives will be a perfect space to enjoy a cold brew.

The beers initially have been focused a bit towards hoppy, IPA-style beers but Cody intends to explore a full range of crisp, malty, roasted, fruity, and tart style brews. He and the staff welcome guest input on what should be brewed next. Cody has partnered with various food trucks to help quell the munchies as needed. The brewery is open Tuesday through Sunday with varying hours. Check them out at [publicofferingbrewing.com](http://publicofferingbrewing.com).

Other breweries in Platt Park include: [Platt Park Brewing Co.](http://Platt Park Brewing Co.),

1875 S Pearl St.; [Grandma's House](http://Grandma's House), 1710 S. Broadway; [Dos Luces Brewery](http://Dos Luces Brewery), 1236 S. Broadway; and Ratio Beerworks, 2030 S. Cherokee St. Plus, don't forget [Denver Beer Company](http://Denver Beer Company) in Rosedale at 2425 S. Downing St.

The lady who has cut my hair for the past decade up and retired on me forcing me to look anew for someone to tend to my shaggy locks. It was with perfect timing then that **Blank Barbers** opened its new location January 2 at 1895 S. Pearl Street in the former home of Schumacher Accounting Service.



Blank's original and still-existing location is in Cherry Creek but the owners wanted to expand. The old Schumacher space was the perfect fit and has been completely remodeled taking on the look of...well, a trendy, cool barber shop complete with turning barbershop pole and spinning some vinyl records for your listening pleasure. The shop offers services ranging from traditional haircuts and fades to curly cuts, beard trims, facials, and scalp massages. Carlos, who has been cutting hair for 15 years, hooked me up with a fade which my wife enthusiastically approved — what more can I say? For more information or to schedule an appointment, go to [blankbarbers.com](http://blankbarbers.com).

Gone! Well almost. The 7-Eleven on the corner of East Louisiana Ave. and South Pearl St. saw the boards going up on the windows and the dumpster landing out front at the end of 2022, hailing yet another wrecking ball and the "fence of death" coming sometime soon.

While not anti-7-Elevens, I've not ever been a fan of that particular spot. Always felt out of the character of the neighborhood with its parking lot and all — just not the Platt Park vibe. The great question of course is what will take its place. The spot is zoned U-MS-5 which allows for a five-story building with some sort of commercial space on the ground floor. The building housing Nixon's Coffee House down the street is a perfect example of that and is probably a good example of what is to come.

# Neighborhood Notes, *cont.*

While we're at it, the plywood boards that also went up on the **old Hanson's building** across the street are meaning exactly nothing as far as I can tell or have discovered to date. That zoning is similar to the 7-Eleven lot but only allows a three-story building (U-MS-3), which follows the step-down approach of building height designed into the Denver building code. My not-too-particularly brilliant prediction is that building will eventually come down as well and a new structure that will utilize the large lot footprint will take its place. All this raises parking questions but that discussion is for another day. Stay tuned.

If you've ever traveled much around the world then you've experienced local snacks that look familiar but seem to come in crazy flavors — thinking dill pickle flavored Lay's Potato Chips in Canada, Garlic Shrimp Doritos in Taiwan, or Skittles Chews (Skittles without the shells) in the UK, to name a few. Well, if your snack cravings have an international flare, then your new favorite store is soon to be, **It's a Bodega** located at 1242 S. Broadway.



Owner KC Christian became a bit of a worldwide snack foodie during various travels and the interest eventually grew into his first retail shop downtown and now one in Platt Park. In a Denverite.com article, Christian said, "People love

their junk food. Everyone loves trying new products, they love coming in and discovering new things or finding things they haven't seen in years." For a more complete list of offerings as well as operating hours, visit [Itsabodega.com](https://itsabodega.com).

And lastly, if you are a whiskey lover than you likely know that in addition to the aforementioned microbreweries in our hood, we are also home to two distilleries both over on our westerly side on South Acoma Street.

An advertisement for Tom &amp; Denise Snyder, Realtors. It features a large photo of the couple smiling. To the left of the couple are three smaller images: a modern kitchen, a brick house, and a "SOLD" sign for a property. Text on the right says "Your Platt Park Specialist since 2004". At the bottom, it says "Helping You Home Tom &amp; Denise Snyder 303.877.3097" and includes the Snyder Realty Team logo.

**Laws Whiskey House** at 1420 S. Acoma St. has been distilling local craft whiskey since 2011 and its products can easily be found around town and the state attesting to its success. Owing to its popularity, Laws is undergoing a major expansion to be completed in 2023. The new expansion will include a much larger tasting room with full bar, a high-end cocktail program, as well as expansion of its whiskey education space. Visit [lawsshiskeyhouse.com](https://lawsshiskeyhouse.com) for more information and updates.

The other distillery is [Bear Creek Distillery](https://bearcreekdistillery.com), 1879 S. Acoma Street.

That's it from my desk. The next issue should bring spring flowers and warmer days. Hope your ice melts and you can get out and enjoy some of the winter beauty of our little corner of the world.

**See you around the neighborhood,**

*Tom Snyder*



# District 7 update

by Jolon Clark, Lucky District 7 Councilmember

Hi Neighbors!

Happy New Year neighbors! New year, new goals. The city is committed to bold climate action and below are a few programs that will help our community reach our goals. We all have a role to play in climate action and reducing our impact.

## Expanded Waste Services

Denver is well behind the national average in the amount we recycle and compost and 2023 is our year to change. Currently, Denver only diverts 26 percent of our waste to a recycling or compost center. With the new expanded waste services roll out, households will now have weekly recycling and compost, cutting what we send to the landfill in half and helping reach our climate action goals.

In January, Solid Waste began weekly recycling collection service. Quarterly billing begins January through March, with customers charged a monthly fee ranging from \$9 to \$21 based on the size of their trash cart. Rebate applications are available for eligible residents who need financial assistance.

Starting in the summer, the city will expand its weekly compost collection. If you fill up your trash cart every week, we recommend you wait for your compost service to begin before you downsize. If you always have extra room in your trash cart, you may want to request a smaller size now through [pocketgov.com](https://pocketgov.com) or by calling 311.

Before invoices are sent out, customers will receive their login information for our new customer portal, Denver Utilities Online. More information including frequently asked questions is available at [www.denvergov.org/expandedcollection](https://www.denvergov.org/expandedcollection).

## Climate Action Rebates

Save money on gas and car maintenance by riding an electric bike! Denver residents can save \$300 off the price of an e-bike, and residents who qualify for the income-qualified rebate can save up to \$1,200 off the price of an e-bike. The first release date for 2023 was January 31 and we expected rebate vouchers to be taken within a few minutes! The next release date is set for Tuesday, March 28. Learn more at [www.denvergov.org/ebike](https://www.denvergov.org/ebike).

Get help to make the switch to electricity! Stack Denver's Climate Action Rebates with Xcel Energy's electrification

*Continued on page 7*

# From food trash to food treasure

*Editor's Note: Our newest contributor is Nia Jakubowski, who is in the ninth grade at South High School, where she is on the volleyball team. She spent the last couple summers backpacking and is interested in health sciences.*

By Nia Jakubowski

This past June, the Denver City Council changed the fee structure for garbage pick up, recycling, and composting. Starting in 2023, Denver residents living in houses will pay for garbage pick-up, but recycling and composting will be covered by the city.

Additionally, Denver voters chose to extend the recycling and composting to apartment buildings, business and restaurants. Also, the council passed Ordinance 306, which requires businesses and apartment complexes to offer recycling and composting.

Despite strong support for composting, there are those who don't want that requirement. Change is not always easy and can take time. I want to share some information about composting that I have learned.

Each summer, we continue to see record-breaking temperatures. It can be seen around the world and here in the U.S. Between 2001 and 2020 Missouri farmers received \$4.9 billion in crop insurance payouts. Insurance companies are acknowledging the climate as the culprit of the lost crops. Right here in Colorado, the risk of fires has increased because the dry heat dries out the forests resulting in less and less precipitation. Last December, the Marshall Fire in Boulder County destroyed over 1,000 homes and damaged almost 150 more, worth over \$500 million. The mountain towns are worried about their local economies given the increasing temperatures and the constant concern of drought.

The increased amount of carbon dioxide in the environment has contributed to more recurrent and extreme natural disasters. Originally, plants and oceans were able to absorb the carbon being produced in the environment. However, with heightened carbon dioxide emissions, plants and oceans are unable to absorb all carbon dioxide being produced in the environment. The excess carbon dioxide being released travels into the atmosphere creat-

*Continued on next page*

*“Food trash to treasure” continued from page 4*

ing a greenhouse effect trapping in heat. While carbon dioxide is much more prevalent in the atmosphere, methane is 20 times more efficient at trapping heat. The ability to reduce methane is crucial in slowing down the heating of the earth, and lowering the chances of lethal and costly fires. It is also one of the easiest things a person of any age can do.

Municipal solid waste landfills are the third biggest contributor of methane in the environment. As organic matter, or our food waste, decomposes in landfills, methane is created and released.

What is methane? Methane is a chemical compound naturally occurring, usually below the seafloor. It is one the three major gasses trapping heat in the atmosphere causing an increase in the earth’s average temperatures. Methane can be found in wetlands, emissions and landfills. Humans are creating additional methane that does not have to be created, and it is a contributing factor in forest fires, and, consequently, insurance premiums and payouts.

Composting our organic waste drastically reduces the amount of methane emitted from landfills and also improves our soil conditions, reducing the amount of water needed for growing. It’s a win-win.

Initially, I knew very little about Denver’s composting program or the total benefits of composting in general. My family had a “backyard compost” consisting of grass cuttings and raw veggie and fruit scraps. Nevertheless, we did not have the rest of our food waste composted.

I learned that our landfills are made up of 50 percent organic waste. Organic waste is anything that originates from a living thing — be it a plant or animal or any type of food (including cooked food), but also paper, cardboard, etc. After organic matter is composed, they begin to decompose.

Landfills do not provide any oxygen to the waste. When organic matter breaks down without the presence of oxygen, methane develops. The reason why methane does not develop in backyard composting is because decomposition occurs in the presence of oxygen.

We can reduce methane emissions — and the chances of costly payouts and tragic fires — by diverting organic waste from landfills. Instead of throwing our

food trash in the city’s black garbage bin, throw it in the city’s green compost bin. Backyard composting really can only take leaves, grass cuttings, raw fruits and vegetables, which limits its ability to reduce methane in measurable amounts.

Thanks to North America’s largest aerobic digester, Denver can take everything the backyard compost can take plus, cooked food, with or without sauce or dressing, meat with or without marinade, bones, fish, dairy, nuts, yard debris, and compostable take-out containers, including the greasy pizza boxes. Aerobic digesters break down organic waste using microorganisms and oxygen. The end product of the process is biogas, which is a methane-rich gas. The biogas is cleaned, and taken to a combined heat and power (CHP) unit, where it is used to generate renewable energy.

What is left, or the byproduct, is compost. Compost is technically decayed organic material that is used as fertilizer. When added to soil, it adds moisture and nutrients, reducing the need for additional water and nutrients. It is a closed-loop system, because food waste returns to the ground it came from, helping to create new plant growth.

A change in a new system can be a challenging adjustment. However, understanding the benefits of composting and how it affects the environment will create an easier transition from trash to composting.

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# Aligning our actions with our values

by Jen Grauer

Did you know that in the U.S., we only recycle and compost about 32 percent of our waste? On one end is San Francisco, recycling 80 percent, and on the other is Denver, diverting only 26 percent of waste from landfills.

To live our Colorado values of caring for people and our natural environment, Denver can cut our landfill dumping in half this year by using the purple recycling and green composting bins (free with the monthly purchase of a black landfill bin).

However, recycling and composting are only as good as the items we put into the correct bins.

So, before we get too excited and decide to put everything in recycling and compost, let's remember the golden rule: *When in doubt, leave it out...of recycling and compost!*

Please start with the idea that it all goes in the black landfill bin. What?! How will that help?

If we toss things into recycling that are not recyclable (hangers, pans, pens, plastic bags, compostable plastic, etc.), it contaminates the recycling system, and more ends up in the landfill.

The same is true of composting. If we haphazardly toss things into compost that are not compostable (shiny plastic lined takeout boxes, produce stickers, rubber bands, and twist ties), it also contaminates the compost, which leads to more methane being produced.

So, unless you are 100 percent sure the item about to be trashed goes into recycling or compost (Okay...99 percent certainty might do!), the conscientious managers at the Denver recycling and compost facilities would rather you toss it in the black landfill bin.



Need more time to figure it out? In a rush to get the trash out? It's better to put the items in your black bin. Really!

To help, here are some quick tips on making our recycling and composting count:

## RECYCLING WITH RESERVE

### YES

- Rigid plastic bottles, jugs, jars, tubs, cups, and containers marked with the #1-7 in the recycling symbols
- Paper coffee cups (empty contents, separate pieces — lid, cup, paper sleeve — as they are each recycled differently)
- Glass jars, broken drinking glasses, aluminum cans
- Clean aluminum foil saved and balled up (when larger than the palm of your hand)

### NO

- Aluminum foil with stuck-on food
- Shredded paper
- Compostable plastic (be sure to check)
- Flexible food wrappers or bags, bubble wrap, plastic bags
- Hangers, pans, wires
- Plastic straws or plastic silverware
- Light bulbs or batteries

Also, dump recycling out of any paper bag, box, or plastic bag that you collect it in. All items must be loose in the purple recycling bin.

*[\\* Read the list of acceptable items to recycle here.](#)*

## COMPOSTING WITH CARE

### YES

- All food: plant, animal, dairy, rotting food, bones (remove tape, stickers, rubber bands, and twist ties from fruits and veggies first)
- Greasy pizza boxes (no plastic corrugated mats)
- Rough paper plates or food containers (without any shiny coatings)
- Dog hair, wood popsicle sticks, used tissues
- Weeds, leaves, and sticks (no dirt, rocks, logs, cut-up Christmas tree)
- Toilet paper/paper towel rolls
- Shredded paper with black ink only (no tape, colored ink, or shiny paper)

Please collect in a [plant-based compostable bag](#) made in the USA or paper grocery bag and toss

*Continued on next page*

*“Aligning our actions” continued from page 6*

as one into the large green compost bin. Compostable items can also be dumped directly into large green compost bins without being in a bag. Layering lawn waste with kitchen waste keeps the bugs and smell down during summer heat.

*\* [Read the list of all acceptable composting items here.](#)*

For those difficult-to-recycle flexible plastic wrap/bags/ bubble wrap, batteries, light bulbs, torn/stained clothing, and electronics, try [Ridwell](#) or [The Happy Beetle](#) or ask a neighbor to deposit recyclables into their Ridwell/ Happy Beetle box.

*\* For hazardous waste recycling, [click here.](#)*

*\* For electronics recycling, [click here.](#)*

*\* For appliance recycling, [click here.](#)*

2023 is a great year to work on aligning our actions with our values — one choice and one action at a time — so Colorado is more beautiful and healthy tomorrow than it is today, and we are too!

*“District 7 Update” continued from page 4*

rebates and incentives to save thousands when electrifying your home. Start exploring options at [www.denvergov.org/homeenergy](http://www.denvergov.org/homeenergy).

- Save up to \$3,500 on a heat pump to heat and cool your home
- Save up to \$1,000 on electric vehicle charging
- Save up to \$4,000 on solar when you have other electric equipment installed
- Save up to \$2,750 on battery storage
- Save up to \$2,000 on an electric service upgrade

Although this year is my final year on the City Council, my office and I are still here to assist you. Reach out with any questions, comments and concerns!

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# Grant Beacon Middle School

by Elizabeth Walters

The Beacon Network Schools (BNS) community understands that you have a number of options when selecting the best middle school for your young learners.

BNS proudly serves families in the southwest communities of Denver between our two schools: Grant Beacon Middle School located in Platt Park, and Kepner Beacon Middle School located in the Westwood neighborhood.

BNS is set apart from other middle schools in our unwavering commitment to academic rigor and diverse educational opportunities. Our staff is composed of a team of adults deeply committed to the success of every student with programming grounded in a blended learning model, incorporating personalized learning and technology-based instruction into each classroom.

Equally significant, GBMS and KBMS proudly offer an extensive menu of enrichments students elect to participate in each quarter. Enrichments are divided into five primary categories: STEM, Athletics & Health, Arts & Culture, Leadership, and Academics, and include classes such as Shark Tank, Guitar, Game Design, Aerospace and Rocketry, and numerous other offerings.

If you are seeking an outstanding middle school opportunity, please visit [www.bnsk12.org/schooltours](http://www.bnsk12.org/schooltours) to learn more about the Beacon difference and to sign up for a tour. We hope to welcome your students to the Beacon Network of Schools where we believe every learner will individually and collectively, achieve, lead and grow together!

# McKinley-Thatcher Elementary School

by Ingrid Hoff

McKinley-Thatcher is focused on Round One (now until 4 p.m. on Feb. 14) of the Denver Public Schools 2023-2024 SchoolChoice application window.

SchoolChoice is the Denver Public Schools program designed to ensure all students have access to quality schools. Families complete a SchoolChoice application to sign up for a space at their preferred school. During Round One, families interested in enrolling

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# Denver South High School update

by Melina Hodzic

We have made it to the halfway mark of the school year. We finished up the first semester hosting our awesome culture fest that showcases all the cultures represented at Denver South High School. Students were able to showcase their culture through song, dance, food, clothing, and more.

Our winter sports are off to a great start. We have just begun league play! If you are able to catch them in action, we would love the community support. You can purchase tickets online <https://dps.hometownticketing.com/embed/all?schools=65> or cash sales at the door.

We would also like to congratulate our JROTC Rifle team! Before we went on winter break, they competed in the Rocky Mountain Regional Air Rifle JR Nationals Qualifier. That competition will be held in Sandy, Utah in April.

Team A (Meadow Contreras, John Dang, Graham Judge, and Wylder Treat) finished first in the Colorado State Cup winning only by two bullseyes over Northridge Marine JROTC. Team B (Austen Ford, Eli Kim, Kevin Maldonado, and Piper Ramirez) finished fifth at the Colorado state competition out of 81 teams

Both teams also competed in the CMP Regional Cup where Team A finished third out of 43 teams and Team B finished ninth. Additionally, both teams competed in the Rocky Mount 60-Shot standing where Team A finished third overall and Graham Judge finished third as an individual. Team B team finished fifth overall.

Finally, we have qualified in the eighth position for the CMP JROTC Nationals scheduled for Feb. 1-5 in Sandy Utah. The following cadets plan to compete: Meadow Contreras, John Dang, Graham Judge, and Wylder Treat. This competition will determine who will go to the all-service championship in Anniston, Ala.

Lastly, we are gearing up for our Winter Spirit Week and Make-a-Wish Week coming up in the spring, as well as SAT testing.

Go Ravens!

# Paws and reflect

## Meet Cooper Barnes, the 18-year-old white-faced dachshund

by Kit Eschner

My name is Cooper and excuse me if I'm a little grumpy or sleepy sometimes. You see, I'm a white-faced dachshund and I'm 18 years old in human time which makes me 126 in dog years. Some people call me a wiener dog or a sausage dog, but my family just calls me "Cooper." I barely remember when I was a young pup, full of energy to run fast and nip at the tails of bunnies. Now, I just bark at them and scare them into thinking I'm dangerous! I still have a little spunk!

I started my life in Beaumont, Texas where Dustin Barnes adopted me from a rescue group. For a while we lived in Crested Butte with Coda, his mini-dachshund, and then Lewis, his beagle. I guess I could be called the "dog that just keeps going..." because I'm the only one left now.

I knew Dustin when he was a young man, playing the field, and I got to meet lots of nice young women when he had dates with them. Some of them he knew for quite a while, but the one who stuck was Lea, the nicest lady in the whole world. Lea would take care of me and Lewis when Dustin was out of town on business and she was very kind. She always treated me like I was her dog, too.

Well, I guess Dustin thought she was great too because he married her and they live with me now in Platt Park. Lewis died a few years ago so now I'm the top dog in the house. Dustin, Lea, and I were happy for a long time, just us three in the family pack. But they decided to make the pack bigger so they had a very sweet and smart little girl named Sloane. I like to go to Sloane's bedroom a lot and sometimes she drops food on the floor for me to eat.

When our pack was four I thought that was big enough but they decided they wanted an even bigger pack! So they got two more humans at the same time, Jett and Esme! Wow! I didn't know if I would like this "six pack" so much but it turned out to be great because wonderful Jett kisses me on my fur and fabulous Esme hugs me and gets treats for me. I was afraid I'd get lost in the shuffle of little human feet in this pack, but it turns out I just get more love and attention than ever before!

We've had a few tough moments over the years, for example, when I ate all the tampons out of the trash and had to be rushed to the vet where they cut open my stomach, or when they forgot about me at the park where I was tied to a tree. But they came back really fast and I was okay, so I don't hold it against them. After all, there's a lot of pack members now and keeping all of us happy makes Lea and Dustin busy, busy, busy!

I'm so old that I almost died a few times, but my Barnes family pack keep loving me and taking me to the vet when I'm sick so I can keep going. I'm on a special medicine now to help regulate my heartbeat, which beats big for my family. They love me so much they took me to Utah with them last Christmas and New Year. I got to sleep all day in a swanky place while they skied. Then they had dinner and I got some special scraps on the floor. It's amazing to be loved so much! Jett and Sloane used to walk me on the Emerson Street sidewalk but I just walk in the yard and house these days because I'm tired, and all of my underside parts drag on the ground (if you get my drift!). And, forget about it in the deep snow! But hey, you'd be floppy like me too if you were 126!

If you ever visit our Barnes family, give me a little, soft pat-pat. You never know, I might be the oldest dog you'll ever meet!



Sloane, Jett, Esme and Cooper Barnes

**Community Chats!** with Denver Mayoral Candidate, **Kelly Brough**



**Kelly Brough**  
2023 Denver Mayoral Candidate  
KellyBrough.com

Wednesday, February 15th, 2023  
6:00-7:30 pm  
Table Public House  
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*“McKinley Thatcher” continued from page 8*

at McKinley can visit [mckinleythatcher.dpsk12.org/school-tours](http://mckinleythatcher.dpsk12.org/school-tours) to sign up for a virtual open house or an in-person tour, see the school’s digital brochure, and experience their video tour.

New this year, the Colorado Department of Early Childhood is introducing the Universal Preschool (UPK) Program for ECE families. The UPK program, signed into law by Gov. Jared Polis in 2022, gives families access to 15 hours per week of free, state-funded preschool for all children in the year before they are eligible for kindergarten. This means families can receive half off of their DPS ECE tuition for all children enrolled in a full-day DPS ECE-4 program. The UPK program also provides 10 hours per week of free, state-funded preschool for eligible ECE-3 students.

To access UPK funding and apply for a spot in ECE at DPS, families with incoming ECE students must complete both a DPS SchoolChoice application and the UPK application on the State of Colorado website. Families are asked to apply as early in the UPK application window (until February 15) as possible to best navigate the new process. For more information, visit <https://earlyeducation.dpsk12.org/universal-preschool-upk-colorado/>.

McKinley-Thatcher Elementary celebrated the end of 2022 with an outpouring of generosity from the school community.

The school ran a successful food drive to support families in need of food assistance during winter break and collected over 2,500 food items. These items were sorted and packed by volunteers into 60+ reusable grocery bags. Half of the bags were distributed to families on the last day of school in December, while the other half are being used to create an informal food pantry in the building.

The McKinley-Thatcher community also came together to make the school’s annual Adopt-a-Family program a success. Each December, families in need of help over winter break complete wish lists for household items, children’s toys, and children’s clothes. Families in the community “adopt” and fulfill each wish list or provide donations of gift cards. Thanks to the generosity of the school community, over \$6,000 in wish-list items and gift cards were donated to families in need.

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