



Colorado Department
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NEWS RELEASE

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Family Leadership Training Institute recognizes 56 graduates

DENVER—The Family Leadership Training Institute, a first-of-its-kind family civics program, today graduated 56 people who completed the community leadership program. Graduates are from Adams, Arapahoe, Dolores, Douglas, Larimer, Montrose and Weld counties and surrounding communities.

Graduates spend more than 90 hours developing skills needed to become effective leaders in their communities. These emerging community leaders participated in a 20-week curriculum that integrated personal and child development, leadership training, civic literacy and civic participation skills.

Eileen Forlenza, Family Leadership Institute director at the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, said, "The institute gives ordinary people the tools they need to make an extraordinary change in their community. The training provides a 'democracy toolkit' giving them the confidence to speak up for positive changes regarding issues that matter to them. Many of the graduates have said the institute has awakened the leader within them."

This year's graduates will be applying their leadership skills in a variety of community projects that address issues such as the following:

- Grandparents raising grandchildren
- Early learning and literacy for young children
- Prevention of teen suicide
- Strengthening families through strong dad/child relationships
- Access to training and support for parents of children with special needs
- Teen moms becoming community leaders
- Nutrition through community gardens

Forlenza said, “Individuals graduating from the class in Adams County – the first monolingual Spanish classes to be offered at the institute – are true champions for their community. Overcoming incredible obstacles related to language, they have pushed forward to learn critical thinking skills and fundamental civic lessons, transforming them into authentic leaders on behalf of kids and families. Their contributions are phenomenal.”

Graduates ages range from teens to grandparents, and include single parents, aunts, uncles, step-parents, and foster and adoptive families. Graduates are active community members concerned about improving systems for children.

The goal of the Family Leadership Training Institute is to dignify the role of families as change agents within community and government by building their capacity. Families use the tools developed to address social policy issues of concern to them. Families are taught the tenets of democracy and their rights to utilize government optimally in the best interest of children, families and their community as a whole.

The institute promotes civic partnerships that draw on the strengths of the individual members while remaining sensitive to the various cultures from which the members come. The institute also promotes public support for partnerships through connections to families, businesses, faith leaders, elected officials, community organizers, state and local government agencies and philanthropists. The Colorado Department of Human Services and the Colorado Department of Education also support the program.