The record that was broken in 2009 was completely shattered this year: Community College of Aurora volunteers participating in the 2010 Tax Help Colorado program filed more than 1,000 tax returns for low-income taxpayers, and more than $2.3 million in refunds will be returned to the Aurora community as a result.

CCA’s participation in 2010 marks the first time a Tax Help Colorado site has completed more than 1,000 returns. “Tax Help Colorado is truly a win-win program,” said Tamra Schmitt, co-coordinator of the program at CCA. “The taxpayers benefit by avoiding tax preparation fees and volunteers benefit by providing a useful community service while at the same time gaining valuable hands-on tax preparation experience. It is rewarding to see how our positive reputation has brought more and more taxpayers to seek our services each year.”

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As participants, trained volunteers at CCA prepared and e-filed taxes for eligible individuals and families free of charge from late January through mid March. At the program’s conclusion, volunteers processed 1,007 tax returns, and refunds totaled $2,374,405—double the number of families and individuals served last year and more than double the $1,004,361 in refunds realized. CCA’s participation in 2010 marks the first time a Tax Help Colorado site has completed more than 1,000 returns.

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Eleven sites participated in Tax Help Colorado this year, including six Colorado community colleges. A service of the Piton Foundation, the program helps families save hundreds of dollars they might otherwise pay to standard tax accountants to file their income taxes. Nearly 3,800 low-income taxpayers benefited from the service across all tax sites this year, and approximately $8 million in refunds are expected.

Volunteers this year included CCA students who completed a tax preparation course at the college, which prepared them to achieve certification by the Internal Revenue Service.

From left: Cathy Neil of Aurora and Amy Bratford of Parker, both volunteers with the Tax Help Colorado program at CCA, assist Gwennette C. Miller of Aurora with her 2009 taxes. Neil, a student at CCA, studied to become accredited and certified by the IRS to run an online tax site.

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Sherlin Lecture to be held this Friday

Dr. Erica Ellingson of the University of Colorado-Boulder will deliver the spring Sherlin Lecture this Friday, April 9, at 7:30 p.m. in the Fine Arts Building Forum. Dr. Ellingson will present “Dark Matter and Dark Energy: Discovering an Invisible Universe.” The event is free and open to the public. The observatory will be open for nighttime viewing following the lecture.

Ellingson is a professor of astrophysics and planetary sciences at CU and a researcher in the Center for Astrophysics and Space Astronomy. Among many teaching and research achievements, she has written, produced and presented several planetarium shows at CU’s Fiske Planetarium, covering research on topics including dark matter, dark energy, and galaxy evolution.

Ellingson’s work primarily focuses on the evolution of galaxies and quasars—the origin, contents, and evolution of the universe. Much of her recent work concerns clusters of galaxies—giant structures of hundreds or thousands of galaxies and clouds of hot gas, held together by the gravity of invisible dark matter. She also is part of a consortium to discover new very distant clusters with the aim of exploring how dark matter and dark energy together form and shape these giant structures over billions of years.

Record $2.3 million returned to taxpayers with help from CCA volunteers

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Contact: Sarah Pretzer 303-360-4728 Sarah.Pretzer@CCAurora.edu www.CCAurora.edu/news-events
The college hosted a Feb. 24 reception in honor of its Daniels Fund IV Scholars. Through the CCA Foundation, the college received a $75,000 grant from the Daniels Fund to provide scholarships to dependents of active duty and deployed military personnel stationed in Colorado.

According to Rene Simard, military and veterans services coordinator at the college, CCA chose to provide scholarships to this group “because of the many sacrifices they make and because they may not have the same access to financial aid as traditional students.” He added that for military families, finances can be tight, with little or no extra money available to invest in higher education. “In addition, military spouses have often moved many times, preventing them from gaining solid employment,” he said. “This accentuates the need for them to obtain an education and job skills.” CCA awarded four scholarships last fall and another four this spring.

“We are close neighbors to Buckley, and we are mindful of the sacrifices you are making for all of us,” President Linda Bowman told the gathered scholarship recipients. “Every time you are successful, we are successful – we are happy for the opportunity to serve you, who serve us. Together, we are so strong.”

Colorado Film School production invited to Indie Spirit Film Festival

The Colorado Film School's entry was originally created for the 7th Congressional District Veterans' Oral History as "The Wars We Fought: Front Line Stories of Colorado Veterans." In March 2009, U.S. Rep. Ed Perlmutter (D-CO) presented "The Wars We Fought" video to the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C., and a contingent of CCA faculty and staff, including President Linda Bowman, joined Perlmutter for the presentation. The 30-minute film presents in vivid detail the stories of Colorado veterans who served in World War II, Korea, and Vietnam.

Re-edited as "In Times of War," the film will be one of approximately 100 productions to be shown at this year’s festival. The film is scheduled to be screened on April 24 at the Kimballs Peak Three Theater.

College hosts Daniels Fund reception for scholars

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Students, donors to be showcased at April 29 Foundation scholarship luncheon

One of the most anticipated celebrations at college each year is the CCA Foundation scholarship luncheon. This year’s gathering will be held at 11 a.m. on Thursday, April 29, at the Denver Marriott Tech Center. The event will serve to recognize the college’s scholarship recipients and honor the donors who make the scholarships possible. The luncheon this year is presented by ADT Security Services. According to Diana Whye, executive director of the Community College of Aurora Foundation, ADT officials are committed to the event “because they believe that the best way to support a community is to be a part of it,” she said.

Tom Green, who anchors the Emmy-award winning Daybreak on The Deuce, is scheduled to serve as master of ceremonies. A news and sports veteran in the Denver market, Green has 10 Emmy awards and more than 20 years of experience in the business. Last year’s luncheon raised approximately $50,000 through the support of sponsors and guests, and the proceeds have been used to support students with the Chair’s Choice and CCA Foundation Scholarships.
The winnah is . . .

Faculty and staff enjoyed a little “down time” while students were away on spring break by participating in a spur-of-the-moment bean bag tournament. The competition was lively and heated, and in the end, Clinton Andersen, director of the Critical Incident Theater, beat out experienced thrower and First Generation Advisor Brad Jacobson.

Approximately 50 faculty and staff took part in the tournament. Thanks to John Shaw and the CCA Bookstore for providing Clinton with his first-place prize.

Author, abolitionist Francis Bok visits CCA

Internationally known author Francis Bok gave a special presentation in Donna Westmoreland’s Introduction to Sociology class on March 23. Bok, a Dinka tribesman and native of Sudan, is the author of “Escape from Slavery: The True Story of My Ten Years in Captivity and My Freedom in America.” He has testified before the U.S. Senate and now is an active abolitionist who travels the world to tell his story of capture and enslavement at the age of seven.

During his visit, Bok recounted his personal story as students listened, in amazement, of his account of beatings and isolation and “completely dehumanizing” rejection before he managed to successfully escape at the age of 17. “I want to tell you how I appreciate my freedom, being in the U.S.A.,” he told the standing-room-only audience. “My dreams have come true once again.” Bok’s presentation was sponsored by the CCA Global Initiatives Committee and the Colorado Coalition for Genocide Awareness and Action.
Kudos to...
Enrollment Services Advisor Anna Jansen, who received the Cynthia Gayles Memorial Award for service to the educational community at the March 12 Colorado Statewide Pre-Collegiate Conference. Jansen was nominated for the honor by CCA Director of Recruiting and Career Services Leigh Bessey. The award is presented annually to an individual with a history of outstanding contributions to the pre-collegiate service movement.

...and to mixed media artist and CCA faculty member Cynthia Thomas, who has been represented recently in two exhibitions in the Denver metro. Her work appears in “Practice What You Teach,” on display through June 30 at the Colorado State Capitol. It is an exhibition featuring landscape paintings and drawings by 16 professional artists teaching in the Colorado Community College System. Her work also appeared in a March exhibition of 25 pieces of cultural collages, including Asian, African, French, and Southwestern styles, at the Highlands Ranch Library.

Take Back the Night events scheduled for April 15
The college will host its second annual Take Back the Night schedule of events on April 15. Take Back the Night promotes the safety and empowerment of women. The festivities allow people to come together and demand an end to sexual assault and violence. All members of the CCA and Aurora communities are invited to participate in this year’s slate of activities, which will include self-defense training, local agency representation, music, food, informational presentations, student collages, readings from the Vagina Monologues, and more. Most TBTN activities will take place in the Student Centre Rotunda.

International Festival to feature “Planina”
Mark your calendars! Members of the CCA community are invited to eat, dance, watch, listen, and learn, during the college’s annual International Festival on April 20. A variety of events will be held in the Student Centre Rotunda. Events run from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., with a special noon performance by Planina, featuring songs of eastern Europe.

9Health Fair slated for April 18
The college will host the annual 9Health Fair from 7 a.m. to 12 p.m. on April 18 at the CentreTech campus. Screenings to be offered include blood count, body fat, breast, eye health, finger stick glucose, hearing, heart, nutrition, oral health, stress management, and more. Screenings are available for free or for minimal cost to those 18 and older. For more information, visit www.9healthfair.org.

Dr. Nate Easley to address CCA grads
Nate Easley, Ph.D., deputy director for the Denver Scholarship Foundation and president of the Denver Public Schools Board of Education, will offer the keynote address at CCA’s commencement on May 8. Dr. Easley has served as vice president for national and international programs for the Council for Opportunity in Education (COE) in Washington, D.C., and has worked at the state, national and international levels to create opportunities for first-generation, low-income, and ethnic minority students.

CCA “Green” tip of the month
Small steps can make a big difference. Reduce paper use, and recycle when possible. But rethink your need to use paper throughout the workday! Do you really need to print out all those e-mails? If it’s necessary to print out documents print double-sided. When possible, hold “paper-free” meetings; e-mail agendas documents ahead of time. Reduce, reuse, recycle!

“Emergency Planning” tip of the month
In the event of a life-threatening accident, injury, or illness, call 911 immediately. Give the building address and specific location of the emergency. Then, call CCA security (CentreTech campus 303-360-4727; Lowry security 303-419-5557). Do not move the injured or ill person, but provide care to the person to the level of your training. Ask other personnel in your area to meet security and emergency responders. For all other employee injuries or illness, contact your immediate supervisor.

PERFORMING ARTS WEEKEND EVENTS, FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC:

Student Art Exhibit Awards Ceremony. 6:30 p.m., April 30, Fine Arts Building Forum.

Spring Dance Recital. Ballroom, hip hop, and jazz dance. 7:30 p.m., April 30, Larry D. Carter Theater, Fine Arts Building.

Acting Showcase. CCA’s top student actors perform. 7:30 p.m., May 1, Larry D. Carter Theater, Fine Arts Building.

Music Recital. Students, faculty, and staff perform an afternoon music recital. 4:00 p.m., May 2, Larry D. Carter Theater, Forum Building.

COLORADO FILM SCHOOL SPRING STUDENT SHOW. 7 p.m., May 5, Harkins Theatres at Northfield, 8300 E. Northfield Blvd., Denver, CO 80238. Free and open to the public.

CCA COMMENCEMENT. 11 a.m., May 8, Arapahoe County Fairgrounds Event Center, 25690 East Quincy Avenue, Aurora, CO 80016.

“FIRE!”: AN EVENT FOR ALL AGES. 1-3 p.m., April 17, Aurora History Museum. Cost: $1 for Aurora residents, $2 non-residents. Learn about fire safety and prevention, meet a firefighter and try on equipment, wildfire trivia challenge with prizes, meet Smokey Bear.

For more events, see www.auroragov.org.