



## 2022 Award Nomination Form National Philanthropy Day in Colorado

**\*Please see Nomination Instructions (afpcc.org) for information on completing and submitting nominations**

### Nominee Information

#### Nominee

Name: Heather Dearman  
*First Last*

Organization: 7/20 Foundation

Address: 15151 E. Alameda Parkway

*Street Address*

*Apt./Unit #*

Aurora

CO

80012

*City*

*State*

*ZIP Code*

Primary Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Alternate Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Category of Nomination (please check ONLY ONE)

- ☐ Lifetime Achievement
- ☐ Outstanding Large Business (Number of Colorado employees \_\_\_\_\_) ☐
- ☐ Outstanding Small Business (Number of Colorado employees \_\_\_\_\_)
- ☐ Outstanding Foundation
- ☐ Outstanding Philanthropist
- ☐ Outstanding Professional Fundraiser
- ☐ Outstanding Professional Grantmaker
- ☐ Outstanding Service Organization
- ☒ Outstanding Volunteer
- ☐ Outstanding Volunteer Fundraiser
- ☐ Inspiration Award

## Nominator Information

### Submitted/Nominated By:

Name: **Kindle Morell** \_\_\_\_\_

Organization: **Caring for Denver Foundation** \_\_\_\_\_

Address: 1035 \_\_\_\_\_ **8<sup>th</sup> floor**  
Osage Street \_\_\_\_\_ *Street Address* \_\_\_\_\_ *Apt/Unit #*

**Denver** \_\_\_\_\_ **CO** \_\_\_\_\_ **80204**  
*City* \_\_\_\_\_ *State* \_\_\_\_\_ *ZIP Code*

Primary Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Nominee: \_\_\_\_\_

did you hear about us? **I've been working in the nonprofit/philanthropy field for over 20** How  
**years.**

If your nominee is not selected, would you like them to be notified that they were nominated? ☒ Yes ☐ No

If your nominee is selected, can we share a copy of the nomination with them? ☒ Yes ☐ No

### **Refer to the Nomination Instructions for Complete Directions**

Please remember:

- Each nomination must include:
  1. Nomination Form
  2. Nomination narrative
  3. Two letters of support (additional letters will not be accepted)
- The nomination deadline is **Friday, July 15, 2022 at 5:00 PM (MST)**
- No exceptions!
- All nominations must be complete when submitted
- If you would like feedback on your nomination from a member of the Awards & Selection Committee (not the judges) before formally submitting your nomination, please submit your draft materials by **July 8** via email with a note to that effect.
- Complete nominations must be emailed to DeAnn Acosta, CFRE, [deann@afpcc.org](mailto:deann@afpcc.org).

***What are the nominee's specific achievements?***

Heather Dearman loves Aurora and will do anything and everything to help her community heal. She has been a part of the 7/20 Memorial Foundation since its inception and is now the CEO. The Foundation is run entirely by volunteers and was formed in 2013 in response to the Aurora theater shooting tragedy which happened ten years ago, on July 20, 2012. With Heather's dedication and passion, the Foundation successfully fundraised, planned, and oversaw the completion of a permanent 7/20 Memorial Reflection Garden which opened in 2018. She now leads the Foundation in supporting other communities who have gone through similar experiences, which is unfortunately occurring more and more often. She started and runs the Paper Crane Peace Project which sends handmade paper crane wreaths to other communities affected by tragedy. She has built lasting relationships with loved ones and survivors of the theater shooting tragedy, many of whom are now a part of the board for the Foundation. Heather's unwavering passion comes from a personal place — she was directly affected by the theater shooting because her cousin Ashley Moser survived the shooting, but Ashley's daughter Veronica Moser-Sullivan, and Ashley's unborn child did not. Heather works almost across the street from where the shooting took place, as a civil service commission analyst for the City of Aurora. Since then, she has used her experiences to partner with government agencies and the community to advocate for healing, and has consistently been called on to speak about community resilience in the media. In the ten years since the shooting, she has not lost focus. She says yes to every opportunity and every connection, no matter the time it takes, to advance her cause to heal communities. With the increase in mass shootings across the country, her work is more important now than ever, and her passion and compassion is an honor to witness.

***What impact has the nominee had on the community through financial contributions and/or volunteerism?***

Heather had a key role in helping the 7/20 Memorial Reflection Garden come to fruition. As an employee with the City of Aurora, Heather advocated for the City to donate the land outside of the Aurora Municipal building for the garden. She also spearheaded the push to raise \$260,000 for the Memorial Garden artwork, [Ascentiate](#). Heather designed and started the annual fundraiser "Reflection Garden on Tap" to pay for upkeep costs and has grown it from a small event to a daylong event, bringing in almost \$100,000 in donations in 2022. She has an incredible ability to recruit volunteers, artists, businesses, and community members to bring her work to fruition. There are too many volunteers and donations to list, but her events have had chalk artists, bands, orchestras, food booths, art, poetry, and more, all volunteers. She recently recruited Zack Golditch, a former NFL player as a spokesperson for a new Heroes Run 5K that will benefit the Foundation. It's just one example of the many connections she makes to create a sustainable and unstoppable volunteer Foundation. Heather also sits on the boards of Spirit of Aurora, Survivors of Tragedy Outreach Program (S.T.O.P.) and the Colorado Resilient-Life Center (CORLC).

***What leadership qualities does the nominee possess that promote philanthropy and/or volunteerism?***

Heather Dearman is a force of compassionate, loving, leadership. She spends almost every moment not at work volunteering to heal communities from gun violence and strengthen the City of Aurora. You will find her in the Memorial Garden talking to school groups or doing outreach for the organizations with whom she volunteers. She speaks across the country on how to heal from tragedy and recently traveled to San Bernadino, CA to be a part of their community event to open a memorial for victims, survivors, and first responders of the December 2015 terrorist attack in San Bernadino. They asked her to open the ceremony, and she brought an Aurora flag and a paper crane wreath to their city. Her deep love for Aurora shows in her willingness to take on any role needed to further healing and peace in her community. Through all of her "official" titles she brings together citizens of Aurora who may never have connected with each other and fosters those connections. Her love and light shine through in every interaction. The Colorado Resilient Life Center, a new nonprofit working to build a community-based peer-run respite center began because of Heather's ability to connect community, government, businesses, and volunteers. She is helping the organization with their community fundraising events. She is the weaver of hope in Aurora.

***How does the nominee adopt a spirit of inclusion? (i.e. inviting broad participation, mentoring young professionals, hiring diverse applicants, etc.)***

Heather invites all people into everything she does, by nature, because her family and community is diverse. Aurora is one of the most diverse cities in Colorado, with 121 primary languages spoken by its residents. The garden is completely accessible, welcoming, and utilized by people from all identities. She ensured that the Garden is accessible to people with disabilities, recognizing its increased importance because several of the theater shooting survivors now need wheelchair accessible spaces. Heather also collaborates with the many diverse communities within Aurora. She reaches out to areas that honestly, most white Aurorans don't. She never does any of this with any feeling of superiority, she sees beauty in all different places and tries to bring it out into the light to be enjoyed by all. For this year's 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary event, Heather collaborated with DACA to make a video that will be part of the immersive audio/visual event, including a spoken word piece, Metamorphosis, from Aurora Poet Laureat Assetou Xango. This piece moves through the horror of the night of the shooting, through the ups and downs of the past ten years, and ends with hope for a more peaceful and loving future. She welcomes everyone to join her cause and inspires everyone to be a part of it, because in truth, we must all be a part of the healing.



Mayor

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Aurora, Colorado 80012

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July 11, 2022

National Philanthropy Day in Colorado  
The Association of Fundraising Professionals, Colorado Chapter  
7010 Broadway Street  
Denver, CO 80021

**RE: Nomination for Outstanding Volunteer**

Dear Nominations Committee:

Shortly after midnight on July 20th 2012, life changed forever for the Aurora community and the State of Colorado. In only a few minutes, the evil act of one person took the lives of 13 people and left countless others scarred physically and emotionally. Out of that immense tragedy rose the [7/20 Memorial Foundation \(a 501c3\)](#); a coalition of family members, survivors and loved ones that vowed to not let that evil destroy them or the love they have to give.

Heather Dearman arose, as a leader and voice for those who could no longer speak for themselves. Heather's open heart, her love for her community, and endless commitment to the 7/20 Foundation, has resulted in the selection and implantation of an art piece in the Reflections Garden near the Aurora Municipal Center. This art piece symbolizes those that were lost and those that survived this tragedy. Her active participation to ensure that paper crane wreaths are delivered to those that experience their own tragedies, communicate hope, and care from Aurora, all over the country. Heather serves as president of the 7/20 Memorial Foundation and the City's non-profit Spirit of Aurora.

This year marks the 10 Anniversary of that fateful day. Heather's ongoing commitment will result in days of remembrance to those lost, reflection by those who have survived, and a community filled with hope and support. Her impact in the City of Aurora, truly represents the heart and soul of our City. Please consider her for Outstanding Volunteer, as we know that she is!

Sincerely,

Michael Coffman  
Mayor  
City of Aurora, Colorado



July 11, 2022

National Philanthropy Day in Colorado

The Association of Fundraising Professionals, Colorado Chapter

7010 Broadway Street

Denver, CO 80021

**RE: Nomination for Outstanding Volunteer**

Dear Nominations Committee:

Heather Dearman is the glue that holds the 7/20 Memorial Foundation together. She is the epitome of light and love and it is a blessing to know her and work with her. No one is more deserving of your award for Outstanding Volunteer than Heather.

In 2012 after Veronica (Heather's cousin) was killed, Heather was hurting so much and trying to find answers to help heal. When she joined the 7/20 Memorial Foundation Board, she described knowing it was the right thing to do, she just felt it. She has continued to state that it is what makes her feel close to Veronica, and through this work has continued to see signs that Veronica is watching over this work and blessing it. Her passion began with a feeling of keeping her loved one alive through her work, and has since bloomed into wanting to share love, and support to everyone affected by tragedy. Her heart is pure, and she is always living in such an empathetic way to others' emotions.

Heather works for the city of Aurora, as a liaison for fire/police workers. She has an office in the Aurora Municipal Center which is where the 7/20 board meetings were held for quite a while. Because of her work with the city, it made being a liaison for the board a natural fit. In the beginning, Heather was always doing introductions, and contacting city officials if they were needed at our board meetings. Because of her unique position with the city and her outstanding networking skills she was able to create so many important connections. As the board finished building its original mission of a permanent memorial, Heather knew her work was not done.

The board continued to meet and restructure. In late 2018 Heather was voted in as the CEO of the 7/20 Memorial Foundation. Heather and the other board members began meeting about their new mission, and it was through Heather's connections that the board began to network with professionals about rebranding, as we created a new outlet for long-term healing. Heather began attending conventions where she met others interested in this field, she started working with Aurora artists to help announce this change of the board and named it the change "Metamorphosis." She started attending workshops on long-term healing, and then we began meetings with other similar non-profits with similar goals to create a coalition for long-term

healing. This coalition has become Survivors of Tragedy Outreach Program (STOP). It is a nationwide survivor-to-survivor network dedicated to long-term healing for victims while connecting those in need to resources. This is Heather's true calling: making connections for those in need. Without her, STOP would have never begun, and she is the heart of the it all!

Heather has done all this while still maintaining our relationship with the city, and up-keep for the permanent memorial. She is the sole point person for the 7/20 Memorial Foundation and has been an integral part of the planning our 10-year event this year.

It is a pleasure to get to describe my friend in this way, thank you for reaching out to me. Please let me know if you have any other questions.

With joy,

Jansen O. Young  
COO and Board Secretary  
7/20 Memorial Foundation