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Contact:

ANDREA RASIZER
Communication Services Director
Direct: 303-795-4284
Mobile: 303-882-1909
E-mail: arasizer@arapahoegov.com

OR

CAROL DOSMANN
BOCC Executive Assistant
Direct: 303-795-4531
E-mail: cdosmann@arapahoegov.com

Arapahoe County Mayors and Commissioners Youth Award Program grants nine scholarships to area high school seniors *17 Teens recognized for serving as positive role models in their communities*

Littleton, Colo. — Arapahoe County Commissioners and local mayors and city council members recently honored 17 teenagers from area high schools who have overcome significant personal adversity during the Arapahoe County Mayors and Commissioners Youth Award Program recognition ceremony. The Commissioners awarded nine college scholarships totaling \$13,000.

Commissioners Kathleen Conti, Nancy Sharpe, Jeff Baker, Nancy Jackson and Bill Holen were joined by City of Englewood Mayor Joe Jefferson, City of Centennial Mayor Cathy Noon, City of Greenwood Village Mayor Ron Rakowsky, City of Aurora Mayor Pro Tem Angela Lawson and City of Littleton Councilmember Doug Clark to recognize and honor this inspirational group of young adults.

The annual awards program honors and recognizes Arapahoe County youth who have risen to meet challenges while maintaining academic excellence and a positive attitude, and serving as role models for other teens. They are nominated by school counselors, teachers, mentors and parents.

The teens recognized in 2017 have overcome challenging situations, such as living with economic hardship or a disability; overcoming physical or emotional challenges; providing financial or emotional support to family members; caring for a sick or elderly parent, sibling or friend; losing or living without a parent or sibling; or having English spoken as a second language at home.

The 17 students honored by Arapahoe County in 2017 include:

- Julia Bechtel, Colorado's Finest High School of Choice, Englewood
- Skylar Cole, Colorado's Finest High School of Choice, Englewood
- Melissa Estle, Heritage High School, Littleton
- Regina Evans, Englewood High School, Englewood
- Kai Bjorn Finstad, Englewood Leadership Academy, Englewood
- Sahmyah Kelley, Hinkley High School, Aurora
- Mykala King, Englewood High School, Englewood
- Josie Lee, Arapahoe High School, Centennial
- Mathew Mendez, Englewood High School, Englewood
- Johnathan Kade Miller, Regis Jesuit High School, Aurora

- Jennifer Olson, Colorado's Finest High School of Choice, Englewood
- Mercedes Ruybal, Options High School, Littleton
- Ambar Solis-Fuentes, St. Mary's Academy, Cherry Hills Village
- Angela Trujillo, Heritage High School, Littleton
- Audrey "Beck" Waltrip, Colorado's Finest High School of Choice, Englewood
- Mikayla Welch, Colorado's Finest High School of Choice, Englewood
- Emerlie Wages-Zoerb, Englewood Middle School, Englewood

Annually, the Colorado Community College System Financial Aid Council awards one scholarship per County. This year, the Arapahoe County Board of County Commissioners solicited donations to fund additional scholarships and were able to award \$13,000 in scholarships.

Scholarships were awarded to the following graduating seniors:

- Julia Bechtel, Colorado's Finest High School of Choice, Englewood
- Sahmyah Kelley, Hinkley High School, Aurora
- Josie Lee, Arapahoe High School, Centennial
- Matthew Mendez, Englewood High School, Englewood
- Jennifer Olson, Colorado's Finest High School of Choice, Englewood
- Mercedes Ruybal, Options High School, Littleton
- Angela Trujillo, Heritage High School, Littleton
- Audrey "Beck" Waltrip, Colorado's Finest High School of Choice, Englewood
- Mikayla Welch, Colorado's Finest High School of Choice, Englewood

This year's event was held at the Mayo Aviation Center hangar at Centennial Airport. Robert Olislagers, Executive Director of Centennial Airport, Max Blair, Surface Land Supervisor from ConcoPhillips and David Lohmeyer, Vice President General Manager of Mayo Aviation Inc. helped distribute awards and scholarships.

Scholarships were made possible by donations to the Arapahoe County Foundation from:

- Arapahoe County Commissioners
- Arapahoe County cities and towns
- Centennial Airport Foundation
- Colorado Community College System Financial Aid Council
- ConocoPhillips Company
- Denver JetCenter, Inc.
- Greater Glendale Chamber of Commerce
- Mayo Aviation, Inc.
- Signature Flight Support
- South Metro Denver Chamber of Commerce
- TAC Air
- XJet

To learn more about how you can help make a difference in the lives of youth in Arapahoe County, please visit: <http://www.arapahoe.gov/index.aspx?NID=265>

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To download photos of the honorees: <http://bit.ly/MMCYA2017>