

Press Release
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Cathy Alderman
Chief Communications and Public Policy Officer, Colorado Coalition for the Homeless
303-319-9155, calderman@coloradocoalition.org

Alexis Whitham
Director of Communications, Colorado Coalition for the Homeless
970-541-9048, awhitham@coloradocoalition.org

Fort Lyon Supportive Residential Community Celebrates 10 Years of Recovery-Oriented Transitional Housing, Serving Thousands of Unhoused Coloradoans

Since 2013, the Fort Lyon Supportive Residential Community has provided recovery-oriented transitional housing on an expansive campus in Bent County, Colorado by combining housing with peer support, and educational, vocational, and employment services to people experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness. When the doors opened in the fall of 2013, just 27 residents were onsite. Over the past 10 years, 2218 unique individuals have been supported in their substance use recovery journeys at Fort Lyon. The program is made possible through a statewide collaboration between Colorado Coalition for the Homeless (the Coalition), the Colorado Department of Local Affairs (DOLA), and Bent County.

In honor of the 10-year anniversary, a celebration was held onsite at the Fort Lyon facility in Las Animas. Over 300 individuals attended including current residents and staff, former staff, graduates of the program from throughout the state, representatives from DOLA, leadership staff from the Coalition, and other community partners including current and past Bent County Commissioners. The program featured speeches from Britta Fisher, President and CEO of the Coalition, Dionne Stroter, Deputy Executive Director of the Colorado Department of Local Affairs (DOLA), Alison George, State Director of Housing serving the Colorado Division of Housing in DOLA, Lisa Trigilio, Director of Fort Lyon, and three graduates of the program, Shalley Harrow, Kat Navarich, and Randy Stotts. The full program is available to view [here](#) and event photos are available [here](#).

Colorado Coalition for the Homeless' President and CEO Britta Fisher spoke to Fort Lyon's unique model and success: "For 10 years, the Fort Lyon Supportive Residential Community has been effective through our innovative model of resident-centered care which starts from a place of dignity and respect. I am humbled by our invested 50-person Fort Lyon staff and so proud that this program not only helps our most marginalized community members, but also provides economic opportunities in the Arkansas Valley region."

Dionne Stroter of DOLA commented on the longevity and impact of Fort Lyon: "We are really proud of what we've built over the past 10 years to serve more than 2200 people, to serve the community, and to prove a model that we know is effective, cost-effective for our taxpayers, and actually helps us move the needle toward ending homelessness."

The cost per person at Fort Lyon is \$18,800 per year. It costs \$45,993 per person per year for medical and mental health services, substance abuse treatment, incarceration, and temporary

shelter costs for those chronically experiencing homelessness. Fort Lyon is not only impactful to residents, but also represents a reduction of over 59% in costs to taxpayers as compared to no interventions for those experiencing homelessness with substance use disorders.

Graduate Kat Navarich shared her story with the crowd in Bent County: “Fort Lyon saved my life ... I was a junkie on the streets in Denver. I used to sleep in the doorways in the freezing snow.” Now six years sober, Navarich lives in Las Animas and provides mentorship to other women working on their sobriety, “I didn't even know I had any dreams because I was so hopeless. This place gave me hope, it gave me a dream.”

The Fort Lyon campus has a long history in Colorado, dating back to 1860 as a military post, veterans' hospital, neuropsychiatric facility, and state correctional facility. As of 2023, the facility can welcome up to 250 individuals at any given time and employs over 50 local staff in the Bent County region. More information on the impact of Fort Lyon is available in [this comprehensive 10-year report](#). A 10-year anniversary video will be released in the coming weeks.

About Colorado Coalition for the Homeless:

The mission of the Colorado Coalition for the Homeless is to work collaboratively toward the prevention of homelessness and the creation of lasting solutions for people experiencing and at-risk of homelessness throughout Colorado. The Coalition advocates for and provides a continuum of housing and a variety of services to improve the health, well-being and stability of those it serves. Since its founding, the organization has earned state and national recognition for its integrated healthcare, housing and service programs. The Coalition’s comprehensive approach addresses the causes of homelessness, as well as the consequences, offering critical assistance to over 22,000 individuals and families each year. Learn more at www.coloradocoalition.org.