



## NEWS RELEASE

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### For Immediate Release

#### **Wheat Ridge Division Chief Receive Yasui Volunteerism Award for August 2019**

**WHEAT RIDGE, Colo. – September 4, 2019** Wheat Ridge Police Department Division Chief Jim Lorentz received the Minoru Yasui Community Volunteer Award for August 2019. He was recognized for his work presenting training to first responders, law enforcement and EMS personnel on the effective response to those living with dementia.

"We are very proud of Division Chief Lorentz and his ongoing dedication to training those who encounter community members and caregivers every day who are living with the challenges of Alzheimer's and other types of dementia," stated Chief Dave Pickett. "This is an example of the impact just one individual can make on the lives of others, and we extend our heartfelt congratulations to Jim."

As a volunteer for the past eight years with the Colorado Alzheimer's Association, Lorentz has dedicated countless hours to training more than 1,400 Denver police officers as well as officers in Wheat Ridge, Englewood, Lakewood, Avon, Eagle Vail and Gypsum as well as deputies in Douglas, Jefferson, Adams, Eagle and Arapahoe counties. Denver Mayor Michael Hancock attended the presentation of the Minoru Yasue Community Volunteer Award and proclaimed August 29 as Jim Lorentz day.

In her letter of recommendation for Lorentz, Tina Wells, director of regional programs for the Colorado Alzheimer's Association said, "The community at large, and particularly family caregivers, can be assured and rest easy knowing that someone who was trained about dementia by Jim Lorentz will handle the situation with the utmost respect and dignity for the individual, and will do so in a calm manner that will diffuse emotions and avoid an unwarranted arrest. A recipient of Jim Lorentz' training leaves them well equipped to handle any emergency situation involving a person with Alzheimer's or another form of dementia."

Lorentz gained first-hand knowledge of the impact of Alzheimer's and other forms of dementia when he and his wife became caregivers for his mother-in-law. He attended an Alzheimer's Initiative course in Texas to learn about teaching others and since then, he has instructed more than 3,000 police officers and first responders in effective practices. An individual with dementia may not react rationally

to officers' questions so the right approach is crucial to lessening the anxiety, distress, fear and agitation that the person living with dementia may be experiencing.

In addition to teaching, Lorentz also was a driving force behind the Colorado Life Track program, a safety device system designed to ensure the safety of adults and children at risk of wandering due to memory loss and other diagnoses.

The Minoru Yasui Community Volunteer Award was conceived by the Commission on Community Relations in 1975 to recognize and promote volunteerism by honoring an individual each month whose volunteer contributions are constructive, unique and outstanding. The award was named for Minoru Yasui who was subjected to military orders which forcibly removed 110,000 person of Japanese ancestry from the West Coast and incarcerated them in evacuation centers during WWII. In testing the constitutionality of such government measures, he spent nine months in jail, so he would know firsthand the never-ending struggles to preserve and protect liberty and freedom of people.

Minoru Yasui served as Executive Director of the Denver Commission on Community Relations from 1967 to 1983 and had served as a member since 1959. His work in the Denver community began in 1943.

The Minoru Yasui Community Volunteer Award is a living tribute of the high principles and courage of an outstanding American and a great man.

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