

# Jumping at the opportunity

Volunteer efforts are ingrained in ALCC's culture. BY CASEY PAYTON

In its 50 years, the Associated Landscape Contractors of Colorado (ALCC) has established a long history of supporting communities, sponsoring and leading projects throughout the state.

"Giving back to the community is one of the things we were founded on," says Kristen Fefes, executive director of the ALCC. "Part of that is because making communities beautiful, productive and sustainable is something

that our membership does every day."

Those community projects have included numerous undertakings over the years. In 2012, ALCC efforts included the installation of an edible garden at Excelsior Youth Center, a school for at-risk teenage girls. Fefes says many of the projects stand out in her mind, but this one had a powerful impact.

"To hear these young women talk about rape, drug abuse and the lack of support from their families was heart wrenching," she recalls. "One of the things that's important to community service is ensuring you have the right volunteers for the right project. On this particular project they were mostly female volunteers that wanted to be role models for these young girls. That was inspiring."

There were other efforts, as well. At Poudre Valley Hospital, the Northern Chapter of the ALCC took on a project in which 14 volunteers transformed a parking lot into a healing garden to benefit both patients and staff. It involved



In 2012, The Associated Landscape Contractors of Colorado installed healing and edible gardens for those in need.

food bank a few years back. "It was such awful weather that day and people could have felt discouraged or even wanted to give up, but instead everyone said, 'It's all right, we're doing this,' and then went ahead," Fefes recalls. "Everyone ended up having a blast and it was very memorable."

As the ALCC chapters continue to embrace community involvement, Fefes says she feels it's now "in their blood" and something they will continue to do.

"Helping people in need is just the right thing to do," Fefes adds. "I've found our chapters are jumping at the opportunity to do that and to make a difference in our communities. We all benefit from our surrounding communities becoming more beautiful.

Fefes says that by this point, community involvement is ingrained in the ALCC and that its members consider volunteering to be part of their membership.

"I see the interest in volunteering as something that's an ongoing part of our future," she says. **LMM**

## AT A GLANCE

**State association:** Association Landscape Contractors of Colorado

**Location:** Denver

**Executive director:** Kristen Fefes

### SELECT PROJECT LISTING:

▶ **Excelsior Youth Center—**

In 2012, 24 volunteers from the Denver Chapter designed and installed an edibles garden within a larger master-planned garden at this school for at-risk teen girls.

▶ **Poudre Valley Hospital—**

Last year, members from the Northern Chapter transformed a parking lot into a healing garden that included irrigation and hundreds of plants.

▶ **Aspen Pointe Enterprises—**

Thirty-four Southern Chapter members turned a weed field into a community gathering place, with support from 18 suppliers.

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