



Honoree Liza Patton flanked by MYCVA committee member Sarla Thal and committee chair Cindy Piggott



MYCVA committee member Jean Kerr, Christine Burt (TAPS), Liza Patton, Bo and Lynne Cottrell (TAPS)

Photos by Scottie Iverson

## In the spirit of volunteerism, Liza Patton receives Minori Yasui Award

“Volunteers are a most special breed. They give their time and energy and their hearts,” said Cindy Piggott, chair of the Minori Yasui Community Volunteer Award (MYCVA) committee. Such a volunteer was Minori “Min” Yasui who was born and raised in Hood River, Oregon and earned his undergraduate degree and a law degree at the University of Oregon. He was one of the few Japanese Americans after the bombing of Pearl Harbor who fought laws that directly targeted Japanese Americans and Japanese immigrants. After internment during most of WWII, he moved to Denver, married and became a local leader in civic affairs including the Japanese

American Citizens League. In the 1970s, an unprecedented program to honor volunteers was established in Denver by the Commission on Community Relations, *Rocky Mountain News* and United Bank of Denver. In 1977 Denver City Council renamed the award to honor “Min,” his service to the community and his extraordinary volunteer efforts. He died in 1986, but his extraordinary legacy lives on and inspires us to make the world a better place. In 2015, Senator Mazie Hirono nominated Min Yasui for the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the highest civilian award of the United States. On November 16, 2015, President Barack Obama announced that Yasui would receive the award posthumously and it was presented to Lori Yasui in a White House ceremony on November 24, 2015. Now, Lone Tree resident Liza Patton joins the ranks of some of the most honorable people of the last 45 years who emulate the spirit of volunteerism and Min Yasui himself. Since its inception in 2004, the Colorado Celebrity Classic to benefit Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (TAPS), has donated almost \$5 million to the national organization. Liza’s efforts have been instrumental in that success. She has

BY SCOTTIE TAYLOR IVERSON



Flair!



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gratitude for those who serve and the loved ones left behind after a death. About what makes a great community volunteer, Colorado Celebrity Executive Committee Member Christine Burt said: “It’s not someone who happily and competently completes a requested volunteer assignment, it is someone who takes on the role of the leader to create strategy for success, leads by example and encourages others to meet important goals.”



Liza Kirkpatrick, who read the proclamation from Denver Mayor Michael B. Hancock with woman of the hour Liza Patton

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