

Archive of past Fran Yehl honorees:

[2017](#)



The Fran Yehle award is presented to an individual, who lives in the Eiber Neighborhood, and among other things, has given so much of their time and attention, for free, to make us a better community. At our annual meeting, the Eiber Neighborhood Board voted unanimously to give this award to Betsy Lopez and family, posthumously, in honor and celebration of Gerald Lopez Senior. Gerald passed away unexpectedly on September 13, 2016, at his home in Lakewood, Colorado.

Gerald gave so much back to the Eiber community in which he lived. He was instrumental in the once Barren Park, being developed and renamed into what is now Richey Park, located at 1301 Carr Street. Gerald loved and played many a game of horseshoes in his time, which is why, to his last breath, was trying to get the 2 (two) pits back in Richey Park. At the time of his passing, one (1) had been reinstalled and a petition had been given to the City of Lakewood. As of the writing of this article, the City has agreed to keep their agreement and reinstall the second (2) horseshoe pit.

Gerald was also very busy in his efforts when RTD installed the light rail system, a time of significant change in the Eiber Neighborhood.

Gerald was known for driving his red pick-up truck, usually with his disabled son Thomas at his side.

There was hardly ever a Wednesday night community meal at Saint Paul's Episcopal Church that Gerald missed. The first meal after his going to meet the Great Spirit, the chair and spot at the table where he always sat was left vacant.

[2016](#)



Lois Witte and Penny Kunter

This year we have elected two very important neighborhood women to receive the Fran Yehle Friendship Award. Lois Witte and Penny Kunter have complimented each other beautifully in the development of the community garden. While Lois uses her negotiation and organizational skills working things through the bureaucracy, Penny is organizing the kids and the volunteers on the ground.

It is due to the tireless efforts of Lois Witte that we even have a community garden. She worked countless hours writing grant proposals, arranging meetings with officials from Jeffco Public Schools to obtain approval of the garden location, and for the school to provide the water. She also met with Denver Urban Gardens and poured through page after page of their rules and regulations. She helped form a Garden Committee, solicited for in kind donations of tools and a shed to put them in. It is with heartfelt thanks that we award Lois Witte the Fran Yehle Friendship Award, for being a Good Neighbor and for her efforts towards improving life in our community.

Penny Kunter has had an equally challenging responsibility as the Garden Leader and Master Gardener. Under her leadership, beds were built, both ground level and raised beds, compost was brought in, and the community came together to prepare the plots for the first planting season. She has taught adults and children the benefits of proper gardening, often repeating the same lessons over and over. It is with heartfelt thanks that we award Penny Kunter the Fran Yehle Friendship Award, for being a Good Neighbor and for her efforts towards improving life in our community.

[2015](#)



Charlotte Shepic

Charlotte was a member of St. Paul's church for 13 years or more before retiring last year. With her incredible sense of community, her role at the church became one of building relationships within the community, including with other churches. She helped develop Vacation Bible School in conjunction with Holy Family Lutheran church. She was instrumental in raising money for our Eiber Community Garden. She is the one who arranged for us to have our annual meetings here at the church. She has a great personality, always smiling and not just ready to help, but seeking out opportunities to help others, perhaps a family or a child in need. She was present at the Grand Opening of the West Line Light Rail, handing out cookies at the Garrison Station and even arranged for the children's choir to provide entertainment. She is well loved and sorely missed by her church family and the Eiber neighborhood. It is for these reasons and more that Charlotte has been elected to receive the first ever Fran Yehle Friendship Award.