



**For Immediate Release
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**July 2011 Awardee Liz Cohen:
A Leader in Developing Evergreen's Trail System**

Liz Cohen is the July 2011 recipient of the **Minoru Yasui Community Volunteer Award** for her leadership with **North Evergreen Activity Trails** (NEAT, www.neatevergreen.org). Cohen has been a volunteer with NEAT since its inception in 2003, and became its president in 2005. She has been instrumental in advancing NEAT's goal of building a 1.8-mile trail linking three public schools, the Buchanan Park and Recreation Area, the Evergreen Arts Center, six shopping areas, Evergreen Fire and Rescue and four residential neighborhoods. The trail is about two-thirds completed with the final .6-mile segment of the trail scheduled to open in Fall 2012.

Liz Cohen and her husband Steve moved to Colorado from New York City about 15 years ago with a vision of a healthy lifestyle for their family. They made their home in Evergreen, where Liz began to envision a community connected by a network of pedestrian trails. Her dream was to create a pedestrian environment where children could walk safely to school, where people could shop or run errands on foot, and where neighbors could greet each other along the way.

In addition to her volunteer administrative responsibilities as NEAT's president, Cohen has helped raise more than \$850,000 to accomplish the trails project, and continues to write grants that will fund the third and final phase of the project. She has also helped form cooperatives and partnerships with Jefferson County, Evergreen Parks and Recreation District, Great Outdoors Colorado and many other public and nonprofit agencies.

"Liz Cohen is a great example of someone who has a strong vision for improving her community, then spent years making that vision become a reality," said Chris Veasey, chair of the Minoru Yasui Community Volunteer Award Committee. Today, Cohen's children are able to use the trails that NEAT volunteers have built working collaboratively with multiple agencies.

Cohen was honored at a special ceremony at the Marriott Denver Tech Center on July 28, 2011. She designated the \$2,000 cash award that accompanies the award to NEAT.

In its 35th year, the Minoru Yasui Community Volunteer Award Committee recognizes outstanding volunteers monthly 11 times a year. Recipients may designate a \$2,000 gift to the organization of their choice. Since 1976, the Committee has recognized 401 outstanding volunteers and donated \$706,000 to nearly 500 nonprofit organizations designated by award recipients. From 1967 to 1983, Minoru Yasui served as executive director of the Denver Commission on Community Relations, which launched the Community Volunteer Award in 1976, and named it in honor of Mr. Yasui in 1977.

2011 sponsors include: Debra Ardelt; City and County of Denver; The Cody Dental Group; *Denver Post Community*; The Denver Foundation; Denver Marriott Tech Center Hotel; Judge Kerry Hada; Havey Productions; Kaiser Permanente; KEZW AM 1430; Minoru Yasui Community Volunteer Award Committee Members; Signal Graphics Printing at Hampden & Monaco; *The Villager*; The Yasui Family.

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