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CORPORATE CITIZENS OF THE YEAR

A charitable equation

LAROCQUE GUIDES MCKINSTRY'S EFFORTS ON STEM EDUCATION



Leslie Larocque supports Colorado Education Initiative, Habitat for Humanity, Girls and Boys Club of Metro Denver.

Leslie Larocque says, "I'm very fortunate to have an incredibly engaged team of people who work for McKinstry."

KATHLEEN LAVINE, BUSINESS JOURNAL

BY JUSTIN GUERRIERO
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Since 1999, McKinstry has donated over \$7.6 million to charities through the McKinstry Charitable Foundation. An overarching objective of the Golden-based engineering and construction firm is to "build a thriving planet" through meaningful social impact.

As regional director of the company's Rocky Mountain operations, Leslie Larocque is a large proponent of that goal. Larocque oversees over \$30 million in McKinstry's annual business across a six state region and is responsible for the 60-plus Colorado team members.

"I'm very fortunate to have an incredibly engaged team of people who work for McKinstry," Larocque said. "They really wanted to do something here locally."

In 2011, Larocque was crucial in implementing a corporate stewardship committee within McKinstry's Colorado team.

"A lot of [the push] came from our employees saying 'we want to volunteer [and] give back, help us to open those avenues,'" Larocque said. "We want to do things that really help serve our community from the standpoint of poverty and equity and helping [to]



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support women and children. We're also very involved in STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) education. Because that tone has been set at the company level, our employees rise to the occasion."

Larocque is largely responsible for McKinstry's efforts with STEM programs in Colorado.

McKinstry has been a partner to the Colorado Education Initiative, a nonprofit linked to the Colorado Department of Education that aims to improve education and student achievement across the state. In large part to Larocque and McKinstry's efforts, Colorado STEM was created. Larocque currently serves as the co-chair of the Colorado STEM's Champions' Board.

"[Colorado STEM] is comprised of industry and state government leaders that are really passionate about STEM education," Larocque said. "We have an industry that's moving in the direction of high technology; we have a lot of that type of industry in Colorado. Our education system is extremely strong but there are areas [that need] improvement. The focus of Colorado STEM is to make sure that people have access to and are aware of STEM."

Over the last three school years, Larocque and McKinstry employees have volunteered 480 hours at Abraham Lincoln and John F. Kennedy

high schools in Denver.

"We understand the challenge for the workforce pipeline in the future and the need to educate Colorado students so that we have great people to hire right here in the state," Larocque said.

In addition to Colorado STEM, Larocque and McKinstry are very involved with The Gathering Place, Denver's only daytime center for women and children who are homeless or living in poverty.

For the last four years, Larocque and McKinstry volunteers have provided a holiday meal for the less fortunate, feeding around 80 people per event.

"It's an eye-opening experience to ground myself in how lucky I am to have received what I've been able to receive in life," Larocque said. "[A lot] of people don't have the same privileges and so it's a heartwarming type of event to engage directly with the homeless and engage with them."

For Larocque, her eyes are focused on the road ahead and how McKinstry can continue to make a difference within the community.

"I feel like we will continue to invest our time and resources in the places where we have been historically investing," she said. "We'll continue to add more tentacles to our outreach."