

Rocky Mountain News YourHub

Acclaimed Milestones Project Photo Exhibit at ACC

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(October 22, 2007 - Littleton, Colo.) In 1998, Littleton residents Dr. Richard and Michele Steckel began the "Milestones Project™," an undertaking involving taking and exhibiting thousands of National Geographic-like photos of children and adults all over the world to promote cultural tolerance. Since they started, the Steckels have been honored by the United Nations, they have been acknowledged by Time Magazine and their Milestones collections of large photos have been installed in 11 international airports, including DIA. They estimate 120 million people have seen their work. On Thursday, November 8, at 6:30 p.m., the community is invited to the world premiere celebration of ACC's newest permanent photographic installation which is also the latest offering of the Milestones Project. The opening celebration for the installation entitled, "Littleton: My International Home Sweet Home," will occur in the Main Building of Arapahoe Community College, 5900 South Santa Fe Drive in Littleton. Hors d'oeuvres will be served.



"Littleton: My International Home Sweet Home," features 37-large images accompanied by storyboards. Each image and story tells about local adults and children who uprooted themselves from another country and then choose to live, work, study or operate a business in Littleton. Many did so because they loved the small-town quintessential-American feel of the Denver-suburb. Specifically, the exhibit highlights three groups: Littleton merchants; elementary school children in Littleton Public Schools and people affiliated with ACC or the Spring International Language Institute at the College (including students, faculty and staff). These people, who have made Littleton their home, originally came from Brazil, Cambodia, Canada, Democratic Republic of Congo, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Greece, India, Indonesia, Japan, Lebanon, Mexico, Nepal, Philippines, Poland, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Spain, Syria, Thailand, Venezuela and Vietnam.

"This collection celebrates the gifts people from other countries bring Littleton's non-immigrants such as their language, world perspective, optimism, entrepreneurial spirit, desire to make a difference and contribute, family recipes and their work ethic," explains co-creator Dr. Richard Steckel. "They choose us [Littleton] because of our welcoming, friendly and generous-in-spirit-attitude." Adds Michele Steckel, "By partnering with the Milestones Project to fund this installation, ACC is making a strong statement that they value everybody regardless of their cultural background and that they believe everybody brings contributions to the table." ACC Vice President of Instruction Dr. Diane Hegeman agrees. Adds Hegeman, "We are pleased to partner with the Milestones Project to make this permanent exhibit possible. This collection will further impress upon our community the high value the College places on diversity. It also reaffirms our belief that the

diversity of our faculty, staff and student body enriches the learning environment of ACC and the greater area."

"These are portraits of immigrants captured in the context of their daily lives and showing the face they want the world to see, whether it be at work or school," said Dr. Richard Steckel. For some, work is the French restaurant, pizzeria or dry cleaners they operate in town.

In their past work, the Littleton-based Steckels have exhibited photos of the world's children taking their first steps, celebrating their first birthdays, getting their first haircuts and experiencing other milestones of childhood. They present these images in such a way as to impress upon people that no matter where we live, what we wear or how we pray, people are all more alike than different. "We expect "Littleton: My International Home Sweet Home," will cultivate an appreciation about how diverse our community is getting and facilitate people learning the incredible stories their neighbors have brought here," he added. To illustrate how international Littleton is becoming, Richard Steckel cites a study by Littleton's Economic Development Unit which found that 25% of the workforce within Littleton proper are Hispanic immigrants.

The ACC permanent exhibit will be unveiled concurrently with new Milestones collections that have opened at the New Children's Hospital, Littleton's Bemis Library and the University of Denver. For more information contact the Steckels at 303.572.3333. For accommodations at the opening of the ACC Milestones Project installation contact the College's Student Affairs Office, at least three days in advance, at 303.797.5668.