Citizenship Counts
What It Means to Be a Citizen

All of her family and friends murdered...a series of slave labor camps...a death march that started with 4,000 people and ended with less than 120...six years of abject misery, terror and sorrow. Gerda Weissmann Klein endured all of this before she turned 21.

Gerda survived the Holocaust, but just barely. When she was finally liberated, she weighed 68 pounds and her hair had turned white. At this dark moment, a light appeared in the form of her liberator, U.S. Army intelligence officer Kurt Klein – a German Jew who had been sent to the U.S. by his parents and then joined the effort to fight the Nazis.

Impressed with Kurt’s respect and concern for her, Gerda developed a friendship that eventually led to them marrying and settling in Buffalo, New York. Gerda came to the U.S. knowing no English and having no friends other than her new husband. But she began volunteering in the Jewish community and sharing her story of survival. In 1957, she published her autobiography, All But My Life, which is now in its 65th printing and was later the subject of an Academy Award- and Emmy-winning HBO documentary, One Survivor Remembers.

Gerda felt a deep sense of gratitude for the freedoms and opportunities available in the U.S., her adopted country. In 2004, she was asked to deliver a keynote speech at a school-based naturalization ceremony that was held in Cincinnati, Ohio.
Colorado Latino Age Wave Launches

A new initiative has launched to advocate for and fund services and programs that promote the well-being of the state’s Latino older adults. Colorado Latino Age Wave is being developed in response to research by the national organization Hispanics in Philanthropy (HIP) that projects a rising “wave” of Latinos entering la tercera edad (the third stage of life). The study identified a unique set of needs for this growing population.

Colorado Latino Age Wave is being managed by Cec Ortiz and will include a community assessment, a grants program and a fellowship program. The project is a collaboration between HIP, the Latino Community Foundation of Colorado and Rose Community Foundation. Metro Denver was selected as the inaugural community to begin developing innovative programs in conjunction with this initiative. Learn more at rcfdenver.org/agewave.