



## **BEHIND THE FAÇADE --- OF EVERGREEN**

When many of the old storefronts in Evergreen were originally constructed, they were built with facades – fronts of the buildings built to look square, prestigious, neat and tidy. The intention of the craftsmen back then was to present a substantial community with much to offer those interested in stopping by on their trips up from Denver. When one went behind the facades though, they would discover that the façade hid a different reality – less substantial, tidy and well kept than what was advertised out front.

In this way, Evergreen has changed very little in 150 years: Behind the facades of our modern day storefronts, homes and schools - hidden by the Mercedes and Lexus driven by the adults, the Aeropostale clothing and makeup worn by the teenagers and the truth of what is bought, sold and spoken behind the facades lies a different reality. The facades however, this time are not only presented to deceive the passersby but also our own consciousness and perception of reality --- and they hint strongly of a community that will not survive another 150 years.

The reality is that Evergreen, like many communities of its kind, is haunted by Truths that it largely strives to keep hidden in plain sight. Our kids – bribed, manipulated and overwhelmed by materialism – are unprepared to stand in a world built on such a cracked foundation. The adults – charged with teaching and watching over them – cannot do so as they are stuck in their own relentless and similarly hollow pursuits and addictions, blinded by their own denial and unable to embrace, nor recognize their own responsibility in profoundly shaping the youth around them. The drugs on the buses and at the parties, lack of meaningful and sound relationships between neighbors and even families, devotion to image and Spiritual shallowness are only hidden by the collusion of a community and the fear of its adults.

Our predecessors in these valleys and mountains, the Utes and Arapahos, did survive for thousands of years - an eventuality that is impossible for Evergreen given the realities of its current existence. The Native Americans thrived by embracing several inherent qualities that do not exist consistently enough in modern day Evergreen:

1. The existence of a united and coherent group of elders (adults).
2. An awareness of reality – unmasked and acknowledged by all.
3. The willingness and courage to stand in front of their youth – especially their independence, defiance, depression and rage to role model and teach what it will take to walk in this world.

There will be some, perhaps many, reading this who see Evergreen differently – more optimistically. I believe they are moving too quickly, neither listening carefully enough to our youth nor paying close enough attention to the hurried, nervous, shallow and deflective contact between neighbors. The symptoms of a community sick within are in plain sight, but too easy to ignore.

My challenge to the adults – and youth – of Evergreen is to show up (there is no fee) at the Community Challenge at Buchanan Recreation Center on December 1 from 6:00 to 9:00 pm. Clear evidence of the trouble our youth and community is in will be presented and clear solutions for rebuilding it will be introduced.