

**PALMER LAKE (Cont. from page 1)**

since last year all the slots were filled by appointment. Residents interested in running for mayor or serving as trustee for the roads, economic development, fire, police, park and recreation, or water departments can pick up petitions Feb. 10 at the town office and turn them in Feb. 28 to get their names on the April ballot.

**Residents asked to do fire mitigation**

Resident Judith Harrington and Palmer Lake Volunteer Fire Department (PLVFD) Chief John Vincent asked residents to take individual responsibility as soon as possible for reducing fuel loads, such as

overgrown scrub oak, on their properties. Vincent said the town is over 100 years behind on burn cycles. This is due to the Palmer Lake area not having experienced naturally-occurring wildfires in the past century that would have thinned out underbrush and pine trees. Vincent also said some town-owned land is out of compliance with its own mitigation ordinances and that the town is in an extremely high hazard area.

Harrington cited the [www.coloradowildfirerisk.com](http://www.coloradowildfirerisk.com) website, where people can look up a lot's wildfire risk.

PLVFD's new volunteer wildfire mitigation specialist, Margo Humes, and Harrington are pursuing several grants to

help reduce the labor costs for residents doing mitigation, but some grants require cash matching funds. Residents who are ready to do mitigation work could commit money upfront to the town to help win those grants, since the grants must go to municipalities, not individuals.

**Committee reports**

Mayor Nikki McDonald reminded residents about the Jan. 18 town meeting for their input about future finances to maintain the fire and police departments and roads. The concern is that both property tax and sales tax revenues have been falling below expectations. The meeting also included discussion on retail marijuana sales. More similar meetings will occur this spring, she said.

McDonald said the Lucretia Vaile Museum is now owned by the town, which will accept sealed bids to do the renovation work until March 1.

Police Trustee Bob Grado said Palmer Lake Police Department officers assisted in stopping a burglary in progress in Douglas County on Dec. 29. The suspect who was arrested also had an active warrant out on him for attempted murder in El Paso County. They also responded to a domestic violence first-degree assault on Nov. 30 and made three DUI arrests in December.

Fire Trustee Rich Kuehster applauded the PLVFD for a total of 24,339 volunteer hours in 2013. They responded to 395 calls for the year, including 123 mutual aid calls. All 25 members will be certified firefighters by March. Fourteen are EMT certified, and 18 are wildland certified. Residents should call Abby Vierling or Humes at 719-481-2902 for free wildfire mitigation assessments and evacuation planning information.



**Above:** Mackenzie Garcia, left, and Racquel Garcia started the nonprofit organization *Helping Everyone Recover Colorado, Inc.* after the Black Forest Fire to collect clothing and household items, including furniture, to give to families who lost their homes. Six months later the other big relief organizations are gone, Garcia said, "and we're the little guy who keeps caring." Mackenzie recently conducted a Christmas tree ornament drive at her school as another way of helping. For more information on how to help this local relief organization, see [www.helpingeveryonerecover.org](http://www.helpingeveryonerecover.org), a website donated to the organization by one of the victims it has helped, or visit its new location at Illumination Point in Palmer Lake. *Photo by Lisa Hatfield.*

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**Spring is on its way!**


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♥

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Check our Facebook page for details in early February or give us a call!

♥

Reservations highly recommended

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