



**University of Denver**  
**Graduate School of Social Work**  
 2148 South High Street  
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# THE BRIDGE CONNECTION

The Bridge Project's mission is to provide educational opportunities for children living in Denver's public housing neighborhoods so they graduate from high school and attend college or learn a trade.

The Bridge Project is a community outreach initiative of the Graduate School of Social Work at the University of Denver

## A PARTNER WITH AN IMPACT:



### The Binning Family Foundation

The Bridge Project's partnership with the Binning Family Foundation provides an incredible illustration of how organizations can work together to create a huge impact in the lives of Colorado's young people.

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- Pawsitive Connections is back at the Bridge Project
- The Saunders Construction *Building Confidence in Kids* partnership continues
- Installation of Bridge's first SMART Board at Columbine
- Renewable energy program continues at Bridge
- Students from Bridge Scholars program tour DU
- Westwood moves to new location

Since 2001, one of the Bridge Project's foundational partnerships has been with the Binning Family Foundation ("Binning"). Throughout the last nine years, Binning has provided financial and programmatic support to the Bridge Project in two main areas: Technology and Outdoor Leadership. Through the leadership and support of Executive Director Sean O'Shea and Technology Program Director Troy Markgraf, Binning has helped to make our technology program one of the most popular and effective initiatives at the Bridge Project.

Perhaps the most successful component of Bridge's technology program has been the Tech Team. The Tech Team provides high school students the opportunity to work after school in computer labs, teaching Bridge participants literacy-based technology skills. More than just after school employment, the Tech Team program provides its participants with intensive, targeted leadership opportunities, technical and financial education, industry certifications to verify skill level, weekly professional development sessions and other critical life skills. In sum, Tech Team participants receive the social, educational and emotional support that it takes to successfully complete high school.

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- Kai Yeung



Currently, the Bridge Project is working with Binning to track every student who has been involved in the Tech Team program. Early and conservative accounts show at least a 95% graduation rate for students who have been involved in the Tech Team program. Compared to the 15-20% graduation rates in the Bridge Project neighborhoods, this number is amazing.

The Binning Family Foundation is making an impact on the lives of our Bridge Project youth every day. We are grateful for their dedication, passion and innovative ideas. We look forward to many years of our continued partnership, leading to great successes in the lives of our youth. For more information about the Binning Family Foundation and its programs, please visit [www.binningfoundation.org](http://www.binningfoundation.org).

## SAVE THE DATE

The Bridge Project Inspirational Gala will be held on November 13, 2010.

### SITES AND STAFF

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Program Director & Scholarship Coordinator: Molly Calhoun, MSW

Healthcare Social Worker: Mandy Jeffries, MSW

Pre-Collegiate Educator: Paul Gibbs

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Phone: 303-433-0645

Site Director: Stephanie Pena, MSW

Scout Director: Sergio Colmenero

#### Westwood Site:

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Phone: 303-975-0078

Site Director: Phuong Phan, MSW

Administrative Assistant: Mayumi Kawafune

Education Specialist: Lisa Mueller

## THE BRIDGE CONNECTION

### Kid's Korner:



Luley is an amazing young woman that attends the South Lincoln Bridge Project. Excelling in the 5th grade, Luley's teachers at school rave about her determination, enthusiasm and willingness to learn.

Luley and her family are originally from Somalia, Africa. She has eight siblings that she helps take care of when she is not busy at school or doing her homework. Luley has attended Miracles on Ice hockey camp the past two summers with other Bridge Project youth. Luley likes to play tetherball, dance, read books and spend time with her friends and family.

Luley has recently applied to attend school at Denver Center for International Studies. Luley hopes to attend this school to receive a great education. "DCIS is a great school to learn from and I will be able to learn about different cultures around the world," Luley said. We are very excited to continue watching Luley blossom.

## Pawsitive Connections is back at the Bridge Project!

Pawsitive Connections is a ten week program where Bridge youth are given the opportunity to assist in the training, grooming and care of service dogs. Currently five youth are involved in the program from the Columbine and the South Lincoln sites.

Pawsitive Connections takes place at Freedom Service Dogs in Englewood through funding provided by CBR Youth Connect. Freedom Services Dogs' mission is to train dogs to assist people with disabilities, thus increasing their independence and peace of mind. Many of the trained dogs go on to assist disabled military veterans in the hopes that it will restore some normalcy to their challenging lives. The dogs trained by Freedom Service Dogs are often rescued from shelters. They seek to provide shelter animals a second chance, while at the same time, providing a loving and devoted partner in life to those with disabilities. Rather than returning to the shelter, the dogs that don't go on to be service dogs may become therapy dogs or are adopted out to caring homes.

The program was first introduced to Bridge last winter by 2nd year MSW intern BJ Allen. This year, the program is being carried on by Devon McClurken, also a 2nd year MSW intern with the assistance of her supervisor, Mandy Jeffries and Alison Levy of CBR Youth Connect.

In the program, the youth learn 'clicker training,' a method of dog training that utilizes positive reinforcement. They also teach the dogs to respond to hand and/or



Students graduate from a ten week program at Pawsitive Connections.

verbal signals. The youth also participate in various activities that help them make connections between what the dogs are learning and what they can learn about themselves in the process. Additionally, participants have an opportunity to visit a shelter where some of the dogs that they train were rescued. By participating in these activities, the kids learn positive social skills, increase their empathy and nurturing feelings towards animals and humans, and develop relationships with each other and the people in their lives.

We are very excited about the Pawsitive Connections program and would like to thank our committed volunteers, Scott Steiss and Marlin Barad, who are joining us each week- we couldn't do it without you!

## Renewable energy program continues at Bridge

For many years, the Bridge Project has participated in a science/literacy program called the Coalition for Learning Opportunities and United Tutors (CLOUT), which is run by the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL). This year, for the first time, students have the opportunity to visit the NREL wind farm near Lamar, Colorado. Thanks to one of Bridge's NREL tutors, the students will be able to see wind turbines in action and gain a better understanding of their benefits.

Students in the CLOUT program learn about renewable energy sources such as solar, wind, geothermal and water. The program runs for the school year and is structured to include reading and vocabulary development and science experiments about renewable energy. The experiments range from students building their own wind turbines and solar cars to learning about electrolysis and food energy.



Students at Quigg Newton build miniature wind turbines to learn about the benefits of wind energy.



High school students in the Bridge Scholars program tour the University of Denver campus.

## Become a "fan" of the Bridge Project on Facebook!

Stay up-to-date on all the activities at the sites, learn about special events and more!

Did you also know you can make a donation online?

Visit [www.du.edu/bridgeproject](http://www.du.edu/bridgeproject)

to make a donation today.

Questions? Need Help?

Contact Kara Wilkoff at 303.871.2319

## Westwood moves to a new location

In January, the Westwood Bridge Project moved into a new space located at the Westwood Opportunity Center. The new site, located at 855 South Irving Street, is less than a block south of the previous location. The site shares programming space and classrooms with the Denver Housing Authority's management staff, as well as the resident and community services resource advisors. The move has allowed for new and improved classroom spaces, including nineteen computers in the lab. Due to the location of the new site, visibility in the neighborhood has increased and Westwood's registration list and number of participants continues to grow each day. The Westwood kids and staff are excited about having a brand new space to work, learn and play!



The computer lab at Westwood's new location holds 19 computer stations.

## Meet the board



### Kai Yeung

Kai's involvement with Bridge started when he was 14 years old as a participant at the Westwood Bridge Project. He was employed as a Tech Team member in the computer lab and shortly thereafter promoted to be a Lab Manager. After graduating from high school, Kai earned a Daniels Fund scholarship to study accounting, finance and political science at the University of Colorado. While at CU, Kai has held several different jobs, including positions at the Daniels Fund, TIAA-CREF and the U.S. Department of Interior. In May, Kai will graduate from CU and begin a full time position at the DOI. Kai is very humbled and honored to be part of the Bridge Project Board of Directors.



### Andrew Schwartz

Andrew Schwartz is a shareholder at the firm Otten, Johnson, Robinson, Neff & Ragonetti, P.C. and practices with the firm's real estate group. His practice currently focuses on commercial acquisitions, dispositions, leasing and real estate finance. Andrew spent approximately 10 years working in other areas of the law before focusing on commercial real estate law. During that time, he worked in the areas of labor/employment law and commercial litigation, and served as General Counsel to a technology company that he co-founded and helped to take public. Andrew worked on the scholarship committee since 2005 and joined the Bridge Project Board in 2009.

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Herb & Barbara Cook  
 In honor of Phil Winn's Birthday

**Students from the Bridge Scholars program tour DU campus**

High school students from all four Bridge Project sites had an opportunity to tour the University of Denver campus in February during a workshop day for future college freshmen. Sixteen students, part of the Bridge Scholars program, participated in workshops on interview skills, resume writing, college/scholarship essay writing and business attire. Even with all of these interesting and useful topics, the highlight of the day was lunch, when these high school juniors and seniors had a chance to mingle with DU students in the cafeteria and get a taste of "college life." For many of these young men and women, it was their first visit to a college campus and they now have a better idea of what life has in store for them after graduation from high school. The Bridge Scholars program would like to thank Sol Richardson, Darcy Leaverton and David Davenport for their hard work in organizing the workshops as well as DU's Graduate School of Social Work for providing space for the workshops.

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**Have you thought about including the Bridge Project in your will or estate plan?**

For more information, please contact Lynne Wilky at lwilky@du.edu or 303-871-2735.

**The Saunders Construction Building Confidence in Kids partnership continues**

In 2009, the Bridge Project was honored to be selected as the first non-profit partner of the Saunders Construction *Building Confidence in Kids* community initiative.

Our partnership with Saunders has been a huge success over the year, allowing Saunders' employees to build strong relationships with the children, families and staff of the Bridge Project.

Beginning in March 2009, the Saunders team led projects that truly changed the lives of our Bridge Project children and their families. For Mother's Day, volunteers helped the children make picture frames for their mothers. Another group designed, organized and implemented a landscaping makeover at the Columbine Site. Last summer, hundreds of kids were given new summer shoes as part of a Saunders shoe drive. However, the biggest project was the incredible renovation of the South Lincoln site. While the project took on a life of its own, it has significantly changed the lives of over one hundred youth who participate at the South Lincoln site every day. The children are proud of their new site and are thriving in a brighter, cleaner and happier space.



The Bridge Project is extremely grateful for the chance to partner with such a community-driven organization, and excited the partnership will continue with Saunders program.

In February 2010, Saunders proclaimed that they will continue their partnership with Bridge and extend it into a two-year program. Marcy Loughran, Marketing and Communications Manager and the lead on the *Building Confidence in Kids* program explained, "Saunders 2009 partnership with the University of Denver Bridge Project was an amazing year. The Bridge staff and volunteers are truly inspiring and we are honored to have had the opportunity to meet and work with so many of you. In fact, we can't let go. We are pleased to announce our continued partnership with the Bridge Project for the 2010 *Building Confidence in Kids* program. We look forward to another year of helping Bridge staff and youth reach their goals."

The Bridge Project is very excited to see how we can deepen our partnership with Saunders Construction in 2010. While the opportunities are endless, we are now in the process of developing some projects that will be meaningful to both Saunders Construction and the youth the Bridge Project serves.

The Bridge Project would like to thank Charles Jordy, Jr. for three years of service as Chairman of the Bridge Project Board. During his tenure, he oversaw the opening of the Quigg Newton site and guided Bridge in establishing two endowments. He has been a tremendous friend to Bridge and we are so grateful he remains a member of the Board and continues to help us to grow and serve as many at risk youth as possible.

We are thrilled to announce our new Chairman of the Board, Alec Wynne. Serving in the past as our Board Secretary & Treasurer, Alec assumed his new responsibilities in March 2010.

**The Bridge Project is proud to announce the installation of its first SMART Board at the Columbine site!**

A SMART Board is an interactive white board that allows students to use "touch technology" to interact with SMART programs. Think of your finger as a mouse - enabling you to open and close programs, scroll through documents, move objects, and even navigate the internet. The possibilities are endless!! Bridge received the SMART Board through the Morgridge 21st Century Classroom grant and hopes to equip each site with this magnificent piece of technology in the future.

# Thank You

## To Our Friends and Contributors

June 15, 2009 - January 1, 2010

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