PUKSTA SCHOLARS CONVENE IN DENVER

By Larcy Brooks, Puksta Scholar

On the morning of January 23, 2016, Puksta Scholars from all over northern Colorado were on our way to the annual intercollegiate retreat in downtown Denver. The first session, led by Zach Mercurio, focused on helping us “live and lead with authentic purpose” and to recognize the long-lasting effects that the smallest of good actions can do for others. Next, Dara Burwell took us through a workshop entitled “Intro to Anti-Oppression & Equity”, where we dissected the power of language, considered how oppression manifests in different ways, and how taking action for change can take many different forms, some more effective than others. The next morning, we returned for a very useful workshop on marketing ourselves through LinkedIn profiles from Pete Cutone, followed by a panel of Puksta alumni sharing how the Puksta journey continues after graduation and tips for dealing with barriers in translating passion into action.

Personally, the evening dinner and celebrations with my fellow scholars is always my favorite part of the retreat. When you are in the middle of creating your Puksta project, you can become detached from the passion of it, but there is nothing like witnessing the raw energy and love of a room filled with Puksta Scholars to remind you why you do what you do. As a third year scholar, it was also a reminder that my journey in the program will soon be coming to a close, and I was struck by how deeply my life has been changed by the Puksta experience. I was reinvigorated to take full advantage of my time left in the program.

A first year scholar, Andrea Bonilla, shares her experience at the retreat: “This was probably the best experience I have ever had as a Puksta Scholar. I didn’t expect to come out of the retreat so inspired and motivated from all the different testimonies and successful projects that I heard from the current and alumni scholars. The passion and drive for changing the issues in our society of every person in that room was definitely felt. I cannot wait to see what all the Puksta Scholars have in store for the future!”

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On the other end of the Puksta journey, third year scholar Laleobe Olaka said that, “The best part of this year’s retreat was getting to know my fellow scholars in a different environment, which allowed me to build deeper bonds. Also, getting to know my roommate from another school was really moving for me this year.”

All around, Puksta Scholars love our yearly retreat for the opportunity it gives us to reconnect to the passions at the root of our projects and to the greater Puksta community. This year was certainly no exception.

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2015-2016 PUBLIC GOOD FUND AWARDS

We are pleased to announce the Public Good Fund recipients for the 2015-2016 academic year:

Yolanda (Yoli) Anyon, Graduate School of Social Work—Increasing Opportunities for Organizational Leadership and Decision-Making Among Low-Income Youth of Color in After School Programs

Bonnie Clark, Anthropology—New Communities of Memory: The DU Amache Project 2016-2017

Oliver Kaplan, Josef Korbel School of International Studies—The Korbel Asylum Project

Shannon Murphy, Biological Sciences; Robin Tinghitella, Biological Sciences; & Jennifer Hoffman, Physics and Astronomy—DUSciTech: A STEM Summer Camp for Girls from Underrepresented Backgrounds at the University of Denver

Cecilia Orphan, Morgridge College of Education—Leading Collective Civic Impact: Measuring and Advancing Higher Education’s Contributions to Civic Health in Colorado Community Partner(s): Campus Compact of the Mountain West

Matthew Taylor, Geography—People in the Path of the Nicaragua Canal: Working with Popol Na and Local Communities to Document Current Livelihoods to Permit a More Just Resettlement
MY PUKSTA PROJECT: HASEEB RAHAT

By Haseeb Rahat, Puksta Scholar

Growing up, I was exposed to the various types of healthcare-related injustices that exist in our world, so I knew the purpose of my life at a very early age. I wanted to apply practical solutions to health-related challenges faced by people not only in the United States, but throughout the world. Therefore, as a Puksta Scholar, I have spent my undergraduate career working towards issues related to healthcare.

In 2013, I started working on a project that deals with Iatrogenic Adrenal Insufficiency in Eosinophilic Esophagitis patients due to Swallowed Topical Steroids. The purpose of starting this project was to further strengthen the positive treatment of Eosinophilic Esophagitis patients. Over the years, I have continuously collected data retrospectively and prospectively through surveys and interpersonal relationships with physicians, the patients and their families.

Working with the same clinical team and patients, my passion for helping this community grew to a whole new level. I felt as if I have a certain responsibility to these patients and this community in order to better their qualities of life. Eosinophilic Esophagitis is a disease in which the esophagus experiences inflammation and therefore prevents children from eating or drinking anything without an enormous amount of pain. Unfortunately, there is no cure for this. The only treatment available for this is Swallowed Topical Steroids, which have life-threatening effects on the lives of these children. These life-threatening conditions include hypoglycemia, hypotension and growth failure. This disease is one of the least-studied cases within the medical field. Through our project, we hoped to further educate the medical community and prevent such life-threatening conditions from occurring amongst these children.

In order to do so, we understood that bringing awareness within the medical community across the globe is the most effective pathway in accomplishing our purpose. Over the last couple of months, I have been honored to have my project published in the Journal of Investigative Medicine and Journal of Pediatric Gastroenterology and Nutrition. Also, I have gotten the opportunity to present my project at seven different conferences and forums across the country including the American Federation for Medical Research (AFMR) conference in California and the North American Society for Pediatric Gastroenterology, Hepatology and Nutrition (NASPGHAN) Annual Meeting in Washington, D.C.

Over the course of my undergraduate career, the Puksta Foundation has provided me and empowered me with the knowledge, skills, and experiences needed in order to take this project to new heights. As a Puksta Scholar, it is an honor to be getting published in these national journals as a first author and getting to present at these international conferences in front of hundreds of individuals from the medical community from across the globe. It is incredibly important to use our passion to bring tangible change within our communities via public products. Now, I am finally getting the opportunity to translate all of my hard work into various channels of public products in order to bring a tangible change within this medical community. This is something that ties with my long-term goals harmoniously as well. As an aspiring physician, I want to help my local and global communities overcome health-related challenges and empower them to live better lives.
WRIT ENGAGEMENT CORPS EXPANDS MEMBERSHIP & OUTREACH

By Dr. Liz Drogin, Writing Program Faculty and CCESL Service Learning Mini-grant Awardee

WRIT Engagement Corps (WEC) is an undergraduate organization dedicated to providing literacy outreach and support in local schools and community organizations. WEC grew out of Dr. Liz Drogin’s Winter 2015 community-engaged writing course, “The Power of Stories.” This course invited Drogin’s students to teach a writing-intensive enrichment course, also centered on stories and storytelling, at Grant Beacon Middle School. A successful partnership developed, and in Spring 2015 Drogin collaborated with nine DU undergraduates to launch WEC.

Since that time, WEC has expanded to include over twenty students who teach, facilitate small group literacy activities, and provide classroom support at both Grant Beacon Middle School and Asbury Elementary School. Sarah Hart Micke, Teaching Assistant Professor in the Writing Program and Assistant Director of the Writing Center, has recently joined as a second faculty advisor. This summer WEC looks forward to further developing its infrastructure, organizational capacity, and long term vision.

Below, two of our members reflect upon their experiences with WEC:

“This was my first year participating in WEC, and I was able to help the curriculum development team and then see the curriculum used in the classroom at Grant Beacon Middle School. I loved thinking about how to teach writing to middle schoolers and then implementing the plan. It was so great to see the students become interested in the writing topics, participate in class, and have their writing improve through the quarter as their love of writing also flourished.

I taught the lessons on informal journal writing and research-based writing. The day I introduced research they all rolled their eyes and said they wanted to keep doing the "fun writing" we started off with. However, by the end of the unit, they all found topics they were interested in and some even presented their findings at the symposium on the last day of the quarter. I would have to say it was a successful winter quarter, and I can’t wait to see what spring’s group has to offer!”

-Alisa Carstens

“Joining Writ Engagement Corps has honestly been one of the best decisions I’ve made here at DU. I’ve been involved in WEC since the beginning of this year and it has already changed my view on teaching. Never before have I worked with the middle school age group. At first it seemed like a challenge, but these students were a nice change of pace from elementary students.

Through small groups and by lead teaching the segment on personal narratives, I was able to learn a little bit more about these students, the struggles of middle school, their personalities, and their passions. It’s great to see that their writing in this class was one of their first avenues of discovering some of their interests and talents. Learning more about their perspectives helps to give insight into our neighboring communities. It reminds me that there is more outside of this college community. I would have to say it has definitely enriched my own life and I hope through this program we can enrich theirs.”

-Julie Gunderson

If you would like more information about WEC please contact duwritengagementcorps@gmail.com.
DU SERVICE & CHANGE: SERVING DURING THE SHORT WINTER QUARTER

By Sarah Yaffe, Co-President, DU Service & Change

Winter Quarter is often considered the quickest quarter at DU for most students, as finals are crunched in to ten weeks of classes without a break. Fortunately, DUSC engaged students from many different programs and backgrounds to make Winter Quarter one of the most meaningful yet.

DUSC was grateful to welcome back two of our co-presidents who were studying abroad. Neda Kikhia who was studying in Turkey and Ashley Edinger who spent the quarter in Costa Rica. Their time back on campus helped guide co-chairs and help motivate new projects and opportunities. In addition, DUSC Co-president Sarah Yaffe received the Diversity Summit’s Undergraduate Champion of Change Award.

Project Volunteer, the committee that plans large days of service, continued their three year tradition by marching in the Martin Luther King Jr March/Parade along with 30,000 other activists. DU Service & Change co-programmed with the Public Achievement (PA) program. Project Volunteer brought a dozen students to march in solidarity with the civil rights movement. In addition, 60 letters were written by both DUSC volunteers and PA students to reflect on the importance of the civil rights movement.

Co-chair of Project Action, Julia Scanlan, brought five volunteers to the Ronald McDonald House to make a delicious pasta meal for the children receiving medical services and their families. Many laughs were shared between the families and volunteers because food is an amazing bridge between communities. Another amazing community connection event was facilitated by DUSC Co-chair, Michaela Nee who took students to Metro Caring, an ongoing partnership which connects the local food bank, the campus Chaplain Gary Brower and DU volunteers. This partnership continues throughout Spring quarter.

Café 180 was another destination for our students during Winter Quarter. Michaela Nee brought DU volunteers to make lunch for restaurant goers on a beautiful Saturday afternoon in early January. Café 180 is an amazing organization that allows the customer to pay what they can afford or volunteer for food. After the event, the co-chair commented on a rewarding experience, “One of the more shy volunteers texted me afterwards and asked me how they could continue to volunteer at Café 180. I’m glad I could connect a student with this organization, and that connection is really why I volunteer.”

DUSC Co-president, Sarah Yaffe, hosted a croquet event for students who are in the English Learning Center. At least seven countries were represented by the students playing with senior citizens. We all learned that smiles are universal, and playing croquet, even with seniors who are affected by Alzheimer’s disease, is the best use of an hour possible.

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At DUSC, we all started to get excited for Day of Action, an event that invites 350+ elementary school students and their families on campus. Volunteers will help make college more accessible while laughing with students. Day of Action is always a high light of the volunteering year and is not to be missed. The planning for this event has continued to grow as DUSC co-president Neda Kikhia expanded the day to a week of public good.

For more information on how to be a DUSC leader, email us at du.service.change@gmail.com

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Ciera Blehm named Newman Civic Fellow

Congratulations to CCESL student Ciera Blehm for receiving the Campus Compact 2016 Newman Civic Fellows Award.

The award honors student leaders committed to creating lasting change in communities both local and global.

The Chancellor’s office nominated Ciera, praising her dedication to connecting academic learning with service to the community. In addition to her role as a Puksta Scholar, the letter from Chancellor Chopp also notes Ciera’s involvement with DU’s Undergraduate Student Government, the Excelling Leaders Institute, and the Social Justice Living and Learning Community.

Way to go, Ciera!
SLA PROFILE: DAMON MOSLEY

By DaMon Mosley, Service Learning Associate

As a Service Learning Associate working with Economics Professor Christine Ngo, I have had the fortune to serve as a liaison for Professor Ngo’s undergraduate and graduate courses. For the undergraduate course in International Economics and the graduate course in Technology and Policy, we worked to find local, internationally-focused non-profits that were conducting research that was relevant to the material Professor Ngo is teaching in each course. This allowed us to successfully partner with two organizations in Denver on joint research projects. Aimed to provide Professor Ngo’s students with hands-on experience in real-world development projects, the collaboration also serves as a pipeline of ready-made international development professionals for the partner organizations.

Working on this project and with CCESL has afforded me the opportunity to expand my networking, public speaking, and project management abilities. As I continue my career abroad in international development, these are skill sets that will prove to be invaluable in personal and work environments. The training that CCESL has provided, in subjects ranging from cross-cultural communication to project planning and implementation, has proven to be helpful not only with my work as a Service Learning Associate, but also with my coursework and with potential employers who are seeking professionals with experience in project and program management. Overall, it has been a great learning experience.

COMMUNITY-ENGAGED RESEARCHERS FEATURED AT FOUNDERS FORUM

CCESL was proud to see that two of the featured faculty speakers at the Spring Quarter Founders Forum—Dr. Kim Bender and Dr. Erica Chenoweth—were past recipients of our Public Good Fund, which provides financial support for community-engaged research.

Dr. Bender’s Public Good-funded project involved using Photovoice as a means to engage homeless youth, and at the forum, she presented her work on the importance of belonging.

Dr. Chenoweth’s Public Good-funded project was the creation of a video highlighting nonviolent resistance throughout history. At the forum, she presented her research on the effectiveness of nonviolent resistance.

Their talks, along with those of other faculty presenters, can be seen on the DU YouTube channel.
TRANSFORMING PASSION INTO PURPOSE

By Kate Powers, CCESL Office Coordinator

DU students have a tremendous opportunity to turn their passions into purpose. At times, however, it can be difficult to determine how to best achieve this goal. The Work on Purpose workshop held on Friday, February 26th, guided attendees through various strategies to identify the kind of work that is right for them and for the world by helping them realize the unique ways in which they can make a social impact.

A program of the national organization Echoing Green, the free, half-day workshop instructed students, recent alumni and DU community members on how to match their heads (skills and education) and their hearts (passions and values). Facilitators engaged participants in a variety of activities, including an alumni student panel, the crafting of a Hustle Statement, and the identification of a supportive mentor. One participant remarked, “I am walking away from Work on Purpose with tangible and solid plans, goals and motivation to pursue my passion.” This workshop is held annually, so returning students are encouraged to join us next spring! The workshop was hosted and co-sponsored by the CCSEL, Student Life, DU Service & Change, and the Living and Learning Communities.

CCESL STUDENT’S ARTWORK FEATURED IN SOCIAL JUSTICE EXHIBIT

On the third floor of the Anderson Academic Commons lives the exhibit, “To the Things That Matter: A Community Collaborative for Social Change,” and Public Achievement Team Lead Kristy Kumar has original artwork featured. Titled “She Woke,” the piece moves from right to left, tracing the formation of her racial identity and her own process of decolonization.
PA SUMMIT BRINGS MORE THAN 250 HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS TO DU

By Jaci Abeloe, CCESL Graduate Assistant

The Public Achievement program is a youth civic engagement initiative focused on the most basic concepts of citizenship, democracy, and public work and is built upon the framework of community organizing. In Public Achievement, we pair university students with Denver and Aurora high school students to identify issues that students are passionate about in their community. Together, these teams conduct community-based research and carry out a public work or service-learning project to address the issue they identified.

One of our more impactful events is our Public Achievement Summit, which was held on the DU campus on February 12, 2016. The Summit is a field trip meant to introduce our high school students to a college campus while sharing our experiences as participants in higher education. This year’s Summit was our largest yet, welcoming over 250 high school students to campus. The day’s events included fun workshops hosted by University staff and students as well as a campus tour led by DU students and other engaging activities.

Workshops covered a range of student activities as well as information regarding college access. One workshop included an inside look at the residential experience of a college student. Hosted by Housing and Residential Education staff, this workshop even included a tour of a residential hall and a chance to view a dorm room. Another insightful workshop was a panel discussion focused on first generation college student experiences. This panel was led by DU graduate and undergraduate first generation students, all of whom were able to share their personal experiences and address questions and concerns from our high school participants.

Students were also able to visit the Museum of Anthropology, which was featuring “Hunger through My Lens: Photographs of Hunger in Everyday Life.” The exhibit was an opportunity to learn more about the impact of hunger on individuals, families, and communities throughout Colorado while also gaining insight into the process of curating an anthropological collection on a college campus. Other workshops were led by Greek Life members and staff, the DU Programming Board, the Office of Admissions, John Gudvangen from the Financial Aid Office, and students from BSA and ASA.
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT CORPS: WORKING WITH HEALTH LEADERSHIP

By Monsi Vazquez, Community Engagement Corps Student Tutor

[Editor’s note: This school year, Monsi has been serving at Abraham High School through CCESL’s Community Engagement Corps. We asked her to share about her experience.]

Working at Abraham Lincoln High School has truly been an eye-opening experience. I was not only able to learn more about reproductive health, but I was also able to motivate these teenagers to follow their dreams and not let anybody tell them that they cannot do it. I am extremely proud of these students. The amount of effort that they put into this group is astounding. It is so wonderful that we have students like this working towards bringing reproductive health to high schools. This is a group that I started last year, so it is wonderful that I was able to come back this year and mentor the future of Health Leadership.

Reproductive health is something vital that everyone needs to know, and it surprises me that high schoolers are taking the initiative to get that information out there. Many more students have been wanting to join this group, and we are even planning on bringing this organization to different Denver Public High Schools. We hope that the more we promote it, the more people will want to learn and advocate for the teaching of reproductive health.

Aside from working on reproductive health, we took the initiative to try and advocate for healthy relationships. Domestic abuse in relationships is something that many of us are affected by, and the students want people to know just what an abusive relationship is. We decided to make an infographic and hang it up around the school.

Rose Barcklow, the Health Education Advisor from Abraham Lincoln High School, works with Health Leadership and is my mentor. She truly taught me so much more than I would have expected, both scientifically and how to communicate with others about such a controversial topic. Rose really pushed me to pursue what interests me, and I honestly learned much more about myself. I now know that I want to work with teenagers in the future to keep pushing them to follow their dreams. They should never be told that they cannot do it.

Furthermore, working with the community I grew up in really made me feel as if I was giving back and helping those that are currently in the position that I was in last year. Most of these students are seniors or juniors that are planning their futures. I know that many of the students feel as if they cannot go to college because of various reasons, and my hopes are that after they have seen someone that used to go to their high school attend college, it will show them that they are capable. Although I do love working with the health education aspect of this job, I also love knowing that I am a mentor or role model for these students. I want them to see that their history does not determine their future. They are more than capable of going to the college that they want. They are more than capable of getting their PhD. They are more than capable of getting the future that they want.
ALUMNI CORNER: FELIPE VIEYRA

Interview by Michael Gooch, CCESL Social Media Specialist

Can you share a little about what you are currently up to now in your career and work?

Currently, I oversee the development and implementation of the Zarlengo Outreach Program. The goal of the Zarlengo Outreach Program is to provide access to high quality, developmentally appropriate soccer programs to Latino children in under-resourced areas throughout Colorado. Currently, I oversee three programs in three different areas: a 5th grade program in Greeley, Colorado, two 6th grade programs here in Southwest Denver, and the other in far northeast Denver. The program serves 172 Latino youth and gives them the chance to play in a quality competitive soccer program. I oversee a scholarship program that provides Latino youth the opportunity to play competitive soccer at the youth club.

There are currently 10 Zarlengo Scholars in the program. I also partner with organizations and schools in Colorado to host free soccer clinics with low-income communities. I enjoy working with Latino youth and families within Rapids Youth Soccer because I truly believe all children should have access to these opportunities regardless of where they come from.

I sit on various boards in Denver, including on the ACCESO Spanish Advisory Board through the Denver Clerk and Recorders Office as the Outreach Chair and on the Denver Young Democrats Board as the Event Coordinator. I am on the Philanthropic Leadership Committee for The Denver Foundation, and last but not least, I am on the Immigrant and Refugee Commission.

Could you share your history with CCESL and what did while you were here?

As an undergraduate, I spent a great deal of time at CCESL. I was a Puksta Scholar for my 4 years at DU, and through that scholarship, I had the opportunity to meet and be mentored by amazing people in CCESL. The scholarship helped me develop my self-interest and pushed me to get to know the Denver community by working with non-profits throughout the city. Not only was I a Puksta Scholar, but I was also involved in the Public Achievement program for 3 years as a Public Achievement Coach.

What is one of your favorite memories at CCESL?

I would say that my favorite memories at CCESL are the meetings with the Puksta Scholars. It is a challenging experience to move away from home for college, especially for a first-generation college student. To have a family at DU (which was what the Puksta Scholars Program is) that pushes you, supports you, and keeps you accountable to who you are—there is nothing like it.

Any advice for current students that are working with CCESL?

I would say my advice to them is to really build relationships with community members outside of the DU community. There are a lot of great organizations doing much-needed work in Denver, and the work you are doing at CCESL can continue post-graduation if you have a good network of people outside of DU with whom you can connect. Basically, network as much as you can while you are in school.

And lastly, what are some of your goals, or where do you see yourself in the next 10 years?

I would love to work for the State Department in the future. I think it would be great to get into international diplomacy. I would also like to get my masters soon in public health or public policy (education or immigration). I love Denver, and I see myself working hard to support this community that has given me so much. I want to continue working in civic engagement and supporting the Latino community and immigrant and refugee communities. I hope to be in a director position or in school in 10 years and owning my own business. As you can tell, I am still trying to narrow it down.
LEVERAGING SERVICE FOR PUBLIC GOOD
WORKSHOP SERIES

Dates/Times throughout Spring Quarter
(Lunch from Little India will be included)

Who? DU Students focused on Service, Inclusive Excellence, and Building our One DU Community

When?
- ‘Reciprocal Relationships’ - 12-12:50pm on Tuesday, April 26
- ‘Tracking and Measuring Impact’ - 12-12:50pm on Friday, April 29
- ‘Striving for IE when Serving the Public Good’ – 12-12:50pm on Tues, May 3
- ‘Critical Reflection’ - 12-12:50pm on Wednesday, May 11

Where? Center for Community Engagement & Service Learning (CCESL), Suite 18 in Driscoll Student Center South (under the DU Bookstore)

Why? Connect with other DU Students to explore collaborative service projects, gain skills, and increase the impact of volunteers contributing to the public good!

*Limited space is available. Please register today at: [http://goo.gl/forms/ulGoJXiatu](http://goo.gl/forms/ulGoJXiatu)