PUBLIC GOOD GRANT: INCREASING LEADERSHIP AND DECISION-MAKING OPPORTUNITIES AMONG YOUTH

By Yoli Anyon, Assistant Professor, Graduate School of Social Work

CCESL funded a Public Good Grant titled Increasing opportunities for organizational leadership and decision-making among low-income youth of color in after school programs. The aim of this Public Good Grant was to increase organizational leadership opportunities for youth at The Bridge Project and to strengthen the organization’s capacity to incorporate youth voice into service improvement processes, planning, and decision-making. Specifically, funds from CCESL supported the establishment of a Youth Action Board (YAB) at the Bridge Project.

Youth recruitment for the YAB happened in late May 2016. We interviewed a total of 8 youth across the four program sites. The YAB began meeting in June 2016 and consistently engaged 7 young people over the summer and through the academic year. Summer meetings took place every week and were facilitated by a doctoral student from the Graduate School of Social Work and two staff members from Bridge. The youth all attended a group team-builder hosted at Denver-based X-Arena that challenged them physically and supported them in learning important group communication and teamwork skills. In June, the YAB members analyzed focus group transcriptions from the Bridge Project evaluation in order to develop data-driven recommendations for service improvement. The youth identified sports and physical activity as potential areas of programmatic

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growth for the Bridge Project that would lead to greater engagement of older youth. They presented their ideas to the Bridge Executive Director in June and received constructive feedback on their proposal.

At the same time, the youth began planning for their summit, creating all materials including outreach emails, the agenda for the day, catering, and complementary t-shirts for participants. The summit was held on August 19 in the community room in Craig Hall at DU. Over 80 individuals participated, representing more than 10 local organizations, including all four of the Bridge Project’s sites. The agenda for the morning included: time for each youth organization to introduce themselves, several team building activities to help summit attendees get to know each other, and a workshop on deconstructing messages youth receive from the media. The afternoon was filled with presentations of participants’ youth education, awareness and advocacy work (including those from YELL participants), a workshop on crafting personal narratives, and a closing evaluation.

During the academic year, Bridge took full ownership of facilitating the YAB, creating a new position for a Youth Voice Coordinator. From September through May, YAB meetings were held once a month. The group typically met up to six hours, combining each meeting with a field trip that incorporated sports or physical activity (e.g. rock climbing, bowling, trampoline jumping). The meetings were held on Denver Public Schools non-student contact days when students did not have school, leading to 100% participation. The YAB worked with the Bridge program manager to further incorporate sports and physical activity into services through a) acquisition of sports equipment that enabled new forms of play at Bridge and, b) encouraging all social-emotional skill building groups to start with a physical warm-up exercise outside when weather permitted.

Of note, the YAB youth also each took a leadership and facilitation role at their local Bridge Project site in implementing the Youth Engaged in Leadership and Learning (YELL) curriculum throughout the school year. Additionally, YAB members attended additional leadership summits held by other Denver-based youth organizations to identify new approaches that could be integrated into their second summit, while also improving their communication and teamwork skills. The success of the YAB in its first year led the Bridge Project to institutionalize the program and seek funding on its behalf independently.
BRIDGING PASSION AND PURPOSE: STUDENT CREATES SOCCER CAMP

By Jimmy Hessler, Community Engaged Student Fellow

As a junior at the University of Denver, I have seen the positivity that soccer can bring to both individuals and communities, and because of this, I love it more than anything in this world. Soccer has given me so much — friendship, happiness, competition. It has truly been my greatest metaphor for life.

In the summer of 2016, my friend Miguel Cortes and I created a free summer soccer camp for low-income youth of Jackson Hole, Wyoming. During the camp’s first summer, we had a total of 31 players, ages 9-14, and 3 coaches. By the summer of 2017, our numbers grew to over 80 players and 7 coaches.

The main goal of the camp is to give underprivileged youth an opportunity to participate in something that they want to participate in — that gets them out of the house, but also teaches them the great values that soccer has to offer, such as patience, respect, teamwork, community and hard work.

This past summer I also introduced classroom sessions in which the coaches spoke to groups of players about our college experiences, why we chose our course of study, and potential college majors for them to begin thinking about.

This project has been tremendously important to me because it has shown me how possible it is to change the trajectory of lives through kindness, patience and belief. The relationships I have created with both players and coaches over these past 2 years are amazing, and now I feel a responsibility to remain in these people’s lives until I see them succeed. From their successes, I know players will have the tools to lift others up. It is this cycle that I wish to create and maintain.

This project is important because it shows the power that we all have to lift others up. Whether big or small, any act of kindness can change someone’s life for the better. It is my belief that when undertaking any project from a true place of love, it is always worth the work that it takes. This project has not always been easy; there have been many bumps along the way, but it shows that when a goal is truly something of unselfish desire, there is no other option but to succeed.

The future of the JH Community Soccer Camp is still a bit unknown. I hope to give the reins of this project to my partner, Miguel Cortes. In the summer of 2018, I will continue to further my knowledge of the world and how best to give youth the tools they need to get to and graduate from college, and lead successful lives upon graduation. Currently, my expertise lies in the field of soccer, but I hope to expand this over the next 2 years so that when I graduate, I am ready to be more than a soccer coach, but also an educator. Education is the key, and through soccer, I have gained the relationships necessary for these kids to truly listen to what I have to say when the time comes.

I will be expanding similar efforts into the Denver area upon my return from Brazil in early 2018. I already have a group of middle and high school students in the Denver area whom I began coaching in the spring of 2017. I hope this group will become my pilot group to begin holding sessions on the University of Denver campus to help them find their passions off the field, and begin manifesting these passions into growth.

With the potential success of this programming with my pilot group, I see much opportunity to involve more students, faculty, and peers to help offer youth opportunity to find out what their goals are and how to make these goals a reality.
MENTORING YOUTH THROUGH MEDIA

By Julie Gunderson

This summer I had the opportunity to mentor at-risk middle schoolers through digital storytelling. My name is Julie Gunderson and I am currently a fourth year student in my last quarter at DU. I am majoring in Psychology and Sociology with a minor in Intercultural Global Studies and Urban Studies. Growing up in Iowa, I was fortunate enough to be a native-born citizen.

The students that I worked alongside this summer did not have the same advantage, but they have overcome much more. Over the course of six weeks, ten students and their mentors met every Thursday from 3:00 – 6:00 p.m. We gathered at Open Media Foundation’s main office, with dedicated time in the computer lab. Through the organization of the Bridge Project, we, as mentors, helped guide the students in creating a digital story about their lives.

Most of the students were not born here in the U.S. Immigrating from Mexico or Africa at a young age; these pre-teens have seen a lot in their lifetimes. As they started growing up and settling here in Denver, most of these students come from low-income backgrounds. I was fortunate enough to work with an incredible seventh grade student who moved here from a town outside of Nairobi, Kenya. She is also Muslim. Middle school can be challenging enough, but on top of the many difficulties, she also experienced bullying due to wearing a hijab.

For some, this project was the first time these students were sharing their stories. Others have shared pieces of their story before, but have never made a visual representation to present to the world. Some of the representations told stories of good times with friends, whereas others expressed the heartache of isolation. Either way, they had an opportunity to put their vulnerabilities on the table. Students had the chance to share their story, build confidence, and contribute a unique perspective to our group. Through articulating their own story, students could understand more of their own identity and their contributions.

Not only were the students able to develop skills in iMovie, I developed skills as well. I had never used iMovie or made a digital story myself. Honestly, I felt like I learned more from these pre-teens then they could have learned from me. Growing up in Iowa, I never really encountered immigration or even those who identify as immigrants. I also never understood what it was like to be an adolescent experiencing immigration. Working with my mentee, I was shocked by what she encountered only up to fifth grade. Hearing her story helped me to reflect on my own. Not only did I reflect on my story, but I reflected on my privilege as well.

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In a day and age where intolerance is portrayed as an acceptable form of behavior, sharing personal stories is even more important. Understanding the life of someone different from you is the first step to building community. Equally important as building community, is building self-esteem. Middle school presents unique challenges, but learning to be empowered, confident, and secure in yourself can go a long way if instilled at such a pivotal age. Becoming comfortable enough to share with the world “this is me” stories is not easy to do, but we all benefit from sharing our stories. We learn, we empathize, and we grow. We begin to find commonalities.

Going forward, the Bridge Project and this mentoring project will be displaying the student’s stories at a showcase in late October. We hope to share with others the confidence it took for these students to share their perspectives with us. Come spring quarter, there are hopes of continuing this project after receiving a grant to do so.

For those interested in becoming a mentor for spring quarter, reach out to Lynn Schofield Clark in the Media, Film and Journalism Department. No previous experience in media is required; I sure did not have any! More importantly, if you cannot commit your time in mentoring, try to share your own story. Whether that be as a digital story or through verbal reminiscing, you never know whom you could impact and our community will be better because of it.

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**CCESL WELCOMES ALICIA SAXE, GRADUATE ASSISTANT & PUBLIC ACHIEVEMENT PROGRAM COORDINATOR**

By Ryan Hanschen, CCESL Program Coordinator

Alicia is a 3rd year PhD student in Curriculum and Instruction at the Morigde College of Education. She has innate passion for teaching and learning which drives her research involving non-traditional curriculum, holistic education, social justice, critical approaches to education and human flourishing. She is a Colorado native, but her curious nature, along with wonderful opportunities has led her through eight years of learning, teaching, and studying around the globe, inspiring her current work as an educator. Alicia holds a BA in Psychology and Spanish from the University of Hawaii, Manoa and a MA in Educational Psychology from the Universidade do Algarve in Portugal. Community organizing with Public Achievement as a Team Lead in 2016-17 has reinforced her motivation to pursue research and practice that aims to encompass, embrace, and empower all people who, together, contribute to the beautifully diverse communities we live in.

Alicia also partners with the CCESL Program Coordinator and serves as the Program Coordinator for Public Achievement (PA). In PA, DU students function as Coaches and work closely with a group of high school students from one of CCESL’s partnering schools to identify social justice issues that students care about within their school and community. She also contributes to all of the CCESL student programs across CCESL’s four initiatives, which include service, civic development, community-engaged learning, and community-engaged scholarship.
STUDENTS USE CRAFT AS A VEHICLE FOR COMMUNITY-ENGAGEMENT

By Libby Catchings, Teaching Assistant Professor, Writing Program

WRIT 1122: Craft, DIY, and the Making of Movements offered DU students the opportunity to cultivate written argument and rhetorical awareness via the ancient Greek concept of technē, a mode of making with practical effects encompassing everything from ceramics to speech writing. Over the course of the quarter, students observed how various maker communities and social movements use craft to develop the rhetorical strategies needed to reach different publics; in the second half of the course, students collaborated with community arts-based organizations to create materials that might facilitate those organizations’ grantwriting and grantmaking efforts.

That work was supported by a CCESL mini-grant received in Winter of 2017; funding enabled students to work with Birdseed Collective and RedLine Gallery, organizations on both sides of the Arts in Society grant application process, to generate tools for grant research and evaluation. In turn, those collaborative writing experiences prepared students to write their own Letters of Intent (LOIs), in which students envisioned craft-, DIY-, or maker-oriented programming that would support a given community.

First, however, students conducted rhetorical fieldwork in maker communities of their choice, helping them understand craft as a community of practice beyond the terminal object. A number of students worked with the Rocky Mountain Toymaker’s Guild, a nonprofit that makes wooden toys for underserved youth; as student Patty Dougherty remarks, “woodworking is much more than the end result. It’s about the communication and relationship developed from one human to another.” In addition to presenting her woodworking creations at the DU Maker’s Market, Patty continues to work with Guild head Jon Dean, whom she sees as a mentor for both the art and business side of woodworking.

Once fieldwork was complete, students were asked to imagine their chosen craft as a vehicle for community engagement, using the Arts in Society (AIS) grant application as their guide. A partnership between the Bonfils-Stanton Foundation, Hemera Foundation, Colorado Creative Industries, and RedLine Gallery, the Arts in Society grant “seek[s] to build capacity for social practice projects that implement” (Continued on page 5)
artistic excellence to engage social issues in communities across Colorado” (Redline, “Arts in Society”). CCESL funding enabled AiS grant administrator Libby Barbee to work with students one-on-one with their Letters of Intent, and collaborate with students to design rubrics for evaluating selection criteria. Barbee then used those rubrics to better support real-time applicants through the grant application process, and refine evaluative instruments for awarding funds.

To ground students in the preparatory work necessary to make their proposals a success, grantwriter Carla Padilla stepped in to the classroom, showing how Birdseed Collective marries traditional archival research and field-based inquiry to ensure that all community stakeholders’ needs are being met. The Denver-based Collective works “to transform the lives of artists, youth, individuals, and communities through visionary art and civic projects and programs.” (Birdseed Collective). Padilla also shared vital rhetorical strategies; students had the opportunity to read in real-time the proposal Carla had written for the AiS grant application, which they could then evaluate according to the rubric co-designed with Barbee.

In order to gain experience in this genre of practice, students developed an annotated bibliography to support Birdseed Collective’s ongoing grantwriting efforts in the Globeville community, based on categories shaped by the Collective’s current emphasis: 1) community-based arts projects relevant to Birdseed Collective’s mission; 2) resources on food deserts; and 3) resources for startup nonprofits. All class entries were compiled in a shared Google doc for Birdseed Collective and student use. Students, in turn, could draw on these annotations as preparatory research for drafting their own Letters of Intent, while Birdseed Collective benefited from the time and money saved through student-initiated archival research, as the paywall for much of the relevant peer-reviewed scholarship was time-intensive and cost-prohibitive.

Thanks to CCESL funding, students were able to not only see real-world applications of the rhetorical know-how, but also engage in collaborative, public writing that has the capacity to positively shape social issues facing the larger Denver area.
WELCOMING NINTH GRADE STUDENTS THROUGH PATRIOT GAMES

By Helen Chao, CCESL Graduate Assistant

The Center of Community Engagement and Service Learning (CCESL) partnered with George Washington High School (GWHS) on August 8 and August 9 to host their Ninth Grade Academy at the University of Denver. Ninth Grade Academy serves as the ultimate orientation for incoming freshmen at George Washington High School. The orientation allows incoming students the chance to make positive connections with other ninth-grade students, student leaders at GWHS, and GWHS faculty and staff to build a foundation for successfully navigating high school. Ninth Grade Academy is a four-day-long orientation that is split between the George Washington High School campus and the University of Denver campus.

Over the span of two days, the ninth-grade students arrived at the University of Denver for field day fun. The class of 2021 participated in the Patriot Games, a collection of entertaining activities like relay races and mock debates to help build a sense of community. The Patriot Games featured a competition between 16 different advisory classes and over 250 incoming students. Students competed in eight different stations, each modeled after extracurricular activities available at George Washington High School. Stations included Drama, Athletics, Speech & Debate, JROTC, Band & Orchestra, Career Connect, Leadership, and Art. Activities such as relay races, dramatic interpretations of Romeo and Juliet and the creation of a musical medley were spread out across the University of Denver campus.

Throughout Ninth Grade Academy, ninth-grade students were awarded Patriot Powers. These awards were given based off skills and behaviors such as Critical Thinking and Teamwork that the students exhibited. The advisory class with the most Patriot Powers at the end of the two-days was awarded a prize. Following the Patriot Games, ninth-grade students also got the opportunity to ask current GWHS students and college student facilitators questions over lunchtime. This provided an opportunity for the incoming students to better connect with current GWHS student leaders and to begin thinking about college in the future.

During the academic year, George Washington High School is a school partner for CCESL’s Public Achievement (PA) program. In PA, DU students coach a group of high school students who want to create change in their schools and communities. The teams follow a community-organizing process that culminates into a public work (service-learning) project to address the issues of importance to students. Between both the Ninth Grade Academy and Public Achievement, it is great to be able to call George Washington High School a wonderful partner.
PHOTOGRAPHY BRINGS TEEN VOICES FRONT AND CENTER

By Vanessa Molina, Community Engaged Student Fellow

A year ago, I moved to Denver from California to pursue a Master’s Degree in Higher Education at University of Denver. Currently, I am a second-year graduate student and Community Engagement Fellow at the Center for Community Engagement & Service Learning (CCESL). The transition from California to Colorado has been filled with many professional and personal life-changing experiences. Being a first-generation Mexican-American and deaf female student has allowed me to develop a unique perspective, which I have been able to express throughout my time at University of Denver.

The Community Engagement program has taught me how to develop inclusivity and accessibility with a holistic approach for students of all backgrounds. I had the wonderful opportunity to apply my classroom teachings into the real world during my participation in the PhotoVoice project with youths from GrowHaus. This project was a partnership between CCESL and City & County of Denver (CCD). The goal was for students to take pictures of their respective communities with the objective of communicating what they wanted to change about their environments. Throughout the project, I facilitated workshops for groups of teens. The workshops included showing them how to take pictures, find the individual emotional connection with their communities, and teaching them how to communicate through an image. I also shared tips on how to use photo-editing software.

I will forever hold these experiences close to my heart, having grown up in Southern California my entire life, I longed for someone to listen as I shared my thoughts on what could be improved around me. In a world where more and more people feel like no one is listening to their needs, the fact that I could participate in a program where young students were given the platform to speak up and be heard has been one of the most gratifying experiences I have witnessed.

I immediately identified with this project because I lived in a city north of Los Angeles where crime was an everyday event. Additionally, smog prevented us from going outside, car accidents caused endless traffic and an overall dry environment left the area vulnerable to fires. I understand the importance of improving resources and the local infrastructure to strengthen surrounding communities. The young students in the PhotoVoice project expressed their concerns regarding infrastructure, environmental pollution, safety, the importance of our first responders, family values and transportation. A common topic of discussion was the Purina dog food factory in the Elyria Swansea neighborhood, and how it is contaminating the environment that they are living in. Families are constantly worried about the long-term effects of breathing in the fumes from the dog food production plant.

A community is only as strong as the bond that brings them together, and these young kids are representative of the change that can happen when people come together to focus on a common goal. These kids are model citizens and my hope for this project moving forward is that it will inspire more people to join and listen to the real issues that are affecting their everyday lives. We are encouraging the city, communities, and organizations to develop plans together to improve the lives of everyone.
ANGELA COBIÁN TO RETURN AS KEYNOTE SPEAKER AT THE COMMUNITY ORGANIZING INSTITUTE

By Alexandra Schweigert, CCESL Business Coordinator

On October 6, CCESL will hold its annual Community Organizing Institute. The aim of the Community Organizing Institute is to equip participants with the tools to effectively bring about social change. The institute continues to evolve every year, and this year CCESL is excited to welcome Angela Cobián back for her second time as the keynote speaker. Angela is a first-generation Mexican-American feminist from the west side of Denver. She graduated from Colorado College with a Bachelor degree in Political Science, and Minor in Spanish in 2011. Angela is also currently a candidate for the Denver Public School Board of Education.

Angela Cobián’s first time as a keynote speaker for the Community Organizing Institute was nothing short of inspirational. Through her keynote address, Angela wove in stories from the field and shared deeply personal experiences as a first-generation Mexican-American and first-generation college student, guiding attendees through activities and discussion on topics such as privilege, oppression, identities, and developing a public action plan.

Attendee’s from the Community Organizing Institute in 2015 gave extremely positive feedback on Angela’s keynote speech. During the post assessment in which attendees were encouraged to provide feedback and share their takeaways, participants included comments such as:

“A phrase Cobián said on love and power-- connecting love and power leads to justice. Without love and power working together, you simply get sentimentality or tyranny, neither of which creates change.”

“I will remember to give power and control to those with whom I work and allow them to reflect upon who they are, what they’re passionate about, and what they’re capable of.”

“I will remember that the ultimate goal is to empower the community to make changes for itself. Every action will be directed towards creating this autonomy.”

Students in CCESL programs are required to attend the Community Organizing Institute, but we encourage students, faculty, and staff from across campus to join. If you interested in attending the institute in October, registration is now open.
DU GRAND CHALLENGES OFFICIALLY LAUNCHING ON OCTOBER 2ND

By Anne DePrince, CCESL Director

The DU Grand Challenges initiative is a family of programs that will bring together university and community change-makers to address the most difficult and far-reaching issues facing our society today.

The theme for DU Grand Challenges is Thriving Communities. This theme presents a variety of opportunities to partner with communities to accomplish interdisciplinary, collaborative projects together.

Thriving Communities will address three issues: Living, Working, and Participating. Each issue area will be addressed in a 3-year cycle, allowing us to co-create Aspirations, Actions, and Achievement with community partners.

We invite you to join us on October 2 from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m. in the Anderson Academic Commons Special Events Room to kick off our DU Grand Challenges. Please save the date and register to attend and learn more about the family of programs that will support us to work together on DU Grand Challenges.

WOMEN'S PROFESSIONAL ALLIANCE PRESENTS: LEVERAGING PROFESSIONAL AND COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS

The DU Women's Professional Alliance is a collaboration between the Colorado Women's College and Alumni Career and Professional Development. The Alliance invites all DU alumni to join them for an exciting event that impacts anyone interested in community involvement or professional associations.

One of the best ways to not only advance in your career, but to grow personally as well, is through membership in professional and community organizations. Not just a nice bullet point on your resume, these groups can provide unique access to job opportunities, professional development and community. Join the panelists as they talk about how to find the right organization and make the most of your membership. The cost of the event is $10 for young alumni and current graduate students and $15 for all others interested in attending. Registration for the event is open here.
Welcome to the 2017-2018 PA Team Leads

Adeola Ajirotutu

Adeola Ajirotutu is a second-year master’s student at the Josef Korbel School of International Studies. She is pursuing a degree in International Human Rights with a concentration in Global Health Affairs. Adeola was born in Lagos, Nigeria but grew up in New York City (the greatest city in the world) and received her BA in Religious Studies and Italian Studies from the University of Pittsburgh. She is passionate about women’s rights, minority rights, racial equality, and equal opportunity in education. She also enjoys reading, singing, and watching/playing soccer—sometimes all at the same time. Adeola is still hoping to develop a love for the great outdoors now that she lives in Denver, but it is slow going.

Sarah Hanselin

Sarah Hanselin is a first year master’s student at Josef Korbel School of International Studies pursuing a degree in International Human Rights and a certificate in Humanitarian Aid. She received her bachelor’s degrees from the University of Northern Colorado in Anthropology and History in 2013. Sarah is passionate about human and refugee rights globally, and more specifically, in the MENA region. She just arrived back to the US after living three years in Egypt where she was working in education and refugee services and aid. She can’t get enough of traveling, speaking Arabic, chasing after her one-year-old daughter, and drinking coffee.

Helen Chao

Helen is a 2nd-year Counseling Psychology graduate student from Apple Valley, MN. In her free time, she enjoys running, yoga, and cooking! Social justice issues that Helen is passionate about are gender equality, racial justice, and healthcare access. Helen is looking forward to continuing her work with Denver students.

Gabe Conley

Gabe Conley is a Colorado native who was born and raised in Aurora. He is a 2nd year master’s student in the Morgridge College of Education, studying Higher Education. His concentration is focusing on retention issues on college campuses and finding solutions for closing the achievement gap between the majority and minority student populations. Gabe believes strongly in mentorship and the significant impact it can have on students. Growing up, Mentorship from his teachers and coaches had influenced him significantly. He wants to be able to give that back.

Liz Shaw

Liz Shaw is a second year master’s student at the Josef Korbel School. She is studying International Development and Human Rights. She grew up in Richmond, VA and received her bachelor’s degree in psychology from the University of Virginia in 2011. She is passionate about social justice and the value in building connections, and had intended on becoming a counselor- but a desire to unite a collaborative approach to community change with a global perspective led her to international development. Coincidentally, she moved to Denver before making the decision to return to school, so she truly loves all of the activities that Colorado has to offer, whether it’s running, hiking, camping, or sitting on the porch enjoying the random Denver weather patterns (though she escapes to the ocean as often as she can!) You can also count on Jill for delicious baked goods at semi-regular intervals.
ALUMNI CORNER: ASHLEY EDINGER

Interview by Alexandra Schweigert, CCESL Business Coordinator

Ashley Edinger is no stranger to The Center for Community Engagement & Service Learning. Ashley, who graduated in June 2017, discovered CCESL during the initial weeks of her first year at the University of Denver. She was looking for a service or volunteer community to join when she walked up to the CCESL table at Pioneer carnival. Four years later, she says that she loved her time as CCESL because of the community that she was able to be a part of, and because she was able to share her time at DU with other like-minded students.

During her time as a student with CCESL, Ashley served in roles as a coach for the Public Achievement program, as well as one of the co-presidents of the student club, DU Service and Change (DUSC). Ashley highlighted her time as a coach for public achievement saying that she loved working with the students because they are “so knowledgeable about the world around them.” She greatly enjoyed seeing how students can have so much passion and critically engage with major issues. Ashley worked at numerous schools during her time as a coach, including South High School, Cole Elementary School, Strive SMART Academy, Prep and George Washington High School. In regard to her time with DUSC, Ashley says that some of her closest friends came from the club.

Moving forward, Ashley has accepted a position as a Partnership Associate with Adams County Youth Initiative (ACYI), a non-profit organization she first learned about when she was selected to be a part of the Denver Foundation Non-Profit Internship Program. Through community leaders and vital resources, ACYI strives to ensure that every young child and young adult in Adams County is healthy and starts school ready to learn, succeeds in school and community, and is college and career ready.

Ashley uses many of the skills and concepts that she learned from CCESL to enhance her work with Adams County Youth Initiative. Similar to the community organization process that CCESL models its work around, Ashley helps ACYI support community partners and schools by co-developing solutions to the issues that the schools focus on.

Looking back, Ashley advises that future students find their connections and passions and build upon them. As a first generation student, Ashley says that finding her community helped her to stay grounded and connected to the issues around her. She hopes future students work to make the same great connections that she did with her time at the University of Denver.

Moving forward, Ashley aims to continue to figure out her role in various communities and look for where she can make the largest impact in the world. Ashley will undoubtedly do some amazing work in her lifetime, and CCESL cannot wait to see all the great things that are ahead of her!
The Center for Community Engagement and Service Learning

Community Organizing Institute

Friday October 6, 2017
12:00-6:00 pm

Featuring Keynote Speaker

Angela Cobián

“Conspire to Organize in a Polarized Era”

Angela Cobián is a first-generation Mexican-American feminist from the west side of Denver. Cobián graduated from The Colorado College with a Bachelor’s in Political Science and Minor in Spanish in 2011. She attained her Master’s in Curriculum and Instruction from University of Colorado-Denver. In 2013, Cobián was awarded a Fulbright scholarship to teach at the National Pedagogical University in Mexico City and consult on student-led social change initiatives with Enseña Mexico. Angela co-leads Together Colorado’s work and leads base-building efforts in Latino Catholic parishes in the Denver-metro area.