A COMMUNITY TABLE DRAWS DIVERSE VOICES TO CONVERSATIONS ABOUT IMPROVING DAILY LIVING

On April 11, hundreds gathered in groups of eight to twelve with the goal of identifying aspirations for improving daily living in our communities. A Community Table, or ACT, provided an opportunity for faculty, staff, students, community members, and alumni to meet others, share ideas, and explore ways to work together towards a common goal.

Under the DU Grand Challenges initiative, ACT is part of a family of programs designed to help move the university and community from individual or isolated impact on important issues to collective impact. By linking university and community change-makers, we are laying the foundation for creating a shared agenda and common aspirations for the Universities’ public good work.

To do this, table hosts created spaces for meaningful new relationships, moving conversations, and genuine pathways towards collaborative actions. Participants generated ideas and brainstormed visions for actionable steps towards improving daily living. From conversations that occurred as part of A Community Table, we are gathering feedback to inform actions and next steps that will be taken under DU Grand Challenges. We have found that discussion topics ranged from equity and social inclusion to education and public safety. In the coming months, we are looking forward to sharing data and information from the day and using this to help coordinate collective efforts between on and off campus stakeholders.

To read more about A Community Table on April 11, check out this article:

NATIONAL EXPERT, BILL FULTON, JOINS CCESL FOR THE COLLECTIVE IMPACT SUMMIT

Nationally recognized scholar and leader, Dr. Bill Fulton, came to campus on April 5 for a full day of events focused on broadening conversations about collective impact as a method of accomplishing institutional goals. The Collective Impact framework is gaining attention as a valuable tool for addressing social issues by bringing together multiple and diverse stakeholders to tackle shared issues. As the University of Denver continues to promote and expand its public good work, Dr. Fulton provided the energy and information on starting and sustaining multi-disciplinary collaborations and projects.

One of the many highlights of the day was Dr. Fulton’s keynote speech at the Collective Impact Summit entitled, “Nuts and Bolts of Collective Impact.” Dr. Fulton guided Summit attendees through leveraging the promise of engaging in cross-discipline collaborative work, observing that there is a clear opportunity to build on the tradition of service-learning and civic engagement already present at DU. Notably, Dr. Fulton highlighted integral parts of the framework including identifying and creating a common agenda and shared measurements, and then using these to foster mutually beneficial activates and cross-discipline collaborations. Dr. Fulton summed up his keynote best when he compared the collective impact approach to the motto of the United States: “e pluribus unum” or “out of many, one.”

Following the keynote, Dr. Fulton responded to a panel aimed at leveraging and showcasing collective work that is already in progress at the University. CCESL Director, Anne DePrince, started panelists with a question about projects they were partaking in and where they see potential for greater impact through collaboration. Chad King discussed reimaging the DU light rail station as a dynamic community amenity. Cecilia Orphan commented on her collaboration with Campus Compact of the Mountain West, which is focused on assessing institutions contributions to civic health and equity. Darrin Hicks noted risks in developing shared measurements and tying groups to shared outcomes, and then highlighted how benefits outweigh many of these risks.

As a follow up, Anne invited panelists to take one observation or idea from Dr. Fulton’s keynote and connect it to work happening here at DU. Tom Romero questioned Dr. Fulton about potential to scale collective impact work and Cara DiEnno discussed CCESL’s role as a backbone organization in supporting community-engaged work at DU. Bill Fulton enthusiastically affirmed panelist responses to all the questions and offered insights into potential next steps and pitfalls to avoid at each stage of a project.

The Collective Impact Summit ended with participants intentionally paired into table groups based on what each has to offer and what each might need to advance their collective work. Participants discussed shared interests, common goals, and resources that they could offer one another. Overall participant feedback was overwhelmingly positive. One participant said “I see the huge potential for DU to really meet the aspirational goal suggested by ‘for the public good.’ I am excited about the possibility of positive change occurring through collaboration.” Participants left the day with ideas for leveraging their multi-disciplinary work at DU and new connections and ideas for co-creating partnerships.

Moving forward from the Summit, CCESL is looking forward to continuing to support collaborative and multidisciplinary work taking place at DU. For resources or more information about the Collective Impact Framework, email us at ccesl@du.edu
MINI GRANT SUPPORTS A STUDENT STUDYING HEALTHY AGING

By Barb Hurtt, Teaching Assistant Professor- Department of Biological Sciences

Senior biology student Dalton Larrinaga conducted a preliminary research project focused on the broad concept of healthy aging. Healthy aging is multi-faceted, and is embedded in basic biological principles. It is well known that a balanced diet and involvement in physical activities are beneficial for maintaining greater health outcomes across all ages – these concepts are the basis of many a physician-patient conversation, many public health outreach activities, and numerous educational endeavors. Current estimates predict that there will be approximately 70 million adults over the age of 65 by 2030, and over 83.7 million adults age 65+ by 2050. To meet this rapid growth, maintain quality of life measures and independence, manage (or reduce) healthcare costs, and decrease preventable health dysfunctions, there is a growing need to better understand how fitness/wellness and dietary programs can be implemented to promote greater interest, participation and success in aging populations. The National Institute on Aging (NIA) created the Go4Life campaign to address the “…concern that most older adults are not physically active. About 30 percent of Americans 45 to 64 say they engage in regular physical activity, while only a quarter of those 65 to 74 do. And although people age 85 and older can benefit from exercise, only 11 percent report being active.” The consequences of not being physically active and/or having poor diets are diverse and increasingly significant in older adults. They include: obesity, heart disease, Type 2 diabetes, osteoporosis, depression, injuries due to falls, mental decline, influenza and pneumonia, among many others, producing various complications potentially leading to premature death. Thus, there are many justifiable reasons and efforts to establish physical activity and strong dietary strategies as foundational habits, and to increase the interest and participation in these concepts as individuals age.

This project, Contributions to Healthy Aging: What Do Your Exercise Habits Look Like – Why and How They Matter, focused on interviewing seniors living at the Clermont Park (CP) Senior Living Community (a community partner through the DU’s Knoebel Institute for Healthy Aging) about what “healthy aging” means to them, how they pursue “healthy aging” through their daily activities, particularly focused on the voluntary commitment to exercise and dietary habits, and how family members may or may not influence the exercise habits of older or younger generations. The focus on diet and exercise was chosen because there are well-established, scientifically researched biological benefits of these concepts related to healthy aging, yet both are largely voluntary, behavioral choices. The study was designed to interview as many seniors as possible, their children, and their grandchildren. We had great participation from seniors, which was very informative – all seniors were interviewed in person at the Clermont Park Senior Community. Children and grandchildren who were able to participate were primarily interviewed via phone or Skype due to distance and/or limited scheduling availability; these factors also affected the number of participants in these two groups. Thus, the majority of our findings represent the perspectives of the senior (65-95 years old) population residing at Clermont Park in the Independent Living community, with 80-84 y/o being the largest participating group, followed by 90-94 y/o.

What does healthy aging/maturing mean to you?

What factors influence your persistence in a physical activity/exercise program?
While there are many other results from this preliminary project, one of the most informative opportunities that resulted from it was presenting at the 7th International Conference on Health, Wellness and Society, held at DU in October 2017. Dalton and a group of seniors from Clermont Park held a round table discussion with other conference participants. For example, CP residents’ responses to the question, “Do you think that societal generalizations of aging positively or negatively impact older adults’ abilities to meet exercise/healthy aging goals,” were overwhelmingly positive. A great discussion ensued regarding the supportive culture of CP, yet if further research was completed outside of a senior living community, responses would likely be different. In addition, great discussions evolved around the opportunities and challenges of improving/expanding broader societal communication and implementation strategies. Another positive outcome was that the data collected from this study were used to help create and enhance another project for a DU non-major Biology course – a “Biology of Healthy Aging” survey that was implemented during Fall 2017 evaluating perspectives of healthy aging in survey format for individuals 14-100 years old. Sixty-one individuals participated in that survey, with more data being collected. Without this Clermont Park project, funded by the CCESL mini-grant, we would not have been able to implement the follow-up survey nearly as efficiently or effectively.

CCESL WELCOMES KATHLEEN FERRICK, PROGRAM COORDINATOR

Kathleen has taken the lead on CCESL’s Civic Development & Service Initiatives, including managing the Puksta Scholars and Public Achievement programs, advising the DU Service & Change student organization, and building campus capacity for service.

Kathleen brings a background in macro social work practice focused on community organizing, outreach, and training facilitation. She has worked for several Denver-based non-profits addressing social justice issues including worker’s rights, housing discrimination, domestic violence, and sexual assault/abuse. She has experience implementing anti-oppression workshops that center racial justice and is committed to supporting grassroots movement building. Kathleen holds an MSW from the University of Denver and a B.A. in Psychology from CU Boulder.
COLORADO BLACK HEALTH COLLABORATIVE HIGHLIGHTED AT COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT

By Madison Kim, Community Engaged Fellow

On March 29th, CCESL hosted a Community Spotlight featuring the Colorado Black Health Collaborative (CBHC). The Community Spotlight Series is an amazing opportunity to create a space where DU staff, faculty, and students can interface with organizations in the Denver community. Both on and off campus, there are people and organizations who are dedicated to addressing public concerns. The conversations and collaborations that spark from Community Spotlights are a stepping stone to tackling complex issues together.

CBHC is a small organization, but with a big impact and who are very active in their community. Ultimately, their mission is to achieve health equity in Colorado’s black and African American communities and to provide black communities with resources for sustaining optimal health and well being. Through organizing events such as free blood pressure screenings or barbershop forums; CBHC is improving health and wellness within their community.

In partnership with CCESL’s ScholarShop, CHBC had previously been connected with the DU faculty mentor, Dr. Nancy Lorenzon. Dr. Lorenzon recruited students, myself included, to write scientific briefs and articles on behalf of the organization on various health related topics. I was very excited to finally meet Dr. Terri Richardson, the Vice Chair of CBHC, in person because I had heard so many great things about her and her impact both as a clinician and an advocate.

Dr. Richardson clearly has a lot of personal and professional experience with health disparities in the black community. It was a privilege to have her speak as very few people in the DU community are so familiar with this topic and the mountain of statistics she presented backed her personal expertise. Though she was honest about the reality of health disparities, she was also passionate about CBHC’s work, optimistic about the future, and welcomed questions from the curious audience.

As a CCESL community-engaged fellow, CBHC’s level of action oriented community engagement and creative solutions to some of the most complex health related issues impressed me. What stood out to me the most was how CBHC keeps their finger on the pulse of the community. They go the extra mile to listen to their community’s concerns and collaborate with them to come up with sustainable solutions. In many ways, they reflected CCESL’s model that emphasizes mutually beneficial collaboration.

Health equity is one of these complex issues. The more I learn about it, the more I realize what makes it an important and fascinating topic and why it is also so challenging to achieve. As a Denver native, I have watched the city rapidly expand and become more diverse, and have witnessed the need for reduced health disparities become an even more pressing issue. Listening to Dr. Richardson and learning about CBHC inspired me to continue to grapple with these issues with thoughtfulness and resourcefulness, both as a CCESL fellow and as a future health care professional.
**DU GRAND CHALLENGES PROGRAM UPDATE**

By Vickie Berkley, DU Grand Challenges Program Manager

During this first year of DU’s Grand Challenges Initiative, we have been focusing on shared aspirations and ideas for improving daily living in our communities. Improving daily living is a broad goal that can include, but is not limited to, meeting basic needs, addressing violence, advancing environmental sustainability, promoting healthy development and achieving social justice.

Developing shared aspirations is the first of three phases during our focus on improving daily living. On April 11, nearly 700 DU students, faculty, staff and alumni, as well as community members participated in A Community Table (ACT) to share their aspirations. Groups of people gathered at coffee shops and restaurants, in grade schools and university campuses, at public places and private homes, to talk about issues and ideas that could make an impact if we worked collectively. Ten great ideas from participants will receive a $1000 ACT grant to turn their ideas into action. We are excited to support these ideas through seed grants and will be checking in to determine if there are opportunities to expand ideas that show promise.

We have also held several DU Grand Challenge Forums, bringing together the DU community and the larger community to hear lightning talks from leaders in the field. Topics have included scholarship for environmental sustainability as well as health and healthy development. On May 14, the DU Grand Challenges Forum topic will be “Addressing Violence.” Faculty will share their community-engaged scholarly research they are doing with community partners to address basic needs. Community and student voices will be highlighted as well. Networking and discussion about the interconnections of the three presentations will follow. No registration is necessary. Come join others over light refreshments and learn about issues impacting daily living in our communities and potential solutions.

Building on the two inaugural DU Grand Challenges Scholars Grants awarded last year, four new awards were made in early March to faculty for community-engaged scholarship that will develop aspirations that will impact daily living in our communities.

The DU Grand Challenge Scholar Grants were awarded to:

Faculty: Aaron Schneider, Ph.D., Latin America Center, Josef Korbel School of International Studies  
Title of Research: Combatting Gentrification & Building Community in North Denver  
Community Partner: North Denver Community Residents’ Committee  
Grant Amount: $4,350

Faculty: Esteban Gomez, Ph.D., Anthropology and Zoe Tobier, Professor, University Writing Program  
Title of Research: This is My Denver  
Community Partner: North Denver High School  
Grant Amount: $4,500

Faculty: Heather Martin, Ph.D., University Writing Program
Title of Research: Charles Hay World School Literacy Improvement Initiative and Faculty Development Plan: Phase I  
Community Partner: Charles Hay World School  
Grant Amount: $4,930

Faculty: Jennifer Greenfield, MSW, Ph.D., Graduate School of Social Work  
Title of Research: Barriers and Facilitators of Maternal Engagement with Preterm Infants in a Rural Colorado Hospital  
Community Partner: Poudre Valley Hospital  
Grant Amount: $4,979

Earlier this year, the Arthur Vining Davis Foundations (AVDF) announced a $100,000 grant to support the DU Grand Challenges. The grant from AVDF will be used to develop new ways for students and faculty to use community-engaged scholarship and high-impact learning practices to work collaboratively with community partners on the grand challenge issues.

“We are incredibly grateful to the Arthur Vining Davis Foundations for their support of this signature DU initiative,” said DU’s Chancellor Rebecca Chopp. “Grand Challenges represents our deep commitment to the public good and touches upon every facet of our strategic vision, DU IMPACT 2025.”

Involving so many people in the aspirations phase of each issue may seem like a long and tedious process, but it is this process of engaging you, our community, that makes DU Grand Challenges unique among universities with similar initiatives. During the next phase of our focus on improving daily living in our communities, The Collaboration for Public Good Working Group will propose actions that can make a measurable impact on improving daily living. Actions through DU Grand Challenges will be based upon our shared aspirations and will build upon existing research, teaching and community partnerships. To bring about breakthroughs, we will foster new connections, bring in new resources and support innovative thinking for developing Thriving Communities, the overarching theme of DU Grand Challenges. We will be announcing actions for collective impact in early fall quarter of 2018.

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CCESL STAFF SPOTLIGHT

CCESL ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR, CARA DIENNO, WAS INVITED TO LUNCH WITH CHANCELLOR CHOPP TO HONOR HER ENERGY, COMMITMENT, BRILLIANCE AND ENTHUSIASM AS WELL AS HER INCREDIBLE DEDICATION TO MOVING THE STRATEGIC INITIATIVES OF THE UNIVERSITY FORWARD. WAY TO GO CARA!
DRUMMING OUT STRESS WITH A DU GRAND CHALLENGES CLASS GRANT

By Francis Agyakwa, Adjunct Faculty- Graduate School of Social Work

Drumming Out Stress is an interactive creative experience using traditional African instruments/rhythm (Djembe) to relieve stress and foster self-expression. The program, which was created by Francis Agyakwa, an adjunct faculty at the University of Denver Graduate School of Social Work was created to provide the DU community a positive outlet to relieve stress and improve daily living.

In the Winter of 2018, Mr. Agyakwa, received a mini grant of $500 through DU Grand Challenges to facilitate Drumming Out Stress as part of his Child and Adolescent Trauma Class. The grant helped him to purchase drums and put on a demonstration for students in GSSW.

The demonstration included 21 graduate students in the Social Work program. At the beginning of the exercise, all participants were asked to complete a pre-survey which measured the areas such as participants past experiences with drumming, as well as stress that they may experience in their daily lives. Of the participants, only two had a similar experience with drumming and all reported some stress in their lives.

The exercise took 45 minutes, which included learning the basic rhythmic patterns of Djembe, creating a group rhythm, and playing solos. Following the 45-minute exercise, participants responded to similar post-assessment questions regarding stress levels. After a simple 45 minutes, participants reported a reduction in stress levels as well as an increase in self-esteem for having the ability to learn a new skill. One participant even said, "I have never goggled and laughed so hard. I like the community aspect of the exercise and I will definitely recommend this to all DU community especially, social workers. This is by far the best experience I have had at GSSW."

SAVE THE DATES!

UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH AND SCHOLARSHIP SYMPOSIUM
May 9, 4:00-6:00 PM

DU GRAND CHALLENGES LIVING FORUM: SCHOLARSHIP FOR ADDRESSING VIOLENCE
May 14, 4:00-5:30 PM
COLORADO PUBLIC ACHIEVEMENT CONFERENCE (COPACON) BRINGS STUDENTS TOGETHER

By Liz Shaw, Public Achievement Coach

COPACON 2018 was a motivating, inspiring day full of comradery, energy, and discussion centered on “the moment of now” and our “responsibility to engage in the privilege of democracy.” We began the day with ‘Sha Boo Ya,’ giving each school the opportunity to introduce who they are and what they represent through a roll call: “We are from Denver (Yeah), where it’s our choice (yeah), we’re makin changes (yeah), through student voice..... PA representatives from Colorado College, DU, CU Boulder, and Colorado State University convened for a day of personal and civic development that included practice in civic deliberation, community building, and insights from a panel of high school PA students. Breakout workshops gave students the opportunity for meaningful, small-group discussion and new perspectives on inclusive dialogue topics like PA Alumni Panel, Privilege and Positionality, Movement Schools, Arts and Activism in PA, Identity and Social Groups, and Icebreakers/Team Activities. Over the course of the conference we reflected on what activism means in the context of a truly collaborative process of change, and why we are invested in facilitating youth-led change. One high school student said, “We’re a small group creating big change.”

COPACON experience is best summarized in the words of the participants:

“My experience has allowed me to reflect on my 4 years in PA. This COPACON was a wonderful way to realize how much I’ve grown and learned, and how proud I am to be part of such an organization.”

“COPACON 2018 has given me access to other folks who care about youth engagement in civics and improving the educational experience for students. The energy of everyone here is something I am able to take away and reflect into the programs I am involved in.”

We are already looking forward to COPACON 2019!

CCESL’S SCHOLAR SHOP WORKING WITH DENVER’S CHINOOK FUND

By Alison Turner, Community Engaged Fellow

Over the last thirty years, Chinook Fund has distributed over $2.85 million in grants to grassroots groups in the Denver area working on a wide range of social issues including globalization, poverty, war, racism, sexual violence, and environmental destruction. According to Chinook Fund’s Operation & Grants Manager, Jessica Nelson, who they fund is only half the story -- the way they fund is the other half. Chinook Fund dismantles traditional power structures by allowing community members to decide how the grants are distributed. Members of the community sign up for six month positions, becoming storytellers and fundraisers at the same time.

The Chinook Fund had thirty years of data from their grants and no staff power to organize the numbers. Then, in the fall of 2017, the DU Scholar Shop program connected the organization with Debbie Gowensmith, a PhD student in Research Methods & Statistics. Gowensmith used her expertise to focus on multi-year grantees, and after just one quarter used qualitative and descriptive statistics to generate a report on the impact of Chinook Fund’s multi-year funding projects. Nelson reports that Gowensmith’s work makes it possible to not only show that the Chinook Fund’s grants have allowed for growth of recipient organizations, but also to tell the story of the grantees.

To get involved with or learn more about Scholar Shop, please visit the Scholar Shop website or email ccesl@du.edu.
CCESL Participates in the Diversity Summit

By Alexandra Schweigert, CCESL Business Coordinator

CCESL staff were invited to host a number of sessions at the 2018 Diversity Summit, which focused on the intersection of sustainability and social justice.

CCESL Program Coordinator, Ryan Hanschen, and Graduate Assistant, Alicia Saxe, started CCESL on a strong note at the Summit on Thursday morning, hosting a workshop titled Power Mapping: Leveraging Tangible Community Organizing Tools to Address Inequity. The workshop answered questions such as what is power, who has power, and how can power be built? With the help of students in the Public Achievement program, workshop participants strengthened their abilities to effectively address injustice and inequity on campus and in the community.

With the assistance of the Puksta Scholars, Ryan held another workshop on Friday morning titled Building Relationships: Inclusively, Intentionally, and Reciprocally which focused on tools for building reciprocal relationships designed to make an impact on campus and in the community.

CCESL was also invited to host a lunch and Call to Action to wrap up the Summit on Friday afternoon. CCESL director, Anne DePrince, provided an overview about best practices in campus-community partnerships and then opened up the lunch to give participants opportunities to engage in facilitated conversations about taking action to create change around topics related to the summit’s theme. Discussions around topics such as Sun Valley Eco District, Smart Cities, iRISE 2.0 and more kept participants busy conversing about interconnections between chosen issues and other related issues that affect daily living.

The lunch set the stage nicely for the Call to Action that followed. Using the takeaways from the Diversity Summit, in conjunction with the United Nation’s Sustainable Development Goals, attendees had small group conversations around the interconnections of sustainability and social justice and what shared aspirations may be set for talking collective actions towards selected issues. The goal of the conversations was to lead participants to identify aspirations that could be implemented under the action’s phase of DU Grand Challenges, Living. Topics discussed ranged from security to education to lack of resources. Participants gave great feedback on discussions and are looking forward to staying involved with DU Grand Challenges moving forward.
CCESL STAFF

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Program Coordinator

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Business Coordinator & PGI Editor

Vickie Berkley
DU Grand Challenges Program Manager

Scholarship for Addressing Violence

The Forum will open with very brief lightning talks on the theme of Scholarship for Addressing Violence. Dialogue and networking opportunities will then focus on identifying connections between addressing violence and inter-related issues that affect daily living.

Lightning talks from our colleagues will be followed by community perspectives, networking, and conversation over beer, wine, and appetizers.

Monday, May 14
4:00-5:30 PM
AAC 290

DU Grand Challenges Living Forum

Can’t make it? Join us live from a computer! facebook.com/DUccesl Facebook live streaming of the event will begin around 4:10. #DUGrandChallenges join the conversation on Twitter!