## Center for Sustainability 2020-2021 Annual Report



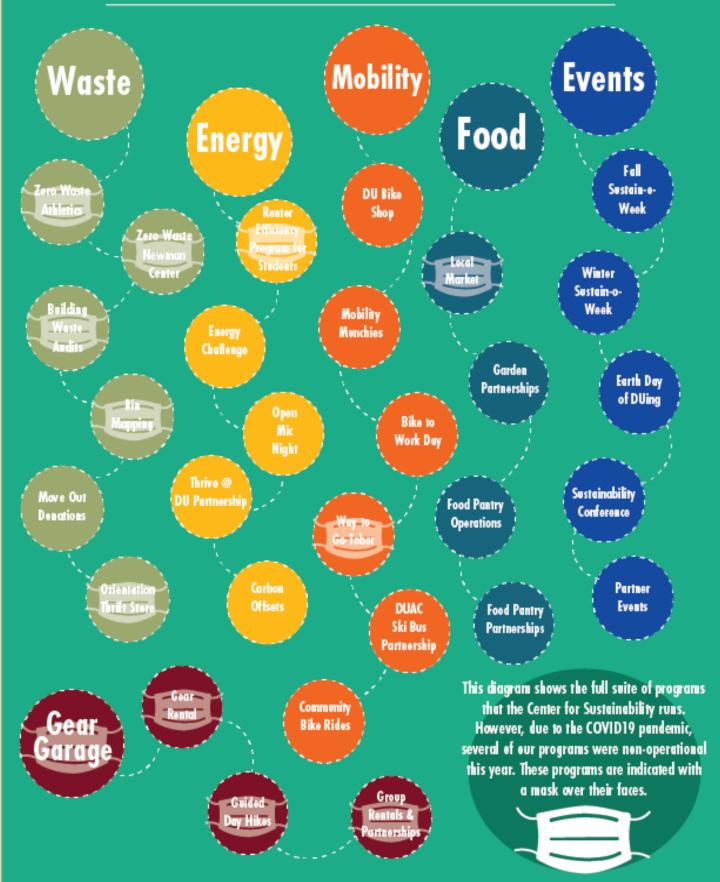


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## CENTER PROGRAMS





# EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Sustainability efforts at the University of Denver must include all of us, as progress towards our sustainability goals only occurs through the work of individuals in all colleges and departments. The Center for Sustainability continues to serve as the connecting framework in this work, directing and coordinating work across campus with a focus on engaging more students, faculty and staff. It is our privilege to support sustainability champions, to teach and mentor Center

students learning and doing research in this process, to provide applied learning opportunities for students and employees, to connect with community partners, and to illuminate the interrelated threads that link sustainability efforts to environmental justice, anchor institution practices, wellness, and more.

In the Center for Sustainability, student interns run our programs. Students gain valuable experience understanding and growing sustainability challenges and operational best practices, as they collaborate with partners across campus to advance University goals. This work allows students' immersion in an area of passion, linking the classroom to operations, while scaffolding into leadership and management positions. This report highlights the great work of those students, even in a challenging environment where many of our programs pivoted to new formats.

Challenges of COVID19 impacted new programs and approaches this year. COVID highlighted structural, systemic inequity, even as protests across the country continued to highlight the racial foundation of these injustices. COVID also proved to be challenging to many sustainability practices, such as public transit, density in urban developments, car sharing and carpooling; even as it highlighted opportunities in local food supply chains, bicycle commuting, and appreciation for green space. A new interdisciplinary research team at the Center partnered with the Rocky Mountain Land Use Institution and community partners to engage graduate and undergraduate students in research on equity and affordability. Our research team also began diving into campus data, to synthesize and share campus progress.

We also learned new ways of engaging with our interns, the DU community, and our external partners. We hope to take lessons learned forward with us in order to broaden the sustainability community on campus. Thank you for joining us in this work, we welcome your ideas and partnerships as we move towards carbon neutrality, conserve our valuable resources, and improve the quality of life in our region.

Sincerely, Chad King DDX:



## INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

The flagship program of the Center for Sustainability, the internship seeks to offer students a rich, highly experiential, and deeply meaningful opportunity to apply passionate purpose in a job setting. Interns link curriculum to practice as they critically work through sustainability challenges facing DU and society. Students work closely with peers and mentors to plan and execute creative solutions to those problems, and then reflect and report on their impacts, outcomes, and next steps. Student Interns grow personal, professional and leadership skills, while building relationships that will last far beyond their time at DU.

7 teams who planned and ran 45 events and programs despite COVID19 restrictions on campus

Those programs impacted over

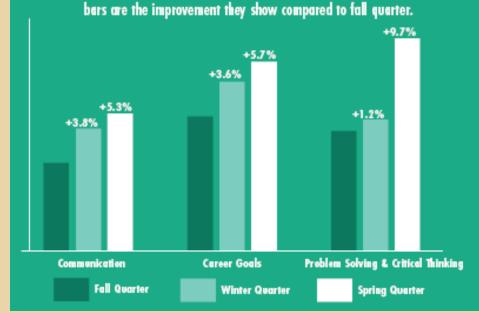
8 Graduate Students from 6 different schools:

Graduate School of Professional Psychology Graduate School of Social Work Morgridge College of Education Daniels College of Business Krorbel School of International Studies University College 36 Undergraduate Students



22 students in leadership roles managing teams of 2-5 other students in support roles

At the end of each quarter, interns were asked to assess themselves on several key skills and competencies. The students showed growth in all areas, the most signficant of which are below. The percentage indicated above the winter and spring quarter



48% of interns identified as being part of the LGBTQ+ community

of interes said they connected their work at the center to academic work often ar very often

of interest said they connected their work at the center to wider social issues often or very often

I'll always remember the Center as a place where I could flourish doing work that I was passionate about. I learned how to identify the connection between work and passion here -Graduating Intern

### Student Spotlight: Cate Lull

"During my time at DU, the Center for Sustainability has been a pillar. The office space has been a safe and comfortable space for me when I felt like I had nowhere else to go. The people I have met at the Center have challenged me, helped me to succeed, and taught me more abut the world and myself than any of my courses. I have made connections that extend beyond the campus boundaries and include friends, mentors, and teammates. In my never-ending search for happiness I have found a nugget of joy and positivity at the Center for Sustainability and I want to continue to be a part of the group that can bring that goodness to others. My work at the Center is meaningful for myself and others. I believe in the mission of the center and want to continue working to bring the message of sustainability to the DU community."











## CAMPUS ENGAGEMENT

Developing and hosting creative and meaningful ways to engage with the campus community is one of the key goals of the Center's programs. From tabling events where people can answer trivia questions and win prizes, to workshops that teach people a new skill, our students are consistently pushing the boundaries of what we can do to bring more people to the table to be part of the sustainability conversation on campus. Measuring the impact of these opportunities assesses impact while shaping future programs.

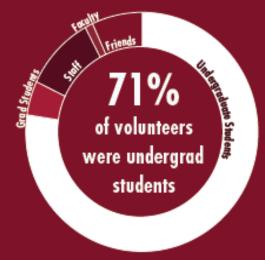
The 2021 Earth Day of DUing engaged

120 volunteers

3 on campus projects

to complete

188 volunteer hours



This year, our Food Team partnered with the Collegiate Recovery Community to design and build an outdoor meditation and garden space. The team organized

>>──> 8 garden workdays <──< that mobilized

→>→> 58 volunteers <→<←

to create a space that will be an integral part of the students in recovery on campus.

The Center for Sustainability planned

**→**→ 26 in-person events and

**←** 10 →≻⊷⊳

fully virtual events. In total these events engaged more than

*→*→→ 1,800 ←--< students, faculty, staff, and alumni from the DU community.

Fall Sustain-o-Week:

7 events

9 partners

166 participants

Winter Sustain-a-Week:

5 events

10 partners

145 partiápants

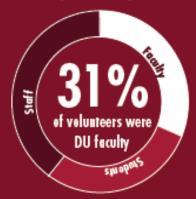
During the 2021 Move Out

32 Volutneers

worked

154 volunteer hours

to collect, pack, and organize items



This was our largest faculty engagement event this year.



This year, the Center for Sustainability partnered with

35 campus partners

Like: Discoveries Orientation, Club Sports, 4D Student Office, CCESL, Rocky Mountain Land Use Institute, Office of Student Engagement, Student Outreach and Support, DU Programming Board, Admissions, Advancement, the ESLLC, Happy Tampers, Solar Decathlon, Bridge Community Garden, USG, and HRIC

#### Student Spotlight: Megan Holiday

"As a first-year intern during the COVID-19 pandemic, I had no idea what to expect coming into the Center. I was concerned that there would be minimal campus outreach and involvement on both sides. However, at the conclusion of such a strange year, I can safely say I was blown away by the constant drive and effort of the Energy Team's members to safely and effectively build the Center's presence on campus through fun and educational events for students. Despite the challenges that pandemic protocol presented, this team was able to quickly adapt and pivot in order to have a successful year. It has been a privilege to work with such an outstanding group of dedicated, hardworking individuals."







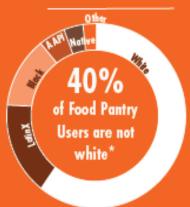


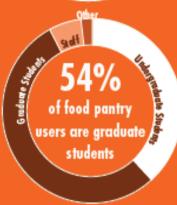


## **COMMUNITY RESOURCES**

One of the key reasons to pursue sustainability initiatives on a college campus is that, beyond being good for the environment, sustainable lifestyle choices tend to also increase quality of life. One of our goals at the Center for Sustainability is to make these lifestyle choices more accessible to all people, regardless of background. This means providing opportunities to DU students at low- or no-cost, connecting students to partner organizations and resources, and removing the barriers to making and encouraging sustainable choices.

1,400 pounds of food to
78 Food Pantry Users over
137 visits during the year





The DU Bike Shop performed

190 total services on

88 different bikes

\$6,400 with an average turnaround time of only: 3 days

Services provided had a retail value of nearly

The DU Bike Shop saved students nearly

→> \$6,000 < ← ← by only charging for parts, and not labor. Any

parts or tools sold were sold at-cost, saving students mark-ups from local bike shops.

In Winter Quarter, we partnered with DU Alpine Club to run a reduced Ski Bus service, which provided a low-cost way for students to get to the mountains.

→ D 130 students ← ←

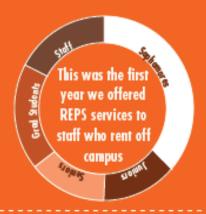
This year, the Food Team focused on reducing the stigma assoicated with using a food pantry when one is food insecure. The team gave 3 presentations to campus partners about this topic this year:

2021 Sustainability Conference Family Connections Week Dr. Rosanna Garcia's MKTG Class "[Some highlights for this year were] meeting new people, working on garden projects, being involved with the Food Pantry. The Food Pantry especially feels good because it felt like I was truly helping the DU community."

- First Year Intern

Because of restrictions due to the pandemic, our usual Renter Efficiency Program for Students (REPS) could not operate. We adapted and created DIY boxes for folks to do energy audits in their own homes. We gave out

19 boxes to students and staff.



In March 2020, the on-campus students were emergency evacuated from the residence halls to continue their studies fully virtually. Despite this unexpected move-out, the Center for Sustainability was able to collect

#### Thousands

of items that students were unable to bring home. These items have been in storage and will be sold in our annual Orientation Tent Sale during move-in in September 2021, as will items collected in a much more traditional move-out in 2021.

#### Student Spotlight: Kayla Fatemi

"I've worked for the Center for Sustainability since my sophomore year and it has been an integral part of my DU experience. Not only has it educated me in sustainability initiatives as well as helped me develop in professional ways, but it has also given me a sense of community with like-minded people. As I go into my senior year, I would love to finish it out with the Center.

"I have been heavily involved with the Thrift Store project since last summer and have grown heavily invested in it from managing the book sales this past year to being a Move Out captain and attending weekly thrift store meetings. Equity is at the core of all my beliefs and I think a sustainable market is a tangible local step to giving people more even opportunities as well as reducing waste and promoting sustainable habits."











~1 in 3 college students are food insecure





## EDUCATION & OUTREACH

Beyond working to engage the DU community in becoming better stewards for the environment and society, the Center for Sustainability serves as a fountain of information about sustainability, both on campus and beyond. Professional staff and student interns are frequently called on to present to classes, provide information and feedback on class projects, and advise honors theses, masters theses, and dissertation work. These opportunities to connect applied operational work back to the classroom is a unique opportunity that enriches the learning experiences of students and faculty alike.

The Executive Director of Sustainability and the Sustainability Coordinator offer knowledge and insights that are helpful to many student class projects. We contributed to more than

→>── 20 group projects <──←
for classes in more than

including Business, Leadership, Writing, Geography, Psychology, and Law, through informational interviews, project feedback, project consultation, and institutional history of DU.

Professional Staff at the Center for Sustainability gave guest lectures and tours to

→ 8 classes ← ←

→ 6 departments. ← ← These presentations reached more than

Student staff working as

Resident Assistant Orientation Leaders Tour Guides

as well as new professional staff at DU recieved training from the Center for Sustainability about how they can bring sustainability to their work at DU, no matter what their job is.

This year, the Center planned a fully virtual Sustainability Conference, which allowed us to invite more speakers, more attendees, and cover a more diverse range of topics and presentation formats.

The 2021 Conference Featured

13 presentations, panels, and workshops
that were attended by

222 students, faculty, staff, and friends.
The conference featured presentations from

10 campus & community partners

such as: The Nature Conservancy, Metro Denver Nature
Alliance, CoPIRG, EcoCycle, Human Resources and Inclusive
Community, the Daniels College of Business, and the
Graduate School of Social Work.

Students and staff at the Center recorded and submitted

6 presentations
to the virtual AASHE conference.
These presentations were viewed
by more than
200 attendees.



After working with most of the teams at the Center, I learned that I really enjoy the [marketing and communications] side of things, especially because it connects so well with one of my majors. Over the past two quarters, I had a great time creating graphics for the Center's teams and enjoyed spending time collaborating with people on ideas for them. - Second

Students and staff at the Center created

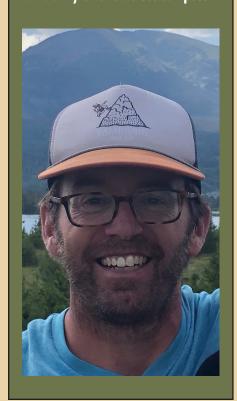
→> 5 trainings ←← that are being used as a Professional Development series by

#e being used as a Professional Development series b →>──→ Pioneer@Work. <──<←

This training is available to any benefitted staff at DU, and can be used as part of the Performance Management process.

#### Staff Spotlight: Chad King

"Campus sustainability efforts often start with operational practices and a focus on reducing carbon emissions. As an educational institution, a logical next step is to connect these practices to the curriculum and to research. By engaging classes, students and faculty we turn operations into a process of learning and knowledge creation. This opens the door to utilizing campus as a learning laboratory, enmeshing the lived experience with the academic endeavor, allowing student to explore and challenge best practices while understanding real world application of knowledge. Through presentations, tours, discussions and interviews, we strengthen our operational and academic outcomes while drawing the whole community into the sustainability efforts across campus."









## RESEARCH

As we work to make DU a more just and sustainable campus, we support knowledge production at our research institution. From providing campus-wide sustainability data as a starting point for statistical analysis to using the Center itself as the subject of research, our work has extended beyond the co-curricular experience and into a rich academic opportunity to engage students from nearly every discipline at DU.

The Executive Director worked with an undergraduate student to advise her

#### **Honors Thesis**

focused on completing a feasibility study for in-vessel composting options on the DU Campus. Her work is being used to consider the next steps for composting at DU.

The ED also advised a geography PhD candidate on his

#### Dissertation Work

focused on understanding the attitudes and culture that exist on DU's campus surrounding sustainability. Student interns at the Center helped to gather data for this work by sending out surveys to their peers ground campus.

A team of research fellows coded and summarized findings from the Rocky Mountain Land Use Institute's

#### >>─→ Ideas RoundUP <──←

meetings which occurred during the summer of 2020. The Colorado Housing Affordability Project (CHAP) grew out of these meetings. This led to secondary research in support of the policy proposals that make up the CHAP platform for state legislation.

> COLORADO HOUSING AFFORDABILITY PROJECT

Our Research Team completed the annual

Transportation Survey in October 2020, with a focus this year on understanding the impact that telecommuting during the pandemic had on campus carbon emissions.

Additionally, we worked with a student team at

CiBiC

in the Daniels College of Business to do consumer research on the campus shuttle to better understand rider needs.

Our Research Team collaborated with the Sustainability Council to complete a new submission to

#### STARS

the Sustainability Tracking, Assessment, and Rating System, which assesses over 2,000 data points to understand our sustainability performance. We anticipate that we will recieve

>>—⊳ Silver ←——



This year, a PhD candidate in the Morgridge College of Education began creating the framwork for a research project focused on the Center for Sustainability Internship Program which will create the basis for his dissertation work.



He will be focused on student learning and skills aquisition for the undergrad students in our program.

I believe in the Center's mission and want to continue to help educate students on sustainability...I noticed that [last year], the most enjoyable and interesting tasks I took on were around data analytics and graphic design. Although these were not necesssarily directly required [in my role], I enjoyed exploring the possibilities in both of those areas...it has made me interested in gaining more knowledge and experience in analytics and I would love to be able to develop and make a positive impact with those skills at the Center for Sustainability - Second Year Intern

This year the Mobility Team collected data to NELEAGUE OF submit for DU to be named as a Bike Friendly University and we acheived a designation of

 $\rightarrow \triangleright \rightarrow \triangleright$  Bronze  $\triangleleft \leftarrow \leftarrow$ 





#### Student Spotlight: Halle Brown

"I've worked for the Center for four years and every year has provided me with new experiences relevant to and supportive of my academic and professional career. This past year, I led the newly formed Research Team on a variety of projects such as creating and analyzing results from the Transportation Survey, organizing data for our AASHE STARS report, and collaborating with the Rocky Mountain Land Use Institute (RMLUI). Each provided me with distinct skills in writing survey questions as well as analyzing and compiling data.

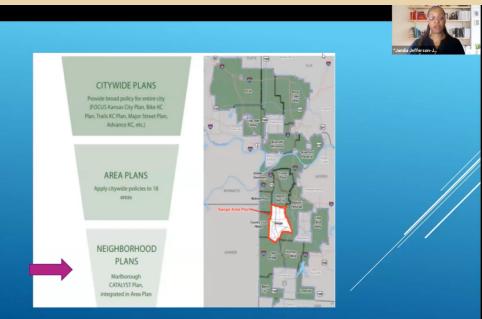
"I learned a lot and significantly enjoyed the project with RMLUI. I joined the Graduate Research Fellows in coding the dialogues into specific themes to identify the subjects most prominent in the conversations and compiled this into a joint paper. From this project, I learned to code which is important for qualitative research and analyzing interviews. It also opened my eyes to the interconnectivity of environmental and equity issues. I strongly believe now that it is crucial for those of us working in these fields to join forces and act from an environmental justice perspective."











## **DENVER COMMUNITY**

As a key historical institution and employer in the City of Denver, DU is in a unique position to use its purchasing power, research and educational opportunities to improve the environment, society, and economy within the larger community outside DU's walls. From encouraging our students to purchase program materials from local, woman-owned, and minority-owned businesses, to integrating our events with dozens of local partners, the Center's work continues to have impacts for beyond the DU campus.

Items collected during Move-Out that cannot be sold on campus at our Thrift Store were diverted to partners throughout Denver and beyond, including:

ARC, SustainAbility, Denver Dumb Friends League, Color of Mud Studio, DU Happy Tampers, Project Cure, A Bedder World Mattress, and Fisher Center for Early Childhood Education

The Executive Director and the Coordinator were engaged with organizations off campus, with the ED serving on the research committee of the Mayor's Sustainability Advisory Group and as the chair of the Transportation Solutions board. The Coordinator is a founding member of Women in Sustainability Colorado.

> This year, the Center for Sustainability worked with

#### 26 Community Partners

Like: CoPIRG, Metro Denver Nature Alliance, Colorado Housing Affordability Project (CHAP), Green Lady Gardens, EcoCycle, The Nature Conservancy, The Denver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG), and Women in Sustainability

This is a wonderful internship that opens doors to community and campus involvement, new friends, productive work, and rewarding experiences. -First year Intern

This year, the Sustainability Interns focused on advancing DU's role as an Anchor Institution\* and were intentional about spending money at local, women-owned, and minority-owned businesses in Denver. To that end, our programming spending put more than

⇒ \$9,500 ← ← into the local economy. We worked with

#### 19 local businesses

including: Green Lady Gardens, Maria Empanada, Mile High Workshop, Etai's Bakery, Devil's Food Bakery, Duffy Roll Cafe, Little Man Ice Cream, Jelly Cafe, and Sweet Cow Ice Cream.



\*Anchor Institutions are enterprises that are necessarily fied (anchored) to their locations, such as universities or hospitals. Because these institutions can't move to another city the way most private businesses can, ancher institutions have a great opportunity to build long, meaningful connections, partnerships and friendships with other local businesses, non-profits and community members.

In 2019, DU MarComm contacted the Center about a way to recycle or repurpose vinyl event banners that can no longer be used. We contacted

#### >>→> Mile High Workshop <→ <←

a company dedicated to hiring and providing training and experience to hard-to-hire individuals, to work with us on converting these banners to beautiful DU-themed tote bags. Mile High Workshop created

>>→ 600 bags <----

that are now being sold int he DU Bookstore and are available for other units and departments to purchase to use as gifts, swag, or other uses.

#### Staff Spotlight: Emily Schosid

"Two years ago, I ran a weeklong training with our students and intentionally only fed them food from local and minority-owned businesses. I think this sparked a realization that we can get so many wonderful, high-quality materials from catering to event give-aways from really awesome Denver-based companies.

I have been so thrilled to see the different companies our students have found and the intentionality they have put into who we give our money to this year. They have built relationships within the larger Denver community and are able to help these local businesses grow and thrive. To me, this is what sustainability work is all about: ensuring our wok always makes people better off than when we started."











## INNOVATION

The COVID19 pandemic forced our student interns to completely re-think how the majority of our programs could run safely. Some of our programs were cancelled entirely in the face of public health concerns, while others were turned on their heads and presented in a new format. Regardless, our students showed amazing creativity and resilience during a challenging time. New programs and approaches emerged as a result, and we look forward to continuing to explore the limits of our creativity.

Student interns expressed the desire to get better at writing for a popular audience, while the Center was seeking additional ways to engage the DU Community with our work. The result was a plan for the

Sustainability Blog which will launch in Fall 2021, featuring writing from student interns, graduate fellows, and experts in the sustainability field.



With large groups mostly impossible on campus, intern onboarding and training had to move to Zoom. These sessions were recorded and they are now available for any department on campus to request, either as an in-person, virtual, or pre-recorded training session:

Sustainability at DU
Why Sustainability?
Sustainability & Equity
Sustainability in Colorado
Getting Around without a Car
What Can be Recycled?
Design Thinking for Impact

Because in-person events were so limited during the year, our interns created several craft kits for students to take home for a DIY experience:

> Build-a-Terrarium REPS Audit Box Food Pantry Cooking Class Plant Some Love Rice Heating Pads

These DIY boxes went home with

and gave them something fun and creative to do while typical events were not possible.

This year required all programs at the Center to be creative and flexible, and it was exciting to see initiatives pursued and students engaged even in a difficult, largely virtual environment. - Third Year Intern

In response to the lack of composting service for students living in off-campus apartment buildings, our Waste Team laid the groundwork for a new small business:

Crimson Compost
which will give students access to a
composting dumpster near their
apartments. They will have to pay a
small quarterly fee - cost competitive
with other compost services. The
program will launch in Fall 2021

In January 2021, the Community Commons building opened and the Center was relocated there. Since then, students have been working to convert our old office space in Centennial Towers to a

Sustainability Market
which will house all of the small businesses that our student interns manage:

Food Pantry
Gear Garage
Bike Shop
Crimson Compost
Thrift Store





As a perennial favorite, our Energy Team was dedicated to finding a way for our Open Mic Night events to continue. We were able to have two in-person events of reduced size, which were

live streamed for the first time.

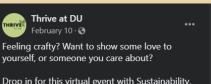
#### Student Spotlight: Olivia DeWitt

"This year was one of ups and downs and most of all it was a year of learning to adapt and overcome any challenge that might come our way. By the end of this long year I learned how to be resilient, how to be creative in my problem solving, and most how to be a leader and member of an amazing team. Events over this past year have looked even more different than I could have imagined but it challenged all of us with an opportunity to improve our skills and learn how to plan successful, engaging, inclusive, educational, and enjoyable programming despite the new obstacles we had to overcome to make that happen. I have learned more than I ever could have expected from this team and my coworkers and I will never look at events planning in the same way."





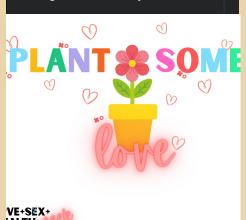




Drop in for this virtual event with Sustainability, Gender & Sexuality, and Health Promotion to plant some affirmations or expressions of love. You'll get to hang out with your peers while you craft and talk about love and relationships. Community members who pick up a craft kit (see the "Pleasure Pack and Crafting" drop-in program in Crimson Connect) and attend will be eligible to win prizes!

Register on Crimson Connect to participate!

#ThrivingAtDYou #love #crafty See Less







## **GIVING**

Many generous donors — friends, alumni, and even current students and staff — financially contribute to the Center for Sustainability. Partnering with Alumni Engagement and Advancement, we have been able to activate a wide pool of donors who have been central to allowing our programs to grow and thrive. We are deeply honored to be among the programs that attracts donors and look forward to continuing to engage students in work that our alumni and other donors are excited to support.

In a virtual year where food drives were a challenge the Food Pantry relied more heavily on monetary donations. An incredible



>>->> \$30,000 <--<<br/>this year, including 6 donations over<br/>>>->> \$1,000 <--<<



Despite the difficulty with in-person food donations for the Food Pantry, our team ran

→>──> 11 Food Drives <──<←

→ 2,500 lbs ← ← of food for the pantry. This equates to

→>----> \$4,250 <---<←

This includes a donation from DU Athletics of

1,455 lbs worth nearly

\$2,500



This year, a family donor committed to an ongoing donation of

→>----> \$5,000 <---<←

in order to support the Sustainability
Internship and Fellowship Program,
which provides deep, meaningful
opportunities for students to turn
their passions into professional and
leadership development experiences.

This year the Sustainability Internship Program was a beneficiary for 1 Day4-DU in partnership with Advancement.

→ 47 donors ← ←

→> \$5,023 < ← ← which will allow us to continue paying interns for the excellent work at the Center



The Carbon Offsets program made some great progress this year, working with several campus partners to secure more than

\$16,700
to purchase carbon offsets from local
offset production projects.

DU Club Sports and Undergraduate
Student Government have committed
to substantial contributions in
2021-2022

\$15,000

Was secureed from DU

SusCom, and is
expected to be an
annual committment

The DU Food Pantry worked with

#### 17 Local Restaurants

including BirdCall, who donated coupons for our Food for Food program, that gave coupons to people after they donated to the Pantry in order to generate additional business for these local businesses. BirdCall also ran a donation night where the DU Food Pantry received

35% of sales



#### Student Spotlight: Paul Ciarcia

"Fundraising for the Food Pantry was successful this year because even though campus access was restricted, student organizations, faculty, and athletics all pulled together and utilized their social networks to run food and donation drives for us. Plus, the local businesses we worked with are extremely generous and always excited to work with the Pantry, especially when we fundraisers are designed in a way that could bring extra revenue to these companies.

For me, working for a program that relies mostly on donations was both challenging and rewarding. In order to be successful we not only had to make people understand that food insecurity is an issue on college campuses. When you bring different groups in the community together around a central purpose, it strengthens the message and encourages participation. This is why our events like Food for Food and Garden Workdays were designed to involve other student groups, as well as local companies."

