



Puksta Pride Spring Newsletter

Enriching Lives. Engaging Communities

Puksta turns Sweet 16

It's our sweet 16 this year and we have now gifted 3.2 million dollars in scholarships, we will be welcoming in 28 new Puksta Scholars for the fall of 2017, and we now have over 230 alumni! In order to celebrate properly we have a brand new look with a brand new website. Check out our new digs [here!!!!](#)

Congratulations to our Graduating Puksta Scholars/Fellows

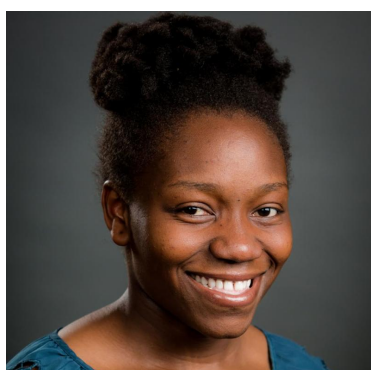
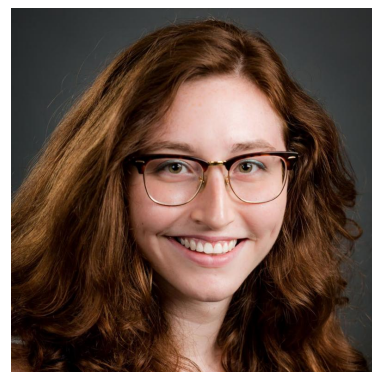
[Check out our newest Alumni](#)

Larcy Brooks - DU

Major: English and Spanish

Puksta Project Issue: LGBTQ and the generation gap

Future Plans: After a year of travel and work I plan to pursue a master's degree in Counseling Psychology, with an emphasis in either Expressive Therapies or Somatic Therapy. I intend to use this degree in order to work directly with people in the LGBT community in order to help individuals heal from traumas, build new and fulfilling lives, and feel seen and heard.



Laleobe Olaka - DU

Major: Biology; minors in Chemistry and Psychology

Puksta Project Issue: Healthcare Education


Future Plans: I have three plans currently for my future. Plan A is the Peace Corps, plan B isoclinic work at Children's Hospital Colorado, and plan C is to continue working at Fischer Early Learning Center.

Cristine de la Luna - MSU

Major:Africana Studies and an Individualized Degree Program in Intersectional Studies: Social Justice & Advocacy.

Puksta Project Issue: Diversity and inclusivity training and research.

Future Plans: ILIFF School of Theology - Master of Arts in Social Justice and Ethics (MASJE) in conjunction with Iliff's certificate in Justice & Peace Studies; an interdisciplinary program that draws from theology, ethics, philosophy, and the social sciences with an emphasis on theories, methods, and concrete issues of Justice & Peace such as peace-building, war, violence, politics, economics, and criminal justice, as well as aspects of international development, public policy processes, and the role of social change movements.





Gabriela Landeros - MSU

Major: Hospitality, Tourism and Events

Puksta Project: Raising awareness about Organ, Eye, and Tissue Donation


Future Plans: She is planning on pursuing her Masters in Social Work in the near future.


Balkarn Shahi - CU

Major: Business

Puksta Project: [ConnectME](#) - Closing the Digital Divide

Future Plans: Kern is looking for opportunities in business consulting industry. He also is actively working to expand and sustain ConnectMe.





Aria Dellepiane - CU

Major: Environmental Design

Puksta Project:Raising awareness about sexual assault. [Anyone Anywhere](#)


Future Plans: Aria is exploring graduate school options as well as looking for ways to expand and sustain Anyone Anywhere.


Diondre Morales - CSU

Major: Sociology

Puksta Project: Higher Education

Future Plans: Pursue my masters degree in student affairs and higher education.





Jesus Mendoza-Ochoa - CSU

Major: International Studies and Spanish

Puksta Project: Higher Education

Future Plans: I would like to get into a Graduate school because not enough latino males seek graduate degrees.

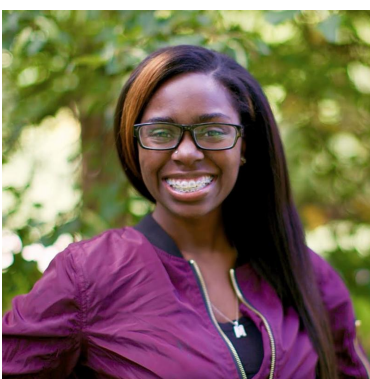
Monay Turnbough - UCD

Major: Ethnic Studies

Puksta Project: Youth Mentoring, Education

Future Plans: My goal is to educate African American children against the stereotypes that may be pushed onto them as they grow up, and to support the demand that we need African American studies in school curriculums. I never ever thought that I would be a

teacher, but now I cannot wait to step into my field and make a difference. Working with the Ethnic Studies Department and my Puksta Fellows, I hope to work toward the end of racism in America.



Hue Phung - UCD

Major: *Psychology and Ethnic Studies*
Puksta Project: *Mental Health in Asian Culture*
Future Plans: *I plan to take a year off to find more experience in the mental health field and in research in order to be a better applicant for graduate school. My career goal is to one day be a children's psychologist where I would be able to implement research and therapy to better the lives of children and families in lower socioeconomic areas.*



Alejandra Armenta - UCD

Major: *Ethnic Studies*
Puksta Project: *Heath care Issues - Patient Navigator*
Future Plans: *In the future, I plan to become a doctor. I strongly support LGBTQ+ rights, and work with our campus groups to make a positive contribution to the quality of student life.*



Alexandra Yeager - UCD

Major: *Biology and Ethnic Studies*
Puksta Project: *Indigenous Rights and Health Care*
Future Plans: *I will be attending Ross University School of Veterinary Medicine in Basseterre, St. Kitts. I will graduate with a Doctorate in Veterinary Medicine in 2020.*



Nancy Garcia - UCD

Major: *Ethnic Studies*
Puksta Project: *Gentrification - Renting Rights*
Future Plans: *I am committed to supporting services that address the social, economic, health, emotional, cultural, and educational needs of under--resourced families in Westminster.*



Sarah Sunderlin - UCD

Major: *Communication M. A.*
Puksta Project: *Incarceration - Effects on Family*
Future Plans: *After graduation, I am planning to continue working with incarcerated communities by doing non-profit work in community reentry. Long term, I also hope to work toward advocating for public policy changes regarding visitation standards in prison.*



Matthew Wilkin - UCD

Major: *Communication B.A.*
Puksta Project: *Veteran Assimilation into Civilian Life*
Future Plans: *As a communication scholar with a health emphasis, I hope to find a rewarding and fulfilling career that incorporates a health communication perspective related to the fields of marketing and media.*



Patrycja Humienik - UCD

Major: *Communication M. A.*
Puksta Project: *Mass Incarceration/Solitary Confinement*
Future Plans: *Still has one more year for her Masters in Communications and will continue with her work for Dances for Solidarity.*

Incoming Puksta Scholars

We Are Growing!!!!

Proud to announce 28 incoming scholars.....
[Read more](#) about our incoming scholars this year!



DU

Alexander Aleman
Oliver Martinez-Reyes
Lucia Ramirez
Lumiere
Sidonie
Evan Utzman-Nichols
Aliyah Williams



MSU

Miriam Miranda
Alexis Robles
Luis Paredes
Jawhara Adan



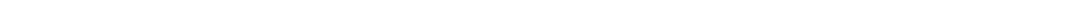
CU

Zahra Abdulameer
Paola Chavez Arroyo
Jasmine Tran
Marwa Osman
Emmanuel Cooke



CSU

Sabrina Pribyl
Deborah Ilangikwa
Dominica Manlove



UCD - Ethnic Studies Fellows

True Apodaca
Binh Phan
Alisya Rodriguez
Tiffany Tasker
Yihee Yoon



UCD - Communication Fellows

Kathryn (Kat) Goldberg
Erin Roney
Miranda Johnson
Claire Shannon
Jessica Rangel

Alumni Appreciation Where are they now?



Entrepreneur, Advocate and all around an upstanding young gentleman. Mawukle Yebuah graduated from the University of Denver in 2016 with a business already in motion with it's feet on the ground and starting to run. [READ MORE>>>](#)

Scholar Recognition

Join us in CELEBRATING the following DU Puksta Scholars honored at the DU [Pioneer Awards!](#)

- [Ciera Blehm](#), Outstanding Second Year Student
- [Aaqil Anwar](#), Distinguished Junior Student
- [Larcy Brooks](#), Kimmy Foundation Community Service Professional
- [Laleobe Olaka](#), Kimmy Foundation Community Service Professional
- [Larcy Brooks](#), Pioneer Award
- [Laleobe Olaka](#), Pioneer Award



New Student Organization of the Year



Celeste Pegues's organization, Sister to Sister (which is also her Puksta Project) won the MSU's New Student Organization of the Year award at the annual Student Involvement and Leadership Awards ceremony on April 13th of this year!! Congrats Celeste!! [Click here to read more about Sister to Sister](#)

Congratulations to two Women Presidents!!

DU Puksta Scholars

- Andrea Bonilla** - elected President of the Multicultural Greek Council
- Allie Grossberg** - elected President of the Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences Student Advisory Council

Way to go ladies!

Scholar Salute

Balkarn Shahi - CU

CU-Boulder undergraduate student Balkarn (Kern) Shahi is taking his knowledge of digital and information systems back to his hometown in Lafayette, Colorado, to help close the "digital divide" and other educational opportunity gaps for low-income students. [Learn More](#)



Bailey Cross - CSU

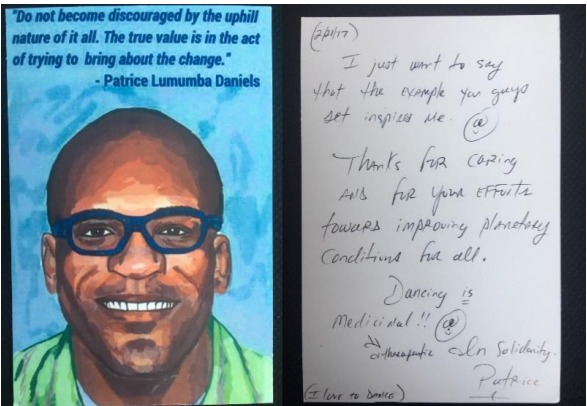
Produced her 2nd Annual Performance of the "The (Blank) Monologues". "The (Blank) Monologues" are a collection of pieces written and performed by CSU students that focus on typically taboo issues facing college students today including sexual assault, domestic abuse, body image, identity, racism, mental health, sexism, and more. They work to empower and encourage all through an event that educates, entertains, and provides a new perspective. [TBM](#)



Patrycja Humienik - UCD

She has created a Denver chapter of Dances for Solidarity. A project connecting with incarcerated people in solitary confinement through letter writing and dance. DFS-Denver is modeled off of DFS out of New York.

" I host meetings for the local chapter of Dances for Solidarity, a national initiative sharing dance through letter writing with people in solitary confinement. The written list, which begins by inviting the recipient to close their eyes, is comprised of a ten-step



movement sequence open to interpretation. The collaborative project invites pen pals to expand upon, and share their reactions to, the dance list. [READ MORE...](#)

Cristine de la Luna, Violet Gorrell, Abigail Jimenez and Celeste Pegues - MSU

Raised funds to attend National Women's Studies Association Conference in Montreal. Here are a few excerpts about their presentations. "My presentation for the NWSA conference focuses on the history and idea behind human trafficking, the tragedy on a national scale, the vicious cycle that's nearly inescapable, [Find out more...](#)

Aria Dellepiane - CU

Her Puksta Project tackles the issue of sexual assault in the Boulder community. She created a website [Anyone-anywhere.com](#) This is a movement created with the idea that sexual assault can happen to anyone anywhere and anyone anywhere can take a stand. There's interactive reporting tool that maps out incidents of sexual assault in Boulder, CO. You can also view official police reports of sexual assault since 2005. Make a report or get connected to resources whether you are a survivor or someone who wants to take action and educate yourself and others! [Learn More...](#)



Ciera Blehm - DU

Ciera hosted an event on campus called "Into the Light" -an innovative approach to change campus culture around sexual assault. They had free food, a guest speaker, giveaways and consent games we planned to get the entire DU community involved in order to end sexual assault on campus. The turn out was amazing even for a rainy day. [Into the Light](#)



Sarah Sunderlin - UCD

Teaching in a prison facility requires an awareness of the realities of institutionalized life; this includes the overwhelming and chronic isolation from loved ones. Family involvement during incarceration can be transformative and is a consistent theme that comes up during in class discussions and individual writing. However, some feedback we consistently get from our students is that routine visitation limits their ability to have quality family interaction. Therefore, my goal in organizing a family reunification event for my Puksta Fellowship project was to give our students the platform to practice practical communication skills that we work on in class while also being able to interact with their loved ones in a fun, relaxed, and welcoming environment. This full day event focused on celebrating the creative work produced by the men in our class and giving them the opportunity to share it with their loved ones. [Read more about the event...](#)



Puksta Winter Retreat Recap
throughout the eyes of a Puksta Scholar



The characteristic that makes Puksta different from other scholarship foundations is the sense of family and belonging. This was demonstrated on Saturday night

through the alumni panel which included three DU and one CU alumni who provided current scholars with their insights into "life after Puksta." This proved to be a useful experience for many first-years, including Oscar Saenz who said, "I am truly grateful and humbled to be a Puksta Scholar after seeing what previous scholars have gone on to do from a community organizing perspective. Puksta really is a lifestyle." [Read more...](#)

DONATE

Help us put more
scholars through our
program!!



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