

<u>Name</u>	<u>University</u>	<u>Social Justice Issue Area:</u>	<u>Puksta Project</u>	<u>Inspiration</u>
Sophia “Rosie” Contino	University of Denver	Sexual Health Education/ Awareness for People with Developmental Disabilities	I want to inform and empower young people with developmental and physical disabilities through a one-on-one sexual health education. In doing so, I hope to move the issue of assault perpetrated against people with disabilities from being considered taboo to being a critical social justice issue that must be addressed on a large scale.	I was inspired to pursue this project initially through my work with the Sexual Assault Victims Advocate (SAVA). In my time at SAVA, I was made aware of a disturbing statistic: Children with disabilities are four times more likely to experience sexual abuse than children without (Sullivan & Knutson, 2000). Upon further research, I discovered that this issue is not only widespread but also devastatingly underreported and virtually unknown to the general public. Once I became aware, I could not stop thinking about it. Since my own brother was born with Sotos Syndrome, I have an understanding of just how vulnerable people living with developmental disabilities can be. I came to the conclusion that people with disabilities are susceptible to abuse primarily because they have not had sexual health education. My ultimate goal is to bring to light this issue that is all too often swept under the carpet and I hope to improve the quality of life for those with disabilities.
Jessica Rangel	University of Denver	Immigration Policies/ Women's Rights	My Puksta Project this upcoming academic year will have a focus on immigration reform and helping those who are undocumented to create a life in the United States where they can feel safe in the community.	As I have seen firsthand how immigration policies and laws tear undocumented families apart, I was inspired to help those who don't have resources or outside support.
Shaunice Dedner	University of Denver	Technology	Teach teen girls about the importance of digital responsibility to help them make better decisions online.	As someone who grew up in the digital age, I noticed the alarming rate at which young ladies are often lured away from their home by someone they met online.

German Treto Esparza	University of Denver	immigration and education	I would like to reach to students of immigrant backgrounds who are thinking about school and life after they graduate. I would like to guide them through what ever questions they might be having. My goal is to provide them with the guidance I wish was available to me.	My own background as an immigrant and my struggles to get where I am today, have pushed me to want to make a difference in peoples lifes.
Gelella Nebiyu	University of Denver	Mental Health, Suicide Awareness	Creating awareness of mental health-related issues as well as suicide awareness in the African community.	After having lost a friend and member of my community to suicide, I realized that the entire situation seemed almost foreign to a number of my friends and family. I want to create awareness within the African community of the reality and the seriousness of mental health as well as the services available that aid in preventing suicide.
Emina Mujezin	University of Denver	Healthcare, Education, Immigration	For the upcoming academic year, I am hoping to integrate fitness classes into my nutrition classes and create a holistic approach.	I have had so many friends and family members that had to work multiple jobs and always put their familys needs above their own. It created unhealthy lifestyles and health conditions that would haunt them ten, twenty years down the road and I want to do my best to prevent that.
Daniela Caro	University of Denver	Undocumente d Female Students Pursuing Higher Education	My Puksta Project is called Road to Distinction, an after-school program hosted in Abraham Lincoln High School which targets students who identify as female to assist them in pursuing higher education. In partnership with Sigma Lambda Gamma National Sorority, Inc. we host weekly presentations and workshops after school. These presentations include healthy relationship, resume workshops and scholarship guidance.	As a former undocumented student of Abraham Lincoln High School, I felt as if the scholarship guidance targeted students with residency or citizenship. As a Puksta scholar I saw the difference scholars made in their community, and felt inspired to change and create a place where students in my similar situation felt welcomed.
Brendan Teck	University of Denver	Access to Higher Education	The purpose of this project is to analyze barriers of access to higher education for Asian American Pacific Islanders (AAPIs). Historically, higher education and pop culture has undermined the	I come from a family of Cambodian refugees who had to fight tireless through the American educational system in order for them to succeed. I come from a community of people who do not have the same opportunities as my

			<p>need to understand AAPI students due to stereotypes of AAPIs as model minorities who achieve great academic success. These stereotypes ignore the ethnic diversity within the AAPI group and perpetuate the idea that AAPI students succeed at higher rates than other racial groups and are not in need of additional support, rendering their experiences invisible.</p>	<p>family did, so my work is to make sure I am providing students from the Southeast Asian community with resources to thrive in higher education.</p>
Ciera Blehm	University of Denver	Women's Equality; Public Health; Sexual Violence on College Campuses	<p>My Puksta Project is focused on changing the conversation around sexual violence on college campuses to be on not rooted in fear and stereotypes and statistics; but rather one that provides the space for every individual to feel that they can create change and gain awareness regarding this issues.</p>	<p>During my freshman year in college, there were 15 reports of sexual assault on campus, and as students grappled with what all of that meant, the conversations I overheard were often dangerous to survivors. It was a lot of gossip and assumptions - fear - which harmed our campus as a whole. I decided to start this initiative because I wanted my campus to unite and create change, not feel afraid and talk about it without purpose.</p>
Andrea Bonilla	University of Denver	Gender Based Violence Education to Younger Communities	<p>The Source Summit is a conference that I am creating for high school students in the City of Thornton to educate, empower, and spread awareness about gender based violence. This summit will focus on educational and engaging discussions revolving around issues on healthy relationships, sexual assaults, consent, bystander intervention, and cultural differences. I will be partnering with the Thornton Police Department School Resource Officer Program, the Thornton/Northglenn Victim Services Unit, and the Pinnacle Charter High School to create a safe environment and discuss these types of issues inside our high school classrooms.</p>	<p>Being informed, educated, and aware of resources and individual rights are by far the most important things a human should learn at an early age. Title IX, rape, domestic violence, gender, harrassment, etc., should never be something an individual should face or learn about in college. These issues happen everywhere and to anyone, especially to our younger communities. Being exposed to these issues at an early age should ultimately benefit an individual in the long run.</p>

Aliyah Williams	University of Denver	Mental Health Stigma within Prison Populations	My project derives around the misunderstanding the general public has regarding mental health disorders and treatments. Specifically targeted towards inmates in prison, my project will aid in spreading correct information, to potentially decrease the amount of ridicule that inmates with mental disorders have to deal with. I believe that mental health and wellness is a touchy subject, that many people do not seek to understand and simply base their beliefs based on the media.	Knowing that we get our information from news media sources, I wanted to see if the information that was provided in articles and videos surrounding mental health and disorders was accurate. After analyzing many news media outlets, I discovered that a large portion of Americans' thoughts regarding mental disorders is misconstrued and falsifiable by statistics and other information that is overlooked. I chose the prison population because I know individuals who have mental disabilities, causing them to be involved in the prison system, and as a result are treated much differently than the rest of society.
Evan Utzman-Nichols	University of Denver	Gender Violence	I am focusing on perpetrator involvement in sexual assault on college campuses. This means over the next year I will be working towards the University of Denver releasing more information about sexual assaults that take place on campus. I believe it is very important, other than describing the location of the assault with scarce detail, that the university describes what consequences the perpetrators faced. This has importance as it will allow students to gain an understanding of the consequences a perpetrator may face which could be a deterrent to future assaults. More information being released would also allow students to gain a better perspective of how little action many colleges take against perpetrators of sexual assault.	To sexually assault someone takes so much from them. It is a terrible act that is incredibly prevalent on college campuses and very occasionally talked about among students.
Alexander Aleman	University of Denver	Youth Education and Health and well-being	After learning about the various institutional and individual factors that lead to students dropping out, I chose to re-focus my Puksta project toward preventing the summer learning loss. I love	I am a first-generation college student. I wouldn't have been able to get a good ACT score, and apply for colleges and scholarships without the help of my mentors. I was fortunate to be 1 of 12 students to selected to the Access

			<p>working with kids. I started a free fitness program for kids when I was 13 called Healthy Kids in Action. My program is a thriving 8-week summer fitness program for kids that has even been featured on the Denver Post and Colorado Public Radio. My goal is to further develop my fitness program and use it as a base to provide kids rich summer learning opportunities through exercise that will prevent summer learning loss and ultimately narrow down the achievement gap.</p>	<p>Opportunity program my sophomore year in high school, which provided me ACT tutoring and college counseling. I knew I wanted to go to college and my Access Opportunity counselors help me get there. In high school, I also witnessed many of my classmates that wanted to go to college not being able to because they were not counseled the way I was. I felt helpless. I now the what the college admission process looks like and I want to help kids go to college. For me, that means beginning at the base, mentoring kids when they are young, because dropout factors start at an early age.</p>
<p>lumiere M sidonie</p>	<p>University of Denver</p>	<p>Education for immigrants and refugees</p>	<p>For this upcoming academic year, I would like to partner with AVID at South High School, Central High School, Place Bridge as well as the African organizations in Denver to further understand what void is missing in the education of young African immigrants. Why most young African students do not pursue higher education. This will allow me to further research and solidify a mentorship program that I will start to create this year which exposes the refugee students to resources and organization that will help them pursue higher education, and attain jobs after graduation. I want my project to provide a resource and an opportunity to understand how college works. There are numerous individuals that came to the United State escaping poverty, war, conflict and lack of education. They came here in pursuit of a better opportunity. So I want my project to help them understand the accessibility of Colleges, how to get into college and the</p>	<p>I am an African young girl myself, and my family struggled in Congo. I was removed from removed from school because I couldn't pay my school fees. I went days without food, I slept with hunger. I was in the pit of poverty, hunger while under war. My family suffered. My father always told me the power that lies within education. He used to say, "the most feared person is one that is equipped with education." He urged that I attend school and that only education can change the world. My experience as a young child in poverty has fueled my desire to assist others who were or are in the situation I once was in. I want to be able to provide an opportunity I never had growing up in poverty.</p>

			<p>procedures that would lead one into college. I want young African students to know that College is accessible and it's not for only one race, rather for all people. So my project will be to exemplify the power of education in the African community in order for them to build a sustainable future for themselves. I believe education can build the African youth, and give them the confidence to face the world and attend higher education to become impactful individuals.</p>	
<p>Margarit a Soltero Gutierrez</p>	<p>University of Denver</p>	<p>Sex Education</p>	<p>Having access to health care resources is imperative for people, hence it provides them an opportunity to prioritize their health. This project focuses on understanding the perceived barriers of sexual health education from educators and students. An interview was conducted on an assistant principle to identify their perspective on this issue. Moreover, the home lives of the pupils and the communities will be examined in order to reduce the factors that are leading to teen pregnancy.</p>	<p>After reading the graphic novel, „Waiting for Health Equity,“ by the Center for Health Progress, I was inspired by the following fact that stood out: „Black and Latina teens are over twice as likely as white teens to become pregnant. This is due to the fact that non-white teens are less likely to have access to reproductive health resources and receive accurate sex education,“ (Center for Health Progress, 38).</p>
<p>Lucia Ramirez</p>	<p>University of Denver</p>	<p>Education; Youth</p>	<p>My Puksta Project for the upcoming academic year will concentrate on equity within education resources across communities.</p>	<p>My involvement with a range of programs that bring together people from around the globe (like the Youth Awards Leadership Camp, Student Board of Education, Youth for National Change, etc.) and being able to ask others about their perspectives with their education systems, listening to injustices that come with our education systems, inspired me to choose my Puksta Project.</p>

Oliver Martinez-Reyes	University of Denver	Education and Economic Opportunities	My end goal is to mentor a few high school students who are first-generation students and/or low-income who are undecided about their educational and economic careers. Through my mentorship, I want to expose them to resources and professional opportunities that they may not have been exposed to before. My focus this year is to build connections and partnerships with different programs on campus to create the foundation for my project.	Coming from both a first-generation and low-income family I had no one to vouch for me, help me understand how to prepare myself for higher education, and a professional career. I had to perform research and partake in constant risk-taking, to find the resources that got me to where I am today. I know that behind me are many, so I want to help others from my similar background achieve the realization that a higher education and any economic career is possible.
James Artis	University of Denver	Racial Inequality	Mending the Relationship between the African-American Community and Law Enforcement	In 2010 my brother was injured in a drive by shooting leaving him motionless from his neck down. Detectives on the case weren't much help in finding the individuals who attempted to take my brother's life, as it was just,"another shooting in the black community." This experience, combined with the inequality seen within the criminal justice system, (from minorities getting longer sentences to police shooting black and brown bodies in the streets with little to no reparations)has shown me that there is a need for change.
Chhorda Vuth	University of Denver	Immigration and Education	I am working on mentorship program to help newly arrived immigrant students adapt to the culture and education system in America.	As an immigrant student myself, I truly understand the struggles that my fellow immigrant students face and I wished I had a mentor to help guide me through when I first started school in the U.S.
Ismaat Klaibou	University of Denver	Child Abuse in Immigrant Communities	I will be continuing research on the presence of child abuse in immigrant communities as well as some of the steps being taken to combat it. From there, I would like to begin having seminars with community partners that will help explain the child safety laws in the United States as a way to protect both parents and their children.	I have had some personal experience of many children of immigrant families facing harsh and painful punishments and not knowing that many of those are unacceptable by law, and can harm them in the long run. It is hard to find resources or know who to go to, especially when there is a fear that there will be dire consequences for parents or family members. The idea is to educate, so that children

				and parents have an understanding of what constitutes abuse, how to avoid it, and where to seek help that won't break the bank.
Blanche Ndoutou	University of Denver	Refugees/Immigration, Human rights	I would like to work more with the African Community center. I want to be able to connect with more refugee families in Denver so that I could work with them to help them adapt to Denver.	I am a refugee from Cameroon. My mother, my siblings, and I moved to the US about ten years ago. We did not have enough resources to help us adapt; therefore, I want to be able to help others find the resources that my family and I had trouble finding.
Jenny Truong	University of Denver	Education for racial minorities or empowerment for underrepresented racial groups	Not very sure yet, I still need to discuss with Kathleen. Something regarding leveling the playing field for racial minorities in terms of academics and opportunities.	The issue not only resonates with me, but many other students as well who have been my peers and mentees.
Leo Andrade	Colorado State University	Helping minority and low income students attain art related resources.	I want to help minority and low-income students attain the resources and skills required to be prepared for a higher education in art related fields.	I was once part of an afterschool art program when I was in middle school. Before I joined I had no idea about what possible career path I would take or how I would get there once I decided. This afterschool program taught me how to use digital computer programs, illustrate, and network so that when I applied and entered college I'd be ready. I want other future students to have access to a collaborative environment that,Â's goal is to do exactly that.
Kiri	Colorado State University	Food Insecurity	Food and nutrition insecurity is a major public health issue often overlooked in college students. Individuals may have limited food access (food insecurity) or have access to poor nutritional quality foods (nutrition insecurity). To address this at Colorado State University (CSU), I initiated a	Food insecurity is a major public health issue worldwide, but it is often overlooked on campuses and in college students in general. Rams Against Hunger is a Colorado State University (CSU) initiative that serves as an emergency food relief for undergraduate students experiencing food insecurity. According to Rams Against

			<p>program to provide students with local produce and education on food preparation and on the produce sources. „FREEEdge“, the combination of „free“ and „fridge“, was developed by students who advocated for community building by providing free produce while reducing food waste. In May of 2017, I implemented the FREEEdge in Aggie Village, a CSU student apartment complex. Over the past year we have provided over 700 lbs of free produce to residents. I plan to collaborate with Rams Against Hunger, CSU’s emergency student food relief program, to expand the FREEEdge and raise awareness of the relationship among food systems, food security, community and the environment.</p>	<p>Hunger, 1 in 10 students at CSU, or roughly 3,800 students, experience food insecurity. This is not just an issue on our campus, but is a prevalent and growing issue at other campuses nationally due to tuition and living expenses which puts students in a difficult situation of choosing between expenses and food. My goal is to support fellow students in providing a basic necessity.</p>
<p>Jada Johnson</p>	<p>Colorado State University</p>	<p>Ethnicity</p>	<p>Students for COLOR is a project that focuses on creating a creative community with fine arts opportunities for low-income children of color, who do not receive an arts education through a school or other private for-profit programs. Students for COLOR is a mentorship program that connects students who have received Arts training and have a love for the fine arts, an opportunity to teach and mentor younger students who do not receive a strong, comprehensive arts education through school. For students and by students this project is meant to give the power back to students, create community, and remind young artists that they can uplift one another.</p>	<p>Arts are seen as disposable within the American government and this specifically targets and disadvantages marginalized communities and communities of color. The Arts and Achievement in At-Risk Youth study analyzes the benefits or lack thereof, from an Arts education. The study’s key finding include that an Arts education promotes better academic outcomes, higher career goals, and leads top students being more civically engaged than students who did not have arts accessible to them. After studying classical voice at Denver School of the Arts for seven years, the importance of an Arts education is undeniable to me and I see the importance to ensure that even marginalized communities of color are not excluded from this experience because of affluence and accessibility.</p>

<p>Dom Baca</p>	<p>Colorado State University</p>	<p>Advocacy for Student Rights</p>	<p>For my project I will learn more about the inner workings of the Restorative Justice disciplinary system and use my knowledge to start by educating first my high school about this process and work to help the implement it. Then after I will begin to reach out to other schools and do the same so that way I may have a bigger impact. This in turn will be my way to combat racism and the school to prison pipeline by decreasing suspensions and law enforcement action taken against students. This, in the end, help create a better future for minority students through equality.</p>	<p>As a high school student I noticed that when going to a minority school and talking to members of my community my school was often seen as the „Äúghetto,Äù or „Äúbad,Äù school. I was always confused by this because my peers were such compassionate and loving people. I then began to notice where this ideology was coming from. It came from how the students reacted to being mistreated by the faculty of the school. This is what the community saw. This ideology became real for me when I was sitting in class one day. As I sat at my desk, I noticed a teacher put in a new policy in their class that I did not agree with. I began to question why the teacher put in this new policy. I also found loopholes and pointed them out to the teacher. Later that day, I was taken out of class by security which brought me to the assistant principal's office and told that I was going to be suspended for being disrespectful and talking back to a teacher. This did not sit well with me because I was a 4.0 gpa student and was seen as one of the leaders of the school. Luckily, I managed to get out of the suspension. This situation had always seemed unjust to me. The pure fact that I was almost suspended for asking a question that a teacher did not like came from how some of the teachers and administrators at the school views and treats the minority students. Now that I am in college I now see how that would have affected my ability to get into college and I realized that many students fall victim to this. I would like to now go back and discuss with the faculty how their treatment of the students is not only affecting them, but it is affecting the school's reputation in the community. This is where I got my idea for my</p>
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				community engagement project. I want to stand up for the social justice of the students and show the faculty why what they are doing is wrong and how it can be improved.
Sabrina Pribyl	Colorado State University	Disabilities and Education	My project Puppy Pals takes grade school students out of their traditional classroom and into the CSU environment and incorporates service animals to practice reading, writing, and speaking skills. Service animals act as a non-judgmental listeners reducing the anxiety students can experience, while CSU's campus helps inspire and encourage students. This provides additional assistance in a non-judgmental environment and empowers students to pursue higher education in the future.	I did not grow up with a disability, rather saw the impact of exclusionary practices and lack of resources that forced some of my peers with disabilities to feel like they didn't belong. Some of these included: changing schools or being isolated from their other peers. Although, I also saw the positive impact of inclusionary programs that helped elevate equal participation in academics, sports, and social activities. As a student, I know that we all experience different challenges throughout our education, some which can deeply discourage us. This discouragement could potentially limit our growth in the classroom and impact how we view education during our formative years. Through these past experiences, I have been inspired to help empower those who have faced obstacles throughout their educations, with a focus on children with disabilities.
Stephanie Herrera	Colorado State University	Higher education for DACA/Undocu students	This year I hope to move forward towards making my project sustainable. I work with Undocu/DACAmented HS students/young adults to provide resources and information about the next steps in their education. Either a 2 year education or a 4 year institution. This has been done through workshops and panel presentations. I am now working towards creating a website with information, testimonials, and more resources so	My own identity as an undocumented and then DACAmented individual inspired me to be involved and give back to my community.

			that future students may access these tools. I hope to collaborate with other PUKSTA scholars from.	
Anarely Marquez-Gomez	Colorado State University	Immigration/ DREAMERS	My project has revolved around community organizing within the immigrant community. The program began as a series of Immigrant rights workshops addressing topics such as : Pathways to Citizenship, Citizenship Application Workshops, and What to Do if ICE is at Your Door. The program has now transitioned into ensuring DREAMERS on the CSU campus have adequate living solutions raging from, health care, scholarships, tuition, hate crimes, and other important issues. Currently the organization is engaging in negotiations with President Tony Frank and other school administration and has presented a list of recommendations.	I was inspired to begin this project through a series of self experiences where I realized the duality of being an immigrant in the U.S. I grew up seeing a lot of injustices which stemmed from a lack of activism and information within the community.
Deborah Ilangikwa	Colorado State University	Higher Education	My Puksta project, this year will be focusing on providing relationship with students in ESL class and to serve as a mentor for them.	My personal experience as an ESL student inspired me to choose this project.
Dominica Manlove	Colorado State University	Mental Health/ Equality	Society's ideologies influence women of color and of mixed races to believe that they are not beautiful in their own skin if they do not fit a certain criteria, persuading woman to change themselves in order to be beautiful. As a result, young, curly-haired girls grow up without self-love for their unique hair, and often damage it in attempts to straighten it. The focus for Be Yourself and Own It, is to establish a curly hair campaign at CSU. During this educational campaign we will unravel beauty and	Growing up in a diverse environment has had its challenges. I,Äôve had to learn how to recognize social justice issues how to deal with them. Here at school, I feel like I am a part of two cultures because I attend a predominately white school and go home to a diverse culture. I,Äôve had to deal with some issues that have been challenging, and have taken courage. Growing up I have been teased because of my big curly hair, I became upset with who I was and did not know how to love myself. It took me years to fins beauty in who I am, there are many young women who go through these similar challenges that I feel a need to support.

			<p>self-love for one week over the Spring Semester. I connected with cultural and women's support systems in the community to gain volunteers and spread the word. The week will be hosted from a Mon-Sat, each day highlighting self-care tips from hair care to skin and nutrition advice as well. The main event would consist of showcasing different hair and skin type journeys in a showcase. With curly haired demonstrations, experts, bloggers, activists and stylists, we dig into culture and understanding through workshops. The „Be Yourself and Own It,“ campaign will influence love for diversity throughout the community, it will also create a safe place where individuals are accepted for who they are. It is important to encourage uniqueness and uplift one another instead of making beauty a battle. I plan to expand this week event to middle and high schools around the world for our youth to learn about themselves and their unique beautiful differences.</p>	
Duvia Ortega	Metro State University of Denver	College awareness	Create awareness of college opportunities and support for DACA students	Little kids, and how they should know about college since they,“re small.
David Campos C.	Metro State University of Denver	DACA & Undocumented Student Empowerment	My goal is to empower the DACA / Undocumented students by showing them lawful knowledge. I am apart of two organizations, MSU Dreamers Network and DSF. At the MSU Dreamers Network; I gave knowledge to teachers and admin here at MSU. We conducted multiple presentations with the goal of giving faculty a little bit more	I was once in their shoes. I don't want any student feeling like they can't go to college because of their citizenship status.

			<p>understanding about the DACA community and how they can help strength our presence. With DSF, I help mentor DACA high school students. I teach them the principles of applying to colleges and scholarships.</p>	
Jhovani Becerra	Metro State University of Denver	School-to-prison Pipeline	<p>Continue to engage high school students to advocate for better school discipline policies/practices to be implemented in Denver Public Schools. The goal is to ensure that students have access to a quality education without any barriers. Another thing for this year is that I want to help prepare new college students in any challenges in order for them keep on track with their academic plan and prevent any chance of them to fall behind.</p>	<p>Observing the excessive exclusionary discipline practices in my middle school has sparked a passion in me to prevent the appalling consequences these practices have on a students education. I want all schools to have a supportive school environment, like I had in my High School. My civic</p>
Kevin McQuirk	Metro State University of Denver	STEM Mentoring	<p>My project for the Puksta foundation is a yearlong mentorship between paired, college and high school students in the Denver Public Schools. The name for my mentoring program is „Impact the Youth.“ Through Impact the Youth, I will immerse high school mentees into the higher education environment on the Auraria Campus. The high school students which Impact the Youth is designed for are minorities, undocumented people, and socio economic disadvantaged students that are in their second, third, or last year of high school. The goal of the project is to present these students multiple options of education through a university or community college. It is designed to show higher education as one of the best career options, encourage them to attend</p>	<p>My inspiration came from the help and support of Juedon Kebede.</p>

			<p>college, and remove any road block in the way of these goals. In Impact the Youth, I will build mentor-mentee relationships with high school students by inviting them attend activities at MSU Denver throughout the year. These activities could be a presentation, laboratory research, lecture, or event on the Auraria campus. This will allow high school students to be familiar with college campus and to experience many opportunities through organizations at MSU Denver. This will also provide high school students the potential to work with on campus organizations that they may potentially become involved with if they attend MSU Denver in the near future.</p>	
<p>Monica Simpson</p>	<p>Metro State University of Denver</p>	<p>Non-traditionally aged students</p>	<p>MSU Denver has a significant number of non-traditionally aged students. Some are returning to school after a few or many years away, and some have never before had the opportunity to attend a university and earn a degree. Older students have distinct needs and challenges, as well as unique wisdom and supports to offer one another. The Wisdom Collective is a student organization that will allow and encourage older students to make meaningful connections with others who understand their journey. Our goal is to build community & connection, support & safety, and resources & resilience.</p>	<p>I found myself back in school after being widowed and raising my children to adulthood. There were numerous compelling and practical reasons I needed and wanted to earn my degree. My story isn't really terribly unique; there,Ãs a substantial number of older students on our campus who've faced significant life challenges and are now working to balance academics and other responsibilities while pursuing a new or growing career. There are few if any resources that address our specific situation, and after talking with other non-traditional students I realized that we are in the best position to support ourselves. We have amazing adaptability and strengths! Our stories and experiences are our greatest assets, and I saw the need to create a place where we could share our wisdom, ideas, and encouragement with one another.</p>

Jennifer Cassidy	Metro State University of Denver	Domestic Violence	Teaching computers skills to domestic violence survivors	Being a child of a survivor and a survivor myself
Angelica Prisciliano	Metro State University of Denver	Immigrant Rights	Improve knowledge of rights and higher education opportunities of the undocumented community in Colorado	Hard working immigrant community inspired me to want to do more work for equity rights.
Cicilia Saenz	Metro State University of Denver	Special Education in low income communities.	Creation of an after school program in low income communities for Sepecial Education students and families.	My inspiration for my Puksta Project came from my own experience within the system as a student with a learning disability.
Samantha Vidal	Metro State University of Denver	Kids mental and physical health.	Creation of a youth program that focuses on physical activity and mental development.	I have a niece who is 5 years old and a nephew who is 4 years old. My niece she,Äôs a swimmer. Swimming is not just a sport it helped her gain trust in others, learn skills and being persistent. She,Äôs tiny and yet she still pushes herself to swim everyday better. She has learned to be patient and to believe in herself. My nephew, he,Äôs a funny little guy. He,Äôs not very patient when learning his numbers or something involving his thinking, but when it comes to soccer or some sort of activity he,Äôll give you his complete attention. You,Äôll tell him some rules and he,Äôll follow them.
Mateo Manuel Vela	University of Colorado Boulder	Access to arts in low income communities	In order to address the lack of arts education in Denver Public Schools, I propose a writing retreat for youth of color in collaboration with community organizations working to increase access to arts education in low-income communities. The program would include writing workshops based on issues faced by students of color, including topics such as poverty and racism, as well as	My personal experience as an alumni of Denver's youth slam poetry team, Minor Disturbance, inspired me to choose my Puksta project. Spoken word has greatly impacted my life, and I feel it is important that students of color are able to engage this art form.

			performance and mentorship opportunities through open mics and writing circles.	
Sara Hagos	University of Colorado Boulder	Diaspora	In an attempt to create a community in which people can learn more about their roots, I will provide resources and a safe space which encourages both collective cultural and individual growth. I also hope to collaborate with other diaspora projects to emphasize the importance and beauty of being involved culturally.	Coming from a high school with a total minority enrollment of 76 percent has opened my mind to a variety of perspectives that have expanded my intellectual capabilities. Experiencing all of these different cultures took residence in my heart and helped me on my journey of cultural identity. Being an American born Ethiopian had proven to be difficult at times because I had yet to truly be immersed in all aspects of my culture. Eventually, I became quite comfortable within Ethiopian culture, but not without a struggle. Therefore, I want to help other diasporas along with their journey of cultural identity.
Sana Zulali	University of Colorado Boulder	Education	My Puksta Project will focus on the immigrant youth who are getting their basic human rights taken away. Such as how the United States is violating the 14th amendment.	Due to the recent political debate on children being taken away from their families and lifestyle, I decided to choose this as my Puksta Project because this is a major problem happening in the United States that will affect globally. As a result, less immigrants will get the opportunity to have basic human rights.
Anthony Salazar	University of Colorado Boulder	Still determining	My project concentrates on helping students specifically seniors navigating the financial aspect of college. Getting in is one step but anybody hardly talked about how to make it a financial reality which seems far out of reach for most students. This tends to be the case a majority of the time. Although the thing really preventing students from coming to a University is a lack of education on how to make college a financial reality.	Coming from a low-income neighborhood there was an immense need for post-secondary option transition coaches. I only knew of one from my district who was hard to get help from. Seeing this as well as my peers struggle joking but being serious on how much harder it is to pay to college not get that acceptance letter. Inspiration sparked in me to help make a change to this.

Alondra Palomino	University of Colorado Boulder	Access to Higher Education	This academic semester I plan to focusing on the sustainability of my parent college workshops. My goal is to work with the Lafayette Peer Empowerment Project (LPEP) and have the high school students take over the facilitation of the workshop. I plan on expanding the workshop and adding an interactive compenent of going through the FAFSA application together as well as the actual college application. Ultimately, the goal of this project is to be able to have the presentation become part of school districts curriculums and presented to both students and parents during their junior year.	My Puksta project is dedicated to my younger siblings. They both attend a low income high school with limited resources and guidance to a post secondary education. I want my younger siblings to realize that there are incredible opportunities available to them if they work hard and are aided with resources. Unfortunately, there are many students that do not have guidance or resources and struggle on the road to pursuing a higher education. The reality is that everyone deserves the right to identify and pursue their dreams whatever they may be.
Helina Zemedede	University of Colorado Boulder	Homelessness /poverty	My project this year is focused on the issue of homelessness and poverty. Specifically this year I plan of working with Boulder County in the System Collaborative that work on providing sustainable resources for the homeless community.	I believe that housing is a basic human right that is essential is success in this society. With the growing wealth gap, the homeless population is become more and more invisible and this community is unjustly criminalized.
Emma Piller	University of Colorado Boulder	Immigration, voting Rights	I am working to amend a charter in the City of Boulder to expand voting rights to residents without full citizenship. I am building a coalition within the community to help achieve this goal.	INVST!!! I think this program really pushed me into a very intensive process that helped me understand what Puksta projects really take. Voting rights is both a personal passion and a greater need. I can apply my love for politics while learning the process of grassroots organizing to change policy.
marwa osman	University of Colorado Boulder	Diversity and Inclusion	Lack of diversity is common problem in many large institutions. Universities and colleges across the nation lack representation of students of color. Despite, many institutions efforts to promote diversity many lack opportunities that would invite students of color as well ensure that they will have community that will make them want to stay.	My passion and interest for diversity stems from my own personal struggles with coming to terms with my cultural identity of being a Somali-American. It wasn,Äôt until the end of high school that this mindset had faded away. I went to the Denver school of Science and Technology (DSST), DSST was continuously praised and prided itself for its diverse student population, and it was during my

			Knowing this, my plans for my project is to produce a written report based on collected data on how CU Boulder can effectively attain and maintain diversity.	high school years, which I started to become surrounded by those who shared a similar cultural background. This is when I started to accept my cultural identity, as I was able to see the love some of my peers had for their cultures, and it inspired me to adopt this mindset. My passion for inclusivity drives my want to extend the everlasting impact my high school experience has given me and offer it to other higher-ed institutions.
Lluvia Macias	University of Colorado Boulder	Immigration	In CU, community DACA students are currently facing real uncertainty with their futures. Since undocumented students cannot receive federal aid and are a small portion of the student body (at the moment), there is little support provided from CU in contrast with other universities. For this reason, I would like to help CU initiate funds and additional resources that will help support, strengthen, and grow the supportive community around undocumented students. My project would involve spreading awareness to faculty and staff to build a supportive platform for students like myself.	CU has a growing population of Undocumented students and must have a support system for them.
Emmanuel Cooke	University of Colorado Boulder	Networking	focus on the content for the networking club	I saw that my sister and many minorities were having a hard time finding jobs and wanted to build a relationship with students and employers
Zahra Abdulameer	University of Colorado Boulder	Providing mentorship programs for young Muslim girls/newcomers.	My Puksta project revolves around creating mentorship programs specifically geared towards young immigrant Muslim girls. These programs would not only help elementary/middle school newcomers with navigating the education system, but they will also serve as a "Big Sister" group that aims to support these students in any way to make	I came to the United States in 2009 in hopes of attaining a more promising future. I was expected to adjust to the new education system as well as adapt to the culture shock on my own. Growing up in a predominately Muslim country, Iraq, and moving to the United States was a huge shock for me. I was the only Muslim girl in my class for a long time. This made me feel very isolated.

			<p>them feel that they have a personalized support system in school</p>	<p>Therefore, I wanted to create a program that supports young Muslim girls in a multitude of ways. Of those ways, helping them in their educational pursuit will hopefully encourage them to keep pushing through regardless of their ability to speak English or not. I would also like to create religious programs that help make their adjustment to US society less scary and more familiar.</p>
<p>Paola Chavez</p>	<p>University of Colorado Boulder</p>	<p>This project aims to reach the underrepresented and give them the chance to create bonds with mentors so they persist in their career goals.</p>	<p>My project is a mentorship program that uses an app as the platform to bridge disadvantaged students with similar mentors in their community, and give them the tools necessary to succeed in their journey to higher education.</p>	<p>My non-traditional path to college inspires my own urge to help other students like myself in their journey to higher education. My biggest mentor is my brother older by only one year who is pioneering the college experience himself as first generation and quickly passing on his advice to me. We didn't have a mentor with years of experience living out our career goals but we are resourceful. I was lucky to have a wonderful role model like my brother (Fernando, also Puksta scholar) and he is my inspiration for this project, because like him, I want to pass on the selfless guidance that he gave me and use this virtual platform to reach many many more.</p>
<p>Jasmine Tran</p>	<p>University of Colorado Boulder</p>	<p>Healthcare</p>	<p>For the upcoming year, my Puksta Project will focus on implementing a health navigation system into a health center. The purpose will serve to enhance the relationships between healthcare professionals and patients in order to receive quality care. Patient navigators will be utilized to assist patients through the process, help access resources, and be a continuing support system.</p>	<p>My family is my greatest inspiration for my Puksta Project. I have attended various doctor appointments to experience the challenges faced by patients. I have also recognized the same inequities through internships and volunteering.</p>

<p>Gaby Solano Serno</p>	<p>University of Colorado Boulder</p>	<p>Healthcare and Immigration</p>	<p>My Puksta Project focuses in Healthcare education, prevention & advocacy for the Latino Community in particular undocumented immigrants and other minority groups. Most of the time when families immigrate to the US, they come with the intention to start have a better life, but in most cases due to lack language, culture and diversity among the healthcare providers they feel out of place. In particular, when age, religion, race, social class, and citizenship status determine the options available for healthcare needs.</p> <p>My Puksta Project will involve collaborating with non-profit institutions or clinics who serve Latinos and minorities . As well as, run seasons that educate and increase awareness of healthier lifestyles that can prevent chronic, cardiovascular diseases, such as diabetes and obesity in youth and elderly individuals.</p>	<p>When I reflect upon my grandmother,Ãs life and the circumstances many undocumented individuals living in the USA have to go through in order to receive the adequate healthcare service. I am the first one be show passion in helping my community, but most importantly change the mindset America,Ãs healthcare system has in place. I believe everyone has the right to health care. Even undocumented immigrants have the right to receive adequate health care. No one should be discriminated against on the basis of income, health status, gender, race, age, but in particular citizenship status. I find it injustice that undocumented immigrants are required to contribute to the US in many ways sale taxes, jobs, and the construction of America,Ãs history, but still do not get equality everyone else does. As a matter of fact, I find it injustice that Congress supporting funds for The Emergency Medicaid program in 2007. This was a program that hospitals accepted to provide emergency assistance to undocumented immigrants in the situation of emergency care and would allow immigrants eligible for Medicaid in just emergency medical conditions. However, it's clear that US government leaders do not take in mind Undocumented Immigrants Humans Rights when new laws as current policies do not offer the same equal opportunities to undocumented immigrants and other minorities. On the other, I am just passion in helping my community to live a healthy life and provide them with tools and guidance to prevent disease.</p>
<p>Rebecca Robidoux</p>	<p>University of</p>	<p>Community Outreach and Older-Adult</p>	<p>I have noticed a gap between the older generation and college-aged students in regards to progressive ideologies and language. Many</p>	<p>I have been working on and researching many community issues over the past two years at CU Boulder. This year I am beginning an internship with a local</p>

	Colorado Boulder	Education on Women's Rights and Empowerment	community organizations are run by older adults, and their ability to be intersectional and inclusive would be enhanced if they had more information! My project this year is a process of reaching out to older adults in the community and facilitating seminars in which they can learn more about issues in our community/society.	nonprofit that is struggling to attract members and volunteers. This organization advocates for women's rights, and their mission is close to my heart. While I will be working with them on certain administrative tasks, I have become inspired to create an outreach program in order to revitalize the org.
Erin Roney	University of Colorado Denver	Those who are incarcerated or who have been incarcerated.	I would like to hold workshops for inmates who are about to be released or have been released to help them with interview training for jobs. On top of that, I would like to provide them with interview attire that has been donated. I want them to feel prepared and confident when entering the job market.	I believe in having stronger and safer communities. If we help inmates change their lives around, then maybe they can be successful members of society. Maybe one day the prison population will decrease with my help.
Anya Dickson	University of Colorado Denver	Travel / Global Education	Anya is a communications major and a political science minor. Coming from a multiethnic family, Anya struggled to fit in growing up. From a young age, she took great interest in education because it often led her to further educational opportunities across the U.S. and abroad, where she felt free to explore her identity. Having studied abroad and completed service abroad six times, Anya hopes to pursue a career in tourism and public relations. As a part of the rising 2018 Puksta class, Anya has partnered with CU Denver, Office of Global Education to expose travel opportunities specifically to students of color and first-generation scholars in addition to mentoring them through financial aid options. The most significant	See above

			<p>thing she has learned thus far from her project has been that everyone deserves to indulge in the beauty that travel offers, and if she can help make that a reality for nontraditional undergraduate students, she will.</p>	
<p>Tara McMurry</p>	<p>University of Colorado Denver</p>	<p>Environmental and housing justice</p>	<p>I am partnering with the Sierra Club and Project VOYCE to produce a series of web videos focusing on Globeville/Elyria-Swansea and the I-70 expansion. The videos will engage with the ways in which these northeast Denver neighborhoods have been isolated, neglected, and abused for over a century, and the ways in which residents still make the neighborhood a vibrant, close-knit community.</p>	<p>I was born and raised in the Highland neighborhood of Denver, though I moved away for college and early adulthood. When I moved back in my early 20s, Denver was on the cusp of the current economic and housing boom, and the boom utterly transformed the neighborhood I grew up in. While I'm happy to see my city and my neighborhood thriving, I feel that the intense growth and development left out the low-income, minority folks who lived in Denver before everyone wanted to live in Denver. The I-70 expansion and the impact it will have on Globeville/Elyria-Swansea is a prominent example of this, and I predict it will transform Globeville/Elyria-Swansea in the same way Highland was transformed: the neighborhoods may look cleaner and safer, but they will also be richer and whiter. Meanwhile, the people who lived in these neighborhoods when they were dirty and dangerous will be pushed farther into the literal margins of the city. I am not anti-growth, but I can't support growth that leaves out poor people and people of color.</p>
<p>Rob Hatcher</p>	<p>University of Colorado Denver</p>	<p>Voice and agency</p>	<p>Fostering voice and agency amongst community college students who are largely marginalized.</p>	<p>My form of activism married to my former community college.</p>

<p>Senika O'Connor</p>	<p>University of Colorado Denver</p>	<p>Education Equity</p>	<p>Education equity as it relates to pedagogy.</p>	<p>Growing up I often found myself in a classroom where no one looked like me. The history books only reflected faces similar to my own when we learned about slavery in America. It was challenging to navigate and make sense of who I was in relation to these environments.</p> <p>When I was old enough to work inside the walls of public education, I noticed that there were students who sat in the same lonesome position as I once had. Seeing these students made me want to rectify the unspoken and spoken injustice of being a minority student. I ultimately chose my project because education equity is incredibly meaningful to me. I believe that one of the best ways a teacher can be intentionally inclusive, is to value culturally responsive teaching for all students.</p>
<p>Stephanie Tolbert</p>	<p>University of Colorado Denver</p>	<p>Sexual Harassment/ Gender Equality</p>	<p>I have partnered with CU Denver, the Women and Gender Center and the Office of Diversity and Inclusion to examine how sexual misconduct training practices in academic settings address identity. Specifically, my Puksta project will culminate with training materials and recommendations for inclusive gender and sexual representation within these trainings. These identities are already marginalized and silenced within society at large. If the same is happening within practices that attempt to prevent violence, and non-binary identities are not part of the conversation, then their experiences with sexual harassment are delegitimized and invalid.</p>	<p>My project began with a question of whether or not sexual harassment trainings are successful in creating any cultural change as more and more survivors began to publicly speak about their experiences. I also knew that I wanted my project to address issues surrounding gender identity and sexism. After attending events, speaking with faculty who are invested in this issue, and looking at training materials from various campuses, it became clear that what I needed to do was combine these issues into one project in order to change the heteronormative conversation around and within these training practices.</p>

<p>Cone Vaughan</p>	<p>University of Colorado Denver</p>	<p>underprivileged and impoverished youth and the outdoors</p>	<p>My project is giving underprivileged and impoverished youth access to the outdoors. I plan on working with a non-profit organization that currently does this in some capacity and seeing first hand the ways in which to start my own non-profit of a similar nature, and the impacts the organization has on the youth. Getting youth out in the mountains, camping and hiking and overcoming many personal obstacles and building their confidence!</p>	<p>As a youth, I did not have many opportunities to go out and play in the mountains because my family couldn't afford the equipment nor did they have the time or the desire themselves to go do the things I wanted to do. As an adult, I have taken advantage of the mountains being just a few minutes away and getting found as often as I could in them. I am an avid 14er's bagger (hiker of the mountain peaks that have an elevation of 14,000 feet or more) and recently I saw first hand just how sumitting one of our beautiful 14er's can boost the confidence of a young person. I hiked Huron Peak with my eight-year-old kiddo this summer. It was their first and my 14th. My kid was the type of kid who would not try new things out of fear. They would not go to birthday parties in fear of not knowing anyone but the birthday kid. They didnt learn to ride their bike until just this year because they didn't think they could do it. When we made it to the top of that peak, their whole being changed. They were all smiles, jumping up and down, looking around and already talking about "when can we do another one!" The next day, their confidence levels were through the roof, trying new things, being a little more daring, and going up to kids they didnt know and starting a conversation. Seeing how just this one simple thing of hiking to the top of a mountain peak can increase the confidence level of one young person has helped me to choose this as my Puksta Project.</p>
<p>Jorge Lomas</p>	<p>University of Colorado Denver</p>	<p>Minorities</p>	<p>PEKAS stands for Preparation, Education, Knowledge, Assistance and Safety which is, a multi-lateral program to assist non-English speakers to</p>	<p>My experience providing emergency assistance and logistical support with FEMA during the 2016 floods which occurred in Baton Rouge, LA, i witnessed first hand</p>

			navigate a foreign nation and to support those who may have been let behind in our country.	how difficult and fatal can be for non-English speakers to respond to an emergency, let alone a natural disaster.
Reydesel Salvidrez Rodriguez	University of Colorado Denver	Undocumented Students, leadership and Higher Education	I want to create a resources guide for undocumented Students in the State of Colorado.	Being Undocumented myself, I did not have a perfect guidance to attend college and it was difficult sharing my issue with any person. I struggled applying for college, scholarships, and reaching out for help. I believe I was not the only one.
Chelsea Situmean	University of Colorado Denver	The Social Justice project I would be interested in working on is the beauty standards in Asian American and Pacific Islanders women focusing on representation and body positivity in the media how it affects women negatively, like myself, and how it impacts their life for	The Social Justice project I would be interested in working on is the beauty standards in Asian American and Pacific Islanders women focusing on representation and body positivity in the media how it affects women negatively, like myself, and how it impacts their life for example their mental health. I would start a campaign that includes video series of short stories of how beauty standards affect AAPI women.	I identify as Indonesian-American and in my community there are perceptions of our beauty standards. We have to look a certain way; our skin color, the length of our hair, the shape of our nose, etc. When I see how America's media portrays Asian-American, they pile us into one category and provide an inaccurate display of representation of our people.

		example their mental health. I would start a campaign that includes video series of short stories of how beauty standards affect AAPI women.		
Marika Fama	University of Colorado Denver	Food Justice	My project is as follows: My project seeks to explore the role of community gardens in reimagining the member's culture in a foreign environment.	I am inspired by the role that food plays in our lives. Food is not only a means of displaying power but our values and culture to name a few. It is well known that people of color are more susceptible to malnourishment which is caused by many factors. Additionally, maintaining one's cultural identity can prove to be difficult when they are in a new environment which includes a lack of access to cultural foods. How then can we best help support cultural productions and food insecurity? This is what motivates my project, the desire to help address these issues.