



## Reflecting on 2021

Dear Puksta Friends and Family,

Tomorrow we embark on a new year, a time for fresh starts and a chance to reset ourselves. But before we jump into 2022 it is important to review 2021. As we take the time to reflect on this past year, many of us will find moments of struggle. It has not been an easy year, but looking back and reflecting will also bring moments of joy and warmth. There is value in reflecting in both the highs and lows, for it brings what is truly important into focus.

Looking back on this year, two words come to mind... *HOPE* and *COMMUNITY*

*Hope... a word that deeply resonates when reflecting on our Puksta Scholars and the Puksta Alumni that have come before them. All striving to create a positive change in this world, putting aside their own needs and wants to help others. Hope for Humanity, Hope in bringing this world closer together, Hope for a brighter and more equitable future.*

*Community... Family is who we are at the heart of the Puksta Foundation. However you are connected, whether you are volunteer, mentor, coordinator, donor, partner, scholar, alumni, or a friend. We are so thankful for all of you who support and believe in the work we are doing at Puksta. We are grateful to have you all by our side. We could not be who we are or where we are without each and everyone of you, we are all in this together.*

Happy New Year everyone. May it bring you all love, peace, happiness and comfort.

Be kind to one another,

NiChel and Johnny Mulstay

*\*We invite you to keep scrolling down to help us celebrate our amazing graduates of 2021!\**



Puksta Fall Retreat Picnic

## In 2021...

♥ Graduated 15 Puksta Scholars

♥ Launched a NEW Puksta Scholar Program at CU Denver

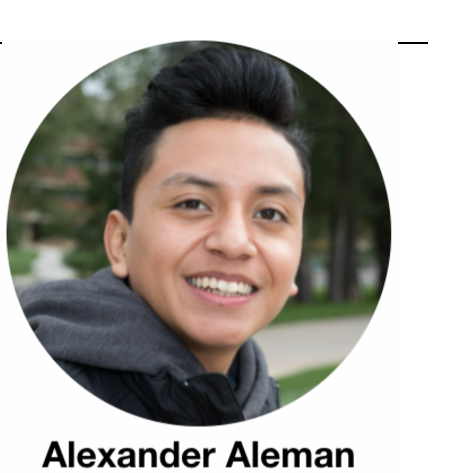
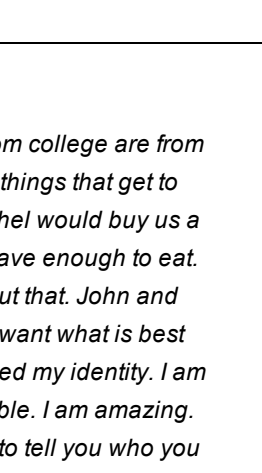
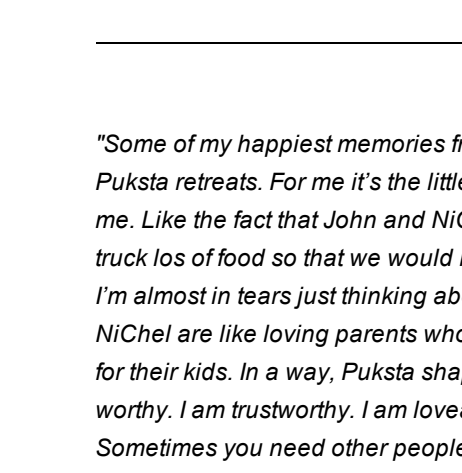
♥ Currently serving 53 Puksta Scholars

♥ Brought in 15 New Puksta Scholars

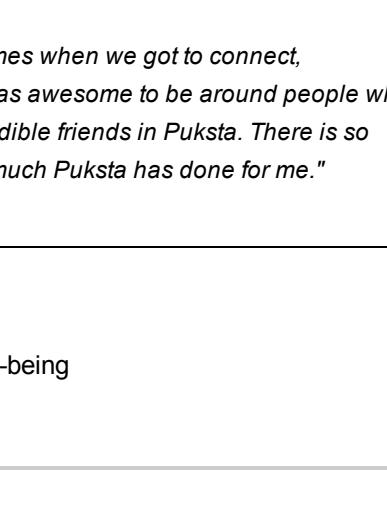
Congratulations to...

*Tyler "Nikki" Beavers, Graciela "Gracie" Leal, Estefany Revilla, Joel Ibarra, Jose Duenas, Anh Bui, Alexandria "Lexi" Walker, Fernanda Maria Cerros, Cristal de la Torre, Mariajose Baca, Jadya Mill, Samantha Rodriguez, Rosie Molina, Rediet Ayanaw, and Madison Allen*

## Congratulations to the Class of 2021



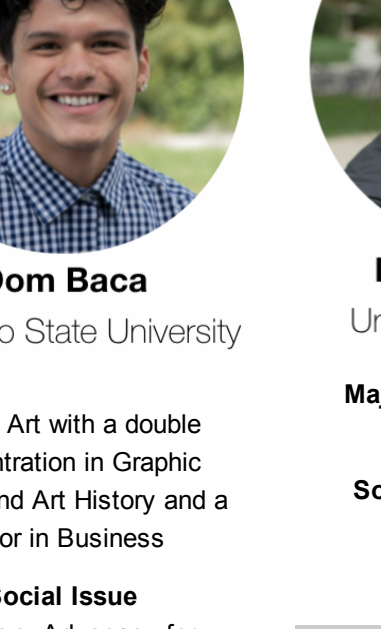
"Some of my happiest memories from college are from Puksta retreats. For me it's the little things that get to me. Like the fact that John and NiChel would buy us a truck load of food so that we would have enough to eat. I'm almost in tears just thinking about that. John and NiChel are like loving parents who want what is best for their kids. In a way, Puksta shaped my identity. I am worthy. I am trustworthy. I am loveable. I am amazing. Sometimes you need other people to tell you who you are. It's John's smile and NiChel's hug. It's those small actions that speak volumes. I think Puksta helped shape my identity through the love I received from John, NiChel, Ryan, and Kathleen. Second, being part of the Puksta community was a refuge. Our meetings were times when we got to connect, decompress, relate, recharge, and strengthen ourselves. It was awesome to be around people who shared similar experiences as me. I've also met people incredible friends in Puksta. There is so much more to say. I don't even think I'll ever truly know how much Puksta has done for me."



**Alexander Aleman**  
University of Denver

**Major:** Business Management

**Social Issue Passion:** Youth Education and Health and well-being



**Margarita Soltero Gutierrez**  
University of Denver

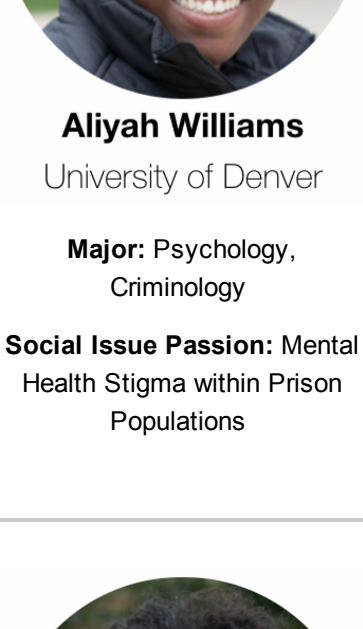
*Family! The Puksta Foundation means so much to my family and I. It gave me a home away from home, it taught me how to advocate for myself and my community, it taught me how to use my voice, it gave me life long friends that I call my family, it gave me the opportunity to make my parents sacrifice in coming to America worth it, and it made me one step closer to becoming a doctor!*

**Major:** Biology  
**Social Issue Passion:** Sex Education



**Dom Baca**  
Colorado State University

**Major:** Art with a double concentration in Graphic Design and Art History and a Minor in Business  
**Social Issue Passion:** Advocacy for Student Rights



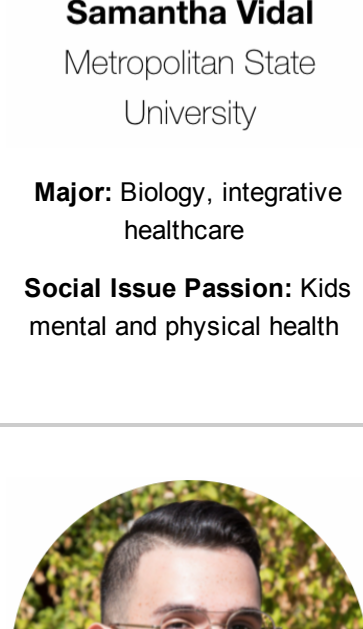
**Lucia Ramirez**  
University of Denver

**Major:** Accounting; Data Analytics  
**Social Issue Passion:** Education; Youth



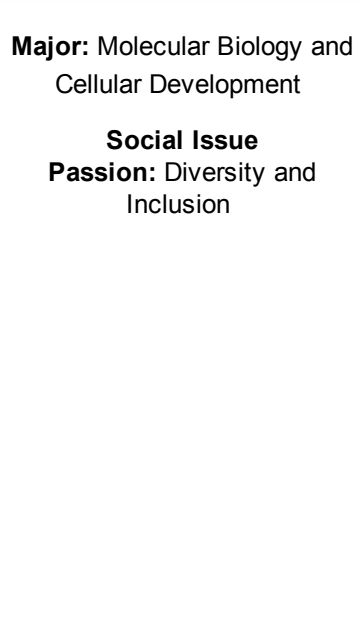
**Lumiere Sidonie**  
University of Denver

**Major:** International studies/socio-legal  
**Social Issue Passion:** Education for immigrants and refugees



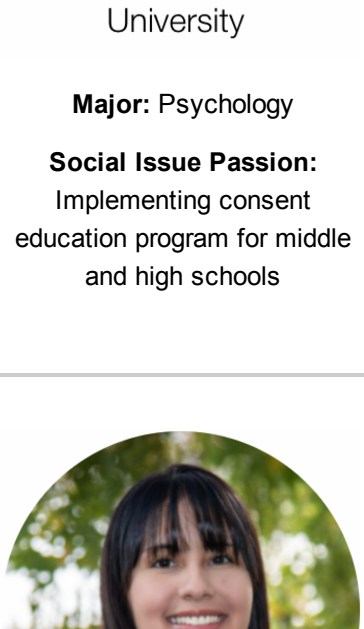
**Jada Johnson**  
Colorado State University

**Major:** Political science; Ethnic studies  
**Social Issue Passion:** Trauma Healing for POC



**Aliyah Williams**  
University of Denver

**Major:** Psychology, Criminology  
**Social Issue Passion:** Mental Health Stigma within Prison Populations



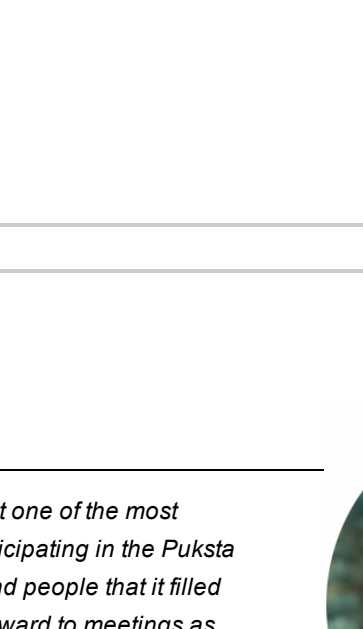
**Zahra Abdulameer**  
University of Colorado Boulder

**Major:** Sociology/Communications  
**Social Issue Passion:** Providing mentorship programs for young Muslim girls/newcomers.



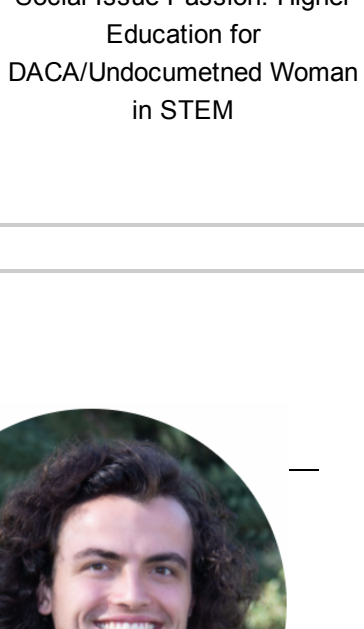
**Samantha Vidal**  
Metropolitan State University

**Major:** Biology, integrative healthcare  
**Social Issue Passion:** Kids mental and physical health



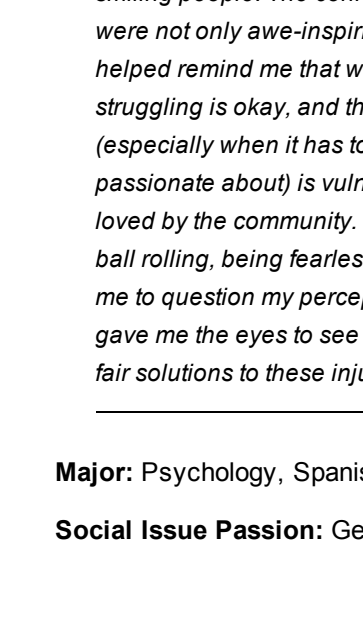
**Marwa Osman**  
University of Colorado Boulder

**Major:** Molecular Biology and Cellular Development  
**Social Issue Passion:** Diversity and Inclusion



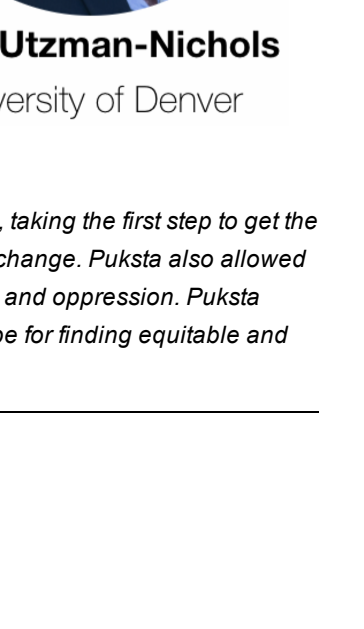
**Kelly Stone**  
Metropolitan State University

**Major:** Psychology  
**Social Issue Passion:** Implementing consent education program for middle and high schools



**Leo Andrade**  
Colorado State University

**Major:** Apparel & Merchandising (Product Development)  
**Social Issue Passion:** Helping minority and low incomes students attain art related resources.

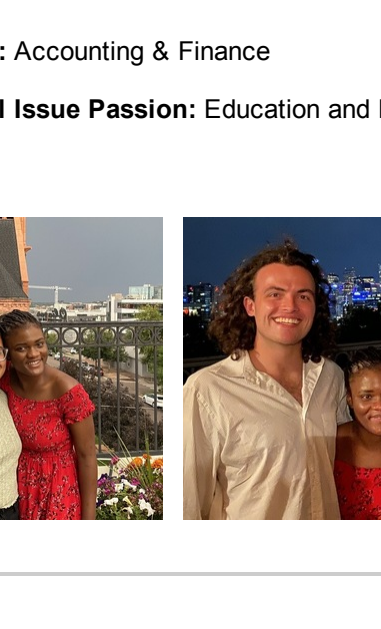


**Karen Nunez Sifuentes**  
Metropolitan State University

**Major:** Biochemistry  
**Social Issue Passion:** Higher Education for DACA/Undocumented Woman in STEM

"It cannot go without saying that one of the most significant takeaways from participating in the Puksta program was understanding the oppression of others around me. Before joining this awesome community, I knew very little about social justice issues and how I could get involved. Puksta educated me and provided me with the skills and tools to take action appropriately. Furthermore, as a business major, I found it hard to balance business and community organizing in the same sentence where they didn't fight against each other. I plan to make a difference in this world by incorporating both into my career! During my development these four years, I'm confident to say that I've found ways in which both can co-exist and even help each other out."

**Major:** Psychology, Spanish  
**Social Issue Passion:** Gender Violence



**Oliver Martinez-Reyes**  
University of Denver

**Major:** Accounting & Finance  
**Social Issue Passion:** Education and Economic Opportunities

"My biggest takeaway from the Puksta scholars program was understanding the oppression of others around me. Before joining this awesome community, I knew very little about social justice issues and how I could get involved. Puksta educated me and provided me with the skills and tools to take action appropriately. Furthermore, as a business major, I found it hard to balance business and community organizing in the same sentence where they didn't fight against each other. I plan to make a difference in this world by incorporating both into my career! During my development these four years, I'm confident to say that I've found ways in which both can co-exist and even help each other out."



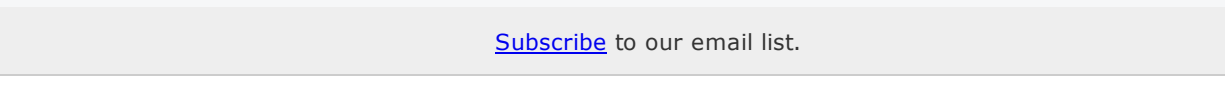
## CU Denver Puksta Intern



**Jonathan Simanjuntak**  
University of Colorado Denver

**Major:** Communications  
**Inspiration:** "I get inspiration from young leaders that refuse to accept the current state of our world. Everyday the Puksta scholars remind me that there is always a way to organize and empower each other despite whatever obstacles might be in the way."

INVEST in a Puksta Scholar



pukstafoundation.org | puksta@pukstafoundation.org

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