



COLORADO CIRCLES FOR CHANGE

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

Greetings from CCFC staff, volunteers, and board members. The purpose of this newsletter is to keep our supporters updated on the powerful work CCFC is doing for young people in our community.

COVID 19

Our number one priority is always the health and safety of our youth and their families. As an organization, we continue to live these values in the wake of the COVID-19 crises. On March 12th, 2020, CCFC made an executive decision to move all programs to virtual access and staff duties to remote access to ensure the wellbeing of our youth, families, and staff. As of now CCFC will remain on virtual/remote status until May 1st, 2020 and will re-assess if needed at that time.

Currently, programs continue via FaceTime, Zoom, text, and phone calls and CCFC is working hard to be responsive to the needs of young people and creating innovative ways to keep them engaged. Adolescent psychologists are already expressing that middle and high school-aged youth are being significantly impacted by the current crisis. We know youth need extra connection, social and emotional support, routine, and hope. WE ARE HERE!

CCFC would also like to share the CDC's steps to protect your self and your family. Please visit their website for more information.

Please feel free to reach out at any time with questions or support needs, and please stay healthy, compassionate and remember we are all in this together.

RESPONSE

As a response to the current COVID 19 crises, our team has amped up our program approach to continue to engage youth in our current programs. WE CANNOT SHUT DOWN! Too many youth depend on our services and now more than ever need connection and positive youth development! CCFC has four programs going strong to ensure they are engaged and supported, in a way that keeps them healthy and safe. Group meetings remain at the same time to continue a routine for youth. Projects, activities, and healing circles carry on.

CCFC provides programs to youth of color, who live in under-resourced communities that experience poverty, violence, school dropout, amplified mental health issues, and trauma. Coming to our after school programs are often a place of solace for our youth to connect with positive adults and their peers in a safe environment and engage in transformational programming.

Staff implemented a survey to youth participants and their families immediately after school closures to gauge needs and to ensure our response is informed by those most impacted. As a result CCFC, has created Art, Learning & Healing Toolkits to be delivered to all youth. The toolkits include art projects and supplies to encourage creativity, educational activities, on-line resources and books to continue learning outside of the classroom, and healing informed activities that focus on cultivating good mental and behavioral health. We are also supporting families with food packages and rent assistance. We are leaning on community to support this venture by donating anything you can to support.

QUARTERLY PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT: KALPULLI

Kalpulli is an indigenous Nahuatl word that means community

CCFC's Kalpulli mentoring program has flourished into a powerful program that is transforming the lives of middle school youth in our community.

Middle school years are some of the most important developmental years of a young persons' life. Kalpulli is a safe place for youth to come during non-school hours to get homework help, develop relationships with positive adults and peers, cultivate leadership and engage in culturally rooted programming. The goal of Kalpulli is to dismantle the school to prison pipeline, eliminate violence in the lives of participants, support the matriculation into high school, and increase participants overall well being. Kalpulli is designed for high program saturation through mentoring.

The current cohort come from communities who are experiencing amplified gang violence, the program has been so impactful that there is a waiting list to join and youth participation and attendance is at an all-time high!



Success Story

A 13-year-old young man was referred from court to Kalpulli. He lives with auntie and has struggled to adapt and began engaging in gang activity and other unhealthy behavior as a result. He has been actively participating for the last four months and his auntie expresses that since joining the program she has seen a significant transformation in him. He has more respect, better role modeling for the younger ones in the household, wants to be home instead of out, and looks forward to coming to the program weekly. Staff has also seen a significant positive change in him and his leadership is flourishing!

PARTNERSHIP

CCFC wants to share some thrilling news that will increase our impact! For over 20 years CCFC/VORP has had a long-standing partnership with the City and County of Denver's Dept. of Public Safety, Juvenile Diversion. Thousands of youth have been referred to our programs after their initial court appearance for a delinquent court summons. This has decreased juvenile incarceration and youth involvement in the criminal justice system in our community.

Through this partnership we have been able to provide restorative justice, mentoring, rites of passage, anti-violence, and leadership programs to youth with high risks of incarceration, gang involvement, and school drop out.

We've had a huge amount of success with these youth and our recidivism rate remains under 5%. Due to this success and evaluation data showing our positive impact, CCFC is ecstatic to announce we are taking our partnership with juvenile diversion to the next level.

In February 2020, we signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Denver City and County Department of Public Safety for CCFC to be a satellite site for juvenile diversion. What this means is diversion officers will be housed on-site at CCFC to pipeline youth directly into our programs without them having to go to court or to see a judge, which most times causes more harm than good.

This is a huge step in ending the school to prison pipeline and decreasing juvenile incarceration. Because the youth who are receiving court summons typically have a high risk of being impacted by violence, gang activity, drug use, etc. we are also positioned to address these issues through our programs, for a comprehensive approach to youth development.

This is a milestone to be celebrated by all of us committed to this work! We would like to thank Safe City Juvenile Diversion Office for their partnership.



MINI-GRANT

CCFC also is excited to share a new partnership with Denver Cultural Affairs, in which we received a mini-grant to support the art and cultural components of our programming. Their investment in our youth programs allows us to have amplified impact by incorporating various aspects of cultural traditions and folk art. Through cultural and folk art youth reconnect to cultural traditions that give them a sense of pride, connectedness, and increased self-worth to support positive social and emotional wellbeing to end the school to prison pipeline and dismantle violence in their lives. Thank you!



AWARDS

We are in deep gratitude for The Cesar Chavez Peace and Justice Committee of Denver, who has awarded CCFC the Cesar Chavez Peace and Justice Organizational Award. We are also ecstatic to share that our program assistant Frida Soto was awarded the Youth Leadership Award!