Annual Report 2017-2018

Organizing COMMUNITY
Sparking DIALOGUE
Deepening INSIGHT
Building EMPOWERMENT
Nurturing UNITY

ycdiversity.org
What an incredible year it has been for YCD and the youth of Colorado!

We’re so pleased to offer our first annual report for Youth Celebrate Diversity, showcasing the hard work and accomplishments of our organization from July 2017 through June 2018, as well as an indication of the exciting plans for the future. With political turmoil, polarization and growing social tensions across the country, we feel strongly there has never been a time more urgent than now for young people to have the eye-opening experiences that YCD offers to organize community, spark dialogue, deepen insight, build empowerment and nurture unity.

In more ways than one, this last year has been the realization of dreams long held for the future and growth of programs like the Cherry Creek Diversity Conference.

Through the 2017-18 school year, YCD has:

1. Organized the Mountain West Diversity Conference for Western Slope students and teachers, the first-ever replica event based on the highly successful Cherry Creek model (page 4)

2. Expanded our professional development training on diversity, inclusion and equity issues for Colorado’s teachers (page 4)

3. Celebrated the 25th anniversary of the Cherry Creek Diversity Conference at the organization’s first gala (page 7)

4. Held our most successful Cherry Creek Diversity Conference ever, with civil and labor rights legend Dolores Huerta addressing students from 102 schools and organizations from across the state (page 3)

5. Started a new initiative to bring diversity-related workshops and programming to local schools and communities throughout the school year, with our Spring Workshop Series (page 5)

6. Launched a new website full of resources on the variety of social issues and challenges facing teens today, so that even those who cannot attend YCD programs have access to the information they need to improve their schools

With all that has been accomplished, we still feel the urgency to provide eye-opening experiences to teens and teachers across the United States, and we won’t stop until every student feels safe to achieve in school, no matter who they are. YCD’s Board of Directors adopted the organization’s first strategic plan in May 2018, calling for the expansion of its model to New Mexico and Arizona in the coming years. We hope you’ll join us on this journey to bring statewide diversity conferences to students throughout the Southwest, who so desperately need programs like this to empower their ability to address social issues, celebrate diversity, and make their schools safe for everyone.

The accomplishments of this past year would not be possible without dedicating more time and resources to YCD’s mission. With the incredible support from YCD’s Board of Directors, Caleb Munro was hired in July 2017 as Executive Director to begin working full-time to advance YCD’s mission and programs. Having spent over 20 years supporting Janet Sammons and the annual Cherry Creek Diversity Conference on a pro bono basis, Caleb spearheaded YCD’s founding in 2014 to continue this critical program while seeking opportunities for its replication. Bringing Caleb on full-time revolutionizes YCD’s ability to grow its programs and services, for the benefit of teens across Colorado and beyond.

We take this moment to thank you for your crucial support. We’re especially in awe and in debt to the hundreds of volunteers who have supported our programs over the past year. This country is in dire need of programs for young people to develop leadership, empathy and social awareness, and YCD is here to fill that gap. While we celebrate what’s been accomplished over the past year, we are so energized to continue this journey for teens across the country, and hope you’ll join us.

Caleb Munro  Janet Sammons
Executive Director  Chair of the YCD Board
Cherry Creek Diversity Conference

This year we celebrated the 25th annual Cherry Creek Diversity Conference on Saturday, February 3, 2018, with a record 102 high schools and student organizations participating from across Colorado, and total attendance of 1,152 students and teachers! It’s incredible to believe this unique and compelling program has reached its quarter-century anniversary, with now over 23,000 high school students having participated at some point in its history.

To recognize this special milestone, we asked legendary civil rights activist Dolores Huerta, who worked alongside Cesar Chavez to gain fundamental rights for farmworkers in California and across the country, to join us and address the audience at Opening Ceremonies. Dolores gave a fiery and powerful speech about why understanding and valuing diversity is more important now than ever and closed her speech by leading the crowd in chanting as one: “Abajo racism! Abajo sexism and misogyny! Abajo homophobia! Abajo bigotry! Que viva diversity!”

Some of this year’s unique workshops at the event—chosen by the students on the conference’s Executive Committee—included:

- A Day in the Life of an Undocumented Student
- Dispelling Stereotypes of Modern Native Americans
- Empowering You to Prevent Suicide
- The Truth about Adulting: The Stuff No One Tells You
- Xpress Yourself! Hip Hop, Poetry and Spoken Word

We capped off the day with a thrilling performance by The Reminders, a Colorado Springs-based hip-hop husband and wife duo who electrified the crowd. This year’s Cherry Creek Diversity Conference was underwritten with a generous donation by RBC Wealth Management, and we are thrilled to be working with RBC to continue their support of this critical program into the future.

As just one example of the direct impact of this year’s Cherry Creek Diversity Conference, students in Longmont realized Dolores Huerta was often unmentioned when celebrating the farm workers movement and its achievements. They pushed local government to recognize this year’s holiday as Cesar Chavez and Dolores Huerta Day, and organized a community party to celebrate and raise awareness of Dolores’ contributions to labor protections we enjoy today.

This is why we do the work we do!
Mountain West Diversity Conference

Initiated by two teachers at Eagle Valley High School who were consistently snowed out from attending the Cherry Creek Diversity Conference, in October 2017 YCD brought the conference to the Western Slope by launching the first-ever Mountain West Diversity Conference! Travel costs, distance, time and weather have always been a challenge for Western Slope schools hoping to attend CCDC in February, so we’ve added another regional conference where students can have a similar and profound experience.

In its inaugural year, MWDC attracted 225 students from 19 schools and youth organizations across the Western Slope – turnout that exceeded even our own expectations. Students from Eagle Valley served on the MWDC Executive Committee, selecting civil rights pioneer Carlotta Walls LaNier, one of the Little Rock Nine who integrated Central High School in 1957, to give a keynote address to the audience. Students and teachers were stunned to hear her personal story of being chaperoned by soldiers just to attend school, all while being harassed by fellow students and prevented from participating in any after-school activities. Stories such as Carlotta’s provide students today with a deeper appreciation of rights and privileges they enjoy, that didn’t exist just a few generations ago.

Given the strong reception of MWDC across the Western Slope in 2017, YCD’s Board of Directors has voted to renew this conference for a second year, taking place on Saturday, October 27, 2018.

Diversity Leadership Institute for Teachers

YCD offered its second annual Diversity Leadership Institute for Teachers in November 2017, with over 70 educators from across the state in attendance, almost double from the year before.

Crafted each year with the needs of teachers, counselors and others in mind, this event provides a unique opportunity for educators to engage in dialogue on the diversity, inclusion and equity challenges facing them today. This year’s event featured a keynote speech from University of Denver professor Dr. Maria Salazar on culturally responsive teaching techniques, followed by workshops on restorative justice as a disciplinary model; teaching controversial issues in the classroom; and building a diversity-focused administration. The day ended with teachers engaging in group dialogue, self-reflection, and crafting a personal action plan on how to make their schools and classrooms more equitable for all students.
Spring Workshop Series
As powerful as the annual Cherry Creek Diversity Conference may be, we recognize that a one-day conference is only the beginning of many students’ exploration of diversity and social justice topics.

In 2018 we launched our first Spring Workshop Series, with events hosted by various high schools around Denver on topics chosen by students on the Cherry Creek Diversity Conference Executive Committee, to provide additional opportunities for students already engaged with YCD to go deeper beyond the conference:

The Intersection of Religion, Family and Sexuality
In April 2018, YCD and the Interfaith Alliance of Colorado presented an evening workshop for teens and young adults exploring the intersection of religion, family and sexuality. We heard from author Amber Cantorna, the daughter of an executive at Focus on the Family and who came out as a lesbian at age 27, about her experience reconciling her sexuality and spirituality, and then had a dynamic group discussion through Q&A.

An Evening with the Newcomers
In March 2018, YCD and the Denver South High School PTSA welcomed over 900 community members and students to better understand the journey and experiences of student refugees, with a panel of four Denver South HS students sharing their thoughts and perspectives on the transition to life in Colorado. We then heard from author Helen Thorpe for a discussion on her experiences observing a class of refugee students at Denver South, which formed the basis for her book, *The Newcomers: Finding Refuge, Friendship and Hope in an American Classroom.*

Community Iftar
In May 2018, YCD partnered with the Multicultural Mosaic Foundation in Aurora to host a community iftar (meal) for community members who don’t know much about Islam or Ramadan, or who may have never met a Muslim. Over 50 community members came together—Muslim and non-Muslim alike—to break bread while also breaking down stereotypes. After a short cultural presentation from local Muslim leaders on the meaning of Ramadan and its traditions, everyone enjoyed a shared meal of delicious Middle Eastern food provided by the community.
Our Reach

YCD is proud to draw a highly diverse audience of urban and rural, public and private schools, students, teachers and youth organizations from across Colorado to our programs. Below is a map and list of schools that joined a YCD program in 2017-2018.

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<th>Northglenn High School</th>
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<td>William Smith High School</td>
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Celebrating 25 Years of the Cherry Creek Diversity Conference
What an incredible night! We were so pleased to hold YCD’s first-ever formal gala event, celebrating the 25th anniversary of the Cherry Creek Diversity Conference, with 270 guests in attendance and raising $15,000 for YCD’s programs!

Guests heard inspired speeches from both the Colorado Speaker of the House of Representatives Crisanta Duran, as well as civil rights pioneer Carlotta Walls LaNier. Thank you to all of our supporters for making the evening so special, but most importantly helping us ensure the Cherry Creek Diversity Conference will continue on into the future with your help!
Thank you to all of YCD’s supporters over this incredible year!

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Peridot Hair Design  
Allison Phillips  
Kristin Pittman  
Shane Power  
The Privilege Institute  
Erin Pulaski  
Tara Raju and Stephen Newman  
RBC Wealth Management  
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Regis Jesuit High School  
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David Willman  
Hayden Windrow  
Alice and Michael Wirth  
Reva Woolford  
Beth Yohe and Michael Savage  
Maggie Young  
Annette Zambrano

**FY 2017-2018 Revenue: $130,955**

- Corporate Sponsorship
- Subsidized Ticket Sales
- Donations

**FY 2017-2018 Expenses: $138,100**

- 25th Anniversary Celebration
- Diversity Leadership Institute for Teachers
- Mountain West Diversity Conference
- Cherry Creek Diversity Conference
Meet our Newest Board Members

Bernard Jones
Bernard Jones is an Associate Trust Advisor with Northern Trust, based in Phoenix, Arizona. He served on the Executive Committee of the Cherry Creek Diversity Conference as a high school student in 2002 and supports its continuing development and expansion.

Shalini Swaroop
Shalini Swaroop, an alumna of YCD’s founding program, is an attorney specializing in renewable energy policy in California. She has advocated for international and domestic human rights with grassroots organizations, legal practitioners, and the United Nations. Shalini has a B.A. in Women’s Studies and Psychology with a minor in Peace and Conflict Studies from the University of Colorado at Boulder and received her law degree from Berkeley Law School. She served on the Executive Committee for the Cherry Creek Diversity Conference in 2001.

Reema Wahdan
Dr. Reema Wahdan is a faculty member in the department of pathology at the University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus. She is currently working on innovative strategies to combat breast cancer. She has obtained a number of prestigious awards, including the “Leaders of Tomorrow, Top 50 innovators,” MedImmune/Astra Zeneca (2015); “Best of Basic Research,” Endocrine Society (2013); and the “Women in Cancer Research Scholar Award” (2010).

Dr. Wahdan has been passionately centered on enhancing our appreciation to promoting respect for cultural diversity in classrooms across the nation. As a Muslim-American, Dr. Wahdan has lectured around the nation and locally regarding Islamophobia and the repercussions of xenophobia and intolerance in our communities. She is active with a number of community organizations that work to unite the Denver community. Dr. Wahdan received her post graduate degrees from Case Western Reserve University School of Medicine and her masters and undergraduate degrees from the University of Denver.

YCD’s Board of Directors
Benita Creacy  Bernard Jones  Shalini Swaroop
Abby Ferber  Corey Jones
Lorenzo Gonzales  Sajit Kabadi  Reema Wahdan
Eve Gracie  Kierstin Miller  Alice Wirth
Pateath Herndon  Janet Sammons
Building for the Future

Supporting students beyond the conference
YCD’s Board of Directors has recognized that despite its power, a one-day conference has limitations in helping students through the rest of the school year and beyond. That is why we’re working on several strategies to engage our clients beyond this one day: through launching a new section of our website full of resources and information year-round; and through partnering with schools to host follow-on empowerment workshops.

These workshops will focus on an issue or topic chosen by the local school and its students, as a way for them to bring the conference and its experience back to their community and to make positive change. Contact us to discuss this unique opportunity in more detail; we look forward to reporting further on its success with our annual report next year!

Expanding access within Colorado
Just as students from the Western Slope have challenges attending the Cherry Creek Diversity Conference each year, we recognize students and teachers from other regions of the state may run into obstacles for participating in YCD’s conferences.

We are actively talking with several groups in Fort Collins, Colorado Springs, Pueblo and Grand Junction on the possibility of hosting or collaborating on diversity-focused events in those cities, to expand access on a deeper level within our state. Make sure to join our mailing list to stay updated on the latest offerings as we work to finalize plans for the 2018-2019 school year, and connect with us if you have resources or contacts we should be talking to in these cities!

Strategic growth in the Southwest
We are thrilled to share that YCD’s Board of Directors has adopted a strategic plan focused on organizing statewide diversity conferences, based on our highly successful model, in New Mexico and Arizona over the next 2-3 years.

We’ve long believed that the eye-opening experience thousands of Colorado students have had at our events over the years is something that should be available to students nation-wide. Political turmoil, partisanship and technological factors have only increased this sense of urgency to provide students with access to programs and workshops that engender empathy and unity. We believe the YCD model can fill the gap where the formal education system isn’t providing sufficient support for our teens.

But we need your help to make this dream a reality! Connect us with teachers and community leaders in New Mexico or Arizona that want to get involved in a movement like this. Share the news about YCD and what it does with your family and friends in the region. Consider contributing to our Southwest Expansion Project budget, to unlock this experience for thousands more.

We won’t be able to achieve this dream – and more – without your help. Visit ycdiversity.org to support these causes.
Certifications

We work hard to demonstrate our commitment to transparency, integrity and good stewardship of valuable resources and donations. Below are certifications YCD has received in 2017-2018 from reputable third parties:

Great Nonprofits' 2017 Top-Rated Nonprofit

GuideStar's 2018 Gold Seal of Transparency