



COLORADO
COLLEGE

THE DIFFERENCE

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The Collaborative for Community Engagement Newsletter

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The Zuia Project



Zuia Project participants with CC student Jessica Meyer '13

Service Quote of the Block:

We must not, in trying to think about how we can make a big difference, ignore the small daily differences we can make which, over time, add up to big differences that we often cannot foresee.

—Marian Wright Edelman

by Laurel Hecker '13

“Zuia” means “prevention” in Swahili, and it was with that goal that Colorado College students initiated The Zuia Project. The organization describes itself as a “whole systems approach” to empowering women and youth in the Ugenya area of Kenya.

In 2011, Nikhil Ranadive '11 was planning a trip to Kenya and had an idea: “Instead of going as a volunteer, I wanted to be more useful and bring in some money,” he says. Ranadive then teamed up with fellow students Melissa Serafin '11 and Akie Mochizuki '11 to write a Projects for Peace grant, which enabled them to put their ideas into action. The three students travelled to Kenya during the summer of 2011 to organize the project and get it off the ground.

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“Our original goal was to offer vocational training and HIV prevention classes in an area where over 20% of people are HIV positive,” says Ranadive. In Ugenya (a region of western Kenya near Uganda and Lake Victoria), they set up a community center through which the community could improve itself. The project has four main aspects: HIV health outreach; a women’s civic engagement program; an information technology center and classes; and vocational training for women. While in Kenya, the founders worked with the locals to get it all started. Though the Zuia Project was originally slated to run for three months, it was so successful that the community decided to continue it long-term, and it is now entirely overseen by locals.

The Health Outreach portion of the Zuia Project is by far its largest arm, with over 500 people having completed the reproduction health educa-



Three of the women who have participated in Zuia Project classes

tion classes. During their time in Kenya, the CC students trained older local students to teach younger ones about HIV prevention—one way that the project becomes self-sustaining.

As part of that first trip, Ranadive, Serafin, and Mochizuki also brought in laptops so that they could set up the new infor-

mation technology center. Many of the local people who enroll in the computer classes have never even seen a computer before, but Zuia has had great success with this program as well. Nearly 100 people have graduated from or are currently taking Microsoft Office training or basic computer skills.

The vocational training for women is also an integral part of the Zuia Project’s mission. Many women and girls are forced to drop out of school to help their families at home, but learning these vocational skills can aid them in becoming more independent. The program focuses on tailoring, a useful skill that empowers the women and invigorates the local economy.

Since those first few months, the Zuia Project has continued to grow. Its director, instructors, and mentors are all Ugenyan locals, but CC students have stayed on in a collabora-



Kids at the Zuia Project— photos courtesy of The Zuia Project

tive role. Though all the original founders have since graduated, another wave of students has gotten involved with the CC end of the Zuia Project. Jessica Meyer '13 is one of those students, who describes CC's function for the project as one of "fundraising, monitoring, and evaluation."

Last summer, Ranadive, Meyer, and Michaela Kobsa-Mark '15 returned to Ugenya to revisit the project and see what progress a year had wrought. Ranadive recalls that the community center had developed into "a very well-loved, homey space. It clearly wasn't just a start-up anymore." The numbers showed immense success, but even more so, their second trip proved what an incredible part of the community the Zuia Project had become.

What makes the Zuia Project different from a traditional approach to humanitarian aid is its focus on the underlying factors that contribute to social problems like the disenfranchisement of women and the prevalence of HIV. Meyer explains, "We are not simply trying to treat the problem once it appears, but get to the root of the causes and target it from there." The Zuia Project is not a one-time donation of money or supplies, but a long-term strategy that empowers the community and has the potential to create real change.

Now, the former and current CC students are mostly working on raising the necessary funds to sustain the project. "Their yearly operating cost is around \$30,000 and we're trying



Students practicing their computer skills

to raise one third of the budget," says Ranadive. They have used online fundraisers, and most recently held a garage sale on campus. At the sale, students and community members could buy things that had been donated by CC students as well as products

made by women in the project in Kenya. In the future, the Zuia Project hopes to transition to sources of funding that are local to Ugenya, and to continue to bring collaborative non-profit opportunities back to CC.

ZUIA PROJECT



for more information:
www.facebook.com/zuiaproject

A Party of Presidential Proportions

by Laurel Hecker '13

On November 6, months-long political campaigns culminated in the general election. At CC, the momentous occasion was marked by the Election Night Party. The event took place in the main space of the Cornerstone Arts Center, and was sponsored by CC Democrats, CC Republicans, and the President's Election Committee. An estimated three to four hundred people attended throughout the night.

From six o'clock onwards, students and various members of the CC community crowded into the building to watch election results roll in. Two large projection screens displayed CNN's coverage throughout the night. As each

state was declared, event organizers colored it in on a large map—blue for Obama victories, red for Romney. The room was also alerted to the results of important state and local elections.

While waiting for results, attendees were entertained by music, food, and prizes. Drawing tickets were picked every so often, giving people the chance to win t-shirts and life-size cardboard cutouts of the candidates. There was also a grand prize drawing for dinner with CC President Jill Tiefenthaler.

Though the CC student body is often seen as overwhelmingly liberal, supporters of both parties were prominently represented in the crowd. Many students showed their political spirit by dress-



Filling in states on the real-time election results map

ing in costume or simply wearing their chosen party's color. Loud cheers filled the room whenever a state's results were announced, regardless of which candidate gained those electoral votes.

Many people expected a long night and a close election, and prepared to wait it out until the final swing state was called. The results were nowhere near a landslide, but attendees were surprised by CNN's early announcement of a projected Obama victory. Though the party did not need to last into the wee hours, it was an impressive showing of political engagement on the CC campus.

New Staff!

As part of the transition from the Center for Service & Learning and Partnership for Civic Engagement to the Collaborative for Community Engagement, we would like to welcome our three newest staff members to the team and give our readers the chance to get to know them a little better.

We hope you'll come visit us in the office some time!



Sarah Marshall

What's your position at the Collaborative?

K-12 Partnerships Coordinator

What does that job entail?

I oversee about 18 student-run organizations on campus that partner with District 11 schools to develop leadership through tutoring and mentoring students in the community.

How did you come to the CCE?

I was teaching 6th grade English and Reading in Ohio and advising a competitive creative writing team, and I moved to Colorado at the end of June.

What led you to pursue a job in a community engagement and service office?

I was looking for a job where my skills as a teacher would be transferable, and I was interested in the higher education world and working with college students. I was also intrigued that CC students were wanting to volunteer and collaborate with schools—and it wasn't part of a class or student teaching. That's different.

What aspects of working at the Collaborative are you most looking forward to?

I'm excited to be working in higher education while still having that connection to the school system, and having the ability to build those partnerships. It's the best of both worlds.

What do you like to do for fun on the weekends?

I like to take advantage of hiking in all the trails and parks around here, and taking my dog with me.

Fransiska Dannemann

What's your position at the Collaborative?

Communications and Technology
Coordinator

What does that job entail?

I'm responsible for maintaining our community profile—the website, the facebook page, and the CCServes database. Hopefully soon I'll be developing a better way to inform CC students about service opportunities.

How did you come to the CCE?

I graduated in May, and I was very involved with the Center [for Service and Learning] and the Partnership [for Civic Engagement] while I was a student. I worked temporarily during the CCE's hiring process and led the CC Votes initiative, and then transitioned to working full time.



What led you to pursue a job in a community engagement and service office?

I'm really passionate about CC students getting outside the CC bubble and getting involved in their community. I also want to help students make marketable connections between their extra-curricular experiences and post-grad opportunities.

What aspects of working at the Collaborative are you most looking forward to?

I'm really excited about redesigning the Community Kitchen website; it's a good opportunity to recognize our community partners. I'm also planning to do some GIS work to visually represent our impact on the Colorado Springs community.

What do you like to do for fun on the weekends?

I love yoga, and I'm trying to become a certified instructor soon. I also like hiking and knitting.

Adison Petti



What's your position at the Collaborative?

Leadership Development Coordinator
for Health and Human Rights

What does that job entail?

In addition to overseeing the CC Kitchen, my job is to work with student groups who are focused on health and human rights issues and to collaborate with some of the living and learning communities.

How did you come to the CCE?

I came to CCE as a 2011 CC alum with a double major in Political Science and Feminist and Gender studies, and a consultant for the TransCampus Project. After graduation, I spent a summer in Scotland, went to New York, saw more plays and museums than I can possibly count, and worked as a Housing Counselor at Colorado Coalition for the Homeless in Denver.

What led you to pursue a job in a community engagement and service office?

Before coming to CC as a student, I spent a year as an AmeriCorps VISTA and experienced first hand how we can infuse any passion—for film, sports, business, art, the environment—with a commitment to service and learning. I think that's a really important perspective, because human rights aren't just about fighting terrible injustices, they're also about pro-actively building up communities that improve the quality of living for everyone through all of these outlets.

What aspects of the CCE or your job are you most looking forward to?

I'm really looking forward to hearing from student groups like Peace Jam, the MicroFinance Club, and the Roosevelt Institute, and would be thrilled to work with the Arts for Social Change LLC. I'm also looking forward to working with the CC Kitchen and connecting with others who are or were formerly homeless, as I was once a teenager living at the Urban Peak youth shelter.

What do you like to do for fun outside of work?

I'm an avid writer, am currently writing my first novel, *M-Theory*, and exploring projects in a Creative Economy. I enjoy theatre, TV, traveling on the cheap, making tea with my cat, and playing with crayons. I'm pretty excited to build snow forts as soon as the winter hits.

Upcoming Events and Announcements

Corey Sullivan	
Nov. 30	On Friday, November 30, Corey Sullivan from the Education Delivery Institute in Washington, DC will present “Navigating difficult conversations about race in higher education settings” at 2 p.m. in the WES Room.
Council on Collaboration	
Dec. 10	Blockly third Monday Council on Collaboration lunch.
Steering Committee	
Dec. 17	The Collaborative for Community Engagement Steering Committee’s blockly fourth Monday lunch.

Happy Thanksgiving!
We hope you enjoy the holiday

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Our Mission Statement:

The Collaborative for Community Engagement challenges students and faculty to integrate rigorous liberal arts scholarship with collaborative community-based work in ways that strengthen and transform both in the process. In the tradition of liberal education and its emphasis on active citizenship, we provide a continuum of opportunities for the Colorado College community to deepen and contextualize classroom learning by engaging in reciprocal and sustainable collaborations with local, regional, national, and global partners. By fostering skills for planning, implementing and examining civic action, the Collaborative facilitates leadership development and promotes a social responsibility that is reflective, imaginative, and self-aware.