



METROPOLITAN
STATE UNIVERSITYSM
OF DENVER

Department of Chicana/o Studies

Journey
Through
Our
Heritage



Year End Report
2014/2015



Welcome! Nawah! Hau Kola! Bienvenidos! Jambo! Cualli Tlaneci!

Welcome to **Journey Through Our Heritage (JTOH)** one of the nation's most innovative and unique multi-cultural educational programs sponsored by Metropolitan State University of Denver (MSU Denver) Department of Chicano/Chicana Studies and Department of Africana Studies. **JTOH** partners MSU Denver students with local high school students and engages them in a yearlong program whose goal is to enhance current public school curricula in the areas of African/African American, Native American, Mexicana/o, Red Bones, Métis, Chicana/o and Latina/o Studies. The grand finale of the year is an academic "knowledge bowl" between/among participating high school teams.

JTOH also participates in numerous community events and works with the Mauricio Saravia School of the Arts, an organization called to spread the Gospel primarily to the some 5000 kids that can be found on every street corner, trailer park and parking lot in their neighborhood in Denver on a year round basis.

Our Mission:

Journey Through Our Heritage promotes self-empowerment, develops leaders and engages students with community leaders and organizations in order to increase cultural and historical knowledge bases through involvement in healthy competition, rigorous academic study and community service via the use of history, creative & cultural arts, and language.

Our Impact Goals:

- To expose K-12 students and University students to indigenous values, traditions, practices and visual/performing arts.
- To support high school partnerships with University student mentors who lead students through rigorous interdisciplinary competition designed to challenge and inspire young minds through Chicana/o Studies and alternative curricula.
- To facilitate the infusion of cultural and historical contributions of Latinas/os and other predominant ethnic groups, resulting in the success of all students.
- To create a formal connection between MSU Denver students in the Chicano Studies program and GED/high school students state-wide.
- To embrace and promote diversity by broadening participating high school teacher's ability to teach a more culturally inclusive curriculum.
- To engage, collaborate and work with communities by building relationships with program administrators, community organizations, schools and potential partners who desire to participate in the program.
- To partner with non-profit organizations to increase our community impact through emphasizing collaboration and promoting cultural awareness through events and volunteer work.

Outcome and Results for the 2014-2015 School Year

Journey Through Our Heritage through MSU Denver

- JTOH employs Metropolitan State University of Denver work study students for the fall spring and summer semester of 2014/2015 and a few volunteers to work with local high schools and office organizations.
- JTOH team logged 4420.96 hours, aiding special events on and off campus, special events co-sponsored by JTOH. Students participated in planning committees, volunteer coordinating of events, data entry, website building, financial budgeting and tracking, graphic design, tutoring, mentoring and community service learning.
- JTOH has recruited many area high schools to participate with the JTOH high school program:
 - ACE Community Challenge School
 - Alameda International High School/Indian Education
 - Annunciation Catholic School
 - Aurora Central High School
 - Escuela Tlatelolco
 - Hinkley High School
 - Connections Learning Center
 - Sheridan High School
 - Pueblo Academy Arts
 - Vista Aademy
- Of the ten high schools there were 10 teams assembled and 100 participants, 20 Metro mentors and 15 teachers involved in the program this year. This year we gave twelve stipends to high school seniors for graduation and encouragement to pursue higher education.

Work Study Total Hours

JTOH Special Events

For the 2014/2015 season the Journey Through Our Heritage program selected the theme of A Retrospective of Race, Culture, and Civil Rights to coincide with the History Colorado Centers Race Exhibition. A total of ten school and 81 students participated in these competitive events.

JTOH Competitive Events Calendar

September 19, 2014- JTOH: Welcome Back Ceremony w/ History Colorado Center

December 12, 2014 - Cultural Expressions

February 27, 2014 - JTOH Literary Journal Deadline

April 17, 2015 - Tlatchli Game Competition

May 8, 2015 - JTOH Awards Ceremony

Competitive Events At A Glance

Fall 2014 Semester:

Sept. 19, 2014 6 p.m.-8:30 p.m. ~**Welcome Back Ceremony** History Colorado Center

Picture

Dec. 12, 2014 6 p.m. - 8:30 p.m. ~**Cultural Expressions Competition**

Picture

Spring 2015 Semester:

Feb. 27, 2015) ~ **Mauricio Saravia Literary Journal and Competition**
(Submitted electronically to jtoh2011@hotmail.com)

Student Anthology:

JTOH produced a professionally edited anthology of student essays on the significance of culture and history. These reflective writings were bound into a booklet and distributed to all students. In addition this year's anthology includes poetry from the students of Pueblo Academy of Arts, high school students, MSU Denver staff and JTOH Sponsors.



Frijoles Elotes Oh My

High School Partnership Information and Demographics:

The Journey Through Our Heritage program inherently emphasizes indigenous students; however, it also embraces participants from other groups. Furthermore, the schools recruited in this year's program do have high concentrations of Chicanos/as, Mexican-Americans, and Latinos/as.

School Partnership Goals

Journey Through Our Heritage developed two main goals when the program applied for funding last year.

- 1) To encourage the inclusion of indigenous history and culture into mainstream curricula of the high schools.
- 2) To create a direct connection to a college or university for high school or GED students. With positive role models to emulate.
- 3) To empower students in high school to able to make positive choices about their future, to avoid negative stereotyping and to encourage positive engagement with the community.

These goals were met by partnering nine JTOH Metro work study students with each of the nine high schools. Each Metro mentor spent time at the high schools working in a class room setting as tutors; they conducted after school team building workshops for the JTOH competition events and helped to host all of the events.

These activities not only introduced our JTOH curriculum into the schools but helped forge a strong bond between our mentors and the high schools. In order to meet these goals the program utilized the expertise of University professors, administrators, teachers, authors, community members, the business community, and University mentors.

The ten year history of the JTOH program has been highly successful in many ways. One of the most important challenges facing the JTOH was how to produce concrete evidence of its success.

In 2014/2015 with full-time coordinator Dr. Renee Fajardo and the addition of a part time Information Technician (IT) work study student Damaris M. Santos, the JTOH program was able to begin the process of collecting data to document success with statistical back up. The following data is the results of that documentation:

High Schools in Partnership with JTOH

1. ACE Community Challenge School

Principal: Eloy Chavez
eloy_chavez@dpsk12.org

720-621-6604

948 Santa Fe Dr Denver, CO

Main: (303) 436-9588

Sponsoring Teacher:

Melissa Ruiz,

me.miklo@hotmail.com, (720) 309-6757

Richard Gonzalez,

rchrdr_gozlz@yahoo.com, (720) 690-3374

(Mon. and Tue.s)

Esmeralda Velasquez,

esme2011v@gmail.com, (303) 960-2114

(Wed. and Thurs.)

Mentors:

Hector Palacios

720.231.6362

hpalacios@msudenver.edu

Tuesdays-Thursdays 3-4pm

2. Alameda International High School/Indian Education

Susie Vanscoyk
Susie_Vanscoyk@jeffco.k12.co.us

Sponsoring Teacher:

Thompson Williams

towillia@jeffco.k12.co.us 303-982-0388

1255 S Wadsworth Blvd. Lakewood, CO
80232

Jeffco indain ed.

Main: (303) 982-8160

Leroy Sainz

lsaiz@jeffco.k12.co.us
303-596-6245

Mentor:

Jessica Madrid

303.927.9267

jmadrid10@msudenver.edu

Fridays 2:30pm-3:30pm

3. Annunciation Catholic School

School Director: 3536 Lafayette Denver, Co
Main: (303) 295-2515

Sponsoring Teacher: Marc Lytle marc.lytle@annunciationk8.org

Mentor:

Amber Russell 720.422.2750 arussel@msudenver.edu
Mondays 3pm-4:00pm

4. Aurora Central High School

School Director: Cynthia Trinidad-Sheahan, Ed.S (303)-340-1600
11700 East 11th Ave. Aurora, CO

Sponsoring Teacher: Andrew Fox: ajfox@aps.k12.co.us
Glen A. Ochoa GAOCHOA@aps.k12.co.us

Mentors:

Nelson Moreno- Avila Mondays Tues 3:30 720.324.1682 nmoreno@msudenver.edu

5. Escuela Tlatelolco

School Director: Rudionna Garza rudionna@esculatlatelolco.org
2949 Federal Blvd. Denver, CO 80211
Main: (303) 964-8993

Sponsoring Teacher: Monica Garcia monica@escuelatlatelolco.org
303-906-9789

Mentors:

Symone 720.436.1879 syesquibel@gmail.com
Thursdays 3-4

6.Hinkley High School

School Director:

Velia I. Munoz
VIMUNOZ@aps.k12.co.us

1250 Chambers Rd.

Aurora, CO 80010

Main: (303) 340-1500

Mentor:

Sponsoring
Teacher:

Graig Thompson

cathompson@aps.k12.co.us

(303) 715-8002

Diana Chavez Mondays 3pm-
4:30pm

720.939.1654

dchavez53@msudenver.edu

7. Connections Learning Center

School Director:

1200 Johnson Road

Golden, CO 80401

303-982-7004

Sponsoring Teacher

Meredith Corely

MCORLEY@jeffco.k12.co.us

720-841-7071

Mentor:

Angie Alvarenga Tuesday
3:45-4:45

303.521.5395

aalvaren@msudenver.edu

School Director:

Michele Kelley

mkelley@ssd2.org

3201 West Oxford Ave.

Denver, CO 80236

Main:

(720) 833-6987

Mentor:

Miguel Lopez

Angie Alvarenga Fridays 2:30pm
(tentative)

Sponsoring Teacher:

Christen Rogers de Reyes

crogers@ssd2.org

720-833-6816

Kate Sorenson

esorensen@ssd2.org

Jordan Felker

jfelker@ssd2.org

720-251-6260

mlope102@msudenver.edu

303.521.5395

aalvaren@msudenver.edu

9. Pueblo Academy Arts

School Director:

Bonnie Norton

29 Lehigh Ave., Pueblo CO,

Main: (719) 549-7430

Mentor:

Stephanie

Wednesdays. 3-4pm

Sponsoring Teacher:

Karen Ortiz

Lisa Morelos

719-671-8964

christine.ortiz@pueblacityschools.us

lisa.morelos@pueblacityschools.us

Stephaniewinchell@pueblacityschool.us

10.Vista Aademy

School Director:

Rhonda Juett
4800 Telluride St Bldg. 6
Denver, CO 80249

Mentor:

Jerry Morgan

Sponsoring Teacher:

Ximena Najar-Hernandez Social
Worker

720.394.7329

ximena_najar-hernandez@dpsk12.org

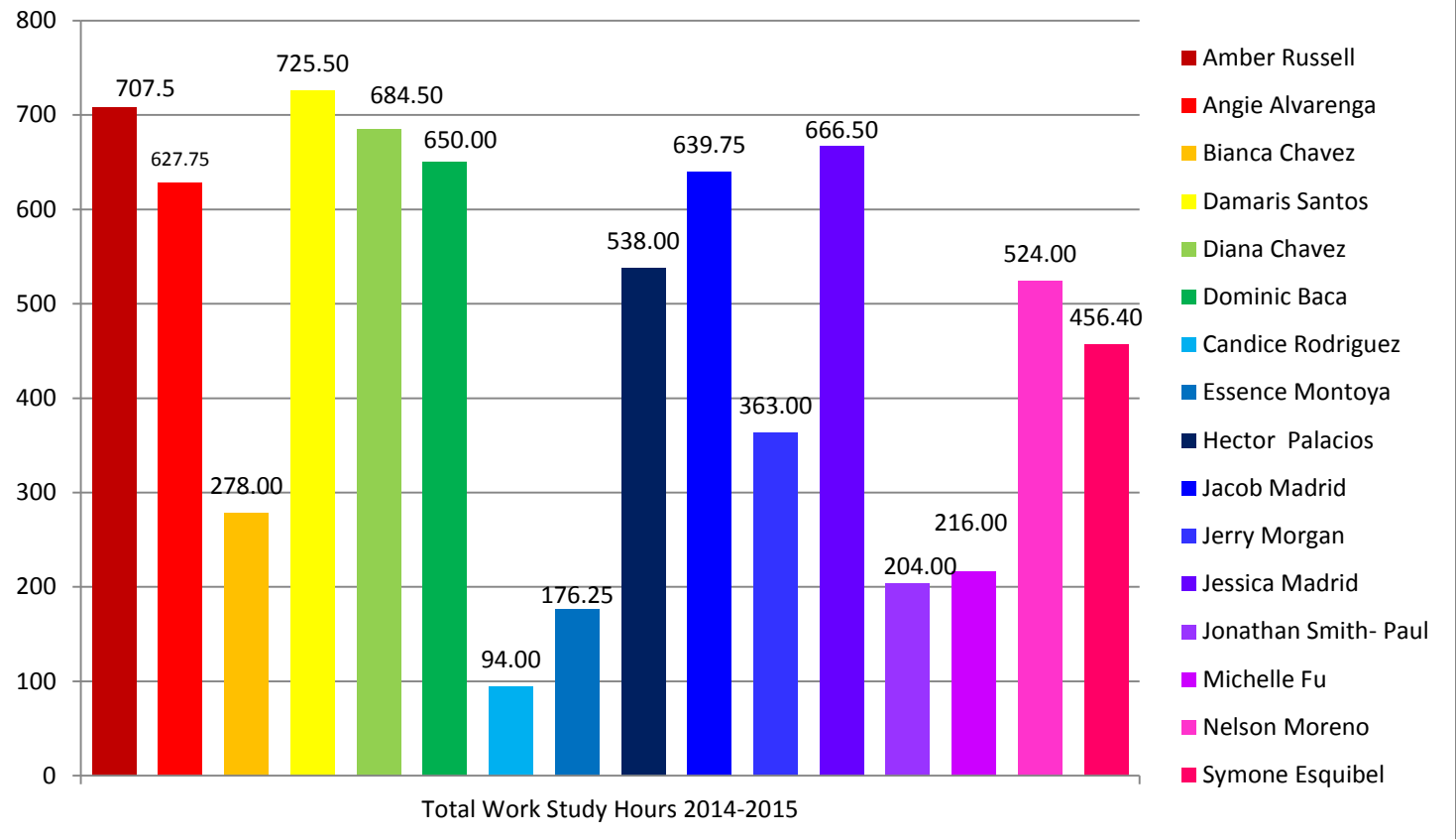
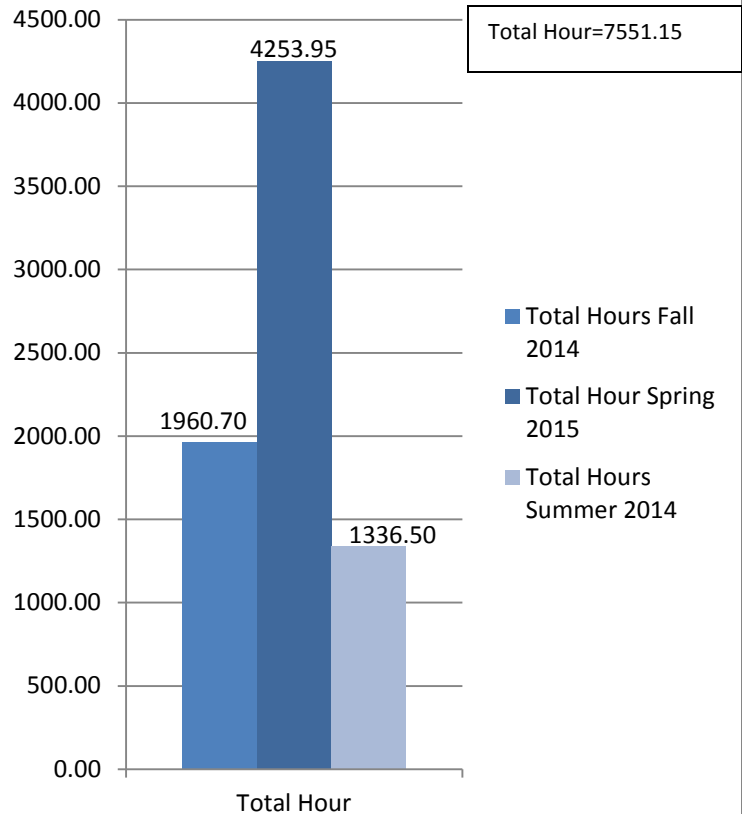
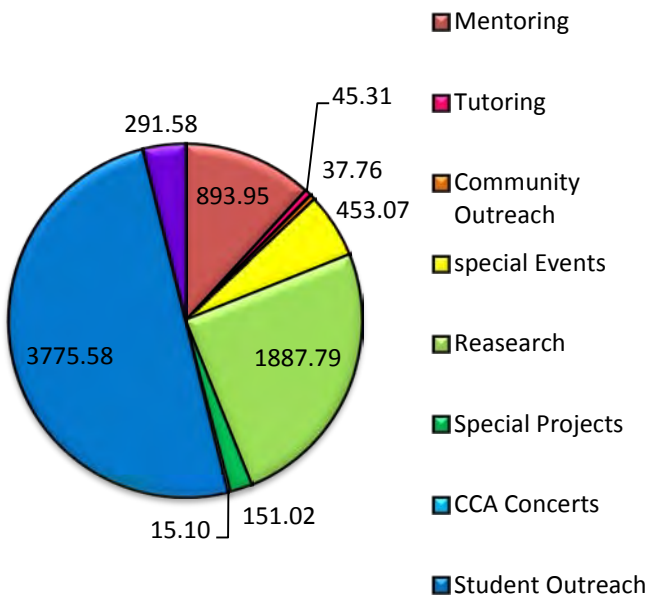
720-423-7689

jmorgn64@msudenver.edu

Impact of Mentoring

The JTOH mentors from MSU Denver were responsible for mentoring 81 individual competitive team members from ten high schools. A total of 2608.591 hours were put in by MSU Denver JTOH mentors coaching and mentoring team members. The teams attended events on and off the MSU Denver campus. Each team member received a participation medallion for their efforts in the competitions. Through the partnering and establishment of core volunteers JTOH was able to reach many students and expand the influence of JTOH partnering with Pueblo Academy of Arts and Adams State University in Alamosa, CO.

Aggregate Student Hour by Task of 2014 -2015



JTOH Partnerships with Non-Profit Organizations:

La Alma Jaguar Summer Camp

Every summer, for the past five years, the JTOH program has hosted a free multi-cultural summer leadership program for 36 children ages 6- 12 at the La Alma Recreation Center.

This four-week program employs 8 MSU Denver work-study students, host up to 8 volunteer students from the MSU Denver Trio program, engages two nonprofits (Colorado Folk Arts Council and Sisters of Color) and hires several multi-cultural artistic troupes to run workshops for the children in the project.

In addition to the art, poetry and cultural performance components of the camp, we also have a gardening project that is planted at the Greenlee Elementary School. The program ends with a community celebration and a barbeque for the whole community that reached over 300 community members..



Colorado Folk Arts Council

Aurora Fox Cultural Concerts Series 2014-2015

Colorado Folk Arts Council

The Colorado Folk Arts Council (CFAC) was organized in June of 1968 by a group of culturally active individuals to represent organized groups of various elements of Folk Arts (music, dancing, crafts, etc.) that would be a clearing house of information, distribute information and sponsor workshops and other events of orientation and understanding of people and cultures. The CFAC was incorporated as a non-profit organization on July 28, 1969 in the State of Colorado.

*Cultural Concerts on Colfax takes place during the academic school year. JTOH mentors create the programs for the concert series and book in the schools. In 2013-14 over a dozen elementary and high schools participated in the program reaching close to **2,000** students.*

October 30th, 2013

[Dia de Los Muertos “Day of the Dead Celebration” with Huilztlipotchli Aztec Dancers and Hannah Kahn Dance Company](#)

Come celebrate this traditional Mexican holiday that brings families together to remember their loved ones who have passed on. Huilztlipotchli is a traditional Aztec “Mexica” dance group from Mexico lead by Capitan Raul Chavez who was one of the first elders to bring this tradition to Colorado. Hannah Kahn Dance Company is a modern dance troupe that has been exciting audiences with modern dance scene 1988.

December 11th, 2013

[Celebrate the Holidays with Cleo Parker Dance](#)

Get an early holiday present by attending this wonderful concert featuring internationally acclaimed dance troupe Cleo Parker Dance. This program is a special holiday sampler of Cleo Parker Robinson Dance programs.

January 15th, 2014

[Celebrate Martin Luther King Jr. Day with Grand Design Inc. and the Black Hands Drum Duo](#) The goal of Grand Design Inc. is to preserve the performing arts of African Americans by entertaining and promoting awareness of the general public through performances, concerts, presentations, visual art exhibits and cultural awareness training in the metropolitan area. Featured as well the Black Hands Drum Duo, this

unique ensemble expresses their African American heritage in a mesmerizing style with pride, dignity and passion through drum, songs and dance.

February 19th, 2014

Celebrate Black History Month with Cleo Parker Dance

Don't miss your chance to see this internationally acclaimed dance troupe perform live at the Aurora Fox Theatre to celebrate Black History Month! This performance will educate and illuminate audiences into the true traditions of the African American experience.

April 16th, 2014

Celebrate National Poetry Month with Su Teatro Su Teatro is a Denver based theater that works for the preservation, development, instruction and promotion of Chicano and Latino history and culture. Come experience their theatrical artistry and learn about how they preserve their heritage.

May 5th, 2013 (11:30 AM to 12:45 PM)

Celebrate Cinco de Mayo with Michael Heralda in "Aztec Stories" "Aztec Stories" is a culturally educational, musically inclined and interactive collection of stories, ballads and narrative inspired by true, documented accounts. Michael Heralda has performed in such prestigious places as the Heard Museum in Phoenix Az, and the Smithsonian.

History Colorado Youth Summit 2014

In partnership with History Colorado exhibit, "Race: Are We So Different", along with creators of the film "I'm Not Racist, Am I?" the 1st annual History Colorado Youth Summit took place on Oct. 20, 2014. A group of 120 Colorado students, teachers, panelists, entertainers and artists engaged in a frank discussion about the role of race in a young person's life.

Dia De Los Muertos Events Fall 2014

The JTOH mentors from MSU Denver did outreach to Topeka Kansas Washburn University Oct. 16-18 for Dia de Los Muertos reaching over 500 students from the campus and community.

They also traveled to Breckenridge Colorado Oct. 23-26 to present workshops and community activities to the town of Breckenridge, impacting over 400 participants

Cesar Chavez Peace and Justice Marcha

Every year for the past 5 years the JTOH team has participated in the city wide Cesar Chavez z marcha. In addition to having a presence on the planning committee ,three JTOH MSU Denver students have received youth awards: Jay Jaramillo, Diana Chavez and Karissa Garcia.

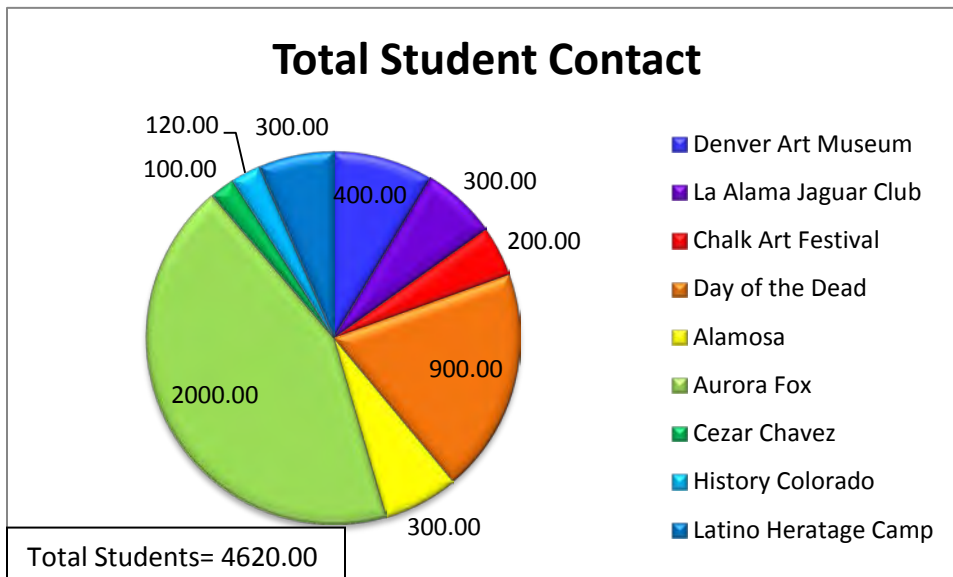
The students carry a JTOH Banner and present opportunities for their high school teams to participate in the marcha. This year the team recruited over 100 students to participate.

Adams State University Casa House/San Luis Museum

In partnership with Adams sate University and the San Luis Valley Museum the JTOH team presented to over 200 Adams sate students and community members at the 1st Annual Voices of the Valley: A meeting of Cultures April 9-10, 2015

Denver art Museum CelebArte!

The JTOH team has participated in four workshops as the lead youth educators in the past two years. In Feb. of 2014 they created workshops on Mayan Chocolate, Sept. 2014 they created an El Grito workshop for Hispanic Heritage Month, in Nov. of 2014 they created tattoos workshops for Dia De Los Muerttos, and the spring of 2015 they worked to create pieces for the South American paper bag art .



Other Community Partners

4620.00

Sisters of Color United for Education

In 1991, Sisters of Color United, was established as a nonprofit organization with the vision of advocating for health equity and improved quality of life. Our organization’s goals are to improve peoples’ health, wellness, and quality of life by educating families about healthy lifestyles and increasing their access to health services by removing language and cultural barriers. SISTERS host the oldest Promotora de Salud program in Colorado. Promotor/a de Salud is a health promotion and harm reduction education and advocacy program. Although only recently recognized by the Center for Disease Control as a best practice for its effectiveness in Latino communities, Promotoras de Salud are well known throughout Mexico and Central America as front line community health workers. Our health promotion and harm reduction education utilizes a unique and culturally relevant holistic curriculum – Mind, Body, Spirit – and empowers participants to access meaningful healthcare and support services through community activism, advocacy, information exchange, referrals, and art as social justice.

W. 8th Ave Denver CO, 80204 (303) 446-8800 Fax: (303) 446-8799 <http://www.socue.org>

Cleo Parker Robinson Dance Studio

Cleo Parker Robinson Dance is an international, cross-cultural, dance-arts and educational institution rooted in African American traditions and dedicated to excellence in providing instruction, performances and community programs, for intergenerational students, artists and audiences. Guided by a vision of dance as the universal language of movement that celebrates performance, Cleo Parker Robinson Dance is committed to honoring diversity and inclusiveness throughout the global community.

119 Park Avenue West Denver, CO 80205-3209 (303) 295-1759
<http://www.cleoparkerdance.org>

Denver Woman’s Press Club

The Denver Woman's Press Club honors its heritage, functioning as a stimulating gathering place for people in literary, journalistic and media endeavors by promoting the cultivation of friendship and providing moral support to members; encouraging through educational and philanthropic means the pursuit of writing.

1325 Logan Street Denver, CO 80203-2308 (303) 839-1519 <http://www.dwpconline.org>

Grand Design Inc.

Grand Design is dedicated to preserving and keeping alive, primarily the performing arts of African Americans, yet inclusive of other cultural performing arts; to provide entertainment and brassier the awareness of the public and an appreciation by the public through performances, concerts, presentations, visual art exhibits and cultural awareness training for the benefit of the residents in Aurora and the metropolitan area.

<http://www.grandbydesign.org>

Boys and Girls Club of Metro Denver

Since 1961, Boys & Girls Clubs of Metro Denver has been helping kids from tough neighborhoods in the Denver area stay out of trouble, stay in school, and succeed in life. The organization owns and operates eight safe neighborhood branches where kids can spend time after school and during the summer.

2017 West 9th Avenue Denver, CO 80204 (303) 892-9200 <http://www.bgcmd.org>

Mauricio Saravia School of the Arts

The Mauricio Saravia School of the Arts is called to spread the Gospel primarily to the some 5000 kids that can be found on every street corner, trailer park and parking lot in their neighborhood in Denver. Their strategy to do this is through the formation of the Mauricio Saravia School of the Arts. By combining state-of-the-art technology and the passion of dedicated staff and volunteer teachers and a dream of inspiring future generations to engage their culture and leave their mark via drama, dance, photography, film-making, musical instruments, graphic design, voice, poetry, etc.

4201 W. Kentucky Ave., Denver, CO 80219 (303) 949-4674

<http://www.joncompassionministries.org/ministries/mauriciosaraviaacademy.html>

Only One Inc.

Only One Inc. was established by David Young in 1989 with the motivation and dedication towards creating social change. This non-profit implemented a program that addresses health prevention because of the high rates of diabetes, cancer, STDs and issues around health and food habits among the Chicana/o, indigenous and Mexican communities. Only One Inc. works with the community to teach about sex education, alcohol, *curanderismo* and cultural awareness. In order to enhance their health, first individuals have to value themselves and have a sense of self. That is why teaching youth about culture is very important. In 1991, recognizing the significant need for HIV prevention in the Latino community, Only One worked closely with leaders from the Chicano/Latino communities to establish HIV prevention/service programs in Denver. In 1998, the Colorado Department of Public Health & Environment contracted with Only One Inc. to assess the HIV prevention needs of the Native American Urban community in the Denver/Boulder Metro Area. Based on the findings of that assessment the Wapia Project, a prevention project targeting Native American Youth was initiated. Only One continues to provide year-round projects and activities for the Chicano, Mexicano, and Native American communities with a commitment to improving the well-being of its consistency. (720) 980-9639

Mana Pottery Studio

Over the last six decades, deep in the heart of Aravaipa Valley in southeastern Arizona, Mana Pottery has been producing unique and stunning American Southwestern art. Multi-colored, hand painted renditions of desert life on handcrafted earthenware provides an inspiring visual feast in the context of everyday functionality. The workmanship that goes into each piece is the meditation of three artists: Immanuel (Mana) Trujillo, who has been making visionary art for sixty years, and Anne Zapf and Matthew Kent, who have been making Mana Pottery for 30 years 30800 W. Bonita Klondyke Rd., Wilcox, AZ 85643 <http://manapottery.com>

Casa Mayan

Auraria Casa Mayan Heritage, an organization dedicated to preserving the history of Auraria and the legacy of the Casa Mayan restaurant. The organization was founded by Gregorio Alcaro and Trinidad "Trini" Gonzalez, descendants of Ramon and Carolina Gonzalez Alcaro, a Denver architect who was 10 years old when the displacement happened, said the ceremony and memorial "represent a milestone in the way the campus has worked with the community and formed relationships." His cousin, writer and lecturer Trini Gonzalez, added, "Good morning, Aurarians. Welcome home."
(303) 388-5174, tghuss@comcast.net

Casa de la Esperanza

Casa de la Esperanza (House of Hope) a 32-unit residential community owned and operated by the Boulder County Housing Authority in the City of Longmont. The Casa de la Esperanza (Casa) Resident Services Program offers an "after-school" program and academic center which provides educational and recreational services to Casa residents, allowing them greater access to opportunity and success by promoting higher education and computer skills and computer access.

1520 South Emery Street, Longmont, CO (303) 485-6287

GrowHaus

The GrowHaus is an indoor farm, marketplace and educational center in Denver's Elyria-Swansea neighborhood. Our goal is to provide healthy, affordable food for the surrounding community and raise awareness about issues of food justice and sustainability.

<http://www.thegrowhaus.com/>

JTOH Awards and Grants 2014/2015

Hispanic Serving Institute Initiative	\$19,500
ACE Community Challenge Grant	\$ 6,000
MSU Denver President's Office of Diversity	\$ 5,000
Metro State University Work Study	<u>\$ 45,168</u>
TOTAL	\$ 75,5000

Journey Through Our Heritage Program Staff:
**Department Chairman of Chicana/o Studies Department and
Associate Professor at Metropolitan State
University of Denver:**

Ramon Del Castillo, Ph. D.

Ramon Del Castillo is currently Associate Professor and Chair of the Chicana/o Studies Department at Metropolitan State University of Denver. He possesses a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Sociology and Mexican American Studies from the University of Northern Colorado. His Masters Degrees are in Social Science and Public Administration and a Ph.D. from UC Denver.

Dr. Del Castillo is a past columnist for the Rocky Mountain News and a current columnist for El Semanario. His critical essays cover the plight of the Chicana/o in American society. His awards include the prestigious Colorado State Division of Civil Right's Martin Luther King Jr. Humanitarian Award (1998); the "Spirit of Tlatelolco Award," (2005); the Latino and Latina Student Law Association Community Humanitarian Award (2005); the Cesar Chavez Peace and Justice Committee's Founders Award (2008); the Rodolfo "Corky: Gonzales Civil Rights Award (2009) the Espiritu de Aztlan Award from Metro University (2010.)

Ramon is published in his discipline. His poetry publications/books include: Tales from a Michoacano; Broken Concrete; From the Corazon of a Bato Loco; and When the Owl Can't See at Night; Chile Colorado, a CD with three local poets and a storyteller used in the Chicana/o Studies Department curriculum; poetry unit in El Alma de la Raza curriculum, used in Denver Public Schools; and Cantos Al Sexto Sol: An Anthology of Aztlanahuac Writing; Cool Salsa edited by Lori M. Carlson and Encyclopedia Chicana.



Office Administrator: Mercedes Salazar

Regis University Denver, Colorado
M.S.M., Master of Science in Management Leadership 1995,
B.S.B.A. Bachelor of Science in Business Administration 1990
Certificate in Spanish 1974 Attended University of Mexico City

Mercedes assists the department Chairs, Faculty and Students in the Chicana/o Studies Department with the main focus of the retention and success of students completing their education. She manages the budget and prepares course schedules, through the Metro Banner computer system. Mercedes participates in staff meetings and supervises work study students. She assists in the planning of the following activities; Richard T. Castro Distinguished Professorship, Corky Gonzales Annual Symposium, Cesar Chavez, Corn Mothers Project, Journey Through Our Heritage and the Lalo Delgado Poetry Festival. As the Fiscal Manager of these events she maintains an accurate budget, by contacting the



caterers, entertainment, speakers, room reservation and obtaining visual equipment and supplies for the event.

Journey Through Our Heritage Program Coordinator:

Dr. Renee Fajardo

Dr. Fajardo has long been an advocate of children's and family rights. Her work with art education, literacy, and community programming have crossed all borders and boundaries. The former director of the Crossover Project, a nonprofit cultural arts education program, Dr. Fajardo has organized summer camps for at risk children, implemented high school cultural workshops, and helped provide cultural programming to thousands of students in the past 15 years.

As a board member of many cultural-nonprofit organizations throughout the state of Colorado, Dr. Fajardo has extensive knowledge of cultural, ceremonial, and community traditions of numerous indigenous people. Her own Chicana/Native American (Picuris Pueblo) and European roots allow her to be sensitive to the many nuances that face today students of color.

A Denver native and graduate of the University of Nebraska, she is also a freelance writer specializing in the South West. She has published articles dealing with subjects ranging from the migrant farm worker crisis in America to the importance of cultural art in impoverished neighborhoods to profiling success stories of immigrant families who own their own businesses.

She is also the co-author of the Holy Mole Guacamole Tummy Tale series with Carl Ruby, a series of four children's books on food, culture, and family. She co-produced the Return of the Corn Mothers exhibition, a Colorado Endowment for the Humanities Award recipient for 2009, along with master photographer Todd Pierson. She strongly believes that community is family and through our connection to our past and ancestral ways we can empathize with others in a compassionate way.



High School Mentor: Amber Russel

My name is Amber Russell and I am proud to be with Journey Through Our Heritage. I feel this is an important program to be a part of because it reflects their dedication to their culture. I am pursuing a Bachelors of Arts in Chicano Studies and Education. In High School I was a part of Latino Estudiantes Unidos and UpLift, both of these programs encouraged me to embrace my culture as well as help out my community. In the UpLift program, we would travel to a middle school once a week and help teach character building skills. Doing this each week made me feel important because I was molding students' ways of thinking for their future.



Latino estudiantes unidos was a place where I could fellowship with other Latino students while serving our communities. Things I love to do would be, salsa dancing, contemporary dancing for my church help build houses for communities in need, hike, camp and make herbal medicine. Music is a big part of my life. I love almost every genre except for hard rock but my favorite genres are Salsa, R&B, Reggaeton, and Native American flute music. Drawing is also a very big passion of mine. I never seem to have enough time to draw as much as I'd like but I am constantly seeing things like an artist would. If I could be remembered for my words, I would say "Always wake up happy, love everyone and think smart." These are three things that I try to live by!

High School Mentor: Angelica Alvarenga

My name is Angelica Alvarenga, but I like to be called Angie. I was born in Denver and graduated from Jefferson High in 2012. My immediate goal is to graduate with outstanding grades and obtain my Bachelor of Science in Human Services. Afterwards, I plan on going to graduate school for my Masters of Science. I haven't decided what field I will go for, but it will be tied in with therapy and counseling. I see myself as a leader in the future inspiring others to be confident. To me, a leader is not someone who has power over others, but someone who empowers others. I am new to Journey Through Our Heritage and look forward to inspiring the high school students I will be mentoring.

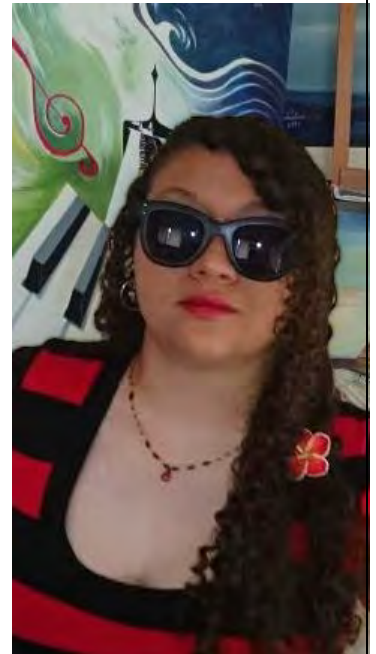


I have volunteered and served as a mentor in the Girl's Inc. Teen program. I served part of the Search Committee for TRIO Student Support Services, and was awarded the Outstanding Leadership Employment Educational Award in 2014 for creating and presenting a workshop. Currently, I am a member and captain of the Urban Leadership Program and now part of the Journey Team.

I may sound like a busy student but I make time for fun. I enjoy a broad spectrum of hobbies. I like to go bike riding, dancing, drawing, reading, watching movies, and eating. I try to be adventurous; after all life is about being spontaneous and not taking things too serious!

Information Technology: Damaris M. Santos

Hi my name is Damaris Milagro Santos I work as Head Information Technologist for Journey Through Our Heritage of Metro State University of Denver's Chicanos and Chicanas study department. I'm going to school to study in the I.D.P. for Archaeology and Herpetology; I plan to go aboard for a year or two to experience other culture's teaching styles. I future Goals in life are to have my own Herpetological green house where people can see and learn from the different reptiles and amphibians and what our history was like with them in our lives, I also wish to lead my own archeological exhibition to discover as what point did reptiles stop being a form of gods to something a so revved nearly most of the human population fears them.



I have multiple hobbies such as; fencing, falconry, all forms of art, gaming, Herpetology, Traveling, computers/ Tech., family cuckoo clock web store, and many more. I joined JTOH as a work-study seeking a job I can do easily, once I got here I was greatly welcomed and I found myself enjoying the program of helping students understand culture and who they are. I've enjoyed working here at JTOH, it has been a shower of great experiences and personal development, which often other organizations are unable to offer to students like myself. This Job is like no other. I've design most of the aspects and digital media on our website. I have managed most of our programs data and handle basic tech support; I've also participated in a few of our events such as the Denver Chalk Art Festival. I am glad to be a part of something as huge as Journey Through Our Heritage.

High School Mentor: Diana Chavez

My name is Diana Chavez. I was born in Valle de Allende, Chihuahua but raised in Colorado.

I am a history major and elementary education minor at Metropolitan State College of Denver.

I plan to graduate by 2015. This being my second year in college I have learned many

new things that make me a great asset to Journey Through our Heritage as they do to me.

This will be my first year with Journey Through our Heritage and from what

I have seen in the past is a great program.

I cannot wait to start working at my selected high school and begin promoting self-awareness of one's cultures and self-worth to our community. Will work together as a team so at the end we can compete

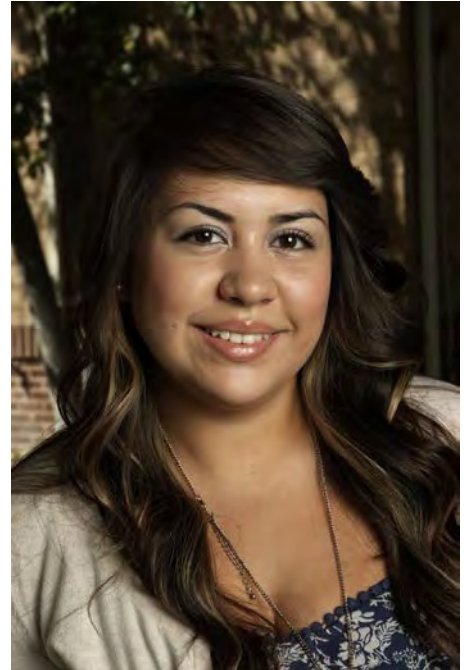
with other high schools and not only teach our values, but learn others values as well.

For my non-profit organization I will be working at Escuela Guadalupe in Mrs. Arlette Lucero's art class. I will be assisting her with grades k-2nd grade, \ and with this experience I will go a long way.

I will one day be teaching as well to similar grades.

This will guide me through the simple understanding of children and what we as adults need to assist them with.

I am very enthusiastic to begin interactions with everyone, not only will I be helping others find out who they are but I will also figure new things about myself.



High School Mentor: Essence Marie Montoya

My name is Essence Marie Montoya.

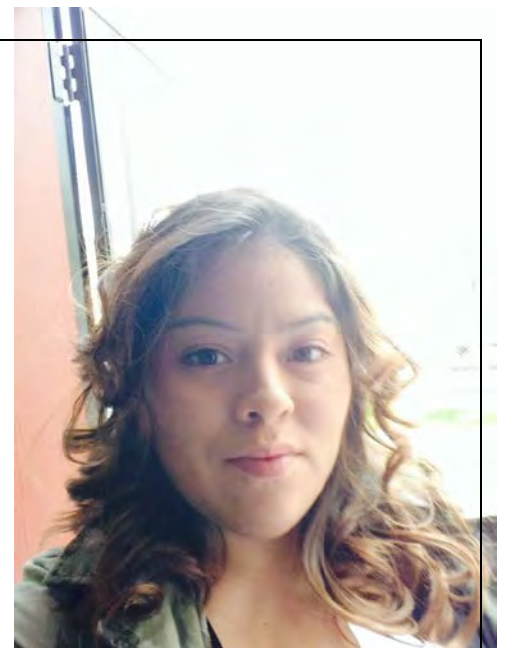
I'm a Biology Major at Metropolitan State University of Denver.

My date of graduation is 2015.

I was born and raised in Denver, Colorado although my family stems from the San Luis Valley area and New Mexico area.

I work at Servicios De La Raza which is one of the most dedicated neighborhood non-profits that I have worked for. At this non-profit I work with Fabien Ortega who is one the most unique guys I have met. The most exciting thing that I do is help in the food bank. I bring in all the groceries that were given to the non-profit for the community. Servicios has multiple resources available for the community such as the La Gente Program for HIV testing and other tests, GED classes, math tutoring and many other resources. This non-profit is an eye opener for me because I didn't realize how much they do in such a small building. I was first introduced to this non-profit when I was looking for a summer job. I then signed up with the WIA program which helps youth from 16 to 21 get job, glasses, take courses and many other things that they provide.

Another non-profit I work for is Denver Justice High School which is one of the best places I decided to volunteer at because I get to experience the high school life again. At Denver Justice I work in the office with all the paperwork that needs to be filed or sent to a classroom. I also serve lunch to the students which helps me bond with the students more. I have worked in the math classroom tutoring students and I find this very exciting which makes me see myself in the future tutoring students. Working with the youth has taught me to be free and live a little because when I first arrived at the school every day I was there I was asked if I was scared. I laughed it off but I soon realized in order to get to know the youth more I got to begin conversing and build a relationship with them. I now feel close to the youth and every Friday I spend with them is a great day well spent. When I graduated from Denver Big Picture High School I never thought I was going to set foot into another high school again but I'm glad I got the opportunity once again. I am going to Metro in order to begin my college life in order to become a Pediatrician. Becoming a Pediatrician is one of my life long dreams and it will come true in the near future. I previously worked at Denver Health as a volunteer and I noticed there were very few Latina as nurses and I didn't see any Latina doctors so I personally want to say I will be one of the Latinas that were missing at Denver Health. I also want to become a pediatrician to help out the families in need that live in my community because I have viewed several people that have gotten great jobs and left the community and never came back to share their wealth or expertise in the field. I have a big vision of opening a doctor's office that will be for families who need a little helping hand with their or their child's health instead of going to another hospital and being discriminated against.



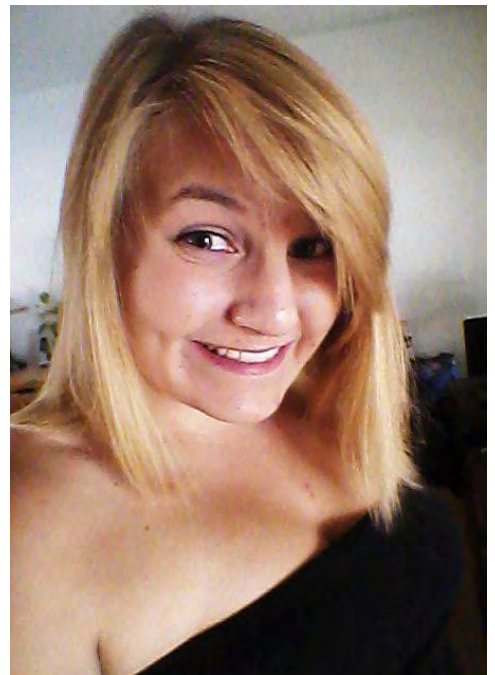
High School Mentor: Hector Palacios

I'm an intelligent man who is not afraid to show his inner feelings. I'm a man that has an opinion and answer for everything coming his way. Open minded, leader who is always there to share his triumphs. One who is eager to learn and always has a story to share. I'm also a well-rounded guy who can speak on any issue and fun to be around. Is a charm with girls, yet doesn't give his heart away so easy. When it comes to his career, he is a natural leader. Sometimes clumsy but always has a positive attitude, one who doesn't allow the small things in life to get in his way.



High School Mentor: Jessica Madrid

Hey my name is Jessica Madrid. I am a student here at Metropolitan State University of Denver studying to obtain a Speech, Language, Hearing Science Major. I have been here since fall of 2012 as a student and have been with Journey Through Our Heritage as a mentor since spring 2013. Here at JTOH, I serve as a Team Lead where I work with my other team members to help put on events and activities for local high schools, Auraria campus and the community. While I help with the event s I also go over to Alameda International High School and mentor students in the Journey Through Our Heritage Program. When I was in high school, I was a part of the JTOH program and I loved it. I learned so much about indigenous cultures, world issues, and community support when I was a student in the program. Because of that I chose to come to MSU Denver to study and become a part of the program so that I could help students through the program like it had helped me. When I am not in school, I like to spend time with my friends and family. I also volunteer at elementary and middle school events when they are put on. When needed I baby sit neighborhood children. . I have some hobbies that I like to do. These include crochet, and baking, and if it is warmer outside, I also go and play tennis with friends.



Volunteer High School Mentor: Maili-lai Rael

My name is Maili-lai Rael and I am a junior at Metropolitan State University of Denver. I am a Criminal Justice Major with a Minor in Chicano/a Studies, my title in JTOH is currently Secretary. I have been with Journey Through Our Heritage for two years and have mentored many students from various schools. My passion is working with the youth and that is exactly what I get when I am at JTOH. I currently mentor the students at Escuela Tlatilolco as well as seeking and maintaining donations from many local businesses for our students whom work so hard on projects and learning all of our criteria throughout the year.



I have gotten a certificate in Victim Advocacy this past June 2014 with over 40 hours of training. I also look forward to beginning an internship in the Lakewood police department or the DA's office. I want to work with at risk youth because I have a son that has a lot of emotional issues and to me all kiddos just need someone who will listen to their problems and concerns without judgment

High School Mentor: Nelson Moreno Avila

I'm Nelson Moreno Avila:
I'm a freshman here at Metro and this is my first year working in Journey.
I currently mentor at Lincoln and Alameda. I plan on majoring in Psychology and hope to one day be a child psychologist. I also plan on joining the Cadet Program here at Metro because I've always wanted to serve my community, and this program would give me the skills I'll need to make that happen



High School Mentor: Symone Esquibel

My name is Symone Esquibel. I was born and raised in Denver, Colorado. I'm a proud graduate from North High School and I'm an even prouder student that attends Metropolitan State University of Denver. My major is in Psychology with a minor in Criminal Justice. After earning my Bachelor's Degree I plan on earning my Master's Degree and very promptly going on to earn my Doctorate Degree. My goal is to pursue a career as a Developmental Psychologist, and work with kids who've experienced trauma in their lives. I want to help rehabilitate their minds and be someone in their life who truly cares for them.



This year will be my first year as a mentor with Journey Through Our Heritage. I feel very blessed to be a part of this team because JTOH has cultivated a community through education, arts, and culture to connect to local youth toward seeking scholarship in their lives..

Letter from the Coordinator:

As the Coordinator of the Journey Through Our Heritage program at Metropolitan State College of Denver, I am very excited to be part of this wonderful project. The hard work and dedication of those who created the Journey has been a labor of love for many years. It is a great honor for me to continue this work.

Chicana/o Studies along with African/African American Studies believe that this unique program will instill in the hearts of our college students and the high school teams we work with the spirit of cooperation and stewardship that is the legacy of our ancestors. The Journey is about team work, community service, honoring our ancestors, knowing our history, excellence in academics, and striving for a better tomorrow by engaging the minds of our youth in thought provoking competition. We are all from indigenous people and the past has much to teach us about being caretakers of the Earth. As we embark on the newest leg of our journey together we invite you to join as we explore new horizons and celebrate the bright future of our students.

We look forward to a very productive 2015/2016 season. We are pleased to be forming new partnership and anticipate a wonderful journey to come.

Blessings,

Dr. Renee Fajardo