



selfpower
PROJECT SELF SUFFICIENCY



Fall 2019

POWERFUL TIMES

Monica's Story

When **Monica** enrolled in Project Self-Sufficiency in 2011, she could never have imagined what she would achieve throughout her time in our program.

Monica began her journey with us as an overnight janitor, working to support two kids and living with her mother to make ends meet. She wasn't confident in her abilities to be a good student and earning a Bachelor's degree seemed outrageous to her, but she was determined to improve her options and create a new reality for herself and her kids. Today, Monica shares, "This program has had such a positive effect on my children. There are so many ways [it] has supported their upbringing, growth, and safety. This program has provided so much SUN in our lives when, without Project Self-Sufficiency, most days could have been very cloudy."

Monica was one of the very first Participants to be a dual enrolled student at Front Range Community College and University of Northern Colorado for a Bachelor Science in of Nursing (BSN) degree. She approached her studies calmly and methodically, as she managed a large workload while working

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at night and parenting her kids. Ultimately, it was no longer possible to keep working a full-time job overnight and be a successful student and parent during the day. While working with her Advisor, Nicole, Monica decided to take a huge leap of faith and leave her job to focus on getting the degree that would lead to the life she wanted. Nicole and Monica found ways to shrink her living expenses, increase her scholarships, and utilize temporary assistance programs to achieve her goals. Monica shares, "My biggest fear was quitting my job and getting on assistance to focus on my education. My Advisor was the backbone I needed in many situations. She helped me notice how far I had come and was always there to keep me going on the journey of self-sufficiency and a better life for my children. [Nicole] taught me to focus

on what I needed to do for the day and take one day at a time. Thinking of everything I had to do in two weeks or a year seemed impossible but day by day it was manageable."

Within the first two weeks of school, Monica realized she was smarter and more capable than she had ever realized. She was more motivated than she had ever been in school. Due to her determination and commitment, Monica was able to manage courses at both schools and secure enough scholarships to fully cover her tuition for her BSN program. She graduated without any student loan debt. "My largest success so far has been completing the BSN education, becoming a Registered Nurse and starting employment. My proudest moment has been getting off all assistance, being self-sufficient, and showing my children hard work isn't for nothing and doing what I wanted to do years ago when I joined this program."

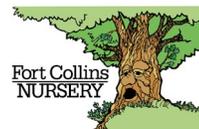
Monica is now working as a Registered Nurse and shares, "I had this goal set six years ago and to watch it come true and now work as an RN is pretty cool. It proves that no matter how hard something looks, step by step, it is possible".

Project Self- Sufficiency thanks our 2019 Right Size Giving Business Sponsors

Right Size Giving provides a platform for businesses to maximize their social impact and community exposure at the same time. Businesses sign up and give once each year, with recognition and benefits provided throughout the year, based on their "Power Level," or level of investment. Our Right Size Giving Sponsors are dedicated to our community and the important work we do because they know that every investment in Project Self-Sufficiency:

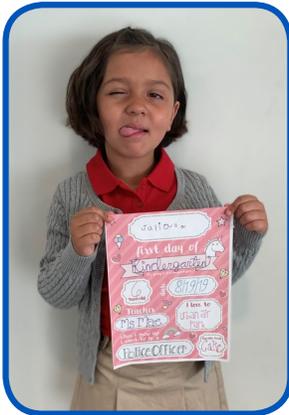
- Is an investment in human capital; education and training create a qualified workforce that is essential to business growth and success.
- Perpetuates a positive cycle in our community; educated and employable families become self-reliant, thrive, and are able to participate fully in all this community has to offer.
- Changes the course for multiple generations; education and career become the norm and not the exception. We see our children pursue the same level, or more, education as their parent.

For information on becoming a Right Size Giving Sponsor,
contact Ricki at 970.635.5904 or ricki@bringthepower.org.



Celebrating 20 Years of Cool Kids

This year, we are celebrating our 20th year of providing new back-to-school clothes for our Participants' children. What has become one of our most valued benefits to our families, Cool Kids began in 2000 in an entirely different structure.



Mervyn's department store began their "Child Spree" and asked us to partner with them. We did, and 30 children from our program were invited to shop 1:1 on a specific Saturday with only a Mervyn's employee. The company would cover half of the cost, plus give a 15% discount and Project Self-Sufficiency would pay the remainder. The event operated in this manner for the first four years. After getting input



from parents that they would rather shop with their kids and approve of the purchases, we partnered with J.C. Penney's, who offered at least a 30% discount, for a "new and improved" version of the program and titled it "Cool Kids Back-to-School" clothing event. Our families were excited at

the opportunity to shop with their kids and share in the joy of the program. In 2004, we had 105 kids in Kindergarten through twelfth grade participate.

Each year, as the number of Participants in our program increased, so did the number of children we funded. In 2006, we increased the shopping options to five stores to give our families more opportunities, and give the kids more choice in their wardrobe. Throughout the years, we've recognized the importance of this fund in helping to reinforce the **selfpower** of our Participants and their children. Every year, we survey Participants and always get the same responses, highlighting the



continued need. One Participant shared, "This program is beyond awesome! It takes [the] stress out of new school clothes shopping and I am able to get my son the necessary clothes he needs for the upcoming year. Also, my son's confidence goes up when he has awesome new clothes to wear and show off to his friends." For many of our children, this program is the one time each year they get brand new clothes. The Cool Kids Program not only meets a direct need, but also allows kids to have control over what they

FUND SPOTLIGHT

want to say with their clothes and helps them express themselves. Connie DeMercurio, who started,



and still runs this amazing program, shared "As the fifth girl in my family, I only got new clothes at back-to-school time. I remember clearly the wonderful feeling of starting the new school year with a brand new outfit or two. That's why this program is near and dear to my heart!"

Thanks to the continued commitment of our donors and supporters, we have been able increase our support of this vital resource over the years. Currently, the fund is serving 65 families and their 110 children each year.



Donor Spotlight: *The Schuchmanns*

Each year, the team at Project Self-Sufficiency is proud to welcome new donors to our Paragon Society. This society is the most prestigious level we have and donors who enter this society show a dedication and love for single parents in our community that inspires us in our work every day. This year, we are excited to highlight our newest Paragon Society members, **Walt and Janet Schuchmann**.

The Schuchmanns first became involved in Project Self-Sufficiency over eight years ago, when they heard about our work through a class at their church concerning "A Christian Response to Poverty". Our mission resonated with them and our emphasis on the power of education and the road toward self-sufficiency led to a meeting with our past Executive Director, Mary Carraher. It was then that the Schuchmanns began their commitment to single parents in our community; they have continued to be incredible advocates and supporters throughout the years.

The Schuchmanns deeply believe in the power of education to



transform lives. They not only support Project Self-Sufficiency through their philanthropy, but Janet is heavily involved as a volunteer. She serves on our Scholarship Committee which helps single parents receive the resources they need to reach their educational goals, and she donates her time through informational interviews for our Participants who are interested in her career field.

Our Program Director, John, shared just some of the impact Janet and Walt have had on single parents. He remarked, "Janet has provided valuable perspective in helping make decisions regarding scholarship allocations for our low-income, single-parent students. The funds that Janet helps award supports our student parents and their children by covering tuition,

utilities, rent, and other crucial needs during their path to a self-sufficient or living-wage career. Janet's service is imperative to our mission and the success of the families we serve. We're so thankful for both Walt and Janet's dedication, wisdom and heart."

When asked to share what makes Project Self-Sufficiency so special to this community, Janet explained, "We're big believers in education [and] this is such a great program. The Participants are developed in so many ways outside of education, through speaking opportunities, internships, and other outlets." And Walt shared, "The idea that people will not only be able to take care of themselves and their family, but also be fully functioning members of our society makes Project Self-Sufficiency stand out in the community. We're financially blessed to be able to support our favorite organizations and the impact of Project Self-Sufficiency can be seen through the feedback to their supporters and the Participant stories."

The Project Self-Sufficiency team welcomed two new staff in July, **Ricki Runions and Brittany Daas**. Ricki joins the team as the new Development and Communications Associate and shares, "I watched my mom go through school while raising four kids and it instilled in me a sense of how precious education and hard work truly is. I'm inspired by the work our Participants are

Welcome New Staff



doing and excited to join the team!"

Brittany joins us as our new Office Manager and Volunteer Coordinator, she shares, "I am grateful to be a part of the team and look forward to watching others achieve their SelfPower". Learn more about them on our website and stop by our Loveland office to meet them!

selfpower Celebration

Each year, we honor the achievements of our Participants at a celebration event for them and their families. In 2019, we had over 55 Participants who were invited to be honored at this special SelfPowerCelebration. We spent the evening highlighting

their accomplishments, including: scholarship awards, degree completions, and new employment. We were also inspired by our keynote speaker, **Camille Dungy**, Poet and 2017 winner of the Colorado Book Award and 2019 Guggenheim Fellowship. Every

achievement is special to both us and our Participants. This SelfPower Celebration gives us the opportunity to recognize the hard work, dedication, and grit our Participants display every day and brings our families together to celebrate their wins!



Sounds and Samplings of Summer



Summertime has been full of fun activities at Project Self-Sufficiency! We kicked off our summer fun with the Annual **Rock Garden Concert at Fort Collins Nursery** on June 12th, with music provided by Dead Horses. It was a thoroughly enjoyable evening full of music and friends AND we raised over \$1,000 for our families.

The Annual **Houska Car Giveaway** tradition continues and we are honored to have partnered with

Houska Automotive for the past decade to keep our Participants on the road to success! A reliable vehicle is a key component of Participants' ability to continue their education and transport their children safely. This year, we joined the Houskas at the CSU Lagoon Concert where they presented our Participant, Meybol, with a "new to her" Hyundai Sonata. When Meybol found out she was going to receive a vehicle, she went out and got herself a job - something she could



not do beforehand because she lacked reliable transportation. With a new car and a new job, Meybol is two steps closer to independence and self-sufficiency.

We jumped into the back-to-school mayhem with a new event, a **Roller Skating Party** for our families at Rollerland Skate Center! **Friends of Project Self-Sufficiency** welcomed Participants and their kids for an afternoon of fun that included roller skating, treats, and free books. Our families had a blast celebrating

the end of summer and the beginning of school. To learn more about volunteering with Friends, contact **Kay Williams** at 970.310.3093 or buddyboy78@comcast.net.



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bringthepower.org



Return Service Requested

Bring the power of education to single parents.

FRIENDS OF PROJECT SELF-SUFFICIENCY FALL 2019 HOLIDAY PLANT SALE

It's fall again, and time for our annual Holiday Plant Sale. Purchase your red poinsettia, holiday cactus, and cyclamen for \$17 each for the holiday and profits go to the Scholarship Fund! The plants will be available for pick-up at Fort Collins Nursery from Nov. 23- Dec. 2, 2019. A big thanks to Fort Collins Nursery for their continued support of our sale, and for always providing such beautiful plants!

For more information, contact Kay Williams at 970.310.3093. You can also purchase your plant vouchers directly by calling Connie at 970.635.5902, or online at <http://bit.ly/2019HolidayPlantsale>. Orders taken through November 5th.



Join us for our annual
"Bring the Power"
Luncheon
Thursday, March 12, 2020
11:30am-1:00pm

Come celebrate our successes and support the single parents and families of Project Self-Sufficiency. We would love for you to get to know us and share in the grit and determination of our Participants and celebrate that you are a partner in bringing the power of education to single parents! If you are interested in being a Table Host, contact Ricki at ricki@bringthepower.org. Registration information will be posted on our website and social media soon.