

Spring 2023

POWERFUL TIMES



Daniel's Selfpower

Single parents enrolled in our program pursue adult education and work towards earning a degree or certificate in their career-field, in order to increase their wage potential when they graduate. We call this the "Strengthen" Stage of our Selfpower program model. During this time, Advisors work with Participants to outline a multi-year academic plan detailing their degree or certificate timeline, which classes they will take, when they will engage in an internship, and application deadlines for competitive training programs. During this stage, Participants focus primarily on school and are encouraged to reduce work hours to focus on learning and successfully completing their coursework as quickly as possible. Since 1992, we have provided Strengthen Scholarships annually to support Participants while they pursue their education.

Daniel, one of the single dads in our program since 2022, will be directly impacted by this scholarship. Daniel has been studying at Colorado State University to become a High School Art Educator. He is 38 years old, a first-generation, BIPOC college student, and has two children who are 12 and 10 years old. He shares that it has been a humbling experience for him to sit in class with traditional college students,

"I'm already stronger than ever before because of the support of Project Self-Sufficiency and the encouragement that I have received along the way to believe in myself and pursue my dreams."

—Daniel

fresh out of high school, and with no kids to care for. "But it is all worth it," he says, "because I am rebuilding my life after escaping an abusive relationship." He spent time at Crossroads Safehouse, and he fought hard to obtain custody of his children. While he does not consider himself a victim, he believes in his capabilities as a survivor of abuse. He has done well at CSU in his first semester, maintaining a 4.0 GPA, because of the support of Project Self-Sufficiency. He plans to use the scholarship funds to help cover the costs of living and tuition and books. He is determined to push through and accomplish his career goal to be an art teacher.

Like many other of our Participants, Daniel does not have any other support systems in this community, so support and encouragement from his Program

Advisor at Project Self-Sufficiency is crucial. With the financial resources from the Strengthen Scholarship Fund, he can focus on his education and his kids, instead of being forced to work side jobs that would slow his progress. Once he becomes an art teacher, he is going to dedicate as much time as he can to help survivors of domestic violence.

"I'm already stronger than ever before because of the support of Project Self-Sufficiency and the encouragement that I have received along the way to believe in myself and pursue my dreams. Thank you so much for considering me for this scholarship."

Our Strengthen Scholarship grants cover the cost of tuition, books and supplies, as well as basic living expenses such as housing, utilities, transportation, and childcare, for our single parents enrolled in school. This year we had 52 applicants. Each applicant faces barriers that could easily knock them off course in the pursuit of their education goals. Without Strengthen Scholarship funds, many of our single-parent families would be without transportation, or short on rent or utilities, and could potentially be derailed from reaching their educational goals.

Fund Spotlight: Boundless Children's Fund

Our Participants' children love extracurricular activities! Our Boundless Children's Fund helps participants with the means to enroll their children in activities that they may not be able to experience otherwise, such as, sports, dance, music lessons, etc. These activities give children a chance to not only be involved in healthy physical activities, but also help them learn life skills, develop healthy self-esteem and build positive relationships with other peers and adult role models.

Jessica, who has been able to utilize the Boundless Fund to enroll her son in sports for almost two years says, "I would not have been able to enroll my son in soccer without the Boundless Fund. He loves soccer so much and asks about it every day!

He is very active and sometimes could cause trouble if he doesn't have some sort of activity to let his energy out. With this outlet, we have a healthier and happier environment at home.

The physical health benefits are wonderful, but he also gets to have time with boys, has a male coach/role model that he can connect with, and gets to learn skills that go along with teamwork, like taking direction, structure and following rules."

Costs for extra-curricular activities continue to rise for our families. To help other Participants and their children experience more opportunities like this, please visit our website and donate to our Boundless Children's Fund or reach out to Natasia at natasia@bringthepower.org.



Congratulations Connie on your Retirement!

Connie DeMercurio, the giver of almost 20 years of service (22 if you count her volunteer time!) and many successful projects at Project Self-Sufficiency, has retired. While we are saddened by her departure, we are excited for the new adventures that await her. Connie came to Project Self-Sufficiency as a volunteer in January 2001, and formally joined the staff in August 2003 as an Administrative Assistant. Her focus was on our Holiday programs, coordinating and executing the "Spring Brunch" fundraiser, newsletter creation and design, the creation and expansion of our "Cool Kids" Back-to-School Clothing Fund, and our annual Participant survey. Later, Connie took on additional financial duties including accounts payable, accounts receivable, and Participant disbursements. Always willing to step up when needed, Connie has had a hand in shaping us into what we are today.

Connie's husband Doug died suddenly in a vehicle accident in March of 2020, and this spring she decided to retire, due to visual limitations, her desire to spend time with grandchildren living close by, an interest in travel, and wanting to slow down and enjoy more free time. Though no longer a member of Team Awesome, Connie has left an enormous impact on Project Self-Sufficiency, and we are forever grateful for her influence. Connie, we will miss you dearly!



Events Calendar

July 21st: SelfPower event and Self Care Day

July 23rd: Parent's Day

December 5th: Colorado Gives Day

Welcome New Board Members!



Peter Boyle

Peter Boyle is an HR executive and Vice President of Human Resources at Dell Technologies, where he leads the organizational people strategy for Dell's corporate functions. With over 20 years of HR experience, Peter brings valuable insights into workforce readiness, learning and development, and the future of work.

As a board member of Project Self-Sufficiency and the Friends of the Gardens on Spring Creek, Peter is passionate about giving back to the Northern Colorado community. He received his M.B.A and B.S. in Organization Management from Colorado State University and lives in Fort Collins, Colorado with his wife and two children.



Lauren Larson

Lauren Larsen is an Advisor on the JLR Team with NAI Affinity Commercial Real Estate, part of the NAI Global network. Her primary role, as an Advisor, is to build long-term relationships of trust with her clients and to help provide expertise to those clients throughout the real estate transaction process.

She is excited to be serving on the Board of Directors for Project Self-Sufficiency. Professionally, she is a member of CREW, NCCAR, and the Leadership Northern Colorado Class of 2023. When she is not in the office, you can likely find her spending time with her family and friends, trying a new workout class, or traveling.



CeCe Majchrowski

A lifelong resident of Weld County, CeCe Majchrowski is passionate about developing the skills of job seekers and enhancing businesses in her community. As the Workforce Deputy Director of Employment Services of Weld County, she is responsible for program and budget management and developing local policies, procedures, and business practices to ensure efficient and effective administration of employment and training programs.

CeCe graduated from the University of Northern Colorado in 2005. She earned a Micro Masters Certificate in Social Work: Practice, Policy, and Research and is also a Certified Workforce Development Professional. She also serves on the Board of Directors for the Northern Colorado Veterans Resource Center and Northern Colorado Guardianship, Inc.



Lori Mostrom

Lori Mostrom is a Mortgage Loan Officer who loves helping people. She has been in the mortgage industry for over 20 years. With her career, she helps people make their dreams of home ownership come true one loan at a time. Lori lives in Loveland Colorado with her three kids and two dogs. She loves any outdoor activities with her kids, and she enjoys painting and taking pictures. Lori serves on multiple nonprofit boards in Northern Colorado and volunteers for various organizations in the area. She serves on the Project Self-Sufficiency board because she is very passionate about the mission of the organization. As a former participant of the program, Lori knows the magnitude of how this program helps single parents. Project Self-Sufficiency was a life changing experience for her and her children. She is excited and driven to help the organization grow and reach new heights.

Thank you to our outgoing Board Members...

Thank you to Sarah Liggett and Nancy Symes, who each served a six-year term and will soon end their time on our Board. Your impact on our families and our work has been tremendous!

We do all that we can to help our Participants overcome obstacles that single parents face. Our Cars for Families Program is one of the resources we use to help ensure safe and reliable transportation. When a single parent does not have transportation, it is detrimental to their success. Unable to drive themselves and their children to school, doctor's appointments, the grocery store, etc., they can fall behind on goals.



Donor Gary Bragdon recently began donating his time to this program by evaluating used vehicles for Participants, in order for us to purchase them for families. Having the support of people like him, who truly care about the safety and well-being of our Participants, is what continues to help us thrive.

Q: How long have you been involved with Project Self-Sufficiency?

A: My first exposure was through my wife, Cindy, who at that time worked for an attorney, Bill Gunn, around 30 years ago. His wife, Nancy Gunn was a great supporter, board member and donor to Project Self-Sufficiency and that is when Cindy became involved as a board member for 14 years. I then became a donor and more of an observer of the operations.

Q: What fuels your passion to be involved in our Cars for Families Program?

A: Providing dependable cars for Participants, along with Don Griffith, who volunteers with repairs and maintenance coordination for Participant vehicles, is a rewarding effort in a very direct way. Since my retirement, volunteering to help Participants with their transportation needs is so gratifying for me because it supports families in their everyday life, getting to work and school.

Q: What do you think is the biggest issue when it comes to single parents and safe/reliable transportation?

A: With so much on a Participant's plate, their challenges can be complicated enough without the worry and disruption of a questionable vehicle breaking down and the costs of repair that can be another unneeded stress for a family.

Q: What are ways that the community can help solve these issues?

A: Contributions to the Cars for Families program, whether to enable procurement for vehicles or to donate for maintenance and repairs is a valuable means of being such a great part of helping a great cause such as Project Self-Sufficiency.

If you're interested in donating your vehicle or helping a Participant pay for car repairs, contact Natasia at natasia@bringthepower.org

2023 Bring the Power Social Event

Thank you to the nearly 400 guests who attended our annual fundraiser, the Bring the Power Social Event on Thursday, April 6th! We enjoyed powerful words from our keynote speaker, Stephanie Land, about her personal story of living in poverty and trying to make ends meet. Her experiences mirror our Participants' life stories of hardship, roadblocks, and incredible strength as a single parent to provide for her children.

This event, our biggest fundraiser of the year, was a success, raising over \$150,000 for our programs. Thank you to those who attended and who gave their support that evening. If you could not attend and would like to make a donation to support our families or be added to our mailing list to hear about next year's event, please visit our website: www.bringthepower.org or email Daniela Morzos at daniela@bringthepower.org.



Dreams to Reality - A selfpower letter from the Director of Development

Happy Summer!

Do you do spring cleaning? After my spring cleaning this year, I released the things that no longer serve me. In this process, I recognized my good fortune of having a home. I realize that I was blessed with opportunities to which many others had no access. Not because of a lack of ambition, intelligence, or hard work, but because of the color of their skin, the country or area of their birth, or the family dysfunction they were born into. No one gets to choose to whom, where, or what they look like when they are born. Digging out of the slippery pit of inequities is a mammoth task, especially as a single parent, with little ones depending on you.

Our Participants continually struggle amidst our current economic climate and increasing inflation. Housing instability is a constantly moving target, with rents rising steadily with no end in sight.

The Bell Policy Center states "Of the half of Colorado renters who are cost-burdened (spending more than 30 percent of their monthly income on housing), they are more often women, over 40, single parents, and/or without a postsecondary education. And as many as 13.3 percent of Coloradans are extremely cost-burdened, putting half of their monthly income into housing." The National Low Income Housing Coalition adds "Severely cost-burdened poor households are more likely than other renters to sacrifice other necessities like healthy food and healthcare to pay the rent and to experience unstable housing situations like evictions." Colorado is the 9th least affordable state for housing.

Colorado Housing Facts:

- \$30,650 is the maximum income for a 4-person extremely low-income household (state level)
- \$60,186 is the annual household income needed to afford a two-bedroom rental home at Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) Fair market rent.
- At the state level, a minimum wage earner would need to work 89 hours per week to afford a two-bedroom apartment
- While the state's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) now exceeds its pre-pandemic level, lower-wage jobs are yet to recover.
- Despite major housing legislation in the 2021 legislative session, Colorado does not have enough affordable and available housing for low- and middle-income Coloradans with wages unable to keep up with shelter prices

Project Self-Sufficiency helps its Participants find and maintain stable, safe housing for themselves and their families by partnering with other organizations in Northern Colorado. We leverage our donations to provide additional help with gas cards, grocery cards, utility payments, and other essentials when Participants are having a hard time paying their increased rent. And we provide emergency assistance when needed.

A Program Advisor recently shared, "Mariah was able to move into stable housing and utilize her funding to help cover her living expenses. This not only provided a roof over her son's head, but a space for him to thrive and flourish."

The cost of sponsoring a Participant for a year is \$16,000, which is much less than the average yearly rent for a two-bedroom apartment in Northern Colorado (\$1,800 a month = \$21,600 a year).

When you are cleaning your home this summer season, I encourage you to take a moment or two to think about those who haven't been given the opportunities you have been given. We all deserve a safe, stable home.

Sincerely,
Daniela Morzos





375 W. 37th Street, Suite 150
Loveland, CO 80538

970.635.5912
bringthepower.org



Bring the power of education to single parents.

Return Service Requested



Friends of Project Self-Sufficiency is a volunteer group dedicated to helping support the needs of both the families and staff members of Project Self-Sufficiency. We meet on the second Tuesday of the month from 5:00 to 6:00 pm. We are a group that prides ourselves on being productive and not requiring a huge commitment level from our members.

Interested in volunteering? Please contact Kay Williams at 970-310-3093 or buddyboy78@comcast.net.

This is the last newsletter you will receive unless you elect to receive more, either by phone or mail. Please scan the QR code or visit <https://rb.gy/p3j67> to update your information or call 970.635.5912.

