



Spring 2019

POWERFUL TIMES

Courtnie's selfpower

When Courtnie enrolled in Project Self-Sufficiency in 2014, she knew she wanted a business degree but was unclear which field would best suit her. She was taking too many credits, working too many hours, and ended up with academic struggles and overwhelming exhaustion. Courtnie was working hard to keep up with the cost of rent and child care but was going into deep student loan debt each semester trying to sustain these expenses. Courtnie completed



five informational interviews and was confident in her choice to become an accountant. "I started honing in on [accounting], in part because it's such a stable career. They have great benefits," Courtnie explained, "Numbers back me up, they don't lie, there's no confusion. It's a very black and white space and I'm happy living there," she laughed.

Loneliness and single-parenthood

"There was so much growth," Courtnie said of her journey in Project Self-Sufficiency, "I feel like I flourished. There was financial, personal, emotional, and educational [growth], as I found my path, went down it, and continued to explore opportunities."

often go hand-in-hand, but Courtnie didn't feel as alone while working with her Advisor, Nicole. "I miss her. She is a ROCKSTAR," Courtnie said of Nicole, "It was great to have someone who wasn't going to judge you, and she understood. Being a single parent... there's a lot of time you feel very alone. Not even just in a parenting space. But in a student space. In a work space. Alone at night while my child was sleeping. I was lonely. Nicole was not only a mentor, a coach, or a guide - she was a friend."

With Nicole's guidance, Courtnie was able to make huge strides to improve her life. Project Self-Sufficiency connected Courtnie to resources for covering childcare expenses while she attended school. Project Self-Sufficiency also helped her secure subsidized housing and assisted with first month's rent and security

deposit. These resources made it possible for Courtnie to stop taking out student loans each semester, avoiding thousands of dollars of debt. In turn, Courtnie could reduce her working hours so she had more time to study and earn better grades for competitive admissions into the College of Business at Colorado State University. Being less anxious about her finances allowed her to enjoy learning, parenting and taking risks such as committing to internships and networking meetings. Her son, Elijah, benefitted from safe housing and a mother who was far less stressed. They made lots of happy memories together while Courtnie attended school. The holidays were a little brighter for Elijah because of the annual holiday party and help with gifts for under the tree.

"There was so much growth," Courtnie said of her journey in Project Self-Sufficiency, "I feel like I flourished. There was financial, personal, emotional, and educational [growth], as I found my path, went down it, and continued to explore opportunities." Now, Courtnie is earning an excellent self-sufficient wage as an accountant with Bellisimo, which is a growing

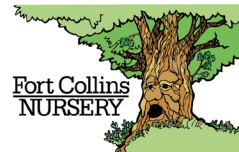
(Courtnie, continued on page 4)

Project Self-Sufficiency Welcomes Our 2019 Right Size Giving Business Sponsors

Right Size Giving provides the platform for a business to give once each year and with recognition and benefits provided throughout the year, based on its "Power Level," or level of investment. We know that our work is important to businesses because we 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 in the wonder that this community has to offer.
- Changes the course for multiple generations. We see our children more often than not pursue the same level of education as their parent. Education and career become the norm and not the exception.

For information on becoming a Right Size Giving Sponsor, contact Tracy at 970-635-5912 or tracy@bringthepower.org.



Welcome to Our Newest Board Members. . .



As Fort Collins native, **Emily Jones** began volunteering with Project Self-Sufficiency through National Charity League in the

mid-1990's. She graduated from the University of Colorado and joined RMC, Destination Management Company in Vail. Emily moved back to Fort Collins in 2015 to raise her two young children and be closer to family. Now a Broker Associate/Partner at The Group, Inc., she helps others find joy in home ownership. Having been a single mother herself, Emily knows the importance of having a strong support system and wants to help others achieve stability and success in their lives despite hardship.



Liz Hogan is Senior Director for Neurosciences, Orthopedics, and Rehabilitation Services for

UCHealth in Fort Collins and Loveland. Prior to joining UCHealth four years ago, she was with Atlantic Health System in central NJ for 19 years. A Fellow with the American College of Healthcare Executives, Liz is board-certified in health care management, has an MPA from Rutgers Graduate School and a BA from New York University. Liz worked full time while completing her studies and has an appreciation for those challenges. Liz sees herself as an advocate for those taking a non-traditional path by choice or because of other circumstances.



Farewell to Stellar Board Member, **Denise Chapman**. In her three years of service, Denise's impact was impressive and included chairing the Board Recruitment Committee, as well as serving on the Scholarship Committee. Thank you, Denise, for playing an important role in our work!

BOARD & STAFF SPOTLIGHT



Patti Stevenson is a former healthcare executive who has joyfully resided in northern Colorado for over 30 years.

An active volunteer in healthcare, education, and the arts in our community she received an MBA from Colorado State University. Through her various roles with the health system, Patti's career included a variety of learning experiences. Initially she worked with low income individuals in need of financial assistance. Later she became a member of the executive team, working strategically with the Executive Committee of the Board of Directors. Patti is excited about using her previous human resource and leadership experiences to contribute to the important work of Project Self-Sufficiency.

Welcome New Program Advisors!

Chrissa Percival earned her B.A. in Psychology from the University of California at Santa Cruz before embarking on her first career in the restaurant industry. After 15 wonderful years, she found herself wanting more and finally listened to her heart's calling to help others and joined the Peace Corps. Upon her return stateside, she earned a M.B.A. in Global, Social & Sustainable Enterprise from Colorado State University, perfectly blending her business mind with her heart to serve others. "My mother never had the chance to gain an education and yet made sure to instill in me how precious my opportunity to have one was."

Hannah Dahl obtained her B.S. in Psychology and Criminal Justice with a Minor in Human Development and Family Science from North Dakota State University. She went on to earn my Master of Social Work from the University of Denver. Her educational experience ignited her passion for advocacy and working with people, and her passion has only continued to grow throughout her work experience. "I have worked with many individuals across different situations within different systems, and the common factor across all of my experience is my constant Strengths-Based approach."



Donor Spotlight: *Dr. Jeff Albert*

Last fall, Project Self-Sufficiency heard from a new donor who wanted to participate in the Run Rabbit Run 100, an annual endurance race in Steamboat Springs, and personally donate money for each mile he completed to our organization. A few weeks after the event, we were impressed to learn he had successfully completed the entire route and he invited us to meet at his workplace to give us his donation. When we arrived at Banner MD Anderson Cancer Center at McKee Medical in Loveland asking for "Jeff," we were humbled to learn that our new donor is Dr. Jeff Albert, a Radiation Oncologist and Oncology Physician Executive for the Cancer Center program in Northern Colorado.

Dr. Albert shared with us his story on how he began running ultra-distances and why he chose Project Self-Sufficiency as a benefactor for Run Rabbit Run. As if his career and three young children weren't enough to occupy his time, he began running as a stress release and quickly found that trail running provided the serenity he was searching for. Navigating cancer also had a personal side for him. His mother, Jeanne Wolfendale, died in 2016 due to lung cancer. Running long distances on trails gave him the opportunity to reflect on what an indelible mark she left on his life and his achievements. She was the rock for her children, always building them up and providing encouragement. He says he owes his grit and

determination to her. Looking back, he saw how she raised her children as a single parent, always putting them before herself. He said he and his siblings always had everything they needed, and even a few of the things they wanted. She worked for a printing company for more than 35 years, stoically taking on life's challenges to provide her children with stability and the opportunity to grow and flourish.



Dr. Albert began running trail races in 2016, starting with a half-marathon, then a full. After that, he was hooked. As with many trail runners, he moved on to a 50-miler and then a 100K (62 miles). In 2018, he entered the Run Rabbit Run 100, making it a tribute to his mom and a fundraiser in her memory. He pledged to give \$59 (\$1 for each year of Jeanne's life) for each mile of the race. Run Rabbit Run is an ultra-marathon; as with most ultra-

marathons, no one is quite sure of the exact distance, but the 2018 race was somewhere between 104-108 miles, with total elevation gain of over 20,000 feet, weather ranging from freezing to 90-degree temperatures. Approximately 40% percent of those who started the race were unable to finish largely due to the heat. Digging deep and on a mission, Dr. Albert finished in a time of 31 hours and 16 minutes.

He researched organizations that met specific criteria to honor Jeanne, and it was our good fortune that he chose Project Self-Sufficiency. He appreciates our accountability and follow through, and that we stress education as the road to future opportunities for single parents. He sees that it's even harder today for single parents to enter the middle class than it was when he was a child. He and his sister, Anne, and brother, Paul, also created an annual scholarship in their mother's name at their high school for a student who embodies her values. Dr. Albert wants to instill in his children the values that his mother gave him: unconditional love, hard work and philanthropy. We salute him, not only for his generosity and fortitude, but for the enormous contribution he is making to our community with his work in the healthcare field. We salute his mother, for raising a thoughtful, caring man, dedicated to making a difference for others personally and professionally.

(Courtne continued from page 1)

property development company in Northern Colorado. "I love it," she said, "I'm in a really small office and I get to know the owner of the company really well, work directly with the controller, and I get thank yous for doing a good job. It feeds my soul. I get to work with a bunch of people in town, I'm meeting people, expanding my network, and gaining friends."

Courtne graduated from CSU in December 2017, and was already off all government assistance programs

by February 2018. "Wam, bam, holy cow," Courtne exclaimed of the sudden change, "It was a cushion I was used to and I didn't have a long transitional period. It was scary at first. But now, here I am a year later, and I'm like 'heck yeah.'"



Thank goodness for the Colorado Childcare Assistance Program (CCAP), food stamps and medical

assistance. I wouldn't have survived without them. But now I get to look at it and say, 'I'm buying these groceries with my own money!' It's like an 'I get to', not an 'I have to.' I CAN. It's uplifting. When a friend asks me to dinner and movie, I don't have to wonder how I can come up with \$20. I can just say YES! There were scary and helpless places where I began, but now I'm thriving. I don't have to worry about bills or living paycheck to paycheck. I have everything plus more. Now I get to give back. I'm on the other side of the table and it's empowering."

Holiday Thanks Abound

The special days throughout November and December are meant as a time of celebration with family and friends, but as a single-parent, especially one that is in school, it is a time of projects, finals, worrying about gift giving and food for the holiday meal. We want to thank all of those in the community who opened their hearts this holiday season and either donated funds or donated time. Because of you, we were able to distribute 88 Thanksgiving and Holiday food boxes and a dozen brand new bikes. Our Holiday Family Sponsors provided "under the tree" gifts for 94 Project Self-Sufficiency families with 160 children, who were eagerly awaiting a surprise on Christmas morning.

Our Annual Winter Wonderland Celebration can be summed up by one Participant's thanks to the volunteers and sponsors: "Thank you everyone who helped with the Project Self-Sufficiency Holiday Party. It truly was a blast. My kiddos had so much fun. They loved that they got to pick a gift for mom. They played for 3 hours straight! We had a great time."

We wish we had the space to list every individual, family, business and organization that sponsored families or those who volunteered or gave items for the Winter Wonderland Party. Just know that we are very appreciative. Below we want to recognize those businesses, organizations and churches for their tremendous support of our holiday programs that remove a bit of that stress and bring about celebration for the families of Project Self-Sufficiency.

Acey Designs**
 Affiliated Moving*
 Black Belt Santa**
 Carol Ann Hixon Fund**
 Charming Charlie**
 Delta Kappa Gamma**
 FirstBank of Northern Colorado**
 First Presbyterian Church Fort Collins^
 Friends of Project Self-Sufficiency**

Group, Inc. Real Estate
 *Ken Sandberg Photography**
 Learning Express**
 Lynnette C Jung Memorial Fund**
 National Charity League**
 Old Firehouse Books**
 Overland Sertoma*
 Peak Serum, Inc.**

Quota Club**
 Realities for Children** #
 Red Hat Society**
 She She Nail Lounge**
 Toys for Tots**
 Trek Cycles*
 Women's Foundation of Colorado**
 Women of the Year**
 Young Men's Service League**

*Christmas on Wheels **Winter Wonderland #Holiday Sponsorship ^Food Boxes





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bringthepower.org



Return Service Requested

Bring the power of education to single parents.

Benefit Concert for Project Self-Sufficiency
 at Fort Collins Nursery
 June 12th / 6:00pm

Dead Horses
 With Special Guests
 Click for info

Join us for the 3rd annual evening of fun, fashion and food (and maybe a little wine!) at Acey Designs, located at 204 W Laurel Street in Fort Collins from 4-7PM on **Thursday, June 6th**. A portion of the evening's proceeds will be donated to Project Self-Sufficiency.

Upcoming Events

selfpower PROJECT SELF SUFFICIENCY

Accey Designs: street chic mobile boutique

and

Shop for a cause

Since 2009, the Friends group has served an important function in supporting Participant needs at Project Self-Sufficiency. Each year Friends provide for the Participants' Mother's Day and Father's Day gifts, prepare birthday cards for Participants, and organize and execute a fun summer event for families. These are small gestures, but mean so much to a single parent. The group also orchestrates the Holiday Plant Sale in support of the Project Self-Sufficiency Scholarship Fund, which helps support single parents in their educational goals. \$28,836 has been raised for the fund since the group's inception! Join Friends next month on Monday, April 8th from 5-6pm, at Realities for Children, 308 E County Road 30, Fort Collins to find out what it's all about. If you have any questions, please contact **Kay Williams** at 970-310-3093 or buddyboy78@comcast.net.

FRIENDS OF PROJECT SELF-SUFFICIENCY
 JOIN A GROUP THAT MAKES A BIG IMPACT!