



Annual Report

April 1, 2023 - March 31, 2024



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Board President Report

DEAR FRIENDS OF ECOC,

We have had a busy year! We are blessed by your support of our work and are excited to share a few of our highlights and collaborations.

- The Leadership Academy swelled from 196 participants for the 22-23 Academic year to 320 in 23-24. We added three new schools to the program: Sand Creek International, Sand Creek High School, and Doherty High School.
- On October 17, 2023, ECOC was honored to receive a \$100,000 grant from Russell and Ciara Wilson's Why Not You Foundation and Common Spirit.
- In November, ECOC was delighted to have Dr. Marissa Prince rejoin the organization, this time as the executive director.
- The 17th Annual Educating Children of Color Summit, "Everybody Welcome," the Life and Legacy of Fannie Mae Duncan took place at Colorado College on January 13, 2024. There were over 1,400 registrants, 100 speakers, and 100 volunteers.
- Sponsorship of the Summit expanded to include the Colorado Housing and Finance Authority (CHFA), Diversus Health, and the Colorado Health Foundation.
- Through generosity from USAA, Beauty Bar, GE Johnson, Omega Psi Phi, OHE Construction, Sherman and Howard, William Stanley Foundation, and other donors, we awarded \$98,000 in scholarships and educational gifts at the Summit.
- Our community collaborations have continued to expand and strengthen: once again, we worked with the African American Youth Leadership Conference, Peak Elevated, and the Sachs Foundation to provide a Fall scholarship and a financial aid workshop for youth and their parents.
- For the past five years, a number of USAFA cadets have completed their capstone project in non-profit management with ECOC. This year's cadets, Gaetan Louissaint, Olawale Familoni, Antonio Johnson, and Christian DePollar have provided us with recommendations for improvements to the Leadership Academy.
- ECOC partnered with CSU-Pueblo to create an internship program for sociology, criminology and anthropology students. Collette Ochoa is our first intern in the program.
- Our collaboration with Colorado College (CC) and the Collaborative for Community Engagement (CCE) has been invaluable. This year we received a work study scholar, Johanna Villegas, who recruited and supervised nineteen CC tutors, as she administered the SAT prep program.
- As part of the CCE Community Engaged Learning program, ECOC worked with Dr. Aaron Stoller and his curriculum development class to update the curriculum for Diversity University II.
- ECOC initiated partnerships with Pikes Peak State College, University of Colorado Colorado Springs, and the Cheyenne Mountain Zoo for site visits with Leadership Academy students.
- The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) became our newest partner as we try to combat youth suicide and increase youth resilience.

Board President Report, cont'd.



On October 17, 2023, ECOC was honored to receive a \$100,000 grant from Russell and Ciara Wilson’s Why Not You Foundation and Common Spirit.

The 18th Annual Educating Children of Color Summit will take place on January 25, 2025. We are accepting presentation proposals from prospective presenters to “open doors” with us at <https://form.jotform.com/241066310959154>

Please consider attending Diversity University from July 15-July 19, 2024. Registration is at <https://form.jotform.com/233135359077055>

We are grateful for your support as we work to dismantle the cradle to prison pipeline for children of color and children in poverty through education.



Cynthia Jacquet
Board President



Executive Director Letter

Greetings,

As the Executive Director, I have the privilege of collaborating with individuals across the many programs we offer, however my role allows me to focus on the future by engaging with youth in our Leadership Academy.

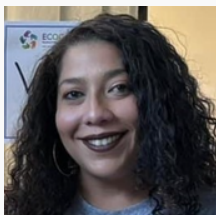
MY STORY

I am many “firsts” in my family. I am the first-born. I am a first generation American. I am a first-generation college student. And, I am the first doctor in my family. However, I am not the first in my family to enter the juvenile justice system. I am not the first in my family to have a child at the age of 16, and I was not the first in my family to experience poverty. I was expelled from many schools in the areas we serve. A district attorney once called me “a violent repeat offender who wasn’t going to learn her lesson until she was in prison,” and a family member once said, I was going to be nothing but a statistic. These painful comments resonated with me, and I started to believe them, but there were many other people who believed I was more than those phrases: people like my mother, Mr. and Mrs. Wykstra, Coach Johnson and people like Judge Regina Walter, who founded Educating Children of Color. These individuals showed me leadership skills, compassion, and believed I could achieve greatness with the right actions, words and tools. I share this story with you, not for praise but to show you how the few can greatly impact the many. I did end up becoming a statistic, I became the 2% of teen moms who finish a degree before they are 30 and the .1% of Black teen moms who became doctors before they were 30. People have asked me why I chose Leadership Academy, and I will always answer, **“It is my mission to become the person I needed when I was young, and Leadership Academy is EXACTLY what I needed”.**

Our 2023-2024 Leadership Academy cohort encompasses many school districts in Colorado Springs including Districts 2, 3, 8, 11, 20 and 49 and is comprised of over 300 students with 180 of them being 8th graders from Harrison School District Two. 90% of our student ambassadors express intentions to pursue higher education or military service after high school, and we’re proud to affirm that since we began collecting data, our ambassadors have not entered the juvenile justice system!

What that shows us is this program is effective and we are doing the work that is needed for our youth! I am proud to be part of a team of change agents who are modeling inclusive behaviors that will improve the future for all students, including the ones like me!

With much appreciation,



Marissa Prince, PhD
Executive Director

Diversity University

The purpose of Diversity University is to provide equity and inclusion training to improve the ability of professionals and the community to respond to the needs of a culturally diverse population. It is designed to increase justice by helping individuals address their bias and leverage their power to address problems of disparate treatment and outcomes for young people.

To meet the needs of the community, ECOC has offered various versions of Diversity University during the year. Each session addressed implicit and explicit bias, equity, inclusion, and justice. The sessions were facilitated by Dr. Regina Lewis and Senior Judge Regina Walter, ECOC Founder.

Guest speakers included John Register, Paralympic athlete; Silas Musick, transgender educator; Dr. Carolyn Strong, anti-bullying advocate; Tim Wise, nationally renowned anti-racism educator; Allyson Pena, YDA Filmmaker; Noelle Strait, Inside Out Youth Services; Andy Kwiatkowski, YDA Filmmaker; Jules Navarrete, YDA Filmmaker; Rose Nseyia, YDA Filmmaker; and Mitch Davila-Armendano, YDA Filmmaker.

Three hundred and thirty-eight professionals from the Colorado Department of Human Services, Department of Corrections, probation, education, adult and juvenile parole, The Office of the Guardian ad litem, Mission Possible, Joint Initiatives for Youth and Families, schools, and non-profits attended Diversity University between April of 2023 and February of 2024. Of those participants, 88% completed a plan for positive behavior change to reduce bias and increase equity based on the knowledge imparted at the session (Bias Busting Plan).



The guest presenters were fantastic!! I was really able to understand challenges and struggles others may be having. You know more, you do better. You don't know what you don't know.”

“Thank you! Know that your training has planted a seed in me. And I will put in my two grains of sand to make this a better world for future generations.”

Diversity University is scheduled to take place the week of July 15 to 19, 2024. Registration is at <https://form.jotform.com/233135359077055>

Diversity University II takes participants on a deeper exploration of inclusion, diversity, and equity. The program equips individuals with advanced tools and strategies to address complex challenges within their communities and organizations. Diversity University II is scheduled for July 29 to July 31, 2024. Registration is at <https://form.jotform.com/233135867679067>



Leadership Academy

The ECOC Leadership Academy (LA) is designed to enhance students' leadership capabilities, confidence, ability to pursue higher education and career opportunities. The youth are nominated by school personnel and meet monthly with college mentors. The program is designed to involve youth who may otherwise never have a leadership role. The program includes youth enrolled in El Paso County schools in grades 8th to 12th. LA students participate in the program for the entire school year and complete a service-learning project that supports their community. Students engage in suicide prevention education; they learn evidence-based practices related to coping skills and trauma; they learn about grit and perseverance; they learn life skills and leadership capabilities; they learn their constitutional rights and how to survive an encounter with the police; and they learn about their personality and how to navigate relationships with others. ECOC's goal is to empower youth and to increase resilience, while exposing youth to higher education and careers.



THE IMPACT OF THE 2022-2023 LEADERSHIP ACADEMY

The Leadership Academy doubled in size from 96 youth in 2021 to 194 for the 2022-23 Academic year. Sixty-nine percent of the youth were from Harrison School District 2 (HSD2) in Southeast Colorado Springs. ECOC expanded its services to include two new HSD2 middle/community schools. ECOC served Harrison HS, Sierra HS, the Career Readiness Academy, Fox Meadow MS, Panorama MS and added Carmel Community School and Mountain Vista Community School. In addition to the HSD2 schools, ECOC had Leadership Academy cohorts from Widefield School District 3, Fountain Fort Carson High School in District 8, and a cohort from Air Academy School District 20.

The 2022-2023 Leadership Academy culminated in the completion of service-learning projects for each school. The projects included creating care packages for youth in foster care; providing therapy dogs for a school to help students with end of year test anxiety; completing a fundraiser for the Walt Fortman Center in Fountain, Colorado; designing and completing murals for two schools; filling backpacks for elementary students with books and comfort items, and then reading to the elementary school students.

ECOC worked alongside the Colorado Springs Police Department to determine if any of the 2022-23 LA scholars were charged criminally during their involvement with the Leadership Academy. **The report indicates no LA scholar was charged with delinquent or criminal behavior, and none of our LA scholars were the subject of an investigation.** One scholar received a speeding ticket.

Ninety-three percent of Leadership Academy youth reported an increase in leadership and communication skills because of their participation in Leadership Academy and 76 percent reported an increase in GRIT (passion and sustained persistence applied toward long-term achievement, with no particular concern for rewards or recognition along the way) and perseverance.

93%

of Leadership Academy youth reported an increase in leadership and communication skills because of their participation in Leadership Academy

SCHOOL YEAR 2023-2024 LEADERSHIP ACADEMY (320 YOUTH)

In order to accommodate more youth and to provide separate programming for the 8th graders, Leadership Academy was divided into three cohorts (two high school cohorts and one middle school cohort). Cohort A consists of Sierra High School, Harrison High School, Academy School District 20, and Sand Creek High School (100 youth). Cohort B includes Fountain Fort Carson High School, Doherty High School, Widefield High School, and The Haven School (100 youth), and Cohort C includes Harrison School District 2 middle school students (Sand Creek International, Panorama Middle School, Fox Meadow Middle School, Mountain Vista Community, Carmel Community (120 youth).

Of those who were willing to share demographic information, 286 of 313 are youth of color; 117 are male, 188 are female, 1 is transgender, and 7 are non-binary; 185 of 319 will be first generation college students; 249 of 285 qualify for free or reduced lunch; 42 of 274 are justice involved or have an immediate family member who is justice involved.

The LA scholars are partnered with college mentors from Colorado College, University of Colorado-Colorado Springs, Pikes Peak State College, University of Colorado-Boulder, and Colorado State University-Pueblo. The mentors prepared the youth to be Student Ambassadors at the Educating Children of Color Summit. They assisted the high school students with public speaking skills, and in turn, those students introduced speakers at the Summit. The mentors have met with the youth at their schools to help the scholars to gain skills and complete service-learning projects. Mentors will continue to meet monthly for the remainder of the school year, and service-learning projects will be completed by each cohort.

The Leadership Academy High School students (Cohorts A and B) attended three onsite college immersion experiences from October 2023 to December 2023. We based the programming for these high school students on our research into what were their greatest needs.

LEADERSHIP ACADEMY PROGRAMMING

October 18, 2023



LA Cohort A attended programming at Colorado College, where they participated in sessions regarding constitutional rights from Learn Your Rights in the Community (LYRIC); True Colors personality inventory; GRIT and resilience survey; and a campus tour.

October 19, 2023

LA Cohort B attended programming at Pikes Peak State College. Students engaged in a Concurrent Enrollment information session; GRIT and resilience survey; True Colors personality Inventory; and a campus tour.



November 8-9, 2023



LA Cohort A and Cohort B attended programming at the Colorado Springs' Fine Art Center at Colorado College. Each student watched a one-person play, explored the art exhibits, participated in an art scavenger hunt, and completed an art project. Many of the youth said this was their first time they had seen a play or visited an art museum.



LEADERSHIP ACADEMY PROGRAMMING

December 6, 2023



LA Cohort A attended UCCS where they engaged in a college tour and gained life-saving information from NAMI (National Association for Mental Illness) on mental health and suicide prevention, connected with a renowned college counselor who immersed the students in various simulations on how to choose their college and career path, and gained information on how and why to attend a service academy.

December 7, 2023

LA Cohort B attended Colorado College where they participated in sessions regarding constitutional rights from Learn Your Rights in the Community (LYRIC); connected with a renowned college counselor who immersed the students in various simulations on how to choose their college and career path, and gained information on how and why to attend a service academy.

January 13, 2024



In January 2024, Cohorts A and B nominated students to provide a professional introduction for distinguished Summit Speakers. Cohorts A, B, and C attended the Summit on 1-13-24 at Colorado College. Content included leadership skills, career opportunities, financial literacy, inclusion, overcoming adversity, college prep, and life skills.



LA COHORT C PROGRAMMING

October 2023

LA Cohort C, which is comprised entirely of 8th graders, attended programming at University of Colorado-Colorado Springs in October, where scholars participated in sessions regarding constitutional rights from Learn Your Rights in the Community (LYRIC); GRIT and resilience survey; and a campus tour



November 2023

In November of 2023, LA Cohort C attended programming at the Cheyenne Mountain Zoo, where students engaged in socioemotional learning, increasing empathy skills, and discovering group problem solving skills.



December 2023

Scholars in Cohort C were welcomed at Pikes Peak State College where they gained life-saving information from NAMI (National Association for Mental Illness) on mental health and suicide prevention, engaged in a Concurrent Enrollment information session, and participated in a college-mentor led activity focused on age-appropriate positive decision making.





LEADERSHIP ACADEMY 2024 PROGRAMMING

February - April

From February 2024 to present, ECOC college mentors completed monthly meetings with the students at their designated schools, where they taught life skills (including sewing on buttons), suicide prevention, service-learning preparation, and facilitated discussion on environmental activism.

COLLEGE MENTOR TRAINING:

College mentors regularly attend training to increase their engagement in Leadership Academy and prepare them to effectively work with the youth they are serving. College mentors received mandatory reporter training, implicit bias training and socioemotional awareness training. They also earned certificates in QPR (suicide prevention) and Stop the Bleed (increasing their ability to recognize life-threatening bleeding and intervene effectively).

2024 SUMMIT EVERYBODY WELCOME



The Educating Children of Color Summit “Everybody Welcome” took place on January 13, 2024 at Colorado College.

Enrollment included 818 middle and high school students, 459 professionals, 85 college students, and 157 parents. One hundred and forty-five individuals showed up at the door for late enrollment. More than 100 presenters and 100 volunteers made the day possible.

This year’s Summit included 48 breakout sessions for youth; and 37 breakout sessions for adults.



2024 SUMMIT KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

THE SUMMIT FEATURED KEYNOTES BY OVI VASQUEZ AND GENEIN LETFORD.

Ovi Vasquez is a national keynote speaker who went from the sugarcane fields of Central America to being accepted to Harvard Business School Online. Labeled "at-risk" in high school, he went on to earn his B.A. in Business Management. He has worked for global corporations like Apple, Tesla, Salesforce, and Uber, is a TEDx speaker, and the author of six books.

The response to his message was overwhelming. **99% of youth attendees found his session valuable, and 96% found him to be engaging, inspiring, powerful and relevant.** The adult response to Ovi was equally as positive: 99% of adult participants found his session valuable and 99% ranked him engaging, inspiring and relevant.



“

He taught me I had dreams and potential. He taught me to love myself.”

“Absolutely wonderful speaker. So need to hear his message. He is the epitome of what is right in the world.”

Genein Letford is an award-winning speaker, best-selling author and corporate trainer on creative thinking and Intercultural Creativity®. She is the founder of CAFFE Strategies and has inspired and led many to reconnect to their creative abilities to produce innovative ideas for an inclusive workspace. Her unique interactive training intersects creative thinking development with inclusion and belonging. She believes creative literacy is a critical skill and she is often called ‘America’s Creativity Coach’ for her work in reigniting creativity in our workforce. Ninety-nine percent of her attendees left with a plan to incorporate her message into their personal or professional life.

“

The key lesson I will take from this session is neurosomatic creativity—the power of activating multiple parts of the brain and increasing the mind-body connection.”

YOUTH SUMMIT INVOLVEMENT

The content for youth included career opportunities, mental health and self-empowerment. Students were able to explore culinary arts; engineering; careers in law enforcement; careers in law; fly a flight simulator; operate drones; and respond to medical emergencies in STOP THE BLEED and in Medical Minds. Sessions were available on self-defense, hip-hop, art and wellness. Every student attended a session on Leadership with Dr. Regina Lewis.

The following information is for youth registrants who provided demographic information :

- **82% were children of color-731 of 784**
- **72% qualified for free or reduced lunch-533 of 742**
- **28% were individuals for whom English was their second language-191 of 694**
- **10% were, or had an immediate family member, who was justice involved-69 of 683**
- **4% had a disability-31 of 743**
- **2% were in, or had been in foster care-12 of 737**
- **Youth registered from 26 different school districts, independent schools and religious schools.**

ADULT SUMMIT INVOLVEMENT

Thirty-seven adult sessions were available over the day emphasizing implicit bias, youth voice, resilience, and self-care.

Attendees were asked to rate the sessions on a range of 1-5, with one being the lowest. Across all topics, the evaluations yielded the following results:

The presenter(s) know the topic: 4.72

I found the workshop approach useful: 4.51

I got ideas for actions I can do from this workshop: 4.40

Ninety-five percent of the attendees who completed an evaluation wrote down at least one key point that they took away and will utilize in their role.

To ensure that new teachers are approaching education with an equity lens, ECOC partners with the UCCS Pikes Peak BOCES two-year alternative licensure program and with Teach for America. Fifty-five second-year BOCES and 108 TFA educators attended the Summit. One hundred and sixteen educators from Harrison School District 2 in Colorado Springs attended.

Participant reaction:

“Get ready for the call!!! I needed this sooooo badly all year!!”

2024 SUMMIT SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS

- \$1,000 Oros Home Enhancement, LLC Scholarship : **Kayla Dent**
- \$1,000 George Harris Memorial Scholarship : **Hamdi Hamid**
- \$1,000 Beauty Bar Scholarship : **Deari Allison**
- \$1,000 Beauty Bar Scholarship : **Morgan Betts**
- \$1,000 Anne Delores Scott Scholarship : **Aisha Young**
- \$1,000 Anne Delores Scott Scholarship : **Brittany Hardy**
- \$2,000 Rhonda Campbell Memorial Scholarship : **Catalina Valenzuela**
- \$2,000 Edna Williams Memorial Scholarship : **Abdimalik Hussein**
- \$2,000 William Stanley Foundation Scholarship : **Carlos Ruiz**
- \$2,500 Omega Psi Phi Fraternity Scholarship : **Bella Volmar**
- \$2,500 Omega Psi Phi Fraternity Scholarship : **Cyndee Taylor**
- \$5,000 Sherman and Howard Law Firm Scholarship : **Josue Rodriguez**



2024 SUMMIT SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS

The ECOC Annual Theme Scholarship topic this year was “Everybody Welcome: The Life and Legacy of Fannie Mae Duncan.”

\$5,000 2024 ECOC Theme Scholarship : **Andre Jones**

\$3,000 2024 ECOC Theme Scholarship : **Sophie Vijayam**

\$3,000 2024 ECOC Theme Scholarship : **Dominic Gray**

\$3,000 2024 ECOC Theme Scholarship : **Alexander Hollingsworth**

\$3,000 2024 ECOC Theme Scholarship : **Jamara Hanson**

STEAM stands for Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Mathematics, and these scholarships are generously funded by USAA.

\$10,000 USAA STEAM Scholarship : **Ruby Atherton**

\$10,000 USAA STEAM Scholarship : **Rosalyn Rabet**

\$10,000 USAA STEAM Scholarship : **Bryan Buendia Sevilla**

\$10,000 USAA STEAM Scholarship : **Nyla Melva**

\$10,000 USAA STEAM Scholarship : **Maya Deitrick**



Welcome to the Cotton Club

Welcome to the Cotton Club,
Where all are greeted at the door
To enjoy the different kinds of music
We echo through the floor.

Welcome all humans women and men,
We welcome those we refer to as they's and them's.
Don't you know?
Sexism is a nasty thang that we put way back then.

Welcome those who wish to leave the violence afar
To live a life where you can be who you are.

Welcome the floor for the pretty, fair, rich, and informed-
Even though "the othered" was ignored.
Open the door for the ugly, warriors, poor, and wise,
With the thrust for equality in their eyes.

Welcome those who fought for the land of the free.
I welcome those who fear to welcome me...

Do as Dr. King say
And preach violence is not the way!
We welcome you in peace and invite you to stay.
Mingle through the night and into the day.

Welcome to my world,
Where Jim Crow is no more.
Where we blend all the delicious, delight defined by humankind.
The more the merrier!

We do not mind.
Equality the melting pot,
Cooked right here on the stove,
Just as my ancestors worked so hard for.

Take a seat and enjoy a glass of wine.
Smell the air of this diverse nation of mine.

Chief Irving tried to shut us down,
Said "too much culture" that they found.
Even so, we say with open arms:

Welcome to my world of inclusion.
Some call it Colorado Springs,
A thriving community that accepts all kinds of things.

Feel free to check-in.
It's a growing community crafted by the tired hands of
Mrs. Fannie Mae Ducan.

The Cotton Club is about harmony
In more ways than tune.
I beg you, please
Feel free to lounge past noon.



Andre Jones Jr.
Undergraduate
2024 ECOC Annual Summit
Theme Scholarship Winner



2024 SUMMIT DOOR PRIZE WINNERS

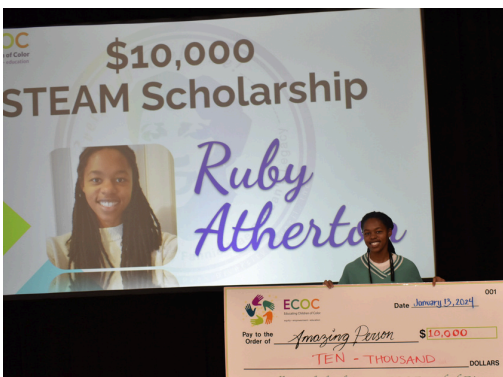
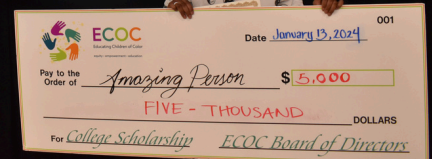
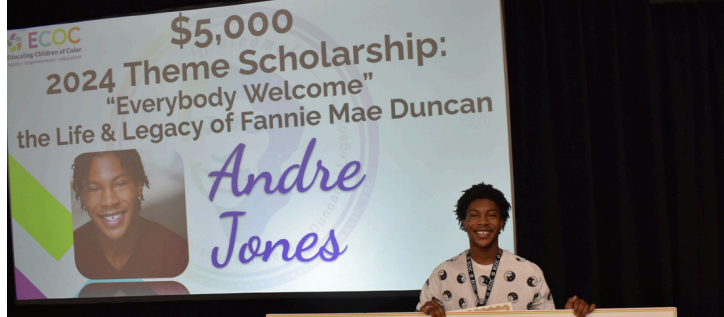
Laptop Winners: Irving Valdez, Makhai Murray, Triciyona Johnson, Brianna Gorman, Yuliana Duran, Joshua Dreesman, Sarah Nsumbu, Kazia Mitchell, Dane Roberson, Jasmine Woods, Zofia Budge, Anya Roberts, Diego Ramirez-Cruz, Hailey Rose, Bella Volmar, Jovani Caballero Duran, Miley Reyes, Milo Sommer, Marvel Sinclair, Samiallah Hamidi, Kendall Ball

\$500 Educator Gifts: Kim Stone, Brianna Valenti, Barbara Smith, Sandra Elliot, Brenden Hamilton

\$500 Educational Gift Winners: Karly Espinoza, Neveah Richmond, Samantha Venega Medina, Morgan Betts, Jonathan Daniels, Jovani Caballero Duran, Kaya Garcia, Faith Ann Magan, Radine Ruiz, Kelly Zeigner, Angelique Ortiz, Olivia Agbo, Imari Mitchell, Jason Cooper, Raven Henriquez, Keira Mizuno, Branaie Pitre, Luciana Camarena



2024 SUMMIT



OTHER PROGRAMMING

Financial Aid, Scholarship Writing and College Preparation Session

On October 28, 2023, 67 youth and their parents attended the Filling In the Gaps seminar sponsored by ECOC, the African American Youth Leadership Conference, Peak Education and the Sachs Foundation. The program was hosted at Sierra High School. The focus of the day was financial aid, scholarship writing, life skills, and access to scholarship providers. Of the 67 attendees, 65 were youth of color; 57 qualified for free or reduced lunch; 31 will be first generation college students; 12 identified as LGBTQ+; 12 identified that English was their second language; and four had been involved or had an immediate relative who was in the juvenile/criminal justice system. Scholars from 14 high schools attended the event.

SAT prep

A free 10-week SAT prep class began on January 30, 2024. The sessions take place by Zoom from 6:00 to 7:30 pm on Tuesday evenings. Thirty-six students and 19 Colorado College mentors have been involved and use Khan Academy resources as the platform for learning. The youth will take the school administered SAT in April. The student with the greatest increase in proficiency, as reflected by Khan Academy results, will receive a laptop.

The college mentors reflect the diversity of the students in our programs. Seventy percent of the mentors are BIPOC; 85% of mentors qualified for free or reduced lunch in K-12; 26% identified as having a disability.

ilnspire Awards:

ilnspire recognizes youth from El Paso and Teller County, who have overcome adversity and inspired others to do the same. ilnspire's goal is to recognize youth who might not otherwise receive recognition but deserve it. Honorees include youth who have persevered and inspired despite homelessness, serious illness, or parental abuse and neglect. Honorees receive a stipend and the opportunity to shadow a professional in their intended occupational field.

Ten ilnspire recipients were chosen by ECOC, Court staff, Guardians ad Litem, school resource officers, El Paso and Teller County DHS, and other juvenile and child welfare professionals. The awardees were honored on April 18, 2024 at the Terry Harris Judicial Complex.

See the following page to meet our winners.

iINSPIRE AWARDS

Caleb Gomez has overcome adversity and inspired others to do the same by going above and beyond in both his personal and academic life. In addition to working to assist in supporting his family, Caleb also takes time to help his peers with their schoolwork. Despite the challenges he faces, both visible and invisible to the community, Caleb continues to offer optimism to those around him. He certainly makes everyone in his life proud and sets the example for positivity and hope for those who have the privilege of knowing him.

Gabriel Duran has seen first-hand the havoc that physical violence and gun violence can wreak on homes and communities, having lost his best friend in a shooting and many other friends and family members to incarceration or violence. He has also been directly impacted by the hardships of substance abuse. Gabe has been a mentor, advisor, and friend, despite his young age. Gabe excels in academics and athletics and participates in multiple programs to help his peers acclimate to Middle School and resolve conflict. Gabe is a leader in his community, proving that even in the depth of hardship, it is still possible to be a beacon of positivity and hope.

Jonathan Bartley displays great strength and courage to set goals and aspirations despite being moved through many different homes in just a few years. He has never let the instability of his home life keep him from having a positive attitude and from working hard toward his goals. Jonathan’s peers see his positivity and determination to make his dreams come true and feel inspired to make their own dreams a reality, regardless of whatever struggles they currently face.

Angie Contreras Tiscareno has overcome adversity and inspires others to do the same by defining her own limits. Despite a muscular disorder and vision problems that place restraints on her ability to walk far distances and drive. A positive member of her community at The Village, she volunteers monthly to clean community spaces on top of her studies in higher education. She maintains good relationships with her foster family, even though she no longer lives with them. She works to improve herself through setting boundaries when appropriate and working to overcome and grow through her previous traumatic experiences.

Ceilani Griffin works full-time and attends school full time with a double-major in architecture and construction and still finds time to support her community. She enjoys researching the architecture and design of The Village and regularly contributes to the community garden. She recently played an integral role in the design of a blueprint for the design of the community space which has since been accepted. Ceilani works hard to make sure she has the skills and expertise to continue to support herself and her community in the future. Her tenacity, hard work, and positivity inspire those around her to work hard in their own lives and communities.



iINSPIRE AWARDS

Jeremiah Schavers stands up to negative influences while maintaining respect and healthy boundaries as well as by remaining positive and focused on the wellbeing of his siblings throughout challenging times. Jeremiah and his siblings were recently removed from their home. However, during this time Jeremiah has remained composed and resilient. He is a leader to his peers and provides positive role-modeling while being a listening ear, giving advice, or a different perspective. Jeremiah demonstrates determination, loyalty, and positivity throughout adversity, proving he has the willingness to succeed and to lift his peers up alongside him.

Cory Archuletta remains calm in the face of confrontation and offers encouragement and support in challenging times. Cory and a friend grew up together and consider each other brothers. When his friend was told he and his siblings would be removed from their home, Cory remained a rock and mainstay for his friend as they navigated this challenging time. While growing up, Cory faced poverty and a broken home. Despite these challenges, Cory worked diligently to graduate high school and is currently celebrating success as he comes upon his one-year anniversary at his job.

Enzo Contreras has overcome adversity and inspired others to do the same through his determination, his dedication to growing his artistic ability, and his sense of responsibility. Enzo entered foster care when he was 11 years old, and he and his 6 siblings were separated into three different foster homes. Prior to foster care, Enzo was missing school in order to stay home and care for his younger siblings, including feed, change, clothe, and cook for them. After coming into foster care, Enzo has found a passion and outlet through art. He uses his art to process his trauma as well as the adversity that he has overcome.

Keyerah Brochu has overcome adversity and inspired others to do the same through her perseverance and advocacy for others and herself. At a young age, Keyerah cared for her younger siblings before moving into foster care. After being placed in foster care, Keyerah was moved numerous times which led to disruption in her academics. However, Keyerah persevered and is on track to graduate next year. Keyerah has a passion for connecting with and supporting others, demonstrated by her work in the tutoring room and being a mentor to others.

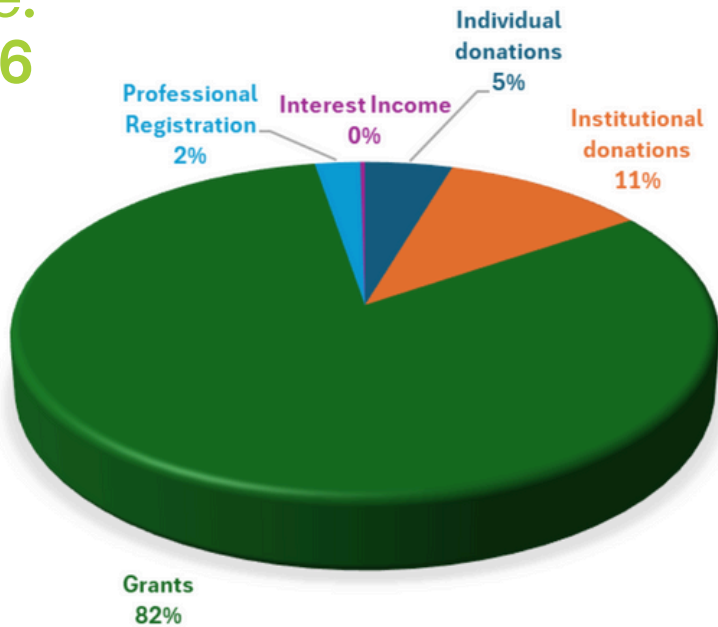
Alexa Marler has overcome adversity and inspired others to do the same through her story of redemption and hope. Alexa endured extreme loss through the death of several family members before turning to addiction and self-harm. This painful path led to detention where Alexa decided to change the direction of her future. She decided to become an EMT where she could help others and make a difference in their daily lives. Alexa recently graduated high school, enrolled in the EMT program at Pikes Peak State College, and participates at a dance school where she performs regularly.



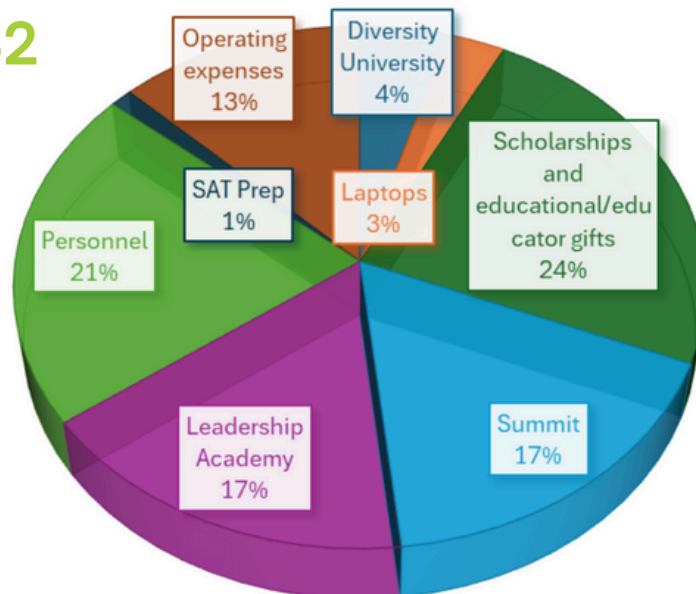
FINANCIALS

REVENUE & EXPENDITURES

Revenue:
\$541,716



Expenditures:
\$406,942

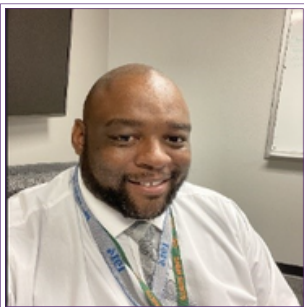


ECOC BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Cynthia Jacquet
Board President

Cynthia Jacquet joined the Board in July of 2020 and now serves as the Board President. She is a Sierra High School administrator and has also worked as a middle school educator. Cynthia has a B.A. in Biology and a minor in Sociology from the University of Rhode Island, Secondary Science licensure from Regis University, and her Principal Licensure and master’s in educational leadership from University of Colorado Colorado Springs. Cynthia is a Board Member of Colorado Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development and was recently selected as a member of the 2023 ASCD Emerging Leader National Cohort after an extensive application and interview process. She is part of a community of ASCD global leaders from the United States, Singapore, and Germany. Cynthia was also chosen to be a member of the Mayor’s Strategic Plan Development Work Group – She was selected to represent the voice and position of K-12 Education to ensure that the needs of students and their families residing in southeast Colorado Springs are considered with the development of the 2025-2029 Citywide Strategic Plan.



Dr. Albert Wiggins III
Vice President

Dr. Wiggins III grew up a military dependent mostly living in Georgia and New York. He is an Eagle Scout who attended Fort Valley State University and graduated with a B.S. in Education. He received his MA in Curriculum & Instruction: Instructional Technology from the University of Northern Iowa and graduated with the highest honors with his Ph.D. in Educational Administration & Educational Sociology from Capella University. Currently, he is a Principal within Widefield School District 3. He currently develops ways to integrate STEM into the core academic curriculum and extend STEM learning opportunities. Dr. Wiggins enjoys spending his time with his family, friends, church family, and supporting student activities. Personal Quote: “In life, we are faced with many locked doors of opportunity. In order to walk through these doors, we need a key. That key is education!”



Ray Edwards
Treasurer

Ray Edwards is a retired executive with over 35 years of experience in postsecondary education administration and nonprofit and healthcare management. He served as an adjunct professor of education, was president of a state association of financial aid officers and served on the American College Testing Program’s regional and national advisory councils. In his role as Executive Director of a two-county youth and family services nonprofit, he was active in numerous local initiatives working to improve life for at-risk youth and their families. He chaired the local community evaluation team and served as the 7th Judicial District SB-94 Program Coordinator. He was a two-term member of the Governor’s Commission on National and Community Service, a three-term board president of a multistate youth mentoring association. In his last professional stint, he served as senior vice president of business development and contracts for a growing healthcare company serving veterans. He is a Vietnam veteran who holds a baccalaureate in history and international studies, a masters in higher education management, and is ABD in a doctoral program in postsecondary administration.

ECOC BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Anita Gandhi
Secretary

Anita Gandhi is an award-winning French teacher currently residing in Denver, CO. She earned a B.A. Honors and a B.Ed. from the University of Western Ontario and completed her M.A. in French Literature at Carleton University. She has presented at local, state, regional and international conferences and holds workshops regularly on Innovative teaching methods to engage students. Anita works actively to advocate for diversity and inclusion, to build a future generation for whom empathy is fundamental. She is Google Level 2 certified and is a certified EdPuzzle and Flipgrid coach. CCFLT Teacher of the Year 2019-2020 and recipient of the John Asbury award, Anita loves to share her skills to build up the community. By joining ECOC, Anita hopes to reach management, educators, and community outreach organizations to support and strengthen concepts needed to thrive in various environments.



Kathy Robbins
Development

Kathy Robbins joined the ECOC board of directors in May 2019. She is the ECOC Fundraising Chair and has been a member of the Planning Committee since 2016. She retired in 2016 from PricewaterhouseCoopers where she was a proposal writer. Robbins has a BA from the University of Colorado-Boulder and grew up in Colorado Springs.



Natriece Bryant
Board Member

Natriece Bryant currently serves as the Deputy Chief Customer Officer at the Governor’s Office of Information Technology. In her role she oversees all IT leadership for 17 State agencies as it relates to statewide strategic technology needs and services. She also served as the State Complete Count Committee Chair for the 2020 Census. She had oversight of the department’s \$625M budget, managed all finance, contracts, accounting, procurement, and administrative work for the State agency. She has worked for the Colorado Department of Regulatory Agencies in the Divisions of Financial Services and Banking to overseeing all compliance, education, and outreach strategies for 60 banks and 39 credit unions. She is an Adjunct Faculty member at the University of Denver and Regis University. She has three master’s degrees in business administration, Sociology and Criminal Justice. She also has a bachelor’s degree in communications.



ECOC BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Shantelle Bridges
Board Member

Shantelle Bridges is the Procurement and Contracting Officer at Colorado Springs School District 11. She is also a public speaker and life coach, operating as Shantelle Bridges, LLC. In that capacity, she provides holistic life coaching to help bridge the gap between where an individual is and where they really want to be. Shantelle is part of the Mayor’s 2024 Community Leaders Fellowship. She is a member of Toastmasters, the National Speakers Association, and is a Certified Coach and Speaker with the John Maxwell Team. Shantelle is on the Board of the William Stanley Foundation and New Born Hope. She served as the Executive Director of the African American Youth Leadership Conference (AAYLC) until June 30, 2023. During her eight-years at AAYLC, her role was to retain, recruit, and lead a diverse team to reimagine the vision for that organization's future. Shantelle envisions her work at ECOC as giving her an opportunity to become an even greater change agent for youth within the Colorado Springs community.



Wakiem Brock
Board Member

WaKiem Brock is an accomplished professional with over two decades of experience in the Corrections field. His dedication to serving communities and empowering individuals has led him to his current role as Executive Director of the BROCK Foundation. With a background in working with adult and juvenile offenders, WaKiem has honed his expertise in rehabilitation and advocacy. He has spearheaded numerous initiatives aimed at creating opportunities for personal growth and empowerment, particularly among young BIPOC individuals. As a member of the board for Educating Children of Color, WaKiem brings a wealth of experience, compassion, and determination. His commitment to creating positive change and fostering inclusion makes him an invaluable asset to the organization's mission.

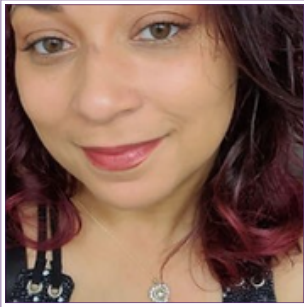


Officer Vuongvu Le
Board Member

Officer Vuongvu Le is a police officer with the Colorado Springs Police Department and has served as a school resource officer. Vuongvu Le was born and raised in Port Arthur, Texas. He joined the U.S. Army after graduating high school and was deployed in OIF. After being stationed at Ft. Carson, he has called Colorado Springs home for nearly 22 years. Le holds an Associates of General Studies, an A.A.S. in Applied Management, and a B.S. in Management. He is currently enrolled in Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in law enforcement for his Graduate’s Certificate at Widener University. He strongly believes in highlighting and uplifting the youth in our community. He also strives to be a voice for those who aren’t heard. “I want to be their voice. I want to help advocate for our youth and our community,” he says.



ECOC BOARD OF DIRECTORS



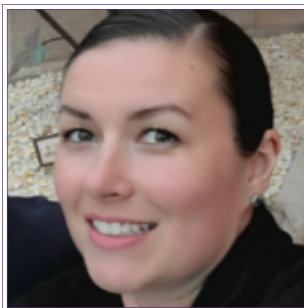
Keesha Lewis
Board Member

Keesha Lewis is a professional truck driver manager and is responsible for the safe transportation and delivery of a variety of goods, from food to livestock. She has served on the parents' and students' board advisory communities for Peak Education. In addition to being a member of Mom's Club of Peak Education, she is a basketball coach for boys and girls within the community and at the YMCA. Keesha is a VIP parent for Harrison School District 2 and a cook for Food to Power. She volunteers for Care and Share and donates clothing to children in need. Keesha thrives on going above and beyond in everything that that she does.



Charmaine Lloyd-Skinner
Board Member

Charmaine Lloyd-Skinner joined the Board in 2023 after having attended ECOC Summit as both a parent and professional for several years. Charmaine is originally from Montreal, Canada and grew up in both Canada and Florida. She has lived in Colorado Springs for 16 years. Charmaine has worked within the field of Social Services for 10 years. She currently works at El Paso County Department of Human Services and is a Caseworker Supervisor in Child Youth Family Services. In this role, she uses her knowledge, education, and passion for helping others to ensure those most vulnerable and marginalized individuals have a voice and are afforded the opportunity to live life to their fullest potential. Charmaine has an Associate of Applied Science in Social Services from Pikes Peak State College, Bachelor of Science in Community Services with emphasis in Community Development from Central Michigan University and is enrolled in Master of Human Services program with emphasis in Family Services at Purdue University Global.



Dana Oros
Board Member

Dana Oros became a member of the ECOC board in December 2021. She is a Colorado native and earned a BS from University of Colorado - Colorado Springs. Dana is a Business Analyst for a local company. Her two sons attend school in District 2 and are members of ECOC's Leadership Academy.



ECOC BOARD OF DIRECTORS



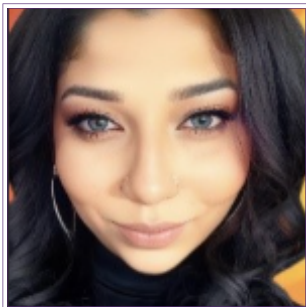
Peniel Owusu-Ansah
Board Member

Peniel Owusu-Ansah, ECOC’s college representative, joined the Board in June 2021. She is originally from Ghana but now lives in Aurora, Colorado. She is a student at Colorado College and works to connect the Colorado College community with community partners to provide English as a Second Language tutoring for immigrants and refugees.



**Judge Regina
Walter**
Founder

Judge Regina Walter retired from the State of Colorado Judiciary in January of 2019 after 32 years on the bench. Currently, she serves as a Senior Judge for the State. She began her judicial career in 1987 as a juvenile magistrate in the Fourth Judicial District. She served as a county court judge from 2008 until her retirement. Prior to joining the bench, she was a deputy public defender. Judge Walter is a graduate of Colorado College, class of 1980, and the University of Tulsa School of Law, class of 1983. In January of 2008, she initiated the first Educating Children of Color Summit. As chair, she has helped to organize 17 successful summits. To date, in excess of \$600,000 has been awarded to students and educators at the Summit to advance education.



Marissa Prince
Executive Director

Marissa Prince is a Colorado native spending most of her youth in Fountain, Colorado. She is a first generation American, as well as a first-generation college graduate. Marissa was a teen mother and acted out violently during her youth. As an adult, Marissa recognized the gap in culturally inclusive programming. Therefore, her mission became to be the person she needed when she was young. Marissa has spent her career working in higher education, inpatient facilities, and providing mental health services for foster care children. She is excited to continue her work with Leadership Academy and hopes to assist our youth and college mentors in their growth, ultimately dismantling the cradle-to-prison pipeline.



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