Hello change, goodbye UB friends

How can one sum up a 12 year experience with such a wonderful program like Upward Bound at CSU? My position as a UB Advisor was my first job upon graduating from college. I had fallen in love with the program the summer before when I worked as a Tutor/Counselor. I wondered how it was that I was getting paid to do such enjoyable and rewarding work. I was advising students on their futures, going on college visits with students, staffing Miniprom, doing room checks, and having the best summers ever! I loved it so much I almost did every job possible in the program; Tutor/Counselor, Residence Hall Coordinator, Advisor, Assistant Director, Associate Director, and Director. I was convinced this was the best job ever. And it was.

One of the things we always expected of students is that they sit in the front row of class or in the front row during college admissions presentations. No one was ever really happy about that request. One of the things I hear most from our alumni is that they always remember that. As I have now moved on to the next part of my professional journey, I’m reminded that the idea of sitting in the front row is applicable to more than just class. Our students are the first in their families to go to and graduate from college, as was I. That means we all sat in the front row. When we have the courage to take risks and are responsible to ourselves and others, we are sitting in the front row. So like our students, I will forever commit to sitting in the front row. It has been one of my greatest honors to work with UB, our students and our staff.

A thousand thank yous.

~Carmen Rivera

UB Staff Member 1998-2012

UB isn’t just a place I worked for 7 years or where I spent many of my summers. My time with UB allowed me to foster my passion around advocating for and empowering 1st generation and limited income students. UB gave me a place to fight for and ensure access to higher education for students who have similar backgrounds to my own.

In leaving UB, I have come to realize that UB will never leave me. I now work on retention efforts for diverse students at CSU. I have the privilege of working with Paul Thayer, who has been a mentor and role model to many in the UB and TRiO community. Paul has taught me that some of the best advocating we can do for UB students comes from outside of UB itself. While I miss the UB students every day. I believe my work today is still benefitting UB students and all those that didn’t get the opportunity to be in UB. I take UB with me wherever I go.

Regardless of how close or far we are from UB, each of us can remain committed to the mission of access for underrepresented students in higher education. My mantra during my time at UB was to advocate for UB at the federal level, so I can’t leave UB without one last encouragement to each of you to get involved in the fight to fund UB and other TRiO programs. Your voice can ensure that UB is around for generations to come.

Since 1977, UB at CSU has been positively impacting the lives of many…mine is one of those many lives that has been forever changed. ~ Miel McCarthy, Upward Bound Advisor, 2005-2012

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Last year, Upward Bound took its first group of students and UB alumni to on their first alternative summer break trip to Kanab, Utah. This summer, UB went to the same city, for the same purpose. What purpose? To volunteer at The Best Friends Animal Society – The nation’s largest no-kill animal sanctuary. Best Friends expands over 3,700 acres and is home to over 2,000 animals on a daily basis. During their trip, UB took a 12 hour road trip, cleaned rabbit poop, walked dogs, played with puppies, talked to birds, rub bed pig bellies, pulled weeds in the desert heat, and made life long memories.

Student Thoughts

My experience on our Kanab trip was beyond what I expected. Before the trip, I strongly did not want to attend it, because I am not a "nature person." I don't consider myself the type of person who likes to be outdoors sleeping out in the wilderness, doing landscaping work, or picking up after animals other than pets. During the Kanab trip, we were given the chance to volunteer at Best Friends, and were assigned many challenging tasks, in blistering hot weather. At the end of our assigned tasks, I felt very accomplished! The time and effort that we put in for the animals helped make different lifestyles for them, which made me happy. Another great thing during our Kanab trip was being able to stay in a house where we were able to bond with different people and learn a little more about them. Staying in the house helped me to become more social with people. On our Kanab trip, we also took a major hike that I felt I would not make it through, but I did. I had to experience something new and with the help of my peers, I had another thing I could now cross of my bucket list. With this trip, I gained the experience to feel what it’s like to volunteer and help out different animals that have been through different situations in their past. For future UBers, my only advice is to not let fear get in the way of you gaining a new experience, especially on rare opportunities like this.

~ Janeli Sifuentes, Junior, PHS

When I went to Kanab, I didn't know what to expect, but I was open to anything. I enjoyed the road trip because I was with friends, we shared stories, listened to music, and played games. When we arrived to the Juniper house, it was very spacious and welcoming. No one fought over the beds. Everyone was very willing to sleep anywhere and was generous with anything to be shared. Sean and Jeff held meetings at the end of the night to reflect on our day, which brought us closer each day. Moreover, during the volunteering, it was very hot out, but no one complained because it felt good to help a good cause. We helped by cleaning rabbit, dog, cat, and pig cages. It was fun to interact with the different animals and help out at a shelter animals benefit from. On our free time, we could help cook, clean, go to the store, or just relax. On the last day of volunteering, we went to see a movie and on our last day in Utah, we went to the awesome national park of Zion. Later that night, we went to a restaurant that was not vegetarian. This experience was monumental to me because I want to work with animals. To conclude, the trip was all around great, and helps build character. It lets you do something different and helps you realize there are other issues than just what we see.

~ Deion Sanchez, Junior, NHS
I can’t believe that I can say that I’ve been to New York. I’ve seen the Statue of Liberty and visiting NBC Studios. Although, there was one memorable site that would change me forever. Visiting Ground Zero was like no other place I’ve been to. I imagine how it would be if the towers were still there. How I would react if I was present during the tragedy. Now that they’re gone, I simply looked around as every other tourist did with my emotions running high. I feel like after visiting Ground Zero, I learned that life is too short and in a matter of seconds, it could all be gone. I learned to not live a life full of regret and to never take anything for granted.

~David DeLaCruz, NHS

Living in the small town of Fort Lupton, Colorado, I never imagined myself waking down the streets of New York. When I found out that Upward Bound was going to New York for our Senior Trip, I was thrilled to know that I was going to go with a great group of people and travel to an atmosphere I had never explored. I was very nervous because I had never been on a plane, but I knew I wasn’t the only one. I was also scared that I might get lost or miss the subway. During this trip, I was able to explore different universities and learned the differences between graduate and undergraduate school. I had an enjoyable time seeing The Lion King at Broadway, Times Square, Rockefeller Center, The Met, NBC studios, and The World Trade Center Memorial. We also went to the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island, which were most memorable to me. I had always seen this in the movies and studied it in U.S. History. To me, it was like a fantasy. Thinking back on the enjoyable experience I had, I know that I will always remember this trip and how my Upward Bound Advisors and fellow classmates made it great. ~ Daisy Espino, FLHS
Community Through Service: October UB University

For a few years now, October UB Universities have focused on building community through engaging our students in community service. This October, our students commit to give up their Saturday morning to help at 4 different organizations in the Denver area—MaxFund Animal Adoption Center, EarthLinks, Safari Seconds, and Habitat for Humanity ReStore. By 8AM, UB students and alumni met at Confluence Park to divide into groups and prepare sack lunches. At 2PM, we met at a parking garage to keep away from the rain and reflect on the day’s accomplishments. UB students never fail to amaze the organizations with their energy and willingness to help.

New Student Perspective

I am proud to say I am a UB member and on October 13 I got on a bus full of students that I didn’t know. I was scared and shy and didn’t talk to anyone that was not from my school. However, UB is like a family and as soon as we got into Denver and off the bus, new faces started to come up to me and talked to me as if we knew each other for the longest of time. I no longer felt scared or the need to be shy. As we prepared for our day of community service we did bonding activities that at first I must say I wasn't really fond of, but as soon as I got into it I can say it was hard not to stop. We then split into groups that would do different types of community service. My group was EarthLinks. I had never heard of it or thought that such an amazing organization would exist. I worked hard with my team and we accomplished cleaning the entire garden in the rain. I was full of mud and my hands hurt. Yet again, I felt so enthusiastic and delighted I left EarthLinks with a smile on my face. At the end of that day, I got off the bus anxious for our next UBU. I couldn't be more proud to be part of such a wonderful program like Upward Bound.

~Daisy Fuentes, Sophomore, FLHS

Soon to be UB Alumni perspective

Eyes fighting to open, we woke up bright and early to get on the bus to volunteer in Denver. My group went to Habitat for Humanity Resource Center. After six hours of hard work and dust all over ourselves, we felt accomplished knowing our teamwork finished what would’ve taken weeks to do. This was my second UBU community service, but it was my favorite learning experience. At first, it seemed the head volunteer gave us an abundance of work to do in little time, but we finished with time to spare! None of the UBers spent a single second standing around looking for something to do. As soon as we were done with one task, we joined another group. If that event could be described in one word, I would define it as “efficient”. We gave light to that building with our laughs and cooperation, almost like magic the way we swiftly progressed from one thing to another. It was a privilege to be a part of that group, to know we all worked together for a common goal. I’m truly going to miss experiences like these where we all meet up and give back. In upward bound, the community has blessed us with all these opportunities to show our real character by volunteering, and this is our way of saying thanks.

~Ariel Gutierrez, Senior, GCHS
Ricardo Mendez

UB Student 2004-2006

My Upward Bound advisors (Dalia, Carmen, Jessica, and Stacey) helped open doors for me to attend Pepperdine University in Malibu, California. I had no idea small liberal arts colleges like Pepperdine existed before UB! At Pepperdine, I was drawn to social justice issues, and ended up creating my own major in Social Awareness & Activism, as well as getting involved with the Pepperdine Volunteer Center's programs working with high-risk youth in the LA County Probation system. After I graduated, I came back and worked for UB’s sister TRIO program, Educational Talent Search, at CSU. Throughout this time in college and working for TRIO, I became fascinated with understanding risk and resilience—why do some students facing similar risk factors "make it" while other’s don’t? Pursuing this question, I attended the Harvard Graduate School of Education’s Risk & Prevention Master’s program, where I met my husband, who works in education policy. After graduating, I followed him out to San Francisco, and started working as a full-time mentor for Summer Search, a national leadership development and college access & retention program. I have worked for Summer Search in the San Francisco Bay Area for 3 years now, and recently transitioned to a role as the College and Financial Aid Advisor for the North Bay office. As far as next steps, I feel very fulfilled in my current role, and plan on investing there. I love the work I get to do, the students I get to work with, and am grateful to Upward Bound for giving me the opportunities to choose this path for myself, and the inspiration to work with other students to help them in their college and life journeys.

Funniest memory of UB

Rushing back from the pool late to study session, not having time to change, and having to sit through all of study session in my wet swimsuit. I got the strangest looks from the TC’s on duty that night.

Melissa Mayes


**Spotlight on Alumni**

After UB I attended Colorado School of Mines and graduated in May of 2011, with a B.Sc. in Petroleum Engineering. My career has taken me to Houston, Texas, where I currently work for EP Energy as a Petroleum Engineer. I am a year and half into a Professional Development Program, where I’ve rotated through Reservoir/Drilling/Production and Completions Engineering. As of the future, I would like to go back to school and receive an MBA sometime down the line. I also am considering working internationally at some point. Outside of work, I’ve been travelling as much as possible and running tough mudders. So far I’ve been to Italy, and earlier this year I visited Spain and ran with the bulls!

Funniest memory of UB

My best memory of UB was going to mini prom and how big of a deal it turned out to be. I can still remember going out to buy roses! Besides that, I made great friendships and grew immensely as a person.
As fall is upon us and we experience the change in the trees and dig out those winter clothes, so too we have stumbled upon change in Upward Bound. Just three months ago, we were finishing up an epic summer of skit nights, dancing, thunderstorm hiking trips, room checks, and Jello eating contests. Since then, we have sadly said goodbye to both Carmen Rivera and Miel McCarthy as they have moved on to new positions within the University. We have been fortunate enough to have alumnus and rock-star summer staffer Caro Bañuelos seamlessly fill in until a permanent advisor is hired. Entering a new grant cycle this year is shifting the reach of our program and we will be leaving Greeley West, Adams City and Rocky Mountain High School over the next two years. Finally, our staff is anticipating a new advisor and new Director of College Access as the Access Center continues to grow in new and exciting ways.

In all of this change, I look toward opportunity. Seniors are making us proud, applying to colleges all over the nation. Last year’s senior class is 100% enrolled in institutions of higher education this fall!!! Freshmen recently admitted are engaged and excited for the mysterious magic of UB they have only heard about as legend from the veteran students. Just today, I had a young man walk into my office asking how he could help Upward Bound. He is an alumnus from the Adams State UB Program and when I asked what was important to him about Upward Bound he responded, “Without Upward Bound, I wouldn’t be in college.” As you read this newsletter and think about the ways that you have been connected to Upward Bound, or hope to be connected in the future, please know that we are meeting these changes with UB style and energy to continue creating access to education. Keep warm this winter and please don’t hesitate to come volunteer, participate, or share stories and remember!

~Sean Jaster

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Spring Dates

UB Summer Program Dates
June 9, 2013- July 18, 2013