



# ASPIRATIONS

Official Newsletter of APSIRE, INC.

**TRiO**

September-December  
2013



## ASPIRE 2014

*Energizing Tomorrow's Future*

*Grand Forks Oct. 12<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup>*

## *Message from the President*

Greetings ASPIRE!



As many of you may have heard, the omnibus appropriations bill was recently passed in both the House and the Senate. The good news for TRIO programs is that the \$838 million in TRIO funding will be spread across the 2014-2015 fiscal year. Although this number is less than the figures that were proposed by the Senate Appropriations Committee last summer, it accounts for a much needed \$42 million increase beyond the current funding levels. Overall, this represents a restoration of 95% of the sequester cuts that occurred for the 2013-2014 fiscal year. We have been encouraged by our ASPIRE Government Relations Co-Chairs, Mike Wade and Rachel Martinez, to contact the representatives of both the House and the Senate in our regions, and personally thank those who supported this bill in getting passed. Additionally, we were

asked to take notice of those representatives who did not support the passing of the omnibus appropriations bill because this may be a good opportunity for your state membership who plan to attend COE's 34<sup>th</sup> Annual Policy Seminar in March to ask specific questions as to 'why' they did not support the bill.

We would like to remind our members that COE's 34<sup>th</sup> Annual Policy Seminar will be an opportunity for TRIO and GEAR UP communities the opportunity to help and educate Members of the 113<sup>th</sup> Congress, congressional staff, and Obama Administration officials about the history and the success of TRIO and GEAR UP. Please note the following dates on your calendar: Saturday, March 22-Sunday, March 23, 2014 is the National College Opportunity Programs Leadership Summit (Registration for this event is free); Sunday, March 23-Tuesday, March 25, 2014 is Policy Seminar; and Wednesday, March 26, 2014 is the Seminar on Relations with the U.S. Department of Education. We hope to see you all there!

The ASPIRE Regional Board recently completed the January Board Meeting held in Rapid City, South Dakota, the site for the 2015 ASPIRE regional conference. During the course of the meeting, we were able to plan and strategize for the upcoming conference. As a reminder, the 2014 ASPIRE regional conference will be held Grand Forks, ND, which is well underway with our membership in North Dakota working tirelessly in preparing for a successful conference. This years' conference theme is "Energizing Tomorrow's Future." The 38<sup>th</sup> Annual ASPIRE Conference will be held October 12-15, 2014 at the Canad Inn in Grand Forks, North Dakota. We have been asked to submit any workshop proposals to Lori Larson by May 31, 2014 ([lori.larson@und.edu](mailto:lori.larson@und.edu)). I look forward to working with each of you closely, and would encourage you to contact me or any other board members with questions concerning the growth and expansion of ASPIRE.

Craig Harter



## **ASPIRE 2014 ANNUAL CONFERENCE CALL FOR PROPOSALS**

ASPIRE, Inc. is the regional professional organization for persons employed in the Federally Funded TRIO programs within the states of Colorado, Montana, South Dakota, North Dakota, Utah, and Wyoming.

TRIO Programs provide postsecondary access and preparation, support for success in higher education, and preparation for graduate school for students from low income families, first generation college students, and students with disabilities.

Specific TRIO programs include: Upward Bound, Talent Search, Student Support Services, Veterans Upward Bound, Upward Bound Math/Science, Educational Opportunity Centers, and McNair Postbaccalaureate Achievement programs.

The 38th Annual ASPIRE Conference will be held October 12-15, 2014 at the Canad Inn in Grand Forks, North Dakota.

You are invited to share your expertise with your colleagues. Workshop presentations may focus on:

- College access
- Postsecondary persistence to graduation
- Preparation for graduate education
- Professional development for staff (advising skills, budgeting, etc.)
- Services for specific populations (veterans; students with disabilities; immigrants & refugees; specific ethnic groups; etc.)
- A topic of your own choosing

Workshop proposals are due by May 31, 2014 and should be submitted to:

Lori Larson  
[lori.larson@und.edu](mailto:lori.larson@und.edu)  
701-777-3427  
701-777-3627



## ASPIRE'S 35<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL CONFERENCE CALL FOR PROPOSALS

<b>Presentation Title</b>
<b>Presenter name</b> - <i>list additional presenters and presenter information on separate page</i>
<b>Title</b>
<b>Institution</b>

**Programs(s):** ☐UB ☐UBMS ☐VUB ☐SSS ☐McNair ☐TS ☐EOC

<input type="checkbox"/> Other	
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<b>Mailing Address</b>			
<b>City</b>	<b>State</b>	<b>Zip</b>	
<b>Email</b>			
<b>Phone</b>		<b>Fax</b>	

**Indicate AV or other equipment needs:**

☐Projector ☐Screen

☐Other

<i>specify</i>

**This presentation  
is most appropriate for (check all that apply):**

☐New TRIO personnel ☐Experienced TRIO personnel ☐Pre-college programs

☐College level programs ☐Specific TRIO program (specify)

**Attach an Abstract of your proposed presentation; 50 words or less.**



## News from South Dakota

### 2014 SUMMER PROGRAM AT CRAZY HORSE

The 2014 Summer Program at Crazy Horse is currently recruiting motivated college bound high school Native American seniors who are interested in jump starting their postsecondary education. Summer participants will enroll in 12-14 college credits, work at least 22 hours per week in a paid internship, garner scholarships for the fall, learn effective success strategies, and complete their preparations for college entry – wherever students are attending school in the fall. Each accepted applicant receives a scholarship (\$6,675.00) that covers the cost of summer tuition, fees, books, and 50% of room & board. The student share of room & board (\$800) may be deducted from a participant's bi-weekly pay. Many prior participants have been TRIO, Gear-Up, and In-Med students from the ASPIRE Region. Numerous former participants are currently and actively participating in SSS projects throughout the country. Prior participants continue to be tracked and supported, e.g., fall book allowances, letters of recommendation, weekly e-mail contacts providing "Success Tips" and possible follow-up summer paid internships. For additional information and/or applications, please contact Professor Charlie Luecke at [cluecke@usd.edu](mailto:cluecke@usd.edu) and 605-677-



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Class of 2013



## South Dakota State University

### ***Students Attend Workshop at SDSU***

The TRIO Educational Talent Search Program of the University of South Dakota serves six areas and 20 schools in the state, seven of them in Sioux Falls: Roosevelt, Lincoln, and Washington High School as well as Axtell Park, Memorial, Whittier, and Patrick Henry Middle School. In November 2013, Sioux Falls ETS participants attended the *Ready, SET (Science, Education, Technology), Go!* workshop at South Dakota State University. This event was sponsored by the SDSU Jerome J. Lohr College of Engineering and numerous corporate sponsors.

Thirty one female engineering students from SDSU were volunteers for the workshop. The goals of the activity were to introduce high school-girls to engineering, math, and science. This was accomplished through a highly dynamic program of hands-on activities to increase student knowledge of engineering, math, and science with regard to academic preparation and professional opportunities, to provide an environment that facilitates learning and excitement about engineering, math, and science, and to inspire young women to continue to pursue the courses of study introduced during the workshop.

The students were able to design, build, and test a Lego roller coaster, program a robot, and learn about the process of extrusion during the workshop. Attending the camp from Washington High School and Roosevelt High School were: Feven Aregay, Hannah Molu, Feven Goitom (front row), Surekchha Siwkoti (middle row), Remi Mae Rice, Milena Arambasic, and Jade Bolin (back row). What a wonderful opportunity this was for these students to learn more about careers in science, technology, engineering and math!

Submitted by: Martha Miller, University of South Dakota  
TRiO Educational Talent Search Advisor, Sioux Falls



## Black Hills State University

### ***Black Hills State University says goodbye to two long-time SSS Advisors***

The SSS program at Black Hills State University would like to extend sincere thanks to Cody McMichael and Juli Larson for their many years of service to our students, as well as to the ASPIRE region. Juli Larson was part of the SSS staff at BHSU for twelve+ years and moved at the end of fall semester back to Georgia where she grew up. She has taken a position as an academic advisor in the School of Nursing at the





University of West Georgia in Carrollton.

Cody has moved to Heber Springs, Arkansas, after eight+ years with the BHSU SSS program. He has accepted a position as the Director of Upward Bound at Arkansas State University in Heber Springs. Cody and Valerie have a son and daughter-in-law living within 30 miles of Heber Springs at Searcy, and his middle son plans to attend school in Searcy as well. Happy trails . . . we will miss you both!

## ***Black Hills State University TRIO Students Recognized For Their Achievements***

By [BHSU Communications](#) | January 13, 2014

During the fall semester, the Black Hills State University Student Support Services (SSS) recognized four students who have worked hard and shown dedication as they move toward earning their bachelor's degree.

The SSS historically recognizes one outstanding TRIO student each year; however, starting this fall semester they decided to recognize one student a month. The Federal TRIO Programs are federal outreach and student services programs designed to identify and provide services for individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds.

"We find that the students who understand the value of our services and use them regularly are the ones who excel, reach their maximum potential and graduate," said Susan Hupp, director of SSS at BHSU. "By recognizing a SSS student each month for the things they are doing right, we hope that their good habits will inspire other students to raise the bar and work diligently to achieve their own personal and educational goals."

Hupp said all of the BHSU students who use the SSS are either first-generation or low-income college students or students who may have a disability. "Without supportive services these students typically graduate at a much lower rate than the average student. With supportive services, however, their graduate rate consistently exceeds that of the general student population."

The SSS students recognized during the fall semester include:

**September:** Elizabeth Burgess, elementary education major from Spearfish. "She has been a tireless leader for the TRIO Student Organization. Elizabeth is creative, energetic, compassionate, and always strives for excellence. Her consistent effort and upbeat attitude have made a positive impact on the SSS program as well as those who know her," Hupp said.

**October:** Allan Stubbs, exercise science major from Lake Elsinore, Calif. "He utilizes all the services



available to him including advising and tutoring. Allan not only meets all SSS expectations, he exceeds them and he does so with a positive attitude. His good decisions and effort have been duly noted and appreciated by the SSS staff and others at BHSU,” according to Hupp.

**November:** Chance Simonton, sociology major from Greeley, Colo. “As an upperclassman, Chance saw an opportunity to help a fellow student and took advantage of that opportunity. He saw it as a chance to ‘pay it forward’ and help someone else which he said is what he wants to do with his life – help others,” according to Peggy Madrid, SSS retention advisor. “We applaud Chance for his willingness to take action on someone else’s behalf and hope that his example inspires other students to do the same.”

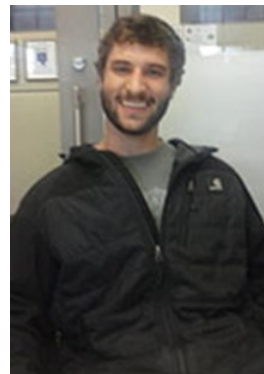
**December:** Skyla Leach, Sundance, Wyo. “Skyla is a first-year SSS student. She commutes to school every day from Sundance and balances working a part-time job, attending every class, making time for tutoring, and being a mom to her two-year-old daughter Emma. She has consistently used the services of TRIO Student Support Services to help her be successful in each of her classes during her first semester at BHSU. She recognizes the value of her education and works very hard to attend every class and use any help she has available,” Madrid said.



Elizabeth Burgess, elementary education major from Spearfish



Allan Stubbs, exercise science major from Lake Elsinore, Calif.



Chance Simonton, sociology major from Greeley, Colo.



Skyla Leach, Sundance, Wyo.

## ***BHSU Students look forward to spending holidays in new home after losing everything in winter storm Atlas Fire***

By BHSU Communications | December 23, 2013

Aaron Morlock had his last final Wednesday morning, and just like most college students who are finished with a semester of late night study sessions, lectures and tests he breathed a sigh of relief. However, Morlock’s last test signified much more than the start of winter break. For the Black Hills State University student, it was the end of a challenging few months and a new beginning for him and his family.





Aaron, his wife Sara, also a BHSU student, and their four-year-old daughter Arabella lost everything in a house fire during October's Winter Storm Atlas. In the last few months, Aaron, Sara, and Arabella, with the help of several communities and BHSU, have been putting their life back together while remaining dedicated to their studies.

On Wednesday, the family will spend Christmas together in their new home.

The last few months have been difficult for the family, but they are in a good place now.

"It's been a pretty heavy challenge, but we bounced back in about two months. We dug our heels in deep. There are a lot of things that happen to people that you won't be recovering from in two months," he said.

The family may have lost their belongings; however, they are grateful they were unharmed in the fire. After observing power lines snapping around them including one which was close to touching the ground near their house, the couple decided to pack some items and stay the night in a hotel. The next morning their landlord called to tell them about the fire. The intense weather conditions made it difficult for crews from the Spearfish Volunteer Fire Department to save the home.

"It was just kind of hard to fathom," said Aaron of what he was thinking after hearing the news. "I guess I was less worried about the stuff we lost and more worried about what we had to do next. What are we going to do for beds? Where are we going to live?"

Soon after locals learned of the family's situation, donations started to pour in, not only from Spearfish and BHSU, but also from Gillette and Circle, Mont., the hometowns of Sara and Aaron. Someone also donated a two-week stay at the Spearfish Holiday Inn for the young family.

"We were really thankful. We still are. We have a lot to be thankful for."

Susan Hupp, BHSU director of Student Support Services (SSS), organized a "Stuff the Stocking" fundraiser where faculty, staff, and students donated money to help the couple purchase whatever they needed for their home, including Christmas gifts.

Hupp along with Juli Larson, Aaron's SSS advisor, and SSS staff members Cody McMichael and Peggy Madrid, helped the students get everything they needed to finish the semester from replacing books to gathering notes from professors.

"We did everything we could to help so he could pick up



*Susan Hupp, director of Student Support Services at Black Hills State University, far left, Juli Larson, Aaron Morlock's SSS advisor, and SSS staff members Cody McMichael and Peggy Madrid present Aaron, middle, with a stocking filled with monetary donations from BHSU faculty, staff and students. Morlock, his wife Sara, and their 4-year-old daughter Arabella, lost their home in a fire during the October Winter Storm Atlas.*



where he left off as easy as possible,” Larson said. “Aaron and I have had a lot of conversations about a lot of different subject matters. He’s endured a lot and he is like a rubber band moving forward and wondering ‘what do I do next.’”

Hupp and McMichael said they were amazed at how committed the couple was in pushing forward and finishing the semester.

“I don’t think the average person can think of having to put you house back together while keeping up with work and school,” Hupp said.

Aaron said he briefly thought about quitting school once. “I thought about it one day and didn’t take one step out of my car before I realized I couldn’t.”

Aaron said the fire is something the family rarely thinks about anymore. “A lot of it is over for us. We are in this new place. We settled ourselves in. We are paid up. We are comfortable there, and we have the things we need. For us the fire is a distant memory now. We don’t think about it a lot.”

His goals for the New Year include making the Dean’s List, keeping up with his courses and graduating with his degree in elementary education as soon as possible.

## ***News from Colorado***

### **University of Colorado Denver**

#### ***University of Colorado Denver Student Support Services Program and Society of TRiO Students Club*** Submitted by Henry Ornelas, TRiO Student Support Services Academic Coordinator.

The TRiO Student Support Services Program and the Society of TRiO Students Club (AKA – TRiO Club) had a busy fall 2013 semester. Both the program and club participated in several events on and off campus. One of the goals of the TRiO Club is to participate in one community outreach program per semester and one campus event to promote the organization since we are listed as a service club.

*The Haunted Harvest Event* sponsored by the Community College of Denver, Office of Student Life took place on Wednesday, October 30, 2013. Our group had the opportunity to transform one of the quaint 9th Street Park Historic homes into a frightening and fun haunted house. This awesome event allowed our group to give back to our campus community by giving out candy and popcorn. Several other organizations participated in the event. For the interactive activity, coloring books and crayons were given to the children. The TRiO Club printed and bound 75 coloring books that consisted of puzzles, crosswords, and coloring pages. To purchase candy and decorations for the event, the TRiO Club sponsored a Bake Sale. Staff and club members had the opportunity to dress up in costume. Over 150 children attended the event.



# ASPIRATIONS

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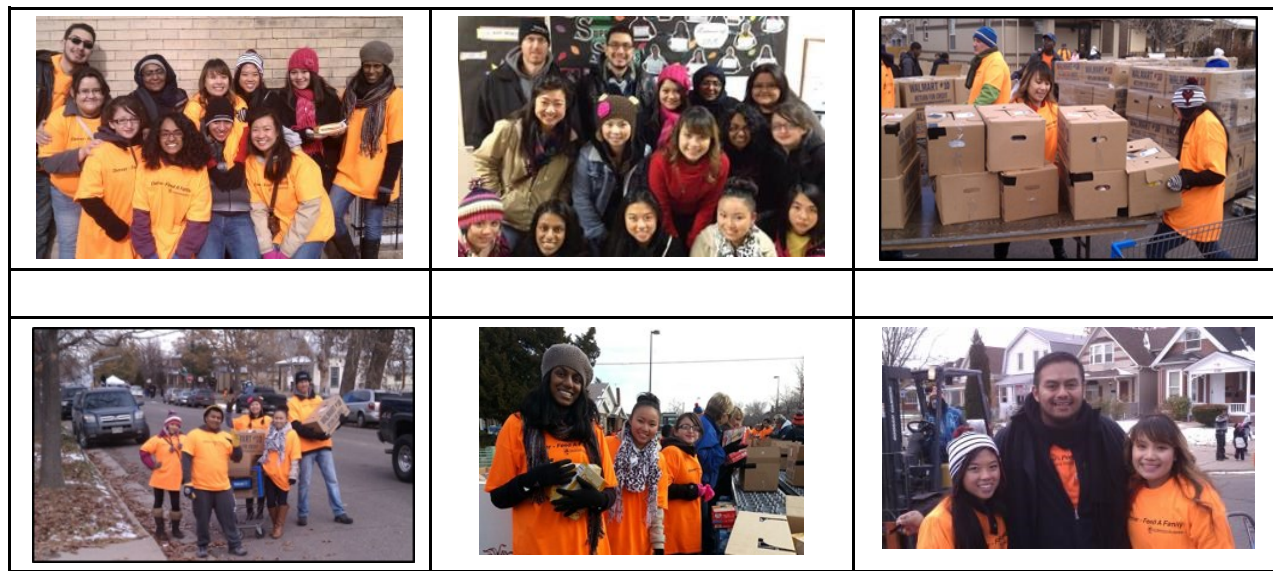
The *Spooktacular Halloween Dance* was sponsored by the TRiO Club as well as the Asian Student Alliance, and Indian Student Alliance on October 31, 2013 in Sigi's Cabaret on the Auraria Campus. The TRiO Club President, Nicholas Beers did a great job at facilitating the logistics of the event. During the dance, refreshments (pizza and soda) were provided as well as awards for the best costumes (scariest, funniest, couples, etc.). The club submitted a funding request to the Student Government Association and attended a funding meeting to seek funds to sponsor the event, which was approved. The location of the event was spooky and provided a great atmosphere. The D.J. for the event was also a participant in the TRiO SSS program and kept the energy high until the event ended. All three clubs helped in the set-up and break-down of the event as well as fund-raising for the decorations. The TRiO SSS Staff served as chaperones and over 85 college students attend the event.



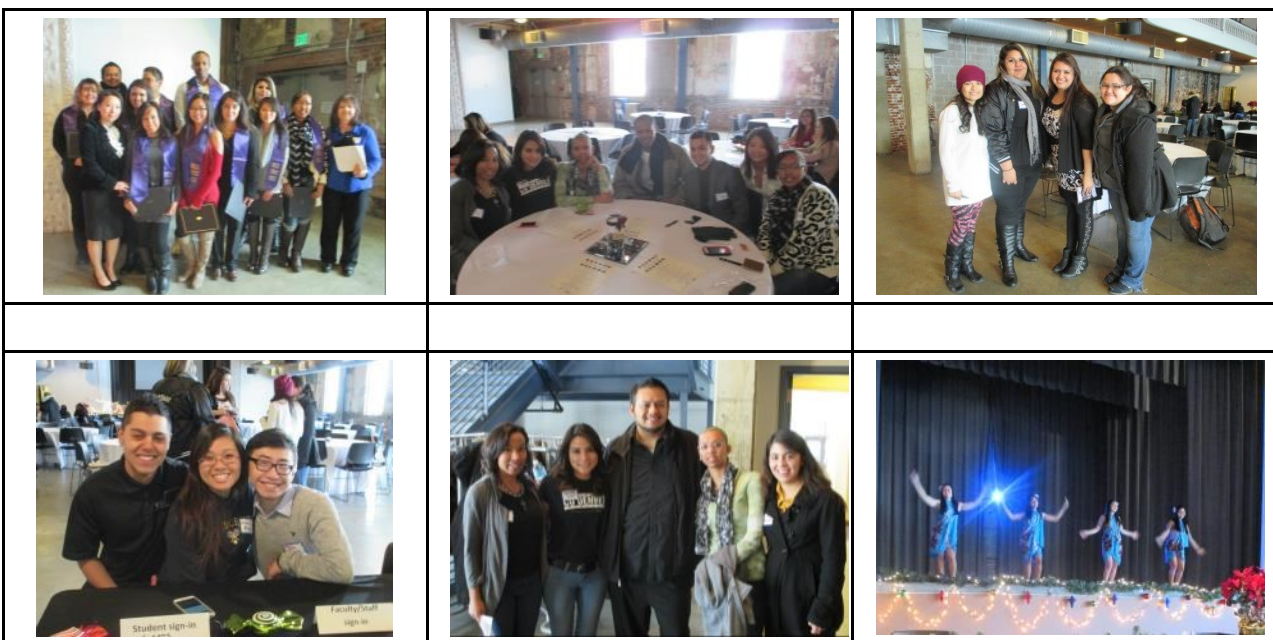




The Denver-Feed-A-Family Thanksgiving Program sponsored by the Epworth Foundation took place on Saturday, November 23, 2013. The theme of the event was "Giving Thanks One Basket at a Time." The event provides each family in need or shut-ins with a box of food for the thanksgiving holiday. Several hundred volunteers participated in this two day event. We had the opportunity to work on the assembly line (packing boxes), transporting boxes via taxi to individual homes or by carts to vehicles. More than 7,000 families in Denver were helped.



The End of Year Cultural Celebration sponsored by the TRiO Student Support Services Program, TRiO Club, Learning Resources Center, Educational Opportunity Programs, and the Ethnic Studies Department was held on Friday, December 6, 2013. The purpose of the event is to celebrate the success of each graduate from each program. The TRiO SSS program had 18 TRiO graduates. Each student was given a certificate of achievement and graduation sash. Entertainment was provided by the CU Denver Hawaiian Club and a delicious lunch was provided. Over 150 students, faculty and staff attended the celebration.







## Colorado Mountain College

### ***Student Support Services Recognizes Former Student Noelle Brigden***

Dear TRiO Colleagues,

I would like to recognize the achievements of this former student. She joined our SSS program here at the Steamboat Springs Campus of Colorado Mountain College when she first started and went on to graduate as our campus Valedictorian in 2001. She then earned her Bachelor's and Master's degrees in International Studies from University of Denver, then her PhD in Political Science from Cornell. She is a true achiever!!

Click here: <http://watson.brown.edu/people/postdocs/brigden>

### ***Upward Bound***

Two 2012 Seniors created the Interview script for this video during one of our Saturday events. In the video, each Upward Bound participant states in their own words, why they are involved in the UB program. They are also asked what activities they participate in the Program, as well as what their goals are after they graduate from their respective high schools.

Click here: <https://docs.google.com/file/d/0Bwgs3IewgYgHRjQ3OGpXdEw5U00/edit>

## Metropolitan State University of Denver

### ***Upward Bound***

As we celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Upward Bound Program this year, the TRiO Upward Bound Program at Metropolitan State University of Denver presents this short video, with pictures of our students participating in various scheduled activities and community service. As one of the nation's longest standing pre-collegiate initiatives, High School Upward Bound at Metropolitan State University of Denver enjoys a great wealth of community involvement opportunities, in addition to their regularly scheduled educational and cultural activities.

The photographs in the video are from activities that our students participated in during the year, among which are also the community service events that we do annually. Some of the volunteer activities include: dressing in fun costumes to run games or hand-out candy to near-by neighborhood children, in conjunction with the Community College of Denver's Haunted Harvest; assisting in assembling or distributing Thanksgiving Baskets to people in need with the Epworth Foundation; and volunteering as costumed characters for the 9NEWS Parade of Lights. The Parade goes on, no matter the weather conditions, so this year; we walked the two mile parade route in -10 degree temperatures. The video also displays students and staff participating in educational activities to learn physics, when we went to the Myth Busters exhibit at the Denver



Museum of Nature and Science. An example of one of the exhibits goals was to see if you could remove a tablecloth from a table, without breaking all the dishes. Many students aptly accomplished this feat. The group photo is when we participated in the TRIO Upward Bound Olympics Day at CSU in Fort Collins. In addition, we view Upward Bound students and staff listening to the cultural performances of the Street Beat Performance at the Lakewood Cultural Center, as well as being amazed at the Nutcracker Ballet by the Colorado Ballet, both provided by our membership with ArtReach, Inc. which gives us the opportunity to experience many activities we would not have the funding to partake.

*Celebrate with us by enjoying the video and see Upward Bound in action!*

Click here: <http://youtu.be/nLGCgNEzKns>

## Eagle River Youth Coalition (ERYC) Award Winners

On Thursday, October 10th, two Upward Bound participants were honored with awards from the Eagle River Youth Coalition at the Valley Tastings Food for Youth event at the Donovan Pavilion in Vail. Eagle Valley High School junior Leslie Cano and Battle Mountain High School junior Kevin Rodriguez won the Prairie Pioneer Award.



Leslie and Kevin attended the dinner and reception with family members, Upward Bound Director Debi Martinez-Brun, and Upward Bound Coordinator Allen Burch. While at the Valley Tastings event, students, staff and family enjoyed food from local restaurants, a silent auction and music from local artists.



Upward Bound student Leslie Cano received the Prairie Pioneer award from the ERYC on October 10th at the Valley Tastings event in Vail. UB Director Debi Martinez-Brun nominated Leslie for the award.

According to the Eagle River Youth Coalition, Prairie Pioneer award winners "have a different perspective and a wide open mind. They are creative, innovative, risk-takers and don't easily back down from a challenge to bring about change." Throughout the years, Leslie Cano has been involved in Head Start, Upward Bound, the Youth Foundation, the Salvation Army, Gypsum Day Clean Up and has served as a volleyball referee. UB Director Debi Martinez-Brun recommended Leslie for this award. "Leslie's involvement with the Youth Foundation programs and Head Start demonstrate patience and tolerance with those younger than her. When working with younger kids, Leslie displays a gentle demeanor as she mentors and guides them. Her gentle approach creates a safe environment for younger kids," Martinez-Brun stated. Leslie attended the Valley Tastings award ceremony with her parents, who are "really proud" of Leslie "being able to give back to the community, what the community has given to [Leslie]." The Prairie Pioneer award means a lot to Leslie, as well. "This award is very special to me; I feel accomplished being rewarded for something I love to do," Leslie said.



Leslie began with Upward Bound as a sophomore when a friend asked her to go to an Upward Bound event. She has been a consistent participant and excellent example for her peers, ever since. After graduating high school, Leslie plans to attend CMC and transfer to UC-Colorado Springs to get her childcare license. Leslie would like to open up her own daycare, someday.

Kevin Rodriguez has participated in SOS Outreach for nine years, and Upward Bound for almost three years. In the summer of 2012, Kevin was selected to accompany SOS Outreach to London for the 2012 Olympics. In his community outreach

efforts, Kevin has made Thanksgiving and Christmas baskets for community members in need. Kevin has also volunteered his time to Habitat for Humanity, the Eagle River Cleanup, the Salvation Army, the Eagle River Ride, and has walked dogs for an animal shelter. Upward Bound Coordinator Allen Burch describes Kevin as a "mentor and role model" for other Upward Bound students who participate in the Summer Academy. Kevin was very proud to receive the Prairie Pioneer Award from the ERYC. "To me this award means that I have an open mind about everything. I am willing to try new things without backing down and that I am creative and innovative," Kevin said. Kevin joined Upward Bound because he desires to go to college. "They [Upward Bound] have given me tutors so that I can do better in school and help with school work. Also in the Summer Academy they gave us a time to do our homework and nothing else, and now I use that strategy at home to do my homework, so that I can turn it in on time," Kevin said. After graduating from college, Kevin plans to attend Colorado State University or a college in California. Kevin would like to become a physical therapist.

Congratulations Leslie and Kevin on a job well done and for your accomplishments in the Eagle County community. We are so proud of you!

## News from Wyoming

### ***McNair Scholars Program Reaches Twenty Year Milestone***

Over the past two decades, thirty-five University of Wyoming McNair Scholars have earned the PhD. We have welcomed the opportunity to provide the host of services and personal guidance that steered these students toward the path of academia.

Most recently, ***Danielle Olden***, a Laramie, Wyoming native earned her PhD. Danielle received her degree from the Ohio State University Department of History in December 2013. Danielle is currently an Assistant Professor of History at the University of Utah.

Danielle graduated from the University of Wyoming in 2006 with a B.A. in History. She conducted research titled *Social and Economic Assimilation of Mexican-Americans into Laramie, Wyoming, 1945-1960* under the mentorship of Dr. William Moore, Department of History. Her dissertation at Ohio State University was titled, *Whiteness in the Middle: Mexican Americans, School Desegregation and the Making of Race in Modern America*. Olden states "the project uses the battle over school desegregation in Denver, Colorado to trace the shifting contours of American racial understandings in the post-World War II period." She is currently expanding her dissertation into a book.





We asked Danielle to reflect back on her McNair experience. Danielle said “The UW McNair Scholars Program gave me the tools and resources I needed to succeed as a scholar. Although I was a good student, I did not have the research experience to make myself a competitive graduate school candidate. I also lacked knowledge about the graduate school application process. McNair not only provided a thorough explanation of that process; they also worked with me to locate potential academic programs, helped me tailor my application materials for each school and provided resources to visit graduate programs. As an undergraduate I was able to present my research in professional settings and made some friends along the way. It was an unforgettable experience, one that laid the groundwork for my graduate career and my current position as an assistant professor.”

Danielle continues to maintain a relationship with the McNair staff by visiting during the holidays, keeping us updated by social media and serving as a contact for other McNair Scholars who are interested in attending the University of Utah. As we remember the 27<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Challenger accident, we also remember a quote by Ronald E. McNair. “Before You Can Make a Dream Come True, You Must First Have One.” Danielle Olden had a dream and is now paying it forward by helping other young scholars navigate the terrain towards graduate education.

## ***News from Montana*** *By Darlene Samson, MT ASPIRE State President*

Warm greetings from Montana in 2014! Right now in western Montana, we’re having chinook winds that have nearly melted away what little snow has accumulated to date. By the time you read this, we may well be into a winter storm! As the New Year begins, we are excited to be moving forward with new opportunities for our programs and for our students.

The Montana ASPIRE Conference will be held at the Hilton Garden Inn in Great Falls, Montana, April 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup>. Along with Montana ASPIRE colleagues, we’ll be combining our conference with the Montana College Access Network which includes affiliates in all sectors of access to education. Colleagues from Montana Gear Up, Student Assistance Foundation, Montana school counselors, and others will be able to network like never before! MCAN presently has 278 members and as an organization it supports, serves and enhances its affiliate members in efforts to increase postsecondary participation and completion. Combining our conferences creates a paradigm shift allowing all stakeholders who want to provide the best educational opportunities to all Montanan’s to come together and share our expertise, knowledge, and make professional development available to all who participate. What a win-win situation for us all!

Our combined conference called, “Spotlight on College Access” is sure to engage every program! As of this writing, we have confirmed presenters:

Amanda Curtis, Legislator

Amy Verlanic, BOARD of COE and Director of TRiO Programs at Montana Tech

Shannon O’Brien, Governor’s Education Policy Advisor

Additionally we hope to receive confirmation from Jamie Merisotis, CEO of Lumina Foundation; and in line for our annual Student Achiever’s Banquet Speaker is Governor Bullock. The awards banquet is always a moving, emotional highlight of the conference. Our students are the best!





The ever-famous silent auction fundraiser helps support our year efforts for conference expenses. Please consider contacting a business or put together a basket to help in the coming months! Begin thinking about your TRiO Achiever and nominate when the call is made.

Look for registration information to come your way soon!

On an additional note, information is being gathered to build our Fact Book. Please help out by submitting program information and a student profile.

Stay warm in the ensuing months!!

## Free Service Helps Students and Parents Complete FAFSA

### ***College Goal Montana: Completing the FAFSA — What's in it for you?***

“My parents make too much money.”

“My grades aren't very good.”

“It takes too long, and I don't think I would qualify anyway.”

These are just some of the reasons students give for not completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), according to Rhonda Safford, state-wide coordinator of College Goal Montana.

“Each year these misconceptions result in many Montana students missing out on financial aid to help them pay for school,” she said. “The truth is, the FAFSA is for everyone who wants to pursue higher education. The only thing for certain is you won't get any financial aid if you don't apply!”

Beginning on Jan. 1, Montana students and their families can begin completing the FAFSA for the 2014-15 Academic Year and nonprofit Student Assistance Foundation is here to help.

College Goal Montana is an annual campaign to encourage FAFSA awareness and to help students and families complete the important form. 2014 will mark the ninth year that SAF has organized the effort for Montana.

Visit [SmartAboutCollege.org](http://SmartAboutCollege.org) to access videos explaining the FAFSA completion process step by step, beginning with getting a FAFSA PIN, through signing and submitting the application. In addition, FAFSA filers can watch the videos on SAF's YouTube channel, SAFTube4U. Should students or families need one-on-one



assistance, the SmartAboutCollege.org website provides email, phone and chat options.

Students and parents who want to access additional FAFSA completion resources can:

- Like FAFSA-What's in it for me? on Facebook.
- Follow us on Twitter @GetFAFSAHelp.
- Text FAFSAHELP to 41411 to receive free texts with FAFSA tips and deadline reminders.
- Visit SmartAboutCollege.org and click on "Calendar" in the top right-hand corner to learn about SAF activities, including College Goal Montana events, in your community.

Email us at [FAFSAhelp@safmt.org](mailto:FAFSAhelp@safmt.org) or call us at 877-COLG4ME (265-4463).

SAF's campus outreach managers also are available to assist with the process at no charge. Plus, SAF will be providing guidance to schools and communities who want to host their own FAFSA completion event, so students and parents should watch for information about those opportunities in their area.

"About \$150 billion in federal grants, loans and work-study funds is available each year, and that doesn't include the state and institutional aid that is out there," said Safford. "Financial aid professionals in Montana will tell you that the return on the investment of taking half an hour or 45 minutes to complete the FAFSA is worth it."

Safford reminds students that many postsecondary institutions have priority deadlines for completing the FAFSA. At most Montana schools, that deadline is March 1, with the exception of The University of Montana which has a deadline of Feb. 15.

*Student Assistance Foundation is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit Montana corporation that provides students with knowledge and tools to pursue and fund their postsecondary education. Funds generated by SAF are returned to Montanans in the form of education grants and public benefit programs - to date more than \$27 million. For more information, visit [www.safmt.org](http://www.safmt.org) or [www.SmartAboutCollege.org](http://www.SmartAboutCollege.org).*

## Sidebar

In order to complete the FAFSA, students and parents should have the following information available:

- FAFSA PIN — to get your PIN, log on to [www.pin.ed.gov](http://www.pin.ed.gov). Both student and parent (if the student is under the age of 24) will need a PIN.
- Security numbers (students and parents)
- Last year's federal tax returns for estimating purposes (or 2013 if complete). You can go back later to confirm numbers after your 2013 taxes are complete.
- W-2s, tribal income, other aid information (TANF, child support, other benefits)
- Additional asset information (money market funds, stocks, other investments)

## News from Utah

### Southern Utah University

**Educational Talent Search** at Southern Utah University in Cedar City Utah has planned great events for the 2013 – 2014 school year. September had our ETS Advisors attending the Utah Systems of Higher Education Conference in Lehi UT where they became familiar with current financial aid, cost of attendance, housing as well as other highlights on the individual campuses throughout Utah.



Each month the ETS Advisors hold workshops and activities for over 600 students. These workshops include topics such as: career exploration, postsecondary options, education requirements, and study skills. They assist with completing college admissions, financial aid, and scholarship applications. Workshops are held to prepare for college and entrance exams as well as decision making skills, values, goal setting, and self-esteem building.

October saw our 8<sup>th</sup> grade students traveling to St George touring Dixie Applied Technology College and Dixie State University followed with an activity at the Staheli Farm Corn Maze. Fredonia High ETS and UB students traveled to Arizona touring the University of Arizona, Scottsdale Community College and Glendale Community College.



November brought The “Snow Blast” in Ephraim Utah which was attended by our ETS high school students. The campus ambassadors had 2 days filled with activities and information that gave our students a chance to experience “real college life”. The students loved this event!



In January SUU hosted the annual ETS Day for our 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> graders. The SUU Ambassadors took our students on tour of campus with a Bookstore Activity which allows the students to find out how much tuition and books cost. Seventh graders participated in a Chemistry demonstration entitled “Fun with Gas” and group games. Meanwhile, the eighth graders took in a Rural Health Fair where they found out about blood typing, and gained experience in taking blood pressures as well as learning about basic first aid skills. Both groups received information from the Admissions Office with chances to win prizes! Swimming, wally ball

and group games filled their afternoon.

February will take our sophomores and juniors on a Northern Utah tour which will include the University of Utah, Westminster College and Salt Lake Community College. March will be the SUU Preview for our sophomores through seniors. April we have a tour to Brigham Young University and Utah Valley Universities planned for the freshmen.





## Dixie State University



# TRiO

TALENT SEARCH

### *10th grade unlv tour 2014*

This year we are able to give our 10th grade students the opportunity to visit the campus of the University of Las Vegas Nevada. This is their chance to get a sense of the "spirit" of a large out of state university.

We started the tour at a large welcoming water feature on our way to the Howard R. Hughes College of Engineering building. On our walk to the building the students intently looked around at the campus watching the college students in their daily routines.

Once we reached the Engineering building the students were seated and welcomed by very friendly hosts from the university. They were given a presentation covering different majors that are available, types of content studied by these majors, &

possible jobs that could be obtained after graduation.

Next our students were able to eat lunch on campus at the cafeteria. This really gives them an idea of what college life will be like because of all of the college students around while they are eating. The food was great as well!

Finally, our students walked to the student services building and met with their tour guides. They received a presentation on UNLV and what type of education it can offer. Then they walked around the campus to see first hand the different buildings & attractions.

This was led by students who currently attend UNLV. They had a lot of energy and did a great job answering students questions ranging from where

the dorms are to what buildings house the different majors.

All students and advisors on the tour agreed that the trip went very well. We accomplished our mission of acquainting our students with various functions of a University campus and getting them closer to their goal of graduating from College.



### *We love our students!!!*

This year we will serve only 782 compared to a high of 1200 in 2008. Budget cuts and flat level funding have really affected our ETS program.

We love each of our ETS students because we know each one personally and their stories. Many of their stories are heartbreaking, yet the students move forward with

tremendous strength and hope for the future, not only for themselves, but their families too.

The Dixie State University ETS program is alive and well because ETS has the support of the University, School District and the individual high schools and middle schools we work with.

We are so fortunate! I hear from other schools that they do not experience the same acceptance that our program receives.

Nothing could be finer (except getting the funding we need from the Department of Education) than being a member of TRiO—which includes everyone involved in making this program work.





## ***News from North Dakota***

North Dakota ASPIRE is busy preparing for the Regional Aspire Conference this fall that will be held in Grand Forks. Many professionals from TRIO programs across the state have volunteered to help any way they can to ensure that we have an AMAZING conference!

Derek Sporbert has met with local state representative to talk about how TRIO can fit in with any upcoming education legislation. This is North Dakota's off year for our legislature which will give us many opportunities to meet with interim committees and try to influence them! We are also working on setting up meetings with the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction in order to see how TRIO can fit in to bridging P-K to 12 and higher education in the North Dakota System.

TRIO Programs throughout the state have written for and received additional funds from the College Access Challenge Grant through the Bank of North Dakota. This money allows programs to plan additional student focused activities.

Many programs have been busy with activities and changes. LRSC has formed a PowerSkills Center and all students are welcomed into their program and their center and then based on need and criteria are either accepted into the TRIO SSS or are funneled into other assistance programs. This makes it a win-win for the college and for TRIO.

## **University of North Dakota**

UND TRIO programs have been busy with activities all five of the programs had students participate in a Paradigm Shift Leadership activity that was held on the UND campus in November.

Upward Bound has also taken students on Campus tours in October, and a senior prep and planning session in December. The students were able to volunteer at the Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch Thrift Store.

Various TRIO Day activities have been planned throughout the state for the upcoming months.

North Dakota will also have the privilege of hosting South Dakota at our Co-State Conference coming up April 27<sup>th</sup> to the 29<sup>th</sup> in Bismarck.





## ASPIRATIONS

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