The YouthRoots RAISE Program (Raising Awareness and Inhibiting Stigma Everywhere) empowers youth to tackle mental health and stigma in their schools and communities. A generous grant from Community First Foundation's Innovators Society funded the development of this program and a two-year pilot. In this second year, 22 students from Northwest Denver and Aurora worked to reduce the stigma of mental health, raise awareness about the issues, and fundraise for youth mental health organizations in the Denver area.

YouthRoots uses philanthropy and leadership to teach teens how to change the world.

**NEEDS ASSESSMENT**
Youth dive deep to find the most pressing issues facing children and youth in their local community.

**FUNDRAISING**
Youth meet with community members to raise awareness about and funding for the biggest issues.

**GRANT MAKING**
Youth decide which nonprofits are doing the best at meeting the needs and give away 100% of the funds raised.
PARTICIPANTS

NORTHWEST DENVER PARTICIPANTS
Facilitator: Ashley Jaramillo
 Rhea Alexander
 Mariajose Baca Ochoa*
 Luz Bracamontes
 Yubia Delgado
 Brenda Escobar*
 Yuridia Gomez-Rodriguez
 Andrea Leyva*
 Max Link
 Micah Quinn

AURORA PARTICIPANTS
Facilitator: Lena McCain
 Varunavi Battula
 Allie Clark*
 Alva Estrada
 Sara Eyassu
 Eyana Geda
 Tori Harwell*
 Emily Nguyen

Kami Pollack
 Ana Simon
 Avishi Singh
 Palmy Tran
 Selihom Yosief
 Aisha Yusuf

*Executive Committee Member
After many hours of research, the RAISE YouthBoards decided to focus on the following funding priorities:

**Northwest Denver**
The Northwest Denver RAISE board chose to focus their funding on youth homelessness, youth mental health services, and youth substance abuse services. The board members saw these issues as the biggest needs based on a needs survey from the community, their own personal experiences, and the research and advice from experts in the mental health field. They understood that all three of these needs can overlap, which can lead to greater problems for local youth.

**Aurora**
The Aurora RAISE board chose to focus their funding on teen dating violence. The board members saw this issue as the biggest need based on a needs survey from the community, their own personal experiences, and the research and advice from experts in the mental health field. By choosing to support organizations that focus on providing support in eliminating teen dating violence, the Aurora YouthBoard hoped to help end this epidemic while protecting young people.
The RAISE boards created fundraising plans to raise as much money as possible to support their chosen priorities. They met with local business, community, and nonprofit leaders (known as “Impact Partners”) from across the Denver area to talk about their funding priorities and ask community leaders to invest in their work.

**Raised: $8,187**

**Thank you to our Impact Partners!**

Conway Brew
Douglas Carlson
Janie Contreras
Johnson
Elisa Corry
Grant Garstka
Heidi & Brad
Gassman
Emily Granath
Garrett Hommel
Robynn Kuhns
Dan Lagerborg
Alejandra Major
KC & Mary
Matthews
Megan Mistler
Matt Mueller
Ben Rainey
Rick Scott
Peter Standley
Brian Trujillo
Tim Welland
Rob Zaback

Interested in volunteering?
Contact info@youthroots.org
The following organizations were awarded grants based on their ability to meet the funding priorities of the RAISE YouthBoards:

**Northwest Denver**

**Maria Droste Counseling Center - $2,900**
The Maria Droste Counseling Center was formed out of the understanding that people need access to counseling regardless of their ability to pay. They bridge the gaps in available counseling services for underserved populations in the Denver area. Since its inception, the organization has grown in targeted ways to meet significant, unmet mental health needs in the community.

**Aurora**

**PeaceWorks, Inc - $5,287**
PeaceWorks, Inc. provides assistance for survivors of relationship violence and abuse, including intimate partner violence, domestic violence, and teen dating violence. PeaceWorks owns and operates Safe Shelter, a temporary secure home for individuals and families who are experiencing intimate partner violence.
### Student Impact

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Empowerment</strong></th>
<th><strong>Community</strong></th>
<th><strong>Leadership</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>100% of participants said YouthRoots improved their ability to identify an issue and take action.</td>
<td>Students raised awareness and funding (over $8,000) for pressing issues.</td>
<td>100% of participants said they would be more likely to take a leadership role because of YouthRoots.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Mental Health</strong></th>
<th><strong>Empathy</strong></th>
<th><strong>Life Skills</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>93% of participants increased their knowledge of mental-health related topics</td>
<td>100% of participants said YouthRoots improved their empathy skills.</td>
<td>Participants showed improvement in non-cognitive skills 99% of the time.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“*YouthRoots showed me that my opinions and ideas matter, and there are people who believe in me and want to follow me when I lead.*”

“*YouthRoots taught me to be more daring with my ideas, because I can always get input from others. Being wrong just provides more room for growth.*”
The RAISE YouthBoards (Raising Awareness and Inhibiting Stigma Everywhere) are sponsored by the Community First Foundation and administered by YouthRoots, a national nonprofit organization whose mission is to unleash the power of youth to change the world. RAISE YouthBoards focus on tackling mental health challenges and stigma in schools and communities.

Together, YouthRoots and the Community First Foundation are cultivating the next generation of leaders and change-makers in mental health.

“I have found myself being more appreciative of the opportunities I have to make change, and I notice myself being much more open to getting involved in my community and making a difference within myself and within my community.” - 2020 participant