

Molly Kendall - Student - The **Capstone Experience** at Wheat Ridge High School is a culminating activity that provides a way for students to demonstrate the knowledge and skills they acquired during their secondary school years of education in a project/experience that focuses on an interest, issue, career path or academic pursuit synthesized with classroom study and a real world perspective. The **Capstone Experience** includes an in-depth paper, project, reflective portfolio, and presentation to a panel of community judges. Molly Kendall's journey for this experience began last August when she proposed, and received approval for a study on, **Efficient Foreign Aid within Africa**. Meeting with experts in the field fueled Molly's passion and motivated her to do more than simply complete the Capstone requirements, it made her want to make a change in the world. Molly blended a combination of challenge and ability with hands-on learning in a real-world context. She created a multi-faceted **Evening of Empowerment** with speakers/presenters in the WRHS auditorium, vendor stations outside the auditorium and a networking/debrief experience complete with refreshments outside the auditorium after the presentation. The speaker/presenters told their stories around efficient and appropriate foreign aid to Africa as well as how they personally became involved in this work. A **TEDTalk** was generated as part of this project fusing Molly's work with contacts, mentors, technology gurus, cameramen and school staff and administration. Three months later it all came together. Molly flourished in these skills with a level of maturity few students ever show bringing to light effective ways that communities could support foreign aid and change the course of poverty in Africa and the world. At her **Evening of Empowerment** Molly shared her favorite quote by Gandhi, "Be the change you wish to see in the world" and she is one of a rare few who live by this quote.

Kate Bellino - Student - Kate did not like being confronted early on in her high school career about her commitment issues and struggles to keep up with high school requirements. Things started to crumble academically and emotionally in her sophomore year. When she was invited to participate in the Cherry Creek Diversity Conference change for the better began to occur. This opportunity helped her find a place in her school, community and the world. The conference was so inspiring to Kate that it provided her with a goal and purpose. She came back wanting to give all the students at Evergreen High School a similar experience, one where they could really start to understand the broader concepts of what diversity was and looked like. Kate wrote a splendid proposal, presented it to the principal and staff and as a result EHS hosted their first all school **Diversity Day**. EHS has now completed a 2nd annual event which was much bigger and even more successful than the first years' experience. **Diversity Day** has charged Kate's participation in school. She has spoken in front of the entire student body and staff multiple times truly coming into her own as a leader and individual. She was a single drop of water transformed to an incredible waterfall of commitment embracing all kinds of diversity and creating a safer environment for all at EHS. This personal growth is astounding. Kate has taken risks that many could never fathom. Because of her devotion to diversity, Kate is a compelling force continuously working to make **Diversity Day** a lasting legacy at EHS.

Evergreen High School Diversity Forum – Student Group

In 2011 a group of students came together to attend the Cherry Creek Diversity Conference. One student in particular, Kate Bellino, came back from the conference wanting to do something at EHS about helping peers and community learn more and increase awareness and sensitivity about the diversity at EHS. From this idea, the EHS Diversity Day was born. Year one for the EHS Diversity Day had three students driving the effort with support from EHS administration, parent Risa Holmes and a few staff members who made the day a successful reality. The tiny three student skeleton crew expanded into an eleven member group that created the second annual Diversity Day at EHS. Beginning their planning early in the year, the eleven member team contacted speakers, located sponsorships in the community, planned the logistics and themes for the programming as well as problem solved a multitude of operational scenarios to ensure the fluidity of the Diversity Day event at Evergreen High School. Community adults supported the logistics identified by the Evergreen High School Diversity Forum and actively participated with the forum in the planning, implementation and decision-making for the event. All decisions were determined collaboratively. This student led initiative ensured the success of the EHS Diversity Day by keeping the pulse of the experience relevant to the EHS student population. The Evergreen High School Diversity Forum prepped, implemented and negotiated the logistics and operational protocols of an exciting event that has created a life-link to the world that exists within and beyond the Evergreen community. The EHS Diversity Day has opened hearts to the global realities the community lives in and has created a legacy for the work of the EHS Diversity Forum creating a safer and more welcoming school environment because of their work with diversity. The 2012 Evergreen High School Diversity Forum includes:

Tal Arnold

Kate Bellino

Kelsey Evezich

Sarah Gutberlet

Caitlin Hern

Mali Holmes

Jesse Levinej

Cori Mayer

Liana McFadden

Mareline Segovia

Tim Ross

Krystal Welp

Risa Holmes – Parent - Risa is a wealth of ideas and connections. She is always brainstorming and working to find new ways to expand the horizons of students at Evergreen High School and Evergreen Middle Schools where her children attend. Risa also worked tirelessly to ensure the success of Evergreen High School's **Diversity Day**. She organized, researched, and located amazing speakers for the event through intense collaboration and coordination efforts with a broad variety of

community resources in order to guarantee that the entire Evergreen community knew about the diversity awareness work Evergreen High School was involved in. Risa orchestrated a book signing by Judy Shepherd (Matthew Shepherd Foundation) and had scenes from The Laramie Project performed at the event. In addition, Risa managed an evening event with the local theatre that performed The Laramie Project generating proceeds that came back to EHS to benefit more whole school work around diversity. She also worked with the EHS, PTSA to confirm parent volunteers on the day of the event generating a sea of helpers who supported the needs and requirements of over 50 speakers. Diversity is a passion for Risa and one she uses to enrich students' lives by connecting students with school operations, students with peers, and creating a safe, welcoming and cohesive environment for our community as a whole. In the Evergreen community, Risa has opened doors to conversations that support the **Diversity Day** message of caring and mutual respect for all.

Holly Jackson – Teacher - All good teachers make a difference in the lives of their students. Holly goes above and beyond to promote cultural understanding and respect in her role as a K-6 ESL Teacher at Stevens Elementary. She takes the time to build relationships, understand student and family interests, and keeps tabs on how her students are doing through close contact with families and teachers. Holly serves as a model for her colleagues in how to structure culturally responsive instruction and has a proverbial “tool bag” of approaches and strategies that skillfully address the needs of every one of her students. Holly is also conscious about the resources she chooses and ensures that they represent her learners' cultures and languages. Her students know that she will never give up on them, so they do not give up on themselves. Holly strives for strong, trusting partnerships with her culturally and linguistically diverse families and uses their home languages to engage the communities in her classes. Holly also looks for parents before and after school sharing a smile and demonstrating how much she cares about their children. She coordinates with the district Parent Liaison to provide culturally and linguistically diverse parents with translated documents and interpreters for conferences and parent meetings. Holly is committed to helping peers learn the skills of being effective teachers of English Language Learners and demonstrates how to think outside the box in order to appropriately connect families with school, provide for a variety of parent involvement opportunities and help families feel honored and welcomed at school.

Hilario Benzon – Teacher - Working with the Office of Diversity and Inclusion, Hilario has helped create, support, and maintain the Jeffco Student Voice Program. Jeffco Student Voice is a district-wide initiative for high school students with the purpose of providing district leadership with opportunities to engage with diverse student populations and to learn how to help diverse students have better, more positive and successful experiences in school. Jeffco Student Voice is a forum for student self-advocacy and leadership. Throughout the school year, Hilario organizes and plans for this leadership forum organizing activities and presentations for over 70 student ambassadors and the high school advisors that

support them at their school sites. He also coordinates the efforts of many departments, schools, staff, and students across the district to ensure that these leadership opportunities are planned, implemented and sustained in the school site cultures. Hilario communicates regularly with district and school personnel about Jeffco Student Voice regarding the importance of providing leadership opportunities for Jeffco's high school students. Working with the Office of Diversity and Inclusion and university officials, he has been instrumental in coordinating a **Leadership Training Seminar** for over 60 Jeffco Student Voice Ambassadors and their school advisors this spring at the University of Colorado, Boulder. Hilario has been teaching English as a Second Language students since 2003 and is currently an ESL/Dual Language Resource Teacher for the ESL/Dual Language Department in Jeffco.

Louis Sisneros – Teacher - Louis has worked with the Office of Diversity and Inclusion and Hilario Benzon on the Jeffco Student Voice project since its inception. In collaboration with Hilario, Louis has helped create, support, and maintain Jeffco Student Voice, with a particular focus on the school advisor support structure. Jeffco Student Voice is a district-wide initiative for high school students with the purpose of providing district leadership with opportunities to engage with diverse student populations and to learn how to help diverse students have better, more positive and successful experiences in school. Jeffco Student Voice is a forum for student self-advocacy and leadership supported and maintained by the school advisors at each participating school site. Louis has organized, trained and created the ongoing networking required for the success of the school advisors in collaboration with Hilario Benzon. Throughout the school year, Louis works to organize and plan the leadership forum school advisor component of Jeffco Student Voice. The Jeffco Student Voice school advisors and over 70 student ambassadors form Jeffco Student Voice. The groups meet several times during the school year and participate in trainings and Jeffco Student Voice events which are choreographed by the work and collaboration of Louis and Hilario. Louis teaches English at Lakewood High School, is a member of the Jeffco Diversity Response Team and has provided in-service training on GLBTQ concerns in Jeffco schools and throughout the community.

Jefferson County Education Association (JCEA) - JCEA has supported the community outreach endeavors embraced by the Jeffco Office of Diversity and Inclusion since our office originated. Through the support of Executive Director Lisa Elliott, JCEA has been instrumental in supporting our community outreach projects by graciously providing a centrally located meeting space with audio visual technology as well as generously furnishing refreshments for each of our community meetings. A primary beneficiary of this attention has been the Jeffco Community Diversity Advisory Council. This council is made up of representatives from across the broad span of Jeffco Schools and includes parents, community organizations and stakeholders who collaborate to discuss, review and inform the comprehensive practice and attention our office and Jeffco Schools have

committed to diversity and cultural proficiency. JCEA is committed to supporting the expanding diversity in Jeffco and continues to partner with our office to help us proactively address the intricacies of our changing demographics and community.

The Jefferson Foundation - The Jefferson Foundation loves Jefferson County Schools and is committed to helping all our students have access to a quality and equitable education. For thirty years the Jefferson Foundation has used a myriad of grant programming and fundraising to provide the Jeffco Schools community with support structures that enrich the educational access of our diverse student population. Through the leadership of Executive Director Katie Tiernan, programs like the ***Salazar Literacy Initiative, Colorado Reading Corp, Jeffco Summer of Early Literacy Program, Lights On After-school, Jeffco Student Art Shows, The Jefferson Foundation Costume Shop, the Mobile Science Show, the Serving Kids Clothing Program*** and the annual ***Crystal Ball Gala*** are but a few of the important programs and events that the Jefferson Foundation has in place to continue to provide resources for students and organizations in our community. Through a tremendous partnering network the Jefferson Foundation has worked to provide more than \$10.5 Million dollars in support to the schools and community organizations in Jefferson County. The Jefferson Foundation believes that we can give our kids more and purposefully develops partnerships across Colorado to make this vision possible for all of our students.

Angelique Acevedo-Barrón, Ph.D. – Administrator – Angelique Acevedo-Barron is a dedicated results-driven educator with over thirty years in public education and a history of demonstrated success in challenging academic arenas. Her global perspective, curriculum and instruction expertise and extensive classroom experience in culturally responsive and inclusive instruction have made her the recipient of many prestigious awards including the Milken Family Foundation National Educator Award, the Disney American Teacher of the Year Award, the Distinguished Teacher of the Year Award for Colorado and Colorado Art Educator of the Year. Angelique works closely with the needs of our schools and the students and families that they serve. She has developed a myriad of culturally responsive intervention and mediation trainings through interdepartmental collaborations that address the various needs of our Jeffco communities. The trainings focus on individual and cultural relevance and have helped certificated and licensed staff, teachers, and administrators be more attentive to the changing realities of their students and communities in particular with the onset of Jeffco's changing demographics, increasing poverty rates and expanding language acquisition concerns. Angelique's effective community outreach involves multi-faceted problem solving that helps students and their families understand the procedures and protocols of the school district allowing them to grow and ultimately thrive within the structure. Her "liaison" ability has also helped to heal some very tense exchanges and relationships between schools and families and has opened doors to better communication, understanding and collaboration. Angelique Acevedo-Barrón takes initiative to go above and beyond the call of duty

to ensure that whatever the situation, Jeffco students and their families feel honored and welcomed and the district maintains the integrity it has always lived by.

Joelle Broberg – Administrator - Joelle Broberg wants to make the world a better place and she has already achieved this at Evergreen High School. Several years ago, she took a group of students to the Cherry Creek Diversity Conference. The students were so inspired that they wanted to plan and provide something for EHS where their peers could come to understand diversity by being exposed to a wide variety of experiences. The **Evergreen High School Diversity Forum** was formed under the guidance and supervision of Joelle and has established the EHS **Diversity Day**. Evergreen High School's first **Diversity Day** was held in October 2011. It was a huge success and in October 2012, the second EHS **Diversity Day** was held with over 50 speakers representing a very diverse population. Students attended workshops and could choose from many different presentations including Argentine Tango, Lost Boys of the Sudan, Adaptive Adventures, the ADL, the Mizel Museum, Slave Trade, Indian Cooking, a World Religion Panel with 12 different religions, and the Laramie Project just to name a few. In addition, students and staff from EHS, community leaders, and teachers from different schools attended the event. Joelle Broberg was instrumental in making the EHS **Diversity Day** a success. As assistant principal at EHS, Joelle spent endless hours motivating the students, raising money, helping parent volunteers, coordinating with speakers, scheduling classrooms, and overseeing the logistics of a 1,000+ person conference. Other schools expressed an interest in hosting a **Diversity Day** so Joelle and EHS students presented the **Diversity Day** planning and implementation process at this year's Cherry Creek Diversity Conference.

Mayor Bob Murphy – Mayor City of Lakewood, Colorado – Legacy Award
Lakewood is proud of its ethnic and cultural diversity. In 2012, Lakewood, Colorado was the first city to win the National Civic League's "**Diversity Award**" in conjunction with winning the coveted 2011 "**All-America City Award**" for their commitment to advancing diversity, inclusiveness and collaboration in the community. The National Civic League selected Lakewood as one of its 10 annual All-America City Awards, because of the significant cooperation and collaboration between City Hall, community organizations and citizens that had taken place in the City of Lakewood under the leadership of Mayor Bob Murphy. The All-America City Award is given to 10 communities each year and is based on how successfully the city meets the ever changing challenges in their communities. Mayor Bob Murphy targeted the city of Lakewood's focus on the diverse needs of their community. This concentration materialized into the creation and implementation of the West Colfax urban renewal and associated light rail project, the Greening Lakewood Business Partnership and the newly opened Boys and Girls Club at O'Connell Middle School. The West Colfax project included nearly 1,000 residents in a multi-year, multi-pronged planning effort to renew West Colfax Avenue with new zoning that expands land-use opportunities and planning for the coming West

Corridor light-rail line and rail stations. The Greening Lakewood Business Partnership prompts energy-efficient modifications to more than 1,500 older, existing office and commercial buildings in Lakewood. The opening of the Jefferson County branch of the Boys and Girls Club at O'Connell Middle School in Jeffco saved the school, which was on the school district closure list and currently provides extensive afterschool academic and recreational support for a diverse community that is expanding in Jeffco.

As Mayor Bob Murphy said, "The City of Lakewood offers a wide variety of opportunities for both businesses and residents. We have an educated population, existing and planned multi-modal transportation systems, historic neighborhoods, vast public parks, open space, and thriving arts and cultural community, all located just 10 minutes from downtown Denver and 10 minutes from the mountains. Lakewood is a diverse community with something to offer everyone. Lakewood, our businesses, and our nonprofit organizations work together to find better ways to serve those who live and work in the city. That culture remains unchanged from the time when the city's incorporation was founded on our eclectic neighborhoods coming together to create Lakewood."