



PEAK EDUCATION
REACH HIGHER

ANNUAL REPORT

2021-2022



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A WORD FROM THE CEO



“ We are hopeful and excited about where we are going, but also pleased to share this look back at the previous academic year and proud of the many accomplishments made by Peak Education Scholars as they strive to Reach Higher. ”

Peak Education Community,

It's been another year of growth and expansion for Peak Education and the students we serve. While overall program enrollment numbers continue to rise, we also measure our growth through the deepening of program offerings to ensure that the fundamental reason for our success is maintained: providing supportive relationships with youth and their families. We were pleased to return to classrooms across the city last year and to be able to engage with our students, in person, in ways that the limitations of the pandemic would not allow. We know that the combination of myriad program offerings and relationship-building opportunities are effective in propelling our students to make great choices about their futures and were pleased that despite the pandemic, nearly 92% of Peak Education scholars choose to enroll in a post-secondary option last year. This was in sharp contrast to declining college enrollment rates across the United States. The student who chose not to enroll is on an honorable path serving our country through the Navy.

As we turn the corner on the pandemic and 2022, I have asked that the upcoming semester be a time of listening and visioning for our organization. Through a student, parent, and alumni advisory council and an inclusive strategic planning process, Peak Education is striving to

better understand the needs of the students and families being served as well as the best practices that other peer organizations are engaged in. Beyond generating a list of activities and goals for the next several years, an outcome of the strategic planning process will be the establishment of a set of core values that staff, students, parents and board members will utilize when making decisions and that will be integrated into organizational practices.

We are hopeful and excited about where we are going. but also pleased to share this look back at the previous academic year and proud of the many accomplishments made by Peak Education Scholars as they strive to Reach Higher.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "L. Carlos Jiménez".

L. Carlos Jiménez
Chief Executive Officer

MEET OUR TEAM



Carlos Jiménez
Chief Executive Officer



Vennita Browning
Director of Programs



Pedro Ramírez
Sr. Director for Strategic
Initiatives & Development



Jasmine Rainey
Director of College Counseling



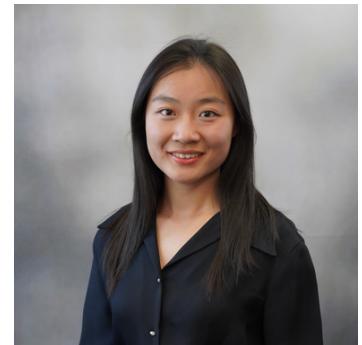
Nataya Stepleton
Operations Manager



Anne Taylor
Associate Director-
High School Programs,
Mentoring and College Success



Grace Miller
Marketing and Communications
Coordinator



Amy Ji
Public Interest Fellow



Lindsay Leggett
Assistant Director for
Programs and Development
&
Basecamp College
Counselor & Consultant



Nancy Whitley
Basecamp College Counselor



**Jessica
Desantis-Berg**
Basecamp College
Counselor & Consultant



Kristen Nunez
Grant Writer

MEET OUR BOARD



**Cassie Gannett,
Ph.D.**

Board President



Rick Gillit

Board Treasurer



Carrie McKee

Board Member



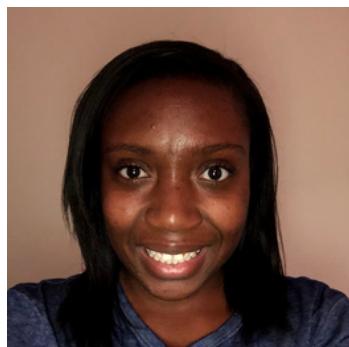
Todd Matia

Board Vice President



Rick Mueller

Board Secretary



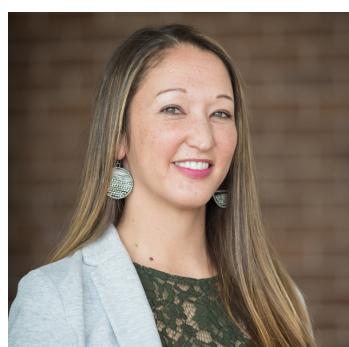
Porschae Brown

Alumni Board Member



Chuy Alvarez

Alumni Board Member



Sylvia Mendez,

Ph.D.

Board Member



Evelyn Spencer

Board Member

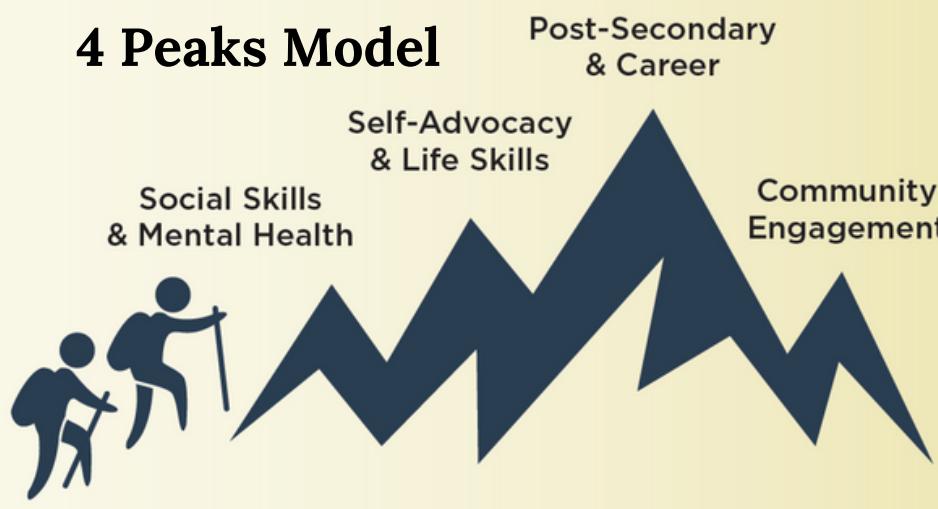
WHO WE ARE



OUR "WHY"

Peak Education disrupts the status quo by closing opportunity gaps in our community. We believe that every student deserves to reach for their full potential and that all willing learners are capable of doing so.

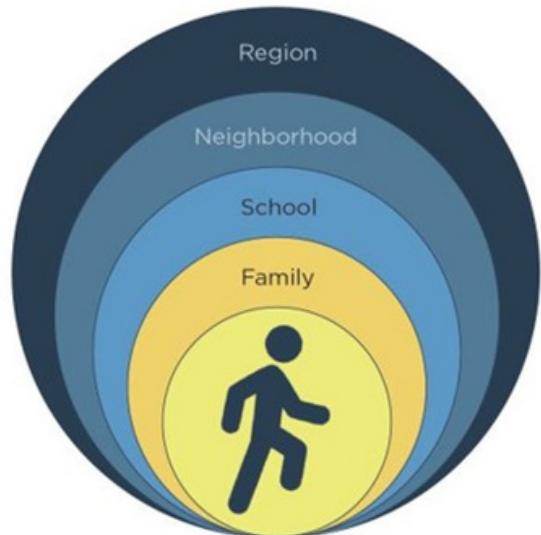
4 Peaks Model



How

Create positive change at all levels that impact a student's trajectory

SUSTAINED SUCCESS
in life creates a ripple effect



For two days in July, Peak Ed staff members retreated to gain a deeper understanding of "Peak Ed 2.0." With so much growth in staff, students and program offerings over the past two years, it seemed important to step back and re-examine our organization and its stakeholders to identify the desired outcomes and enduring understandings we aim to cultivate in our scholars. Using threads of Grant Wiggins' "Understanding by Design" and design-thinking strategies, we identified four categories that encapsulate the work we do: **social skills and mental health, self-advocacy and life skills, post-secondary and career readiness, and community engagement**. With a slight shift from the original "four pillars" of Peak Education, we adopted these as the "Four Peaks" that correspond to our new logo.

What Our Programming Includes:



PROGRAM DATA



Partner Schools

Middle Schools:

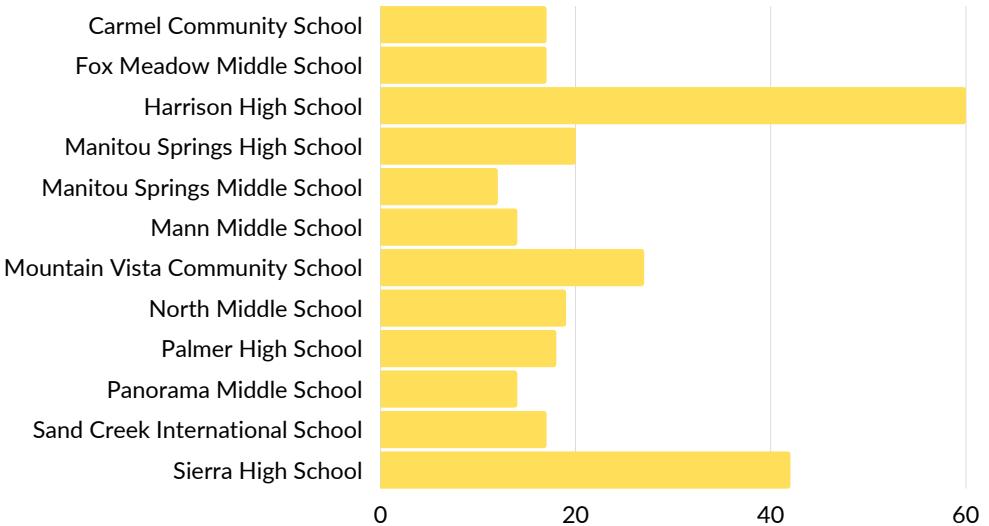
Carmel Community School
 Fox Meadow Middle School
 Manitou Springs Middle School
 Mann Middle School
 Mountain Vista Community School
 North Middle School
 Panorama Middle School
 Sand Creek International School

High Schools:

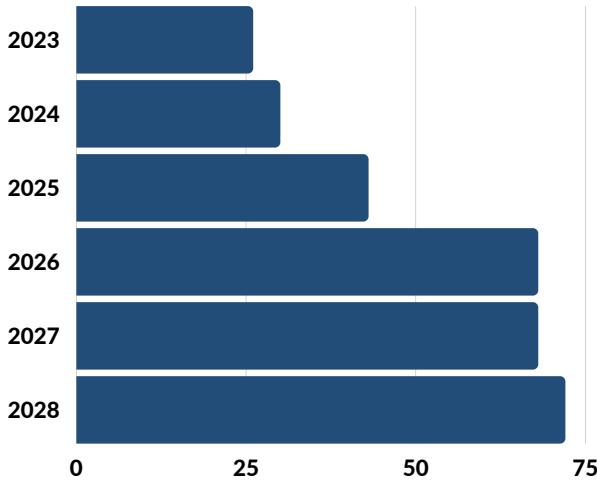
Harrison High School
 Manitou Springs High School
 Palmer High School
 Sierra High School

We currently serve just under 300 students at our partner schools in Districts 2, 11, and 14 in the Pikes Peak Region as well as an additional 27 students who are enrolled outside of our partner schools.

Active Enrollments at Partner Schools



Active Enrollments by Cohort



Colleges Currently Attended by Peak Ed Scholars

60 Peak Ed Scholars
 Currently enrolled
 in a postsecondary
 program

- Adams State
- Arizona State University
- Benedictine College (Kansas)
- Berea College
- Case Western University
- Colorado College
- Colorado Mesa University
- Colorado School of Mines
- Colorado State University, Ft. Collins
- Colorado State University, Pueblo
- Fort Lewis College
- Lake Forest College
- Metropolitan State University, Denver
- Northeastern University
- Northern Arizona University
- Pikes Peak State College
- Pueblo Community College
- The Ohio State University
- University of Arizona
- University of Colorado, Boulder
- University of Colorado, Colorado Springs
- University of Denver
- University of Northern Colorado
- West Texas A&M



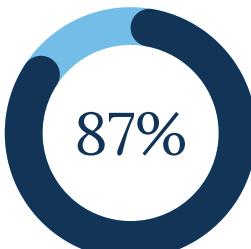
ABOUT OUR STUDENTS



Will be the first in their family to complete a college degree



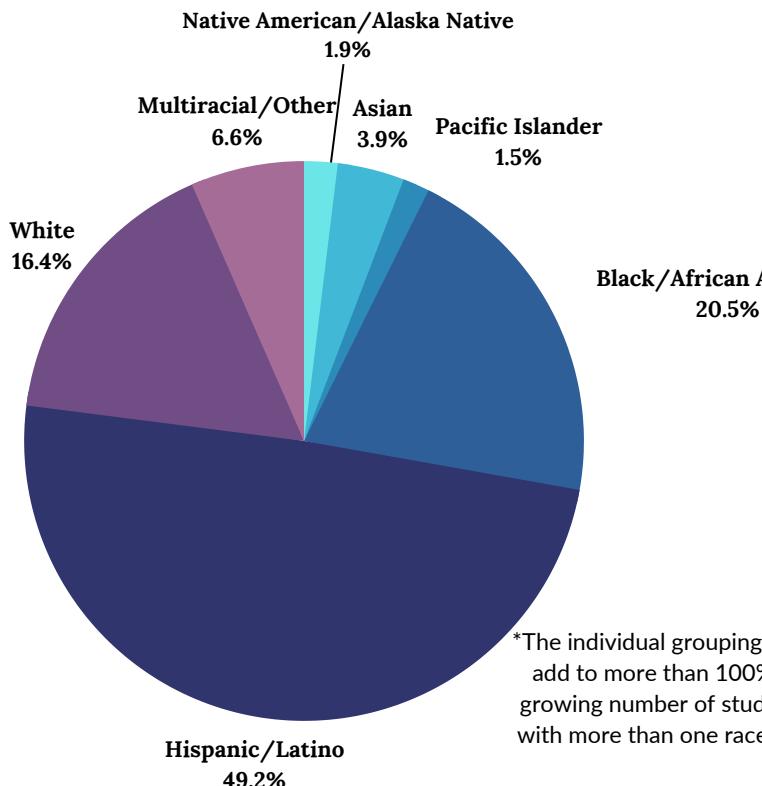
Qualify for free or reduced lunch



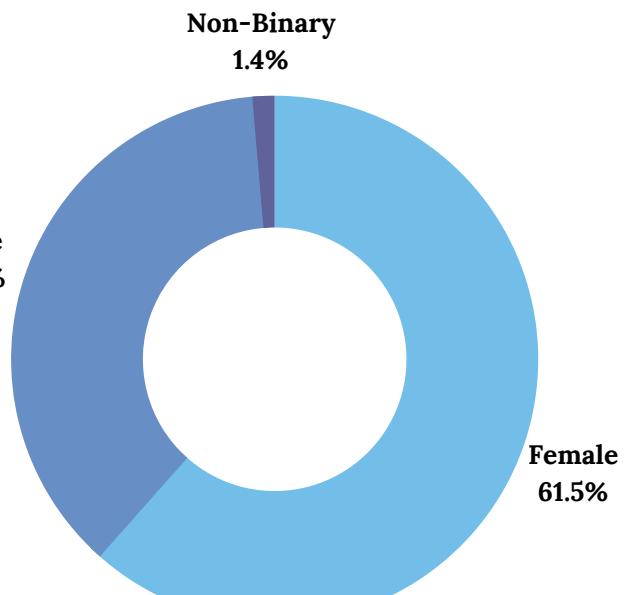
Identify as a person of color

Student Demographics

Racial/Ethnic Identities



Disclosed Gender Identities



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Monthly School Meetings



Monthly programs launched in our partner schools this September, focusing on the four pillars defined by Peak Ed staff during our summer retreat: social skills and mental health, self-advocacy and life skills, post-secondary and career readiness, and community engagement. In the middle school program, we taught our students the importance of college and career readiness using the Roadtrip Nation website. They are also learning the importance of self-advocacy and integrity in group dynamics through negotiation. In addition to conducting college and career research, high school students set goals, established priorities and are learning techniques for stress reduction and mindfulness to promote self-care and mental health. Every monthly meeting allows us build connections and relationships with our students, the foundation of our program.

Mentoring

Mentoring programs at Peak Education are up and running this fall! Fourteen community mentor pairs launched the year with icebreakers, pizza and ambitious plans, particularly for seniors who rely on their mentors to help them with the daunting tasks of college and scholarship applications. Peak Ed's Community Mentors range from financial analysts, to retired educators, to El Pomar Fellows. All of them donate their time, wisdom



and support to Peak Ed juniors and seniors who opt into the program.

Meanwhile, 12 of our 9th and 10th graders in our Near-Peer Mentoring program are matched with Peak Education scholars now attending college across the country. Participants join monthly group Zoom meetings to explore topics such as goal-setting and decision-making, as well as meeting one-on-one (remotely or in person, depending on geography) to further explore these and other topics, as well as to support our young students as they navigate the early years of high school.

From your local Starbucks to the world of wi-fi, our scholars are connecting with mentors who help them explore their potential and expand their world of possibilities.

Full STEAM Ahead



This summer 64 of Peak Education's middle school students attended the Full STEAM Ahead program hosted by The Colorado Springs School. During the two- week program, students got to learn through hands-on activities such as building robots to dissecting sheep brains. Outside of classroom learning, students went on field trips and participated in chosen electives. For both our newest students and for those returning, Full STEAM Ahead is a significant part of the Peak Education experience.



Community Engagement/Volunteering

Having our students engaged in their community through giving back and volunteering has always been a core part of Peak Education's mission. We provide different opportunities through partnerships with Catamount, Rocky Mountain Field Institute, Friends of Cheyenne Cañon, and Care and Share Food Bank. So far this year, Peak Ed has offered service events each month resulting in a total of over 500 volunteer hours. Not only are these opportunities meant to promote service-learning, but are also a way for our scholars to build an impressive resumé for scholarships and post-secondary success. Teaching future generations, such as our students, to be stewards of their community by giving back allows them to become agents of change.

College Success Program

In its second year, Peak Education's College Success Program (CSP) follows our graduating seniors to college, supporting them with individual phone check-ins and providing timely resources on topics related to academic, financial and social-emotional wellbeing as they transition to their new campuses. This year's cohort includes 11 college students enrolled in six colleges and universities all over Colorado. Thus far, the 2022 cohort is doing very well, tackling the challenges of increased academic demands, navigating dorms and food plans, finding part-time employment and exploring the clubs and activities available on campus.

CSP also provides opportunities for first-year students to stay connected with other Peak Ed scholars and learn about summer internships at our Back-from-College Night over winter break.

Particularly for those living away from home, finding a supportive community where one feels a sense of comfort and belonging can be challenging. CSP helps students identify and take advantage of resources on campus—from tutoring centers to cultural affinity groups to additional sources of financial support. New to CSP this year, a fund set up by a long-term Peak Education donor allows us to offer financial support for unexpected expenses, emergencies and enrichment opportunities.

We recognize that the path is not always linear: students don't always pass every class the first time around; one's first choice college may turn out to be the best fit. CSP walks with students who need support navigating the obstacles in the road. We are incredibly proud of the work our scholars are doing in college, and we look forward to seeing how their paths continue to evolve, ultimately bringing them onto the stage for their degrees.

Impact Service Project 2.0



In January, we kicked off our second year of the Impact Service Project, made possible through a grant from L3Harris. By participating in the ISP, Peak Education Scholars have the chance to take on some of our community's biggest challenges. In response to problems identified in local businesses, nonprofits, and educational institutions, students work in small group teams—with the support of a coach—to identify root causes of local area problems and identify solutions.

COLLEGE COUNSELING UPDATE

Peak Ed's college counseling program continued to expand throughout the previous and current academic school year for 9th-12th grade students. Class of 2022 earned over \$500,000 in scholarships with 92% enrolling in college in the fall of 2022. The remaining 8% enrolled in the U.S. Navy. Students matriculated to a variety of universities, including Colorado School of Mines, Colorado College, Colorado State University and Fort Lewis College.

During the summer, four rising seniors took advantage of Peak Ed's partnerships with various colleges. Three students completed a weeklong Economics for Leadership program at the University of Washington, the University of Chicago, or the University of Texas at Austin, while a fourth attended a three-week long global pandemics course at Carleton College.

The class of 2023 kicked off the year with a three-day college app camp in June, which gave them a jumpstart on their senior year and the admissions process. Sessions and workshops included admission case studies, resumé building,

essay writing, financial aid and scholarships, and application completion. Throughout the fall, students have continued to engage in a variety of admissions and financial aid presentations and workshops, including a community event on October 15th, which was co-led by Peak Ed's Director of College Counseling, Jasmine Rainey, in conjunction with Educating Children of Color and the African American Youth Leadership Conference. The event culminated in a college application workshop where volunteers and college representatives assisted students with their applications and reviewed essays.

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE CLASS OF 2022!



PEAK ED SCHOLARS THAT ARE REACHING HIGHER



Deliannys Reyes

Alongside her high school diploma, Deliannys Reyes earned an associate degree in psychology and 83 college credits from Pikes Peak State College, all with a GPA of 4.65. Deli represented Harrison's 2022 graduating class as Valedictorian. Over the years, Deli has grown more confident in her own abilities and communication skills as she stepped into leadership roles. She was part of the Impact Service Project that was invited to present their results on a panel at the Colorado School Counselor Association Conference in Keystone in the fall of 2021, and in her senior year she worked with Viva Marketing to plan a festival honoring Hispanic culture and heritage. Deli has received the Hispanic Heritage Foundation Community Service Scholarship and currently attends Colorado College debt-free where she majors in psychology with a minor in feminist and gender studies. Ultimately, she hopes to become a clinical psychologist serving underrepresented populations and working towards ending the stigma surrounding mental health education.



Melia Palaroan

Melia Palaroan graduated from Sierra High School at the top of her class. The class of 2022's valedictorian had a list of impressive accomplishments beyond a 4.5 GPA. She also earned an associate degree from Pikes Peak State College during her junior year of high school. From student government, where she served as class president for three years and student body president this year, to National Honor Society, to four years as a varsity cheerleader, Melia engaged fully in her school community, honing her leadership skills and making the most of her time there. She participated in community service projects at Care and Share and the Rocky Mountain Field Institute, in addition to doing work at the Children's Literacy Center. Melia is also deeply committed to her family and her Hawaiian heritage. She has often spoken about returning to Hawaii to help people live fuller lives. After watching some of her family members in the healthcare profession make a difference during the pandemic, she decided to pursue a degree in nursing at UCCS. As a Kane Scholarship recipient, Melia is attending with a full ride.



Joleen Mai

As Salutatorian at Sierra High School, Joleen Mai, graduated with her diploma and a GPA of 4.58, not to mention two associate degrees—one in arts and one in science—from Pikes Peak State College. She also participated in student council at Sierra and pursued her interests in STEM, dance, and volleyball. Like many, Joleen came back to school after the pandemic with a greater appreciation for friends and a determination to make the most of her opportunities. Her academic success is no doubt the result of her incredible work ethic, but she recognizes her support network as well. She credits her family as the source of her happiness and motivation; they create a safe space where she can share her struggles and gain the support she needs to continue. Through Peak Education she got involved in community service work at Care and Share and developed an important relationship with her community mentor, Barbara Keeney. In Joleen's words, Barbara provided her with "kindness, answers and constant support" for the past two years. Joleen plans to pursue a career in a medical field, and her first step on this journey is attending UCCS where she studies biochemistry.

In May, Peak Education commemorated the achievements of the graduating class of 2022. They demonstrated their resiliency through continued hard work and persistence put into every aspect of their lives. Three students from this year's graduating class who exemplified these qualities were honored as Valedictorians and Salutatorian of their classes. We are so proud of them and can't wait to see what they do next!



BASECAMP

COLLEGE COUNSELING

FIND YOUR PATH

Basecamp College Counseling, the social enterprise division of Peak Education, officially launched this past spring and continues to grow and extend Peak Education's expertise into the community. Staff presented introductory college counseling information at a community event for juniors and their families and offered college application workshops and camps over the summer and fall.

Our counselors also work with long-term clients, currently serving a caseload of eleven students--with one of our current seniors recently accepting an offer to University of Michigan. Basecamp also offers "a la carte" counseling whereby families can sign-up for specific consulting services tailored to their individual needs.

This fall, through Counselor Corps Grants, two school districts hired Basecamp to help with all aspects of college planning and counselor support. Needless to say, our staff continues to seek ways to support Peak Ed's initiatives with our unique and varied approach to client-centered college counseling excellence.

To accommodate increased programming and client services, Basecamp hired two new staff members. Lindsay Leggett, formerly of Western Colorado University's admissions office, joined Nancy Whitley, formerly serving in school counseling positions in Dallas, Texas and Vail, Colorado, as our lead counselors. In addition to their individual student clients, Lindsay and Nancy serve weekly at both Harrison and Sierra High Schools. At Harrison, Lindsay has already led several workshops focusing on scholarships and financial aid.

Jessica DeSantis-Berg also joined the team this year. She provides focused guidance and vision-casting as a former admissions leader at Lehigh University. Jessica works remotely from Pennsylvania and maintains Basecamp's website.

In the coming year, Basecamp intends to expand its footprint, from professional conference presentations to creating a social media presence in order to further share valuable information and advertise its services.

"Peak Education/Basecamp helped make the college application process much more fun and a lot less intimidating. I am confident in my school choice."

- Adam W., Basecamp Client

RECOGNIZING KEY DONORS

We are grateful to all of our generous donors and supporters who continue to partner with us to change the trajectories of youth in Colorado Springs. Below are our top donors for the '21-'22 fiscal year.

Founders' List \$50,000+

Sachs Foundation

The John E. and Margaret L. Lane Foundation

The Bloom Foundation

Colorado Springs Health Foundation

President's List \$25,000+

Moniker Foundation

Pikes Peak United Way

Anschutz / Gazette Charities Foundation

Chapman Foundation

Colorado Enterprise Fund

Dean's List \$10,000+

Carl George Bjorkman
Foundation

Myron Stratton Foundation

Edson Family Foundation

Clay & Anne Taylor

Heather & Leon Kelly

Strub-Heer Foundation

Honor Roll \$5,000+

Anschutz Family Foundation

Patricia Hudson

CALM Foundation

Paul Martinez & Mari Sinton-Martinez

Colorado Tour Line, LLC

Rick Mueller

Jeff Dunn

Nutrition Camp Foundation

Cathy & Bart Holaday

Chuck & Mary Lou Murphy

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Jessica Desantis-Berg (Basecamp College Counselor and Consultant)

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Kristen Nunez (Grant Writer)

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Fund Their Future Campaign

Now-December 31st

Help Us Raise the Next Class of Peak Ed Scholars

As 2022 concludes, we are preparing to recruit the next class of Peak Education Scholars. Our goal of **\$32,000** will help pave the way for the new group of scholars to receive impactful and vital services from Peak Education which will change life trajectories.



Scan the QR or head to www.peakedu.org/donation to give today

Meet Denver: The Peak Ed Office Mascot



Meet Denver, a spunky 4 year old Border Collie and Beagle mix. He is the official office greeter and protector. He can normally be found at his mom's side or begging for human food. If you need a companion to make sure you're eating every bite of your lunch, Denver's your guy!



@peakeducationcos



Peak Education