



The New America School

Success 2014

Report

Message from Chair

The 13-14 school year was another exciting year for New America School-Colorado (NAS). We had many high points and milestones to celebrate.

Two of our campuses successfully transitioned, or were approved for transition in the 14-15 school year, to the Charter School Institute (CSI)—Denver and Lowry, respectively. The change in authorizers was extremely well-received by the board of directors as being state-authorized is much more appropriate for schools that enroll students from across many districts rather than mostly from the district in which they reside. Additionally, the change will grant both of these campuses more freedom, coupled with thoughtful accountability, to run their operations more effectively to meet our unique student needs.

The Denver campus had some other significantly good news: a brand new—and gorgeous—campus! In fact, the campus is now NAS-Thornton as the school moved from a dilapidated building in the industrial area sandwiched between I-25 and I-76 to a modern building in the heart of old Thornton on 89th and Washington. We had a great school opening in January 2014 attended by many elected officials, community leaders, and, importantly, incumbent and new students. The campus has been welcomed by the community with open arms as it not only provides new academic opportunities, but it also transformed a former eyesore, a long-closed Albertsons, into a fully renovated school building. The board happily oversaw this transition and expects great things from the new Thornton campus.

And no Success Report would be complete without recognizing and congratulating the 198 students that walked across the stage at the Ellie Caulkins Opera House downtown to receive their high school diploma, with more than ever before moving on to two- and four-year colleges. As a member

of the board for the past four years, I always look forward to this evening as it reminds me of why NAS is such an important institution for both the Denver region and Colorado as a whole. Without NAS, many of these young adults would not have completed their high school education as most self-report that they have not been well-served—or even, distressingly, discarded—by the traditional K-12 system. Now, these students all have a wealth of new opportunities that they would have been precluded from without a degree.

But this year was not without its challenges. All three NAS campuses were faced with student counts that were below historical norms and under expectations. For a school that provides a variety of wraparound services for our students, the lower student counts—and the resulting decline in per-pupil revenue—forced some difficult financial decisions. But our phenomenal staff at the non-profit and all three school principals were well-prepared and the schools all weathered the financial storm with few disruptions.

Second, while the NAS schools had academic successes, the schools still face issues on the state-mandated School Performance Framework (SPF). This is not a shock, however, as the NAS mission—to empower new immigrants, English language learners, and academically underserved students with educational tools to succeed—results in all three schools serving students faced with many challenges, both inside and outside of school. This is compounded by the fact that the SPF continues to remain ineffective in accurately and effectively evaluating the full extent of the progress NAS makes serving our students. The schools remain vigilant in improving these ratings, however, and we remain 100% committed to staying



Vinny Badolato
Board Chair

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Mission

The mission of The New America School is to empower new immigrants, English Language Learners and academically underserved students with the educational tools and support they need to maximize their potential, succeed, and live the American dream.

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Maria Lopez: James Baldwin Fellow

“Con Maria, todo se puede,” said Mr. Lopez, a native of Zacatecas, as he waved at his daughter going through security at DIA, “She say yes to everything, si, todo se puede.” It was a bittersweet moment, watching this unassuming but proud father who had only finished fifth grade wave his first born off to college—an adventure he could only imagine. “Maria is our first,” he said to me, his eyes glued on the beautiful



Maria Lopez

brunette smiling at him from her spot on the line. Maria was indeed a first—the first in her family to finish middle school, to finish high school, to go to college, and

the very first to step inside an airplane. At NAS-Lakewood, she was the first to apply, be accepted, and receive a full ride to a liberal arts college.

To Maria, all ideas are worth pursuing. As a senior, she relentlessly followed every lead for a scholarship while earning straight A's and never missing

a class. She also never said no to an invitation: Want to join the sewing club? Sure. Staying late for ACT prep? Yes. Going to the prom? Already bought

the ticket. When asked how she could possibly find everything interesting, she would answer, “If Happiness knocks on your door, you better let her in, or she may not return.” Her positive attitude was terribly contagious. In fact, Maria was instrumental in creating our first “Geek Club”—a group of kids who attended school every day, joined all the clubs, applied to colleges, and hung out at on the couches before and after school.

Today Maria Lopez is a happy pre-freshman at Hampshire College in Amherst, Massachusetts—one of just eight students throughout the United States to receive a five-year James Baldwin fellowship to Hampshire. She is taking advantage of the college's creative cross curricular emphasis to major in film making and pre-medicine.

—Teacher Lilia Guimares

Memories of Class of 2013-14

Mohanad Abdulrazzaq, NAS-Lowry, Class of 2014

Each year there are just a handful of graduating seniors that I know will leave a lasting impression on me. Mohanad

Abdulrazzaq is one of those students.

Although he only attended NAS for three semesters, he made an indelible mark on our school. Mohanad has a story of survival, adaptation and success. He

came to the United States via Iraq older than the traditional high school age and so Overland High School denied him admission. He heard someone mention The New America School and the rest is history. Mohanad excelled as a student here, graduating in the top 10% of his class. For one semester he was concurrently enrolled at Pickens Technical College where he earned an Enterprise Computer Service certificate. Mohanad served as a tech assistant in his final semester at NAS, helping ensure our computers were running smoothly. He willingly volunteered his time in other capacities as well. He helped with translating, recruiting and tutoring. He did all of this with a willing, affable

demeanor. Mohanad is a well-rounded young man who has a bright future in store for himself. What a pleasure it was to have him as a student here.

— Counselor Matthew Johnson

Maria Guadalupe Lopez Alvarado, NAS-Thornton, Class of 2014

Imagine having only two years of formal education and having to move to a country where your native language is now a foreign language. Added to your lack of education is the fact that you are now of high school age and must try to learn a new language, earn a high school diploma and work while attending high school. The odds of success for this student



are slim to none. However, there are people who were made to succeed no matter what obstacles life throws their way. This is the story of an amazing young lady who defied all odds and has become an inspiration to her fellow classmates and our school staff.

Maria Guadalupe Lopez Alvarado exemplifies perseverance and dedication. Maria was born in the United States

but was raised in Mexico. Due to circumstances out of her control, she was forced to leave school at a very young age. She learned how to read and write because her family always transmitted the importance of being educated. Maria was forced to practice reading and writing every afternoon. Attending school did not become an option for her until she moved to Denver to be with her father and brothers.

She learned about The New America School from her older brother who was already attending the school. Maria came to NAS with no English and no high school credits. She began attending NAS in August 2011 and graduated May 2014 just before her 22nd birthday. This amazing young lady not only learned English but also earned her high school diploma in less than three years. While in school, Maria held a full time job. She made sure her employer knew school was her priority.

All students have the ability to rise from their experiences, both negative and positive. Maria Guadalupe Lopez Alvarado rose above and beyond her experiences, which were mostly negative. Yet, she was never selfish or bitter. Maria was always willing to help others around her reach their goals by allowing herself to shine with humility and gratitude.

— Counselor Mayra Ramirez

Graduation: 2014



2013-14 Graduation Ceremony Honors Student Success

The 2014 New America School graduation ceremonies returned for a third time to the beautiful Ellie Caulkins Opera House, as a standing room only crowd of family and friends proudly watched 198 students receive their diplomas. And as each graduate crossed the stage to receive his or her diploma, friends and family members burst into loud applause and, often, tears of joy.

"Watching these students beam with pride and hearing the elation of family members," says Scholarship Committee Chair and graduation presenter Gina Nocera, "really brings home how significant this day is for our students. Many of these young adults are the first in their families to graduate and, perhaps, to continue their education. The New America School has opened doors for these students that just a few short years ago, they felt were permanently shut."

Festivities began with a rousing rendition of the national anthem, delivered for the second consecutive



year by NAS-Thornton student, Jobel Walker, now a graduating senior. As Ms. Walker sang, positioned in front of a bank of flags of the many nations from which our students hail and flanked by graduating students from more than 30 countries,

audience members could not help but be reminded that the New America School truly empowers new immigrants, English language learners, and academically underserved students with the educational tools and support to maximize their potential and live the American dream.

Senior speakers Nhi Prim, (NAS-Lakewood), Maribell Cervantes-Estrada (NAS-Thornton), and Armando Villela (NAS-Lowry) recapped some of their experiences on the long road to graduation. They spoke of obstacles they faced while pursuing their degrees and the joy they experienced when overcoming these challenges, and of how the New America School helped them realize their dreams—sentiments with which all their peers could certainly empathize.

For example, Armando Villela recounted, "I think it's safe to say that we all found a home here at New America, where all the teachers believed in us when no one else did, including ourselves. We felt like we finally found somewhere we belonged." ♦

FUNDING CONTRIBUTIONS

SUPPORT NAS

Your support will enable the New America School to continue to provide high quality education to English Language Learners and non-traditional students. If you would like to visit our school or hear more about our programs and how your generosity can make a huge difference in the lives of NAS students, contact David Rein, drein@newamericaschool.org, 303.894.3160.

School *Updates*

Thornton Celebrates Grand Opening

On January 30, 2014 The New America School-Thornton celebrated the Grand Opening of the school's new campus at 8978 Washington Street in Thornton, Colorado.

Festivities were attended by students and staff, along with community officials and Congressman Ed Perlmutter.

NAS-Thornton Principal Epke

told those in attendance of how the New America School-Denver (now NAS-Thornton) had been located at three different sites in the nine years prior to finding its permanent home. Congressman Perlmutter spoke of the beautiful redevelopment of a site that had fallen into decay in the years since being occupied as a grocery store. Students Aaron Navarro and Maribell Cervantes related stories about how The New America School has helped them become more prepared for life after high school.

The event allowed members of the nearby community, including Thornton and Adams County public officials, a chance to come inside and see the great work being done by NAS students and teachers. Student leaders conducted visitors on tours of the school. Among those receiving a private tour was the New America School founder Congressman Jared Polis.

The ceremony culminated with a ribbon cutting at the school's front door.

Breakfast in the Classroom

The New America School-Lowry is proud to announce that as of this fall, the school has established a "Breakfast in the Classroom" program, funded by the United States Department of Agriculture. Through this program all NAS students, regardless of their income, will be provided with a healthy breakfast at no costs.

"There were numerous reasons why we chose to start a school breakfast program," explains NAS-Lowry Principal Annie Trujillo. "Many of our students do not have the opportunity to eat breakfast on a regular basis because of working parents, long bus rides, or the inability of their families to provide enough food. These children are hungry when they reach school and they will continue to be

hungry until lunchtime, or they may eat less nutritious food to stave off hunger pangs."

While poor nutrition is obviously associated with poor health for high school students these poor health habits confound matters even more: There is mounting evidence that indicates there is a direct linkage between school performance and eating nutritious meals—particularly breakfast. Moreover, studies have shown that children whose nutritional needs are met have fewer attendance and discipline problems.

This program is especially needed at NAS-Lowry. Lowry students' responses to a recent Youth Risk Behavior Survey indicated that:

- Sixty-one percent of girls drank fruit juice less than three times per week; 68% ate fruit less than three times per week; 74% ate salad less than three times per week; and 65% ate other vegetables less than three times per week.
- Similarly, 61%, 64%, 71% and 66% of boys, respectively, reported drinking juice, eating fruit, eating a salad, or eating other vegetables less than three times per week.

The program has already positively impacted Lowry's students. "A high number of students used to visit me in the morning due to headaches and hunger," notes school nurse Anne Comaskey. "Since the program began I have already noticed a dramatic decline in these visits."

Through the newly established Breakfast in the Classroom program, along with the existing School Lunch Program, NAS-Lowry students will have the opportunity to eat healthier, and in the process, achieve better school outcomes.

Boys and Girls Club of Aurora Reading Night

Last spring, the NAS-Lowry night program invited the Boys and Girls Club of Aurora to participate in a reading night. NAS students had just finished a project in which they wrote, illustrated, and published their own children's books. This was the culmination of a unit in

which students explored the importance of reading to small children. They were exposed to different styles of children's books and practiced reading orally while using engaging expression and intonation. NAS students with small children of their own also participated in a grant-funded Motherhood study group run by school nurse Anne Comaskey.

Students worked with Humanities teacher Diana Myers to gain confidence in their reading skills, learn important elements of stories, and write and revise their own books. They worked with art teacher Alyson Ellena to learn illustration techniques, storyboard their books, and create rough and final drafts of their illustrations.

After publishing their own books, NAS students invited the Boys and Girls club to the Lowry campus for a reading and book making night. Each NAS student was paired with one or two youngsters. NAS students read their books to their

partners and then helped the Boys and Girls club participants write and illustrate books of their own. The night was such a success that the Boys and Girls club requested NAS-Lowry night students partner with the Club for more activities in the future.



Lakewood Students Hone Leadership Skills

For the past two years, NAS-Lakewood students have been taking part in several extra-curricular opportunities through which they've been able to learn more about themselves and discover their leadership qualities and potential.

Nine students, under the tutelage of advisor Deanna Hanna, have been participating in the City of Lakewood's bi-weekly Teen Court program. "Teen court," explains Ms. Hanna, "allows students to see how someone's breaking the law affects other people, and how to determine consequences that are appropriate and just for the offender."

First-time juvenile defendants who have pled guilty to municipal code violations appear in Teen Court. A teen judge presides over the trial and teens act as prosecutor, defense attorney and jurors. After hearing the case, the teen jury

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Featured Initiatives: Commitment to Professional Growth

A proven means by which a school can improve the academic outcomes of its students is to build the instructional capacities of its faculty. Acting on this premise, this year NAS will deliver two multi-faceted, thematic professional development (PD) training programs to our teachers.

The first PD program will help teachers to more effectively use data to adjust and improve instruction. This effort will take place through the support of a Colorado Department of Education "Data Use for Improved

Results" grant, secured in partnership with the Jefferson County School District.

The training will center on the Measures of Academic Progress (MAP), developed by the Northwest Evaluation Association. MAP is one of the more powerful specialized tools available to facilitate student academic growth. A teacher can use MAP data to work with a student to set goals that target the specific areas the student struggles with most; teachers can pinpoint the student's precise achievement level and group him or her with students at a similar level; or



teachers can identify reading materials that match the student's reading abilities.

Informal surveys conducted last winter indicated teachers felt that with additional training and mentoring they could use MAP data to an even greater extent, thus promoting better outcomes for

students. As such, NAS has developed a semester long PD program featuring monthly day-long training sessions supplemented with one-on-one mentoring and observation of in-class instruction.

Principal Jon Berninzoni, leader of the "Data Use" efforts, explains, "A key element of this

program will be Instructional Rounds. NAS teachers will observe model teachers, adapt and implement the teaching methodologies they observe, receive classroom coaching, and then share the lessons they learned with their peers."

The second PD program for NAS teachers will build their expertise in the use of Model Performance Indicators (MPIs). MPIs were developed by WIDA, a national consortium that promotes the advancement of English language acquisition instruction. WIDI realized that teachers were faced with two inter-

related instructional issues: the first is that academic language is more abstract and challenging than everyday English, which is especially significant for English language learners; the second is that English language learners need to learn subject matter content at the same time as they learn English. In addition, English language proficiency means becoming adept in several different areas: speaking, reading, writing and listening.

WIDA developed MPIs to help teachers navigate all these issues. MPIs define five levels of English language proficiency, such as "level 1: entering" or "level 3: developing," and accompany these definitions with strategies to identify where a student stands and then move that student from one level to the next, culminating with the student reaching the highest level of proficiency.

The MPI training will build the capacities of our teachers to write lesson plans that include both a content objective and a language objective, and provide them with the tools to guide students to ever increasing levels of content and language proficiency.

"Through these programs," NAS Professional Development Coordinator Tracey McCormick concludes, "NAS will continue to build a school climate that values professional growth and teachers, administrators and staff will have the opportunity to learn and benefit from each other's skills and strengths." ♦

UPDATES *continued from page 4*

determines the juvenile's sentence, which must include community service and teen court jury service and may require the defendant to complete classes, essays, or apology letters.

NAS student and Teen Court participant Briana Ortega notes that she has grown more confident in her leadership abilities through the program as "everybody's opinion counts at Teen Court."

A second program, Jeffco Student Voice, engages students in conversations with the Jefferson County School District Superintendent and district leadership. NAS students attend monthly meetings with student representatives from other Jeffco schools. Students are provided the opportunity to express their viewpoints about education and school-related topics. Conversely, district leaders are given the

opportunity to learn from students about how best to address their educational needs and concerns.

Students are nominated to participate in the Student Voice program. This year's participants include: Rose Estrada, Victoria Hernandez, Yussef Malacon, Jayla Anglada, and Geovanni Anglada.

"Jeffco Student Voice is a wonderful opportunity for NAS students to meet and work with students from other Jeffco schools on issues they deem important. It really does give them a voice," states advisor Savanna Benson.

The program teaches teamwork



as NAS-students work in concert with students from other schools; it builds advocacy skills, as students must learn to speak on the behalf or in support of their peers; and Student Voice empowers students as they gain experience creating outcomes that might not have been realized without their participation.

Piggybacking off these efforts, Ms. Hanna and Ms. Benson, along with Social Studies teacher Jeremy

Hoffer, took students to visit the Colorado Supreme Court and the State Capitol building. At the Supreme Court, students were hosted by Justice Gregory Hobbs and were also able to meet Chief Justice Nancy E. Rice and Representative Brittany Pettersen. ♦

Featured Initiatives: Postsecondary and Workforce Preparedness

During the 2013-14 NAS graduation ceremony, counselors informed those in attendance of each student's postsecondary aspirations.

"As I watched graduates walk across the stage, and listened to their plans for the future," reminisces NAS superintendent Dominic DiFelice, "I was reminded of how many different paths our students will follow. Some students tell us they plan to attend four year colleges and pursue advanced degrees; others, a two year institution to better prepare themselves for further studies; still others will enroll in trade schools; and many are eager to immediately enter the world of work or serve their country in the armed forces. Our job at NAS," DiFelice concludes, "is to prepare all of our students for whatever future they choose."



Toward that end, the New America School has launched several major initiatives to better ready our students for either the workforce or postsecondary education.

With the support of a School Counselor Corps grant, awarded by the Colorado Department of Education's Office of Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness, NAS school counselors undertook a year-long planning project to recommend a series of workforce and college readiness interventions. The Counselor Corps grant will fund the implementation of many of these interventions for the next two years.

"This year, the counseling team conducted environmental scans and needs assessments related to each campus's postsecondary preparation programming," describes

Counselor Corps lead Barbara Rittenhouse. "We analyzed our Individual Career and Academic Plans (ICAP) procedures and all the various postsecondary preparation interventions



we have in place at our schools. Acting on the results of these scans, the counselors were able to develop a comprehensive postsecondary preparedness program that will be fully implemented at all three campuses beginning next year."

The counselor team's adopted recommendations include:

- Expanding the Counseling Staff.** Each school will hire a licensed school counselor whose duties will focus on postsecondary counseling. Newly hired postsecondary counselor Judy Schott explains her position, "My mission is to work with all students to complete their ICAP. I collaborate with and support all my students as they develop post-secondary goals and together we create roadmaps to allow them to achieve their goals."
- Preparing Students to Perform Better on the ACT and AccuPlacer Tests.** Standardized tests play an important role in determining whether graduates will have an opportunity to attend college, what colleges they will attend, and the financial support they will receive. Accordingly, NAS will deliver the ACT ZAPS preparatory program to 10th and 11th graders and Accuplacer preparation to 12th graders.
- Offer Online Developmental Math Education.** NAS will offer student ALEKS 060 and 090 classes, programs sanctioned by Adams State University, which prepare students to directly enter college level math courses upon enrollment.
- Building a College Going Culture.** NAS will implement a variety of steps to build students' expectations that they can continue their education including: colleges visits for students and their parents; a college and career fair at each site; and expanding efforts to support concurrent enrollment.

The counselors recommended that the schools adopt workplace, as well as college, readiness programming. Our non-college going students will be given the opportunity to take concurrent technical (CTE) courses and certificate programs through either community colleges and/or technical schools, and NAS is pursuing partnerships to allow our students to intern or participate in apprenticeships. Students

will be given the opportunity to attend career events or participate in job shadowing. ACT WorkKeys, a career readiness program, will be integrated into the curriculum at each school. Students completing the program earn a nationally recognized certificate attesting their readiness to the employer community.

One major workplace preparation initiative is taking place at the Thornton campus in partnership with Goodwill Industries of Denver. During the 2013-14 school-year, a Goodwill facilitator began teaching an onsite College and Career Readiness class.



Taking advantage of the close relationships that Goodwill has been able to develop with local employers over

the years, the facilitator has been able to regularly bring representatives from these employers into the NAS-Thornton classroom. The employers not only act as guest lecturers, but they hold mock interviews, conduct practical hands-on activities, and some even arrange for students to visit their workplace. Through these efforts, students are able to see a direct link between their classroom experience and "the real world."



According to current Youth Facilitator Luke Warner, "NAS students are interested in the class and really enjoy it. They know that it will help them to become ready to pursue jobs, college or other postsecondary opportunities."

The NAS/Goodwill partnership deepened throughout the year. A Goodwill Adult Facilitator has now come on board to work with students' parents or adult family members for eight hours each week. The facilitator helps family members improve their job skills. The very first adult family member who participated in the parent program was hired within two weeks of working with the adult facilitator. ♦

2013-14 Most Successful Fundraising Year in NAS History

With a grant of \$25,000, the **Temple Hoyne Buell Foundation** once again renewed its support of the Lakewood campus' *¡Cuídate!* program, a research-based, proven-effective teen pregnancy and HIV prevention curricula.

2013-14 marked the first year of the three-year \$490,000 *School Counselor Corps* grant, funded by the **Colorado Department of Education's Postsecondary Readiness Office**, through which NAS began the process of establishing a comprehensive program designed to increase our students' postsecondary education and workforce readiness.

The **Colorado Department of Education's Dropout Prevention and Engagement Office** continued to fund three grant programs in 2013-14:

- The five-year, two million dollar *21st Century Community Learning Centers* (CLC) grant (made possible through the U.S. Department of Education), which allows each campus to establish a series of after-school academic and enrichment programs for all NAS students.
- The four-year \$500,000 *Expelled and At-Risk Student Services* program, which identifies the NAS students that are most at risk of suspension and expulsion and assigns a behavior interventionist to work closely with them, monitoring their behavior and academic progress, but more importantly providing them with personal support and attention.
- The five-year, \$450,000 *Colorado*

Graduation Pathways Program, which targets students at the NAS-Lowry and NAS-Thornton campuses that are most at-risk of dropping out.

Working in conjunction with the Jefferson County Public School District, NAS was able to secure a \$43,485 **Colorado Department of Education** grant titled *Data Use for Improved Results*.

Denver Department of Human Services renewed its partnership with the New America School by placing an AmeriCorps member at each of the three NAS schools, primarily to provide direct services to our students participating in Community Learning Centers' activities.

The **Polis-Schutz Family Foundation** continued to provide the financial support needed for deserving NAS students to carry on their studies after graduation. This year, the family through their foundation donated \$20,000 to the *Colorado Educational Opportunity Scholarship Fund*. In addition, The Polis-Schutz Family Foundation donated \$50,000 to support efforts to replicate the NAS educational model in other communities throughout the southwest.

NAS received \$82,883 in funding through the **U.S. Schools and Libraries E-Rate** program, a federal program which assists schools that enroll a high percentage of low income students pay for telecommunications and internet service.

NAS Board Members demonstrated their leadership and commitment to the

school's mission, not only through the extensive work members do on behalf of NAS, but through their financial support. Once again, 100% of the board contributed to NAS during fiscal year 2013-2014.

In sum, gifts from public and private sources, corporations and individuals exclusive of in-kind contributions totaled \$929,654 for the year, with commitments of \$2,474,783 over next three years.

In national funding news, **The Arizona Charter School Incentive Program** conditionally approved a grant of \$600,000 to help fund the start-up cost for the New America School-Phoenix, which will be applying in May 2015 to the State of Arizona to charter the new school.

More than 90 local organizations, agencies and individuals provided thousands of dollars-worth of in-kind goods and services to NAS in 2013-14, primarily through work with each school's 21st Century Community Learning Center. For example, **Denise Cox**, a Latina filmmaker currently producing a documentary on the experiences of first generation Latinos in the U.S., provided \$1,650 in motivational speaking services to NAS; **Chipotle Mexican Grill** donated a percentage of their proceeds to NAS on several days, helping the schools raise more than \$3,000; and **Goodwill Industries of Denver** donated ½ the costs of a postsecondary preparedness classroom teacher. ♦

Featured Partner: The AmeriCorps Community Building Partnership for Youth in Transition program

Since 2012, The City and County of Denver, through its Department of Human Services, has chosen the New America School to act as a Host Site for its AmeriCorps Community Building Partnership for Youth in Transition (CBPYT) program. Through this program, an AmeriCorps member is placed at each of the three NAS schools to deliver one-on-one support services to our students.

Working mostly out of their school's 21st Century Community Learning Center, AmeriCorps members provide academic support to students, facilitate students' community service work, assist students filling out scholarship and college application forms, and help students develop career plans.

"One of the most rewarding things I was able to do as an AmeriCorps member



was working with students on the verge of dropping, or failing, out of school," recalls former member Micah Williams. "Being able to be a part of getting them refocused and engaged in school was an incredible feeling, particularly when I got to watch a couple of them walk across the stage at graduation to receive their diploma." After his term as member, Mr. Williams stayed on at NAS-Lowry, becoming

the site coordinator for the 21st Century Community Learning Center.

The CBPYT program focuses on providing services for youth between the ages of 15 and 22 who are transitioning out of systems of care towards self-sufficiency. This mission parallels that of NAS: Our student body is comprised almost entirely of youth in transition. Roughly half of our students are immigrants. The majority of our students are ages 18-21. Many are parents. Many also work while attending

school. That is, most NAS students have already taken the first steps to transition to self-sufficiency.

Past AmeriCorps member Heidi Johnson explains how she helped a student on her journey towards adulthood. "The best part of working with our students was seeing them grow and take pride in their own growth. One of our graduating seniors started at New America as a reserved and somewhat socially isolated young lady. One day while she was sitting alone during lunch, I suggested she come to our volunteering club. She said yes, became more and more involved, and by the end of the year she was such a leader everyone in her class knew her and she beamed with confidence." Ms. Johnson also remained at NAS after her service year, becoming a school counselor.

The NAS/CBPYT partnership will continue in 2014-15 with the City and County of Denver placing four AmeriCorps members at NAS schools. ♦

2014 Colorado Educational Opportunity Scholarship Recipients

Humberto Enriquez Cuevas' educational path did not follow a straight line. He explains, "After dropping out from school for a whole year, I lost my hopes of ever graduating.... I moved from Denver to Mexico. After coming back to Denver



Humberto Enriquez Cuevas

without my mother, father or younger sister, I knew I had to do something that would help me in my future. So I decided to go back to school..." With this decision made, Humberto excelled. He earned a perfect

4.0 grade point average at the New America School, graduating first in his class and in the process becoming the first male in his family to graduate high school.

Humberto wasn't going to let anything deter him from going to college, which he believed to be one of the most important goals that he would achieve in his life. With a family member becoming seriously ill, Humberto was under increasing pressure to leave school and begin working. In order to continue his studies, Humberto doubled up on credits to graduate a year early, all the while working to send money home. This winter, when he enrolls in the University of Hawaii, he will be the first person in his family to go to college; he plans to study oceanography. ♦

During Jamilet Mares' three years at the New America School she never failed to impress her teachers with her indomitable spirit, understated intelligence, steady temperament and sense of purpose. As counselor Mikiko Ellis describes, "She is both a role



Jamilet Mares Juarez

model at home and at school, and is known as an individual who is willing to face any challenge with heart, strength, and integrity. Although Jamilet faces many obstacles outside of school,

she perseveres and does not let her economic circumstances define who she is or what she is capable of achieving."

While NAS gave Jamilet much, she also gave back to the school, serving on the Student Senate where she helped organize school events, participating in the recycling club, and performing community service at the Denver Botanical Gardens.

Jamilet plans to attend Regis University to pursue a career in veterinary science, where she can combine her deep felt connection with animals with her high intellectual capacity. She knows that working towards such a rewarding career has the capacity to transform life for her entire family. Jamilet is the first in her family to graduate from high school and attend college. ♦

Kenia Rascon Rodriguez has assumed the role of parent for her young niece, and has to work regular hours to help support her family. She travels long distances by bus and works until late at night during the week in order to make a



Kenia Rascon Rodriguez

modest income. Despite this time and emotional commitment, Kenia graduated second in her class from New America School-Lakewood—the first girl in her family to

graduate high school. She even found time to participate in the school's service club.

"Her mind is a high-powered thinking machine, but I attribute most of her success to her inexhaustible work ethic," explains teacher Jeremy Hoffer. "She simply works harder than most students are willing to work, and won't quit until she has done her very best."

Kenia will attend the University of Colorado at Denver where she plans to pursue a career in family law. Kenia knows personally the struggles that broken families face, and would like to use her skill set and education to help families in need through the legal process. ♦

[CHAIR continued from page 1]

true to our mission by continuing to serve our target populations.

There were many other successes to note—including the addition of three new board members: William (Bill) Bethke, Kontar Tonee Mwamba, and Terry Whitney—but I am rapidly running out of space in this letter. I encourage you to read on in this Success Report to get a richer picture of the 13-14 NAS story. And I know I speak for the entire board when I say that we are tremendously proud to serve the entire NAS community and look forward to beginning our second decade in 14-15! ♦

Learn More about the New America School on YouTube:



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a10KODd13sc>