Highlights from the Past Year

Growing Up Boulder actively engages youth in a number of planning and design projects to increase youth voice. Highlights of GUB’s work in the 2012-2013 academic year include:

* Signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the City of Boulder, University of Colorado, and Boulder Valley School District that creates a framework for Growing Up Boulder's continued collaboration

* Boulder Civic Area visioning with Boulder High School (BHS), New Vista High School, Casey Middle School, Boulder Journey School, I Have a Dream Foundation, and the City of Boulder Sustainability and Community Planning Department

* Burke Park multi-generational park planning process in collaboration with Horizons K-8 School and the City of Boulder’s Parks and Recreation Department

* Neighborhood Photovoice project and exhibit at the North Boulder Recreation Center and Twirl Frozen Yogurt, in collaboration with Youth Services Initiative and photographer Rebecca Stumpf

* Creation and implementation of homelessness curriculum with BHS's AVID classes

* Initial interviews with past GUB youth participants about program impacts

* Boulder Journey School presentation to city council on preschool students’ participation in the civic area

* Presentations about GUB work to the CU Gold Leadership Conference and the International Symposium on Society and Natural Resources Management

* Publication of “A City for all Citizens: Integrating Children and Youth from Marginalized Populations into City Planning” in the Buildings Special Issue on Designing Spaces for City Living.

“GUB helped me realize that even youth have perspectives, and we should understand them and not just rely on older people to make decisions.”

— Daniel Vigil, reflecting on his GUB experience (see page 6)
During the summer and fall of 2012, Growing Up Boulder partnered with organizations serving children and youth to find out what Boulder’s young people think about the “Boulder Civic Area.” The “Boulder Civic Area project” is a visionary, community-driven project to rethink and evolve the downtown’s most expansive public space. The planning area is bounded by 9th to 17th Street and by Canyon Boulevard to Arapahoe Avenue. The goal of the project is to transform this area into Boulder’s social, civic, and environmental heart.

GUB worked primarily with five groups to garner children and youth opinions about the area. These groups were: Boulder High School’s 10th grade AVID class, New Vista High School’s civics class, Casey Middle School’s leadership class, Boulder Journey School’s pre-kindergarten class, and I Have a Dream Foundation’s Iris class.

GUB and its partners used a variety of techniques to engage young people in the process, including:

- **Photogrids** (photographing and analyzing the space by dividing it into sections on a map),
- **City as Play** (using ordinary objects on top of an aerial map to re-imagine the space),
- **Dialogues** with city leaders and urban planners,
- **Field trips** to the civic area, Boulder History Museum and partner schools,
- **Family and citizen interviews** about great public spaces, and
- Powerpoint presentations, drawings, Sketch-up and other renderings of the space.

By gathering data from young people and having the young people share their ideas with decision-makers directly, GUB was able to synthesize a set of 5 themes to guide the City’s redesign of the Civic area.

**EMERGENT THEMES FOR THE CIVIC AREA**

**PLAY:** Include better play equipment for all ages, a soccer field, and create opportunities to run, jump, climb, swing, scoop and build

**SAFETY:** Address dominance by the homeless/transient population in the area and improve lighting

**NATURE:** Preserve and honor nature around the creek and create opportunities for interaction with it

**ART:** Add public art, with special attention to interactive art, and provide opportunities for the public to make art

**HANGING OUT:** Include more comfortable seating, picnic tables, and food stands to create a space in which to “hang out”

**WATER FEATURE:** Add fountains, misting stations and/or other areas for interactive water play
What would it look like if young people were involved in civic planning?

This is the question Boulder Journey School (BJS) undertook to answer for the Boulder Civic Area. BJS is a year-round school for students 6 weeks to 6 years in age. Building on the methods employed by GUB with middle and high school students, BJS students took field trips as a school and with families, drew on pictures with overlays, and imagined a civic area that would be more engaging for young children, but also others in the community, and wildlife as well.

BJS students shared their ideas with other GUB partners at a community meeting for the civic area in December. BJS’s work culminated with young students presenting their ideas to Boulder City Council in early June. More examples of their work (right) can be found on the GUB website: www.growingupboulder.org.

BJS student ideas for the Civic Area:

- Add colors and embellishments
- Add new places to play games
- Add elements to and near the creek
- Make connections between things they already like to do and possibilities for the Civic Area
Burke Park Redesign

Growing Up Boulder partnered with the City of Boulder Parks and Recreation and Horizons K-8 School to participate in a multi-generational redesign of Burke Park, in the Frasier Meadows community of Boulder.

Burke Park is the only neighborhood park for one of Boulder’s densest neighborhoods and is bounded by major roads and highways on all sides. It is also home to a significant number of retired residents who grew up near the park and have attachments to the park and lake within it. Horizons needed to create a new playground to accommodate its school expansion, and the City needed to address issues of lake water levels and management. The redesign of Burke Park thus became an opportunity to collaborate and develop an intergenerational model for park planning.

GUB’s role was to facilitate a 4 week course for 30 4-8 graders at Horizons K-8 School. The course focused on the following goals:

- Understanding and seeing the park as a whole (and not just the school playground)
- Learning the site history and ecology
- Thinking about community uses of the park
- Expanding design thinking
- Developing recommendations and desired features for the park, and
- Engaging students and community in a shared visioning process.

Outcomes of the project include:

- Students learned the ecological and social value of their park
- CU’s Environmental Design students built on GUB’s engagement with children and seniors in their spring Design/Build studio
- Horizons K-8 received a $100,000 grant for a natural playground based in part on youth and community involvement in the park’s planning
- Teachers have expressed increased interest in using place-based education in their teaching
- Seniors within the community will use school facilities for their annual square dance and other events.

The collaboration was presented at the International Symposium on Society and Natural Resources in Estes Park in June.

Explore in Burke Park

GUB created a website to showcase student work and ideas for the park redesign:

http://explorationsinburkepark.weebly.com/
Neighborhood Photovoice

Growing Up Boulder partnered with the Youth Services Initiative and photographer Rebecca Stumpf to initiate a Neighborhood Photovoice project from January through May, 2013. The goal of the project was for under-represented youth to document and reflect upon their lives.

In a series of 10 weekly sessions, students learned photography skills, participated in literacy exercises to develop their voice, and photographed both public places and homes. More than 40 YSI youth participated in the project. Some participated regularly and others came for a few sessions.

Youth work was hung at the North Boulder Recreation Center for the month of May. At the exhibit opening, many youth demonstrated pride not only in their photography, but also in their heritage and culture. Teachers and city staff also viewed the exhibit and were impressed by the student work.

The exhibit has since moved to Twirl Yogurt Shop this summer and will move to CU’s Environmental Design Red Gallery in the fall.

Photovoice is a process by which people identify, represent, and enhance their community through photography.

This project was funded by a University of Colorado Diversity & Excellence Grant and the Boulder Arts Commission.

GUB Funders & Supporters in 2012-2013

- University of Colorado, Program in Environmental Design
- Children, Youth & Environments Center for Community Engagement
- City of Boulder, Department of Community Planning & Sustainability
- University of Colorado Diversity & Excellence Grant
- Boulder Arts Commission

Exhibit Opening

Approximately 50 visitors attended the opening of the youth photovoice opening at the North Boulder Recreation Center. The exhibit will travel to city venues and public spaces during the summer.
In Other News

Evaluations

- Four years after its establishment, GUB has begun retrospective evaluations with youth involved in GUB projects. With support from GUB, intern Imani Haupt used interviews and focus groups to learn more about the impacts and influences GUB work has had on youth. One particularly active youth has said that the program made him more aware of the importance of youth voice, and he carries that ideology forward in his current leadership roles at the University of Northern Colorado.

Publications

- Tori Derr, Louise Chawla, Mara Mintzer, Debra Flanders Cushing, and Willem van Vliet wrote a paper titled “A City for all Citizens: Integrating Children and Youth from Marginalized Populations into City Planning” for a special issue on Designing Spaces for City Living in the journal Buildings. The paper can be accessed at http://www.mdpi.com/2075-5309/3/3.

- Louise Chawla and Mary Rivkin published a book chapter titled “Sustainability and a Sense of Wonder” in Early Childhood Education for Sustainability in the United States. The chapter highlights GUB’s work with the Boulder Journey School and Burke Park.

Presentations

- Growing Up Boulder shared its work with approximately 25 young leaders at the CU Gold Leadership Conference in January.
- Burke Park project partners shared the collaborative multigenerational park design at the International Symposium on Society and Natural Resources in June.
- GUB shared its work and techniques with city staff at a meeting about indicators for sustainability.

Homelessness in Boulder

When youth evaluated the Civic Area (page 2), they repeatedly expressed concerns about the homeless who frequent this space. They struggled over how to talk about the homeless, both in terms of the actual terminology in referring to them and also the reasons for homelessness. As a result, GUB, in partnership with AVID classes at Boulder High School, developed a curriculum on homelessness for the winter and spring of 2013.

Speakers from the Boulder Shelter for the Homeless and the Bridge House, a day program for the homeless, visited 9th and 10th grade AVID classes and shared their own stories and others’ stories of homelessness. Students read The Glass Castle: A Memoir by Jeannette Walls, and a subset of students volunteered at either the shelter or Bridge House kitchen. Youth were able to take their negative and inarticulate feelings about homelessness and turn them into an opportunity to delve into this topic, understand homeless people’s life histories and vulnerabilities, and contribute to their support.

GUB saw this as a success in that its efforts to increase AVID students awareness of their own rights through participation in city planning led to an investigation of issues of human rights and social justice on a community-wide scale.
“Interning for Growing Up Boulder was a great opportunity and the best decision I made in school. While working with youth on planning and design, I learned how important it is to work with different age groups to represent all sorts of perspectives. It was a unique experience that opened my eyes to the various aspects of city design. For me, the most rewarding moment was at the city held community meeting where a few students proudly presented their hard work to local residents who enthusiastically listened. I loved being part of the GUB team and am very thankful for that opportunity. The experiences taught me a lot about what I value and allowed me to start narrowing down what kind of career I might want. It also helped me obtain a comprehensive planning intern position with the City of Boulder!! ”

— Katherine Buckley

“My involvement in the Burke Park project opened my eyes to the fact that children can be strong promoters of natural space preservation, which is something I greatly value. I am proud and amazed that Boulder seeks out these voices, leading children to have a powerful influence and changing the future of rural and urban spaces for the better.”

— Erin Hauer

“GUB’s Burke Park project helped me see the value in having students be an active part of the planning process of their everyday spaces.”

— Ilaria Fiorini

Fall 2012 Interns: Kate Armbruster (BENVD ’13) and Katherine Buckley (BENVD ’12) (Top)
Fall 2012 Graduate Interns: Pier Luigi Forte and Ilaria Fiorini (University of Bologna) (2nd from Top)
Fall 2012 Volunteers: Erin Hauer (2nd year ENVD) and Corrie Colvin (Ph.D. ‘13) (2nd from Bottom)
Spring 2013 Interns: Imani Haupt (2nd year ENVD) and Gianni Franceschi (2nd year ENVD) (Bottom)
Spring 2013 Volunteer: Katherine Buckley (Top Right)
GROWING UP BOULDER IS A CHILD- AND YOUTH-FRIENDLY CITY INITIATIVE FOUNDED IN 2009. IT IS A PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN THE CITY, BOULDER VALLEY SCHOOL DISTRICT, THE UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO, AND LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS THAT SERVE CHILDREN & YOUTH.

By the Numbers 2012-2013

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