



Growing up Boulder

SPRING 2012

ANNUAL REPORT

Highlights from the Past Year

Growing Up Boulder has had an active & exciting year. Some of the projects we've worked on include:

- * GUB community survey and report
- * "Street as a Living Museum" workshop
- * CYBOR presentation to the City's Youth Opportunities Advisory Board
- * Interactive GUB booth at the Boulder Creek Festival
- * Boulder Journey School's assessment of young children's rights
- * New partnership with City of Boulder, Parks & Recreation to plan neighborhood parks
- * Youth engagement in Boulder's energy future debate
- * Children and youth bill of rights (CYBOR) curriculum in Boulder middle and high schools
- * Development of a youth web portal



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SUCCESSSES

Of Growing Up Boulder

GUB has been creative and resourceful in its attempts to involve children and youth in local decision-making. We have used the following participatory processes to gather youth opinions about how to make Boulder more child- and youth-friendly:

ART: murals, videos, digital stories, logo contest, individual paintings in CYBOR curriculum, banner at GUB event, 3-D city redesign

WRITING: letters to city council, essays in class, draft of CYBOR, question wall

DIALOGUES: Wiki site, Skype conversation, meetings with city council

PEER-TO-PEER EDUCATION: Between high school, middle school, elementary school and after school children & youth

ACTION GROUPS: business, art, teen nightlife, CYBOR

SURVEYS: Nightlife questionnaire, 2010 Community Survey; CYBOR outreach questionnaires

This diversity of methods has enabled many children and youth to participate in decisions that affect young people in Boulder. GUB has worked with diverse ages (children from 2-years of age in the Boulder Journey School to high school); income levels and ethnicities (through our work with the Youth Services Initiative pro-

gram, AVID and I Have a Dream as well as Casey Middle School and New Vista High School), and both traditional and non-traditional students (such as the teen-mothers formerly at Fairview High School or students at Arapahoe Ridge). In addition, GUB has provided short- and longer-term processes for engagement, from stopping by a booth at the Boulder Creek Festival to being part of a year-long CYBOR student group.

Through these different approaches to engagement, GUB has offered many ways for the community to be involved.



Community Survey

In the fall of 2010, GUB assessed adults' and children's perspectives about Boulder as a child- and youth-friendly city. The survey assessed:

- (i) issues facing children, teens, and families;
- (ii) neighborhood characteristics, including what is good and what they would like to see changed;
- (iii) roles of children and teens in decision-making;
- (iv) improvements to the city.

More than 600 people completed the survey, with respondents fairly representative of Boulder.

The two most important issues for children and families were lack of gathering spaces and having a safe environment that is free from alcohol, drugs, and bullying.

Young people under 19 sometimes had different views from adults:

- ◆ While 40% of youth thought they should be able to give input

into local decision-making, only 18% of adults did.

- ◆ Only 15% of youth compared to 32% of adults thought youth should be involved in formalized civic engagement

This difference indicates that youth under 19 believe that their voice should be heard more frequently and that they should be able to give input on issues that affect them in various forms.

Executive Committee

- ◆ University of Colorado, Children, Youth & Environments Center
- ◆ City of Boulder Planning & Sustainability
- ◆ City of Boulder Housing & Human Services
- ◆ Boulder Valley School District
- ◆ Boulder Valley YMCA
- ◆ Former Senator Dorothy Rupert

Street as a Living Museum

In June of 2011, GUB undergraduate interns worked with the City of Boulder on the "Street as a Living Museum" project. In this project, undergraduates walked with 15

teens around University Hill and invited them to photograph areas of interest. Using color-coded picture frames to illustrate their points, teen photographed settings

they found good, bad, and interesting around the Hill.

Pictures were immediately hung in the Sink. GUB students were able to share their ideas with residents, city planners, and policy makers as the city looks for ways to improve the quality of life on the Hill.

Boulder's Energy Future



In the spring and summer of 2011, GUB worked to engage young people in the Boulder energy future process, a process that would begin to determine how Boulder will produce and meet its

energy demands for the foreseeable future. GUB staff helped the city strategize on methods to engage young people by attending strategy meetings and later presenting to high schools and environmental clubs around the city about the energy future discussion. At the GUB annu-

al event, a team of GUB interns partnered with the non-profit New Era Colorado to educate youth about the energy issues. In this way, GUB was able to provide unbiased support to the City in creating an informed younger generation about Boulder's energy future.

Boulder Journey School: Young Children's Rights



Mural by BJS Children: young children appreciate Boulder's nature for face painting, young children aged 0-5, were encouraged to answer the question "what rights should Boulder's children and youth have?"

GUB conducted a children's rights activity at the Boulder Journey School's (BJS) "Creative Recycling Day" in November 2011. In exchange

Young children answered this question with drawings or simple statements such as, "all children have the right to eat food."

BJS also used the fall 2011 semester as an opportunity to work with its own graduate students on a project to determine the best way to assess young children's views of their own rights. Early childhood education graduate students, who were interning at BJS, teamed up with early childhood educators in the larger Boulder community to test their hypotheses on how to ask young children about their rights. At the end of the semester, the teams presented their work. Ideas included writing a story with 3 year olds about rights and having the children write the ending, and looking at children's rights through their own photography. Some of the best assessment tools tested in this class might be used to include young children's voices in the creation of a children and youth bill of rights for Boulder.



Boulder Creek Festival

At the 2011 Boulder Creek Festival, GUB undergraduates, teens, and adult GUB collaborative members worked together to staff an interactive booth for young people. Located in the teen area, the tent offered face-painting, temporary tattoos, and information on GUB. The most important part of the booth, however, was the opportunity for people to learn about children

and youth bills of rights worldwide. Posters outlining children and youth bills of rights from around the US served as inspiration for Boulder's young people to think about their own rights and responsibilities. Young visitors to the booth were asked to answer the following question posted on parchment paper, "What rights should

children and youth have in Boulder?" (see clothesline responses, above). Children ranging in age from 2 through 18 answered this question with words and drawings. The completed mini-bills of rights were then hung from a clothesline throughout the tent so that participants and passersby could learn from each other's ideas.

Annual Event



Annual Event
October 15, 2011

More than 100 children and youth participated in the GUB annual event on October 15 at the North Boulder Recreation Center. It included student presentations, youth hip hop performances, creation of a mural about youth rights, free food, raffle prizes and bouncy house games. Those attending said that the event was engaging enough for them to come again next year.

Students involved in a children and youth bill of rights curriculum (see page 5) presented their ideas through digital stories, videos, artwork, and PowerPoint presentations. One student wrote, ***"I have changed my attitude towards taking action."*** Students (and adults) loved interacting at the GUB annual event. Youth felt a sense of pride when presenting their final projects to their

peers and interested adults at the event. Likewise, they were curious to learn what other classes had created regarding youth rights. One student concluded, ***"Learning about these rights made me more aware of what is happening around me."***

Steering Committee

- ◆ City of Boulder Planning & Sustainability
- ◆ YOAB
- ◆ Boulder Valley YMCA
- ◆ The Boulder Loft
- ◆ Boulder Journey School
- ◆ Youth Services Initiative
- ◆ I Have a Dream Foundation
- ◆ Boulder Housing Partners
- ◆ Boulder Valley Head Start
- ◆ Children, Youth & Environments Center

Youth Portal : Arapahoe Ridge

Young people have repeatedly expressed a desire for one website where they can find all things youth-related in Boulder. The site would include everything from local activities and events to links to college resources and mental health support.

The "Web and Gaming Applications TEC Program" class at Arapahoe

Ridge High School worked on this concept in the spring of 2011. Students in this class developed a preliminary web portal, which they named: boulder4teens.org. They used ideas generated from other Boulder teens combined with their own unique vision to create the site.

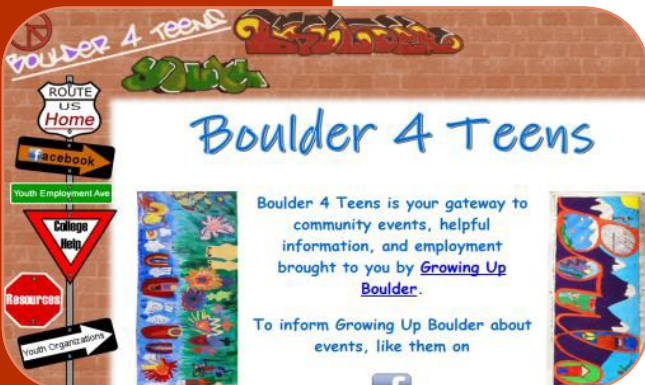
We then field-tested the website with various groups of their peers: Youth Opportunities Advisory Board (YOAB) students and young participants at the GUB annual youth celebration.

Feedback from these groups varied greatly, with some teens loving the design and urban feel of the website and others viewing it as unsophisti-

cated and cartoonish.

Further research will be needed with a wider group of youth to determine how to make this the most user-friendly, attractive and accessible site possible to young people.

Another issue raised with the youth portal is the question of who would host and manage this site. GUB staff have explored this question with a recent Ph.D. from the University of Colorado's Communications Department, Lucille Sommers. Lucie is interested in understanding the use of informal spaces of engagement, both physical and virtual, to facilitate youth participation and deliberation. GUB will work with Lucie to explore this further and address existing needs and potential futures.



Boulder's Own Child & Youth Bill of Rights



Boulder High School CYBOR presentation at the annual event

One of GUB's most significant and ongoing recent projects has been to engage children and youth in the creation of a children and youth bill of rights (CYBOR) for Boulder. Adoption of a CYBOR is fundamental to a child- and youth friendly city, because, as Dana Burnett writes in the book, *Big Ideas: Game Changers for Children*, a bill of rights for children and youth is a "bold, public acknowledgment that

all children and youth are entitled to certain fundamental rights. As a public agreement, adoption of the Bill of Rights is a first step in ensuring that our leaders are keeping the needs of children and youth in the forefront when decisions are made

regarding policies, budgets, and government practices."

GUB coordinators began investigating local interest in a CYBOR in the spring of 2011. We called together a "council of councils" by inviting members of most Boulder youth councils and high school student governments to a meeting to discuss creation of a CYBOR in Boulder. Lack of attendance prevented the in-

tended discussion. However, those present used this as an opportunity to re-think how best to engage youth in the bill of rights discussion.

GUB coordinators and collaborators decided to use a different method of engagement, and instead worked with interested and motivated teachers. By networking with local schools, we were able to find a group of four committed teachers to help us design and implement a CYBOR curriculum. Participating teachers were from New Vista High School's Street Law, Language Arts and Service Week classes, Casey Middle School's Leadership class, and Boulder High School's Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) class. AVID is a program that provides support for at-risk students who wish to attend four-year universities.

This group of teachers and GUB coordinators spent the summer of 2011 designing curriculum and evaluation questions, classroom activities, a speaker series, and a Wiki site (an interactive website to be used by everyone). The curriculum was supplemented with materials designed by other countries for children and youth rights educational units. CYBOR classes also presented their final projects to the each other and to the larger Boulder community at the annual GUB event.

The CYBOR Wiki Page provides many useful materials developed by the teachers & students who engaged in the Bill of Rights process: bouldercybor.pbworks.com/

As we designed the curriculum, teachers and GUB coordinators were careful to align the CYBOR activities and goals with concepts and goals for the existing curricula. Teachers asked questions about children's rights using literature already assigned in their classes. For example, Boulder High School's AVID class asked questions of the book *Burro Genius*, such as, "What rights does the main character have as a child? What rights is he denied?" They were then able to reflect on their own rights in their writing assignments.

Curriculum & School Engagement

The children and youth bill of rights curriculum was designed to assess youth interest in developing a children and youth bill or rights (CYBOR) for the City of Boulder and if there was interest, begin generating ideas of what should be included in a CYBOR.

Most specifically, the goals of the curriculum were for youth to:

- ◆ Understand the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Concept of a child-

dren and youth bill of rights

- ◆ Learn how to advocate for their needs as citizens in a community
- ◆ Generate a list of ideas to be included in a CYBOR for Boulder
- ◆ Learn how to present and discuss their ideas with adults and peers, and
- ◆ Develop an outreach plan for how to gather ideas about a CYBOR in Boulder from youth who weren't part of the CYBOR classes.

WIKI PAGE

Children & Youth Bill of Rights: bouldercybor.pbworks.com/

The CYBOR wiki page is an educational tool used by classrooms and youth engaged in the development of a child- and youth bill of rights. It serves as a community where students can communicate and comment on CYBOR ideas. Teachers may be granted editing permission, so they can add articles or make improvements to the site. The stu-

dents were granted non-editing access, which allowed them to comment on, but not edit, articles. A few lively discussions ensued about youth rights on the site.

Classes also used the wiki site to research children and youth bills of rights created by other locales. One teacher developed a treasure hunt for students to complete using the

wiki page. For students still perfecting their research skills, the wiki page provided an intermediary step towards conducting effective research on the internet. It also allowed students and adults who were not present at GUB speaker presentations or interactions, such as a Skype exchange with Portland youth (see below), to access the videos at a later time. The wiki pages serve as a repository for student work, photos, and interactions.

"I learned there is always someone there to help, if I just speak up."

Results of CYBOR Curriculum

Students reported that highlights of the curriculum included the **opportunities to interact with people outside of their classroom**. These included:

Professor Violeta Chapin, from CU Law School, who spoke with two classes about student rights from a legal standpoint. In her talk to the AVID class, she discussed her own background as a young Latina growing up in America and abroad.

The head of CU's Black and Latino Law Students Association also spoke with AVID students about struggles surrounding her own rights. One student wrote, *"You inspired me to work hard to get into college because I'm going to be the first one in my family to go to college."* Another added, *"I really need a scholarship to go*

to CU. I did not know where or when to apply for scholarships. From you, I learned that there is always someone there to help if I just speak up."

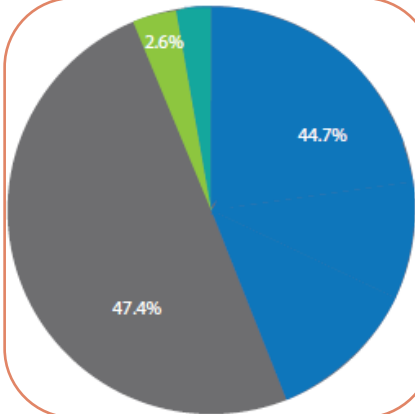
A second curricular highlight was the chance for **New Vista students to interview Boulder's Mayor Susan Osborne** about her views on a children and youth bill of rights. Students relished the chance to pose meaningful questions to a local leader.

A third highlight was a **Skype conversation between New Vista High School students and youth commissioners from Multnomah County in Portland, Oregon**. Twelve New Vista High School students and 5 Multnomah county high school students discussed the process of creating a children and youth bill of rights and getting it adopted

by the City. Boulder students asked questions such as, *"What inspired you to create CYBOR in your community? What kind of impact has your bill of rights had on the community? Have adult attitudes toward youth in the community changed as a result of this bill?"* The discussion helped Boulder youth gain a greater understanding of what a significant undertaking it is to create a CYBOR, and that if they wanted to create a CYBOR in Boulder, they would need to seek the input of a greater number of Boulder children and youth.

Fourth, **high school students enjoyed the opportunity to teach younger children about children and youth rights**. New Vista students visited both Whittier Elementary School and Casey Middle School classes to teach the younger children about children and youth rights and to gather the younger children's ideas about these rights for inclusion in an eventual CYBOR for Boulder.

"Government cares about my opinions."



■ Never True
■ Sometimes True
■ Mostly True

Through peer-to-peer exchange and an adaptation of UNICEF's Child and Youth Friendly Cities assessment, students expressed mixed sentiments about whether their local government cares about youth.

CYBOR Training & Outreach

From February through May of 2012, a small group of students from New Vista and Fairview High Schools participated in trainings and outreach to further develop the Boulder CYBOR. Students received trainings on local civic engagement and methods for building a constituency.

These youth then visited classrooms at Casey Middle School, Boulder High

School as well as after school programs of the Youth Services Initiative and I Have a Dream Foundation to gather broader input into a CYBOR. to talk about youth rights, perceptions of local government, and the ability of youth to make change in their communities.

Results of this outreach showed that less than 3% of youth surveyed believe that government cares

about their ideas and opinions (left). The majority of youth were aware of ways to participate in their community although they do not always feel empowered to do so.

A group of 3 youth summarized and presented their outreach efforts to the Youth Opportunities Advisory Board in May. GUB and YOAB discussed the outreach efforts and potential for a child & youth bill of rights to be adopted in Boulder. YO-

Youth Participation Workshop

With Barry Percy-Smith

This spring, GUB hosted a workshop facilitated by Barry Percy-Smith for GUB partners, including the City of Boulder Parks & Recreation, Housing and Human Services, Sustainability & Planning, Keep it Clean, & YOAB; the Boulder Loft; Boulder Journey School; CYE interns and affiliates; and GUB youth.

Barry Percy-Smith is an Associate Professor in Childhood, Youth and Participatory Practice at the University of West England in Bristol, UK and has spent much of his life engaging children and youth in participatory processes.

At the workshop, participants discussed a number of questions about how to better engage youth in

meaningful, participatory processes. There is great interest among the many city and non-profit partners in attendance in furthering youth participatory practices in Boulder. This is of course an important component of a child- and youth-friendly city.

Participants discussed the differences between participation as input and the more meaningful, everyday practice of participation which Barry Percy-Smith promotes. In addition, the group discussed **art as a powerful tool of expression** and engagement, and **informal spaces of engagement** that are not traditionally considered.



Next Steps

The majority of participants wanted to see additional work on increasing meaningful youth participation in Boulder. **GUB plans to host a second workshop in August** with project partners to facilitate dialogue and explore how to put these broad ideas into practice with the piloting of **youth engagement in parks planning** this fall.

A RESOLUTION

In Support of Youth Having a Say in Their Future

WHEREAS, there were an estimated 64,150 children below age 18 in Boulder County in 2011, 20.8% of the county’s total population,

WHEREAS, the youth of the City of Boulder represent an enormous resource and are a vital constituency of the City of Boulder,

WHEREAS, the City of Boulder provides many services which directly impact the lives of children and youth including after-school programs, mental health care, juvenile justice, and homeless youth services,

WHEREAS, the well-being of children and youth is an important indicator of the health of the community,

WHEREAS, youth are currently underrepresented in government,

WHEREAS, youth can and should be able to have a voice in matters concerning them,

WHEREAS, youth require special protections to supplement their legal rights,

THEREFORE, the youth of the City of Boulder resolve as follows:

RESOLVED, that children and youth deserve basic necessities such as food, clothing, shelter, medical resources, a well-rounded education, and opportunities for recreation;

LET IT BE FURTHER RESOLVED, that children and youth have the right to a mentally and physically healthy life free from neglect and abuse and the right to make reasonable choices concerning their life;

LET IT BE FURTHER RESOLVED, that children and youth have the right to not be profiled or unfairly discriminated against based on their appearance or age in addition to the rights outlined in the Human Rights Ordinance, and have the right to participate in events and express themselves;

LET IT BE FURTHER RESOLVED, that children and youth have the right to have an influence in matters of government and their education, including the long-term planning processes of these institutions, and that this manner of influence shall be formalized;

LET IT BE FURTHER RESOLVED, that city officials, including the police department, and the Boulder Valley School District shall protect the rights of children and youth that this resolution affirms.

[GUB Youth...]

...Developed this resolution after a workshop on civic engagement facilitated by Annie Miller from the University of Colorado’s Political Science Department.

GUB youth shared this resolution in their outreach efforts this spring and presented it and other results of their outreach to the Youth Opportunities Advisory Board in May 2012 (see page 7).

Growing Up Boulder (GUB) began in the spring of 2009 as a partnership between the University of Colorado, the City of Boulder, the Boulder Valley School District, former State Senator Dorothy Rupert, local non-profits and businesses, and children and youth under 18.

This initiative aims to foster a child- and youth-friendly city, in which children's rights are reflected in local policies, laws, programs and budgets. Child- and youth-friendly cities work to realize children's rights as outlined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). Included are children and youth's rights to:

- ◆ Influence decisions about their city
- ◆ Express their opinions on the city they want
- ◆ Participate in community life



GUB HISTORY

A Child & Youth Friendly City

Children's rights should include. . . "The First 10 Amendments for all of us" - Irina

- ◆ Have protection against exploitation, violence and abuse
- ◆ Live in an unpolluted and sustainable environment
- ◆ Participate in cultural and social events
- ◆ Have access to services, regardless of ethnic origin, religion, income, gender or ability

Working directly with children and youth, GUB has initiated a number of efforts, including a teen nightlife survey; dialogues with teen mothers about Boulder's housing and child-care; organizing youth involvement in the update of the City of Boulder Comprehensive Plan; the creation of child- and youth-friendly city murals by adolescents and preschoolers; and youth-created assessments of the teen-friendliness of Boulder's businesses, services, and government.

Lessons for Growing Up Boulder

While GUB has offered a variety of methods of engagement, it has been a challenge to maintain a consistent group of children and youth who are interested in being part of a "child- and youth-friendly city" initiative. Our hypothesis for this is multifold.

Find the right time and place. Most of our work takes place during "optional" hours, such as afterschool or weekends. With homework, afterschool sports and clubs, jobs, and home responsibilities competing for our high school and middle school students' time, they do not have time to add an additional activity to

their schedule. The students with whom we have had the most success are those who are in classes that work on GUB activities. This suggests the need for on-going collaboration with teachers and the Boulder Valley School District in order to be successful in our efforts over the long-term.

Identify appropriate benefits. When GUB began, we promoted the initiative by advertising the benefits of participation as the chance to meet other youth, share ideas with decision-makers, gain valuable experience for future jobs and college, and have fun. Realizing this wasn't incentive

enough, we offered community experience credit to high school students. Students needed to sign a contract outlining expectations for being part of the GUB initiative and in exchange, students would gain class credits for their work. This galvanized a few students, but not as many as are needed to sustain these efforts over a semester or year.

Identify relevant issues. People rally around issues of immediate threat—environmental destruction, job losses, or reduced services. GUB needs to work with youth to identify relevant issues for both youth and the

city.

Provide training and skill building. While many youth were initially energized about working on children and youth bill of rights, they were disappointed to learn that it would take many months to create and implement one. As one teacher said, the youth were frustrated that change takes time.



How to Find Us:

bouldercybor.
pbworks.com



OR...

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Growing Up Boulder

GROWING UP BOULDER IS A CHILD- AND YOUTH-FRIENDLY CITY INITIATIVE THAT BEGAN IN THE SPRING OF 2009 AS A PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN THE CITY, BOULDER VALLEY SCHOOL DISTRICT, THE UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO, AND LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS THAT SERVE YOUTH.

By the Numbers

2011-2012

Number of Projects	8
Number of Youth Involved	576
Number of Interns, Volunteers & Youth Leaders	28

