Healing from the Table Mesa Tragedy with Children and Youth: Part I



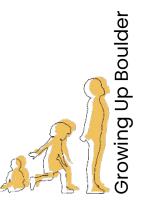


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Why this project?

In 2021, a gunman tragically killed 10 people at the Table Mesa King Soopers, a supermarket in Boulder, CO.

While there were many resources available for community healing in the aftermath of this tragedy, few were designed specifically **for** and **with** children and youth.

To address this gap in support for our youngest residents, the Community Foundation Boulder County asked Growing Up Boulder (GUB) and Mayamotion Healing (MMH) to design an intervention to: 1) hear from young people about what they needed to heal from the tragedy, and 2) co-create and deliver these supports with and for the young people.

This report describes how Growing Up Boulder and Mayamotion Healing have worked with young people and community partners to meet to this need and centers the voices and wisdom of the young folks in our community.

Thank you to our key partners!

Key Partners







Mental Health Partners'
Boulder Strong Resource
Center



Boulder Valley School District

In January 2022, GUB and MMH invited the University of Colorado's Renée Crown Wellness Institute, Mental Health Partners' Boulder Strong Resource Center, and Boulder Valley School District to partner on the project.

Growing Up Boulder (GUB) is Boulder's child-and youth-friendly city initiative

VISION

To lead a global movement in child-friendly cities, resulting in more equitable, healthier and more sustainable communities for all.

MISSION

To offer young people opportunities to participate, deliberate, and influence local issues that affect their lives.



Primary GUB partners









Mayamotion Healing (MMH)



services that are grounded in the concepts of intersectionality and healing-centered engagement.

A multilingual, woman-owned practice that promotes a holistic health model,
Mayamotion Healing's work considers the social and political contexts that impact our mental, emotional, spiritual, and physical health with responsive modalities of healing

rooted in culture, spirituality, mental health,

and community.

Mayamotion Healing (MMH) is an organization

that offers a comprehensive response to the most pressing mental health, social justice, and community issues that we face today. It

offers three components of decolonial



University of Colorado's Renée Crown Wellness Institute



The Crown Institute is a home for interdisciplinary research and practice that seeks to prompt the social and emotional wellness of young people and - because the Crown Institute believes wellness must be understood in context - the wellness of the systems and adults who support them.

The Renée Crown Wellness Institute's work is rooted in connection across disciplines within the university and partnerships with families, teachers, young people, and community members. The Crown Institute co-designs and studies transformative practices, programs, and policies that foster wellness among children and youth, families and communities, and educators.

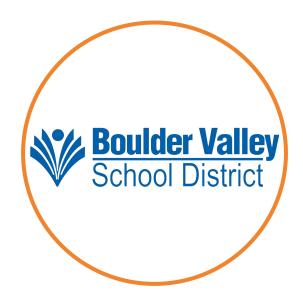
#BoulderStrong Resource Center (BSRC)



BSRC is a multi-agency resource hub managed by *Mental Health Partners of Boulder* and sponsored by King Soopers.

The #BoulderStrong Resource Center is a safe place of healing and support dedicated to serving as a resource and referral center for those affected by the Boulder Table Mesa tragedy. Equipped with trained professionals, BSRC goal is to help those affected process grief and trauma to move forward with their lives.

Boulder Valley School District (BVSD)



BVSD, located in the foothills of the Rocky Mountains, stretches from the suburbs of Denver to the peaks of the Continental Divide. The Boulder Valley School district is a leader in academic excellence and equity, consistently ranking among the top three of Colorado's large Front Range school districts.

Mission: To create challenging, meaningful and engaging learning opportunities so that all children thrive and are prepared for successful, civically engaged lives.

Vision: To develop our children's greatest abilities and make possible the discovery and pursuit of their dreams which, when fulfilled, will benefit us all. BVSD provides a comprehensive and innovative approach to education and graduate successful, curious, lifelong learners who confidently confront the great challenges of their time.

Art Partners



The Museum of Boulder showcases inclusive community stories, preserves them for the future, and inspires all of us to effect positive change.



Boulder Museum of Contemporary Art is a catalyst for creative experiences through the exploration of significant art of our time.



Boulder Arts Week is Boulder's large-scale, inclusive celebration of the community's vibrant arts and cultural offerings and the city's thriving creativity. GUB participated in this week, which took place from March 25 to April 2, 2022.



Guiding Principles

For Our Healing Work with Young People

- Center equity and honor identities.
- Offer reciprocal experiences: teach young people tools to care for themselves as they care for others.
- Balance the open-endedness of the project with structure.
- Balance a youth-led approach with adult support.
- Create a "care" team of professionals to support youth leaders' wellness.
- Collaborate and partner for success.

February 2022:

Museum of Boulder Call for Children's Art or Poetry

The Museum of Boulder hosted an exhibit called "Boulder Strong: Still Strong, Remembering March 2021" from February to April 2022 to help the community mourn the Table Mesa tragedy. Through the Museum of Boulder, GUB/MMH invited children and youth to share their art, artifacts or poetry related to the tragedy.

Due to the fast turn-around time of this invitation and limited publicity, few young people responded. One girl, however, did submit a powerful poem, which was displayed at the Museum during the exhibit.



Boulder Strong: Still Strong, Remembering March 2021 Photo by Ross Taylor

Dead or Alive Poem by Sarah, age 13

dead or alive:

should our kids grow up in danger with fear in their eyes with gunshots nearby guns need to go now guns are killers, murderers, destroyers bullets kill guns command we need to stand change is near change is here our sons can get guns but who can outrun what our society has become humans killing humans our world split people are dead others lying in hospital beds

our world is the hunger games species killing species pow, pow the sound of killing the sound of lives lost the world is a war zone

guns feel no regret guns feel no loss guns cause people to run are humans being hunted are humans being hunted friends are dead neighbors are dead humans are dead and this is not the end gone, gun, gain what do we get from weapons protection or destruction safety or sorrow love or loss dead or alive dead or alive

February 2022:

Forming a Youth Leadership Healing Committee (YLHC)



Maya Sol Dansie, of Mayamotion Healing, works with students Nevaeh and Jack as part of the YLHC. Photo by Mara Mintzer.

GUB and MMH organized a
Youth Leadership Healing
Committee (YLHC); the YLHC
decided to design a youth-led
"Healing Day of Remembrance"
to support children and youth
for the anniversary of the
tragedy.

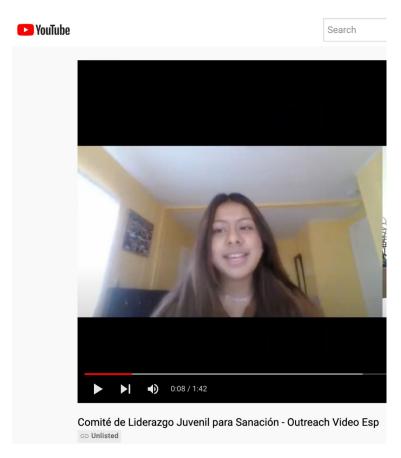


How Did We Create the YLHC?

GUB + MMH publicized the YLHC widely through written words and bilingual videos, both of which linked to a bilingual application form for high school students. Using social media and newsletters, and with the help of community organizations and BVSD, the opportunity was widely shared with teens in the Boulder area.

Twenty-six youth applied, all were invited and 16-20 youth consistently attended the healing and planning meetings.

The YLHC group was very diverse in terms of race, ethnicity, primary language, gender, sexual orientation, and sexual identity.



Approach for Work with the YLHC

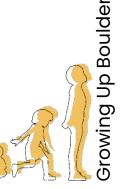
Our team used the following approach to working with teens on healing sessions:

- Person-first engagements.
- "Relationships over tasks."
- Healing Centered Engagement framework & trauma responsive.
- Positive Youth Identity Formation.
- Centering identities and intersectionality.
- Cultural practices and teachings.
- Decolonial mental health modalities.
- Círculo Practice for group facilitation and processing.
- Facilitated by POC.



Wellness and Planning Sessions

- Feb. 11 From the Ground Up: Co-Creating Our Space
- Feb. 15 Preparing for Conversations on Trauma
- Feb. 22 Healing Trauma Conversations Continued
- March 5 Design Sprint (Event Organization)
- March 11 Pre-Event Organizing Meeting
- March 16 & 17 Drop-In Hours for Event Planning
- April 1 Event Set Up at BMoCA
- April 2 Healing Day of Remembrance Event
- April 13 Debrief, Reflect, Celebrate & Collect
 Stipends



Hours Contributed to the Healing Work

January-June 2022

Youth leaders: 360 hours

GUB/MMH team: 670 hours

Additional project partners working with youth: **100 hours**



City Manager Nuria Rivera-Vandermyde contributes to the healing puzzle. Photo by Cathy Hill.

Sessions about Healing Trauma

Maya Sol Dansie (MMH) and Solicia Lopez (Crown Institute) led the Youth Leadership Healing Committee in group sessions to build group cohesiveness and trust.

Then, they worked with the youth to help them understand how trauma works and learn tools to take care of their own feelings of trauma and/or anxiety.



Crown Institute Report

Following the Design Sprint, the Crown Institute compiled a process/reflective report, which gathered information about experiences in the youth healing and design workshops (e.g., qualitative information, feedback, meaning-making). The evaluators and writers of the report were Dr. Julia C. Zigarelli, Dr. Donna Mejia, and doctoral student Trang Tran.

As part of this process, the team interviewed many of the teens involved in the Youth Leadership Healing Committee. The following few pages of this report summarize what the youth shared. Click here for the complete report.

In Interviews, Youth Identified:

Values:

- Respect-for each other's multiple identities, for boundaries, for the unprecedented hardships they all are facing right now.
- Relationship—with friends, families, and people to talk to.
- Community-"people my age," "people who are too scared to say they need a bit of healing," "the King Soopers community."
- Personal fulfillment and growth.
- Love, care and the role of art in healing.
- Offering care to younger generations.

Goals:

- Strong theme: give back to the community (by helping with the healing process; helping others figuring out the process a year after the tragedy).
 - Take care of ourselves as a collective.
 - Reflect about what happened.
 - Become more connected with the community.
 - Support the healing process of K-6's youth.

In Interviews, Youth Identified:

<u>Themes</u> important to center in the event:

- Safe space.
- Healing, needs and engagement look different for everyone.
- Centering student agency: keep it conversational, interactive, mutual and flexible.
- Adult allies staying present for support.
- Building a shared sense of community.
- Clarifying broader impacts intended by the program.
- Interests in ongoing and sustained resources.
- Don't want to be bored (e.g. engaging and interesting activities).

In Interviews, Youth Identified:

What <u>activities</u> should be included and displayed at the Healing Day of Remembrance?

- Letter writing
- Music (e.g., piano, dance) and art (e.g., chalk art)
- Prayers and flowers
- Yoga, breathing, stretching
- AcuDetox
- Therapy dogs
- Meditation



Photo by Cathy Hill

Healing Day of Remembrance Event

- 21 youth facilitated the event.
- 200 members of the public, of all ages, attended.
- 9 community organizations participated.
- The event was held at BMoCA on Saturday, April 2, from 10-12 (the first day of the Boulder Farmers Market).
- All materials were bilingual.
- 10 "healing" stations; images of the stations, and their instructions, are documented on the following pages.



Photo by Deryn Wagner

Healing Stations



Altar Station



Image by Ning Mosberger-Tang



Image by Ning Mosberger-Tang

Found across cultures, altars are a beautiful way to commemorate and honor the lives of loved ones we have lost. At the Altar Station we co-created a community altar to represent the blessings of the special people in our lives we honor.

Poetry Wall Station



Image by Ning Mosberger-Tang



Image by Deryn Wagner

Poetry can be a wonderful way to express how we are feeling. A Poetry Wall can consist of a variety of images, words and phrases that people of all ages create. At this station, guests spent a few minutes looking closely at the variety of photos that were displayed on the table and wall. They noticed which one or ones they were drawn to and how the images made them feel. Then, they wrote a word, phrase, or short poem to express themselves. Finally, they added their creation to the poetry wall.

Community Puzzle Station

This puzzle emphasizes the importance of "healing" and that we're "all in this together." To create this Healing Puzzle, guests decorated one puzzle piece. They put their name on the back of the puzzle piece and then drew or wrote something on the front of the puzzle that represented healing to them or something that brings them joy.



Image by Ning Mosberger-Tang



Image by Jade Cody



Image by Ning Mosberger-Tang

Love 80305 Station



Image by Jade Cody

At the Love 80305 station, community members shared what they love about their community and wish for the world by drawing on half-hearts. The half-hearts were then paired with other participants' half-hearts to make complete hearts, symbolizing the community coming together.



Image by Cathy Hill

Envelope Exchange Station



Image by Ning Mosberger-Tang



Image by Jade Cody



Image by Jade Cody

The Envelope
Exchange station
reminded us that
the written word
can be a powerful
way to heal,
especially when the
words are kind and
offer hope and
encouragement.

At this station, members from the community picked a written message from the envelope board to keep and then wrote a message to leave for someone else.

Watercolor Crayon Resist Station



Image by Jade Cody

At the Watercolor Resist station, community members thought about something that they do to heal or take care of themselves. Answering prompts helped them get started: Take a moment to close your eyes and imagine: where do you do this activity and who you are with? Are you alone or with friends or family? Are you outdoors or indoors? Once identified, guests drew with crayons, then painted with watercolors over their drawing.



Image by Jade Cody



Image by Deryn Wagner

Playdough Creation Station

Using one's hands to knead, stretch, and play with a material such as playdough is therapeutic.
Children were encouraged to play with playdough by the YLHC teens.



Image by Ning Mosberger-Tang



Image by Cathy Hill

Sensory and Care Station



Image by Ning Mosberger-Tang

Youth leaders helped community members care for themselves by offering healing through scents and quiet reflection. Student leaders reported that the Care center was a highly emotional station.



Image by Ning Mosberger-Tang



Image by Ning Mosberger-Tang

Massage and Accudetox Station



Image by Ning Mosberger-Tang

Practitioners from Natural Highs offered Acudetox, similar to acupuncture, to help promote healing. Local massage therapists offered their services as well.



Image by Ning Mosberger-Tang

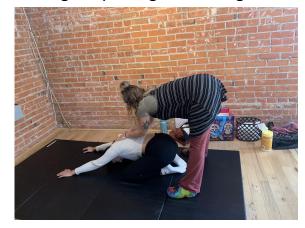


Image by Cathy Hill

"Feedback For Healing" Station

At this station, participants answered two questions:

- "What helps you heal?
- "What wellness tools do you need or want more of?"

The printed program for the event showed common ways people of all ages practice wellness and heal. Participants were asked to find some activities on the poster that they liked and what they wanted more of, and then write those activities or resources on a card for a Healing/Wellness Toolkit Box. Ideas will help inform GUB/MMH programming about healing in the fall.

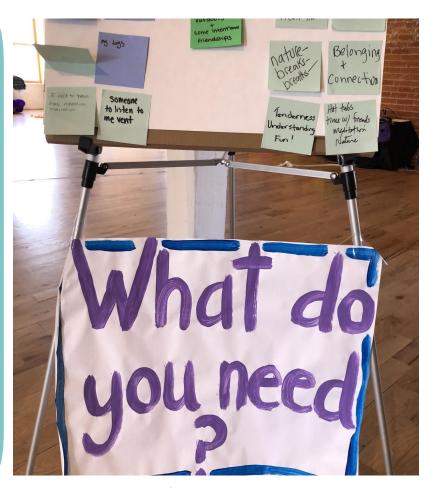


Image by Cathy Hill

What the Young People (0-18) in the Community Requested

What helps you heal?	What wellness tools do you need or want more of?
 cats and dogs comfort food drinking more water respect freedom equality someone to listen relaxation motivation 	 going on walks or hikes outside animals time with friends and family blanky hugs piggy-back rides therapy massages health and wellness professionals being together in community music activism educating myself

For details on healing requests from all ages within the community, read <u>here</u>.

Resources for Wellness

A station with information about additional resources for wellness, including mental health support, was staffed by Mental Health Partners/Boulder Strong Resource Center. The information table also included the event "program," a take-away document which offered 20 ideas for healing.



Photo by Cathy Hill

Media Coverage

A number of media outlets covered the event including:



Boulder Reporting Lab article

Daily Camera article

Home / Featured / Boulder Youths Lead Healing Day of Remembrance at BMoCA

Boulder Youths Lead Healing Day of Remembrance at BMoCA

O APRIL 4, 2022 / SHANNON / FEATURED, MORNING MAGAZINE



KGNU broadcast

BVSD newsletter

GUB newsletter



Evaluating Process and Outcome

GUB and MMH offered numerous opportunities for youth and partners to provide feedback about the process and the outcome of the project after the Healing event.



Comparing Goals Before and After the Event

After the event, GUB and MMH facilitated an evening of reflection and celebration with the YLHC. Youth assessed whether their original hopes and goals, which were captured during Crown Institute interviews, were met.

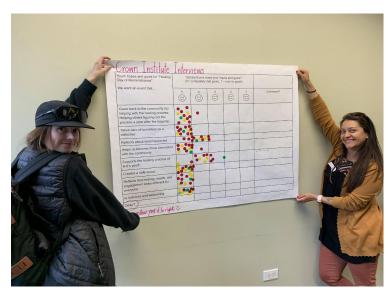


Photo by Cathy Hill

The findings? Seventy-five percent of the goals were "completely met," such as "giving back to the community" and "taking care of ourselves" as a collective." Twenty-five percent of the goals were "mostly met," leaving some room for improvement in the areas of "reflecting about what happened" at the King Soopers in March 2021 and "supporting the healing process of K-6 grade youth." For the full survey, see the next page.

	20				
Youth hopes and goals for "Healing Day of Remembrance" We want an event that	Did the Event meet your hopes and goals? (5= completely met goals, 1 = met no goals)				
	5	4	3	2	1 💮
Gives back to the community (by helping with the healing process; Helping others figuring out the process a year after the tragedy)	11	1			
Takes care of ourselves as a collective	12				
Reflects about what happened	4	9			
Helps us become more connected with the community	11	1			
Supports the healing process of K-6's youth	2	7	3	2	
Creates a safe space	12				
Reflects that healing, needs, and engagement looks different for everyone	12				
Is inclusive and welcoming	12				
2	Dist.		T .		I .

Youth Leader Feedback After the Healing Event

What went well about the event?

- "Attendance, flow of stations, energy of participants, leadership, communication...all were great!"
- "The ambience and the respect people had when they came in. Especially because people commented on how thoughtful and nice it was that we were doing this event."
- "It definitely helped me heal!"
- "Overall, I really enjoyed this event, and I think the Boulder community did too!"

Youth leaders were quite pleased with almost every aspect of the event itself. They felt respected and liked that they helped themselves and others heal. They also expressed gratitude for the opportunity to participate in the process and event.

For more detailed feedback from young people, read **here**.



Photo by Deryn Wagner

Youth Leader Feedback (cont'd)

What about the event could be <u>improved</u> for next time?

- "I think we can work on spreading the word more."
- "Better advertising."
- "Semi-permanent location (lasts at least a couple of days) so people can filter in and out as they please."

Most young people agreed that not enough of their peers and others knew about the event. We believe this was due to the rushed timeline.



Image by Deryn Wagner

Feedback from Adult <u>Participants</u> at the Event

- · Community members leaving the event gave positive feedback.
 - Positive reception of kids' stations, community puzzle, and massage chairs.
- Outsider German said she could see how we were taking care of each other; she had heard about the shooting in Germany and was happy to be there as a part of the healing.
- People got really nice notes at the envelope station people loved it.
- "I heard only positive feedback from the people that attended. The only blunder was the advertising, as I heard from many people that they would've brought others if they heard about it before the day of."
- "Comments I got during the event were about how it was nice, thoughtful, and healing to have a space to honor the losses from the shooting."
- Many complimentary things said by BVSD.
- Wisdom of lived experiences amongst students helped create a safe space.



Responses reported by youth leaders and their adult allies.

Feedback from Adult Partners: Successes

- Our young people felt overwhelmingly positive about the process and project, and that was the goal.
- Each of the partner organizations shared fantastic expertise with the youth and with each other.
- Everything- youth involvement for planning and executing in a thoughtful and sensitive
 way. Venue was great; met goals they were hoping for; lots of visitors; fun to be part of
 as a partner agency. A very meaningful event.
- Amazing turnout, very diverse people who attended, great reach!!!!!!
- Reflecting on how mental health and healing for young people does not equal hospitals and services. It is family, traditions, community, culture, identity and engagement.
 Young people want to be embraced and guided by and with their loved ones.
- How brilliant, bold, and honest young people are when they have a space to share and grow.

Feedback from Adult Partners: Challenges

- Holding the event on the one-year anniversary of the tragedy made the process
 too rushed; youth would have benefited from several more sessions together, the
 adult team would have benefited from more planning time, and we all needed
 more time to publicize the event to the community.
- It was a challenge to balance the emotional healing time and learning with the logistical planning of the event.
- We had so many thoughtful adult partner groups that it actually made planning
 the event challenging (too many skilled leaders in the room makes
 decision-making less nimble and we needed more support staff to help youth
 actually implement their ideas and take care of logistics).
- Coordinating 21 busy teens and planning the logistics of a teen-driven event was more time-consuming than anticipated.

Recommendations for Other Communities



Photo by Deryn Wagner

- Develop committee member application and selection process
- Set weekly 2-hour wellness and planning sessions. Each session should include both wellness and planning components
- Set ideal date, time, and location for Healing Day of Remembrance
- Identify one team member as the youth communications person
- Identify one team member as the event logistics coordinator

Plan 4-6 months in advance

General Insights & Feedback from the Youth:

"

I think providing more **continued**resources targeted towards youth would
be good (like tables at the market or
something that happens regularly)."

"

Accessible opportunities for children coming from different places and backgrounds."

[We need] healing more strongly intertwined with local schools/youth programs."

4

Address the **root causes of stress and anxiety** for young people.

Next Steps for Healing with Children and Youth



Children



Photo by Jade Cody

Continue seeking feedback from children and families about what supports their healing and offer opportunities for healing that respond to this feedback.

Continue to partner with BVSD to support their students, teachers, and schools in addressing the need for healing.



Youth: Continue YLHC

Summer & Fall 2022:

- Regular sessions will continue on trauma, healing, and activities for children and youth, including a session dedicated to processing what happened on March 22, 2021.
- Provide leadership opportunities for YLHC members such as having youth collaborate with Temple of Tranquility Project organizers (see slide 52).
- Encourage healing events, programs and activities that the YLHC members may be interested in pursuing during the remainder of 2022.



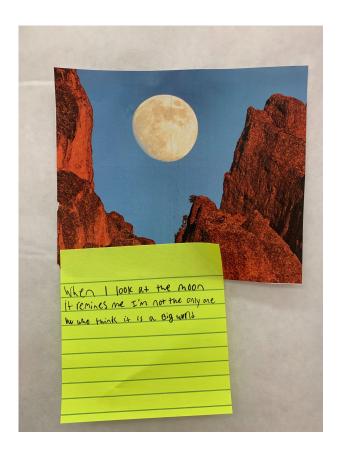
Summer and Fall Activities



Museum of Boulder:

Healing Exhibit at the Google Garage

GUB and MMH transferred the "Healing" Day of Remembrance" stations from BMoCA to the Museum of Boulder so that more young people could benefit from the experience, per youth leaders' request. The "healing stations" offered at the Museum of Boulder's Google Garage were self-directed. Healing stations included art, poetry, letter writing, and puzzle making. Stations were supportive in nature and were careful not to include "triggering" words. This exhibit took place in June-July 2022.



Temple of Tranquility

Young people have been invited to play a big role in the Temple of Tranquility project, which is a **community-driven response to the collective traumas and grief** experienced throughout the Boulder community following the tragic events and aftermath of March 22, 2021, the Covid-19 pandemic, the Marshall Fire, and associated challenges of the last two years. The Temple will **be co-created with the community** and serve as a **non-denominational space for contemplation and reverence**. This setting for participatory experience is designed to foster community healing, personal expression, catharsis and new beginnings. **GUB/MMH will help connect Boulder's young people to Temple of Tranquility opportunities and offer them a voice in co-creation of the space and programming.**



Appreciation



Appreciation: Partner Organizations

Thank you to the following organizations and individuals who made this project possible:

- Boulder County Farmers Markets, Stephanie Hempel
- Boulder Museum of Contemporary Art, Gwenyth Burak, Crystal Blaskis
- Boulder Valley School District, Elton Davis, Randy Barber
- Community Foundation Boulder County, Lisa Moreno
- Growing Up Boulder, Cathy Hill, Keaton McCargo, Mara Mintzer, Nettie Skievaski,
 Olivia Szeliga, Deryn Wagner
- Mayamotion Healing, Maya Sol Dansie, Amairani Contreras
- Mental Health Partners' Boulder Strong Resource Center, Chris DeMarco
- Museum of Boulder, Lori Preston, Sonia Fraser

Appreciation: Youth

Thank you to the Youth Leadership Healing Committee:

Amairani Contreras

Benji Dienstfrey

Darien Jones

Fernanda Laguna-Perez

Gabe Weksler

Grace Reivich

Greyson DeMarco

Holly Auerbach

Jack Bieringer

Jackson Moody

Josh Cochran-Holmes

Kelly Yang

Lila Nuttle

Liya Mei

Melanie Echiveste Jara

Nevaeh Patt

Paris Elena Eayre Ordonez

Ronan Kiernan-Johnson

Una Basta

Violet Pyles

Yari Olivares



Photo by Jade Cody

Resources



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Thank you!