



## Initiatives in Action: Youth Success Initiative



We can do more together.

### When I grow up, I want to be...

“Today I learned  
that anyone can be  
successful in life no matter  
where you are from.”

That quote is from one of 50 current or former foster youth who participated in Bridging the Gap at Mile High United Way’s 4th annual Take a Foster Youth to Work Day.

Held in conjunction with the national Take Your Sons and Daughters to Work Day, the experience gives foster youth the chance to shadow professionals in a variety of professions and get inspired about their future careers. The day allows them to participate in career exploration activities that will expose them to a wide variety of jobs and help them learn the skills and type of education needed to work in specific professions.

Highlights of the day included a group who shadowed at the Colorado Ballet, watching a ballet class, visiting the costume department and going on a VIP backstage tour at the Ellie Caulkins Opera House. The caseworker who brought three of her foster youth to the Ballet describes her experience:

*“It was great for our youth to see the different jobs/ roles that are needed to keep it going strong. We got a VIP tour of the Ellie Caulkins Opera House and walked backstage, saw the orchestra pit, dressing rooms, the stage set for the opera that was performing that night, and learned about the history of the building. Later, we toured the costume area and were up close to the costumes used in ballets such as the Nutcracker, Dracula, Copelia, and others.”*

Christina

Four youth had the opportunity to shadow Denver Juvenile Judges, an experience that allows them to see judges from the other side of the courtroom- different than when they are there for child welfare classes.

*“It would be really hard to be a judge, and go through all that schooling. It would be hard to decide on cases. I’m really glad I had this opportunity to see what a judge does because I really like my judge. I think it would be hard for me to be strict when I needed to be.”*

Brendon

The job shadow experiences are just as rewarding for the businesses and organizations as for the foster youth. Every year, the professionals leave the day feeling inspired by the young people they shared the day with and eager to do more to help.



Bridging the Gap Foster Youth in the Colorado Ballet costume shop on Take a Foster Youth to Work Day.

## When I grow up, I want to be... - cont.

This year was Qwest's second year participating in Take a Foster Youth to Work Day. Six foster youth spent the day with Qwest and had a packed agenda including a company overview, an education presentation, lunch, career overviews and one-on-one participant interviews.

This year 15 companies participated in Take a Foster Youth to Work Day, including: Arrow Partnership, the Colorado Ballet, the Colorado Division of Child Welfare, Colorado Legislators, Denver Department of Human Services, Denver Juvenile Court, JHL Construction, the Office of the Child's Representative, OLP Management, Qwest, St. Mary Land and Exploration Company, Starz Entertainment, University of Colorado Law School, Work Options for Women and Zandi K Salon.

May is Foster Care Awareness Month. Learn more about Mile High United Way's Bridging the Gap and how it is helping Colorado foster youth succeed!

Bridging the Gap is part of Mile High United Way's Youth Success Initiative which focuses on programs and services which ensure that school-aged, low-income and underserved youth succeed academically, graduate from high school and are ready to transition to college or advanced career training.



Foster Youth Dylan P. outside the University of Colorado Law School. After talking to an admissions counselor at CU, Dylan is working hard to go there one day.

For more information about our Youth Success Initiative, please visit our website at [www.unitedwaydenver.org](http://www.unitedwaydenver.org).

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Mile High United Way