

THE DIFFERENCE



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THE CENTER FOR SERVICE & LEARNING NEWSLETTER

CC's Priddy Experience: Past, Present and Future

Every year for the past six years, the Priddy experience has been sending out incoming students on community service and backpacking trips as an alternative and fun way of both introducing the new students to the CC community and doing something meaningful. By this point in the program's history, it has been established as a well-known and integral part of the CC experience. As this is the sixth year of the program's existence, it is a good time to take a look at how the program started, how it has developed, and where it is heading.

The Priddy experience was started in 2003 because of a \$7.9 million grant to CC from the Robert & Ruby Priddy Charitable Trust in 2002. The grant was one of the largest in CC's history and required that the school match the money granted by 2010. While the funds were spread across various campus programs, \$125,000 was designated to New Student Orientation (NSO) Trips, which CC pledged to sustain even once the grant money ran out. At the time, Dean Edmonds contacted Elizabeth Pudder from the Center for Service and Learning and asked her to organize the new trips. Needless to say, it was a big challenge ahead.



\$125,000 of the Priddy Grant helped jump start the Priddy Experience Trips in 2003.

Everything had to be organized: from how the program would be structured, to where they would go, to how they would get there. Some of the sites had been used previously for BreakOut trips, but many more would have to be found. During a three month long process, sites were researched, contacted, reviewed, visited, and eventually chosen for the brand new Priddy Experience. Student leaders were then selected, trained, and paired with their new students, and the trips eventually took off with hundreds of first years going to locations around the Southwest. While the first year was daunting, the work would pay off. The result would turn into an experience completely unique to CC. Today, it is one of only a few community service-based AND *completely* student led NSO experiences in the nation.



Students in the fields of Espanola, New Mexico in 2004, only the second year of the Priddy Experience.

Today, the Priddy experience is widely known on campus and few could imagine coming to CC without it. But well known and respected does not mean the work stops. Pudder, who still runs the program six years later, realizes that there are always improvements to be made. By this point, the changes are small, but meaningful-such

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COLORADO COLLEGE
1871

**THE CENTER FOR
SERVICE & LEARNING
205 WORNER CENTER
NEWSLETTER EDITOR:
PRESTON BRASCH
PHONE (719) 389-6846
FAX (719) 389-6137**

WEBSITE

[WWW.COLORADOCOLLEGE.EDU/
STUDENTS/SERVICELEARN](http://WWW.COLORADOCOLLEGE.EDU/STUDENTS/SERVICELEARN)
**TO BE REMOVED FROM MAILING
LIST PLEASE EMAIL:
K_LOLAR@CC.EDU**

Priddy Experience Past Present and Future (cont. Pg. 1)

CC Priddy Experience: Past, Present and Future Cont. Pg. 1

as blister kits and s'mores to every trip. Many of the changes being made are site specific, such as a map of showers for those sites where showers are not at hand. Of course, there have been bigger changes made in the past to improve the students' experience- such as the placement of transfer students in their own groups and international students in a international-domestic split group. These changes are all derived from the reviews received from the students and leaders who go on the trips, which helps make the changes students want to see.

What are some of the changes you can expect to see next year? To name a few: no more 15 passenger vans will be going out at all- instead all trips will be sent out with either a bus, SUV, or a mini-van. Also, birthdays of students in the group will be announced to the leaders, so that they can celebrate the student's birthday away from home. The continued support and feedback from students and student leaders is essential to the improvements made to the program. The future of the Priddy Experience looks bright. By 2010 it will be completely sustainable and established as a CC tradition.

**Football Players Host Big Brothers/ Big Sisters
Event for Local Children**

The CC football team has recently hosted a Big Brothers/ Big Sisters "football clinic and lunch" which was hosted by Coach Bob Bodor. It happened on Saturday September, 6 when nine local children came to the CC football field to spend some time with the CC Football team's athletes. The athletes showed the children what it was like to be in college: taking them to the dining hall, playing football with them, and talking to them about their reasons for going to colleges and the advantages it rewards. The team then sent the children home with their very own miniature football. The players may have only spent a day with these children, but their impact will give the kids aspirations for years to come. Furthermore, the Football team has set an example of the many ways athletic teams and student organizations can help the community.



CC Football players host Big Brothers/Big Sisters event on CC Football Field.

Big Brothers/ Big Sisters also takes volunteers under 21. For Info contact:

Meg Bunka, Program Manager, Big Brothers, Big Sisters of Colorado, Inc.

bbbspikespeak@biglittlecolorado.org

DID YOU KNOW... You can support Charities just by purchasing everyday items?

Lemonade Smith toothpaste from GoSmile contains lemon oil, a detoxifier for teeth and breath. Proceeds benefit Autism Speaks, an organization "dedicated to increasing awareness of the growing autism epidemic and to raising money to fund scientists who are searching for a cure."; \$16 It can be purchased at the following locations in Colorado Springs:

JC Penney (Sephora)

ULTA

3650 New Center Pt.

The Shops at Briargate (1845 Briargate Parkway)

Colorado Springs, CO 80922

Suite 407; Colorado Springs, CO 80920

or online @: http://www.autismspeaks.org/press/gosmile_toothpaste_on_sale.php

FOUR NEW NSO TRIPS GO OUT THIS YEAR

This year a total of 41 urban and front country trips plus 17 back country trips ventured out into the Southwest. There was a total of 596 new students who went on these trips with 75 student leaders going with them on the NSO trips and 24 with the back-country trip-22 of which had a service component. The average student worked two eight-hour days totaling sixteen hours of work. That makes for a total of 11,120 hours completed by CC students during New Student Orientation. This year, there was an unusually large incoming first year class. To accommodate this surge in students, four new sites were added to the line-up.

To find out about these sites, I interviewed three CC students- two new students and one leader. The two first year students, Garrick Sherman and Daniel Rosen, went to The Yaxche School and The New Mexico Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (LBPH), respectively. Daniel said at the library, he spent his time "cleaning audio cassette players, listening to cassettes to see if they work, sorting cassettes, and going through files." While he said that "the work itself wasn't necessarily fun, we all had a great time." In the end, though, it seemed as though he realized that his work would be appreciated by those in need. "Sarah, our NSO leader, found letters from blind and physically handicapped people to the library thanking them for all they do. It was nice to hear- it made me feel like I'm really doing something meaningful." It is not uncommon for new students to walk away from their NSO trips feeling like they actually had an impact, and that their work was meaningful.

Nicki Dunnavant may have a different perspective on the trips due to her role as a leader, but she felt very connected to the site she went to. Her trip was to Esperanza- an organization that "empowers people to

live violence-free lives through protection, prevention, awareness and education." She also led a trip as a sophomore and, now as a senior, has led her second. Compared to her last site, Nicki felt like students could connect more to Esperanza as a site than her last, and that it was a place where students could have a better



Students working at Santa Cruz Farm setting up a tent.

September, 2008

sense of helping. While there, the group cleaned out a warehouse full of furniture, which was both physically demanding and dirty. But she described the highlight of the trip when "we loaded up a truck with a woman and her child inside. I actually felt like we were helping her directly." She said the trip was both rewarding and hard, because there was this sense that the group was doing important work, but that there was still so much to be done. "We just went really deep, really fast. The kids would stop during their breaks and ask the workers questions about the site, and the workers were just so passionate in sharing their commitment."



New students at the Santa Cruz Farm out on their cultural experience.

September 2008

Garrick Rosen was also in New Mexico working at the Yaxche School- a multi-cultural school located in Taos, NM, which promotes "academic excellence, earth stewardship, diversity, emotional intelligence, creativity through the arts, and social justice." He spent his time doing "construction work. The school was changing locations and needed work done. I personally worked on an adobe wall, stacking hay bales and attaching chicken wire to them so that stucco could be added to it later." He was also getting his hands dirty, but it seemed as though what stuck

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THE CENTER FOR SERVICE AND LEARNING HAS NEW STAFF

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the most for Garrick was the experience away from the work. The five days of the Priddy Experience include one "cultural day" where groups get to go out and explore the area around their site. Because of his trip Garrick had a new-found appreciation for Taos and its surrounding area. "Taos is a beautiful place... [It] has a very interesting culture, especially if you are interested in art (there are a lot of art galleries) or environmental construction." The highlight of the trip for Garrick was when, "We hiked into a canyon to reach some hot springs and a river to swim in. It was really beautiful there." This cultural day along with the work that students accomplish makes for an experience that helps make the beginning of their CC experience that much more meaningful.

For information on these sites or any of the sites used for the NSO trips, please visit:
<http://www.coloradocollege.edu/servicelearn/priddy.asp>

The Center for Service and Learning has new staff! Aside from the annual turnover of students who work at the office, the Center has brought in a new assistant director to help run things around the office. Her name is Lopez, Tonita Lopez. But the question is: who is she and what is she about??? To give a brief background, Tonita was raised on a cattle ranch in Taos, New Mexico and first came to CC as a student in the 90's. She majored in English and after she graduated, got a job working for a fashion company as their design room manager. Graduate school was always in her mind, though, and after a year and a half with the fashion company, she headed to the University of New Mexico. There she earned her masters in education with a focus on multi-cultural education- a brand new field at the time. After she received her masters, Tonita came back to Colorado Springs where she worked for St. Mary's Cathedral as their youth ministry's director running the program for grades 6-12. The job originally started as a one year deal, but she ended up staying for eleven years in total. Tonita has been part of the parish since 1992, when she used to volunteer in her college days.

This past June, however, it was time for a change. Her friend found the opening at the Center for Service and Learning and told her about it. She decided to apply and went through a two month long application process. "It seemed liked the perfect job, I lived only two blocks away. Plus, I had done so much volunteer work and wanted to continue with that." One of the most impressive parts of the application process for her was the collaboration between staff, community members and students who all interviewed her during the process. Tonita also gave a presentation on some as-

pects of community service, something she likes to call the "Aha moment,"- that moment when a person actually realizes that what they learned can be applied in the community. In the end, Tonita was chosen for the job and has elegantly taken on the role of assistant director with what seems to be an ease, that not many could have pulled off. When asked what challenges she faces in her new position she replied, "Just trying to get to know everybody and remember their names." Yet, she stays positive and is happy to be able to learn more with each passing day. And the rewards? She listed off more than a few: being back on campus, being with students, the excitement and energy of the office and community, meeting with community partners, being able to see what a good program is being offered, and being able to do community service in India. And for anyone interesting in knowing what makes Tonita happy: "Miss



Tonita López at the Volunteer Opportunity Fair on September 16, 2008

!!!@!!!Here's a Tip !!!@!!!



Tonita Lopez: (719)227-8247

Tonita.lopez@ColoradoCollege.edu

Whenever you want to do a search use: www.goodsearch.com. You can make it a toolbar like Google. You enter your favorite charity and every time you do a search through them, they will make a contribution to your charity.