

**Subject:** [col-sw-emp-staff-appt] The Bridge Project  
**Date:** Tuesday, June 9, 2020 at 11:05:06 AM Mountain Daylight Time  
**From:** Amanda Moore McBride  
**To:** Christine Mafana  
**Attachments:** image005.png@01D63DD7.41284730, image006.png@01D63DD7.41284730,  
image007.png@01D63DD7.41284730, image008.png@01D63DD7.41284730

Dear GSSW faculty and staff,

The Bridge Project, a community outreach program of the University of Denver Graduate School of Social Work (GSSW), has served children, youth, and families living in Denver public housing communities for nearly three decades. This service has been possible through public-private partnerships and dedicated individuals and donors at GSSW and beyond.

It is with deep sorrow that I announce the Bridge Project will cease operations in 2021. The Bridge Project's decade-long struggle for financial sustainability has succumbed to the challenges facing many organizations due to COVID-19. In addition to financial struggles, the pandemic makes it physically impossible to deliver our suite of programming. All of this combined led the university to a difficult decision.

The sites at Lincoln, Columbine, and Westwood physically closed in March as a result of the pandemic and will remain closed. This spring, Bridge's academic tutoring, TECH Team, and other high school programming continued to be in demand, even in the virtual environment. This programming will continue virtually in the 2020-21 academic year, led by long-time Bridge employee and GSSW alumna Phuong Phan with support from MSW student interns and our more than 100 caring volunteers.

In addition to this virtual programming, we will continue working over the next year to integrate Bridge students into other strong youth-serving organizations. We are discussing the future with Boys and Girls Clubs of Metro Denver and Denver Housing Authority, and we are hopeful that the most effective aspects of Bridge will live on under the primary sponsorship of another organization.

Words of appreciation are due to many, including Professor Jeff Jenson, the inaugural Philip D. and Eleanor G. Winn Endowed Professor for Children and Youth and Bridge's stalwart champion. The Winn Professorship is named in honor of Phil Winn, one of the founders of the Bridge Project. As deans and staff came and went, Jeff provided the consistent values, evidence, and voice that made Bridge such an impactful preventative youth development initiative for so many years.

We also appreciate the many GSSW faculty and students over the years who have helped to advance the programming, research, and impact of the Bridge Project, including former Deans Jack Jones, Catherine Alter, and James Herbert Williams and current Professors William Cloud, Nicole Nicotera, Yoli Anyon, and Kim Bender. GSSW's continued support of community engaged work with young people will continue, as, upon Jeff's retirement, Kim will support GSSW on a way forward for Bridge as the next Winn Professor.

We are indebted to the current and former Bridge Project staff and interns, who have served the children, youth, and families through 29 powerful, life-changing years. We are grateful for the Bridge students who came into our hearts and lives and let us into theirs.

Additional information is forthcoming regarding celebration of the Bridge Project's success over the years. Please contact me if you would like to discuss the program's closure. Please also join me in holding our GSSW community members for which Bridge means so much.

With sadness and gratitude,  
Amanda

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