

ANNUAL REPORT

FALL 2022 & SPRING 2023



WGAC FAQ

What does the WGAC do?

- We like to say that our office has two branches that live on the same tree: Programming and Advocacy.
- WGAC provides programs and resources focusing on social justice and interpersonal violence prevention for all genders.
- Additionally, WGAC provides advocacy and support for victims of sexual violence, stalking, sexual harassment, and relationship violence.
- Our purpose is to provide a safe and affirming space for the students we serve at CSU, while supporting systemic change to end all forms of oppression within our community.

What are some of the misconceptions about WGAC?

- That we only serve a few survivors a year (or the same number of survivors as reported in the CSU safety bulletin each fall): In reality, we served over 450 survivors this year.
- That services are only for women: There is actually very little gendered language in any of our VAT marketing, and unless a program is specifically about a particular gender (ie. Men in the Movement), most programming marketing is also gender-neutral. This misconception comes from the broader societal misconception that Interpersonal Violence (IPV) only happens to women, which is not true. While it IS true that IPV is a deeply gendered phenomenon, we operate from the framework that anyone of any gender can either perpetrate or experience IPV.

Why is WGAC important?

- We provide 100% confidential resources for survivors of IPV. Our confidentiality is protected by CO state statute. We are one of the only campuses in the country to have a 24- hour, 365 day a year hotline that has been in existence for over 50 years.
- IPV is a retention issue on college campuses, CSU included.
- The educational programming we provide has had a positive impact on the rates of violence and/or how victims of violence experience the aftermath.
- Our men's programming is one of the oldest in the country.
- More and more prospective students are expecting that campuses have programs like ours and are able to speak to the issue of IPV on campus in open and transparent ways.
- Even though our numbers continue to increase, there is no way we are serving all survivors considering that in the US, 1 in 4 women, 1 in 6 men, and 1 in 1.75 transgender individuals will experience IPV in their life. Additionally, of the incoming class who went through Ram Orientation 2019, 66% of them indicated they have already had some level of experience with sexual violence before even coming to CSU.

How many students do you employ each year?

- We typically have between 25-30 student employees each semester who fall into one of three categories:
 - Semester Red Whistle Brigade (10 students each semester)
 - Summer Red Whistle Brigade (8 Students)
 - Student Aides (10-12 each semester)

WGAC 22/23 GOALS

Goal: Reestablish WGAC Professional Staff

- In 2022/23, the WGAC lost 5 professional staff members, 3 of whom were members of the leadership team within the office, and 2 of whom were the core of our programming team. We also saw leadership change significantly in the office. We experienced an entirely new leadership team, with 2 new AD's, an Office Manager, and 2 Interim Directors. The remaining members of our staff had an incredibly busy year, and they held the Center while at half staff. The goal is to help them evaluate with radical honesty their capacity, learn to set boundaries for work life balance, say yes to only the things that are life sustaining or a critical function of the job. Their work is to hear stories of trauma all day every day. If they cannot prioritize their self-care, we know that we will not be able to retain them on our team. Additionally, WGAC is in the process of hiring 2 advocates and we have hope of a successful search. We have also asked for new positions from SFRB, including 2 counselors and an additional programmer. We received the funds, and will fill these new positions this year, as well.

Goal: Maintain Basic Function of the WGAC

- At our core, we must serve survivors. We are singularly focused on maintaining exceptional care for the people at CSU who experience IPV. We will maintain our hotline, chat, web, and in person advocacy. We continue to train new and returning volunteers on how to provide confidential victim advocacy. We continue to educate and train our community on how to support survivors and on the impact of IPV. We continue to raise awareness when possible for consent education, healthy relationships, self-care, and digital safety.

Goal: Grow Our Reach and Services

- WGAC leadership is planning initiatives and programs to grow our reach and ensure advocates are more accessible to survivors. Advocacy has historically operated from a medical model in which survivors have to come to a certain building during certain hours to have in-person access to full-time advocates. This year, WGAC plans to have a presence in the LSC, extend our advocacy hours, and look into a text function to better support survivors on CSU's campus.
- WGAC also hopes to work with campus leadership on policy-related work related to accountability for faculty and staff who cause harm, thus ensuring impacted parties have a better path toward justice.





PEOPLE



who we are
and how we do
things around
here...

Meet *OUR*

CORE STAFF

Rachel Auerbach (she|her)

Victim Advocate and Educator

Rachel earned dual BAs in Women and Gender Studies & Environmental Studies from Denison University in OH. After graduating, Rachel moved back to her home state of Wisconsin, where she joined Domestic Abuse Intervention Services in their shelter and helpline programs. She is an intersectional feminist who is passionate about environmental justice, healthy relationships, and supporting survivors. New to CSU and Fort Collins, Rachel is looking forward to exploring northern Colorado, spending time with her two cats, and attempting to keep all her plants alive.



Victoria Benjamin (she|her)

Assistant Director for Victim Services

Victoria is a first-generation college graduate and CSU alum. She's an intersectional feminist with a background in massage therapy & energy work. Her personal experiences as a white, cis-gender, working-class single mother & survivor helped her understand the nuanced importance of contending with dominant identities, especially Whiteness, while also healing from trauma. She loves the month of October, spending time with her partner & children, watching stand-up comedy, making herbal infusions, & raging against white supremacy & the patriarchy.



Kristin Middlesworth (she|her)

Office Manager

Kristin serves as the Office Manager for the WGAC and has the privilege of supervising the Student Aide Front Desk Assistants. She earned bachelor's degrees in Women's Studies and Anthropology at the University of Michigan where she spent 4 years volunteering as a peer educator for Michigan's Sexual Assault Prevention and Awareness Program. Engaging in this life-changing work set the course for her continued passion for supporting survivors and dismantling systems of oppression.



Erica LaFehr (she|hers)

Assistant Director for Educational Programs

Erica is a working-class, first-generation college graduate and CSU Alum with a B.A. in Sociology and an M.A. in Ethnic Studies, with a certificate in Gender, Power and Difference. Her pedagogy and research is informed by her experiences as a survivor of cyclic interpersonal violence and intergenerational trauma. When not consumed with dismantling the white supremacist settler colonial heteropatriarchy, Erica enjoys spending time with her family by sitting around at home binge watching television, going outside in the natures, or going on road trips.



Meet *our*

CORE STAFF



Lauren Shulman (she|her)

Victim Advocate

Lauren is a confidential victim's advocate who comes to the Women and Gender Advocacy Center with experience working in on-campus housing at Colorado State University, and previously working with people at risk of contracting HIV, or currently living with HIV. Lauren cares deeply about creating and holding space for survivors as they access resources and find healing. She is passionate about dismantling white supremacy and other forms of oppression. Outside of work, Lauren is attempting to raise two kids and enjoys crochet, cross stitch, and knitting projects, getting lost in a good book, and soaking up the Colorado sun.

Shannon Archibeque-Engle (she|her/Ella)

Interim Director

Shannon is serving as the part time Interim Director of the WGAC alongside her duties as Associate Vice President for Inclusive Excellence. Shannon first went through VAT training in the mid - 1990's and has been committed to organizations supporting survivors for over 2 decades. Dr. Archibeque-Engle is committed to fostering an equitable learning environment for students, faculty, and staff through education and evidence-based practices. Her research focuses on an intersectional and critical analysis of higher education, particularly agricultural higher education. In keeping with her Chicana heritage, Shannon an avid story teller. She is also the proud mom of two adult children.



Karen Eichel (she|her)

Interpersonal Violence Counselor

Karen supports survivors through individual counseling and group counseling. Karen is passionate about supporting survivors to process and heal from interpersonal violence, is ready to work with anyone at any part of their healing journey (and at any pace), and is committed to holding space for the compounding impacts of violence that may be experienced by those holding marginalized identities. In her free time, you can find her in the outdoors hiking, listening to live music, gardening, or tending to plants. She also enjoys reading, listening to podcasts, cooking with her partner and creating art.

CURRENT VACANCIES



2 Victim Advocates

WGAC is currently in a search process for 2 victim advocates. These positions will round out the advocacy team, which has been depending on intern and non-student hourly labor to function. These positions serve to offer direct supportive services to survivors on campus.

Men's Programming and Violence Prevention Coordinator

This position serves to engage men and masculinity as it pertains to rape supportive culture and interpersonal violence. The coordinator also creates violence prevention programming, including bystander intervention.



Program Coordinator

WGAC has received SFRB funding (thank you!) for a new program coordinator position.

2 Interpersonal Violence Counselors

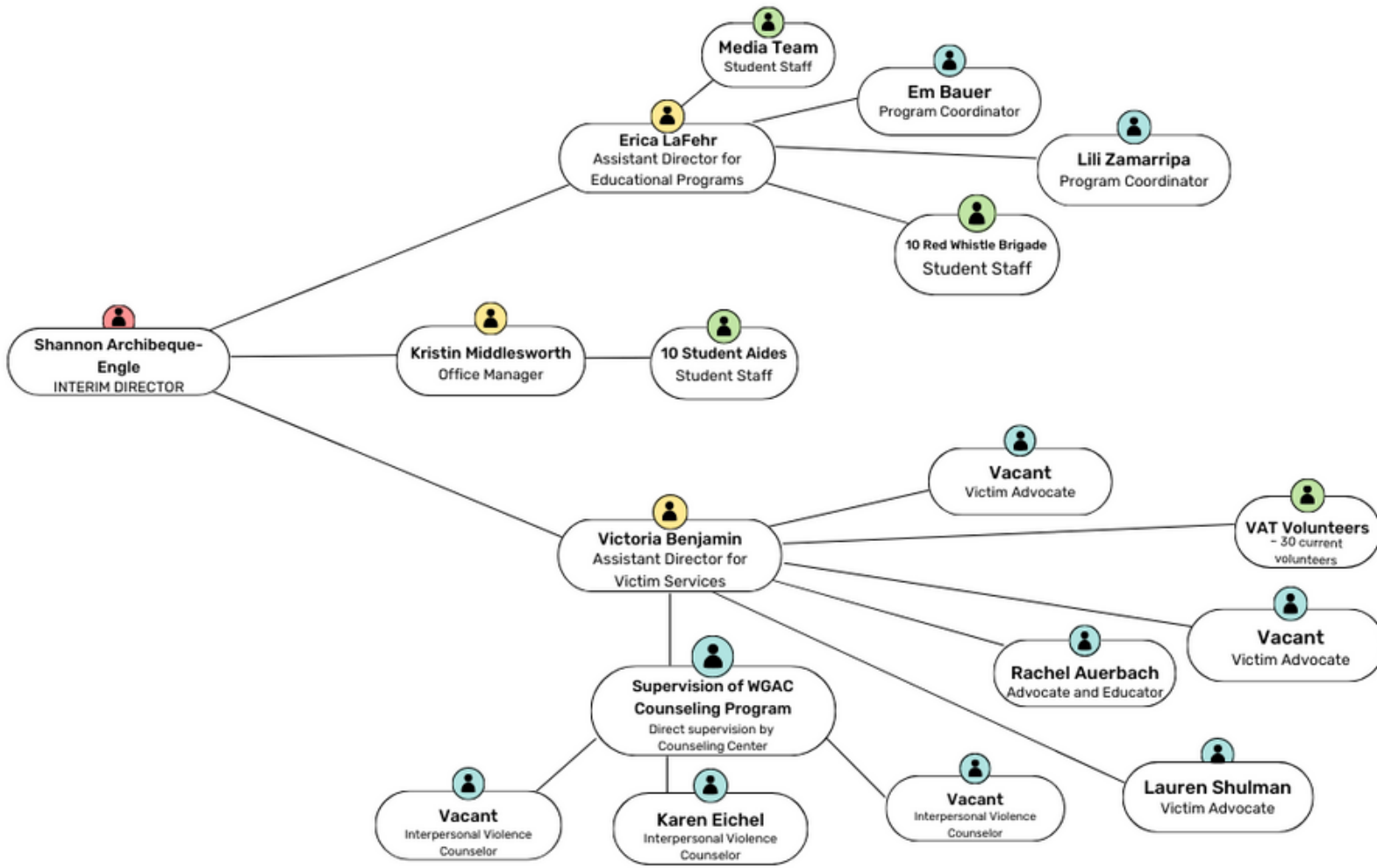
WGAC has received SFRB funding for 2 new interpersonal violence counselor positions in collaboration with the CSU Health Network.



Director

WGAC is searching for a director this fall.

WGAC ORGANIZATION CHART



We love our STUDENTS





FEEDBACK

IS

LOVE

GUIDING

PHILOSOPHIES

*How we do things
around here...*

We believe feedback is love. And much like love, giving and receiving feedback is a learned skill that we must all practice.

We believe transparency fosters empowered, informed and collaborative decision-making at all levels.

We strive for proactive inclusivity and work to minimize harm by asking questions like "who or what is missing?" and "what might the impact be?" from the beginning.

We believe that asking questions makes us better and ultimately benefits our communities.

We are committed to personal, professional and academic growth of everyone involved with our center.

Our work is informed by intersectional feminist praxis. Which is a fancy way of saying that we verb the heck out of concepts like social justice, intersectionality and liberation.

We believe in open doors (literally and metaphorically) and are invested in knowing and understanding one another.

We remaining grounded in, and outwardly projecting, a sense of hope and optimism while also honoring & validating the full range of human emotions.

We are all responsible for the success of this center. We all contribute (positively and/or negatively) to how it feels to be a part of WGAC.

We say... down with social justice elitism and arrogance, up with dialog, playful humor & humility.



ADVOCACY

Review of confidential victim advocacy services

This year, WGAC lost a number of staff members, and was operating at half staff. This included the advocacy team. After the departure of the Director, WGAC had both an Interim Director and Interim Assistant Director of Victim Services. In fall of 2022, WGAC experienced vacancies in the following positions: victim advocate, office manager, program coordinator, and Assistant Director for Educational Programs. WGAC then lost another advocate in January of 2023 and had their interpersonal violence counselor out on leave for part of spring and the entire summer.

In April of 2023, WGAC promoted Victoria Benjamin into the position of Assistant Director for Victim Services and they are currently engaged in a search to fill vacant advocate positions. Moreover, the interpersonal violence counselor will return for fall semester.

In spite of these challenges, victim advocates served 456 survivors in 2022-2023, which is over a 10% increase from last year. Our hotline saw a 36.5% increase in calls, as well. WGAC also began an initiative to present content for the entire staff in the divisions of Inclusive Excellence and Student Affairs, which will continue in summer and fall semesters. With this programming, along with other initiatives, Victoria plans to widen the reach of advocacy services to survivors on campus as we move into the next year.

In the Student Services offices, which houses victim services, WGAC was able to complete a renovation which gave us kitchen space. This allows our team to better serve survivors in a comfortable environment.

Advocacy may have seen challenges this year, but we are overcoming these and have plans in place to ensure WGAC can serve what may be a record number of survivors in 2023-2024.

*Advocates served
a total of*

456

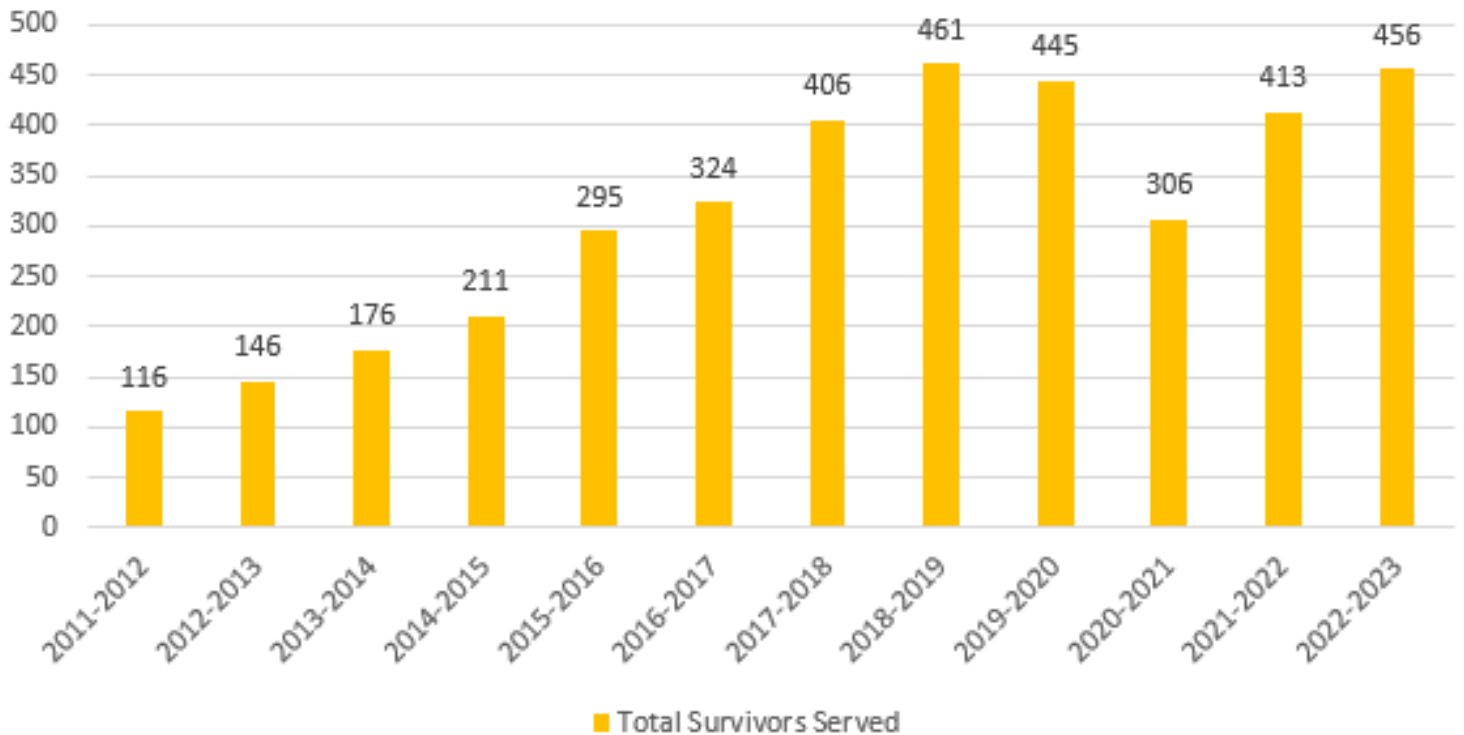
*survivors
in 2022-2023*

65%

*of survivors sought out
advocacy for interpersonal
violence that occurred
within the past year*

VICTIM ADVOCACY

Total Survivors Served



F22-S23

4237 interventions to 456 survivors (383 new survivors)

- Summer 2022: 36 new cases
- Fall 2022: 181 new cases
- Spring 2023: 166 new cases
- As compared to 2021-2022, WGAC has experienced
 - 35.5% increase in number of interventions
 - 38.5% increase in number of advocacy appointments
 - 31.75% increase in hours spent with survivors
 - 12.6% increase in new survivors
 - 10.4% increase in total survivors served

We saw a significant decrease in numbers at the height of the pandemic. However, this year we were only 5 less than 2018-2019, when we saw the greatest number of survivors served compared to any other year. If our increases stay on track, 2023-2024 will be the biggest year WGAC has seen so far in regards to advocacy services.

WGAC PODCAST

ADVOCACY PODCAST

WE BELIEVE YOU: ADVOCACY, RESOURCES, & HEALING AROUND INTERPERSONAL TRAUMA

Description: In each episode, members of the WGAC advocacy team explore the concepts and practices associated with healing after trauma. We share tips, strategies and resources around sexual assault, relationship violence and stalking, as well as explore the ways that identity has an impact on healing. This podcast also includes interviews with the year's keynote speakers.

Historically, WGAC had a programming podcast called ***Do You Even Lift Bro? Men Exercising Social Justice***. This podcast has been on hiatus since 2019 due to staffing concerns and the COVID-19 pandemic. WGAC staff is currently in conversation about the future of our podcasts.





IN

THIS

CENTER

WE

BELIEVE

SURVIVORS

PROGRAMMING

Review of educational programming efforts

This year, WGAC hired a new Office Manager and Assistant Director for Educational Programs, which has allowed us to ramp up our educational efforts on campus. In spring of 2023, WGAC programming staff re-envisioned our February program called Sweet Shop, which saw over 300 students in attendance. Students were excited about this effort, and WGAC is ready to bring it back next year.

Erica LaFehr, AD of Educational Programs, also piloted a thematic Sexual Assault Awareness Month called Grow Consent Culture. This speaks to the need of building a culture that attends to rape-supportive culture at its' roots, thereby bearing beautiful fruit of a world without rape and other forms of interpersonal violence.

In addition to these initiatives, Erica reformatted our annual Take Back the Night, offering a vigil and dinner to help us build community instead of the traditional march associated with this event. We had around 100 attendees in a beautiful and poignant event.

WGAC brought back our presence at orientation in 2023-2024, which will ensure all incoming first-year students hear from our office.



SEXUAL ABUSE

1 IN 4 WOMEN

1 IN 6 MEN

1 IN 2 TRANSGENDER INDIVIDUALS

Will experience sexual assault in their lifetime.

26% OF PEOPLE

ARE COMMITTED BY CURRENT OR FORMER SPOUSE, BOYFRIEND, OR PARTNER

41.6% OF PEOPLE

Will experience sexual violence in their lifetime.

(In 2014) 22% of black women being raped, 41% experience forms of sexual violence

17.9% of Latinas with boyfriend or partner experience sexual violence in their lifetime.

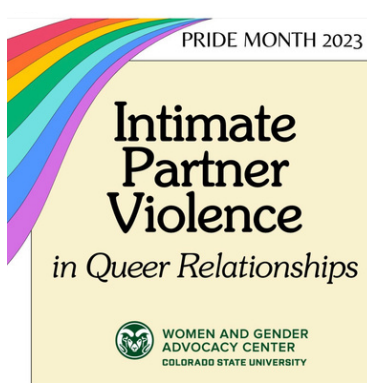
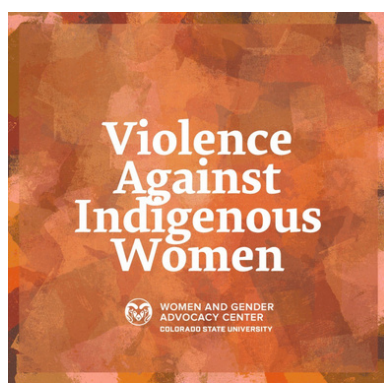
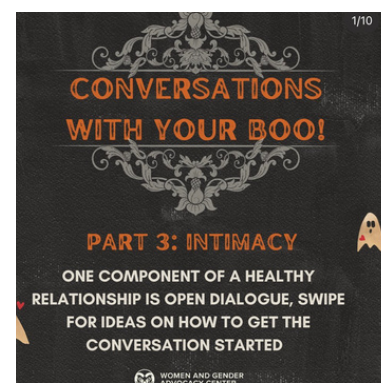
PROGRAMMING HIGHLIGHTS

Programs and Workshops:

- Understanding and Building Boundaries
- Speaker's Bureau Workshop & Panels
- SAAM Kickoff: The Hunting Ground movie showing
- Karla G. Gonzales keynote (Women's History Month)
- Zabie Yamasaki keynote with yoga practice (in collaboration with APACC)
- Exploring Relationships After Trauma
- MGC trainings
- R.E.D.Y to Talk (Red Whistle Brigade conversation series)
- Sweet Shop
- The Art of Building Community

Campaigns and posts:

- Brigade on the Stump: Navigating Rejection
- Survivor Story Speak Out
- Creepy or Cute
- Conversations with Your Boo!
- Violence Against Indigenous Women (In collaboration with NACC)
- IPV in Queer Relationships
- Self Care Summer



Amazing Stickers!

WGAC had an incredible sticker game this year, and we printed thousands of them. We calculate our sticker reach to be over 4,000 people!





**WOMEN AND GENDER
ADVOCACY CENTER
COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY**