



For Immediate Release

Big Idea Project students help Aurora Warms the Night win \$137,000 grant

Denver, CO (August 2, 2018) – Big Idea Project® students from Smoky Hill High School helped win a \$137,000 grant for Aurora Warms the Night to provide hygiene accessibility for Aurora’s homeless population.

Big Idea Project is a Colorado-based co-curricular experiential leadership development program that trains and equips students with real-world skills, character lessons and leadership experience. In teams, and with the help of a business mentor, students tackle issues, develop an actionable plan, and implement solutions that produce real results.

Smoky Hill High School Big Idea Project students Ryan Rebollo, Eliyah Chadioun and Breanna Hitt took on Aurora’s homeless need by reaching out to Aurora Warms the Night to collaborate on a project that would increase opportunity for homeless citizens to find work and dignity. Brian Arnold, Executive Director of Aurora Warms the Night, worked closely with the students to craft a grant proposal that would fund the purchase of mobile showers and hygiene trailers, a service that is the first of its kind for Colorado’s homeless population.

The collaboration between the Big Idea Project students and Aurora Warms the Night resulted in a \$137,000 grant.

“Bathrooms in the north Aurora community after 7pm are almost impossible to find,” says Arnold. “A large portion of our homeless population work but find shelter in places that don’t have showers. Our mobile bathroom and shower facility will create a safe gathering place for people in great need during the evening hours. By partnering with Big Idea Project students, we are helping to break the cycle of homelessness through comprehensive services while empowering our youth to be a part of important solutions.”

With the grant Arnold purchased the same trailer that Big Idea Project students found through their research. The trailer’s first stop will be Smoky Hill High School to celebrate the collaborative success and provide opportunity for more students to care for Aurora’s homeless population.

“The Big Idea Project really taught us that anyone can make change in their community if they set their mind to it,” said student Ryan Rebollo. “We learned how to reach out to leaders in our community for advice and direction so we could make a lasting impact. We are thankful we could help Aurora Warms the Night reach its goal to provide assistance to and boost the self-confidence of homeless individuals so they can break free from their situation.”

The Big Idea Project organization provides the opportunity for connection between classrooms, community organizations and local companies. Rebollo, Chadioun and Hitt were just three of the 1,200 students in high schools across the Denver metro who have positively impacted over 14,500 people in their communities through their experience with the Big Idea Project.

“Big Idea Project exists to transform the way students think, feel and engage with those around them, commented Tricia Halsey, Founder and Executive Director of Big Idea Project. “Ryan, Eliyah and Breanna’s Big Idea Project is a success story of student achievement, community collaboration and social impact that will influence not just their lives, but others’ as well, long after they graduate.”

About Big Idea Project

[Big Idea Project](#) brings communities together under one vision: to develop our nation’s future generous leaders. Teachers leverage a deeper network of support and collaborative relationships to usher in new levels of innovation in the classroom. High school students become leaders through self-directed action that merges their passion and talents with their community’s needs. They become the employees we want to hire and the citizens we need. With the support of business mentors, students take on real social challenges and work to impact people for the better. Real work, real solutions, for real life. To learn more about Big Idea Project and to see student videos go to www.bigideaproject.org. Connect with Big Idea Project on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).

About Aurora Warms the Night

[Aurora Warms the Night](#) (AWTN) shelters those experiencing homelessness in the winter when temperatures reach 20 degrees or colder. Year round services include meals, warm clothing, hygiene items, transportation to shelter, laundry vouchers, bus passes, partner agency referrals, and advocacy. AWTN operates these services in order to ensure families and individuals meet their most basic needs, learn new skills, and access resources to transition out of homelessness.

###

Media Contact

Big Idea Project

Tricia Halsey

Phone: (818) 795-7362

Email: Tricia@bigideaproject.org

Aurora Warms the Night

Brian Arnold

Phone: 303-361-6905

Email: brian@awtnco.org