

Kyra's PlatteForum Story ArtLab Intern Graduate

Kyra Kaviani came to PlatteForum a quiet young woman, searching for a sense of identity. Through ArtLab, our innovative year-round, out-of-school internship program for at-risk and marginalized high school students provided the level of freedom, guidance and support that Kyra was looking for, whether knowingly or not.

Working with PlatteForum resident artist, Andrea Moore, Kyra developed a new sense of confidence in her abilities, in her facility for engagement with her peers and in her willingness to speak out on issues close to her heart. By her senior year in ArtLab, the real Kyra had emerged as a leader with her peers, even as they, in turn, helped her find her voice.

During her time in ArtLab, Kyra drew on her own heartbreaking experience as a survivor of abuse when she spearheaded a community art project that spoke to the critical importance of reporting child abuse. Subsequently, at the request of the Colorado Department of Human Services and in conjunction with statewide Child Abuse Prevention Awareness Month activities, Kyra was selected to introduce Governor Hickenlooper at a kick-off rally held at the state capitol and courageously recounted her personal story of abuse. That very same week, Kyra was honored as one of the recipients of the Mayor's Youth Award – in recognition of her triumph over adversity in the pursuit of success.

Kyra graduated from East High School and is going on to study at Metro State University in spite of the fact that a higher education was something Kyra did not think was attainable until her experience with ArtLab. As she puts it, "ArtLab showed me the importance of continuing my education post-high school and that with a little bit of hard work, my dreams can become reality."

*" ArtLab taught me humility. I realized my ArtLab peers had equally difficult struggles. We are so fortunate to belong to a group of people who care and support each other."
-Kyra Kaviani*



Kyra introducing Governor Hickenlooper at the Capitol.

Kyra's longer-range goal is to someday enter politics, with a focus on human rights issues. Her personal experience and her willingness to engage now allow her to recognize unfairness and to refuse to sit by while injustices occur. Through her experience with ArtLab, Kyra has taken on the mission of helping others find their own voice.

