

## Megan's PlatteForum Story Community Organization Partner

Megan Vizina, executive director at Colfax Community Network (CCN), is a loyal partner and staunch supporter of PlatteForum and will take any opportunity to celebrate the partnership and to spread the word about its benefits. Founded in 1999, CCN first teamed up with PlatteForum in 2006 to the mutual benefit of both organizations.

CCN was created to reach the transient motel population along Colorado's most unforgiving stretch of roadway, CCN not only provides needed services, but works to create a sense of community in an otherwise troubled landscape. As a recurring annual partner with PlatteForum's Learning Lab program, CCN youth are paired with our resident artists and ArtLab interns for a series of creative workshops culminating in a public art exhibition or performance.



*Megan with a member of the Colfax Community Network family.*

CCN youth have experienced some form of severe trauma; homelessness, hunger, parental addiction and incarceration and bearing witness to violent crimes being some of the more egregious examples. As they struggle to understand these cruelties, their lack of coping skills intensifies their frustration that often reveals itself in behavioral issues. The workshops at PlatteForum give them the tools and support they need to express their feelings through art in a safe and supportive space.

*"PlatteForum offers our kids an opportunity to create something uniquely their own. It's an opportunity for them to take pride in what they create and to receive accolades for their hard work and creativity, which is something they don't often experience."*

*-Megan Vizina*

The simple act of leaving their East Colfax neighborhood for the PlatteForum studio is a cause for excitement amongst these children, and the enthusiasm they display at end-of-workshop exhibitions and performances is both touching and promising. To a group of young people who are rarely praised and often spend time in detention or facing expulsion, the workshops provide reinforcement of the value of hard work and group effort.

Megan is committed to continuing and growing the partnership between PlatteForum and

and Colfax Community Network because of the consistent outcomes the programming delivers. She sums up the partnership in this way; "The thing that always strikes me about PlatteForum is consistency of high caliber programming.

Consistency is crucial for our kids because there normally isn't a lot of consistency in their lives. PlatteForum is always such a great experience for us, and that is why they have been an integral part of our afterschool programming. PlatteForum is the perfect combination of art, social justice and a safe space. Our kids are always asking about our next trip to PlatteForum."



*Art work from PlatteForum exhibition with Colfax Community Network.*