Courage and inclusion.

During our freshman year we noticed that all we saw around us in Boulder and at CU was wealth and prosperity, and this moved us to discover how the rhetoric of compassion could convince the thriving community we live in to give something back. So we took advantage of our first year writing class to create a service learning video for Habitat for Humanity.

Our story is of course, not about our own diversity, as you can see we’re not very diverse, (joking) but instead us being unexpectedly put into a diverse situation. It is the story of a diverse family overcoming a situation of extreme adversity.

The goal of this project was to make a promotional video for a deserving non-profit organization in Boulder. After some searching and thought, we found the CU chapter of Habitat for Humanity, which builds homes through volunteer efforts for deserving families. Luckily there were four homes being built up in North Boulder at the time. At these build sites we met some incredible people.

Before you see the video none of us have any video making experience, and we think it turned out well considering. We went to the site, filmed what we saw, and here’s our final product:

[Video] 3:14

http://www.pwrfaculty.net/pschaberg/student-video-showcase/wrtg1250-fall10/habitat-for-humanity

We think it’s a pretty good promotional video, but keep in mind that it’s not the video itself that we’re presenting but the experience behind the video.

The woman you saw in the video was Leticia, she and her family were born in Mexico and when situations became difficult, her family moved here to Colorado. She started her life here with very few resources. Her husband, her autistic son, and she were living in shelters just a few months before this video was shot. She managed to get a job as a nurse caring for the elderly, and there met someone from Habitat for Humanity who decided that she was a great candidate for a habitat home.

After hearing about Leticia and her story we thought she would be a perfect interview candidate for our video. We loaded up in the car with our camera, and drove to Leticia’s new house. Here we were, freshmen at CU knocking on a stranger’s door, having only heard about her difficult past. The door opens and she immediately hugs us and welcomes us inside. What really caught us off guard was she was not only expecting us, but was in the middle making us a delicious traditional meal. We had only known Leticia for a minute and her positive outlook on life was already affecting us. Not only that, but looking back on her enchiladas still makes me smile.

I know what you all are thinking and don’t worry... we helped with the dishes. The next person we meet was Leticia’s autistic 10 year son, Pepo, whom Leticia proudly told us was starting to say his first words. Being autistic Pepo required almost constant supervision because he had the tendency of taking of his clothes and running around the neighborhood, hence the nickname Tarzan. Luckily when we got to meet Pepo he was both fully dressed and playing with the family’s pet cat. But the story gets even
better; their cat only had one eye. Leticia explained that it belonged in the family because it too had a hard past but now had a safe place to call home.

The amazing thing is how a woman from such diverse conditions can teach two young men from background of privilege that no adversity is too great and all you need to do is add a little spice to your life. Leticia’s gave us the meaning of courage and inclusion so as you leave today we encourage you to go out, meet new people and give back to the community.

Thank you and have a great day.