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When I found out I was going to be placed at Colorado Organization for Latina Opportunity and Reproductive Rights (COLOR) I was taken back. There I was, little old me driving from Reno, NV to Denver, CO to become a part of the COLOR team. If I could describe my internship is in a few words they would be: invigorating, grounding and unforgettable. This paper will explain in details the highs, the lows and the in between.

On June 6th I packed my little Nissan up, said goodbye to my friends and started my road trip to Denver, CO. I drove over 1,000 miles, stayed in Salt Lake City one night and when I finally got to Denver it was all worth it. Denver, CO is absolutely beautiful. There were green parks everywhere, lots of trees everywhere, four seasons and the folx there were surprisingly nice. It reminded me of a bigger version of Reno. One of the first things I learned about the city is that there are at least 300 days of sunshine, but they don’t typically share that with just everybody; Cristina the director at COLOR told me about it.

As soon as I got there I had the chance to learn about the history of COLOR, and spend time with each and every xingona (badass), unapologetic colorista staff members! My first week at COLOR was very refreshing, and grounding. When I got there I didn’t have much to do, but adjust myself to working in the little casita (little house) that has been converted to an unapologetic Latina workspace. I loved it! During the second week I got assigned to start working in a few projects such as, phone banking for Colorist@s Unite, which was a potluck style event we were hosting towards the month. The goal was to engage other Colorist@s in the community, and spoke to them about the misconceptions when it comes to raising the minimum wage in CO. I also took the task of jointly managing the social media handles with other staff
Some of the early challenges I faced were internal. My first few weeks were the toughest. I felt extremely homesick and though I was surrounded by a badass community I was missing my loved ones from home. It was also very challenging for me to not have any friends outside of work. For the first time in a long time I was feeling extremely alone. Another struggle I was having was finding someone to cut my hair; it was a little intimidating asking around, but nonetheless I was given the contact of an amazing LGBTQIA friendly beauty salon run and owned by Latinxs.

Some of the other highlights of my internship revolved around being trained on how to properly register folx to vote, and how to properly canvass to raise awareness around raising the minimum wage in CO by working in coalition with Colorado Families for a Fair Wage (CFFW). We were helping push this movement to raise the minimum wage by canvassing and having folx fill pledges in support of voting to raise the minimum wage this fall. I have to admit that that
canvassing was a little difficult for me, since I’m a very introverted person, but overall it was a great opportunity to develop professionally.

The COLOR Staff creating Safer Sex Kits for Denver Pride 2016.

During my time at COLOR the horrendous Orlando shooting happened. As a staff we were all feeling the weighted energy, and collectively created spaces to heal. Cristina, the director of COLOR, created a space for us to break out and dance along to cupid shuffle. It was an exercise in hopes of it helping us process and heal. Later that same day, I had the privilege and honor in attending a vigil specifically for 2spirit LGBTQ Latinx and People of Color community. The ceremony was beautiful, but I left feeling more homesick and sad than I anticipated. It was beautiful to just see the comunindad come together and join in prayer, and march to show support and raise awareness for the tragedy in Orlando. It was especially hard for me to be in that space because it reminded me of my brown xingnx crew, my qwoc crew, and the
spaces I have created back home, which is why it is important to find a space and to be surrounded with folx who are like minded and resilient.

Hermanitas 2016
During my time there I had the opportunity of co-teaching a sex comprehensive class to Latina youth from the community called Hermanitas. Amber Garcia, a community organizer and total badass, was my supervisor and lead on this comprehensive sex education class. My job was to create a flyer, and organize the event. In total we had 9 young girls show up, and Amber and I taught them all we could about their bodily health, and sexual health. It was amazing and empowering to be around a young group of girls asking questions about their bodily health. It felt necessary for us to be there having these conversations with them.

My time there did not feel like it was long enough. My internship was over before I realized. Everything happened very fast, and before I knew it I was saying goodbye to my COLOR familia over dinner and karaoke. From this experience I learned about the importance of simply being engaged in one’s community and leading the people in it. My time at COLOR was incredible, and I wouldn’t change it for anything in the world.