

THE PILLAR

A MONTHLY JOURNAL OF THE TRIO SSS COMMUNITY

"Helping Students Realize Their Full Potential"



December 2023
ISSUE

Page Guide

Page 1

• Student Spotlight

Page 2

• Spotlight Continued
• Holiday Movie Review

Page 3

• Student Spotlight

Page 4

• TRIO Office Assistants

Page 5

• Holiday Treats

Page 6

• Treats—Continued
• Meal Prep

Page 7

• Holiday Activities

Page 8

• Message from Director
• TRIO GRAD Ceremony

Page 9

• Workshop Calendar



Student Spotlight - Irafasha Nadia-Louis



The TRIO Student Support Services program is happy to spotlight Irafasha Nadia-Louis in this month's newsletter. She is majoring in International Business with a minor in Risk Management and will be graduating this semester. As a first-generation college student, she had to figure out things on her own. She noted, "I felt as if I were doing so without knowing how. Even though I learnt to be autonomous and had the support of wonderful programs as well as family and friends. It was difficult not to be able to ask questions to parents or siblings." She is grateful for Maria from the DSF Program and Henry from TRIO as they assisted her in navigating her way through college. She appreciates all the efforts on behalf of the students. She shared that these programs made an impact on her and other students. When asked about one thing she wished she was told when she started college, she noted to network. She stated, "Network can get you places a degree cannot."

When asked about her undergraduate experience, she noted that her experience was fantastic. She felt connected with CU Denver by serving as the Marketing Coordinator for the Women in Entrepreneurship and Financial Freedom student organizations. She mentioned that she is grateful to have so many wonderful instructors who were willing to work with her and be patient. Irafasha noted, "I have been to a lot of excellent events that have helped me to network with wonderful individuals and meet new people. College has taught me so much about myself that I will remember for the rest of my life." If she could go back in time, she would not change anything. She is grateful for the challenges and successes that have come her way. In college she met her two best friends. It was the nicest thing that ever happened to her. She stated, "If you're looking for a unique way to express yourself, this is the place to be. I am excited to see what I can accomplish next. I have never had a wonderful semester, but this one is my favorite because I resolved to make it my best semester."

When asked about her favorite memory in college, Irafasha noted that she had many memorable moments. If she had to choose one, it would be the time when she had to submit her second SAP appeal for financial aid. She was struggling financially and was working in two positions. Her long-term relationship had ended, and she was experiencing mental distress. She lost all hope and did not believe in her abilities to complete college. She felt compelled to drop out to maintain a sense of balance in her life. This event taught her to try everything and anything and to never give up on herself. She found many great people and programs willing to assist and collaborate with her. All this experience reinforced her intelligence. She noted, "If I can fail and then get back up, you can do it too. Failure is only a step to success. This is my favorite memory because it reminds me of when I have been through worse and kept a smile with hope on my face." **CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE...**

Student Spotlight Continued — Irafasha Nadia-Louis

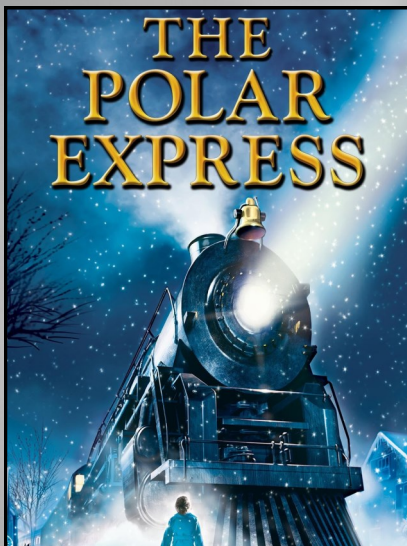


When asked how the program has helped her, Irafasha shared that TRIO has been quite beneficial to her academically and financially. She noted, "I did not know how to manage college alone, but TRIO made me feel supported and like I had a family in college with me to whom I could relate. TRIO provided me with emotional support by providing meetings with the coordinator and student assistants to discuss future objectives and goals, which helped me in drawing a vision of what I desired for myself." She loved having someone with whom she could communicate and was concerned about her personal aspirations. Her advice for other students is to write your own story. Write down your goals and do not let anyone tell you that you cannot do it.

Her short-term goal is to seek a full-time job at the University of Colorado Denver to help her pursue her academic goal to apply for the CU Denver, Health Administration MBA program. Her long-term goal is to own an international business. Her hobbies and interests include her passion for art and reading. She also loves to draw. If she won a million dollars, she would invest her money. She stated, "Investing in myself is investing in others." If she could multiply the amount, then she would have the ability to help others with endless success. A million dollars can go fast if you do not know how to spend it, but if you invest, you can make more. Her favorite quote is, "Find what you love doing and do it for a long time. Eventually you will succeed." This quote resonates with Irafasha because it does not limit us to our failures or define us by them. If you fail, you must keep going. Knowing how to stand after a failure is success. The TRIO SSS Program wishes Irafasha continue d success. Woo Hoo! You did it!



Holiday Movie Review



"The Polar Express," directed by Robert Zemeckis and based on the beloved children's book by Chris Van Allsburg, is a visually stunning and heartwarming holiday adventure. The film follows a young boy who embarks on a magical train journey to the North Pole on Christmas Eve. The animation is groundbreaking, with motion-capture technology bringing the characters to life in a way that captures the essence of Van Allsburg's illustrations. The breathtaking landscapes, coupled with the whimsical design of the train itself, create a truly enchanting world that immerses the audience in the spirit of Christmas.

At its core, "The Polar Express" is a tale of belief and the magic of Christmas. Tom Hanks, who voices multiple characters, including the mysterious train conductor, delivers a compelling performance that adds depth to the narrative. The film beautifully explores themes of friendship, bravery, and the importance of holding onto one's sense of wonder even as we grow older. The musical score by Alan Silvestri enhances the emotional resonance, complementing the visuals and contributing to the overall festive atmosphere.

While some critics may argue that the film's plot is simple, its charm lies in the simplicity of its message. "The Polar Express" succeeds in capturing the magic of childhood and the joy of the holiday season, making it a timeless family classic that continues to resonate with audiences of all ages. Whether experienced for the first time or revisited annually, this cinematic journey on the Polar Express is sure to kindle the holiday spirit and leave viewers with a warm and nostalgic feeling.

Angel Lupian | TRIO SSS Office Assistant

Student Spotlight—Patrick Gurule



The TRIO Student Support Services is also happy to spotlight Patrick Gurule. He will be graduating this semester with a Bachelor of Science degree in Architecture. He has been an active participant in the program since spring 2021. His hobbies and interests include woodworking, fishing, and hiking. He also loves designing and building. In addition, he enjoys anything that involves art watercolor, acrylics, graffiti art and sculpting. If he won a million dollars, he would first pay off debt and help his family pay off debt. He noted that a million dollars seems like a lot of money but honestly would go fast especially with the economy and inflation. He would like to give back to everyone who helped him along his journey. If he had anything left over, he would like to get a paint job on his 1986 Oldsmobile Cutlass Supreme.

Patrick was asked about his college experience. He shared that he had been out of school for nearly ten years. Transitioning back to school was a huge change for him after being in the work force working many different jobs. He remembers it was like starting a race. He was pumped up and excited to be back. He had lots of energy and was involved with many activities. He stated, "When I first started, I was like a deer caught in the headlights. I made it a priority to find resources that I could tap into and how

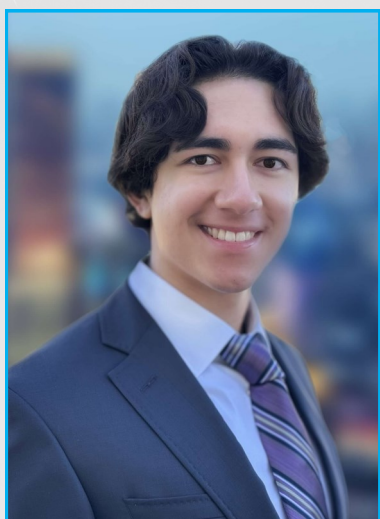
I could get involved in organizations at school. I also took it upon myself to get acquainted with everyone in the school from the President to the cooks and janitorial staff. I believed that it's not what you know it's who you know." He was a part of the TRIO Program at Red Rocks Community College and transferred to CU Denver where he was part of AFWIAS, which is a club that honors and highlights women in architecture and aims to end the inequalities in the workforce.

When asked how TRIO has helped him, he stated, "TRIO has helped me to be accountable. Sonia helped me apply for a scholarship for a 6-week class certificate for Classical Architecture in New York. She gave me deadlines and really pushed me to apply for the scholarship. I would have never done it by myself. Also, mentors checking in on your wellbeing and helping with scholarships was good." One of Patrick's biggest challenges was having to balance work, family, religion, and school. Patrick also stated, "Other than that, I would say having resilience against peers and instructors who doubt you." He also shared his finances played a major role while earning his degree, which can be a heavy burden. Having to work and go to school has been nearly impossible. He also struggled with his commitment with God and his family, being that work and school consumed so much of his time. He wished he could focus on what comes first and second, which is God and then family.

When asked about what his favorite memory in college was, he shared that he traveled to Estes Park with the Student Government to rewrite the by-laws. He participated in an Iron Chef challenge. Groups were given questions and if answered correctly they got to choose a category of food that they would implement and cook for the judges (i.e., chicken, steak, pork, and vegetables to cook like potatoes, asparagus, or corn). It was a lot of fun and he learned how to work with others on the fly. Patrick noted it was amazing what they accomplished together as a team.

Patrick's short-term goal (within the year) is to apply for an entry level position in Architecture. He would like to at least try the waters before he fully jumps in. Eventually, he would like to return to the exhibition field where he has spent twenty years of his life designing exhibitions for businesses and conventions. He is also interested in furthering his education, but he really must dig deep into resources to pay for more schooling or else it is not going to happen. Graduate school would be in mind, if he could find a resource to pay for it so that it does not cause financial burden. Patrick stated, "First thing I want to do is get myself healthy, which includes eating better and exercising. Also, I want to catch up with family and friends because I have been committed to school and I have had to put them on hold. Going on a nice trip somewhere for relaxation would help with my mentality." We wish you continued success in your career and academic endeavors.

New TRIO SSS Office Assistant - Angel Lupian



Hello, my name is Angel Lupian. I am a student at the University of Colorado Denver Majoring in Finance with a Minor in Information Systems. I aspire to gain knowledge that will allow me to enter the competitive business world with enough knowledge to succeed. I hope to be able to provide software development skills, and great financial skills.

When I am not studying or in school, I enjoy doing a variety of things such as going to the gym, playing basketball, and sinking into the beauty of classical music. I really enjoy coding and learning new coding languages. Every day I work on improving myself and learning something new. I aspire to be as mentally tough as possible with the greatest amount of discipline possible. Discipline and consistency are the key to success.

Angel Lupian | TRIO SSS Office Assistant

New TRIO SSS Office Assistant - Anahi Andres

Hello everyone!

Let me introduce myself:

My name is Anahi Andres, the new Office Assistant for the TRIO SSS Program. I am a first-generation, third-year student working toward a bachelor's degree in biology. With my degree, I am hoping to enter the field of medicine to pursue a career in pediatrics or family medicine. I have lived in the state of Colorado all of my life, more specifically in a town called Fort Morgan in the Northeastern plains. Even though I have lived in Colorado all of my life, I like to say that I am from Guatemala since this is my place of origin.



Some of my hobbies that I enjoy doing outside of school include spending time with family, playing soccer, and playing basketball. Spending time with family is a time that I truly enjoy because they are a big part of who I am, and it is always fun to spend time with them. Growing up I have enjoyed playing soccer, and I continue to enjoy playing this sport. Recently, I have also taken an interest in playing basketball, because similar to soccer, it can get a bit competitive, which I enjoy.

As a new member of the TRIO SSS staff, I am excited for the opportunity to continue meeting and working with all of you at some point throughout the year!

Anahi Andres | TRIO SSS Office Assistant

Holiday Treats - Monkey Bread

FOR THE DOUGH

- 2¼teaspoons/7 grams active dry yeast (1 package)
 - 1½cups lukewarm milk (about 105 degrees, or just warm to the touch)
 - ⅓cup/67 grams granulated sugar
 - 1tablespoon/15 grams kosher salt
 - 3tablespoons/43 grams unsalted butter, melted, more for greasing bowl
 - 2eggs, at room temperature
- 5 to 6cups/640 grams to 768 grams all-purpose flour**

FOR THE SAUCE

- 1cup/227 grams unsalted butter (2 sticks)
 - 2cups/440 grams packed dark brown sugar
 - ½cup heavy cream, more to taste
- Salt (optional)**

TO FINISH

- ½cup/114 grams unsalted butter (1 stick), melted and cooled to room temperature
- 1¼cups/275 grams light brown sugar or maple sugar, or a combination of dark brown sugar and white sugar
- 2tablespoons ground cinnamon
- ¼teaspoon kosher salt

About ¾ cup/80 grams chopped toasted pecans or walnuts, more for garnish (optional)

PREPARATION

1. In the bowl of a mixer, dissolve yeast in ¼ cup of the warm milk. Add the remaining warm milk, sugar, salt, butter and eggs.
2. Add 5 cups flour and mix with paddle attachment until smooth, about 2 minutes. Switch to hook attachment and knead on low speed, adding flour if necessary until dough is stiff and slightly tacky, 10 minutes.
3. Grease a large bowl with butter and turn dough out into the bowl. Flip over dough so greased side is up, cover loosely with a kitchen towel and set in a warm, draft-free spot until doubled in size, about 1½ to 2 hours.
4. Make the sauce: In a saucepan, melt butter over medium heat. Add sugar and stir constantly until simmering and the butter has melted. Pour in cream (it will bubble up) and cook until thickened, 3 to 5 minutes. Taste and add cream and pinches of salt to taste. Turn off heat and set aside.
5. Brush a medium or large Bundt pan, preferably nonstick, with some of the melted butter. Combine the sugar, cinnamon and salt in a bowl and mix well. Rewarm the caramel sauce over low heat.
6. Once dough has doubled in size, turn it onto floured surface and knead for 3 minutes. Cut or pull off small pieces, each weighing about ½ ounce/15 grams, and roll them gently into balls. Set aside on a baking sheet.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE...

Holiday Treats - Monkey Bread (Continued)

7. To assemble, dip about half of the balls in melted butter, roll in sugar mixture, and fit them snugly into the pan, occasionally adding a sprinkle of pecans. Pour about a quarter of the sauce over the sugared dough balls. Repeat with remaining dough balls, pecans and another quarter of the sauce. Reserve the remaining sauce.
8. Cover and let rise at room temperature for 30 minutes to 1 hour, until puffy. (The monkey bread can be made up to this point up to 24 hours in advance and refrigerated overnight. Bring to room temperature before baking.)
9. Heat oven to 375 degrees. Bake for 30 to 35 minutes, until golden and bubbling around the edges. Let cool on a rack for 5 to 10 minutes, then invert onto a platter.
10. Meanwhile, reheat the remaining caramel sauce and drizzle or spoon it over the top of the monkey bread until it runs down the sides.



(Any remaining sauce can be passed at the table, for dipping.) Serve warm or at room temperature, with hot coffee or tea and plenty of napkins.

Monica Vu | TRIO SSS Peer Mentor

Meal Prep: PB&J Overnight Oats

Serves 1

Prep Time: 5-minutes

Chill: Overnight or at least 8-hours

Ingredients

½ cup of your favorite dairy or non-dairy milk

An almost empty jar of Creamy Salted Peanut Butter

½ cup Rolled Oats

1 tablespoon Flaxseed Meal (optional)

¼ cup of your favorite frozen berries

Directions

Add milk to your almost empty jar of peanut butter and shake to loosen the peanut butter.

Add remaining ingredients to jar and shake to combine.

Refrigerate overnight before serving.

Source: <https://www.traderjoes.com/home/recipes/pb-jar-overnight-oats>



Zoe Vavrina | TRIO SSS and McNair Project Specialist

Holiday Activities in Denver

The Mile High Tree Presented by Xfinity

Nov 17 – Dec 31 from 5pm – 10pm

Civic Center Park – 101 W. 14th Ave, Denver, CO

Enjoy the display of colorful lights and holiday music. Along with this, the opportunity to view the light shows presented by the “The Mile High Tree Presented by Xfinity.”

The Polar Express™ Train Ride

Nov 10 – Dec 23 (*check the website for available times*)

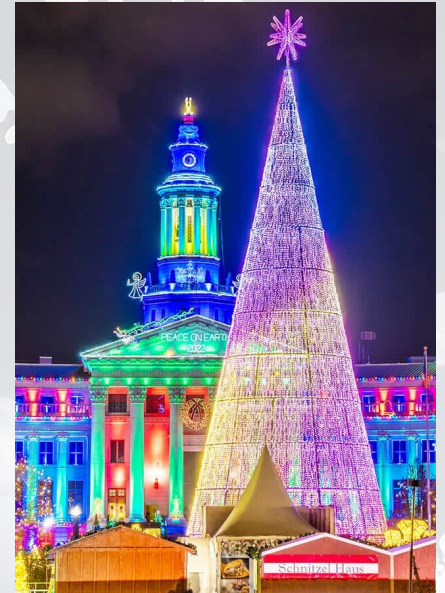
Colorado Railroad Museum – 17155 W 44th Ave, Golden, CO

Colorado Ballet: “The Nutcracker”

Nov 25 – Dec 24 (*check the website for available times*)

Ellie Caulkins Opera House – 1400 Curtis St, Denver, CO

Come and enjoy the Colorado Ballet holiday production of “The Nutcracker”



Zoo Lights

Dec 2 – Jan 7 from 5pm – 10pm

Denver Zoo – 2300 Steele St, Denver, CO

Come by and say hello to our animal friends and enjoy the holiday cheer through the various light displays and the presentation of beautiful ice sculptures!

Santa at the Station

Nov 26, Dec 3, Dec 12, and Dec 17 from 11am – 4pm

Denver Union Station 1701 Wynkoop St, Denver, CO

Enjoy this FREE event where the family will be able to take pictures with Santa and Mrs. Claus!

Downtown Denver Rink

Nov 20 – Feb 11 (*Check website for times*)

1601 Arapahoe St, Denver, CO

Come with friends and family to enjoy the winter season as you ice skate across the rink!

For more information on the listed events and other events occurring in Denver visit:

<https://www.denver.org/milehighholidays/#:~:text=No%20other%20city%20creates%20holiday,now%20with%20great%20hotel%20rates.>

Anahi Andres | TRIO SSS Office Assistant

Message from the Director

Hello TRIO family,

Before I introduce myself, I would like to first congratulate all of our fall semester 2023 graduates! It was great meeting some of you at our graduation recognition ceremony. For those that I did not get a chance to meet, I wish you all the best of luck in your new endeavors and I hope that you keep TRIO as a piece of who you are.

As you have noticed, our TRIO programs have gone through transitions these last few months and I would like to thank the TRIO team (Henry, Zoe, Jenny, Marie and Teresa) for holding down the TRIO fort! As we move onto the next chapter in our TRIO programs, I would like to introduce myself as your new Director for TRIO Student Support Services and McNair Scholars Program! I am beyond thankful to be given the opportunity to lead the team, the programs, and you as a participant! I myself am a TRIO-SSS alumni from Colorado Mesa University and I know how important these programs are to the success of our students. I am a proud TRIO product and we know that it works. As I work with you, please let me know what your needs are, what can we do to improve your experience in TRIO, but most of all, we want to hear how things are going for you. Please feel free to stop by my office anytime or feel free to reach me via e-mail rafael.orozco@ucdenver.edu.

I look forward to working together in the future!

Kindly,
Rafael Orozco



I feel like if you're a really good human being, you can try to find something beautiful in every single person, no matter what.

— Lady Gaga —









TRIO Programs Graduate Recognition Ceremony



The TRIO McNair Scholars Program and the TRIO Student Support Services Program had a successful Graduate Recognition Ceremony on Friday, December 1st in Student Commons, Classroom 2500. Attendees included graduates, staff, and guests. Graduates were presented with their graduation stole. Delicious Mexican food was provided for attendees, and there was an opportunity to take photos with our mascot, MILO!



December Workshop Calendar

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Make sure to complete the TRIO SSS Online Evaluation Form for Skill Building Workshops and Financial Literacy Sessions. Complete at: https://bit.ly/486skrV .				1
4 ¹Resume Basics 3:00 pm—4:00 pm SC, Suite 2000 	5 	6	7 ¹Coping with Stress Using Art 2:30 pm—3:45 pm SC, Suite 2000 	8 
11 ²Budget Basics 12:00 pm—1:00 pm SC, Suite 2000 	12 ¹Coping with Stress Using Art 12:00 pm—1:30 pm SC, Suite 2000 	13 	14 ¹Procrastination: Now or Later? 2:00 pm—3:00 pm SC, Suite 2000 	15
18	29	20	21	22

All Workshops Will Be In-Person 

REGISTRATION REQUIRED—Non-TRIO workshops are subject to change.

¹TRIO SSS Skill Building Workshops: [Registration Required: RSVP: HERE](#)

²TRIO SSS Financial Literacy Workshops: [Registration Required: RSVP: HERE](#)

Online Skill Building Workshop

If you are not able to attend one of the skill building sessions in the December Calendar, you can complete your skill building workshop with the CU Denver, Student Life and Campus Community office. They are offering on-demand LEAD workshops including sessions viewable on their YouTube Channel, click [HERE](#). Approved workshops include: 1) Decision Making, 2) Listening Skills for Leaders, 3) Conflict Management, 4) Managing Change, 5) How to Adult, and 6) Imposter Syndrome. Click "PLAYLISTS" at top of menu. Look for "LEAD Workshops" and click "View Full Playlist." You will be able to choose one of the session listed above. Once you see the video, click "SHOW MORE." You will be able to download any documents and complete the verification form. You can put "Henry Ornelas (HENRY.ORNELAS@UCDENVER.EDU)" on the Attendance Verification Form. Please email me the name and date of session completed. If you choose to complete the Imposter Syndrome session, you can complete verification form [HERE](#).

Online Financial Literacy Session

You can also complete your financial literacy session online using the Enrich Financial Planning website. [Enrich](#) offers you the opportunity to increase your financial literacy knowledge and fulfill this program requirement on your schedule. To fulfill the financial literacy requirement using Enrich, you must complete between 45 – 60 minutes of combined course video content. You must pass the session (s) with 80% or higher to receive credit. You could watch three 20-minute videos or one 30-minute and a 20-minute video. Don't forget to submit your certificate (s) of completion to receive credit for your financial literacy session. Once you have completed your course, you will be able to download a PDF Certificate of Completion. Please save the file with your name and return to professional staff by email. Should you have any questions, please contact the TRIO SSS Staff who can guide through this online financial literacy tool. Below, you will find a list of eligible video courses from which you can choose according to level (Introduction, Intermediate, and Advanced).