



TGNC HARM REDUCTION BADDIES CAMPAIGN: ROCKY MOUNTAIN HARM REDUCTION

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Intro by:

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It can be discouraging to work in harm reduction. We don't often get a lot of wins, or sometimes, it can be hard to recognize them. When Arlo received his nominations for this campaign, and I read the beautiful things people had written about him, it gave me an immense sense of hope and pride for the future of the movement.

They quickly became one of our most engaged Lighthouse Learning Collective members and never hesitate to share their perspective or expertise with the group. He even filled in at the last minute to help us present at the NHRC Conference a couple of weeks ago! Their dedication to the community surpasses their day job, as they promote harm reduction information and supplies to the music scene in Colorado.

In addition to this blog post, we invite you to check out Arlo's [recorded interview](#) as well as this [Instagram post](#) about him and his work.

To read the previous posts in our series, [click here!](#)

Opinions stated are my own and do not reflect that of the company I work for

Mutual aid, harm reduction, and community are three things that truly saved my life, and I would love to use this platform to highlight the amazing work that is happening in our Colorado community.

First off, I wanted to thank Taylor and the National Harm Reduction Coalition for giving me a platform to speak about myself and how harm reduction has affected my life and community. My name is Arlo Santiago Cruz, and I grew up in Phoenix, Arizona. I am someone with lived experience as a transmasculine person who uses drugs. I am currently living in Fort Collins and work at the only SSP in Northern Colorado. We often serve folks from neighboring states and rural areas without access to harm reduction supplies or testing. Our SSP provides safe injecting/smoking/snorting supplies, syringe disposal, safer use and sex education, free HIV/Hep C/STI testing, a low-barrier suboxone clinic, and much more. If there is something we are not able to accommodate, we bring in outside community members for more in-depth resource navigation and a network of mutual aid groups and peers who are currently using to help build community for the participants we support.

We are very lucky to have such creative, resilient, and empathetic folks putting in the work within our community. I want to give a shout-out to some badass harm reductionists across the state of Colorado who are vigilantly working hard to empower the folks we support:

Maggie Seldeen is the fearless leader and founder of High Rockies Harm Reduction. All alone, Maggie is covering 7 counties across the western slope of the Rocky Mountains. The western slope is an extremely rural and somewhat conservative area, and Maggie has done an amazing job advocating for the needs of people who use drugs. Her flexible mobile unit is unmatched when it comes to meeting and distributing supplies.

Here is more info on High Rockies Harm Reduction:

<https://highrockiesharmreduction.com/> and
<https://www.instagram.com/highrockiesharmreduction/>

Mariela Hernandez and **Zee Stark** are both powerhouses at the Harm Reduction Action Center in Denver Colorado. I have had the pleasure of working alongside both of them, and seeing how they work with volunteers and participants warms my heart. Mariela has an amazing rapport with everyone she encounters and truly meets people where they're at by providing mobile services. Zee is a wiz at ordering supplies, keeping meticulous and meaningful data, as well as having a vast knowledge of the current drug supply in Colorado.

You can learn more about their work here:

<https://www.harmreductionactioncenter.org/> and
<https://www.instagram.com/harmreductionactioncenter/>

Jojo Schneider from Denver Colorado Access Point is a fierce advocate for people who use drugs. Coupled with empathy and ability to build rapport, he is a vital part of any team he is on. Jojo's experiences bring so much new to the table, and he always centers the experiences of others when making decisions. Jojo isn't only an amazing harm reductionist, but an amazing friend who is always looking out for the people he loves.

You can get a glimpse of the work Jojo and DCAP are doing here:

<https://www.instagram.com/accesspointdenver/>

Sophie Feffer is unmatched when it comes to their knowledge of the inner workings of Colorado's statewide harm reduction initiatives, grants, and policies. With a long history of direct service and program building, Sophie is now Colorado's go-to when it comes to Syringe Service Programs statewide. Sophie has one of the biggest hearts I have ever met, and the experience, passion, and drive to help Colorado better serve people who use drugs. Without Sophie, our existing programs would not be as strong as they are, and I am so proud of the hard work they are doing behind the scenes.

A big thank you to **Brian, Nevi, Milo, Colby, Jaten, Madeline, Sophia, Sabrina**, and many others who work with various mutual aid groups in Northern Colorado. Thank you for pooling together and making sure our neighbors feel supported. You have been so open to learning about harm reduction and handing out these vital supplies to community members our SSP can't reach. These folks are the future of harm reduction, and I have no doubt they will continue to push the movement forward with their radically compassionate ideas. Please reach out to me if you would like to know more about their work and their distribution schedules!

Blasti is the most wacky and eccentric man who came into my life at a very important time. Blasti, along with a brigade of volunteers who believe in his mission, run an

integral organization in Northern Colorado called Blast n Scrap, which puts on donation-based, all-ages shows and workshops for musicians/artists to learn how to better hone their skills and support themselves independently. With the motto, “Music meets mutual aid,” I was stoked to offer Blasti some Narcan to keep at shows. From there, a beautiful partnership formed, and we have distributed hundreds of doses of Narcan and thousands of fentanyl test strips to folks attending shows. No one is ever turned away from a show, and there is always food and clothing available for folks who need it, or want to donate it. Blasti has created a space for the community to flourish, and always makes sure people have a safe place to engage in the arts. As someone in recovery, Blasti is a loud and proud advocate for harm reduction, and one of the best friends I could ask for.

To learn more about the groundbreaking work Blast n Scrap is doing, check them out here: <https://www.blastnscrap.org/> and <https://www.instagram.com/blastnscrap/>

Jamey, Kaitlin, Marlee, and Astrid have been working alongside me at Northern Colorado Access Point. I want to thank y’all for standing by my side through all the wins, loses, and tears (and there’s definitely been a lot of them, good and bad.) Y’all are my backbone, and I cannot thank you for your love, support, and jokes to get me through the day.

To see all of our day-to-day shenanigans, you can follow us here: <https://www.instagram.com/northerncoloradoaccesspoint/>

I have learned so much from these folks, but the biggest thing I have learned is how important community is. I am very lucky to be so loved and supported by people with the same passion as myself. I moved to Colorado during a very chaotic and difficult time in my life, and I am honored to say all of these people have helped me find a family and home here. I am honored to be highlighted for the work I am doing, but my work wouldn’t be what it is today without support from these lovely individuals and organizations.

We take care of each other, we keep us safe. We will be liberated through radical compassion, real connection, and the drive to create a better space for our communities.

If you would like to get in contact with Arlo, please email him at:
arlo.cruz@coloradohealthnetwork.org

Here is a list of the resources mentioned by Arlo. Check them out and share them with your contacts!

Blast n Scrap

Instagram: @BlastnScrap

Website: <https://www.blastnscrap.org/>

“Blast N Scrap is a nonprofit organization that supports young and emerging musicians and artists by providing performance and workshop space that advances social inclusion and environmental sustainability in the arts. We offer regular educational and career development opportunities to train young musicians and artists on alternative approaches to careers in the arts. By connecting touring musicians and local bands we help our local musicians develop the networks they need to succeed in their careers. We also specialize in environmentally and economically sustainable approaches to creating merchandise, such as t-shirts, stickers, album covers, and more.” Every show is donation based, and no one is turned away. Every show has mutual aid tables and harm reduction supplies available.

Foothills Mutual Aid

Instagram: @aidfoothills

Venmo: foothillsaidj

CashApp: \$AidFoothills

Website: <https://www.aidfoothills.org>

“Providing our unhoused neighbors in Larimer with meals, supplies, & love.” A community-funded mutual aid organization local to northern Colorado distributing supplies to folks in our community, including folks in more rural areas.

Lysistrata Mutual Care Collective

Instagram: @lysistratamccf

Website: <https://www.lysistratamccf.org/>

“We are an online, US based, community-run sex worker activist cooperative (as a non-501c3 entity, contributions or gifts made to us are not deductible as charitable contributions for Federal income tax purposes). As people in the industry, we understand how exploitation plays into our field, like any other job, because sex work is WORK! Our goals are to protect our autonomy and decision-making while also acknowledging that there are people who have lesser access to making choices about their involvement in this industry, to protect folks who have chosen this industry for any number of reasons and to protect folks who didn't by working together as a collective to provide education, exchange lifesaving information, and provide access to resources.”

Trans Needle Exchange

Instagram: @transneedles

Website: <https://transneedles.org/>

“We are a non-profit mail-based service providing free HRT needle supplies for trans folk who cannot access or afford their own. We send a month's worth of supplies to people all around the country. Trans Needle Exchange ships out over 150 packages a month.”