

ALL IN!

April 2026 Edition



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Welcome to the first edition of IN!'s Quarterly Newsletter: ALL IN!

ALL IN! invites members of our community to stay informed about the impact of inclusive higher education (IHE) and to be involved in its advancement throughout Colorado. Together, we can ensure campuses and communities across the state continue to embrace inclusion and students with intellectual disabilities (ID) have the opportunity to lead self-determined lives.

IN! plays a critical role in advocating for the inclusion of students with ID in postsecondary settings. Ensuring their equal access to opportunities that foster academic growth, social development, greater independence, and career advancement is our central goal.

Each quarter, the **ALL IN!** newsletter will share the collective work of the community to strengthen IHE pathways and expand opportunities for students with ID. We're excited to spotlight the progress happening across Colorado, the difference this work makes, and the ways you can partner with us to see it advance. As the IHE landscape continues to evolve, we ask that everyone in our network remains **ALL IN!**

GET INVOLVED
TODAY





School Highlight

Expanding Access: How Pikes Peak State College is Paving a New Pathway for Students with ID

The [ASPIRE Scholars](#) program at Pikes Peak State College (PPSC) launched in the fall of 2025, thanks to IN!'s Inclusive Higher Education Opportunities grant program. Fueled by the statewide need for diversified inclusive higher education (IHE) options, ASPIRE was established to expand opportunities for students with ID in southern Colorado.

As the only community college IHE pathway in the region, ASPIRE focuses on providing financial accessibility and establishing innovative community partnerships to meet student needs. In so doing, they set out to be the **first IHE in the state to provide a dedicated concurrent enrollment pathway for transition-age students with ID.**

ASPIRE welcomed its inaugural cohort of concurrent enrollment students with ID this spring. Participating students began their inclusive higher education journey while still benefiting from their district's 18-21 transition services – an opportunity that was out of reach for far too long. Students experience the full breadth of ASPIRE support, including enrollment in on-campus courses, peer mentorship, career exploration, specialized workshops, person-centered planning, and more. Their school districts provide transportation and cover the full cost of tuition and fees, addressing two of the longstanding barriers to inclusive higher education. **This collaborative model of IHE is revolutionizing student access through early exposure to college, financial feasibility for families, and wraparound support for postsecondary goal attainment.**

“ This is about access, dignity, and opportunity.”

Dr. Kassy Lopez
Director, ASPIRE at Pikes Peak State College

Dr. Kassy Lopez, ASPIRE Program Director, says, "This is about access, dignity, and opportunity...Being the only college in Colorado able to offer concurrent enrollment to this population allows [ASPIRE] to create real college pathways that lead to independence, employment and community engagement."

Widening the path of inclusive higher education for students still enrolled in their K-12 programming is a milestone worth celebrating. As one of ASPIRE's peer mentors states, "It's something that I am really proud to be a part of!" Similarly, IN! is proud of the trailblazing work of the ASPIRE program at PPSC and looks forward to seeing the ripple effect this has across the state.



Scholar Highlight



Defying Expectations: How Emily at UNC is Achieving Goals Some Never Thought Possible

Emily Goldstein, a junior at the University of Northern Colorado (UNC), is living proof that college inclusion for students with ID is both possible and powerful.

Emily spent the majority of her K-12 career feeling stifled by the low expectations of others, like so many students with ID. She shares, “I thought college, specifically a four-year college, was never going to be a thing for me.” Despite the limited assumptions of many past teachers, family members, and peers, **Emily knew there was more for her after high school, and she was determined to experience it.**

As a student in one of Colorado’s flagship IHE pathways, Go On and Learn (GOAL) at UNC, Emily has the support she needs to pursue her goals and prepare for the life she deserves. Emily is majoring in Psychology because of her desire to help others. To aid in job exploration and critical career exposure, the GOAL program facilitates an on campus work experience where Emily has the opportunity to support her college peers. Currently, Emily is employed at the university’s Disability Resource Center, where she helps fellow students with disabilities navigate the accommodation process, access the support they need, and become stronger self-advocates. In her role, Emily is actively enhancing campus accessibility while gaining meaningful professional experience. Beyond academics and employment, Emily also lives on campus with roommates, developing essential life skills for an autonomous future. In all these areas of college life, the support provided to Emily through the GOAL program has not isolated her but instead ensured her full participation.

She says, “GOAL has done a very good job of making sure nothing feels different.” She proudly acknowledges that she has had the same treatment and access to courses as any other UNC student - **a true depiction of inclusion.**

Emily’s path hasn’t been linear or without challenge. She has navigated changing her major, roommate conflicts, and difficult coursework, all of which have helped her become even more resilient. She credits the consistent support of mentors, peers, and the GOAL program staff for helping her persist and thrive.

Had Emily listened to the limited assumptions of others, she says herself, “I wouldn’t be here. I wouldn’t have had this job for three and a half years. I wouldn’t be three and a half years through college.” Emily goes on to emphasize the importance of not taking away someone’s right to further education or a normative social life solely because they think differently than others. She says, **“I don’t think anybody should be able to tell you what you are and are not capable of.”**

After years of academic and social exclusion, Emily is experiencing the life-changing impact of inclusion in higher education and defying societal expectations as she does so!

WATCH EMILY’S VIDEO HERE



IMPACT OF IHE

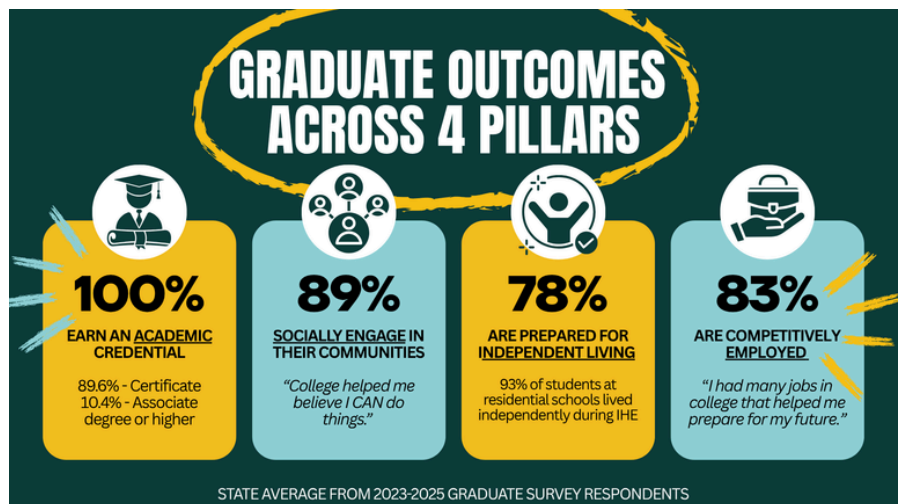
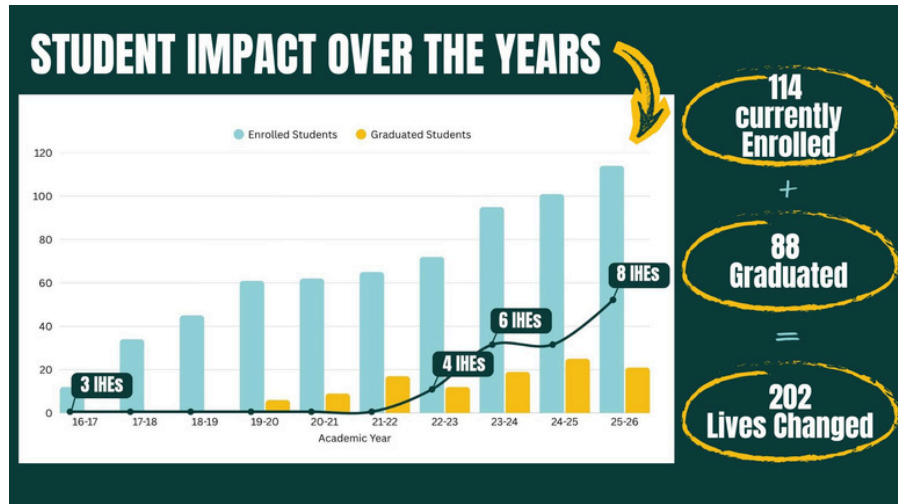


IN! believes that inclusion of students with ID at the college level is more than an opportunity, it is a pivotal catalyst for growth! The longstanding model of IHE in Colorado is grounded in the belief that **students with ID deserve equal access to postsecondary education** because they are capable of experiencing the same outcomes as their nondisabled peers.

With appropriate support, students with ID can fully engage in the same college classrooms, social settings, living environments, and career fields as their peers. All support provided to students within IHE leads to greater inclusion across these settings, which is both integral and revolutionary. Unlike the separate learning environments that many students with ID experience throughout their K-12 years, this approach prioritizes the full participation of all learners and highlights the mutual benefit of inclusion.

When colleges presume competence and create the conditions for authentic inclusion, students with ID contribute meaningfully to classroom discussions, strengthen campus communities, and deepen their own academic and career pathways.

IN!'s work is about more than opening doors; it's about transforming systems so that all students are recognized as equal contributors and leaders of their future. As IN! continues to advance IHE in Colorado, **we are seeing the powerful impact of what happens when college inclusion for students with ID is not an exception, but an expectation.**





INPUT from the ED



Be **IN** spired vested clusive

Our push for inclusive higher education (IHE) not only makes an indelible impact on the postsecondary ecosystem, but more importantly, has transformed the lives of students with ID who, just a decade ago, did not have a viable pathway to postsecondary education. Their successes are a testament to the power of collective impact; when every stakeholder prioritizes inclusion, IN!'s mission becomes a reality.

Today, **114** students with ID are enrolled across 8 IHE programs; **88** students have graduated from IHE programs, and this year, **21** more students are expected to graduate! We have been building momentum for the last 10 years and see no reason, given the need and overwhelming support, to slow our pace. We envision a world where an individual's academic, social, vocational ambitions, and their prospect for independence, is not limited by low expectations. This wholehearted conviction guides our work. Building the infrastructure that makes Inclusive Higher Education possible takes collective effort; it takes advocates, donors, stakeholders, and supporters in order to be successful. We hope that you will sign up and support our mission: we believe that one's disability should not compromise their chance of success.

Sincerely,
Gregg Zaire
Executive Director



ARE YOU ALL IN!?

Join IN! as we continue advancing inclusive higher education pathways for students with intellectual disability!

CONTRIBUTE
TODAY

