

Contact: Latia Henderson
RootED Denver Director of Communications
lhenderson@rootedenver.org | (720) 982-4770

Documentary Showcases Denver Public Schools Students Leading Transformative Changes To Curriculum

DENVER, Colo. (October 22, 2021) – On October 22, 2021 the film [Power in our Voices](#) will premiere at Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Early College (DMLK). It showcases the remarkable story of four young women finding their voices and becoming empowered to envision and effect change at their school and across the city. The film relates the emotional and inspirational journey that led to Denver Public Schools’ adoption of the [Know Justice, Know Peace Resolution](#). *Power in Our Voices: The Know Justice, Know Peace Story* was produced by [Degotelo Studios](#), with support from [RootED Denver](#).

The story begins with the students’ visit to the National Museum of African American History and Culture in Washington, D.C. in the fall of 2019. “Just being able to go to that museum and see people that looked like me and to actually dig deeper into what we used to be, what happened before slavery, was just really amazing to see and it was very big,” said student Dahni Austin.

Upon their return, the DMLK students felt their mission was clear: to ask the DPS Board of Education to incorporate Black history in the curriculum districtwide. Black history is U.S. history. Student Jenelle Nangah said, “We didn’t want to mess up. We felt like we had so much on our shoulders just because it literally felt like we were carrying on our ancestors legacy.”

The film presents a powerful example of what’s possible when student perspectives are lifted up, and when educators are responsive to feedback and have the autonomy to implement changes. DMLK Principal Kimberly Grayson said, “Our vision at MLK is to create great leaders, great communicators and great thinkers. And a part of that is to ensure that we are listening and valuing our students and their voices.”

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Early College has Innovation status in DPS: teachers there are able to enhance the educational program to personalize and meet the needs of the student body.

Accompanying the film is a [discussion guide](#) that addresses how it can be used in classrooms, with school-based parent groups and community groups to delve into national issues that relate to the documentary’s themes.

Student Alana Mitchell said, “Some advice I have for teachers who want to support their students are basically just listen to them, and when they’re telling you things that they need, you need to work your hardest to get them what they need because they’re asking for it for a reason.”

“No longer should students have to come into a building and minimize their voice in order to get a grade. Because when we send them out into society, where’s their support system? We’ve minimized their voice so then what do they have? We need to make sure that our kids are leaving our buildings ready to go into society and engage with the world the way we want our kids to engage with the world.” said Kiara Roberts, a teacher at DMLK and advisor to the students.

And student Kaliah Yizar added, “It’s so important that we don’t let the students coming up today not feel important. Especially with things like mental illness affecting teenagers already. Be willing to give students a foundation to value themselves and know that they can do something because the future is really in our hands.”

About Degotelo Studios

Degotelo Studios specializes in working with clients to bring content to life in creative and compelling ways. Since 2014, its dynamic team based in Denver, CO has been bringing a fresh perspective to a variety of film projects ranging in scope, genre, and application. Degotelo is passionate about the film process and cares about meeting client needs, all while maintaining a work culture of fun and productivity. Under the Studios umbrella, filmmakers work with a close-knit group of film professionals to meet any challenge and produce high-quality branded content with a creative edge. To learn more, visit <http://www.degotelostudios.com/>

About RootED Denver

RootED Denver works to ensure all students have access to schools that provide academic rigor and authentically partner with and are responsive to the students, families and communities they serve. The organization invests in autonomous schools and community-driven, community-led work to promote racial equity, quality, opportunity and accountability in Denver Public Schools. RootED Denver is passionately committed to ensuring every child has the opportunity and support to attain the knowledge and skills to self determine their future. To learn more, visit <https://rootedenver.org/> and follow RootED Denver on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).