

In 2019, Caring for Colorado Foundation and The Colorado Health Foundation commissioned a human-centered design project focused on Latinas in Pueblo and Adams counties. The process (documented [here](#)) inspired a new initiative called SOMOS. Despite barriers resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, SOMOS development and testing remained a top priority and launched in the spring of 2020.



SOMOS
 Latina-led movement designed to gather Latina youth and caregivers together — in a safe, positive, and culturally affirming environment — to have meaningful conversations about issues that are essential to the wellbeing of young Latinas but challenging to navigate and talk about.

Grounded in a generational approach that respects and taps into the wisdom of the Latino community, SOMOS engages three different age groups of Latinas: youth 12-14 years old, youth 15-18 years old, and adult parents or caregivers. This format creates a unique opportunity for powerful peer *and* inter-generational learning and relationship building. Unlike traditional off-the-shelf curricula, SOMOS is not meant to be rigidly structured or scripted. Sessions are lightly structured and give trained community-based facilitators the freedom to follow the will and interests of the group.

Adjusting to the 2020 pandemic environment, SOMOS pilots were facilitated virtually. A total of 61 participants from Adams and Pueblo counties engaged in two eight-week pilots. The first pilot was facilitated in English and the second in Spanish. Session topics focused on healthy relationships, sexual health, and socio-emotional health. Each session began as one large community group for learning, and then broke into smaller groups according to age for discussion and skill building. Multi-generational breakout groups were incorporated in the last three sessions which led to enriching conversations and wonderful learning.



Initial evaluation results are very encouraging. Under the leadership of the project’s original design fellows, SOMOS will continue to be refined, tested, and evaluated in 2021.

SOMOS DESIGN FELLOWS



I started to feel a change in myself. I started to be more confident in the way I expressed myself and not only in the SOMOS program but also in school! I feel like thanks to SOMOS, I was able to “break out of my shell” and I was also able to identify the factors that create my identity as a person. Also, in one of the activities, I was able to see what parts of my life I needed to work on... and so after that day I started to work toward that and now I feel like I have a more balanced life. No, my life isn’t completely balanced, yet, but I will get there! I’ve been in other programs to try and feel more confident in myself and never was able to do it. I truly felt a change once I started SOMOS.

-SOMOS participant, age 13