

2018 Report
**Laura didn't
expect to
share her
story on
Saturday
afternoon,
but was
inspired by
the bravery
of others.**



OPEN LABS

Laura Schmalstieg, member

Welcome Letter

from the Founders



Dear Open Labs,

2018 was a year of welcoming and transition for Open Labs. We welcomed Hollis Moore as our Community Manager to run operations in Colorado. Lance and I were welcomed as board members when we left our staff roles. We also welcomed our acceptance to the Innovators Society's intensive grant process and participation in their coaching and funding program.

We learned to welcome Open Labs members' fears, joys, and questions through this transition. We learned what made you feel more like a community and what brought you apart. Based on those lessons, we welcomed the commitment to communicating our plans in 2019. We are welcoming these guiding values for the year:

1. **Give before we receive.** Our goal is to create deep value and affinity with our members. Only then, will we request and welcome time, talent, and resource contributions. We believe this will create a more trusting and balanced relationship and reduce member fatigue.

2. **Act with patience and long-term thinking.** In 2018, we rapidly moved through experiments and workshops so that we could learn quickly. Now that we have those learnings and lessons, we are implementing on a timeline that gives members the physical and emotional space to process and contribute fully.

3. **Think with abundance.** Resources may be limited, but our outlook does not have to be. We are focusing on what is working well, what we have right now, and what we might create in the future, instead of what is scarce.

Your energy helped us select the 'Experiment' theme for 2019: Sharing Stories to Reduce Stigma. This is an extension and scaling of the Storytelling Experiment and will become our exclusive focus for the year. With this focus, the help of the Innovators Society Grant, and your powerful stories – we will touch the lives of thousands Colorado and beyond.

As the interview on page 4 reminds us, all of you are integral to spreading stories and reducing stigma. Join us in 2019 by sharing your story or giving to a storytelling event as outlined on the last page of this booklet.

We welcome you & your stories,

Lance Powers

Lance Powers, Founder & Board Member

Alexandra Weiner

Alexandra Weiner, Founder & Board Member



A note from your Community Manager



When I met Open Labs in 2017 at the Denver Startup Week Brain Crawl, I knew I had found my tribe. As a mother, wife and sister I, too, am touched by the complexity of brain conditions and am blessed to have a community of people who understand the challenges I face loving, raising, and supporting these people in my life.

Through my time as a volunteer member in 2017, I saw how powerful a community of individuals could be when they shared their stories and collaborated on reducing the stigma surrounding brain conditions. Participating in the Storytelling Experiment not only helped me articulate my life experiences, but also I saw it change the people who were listening!

It is this demonstrable effect of storytelling that I am most excited about growing in 2019. Our members have said that storytelling has been the most energizing thing they've participated in at Open Labs. As a member-led organization we want to equip you with the tools and activities that feed you and our vision at the same time - a win-win! You will see by the testimonials in this booklet, that, through storytelling, we can effect the most change as we seek to execute our mission- to provide hope and empowerment to people with brain conditions so that they can live openly.

As your Community Manager, I am excited to experience with you even more storytelling workshops, live storytelling events, multimedia experiences, enhanced programming and even a podcast (see our upcoming events at the end of this booklet). As a creative writer and former high school English teacher, I have seen the power of stories of all kinds transform people, and Open Labs is no different. As a mom, wife and sister I am eager to see even more of our stories propel our Open Movement forward. Yes, our stories. Your stories. So join us in Sharing Stories to Reduce Stigma in 2019!

With Gratitude,

Hollis Moore
Open Labs Community Manager

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Build an open world with us!

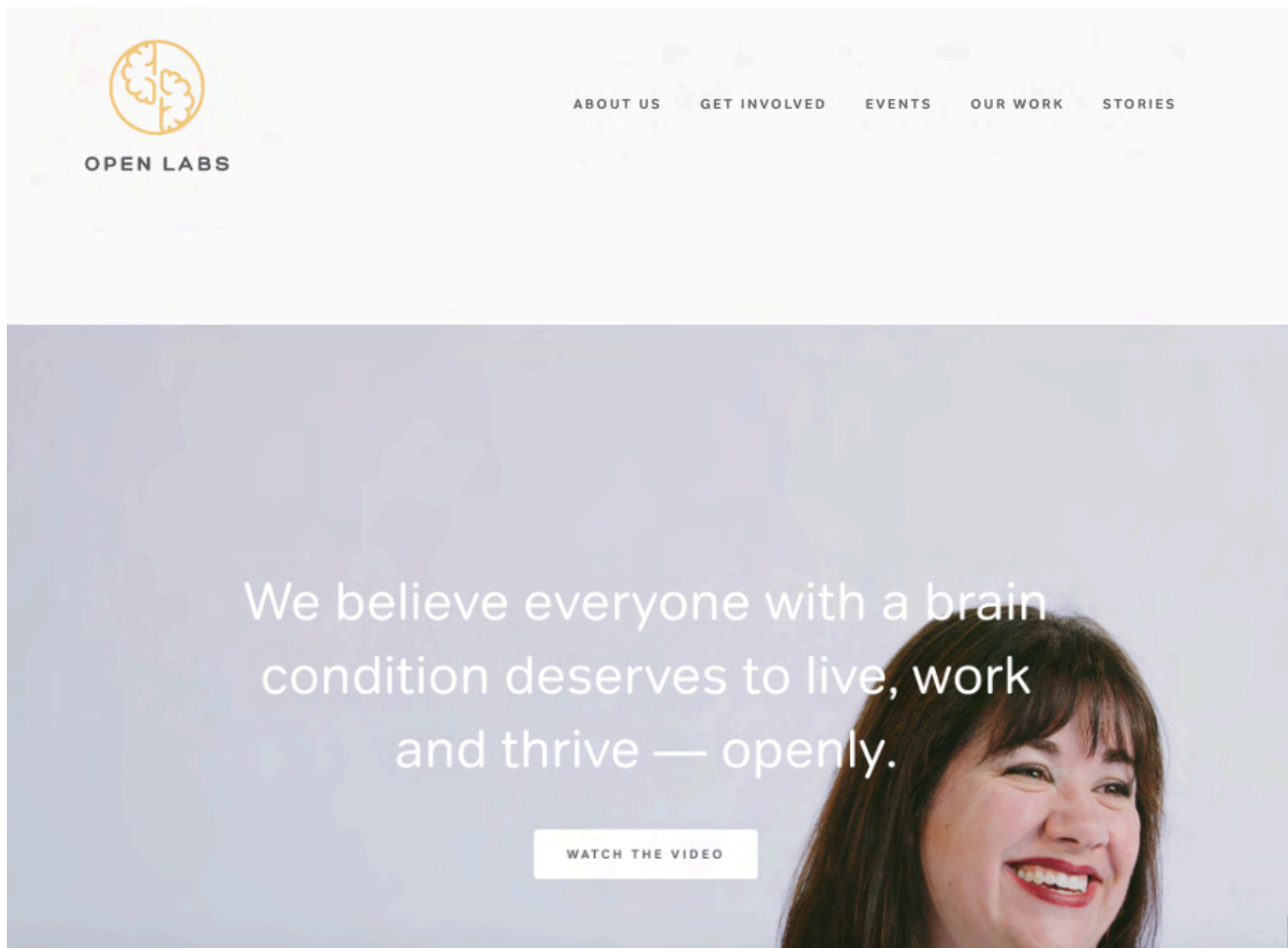
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Operating a Member-Led Organization

In 2018, Open Labs revamped our organizational design to help us serve more members and allow us to be patient as we work to change deeply instilled perceptions of people with brain conditions. We decreased our spending so we could be more patient. We recentered around the lifeblood of Open Labs, our members. In the six months since the restructure, we have heard things such as, 'we feel like a family' and 'new life has been inspired into Open Labs'.

When we replaced our top-down approach and empowered members to use their skills and talents to develop what they wanted to see out of Open Labs, they came out in full force. They assembled a best-in-class team to do an entire rebrand of Open Labs and organized a 'The Moth' style storytelling series called the Opening Act. Not only did this create beautiful, moving end results, the creation process also forged life-long bonds between members.

From one Open Council Member to a full Rebrand

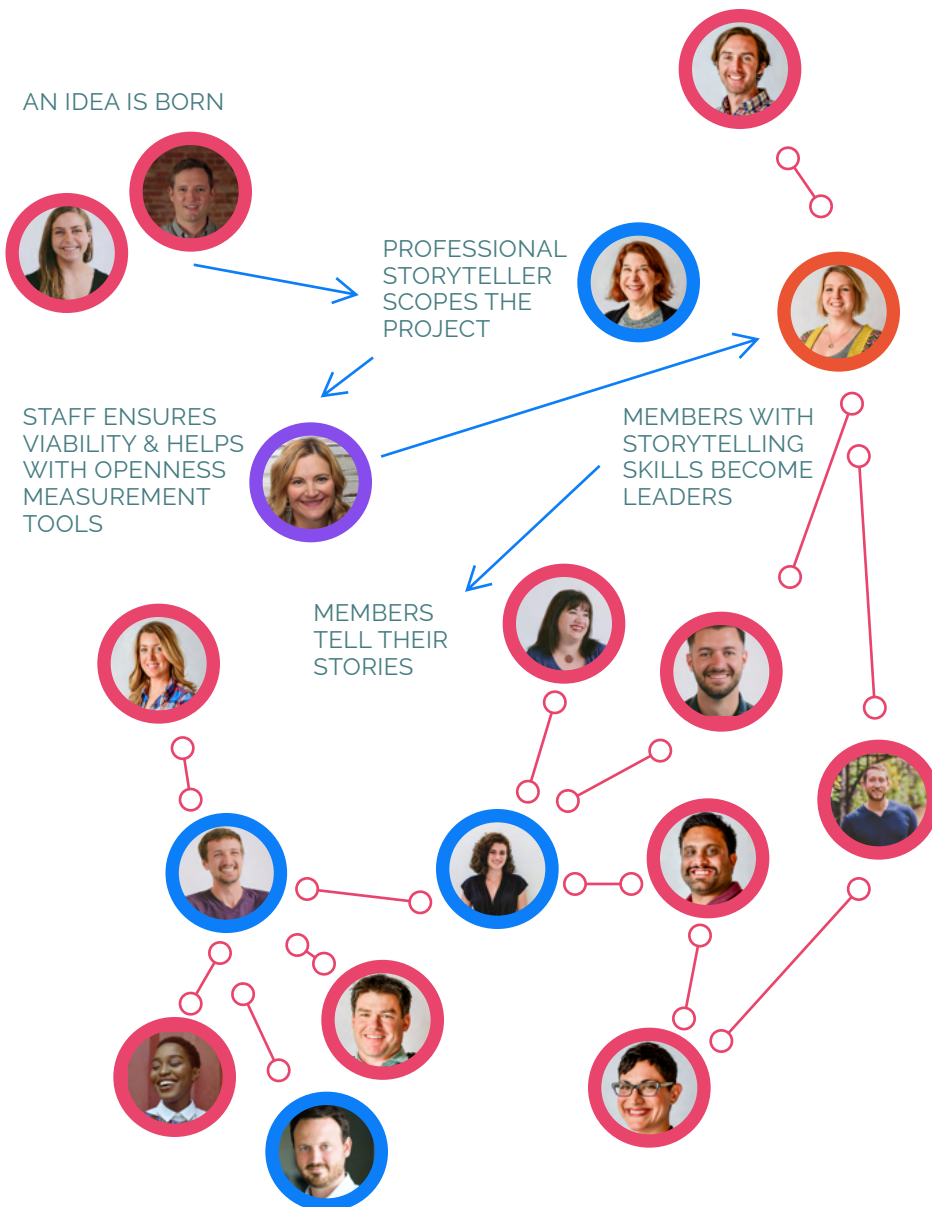


Katie Thurmes joined the Open Council without hesitation. She knew from experience having successfully founded and sold Denver based startup, Artifact Uprising, that brain health is an important topic. She reached out to her community and before we knew it, there was a talented task-force behind the Open Labs rebrand. With Laura Schmalestie leading, Hunter Brothers behind the camera, and Kelsey Bailey behind the design, this dream team knocked it out of the park.

That is just the beginning of the ripple effect, two of the people working on the 90-day rebrand opened up, speaking about their brain conditions for the first time. Two more people, our 'actors' in the Mental Health Month video, joined Open Labs. They trained in our storytelling method and have since opened up to dozens of others, normalizing the conversation and reducing stigma through their stories.

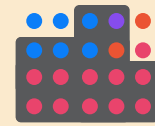
What's in an Experiment?

The Storytelling Experiment in Action

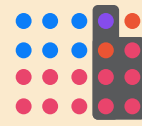


Organizational Design

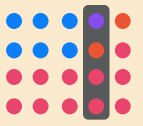
- Experiment Group
- Advisor
- Lead Member
- Member
- Staff



Storytelling Experiment



Rebrand



Workplace Experiment

These diagrams represent the organizational structure of Open Labs with examples of different formats of Experiment groups. Experiment groups can form among any combination of stakeholders so long as there is strong and committed leadership.

This is known as a 'flatarchy' organizational structure, where the organization has hierarchy with staff, lead members, and advisory board members having decision-making power. Information flows freely between all layers. However, no matter the makeup of Experiment groups, they are uniquely functioning flat organizations. In and out of Experiment groups, information and members flow freely between all layers.

As you will read on the next page, Experiments are born from anywhere within the organization. Next, a staff member ensure there are adequate resources and proper measurement so members can complete the work and the experiments are viable.

Beyond the diagrams of Open Labs experiments and the flatarchy supporting them is a story of two Open Labs members, Kate Peabody and Britton Murrey, who are central to impact on community and individuals alike through the Opening Act storytelling Experiment.

We began by asking Britton about his move from photographer to Open Labs to storyteller.

[BRITTON] When you reached out for photography through Unbound, I thought, “This is exactly what I want to be doing!” And for the longest time I was able to capture these amazing stories. No masks, just friends telling their story with pride not being ashamed. I'm so used to capturing the stories with the camera and not telling my own. And for the first time, I really took an in depth look at what story I really wanted to tell. Having a family history of schizophrenia I thought my story might help others.

Enter Kate Peabody Open Labs member and storytelling experiment lead. Can you tell us a bit about yourself and how you became involved in Open Labs?
[KATE] I spent a decade in corporate communications writing stories and taking the public stage, but I really had a hard time speaking my own story.

“

I ENDED UP KEEPING IT BOTTLED UP AND THAT CREATED A LOT OF ANXIETY, DEPRESSION, AND REALLY A VERY, VERY DARK SUICIDAL PLACE FOR A LOT OF YEARS, PARTLY BECAUSE I JUST WASN'T SEEKING THAT HELP AND THE COMMUNITY THAT I NEEDED.

”

Open Labs really helped to build the confidence that I needed to speak up about what was going on for me. And in return, I have made new friends, I built my business [Kaptivate]. I've found and empowered clients, and really had to change my lifelong perspective of ‘how I was feeling was bad’ to you know, I can live a happy life as me.

That type of individual impact is one of the reasons Kate is drawn as a lead to the storytelling experiment.
[KATE] You know, for a long time in my corporate job, I was impacting millions of people at a time, cities, countries, and the empowerment that happens at an individual level should not be taken lightly. I took it lightly before, but it's powerful. When you impact one individual, it keeps going.

The storytelling event is part of a much larger experiment to see if Open Labs can grow and thrive as a member led flatarchy. We asked Britton and Kate about the structure and transition from founder leadership.

[KATE] The idea for the Open Mic was suggested. That idea did not come from someone who had been deemed a leader. Everyone pitched in to make that event happen, and we all agreed together on the format. The last Brain Crawls have been the ones that the members have led with our new Community Manager,

Hollis, without the formal leadership of the cofounders. There was a lot of uncertainty. Hollis has stepped in and helped bring in so much new membership. So there's new energy and participation. [BRITTON] It feels much more like we're doing this for ourselves. It's like we're a family that's genuinely just trying to come through and do this together. I feel like member led, it's very easy for everyone to take on small roles.

Continued on Next Page...

After seeing Kate and other members tell their story at the last Opening Act, Britton decided to tell his own.

[BRITTON] When I was working with Kate and she had the idea for me to become a storyteller, it was like something clicked. Just gathering my story with some structure and learning how to tell it in a genuine way people can connect to and I can be proud of. That first step was huge. Just super nerve wracking. I was going around and they're like Oh hey, are you speaking today? And I was like, yeah I'm telling my story. And they're like, me too. It's my first time. I'm so nervous. We're in it together, man.

We asked what they got out of Open Labs? Why they choose to continue giving their time and effort?

[BRITTON] For the first time, it was pretty life changing. The more we can find people to share, the more we share ourselves, the more people are going to be encouraged to share their own stories and be proud of their stories. And the more that we can do that, the more that we can break down that barrier.

[KATE] The tribe, the movement. I think my life would've been so different, had a culture of openness existed from day one, had a culture of acceptance and even celebration of those differences existed.

That's why our mission here is so powerful.

“

“WE'RE NOT JUST TELLING STORIES TO TELL STORIES. WE ARE MEASURABLY INCREASING OPENNESS, WHAT EMERGES WHEN STIGMA IS REDUCED.”

”

We asked Kate why the storytelling experiment measures the results on openness from the event.

[KATE] We're telling stories because they are healing, they are confidence building, they are pride building, they are community building. You know this is true when you seeing it live is proof of all of those things. Open Labs members are more open than the general population, right? Whatever we're doing is working. Those who attend the events leave more open than they were before and have more pride than they had before overall. I think that's a part of the reward of doing these events, you know it's working. And I think that's part of what keeps me coming back.



Britton at the first Brain Crawl, Boulder 2017

Finally we asked Kate for ways someone new to the community can get involved.

[KATE] Join us by following us on [meetup.com](https://www.meetup.com), and then join us at our monthly events. We will be holding storytelling workshops monthly. We'll have a one on one virtual at least once a quarter for new members. And don't miss out on our next Opening Act in March!

Measuring Openness

Openness Survey



The Open Labs custom openness scale is given to each member to track openness over time to measure our impact. People who exhibit closed, sometimes called masculine, behavior are at a 4x increased risk for suicide. Members are surveyed with a series of images designed to depict how open the participant is to sharing their brain health status and experiences with different groups of people. The more the circles overlap, the more open the relationship.

With the help of our 2017 Public Health Fellow, Thomas Rotering, we designed a custom metric for Openness derived from the "Inclusion of Self and Other" scale. You might recognize this name, the scale was popularized by psychologist Arthur Aron in the New York Times '36 Questions to Fall in Love.'

Survey Results

2018 EXPERIMENT #1 OF 3
SPRING STORYTELLING

Hypothesis #1: If Open Labs members design and tell stories for connection using the Story2 Moments Method® then member engagement and openness will increase.

Experiment #1: Hold a series of storytelling workshops and final show "The Opening Act" for members and supporters only, surveying participants before and after about pride and openness with different social groups.

Result: Openness increase ~1%, largest increase friends, smallest with family and work relationships

STORYTELLING OPENNESS METRICS			
Question	Before (Average)	After (Average)	Change
Shame/Pride Scale 1-10	7.52	8.13	8.11%
Willingness to Be Open - Scale 1-7 (closed - open)	3.7	4.09	10.54%
A Partner	5.43	5.8	6.81%
Child(ren)	4.92	5.1	3.66%
Parent(s)	4.35	4.54	4.37%
Immediate Family	4.1	4.47	9.02%
Extended Family	3.35	3.89	16.12%
Close Friends	5.4	5.2	-3.70%
Friends	4.32	4.5	4.17%
Acquaintances	3.47	3.53	1.73%
Coworkers	3.61	3.79	4.99%
A Boss	2.2	3.23	46.82%
Employees	3.27	3.37	3.06%
A Human Resources Department	1.6	3.53	120.63%
Clients	2.27	3.23	42.29%
Investors	3.88	3.71	-4.38%
Classmates	3.6	3.6	0.00%
Professors	2.85	3.23	13.33%
Members of a Church	3.42	5.25	53.51%
Club or other Community Members	4.37	4.45	1.83%
An online social network or media platform with a mixed audience or relationships	3.62	3.49	-3.59%

data collected by Kate Peabody of the storytelling experiment

Sharing Stories to Reduce Stigma

Stories are powerful. If 2018 has taught us anything it is the power of stories to create profound, enduring change. Using the updated Open Labs approach to Experiments, the core focus during 2019 is to build a vibrant storytelling community in the Denver metro area and beyond through speaking and writing workshops, events, and media. We are taking Open Labs members on a journey to become advocates and create a more open world. New members will engage in a life-changing experiences - learning that there are others like them and sharing their stories for the first time.

Opening Act Spring 2018 *photo by Unbound Photographic*



1. Grow the Meetup Group

We're training at House of Pod! Keep an eye out for our podcast.

New to being open? The mentorship program is coming!

Come one, come all. Invite your friends so we can increase all types of diversity at our meetup.

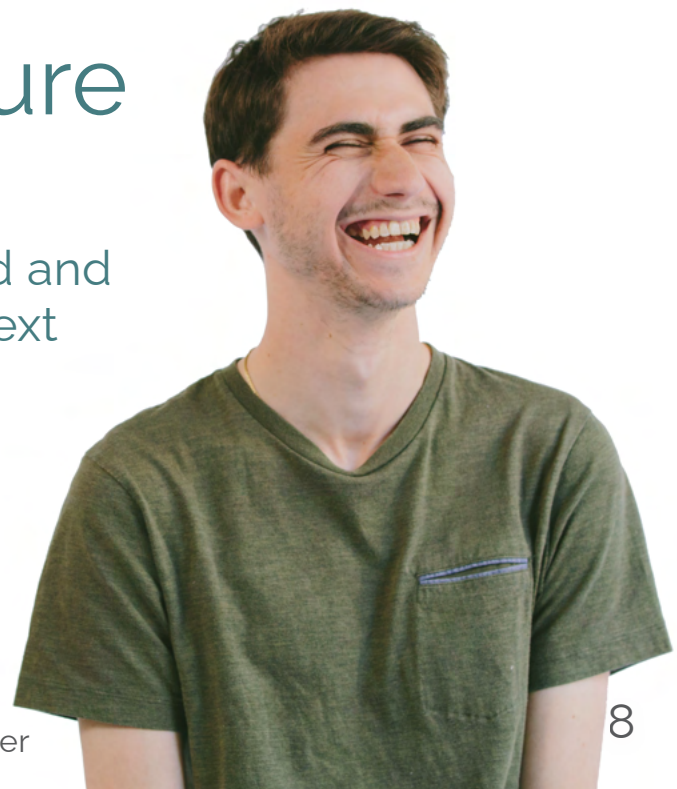
WWW.MEETUP.COM/OPENLABSDENVER

2. Improve our Training

Webinars, templates, and more. This is all rooted in science so we're going to teach you the scientific method so your experiment methods are just right!

3. Build Infrastructure

2020: 'How can I do this in my community?' We heard you loud and clear - We're searching for the next community to test our playbook.



You are core to our mission

Join us

FIND DETAILS & RSVP WWW.MEETUP.COM/OPENLABSDENVER

12/12/18 6-9pm Open Labs Holiday Party

Jan 2019 Storytelling Workshop

1/6/19 Collaboration with Mental Wellness Meetup

Feb 2019 Storytelling Workshop

2/3/19 Collaboration with Mental Wellness Meetup

2/8/19 Brain Injury Hope Foundation Survivor Series

March 2019 Opening Act Storytelling Event

3/3/19 Collaboration with Mental Wellness Meetup

3/8/19 Brain Injury Hope Foundation Survivor Series

April 2019 Storytelling Workshop

4/7/19 Collaboration with Mental Wellness Meetup

4/12/19 Brain Injury Hope Foundation Survivor Series

May 2019 Boulder Startup Week and Opening Act Storytelling Event. Open Labs Anniversary; Mental Health Month

5/5/19 Collaboration with Mental Wellness Meetup

5/10/19 Brain Injury Hope Foundation Survivor Series

6/2/19 Collaboration with Mental Wellness Meetup

6/14/19 Brain Injury Hope Foundation Survivor Series

Cassie Cohen, Member



Help us hear those voices

“ I had two suicide attempts. That happened because I didn't feel like anyone would ever understand me. I didn't feel like I knew how to talk about it. I felt like my voice was silent and I concluded that if my voice is silent, I don't exist. ”

or give today to support our storytellers on their path to becoming open

GIVE ONLINE AT [BIT.LY/OPENLABSGIFT](https://bit.ly/openlabsgift)

BY MAIL:

Community Foundation Boulder County
"Open Labs" in Memo line



Mailing to:

Attn: Open Labs
Community Foundation Boulder County
1123 Spruce St
Boulder, CO 80302



Build

an

open

World