



# YOUTH ENRICHMENT SERVICES

STAY CONNECTED WITH YES AND GET THE SCOOP ON OUR STUDENTS & STAFF!

JANUARY 2022

## Honoring the Past, Charting the Future

2021 was a truly remarkable year for YES. As we reflect on all we accomplished, we honor our supporters, funders, stakeholders, students, and close friends. We would not have made it this far along in our organizational journey without the individuals who selflessly supported us and sacrificed on our behalf. Thank you for helping us make this year one to remember. As we look toward 2022, we acknowledge the important work we must prioritize to keep our young people and communities safe. Given the current conditions and realities of our communities and the world writ large, we designate 2022 as a year of Peace and Non-Violence. Even though YES is a small entity, we must do our part to elicit change! We need to come together and unify across forces! The current level of violence cannot be tolerated. It cannot be okay for our kids and family members to be shot down in the streets and it be normalized!



This year, YES is joining forces with other committed nonprofits, along with our new city of Pittsburgh Mayor, to find a way to tackle violence head on! Everything is on the table. Any unified strategy, plan, coordinated effort is welcomed. YES will focus on this goal, spearheaded by our Volunteer Board of Directors, throughout the year. We want to help design long-term engagement with leaders, stakeholders, families, and young people as this is a serious issue that requires serious and sustained engagement.

If you want to join us in these efforts, please contact me at [dfjones@yespgh.org](mailto:dfjones@yespgh.org)! More information is forthcoming!

Peace and Blessings for a prosperous New Year,

Dr. Jones

---

## YES Makes the Holiday Season Brighter

# for Local Families

Through the generous efforts of YES' Legal Advisor, Attorney Carl Rothenberger, over \$4,500 was raised to provide YES youth and family members with food, gifts, resources, and special items during the Holiday Season.

This year's effort was one of the largest in YES' history, as nearly 130 youth and families were served. Youth and families met YES staff with smiles and warm reception and expressed their gratitude for this act of kindness.

Families were exceptionally thrilled and elated to have at least one burden removed during this often stressful time.

Thank you again to those who participated, donated, and made the Holiday season a little brighter for YES youth and families.



## YES Hosts Annual Board Member and Stakeholder Christmas Party

Every year, Dr. Jones hosts YES Board Members and Stakeholders to celebrate and reflect on a year of accomplishments. This year was no different as 50 board members, staff, and stakeholders gathered for food, fellowship, and celebration.



We came together to honor YES' efforts in

completing the first year of our strategic action plan, diversifying funding and program profiles, and recruiting prospective board members who will significantly improve YES' capacity as we move to the next level.

The food and fellowship are certainly nice additions to this event, but hearing everyone's serious commitment to supporting YES and improving the lives of the students it serves is what makes it truly special.



## PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

### Celebrating the Holiday Season with YES Students

The Holiday season is particularly special at YES. During this time, YES celebrates its yearly successes, reflects on its students' accomplishments and organizational blessings, and looks forward to the new year with hope and optimism.

This year, YES culminated the calendar year and sparked off the Holiday season with a small gathering where students enjoyed food, fellowship, and games.

Students especially appreciated connecting with their peers after a year of isolation and challenges and expressed their creativity through Christmas tree decorating, Holiday Tiktok dancing, and Karaoke singing.



Students left the celebration with joyful spirits and thankful hearts, ready to spread holiday cheer to their families and loved ones.



# Elsie H. Hillman Foundation

## YES Receives Capacity Building Grant From The Hillman Foundation

YES received \$200,000 from The Elise H. Hillman Foundation this December to support its capacity building and technology initiatives. The Hillman Foundation is a longtime supporter of YES and was especially catalytic in helping YES establish its evidence-based and scientific programming approach in 2013.

This grant aids YES in scaling up its county-wide audience and meeting the holistic needs of the families and youth YES serves. Senior Program Officer, Lauri Fink, acknowledges YES' longtime efforts and offers the following remarks, " I appreciate the passion that you all bring to your work and your focus on making lives better for youth and families."

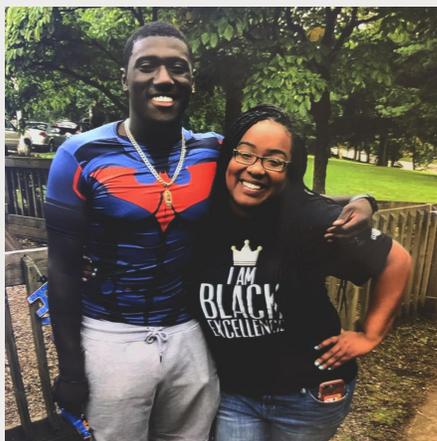
**Thank you, Hillman Foundation, for your continued belief in YES' transformative work.**



**To learn more about the Hillman Foundation and its priorities, please [click here](#). »**

## STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

### Glen Almon: YES Alum Successfully Defends Senior Thesis



Glen Almon, an Allegheny Senior, and YES Alum, recently defended his Senior Thesis, "Interracial to Intra-racial: Philosophy Inquiry of the Relations of Dominance in Skin Color Discrimination."

As a Philosophy major and English and Black studies double minor, Glen used his culminating project to develop a philosophical theory of colorism and highlighted the dynamics and institutions that perpetuate it. In his four-chapter thesis, he laid the historical foundation of colorism, discussed its use in

the Black community, conducted a case study on Black women, and offered practical ways to decolonize and dismantle remnants of colorism in educational spaces.

[Read more on our website.](#) »

## YES Celebrates National Mentoring Month

January marks National Mentoring Month. Mentoring is the foundation on which all YES programming and efforts rests; it is a core principle and framework.

During this month, YES honors and recognizes the ways in which staff and students engage in formal and informal mentoring. YES also celebrates the mentors who have helped shape the lives of its staff and students.

Follow YES' social media efforts to celebrate National Mentoring Month.



## YES Makes Room for Young People



YES recently published a brief in the *Connected Science Learning* journal reflecting on young people's involvement in youth participatory action research.



At YES, young people work alongside stakeholders to rebuild community-institution trust within Pittsburgh Communities. Their efforts have elicited new partnerships, improved community health, and created innovative ways to center the unique voices of young people.

[Check out the article, here. »](#)

## STAFF SPOTLIGHT

### Returning Home: Jasmine Davis

As the New Year commences, YES excitedly welcomes Jasmine Davis to the YES team.

After 6 years of AmeriCorps City Year Service and Classroom Teaching in Texas, Jasmine,

a Pittsburgh native, returns to YES, where she formerly served as an intern and summer program coordinator.

In her new YES capacity, Jasmine will serve as the Manager of Academic Services and Mentoring Partnerships Programming and will oversee YES' academic and mentoring efforts. Her work at YES is particularly integral to YES' strategic and scale-up initiatives.

Jasmine is an amazingly skilled educator, relationship builder, and community-engaged practitioner. She has a heart for YES' mission and will certainly be an asset and valuable member of the Team. Welcome home.



---

Visit our Website | Thank you for your support!

