

Unleashing the Caged Birds:
Stories of Promise and Hope from YES Seniors

A Collection of High School Seniors'
Narratives and College Application Materials

Youth Enrichment Services

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Report Introduction

Selena, you are destined for greatness.

I continued, you are here on purpose. Your life matters.

"But, Ms. Denise – it does not always feel that way. How can I overcome my low SAT score and poor performance during my freshmen year?" She said.

Remember, your ninth-grade performance does not define you. Trust me, you have what it takes to be successful.

"I still don't believe I will get into my school of choice, though."

I need you to know that you deserve a seat at the table; the world is just waiting on you to pull out a chair and take your rightful seat.

Here is one of many weekly conversations I engage in with my high school seniors who are applying to college. Some of my most rewarding work occurs when I sit down with students, look them in the eyes and help them redefine possibilities, reframe their self-concepts, and reassure them of their forthcoming contributions to the world.

This aligns with our philosophy of no throw away students. As we support our young people in applying, attending, and ultimately graduating from college, we operate from the ethos that they are worthy and valuable, irrespective of their life experiences. Many of our youth have confronted turmoil, challenges, and setbacks that should discount and discredit them. However, through our college preparation program, we disregard the "detractors" and instead build students up, help them reclaim and tell their complete stories, and market themselves as assets.

Throughout our years of working with students, we learned of their unique stories that frame this report. Among them are ten poignant narratives that reflect stories of resilience and hope. Our students' stories not only evidence the breadth of YES' impact, but also demonstrate the growth our students have experienced throughout the years. These are the students who have fully engaged the organization's ethos and its motivational model, who *own* their own narratives and are able to communicate them in empowering ways.

Students come to YES unaware and unsure of their own efficacy. However, through their continued engagement and introspection, students see themselves as increasingly successful. They also desire to engage their peers and feel personally responsible as members of the YES community. As students shift their perspectives, they see their program roles shift, too—to ones involving leadership and responsibility. Students' own growth and self-actualization help them remain connected and invested in YES. The subsequent sections continue to substantiate our work and suggest the importance of students sharing their comprehensive stories.

What's YES?

Youth Enrichment Services (YES) formed as a 501 (c) (3) in 1994 to create hope out of hopelessness, to paint a bright future out of uncertainty, and to give young people from inner-city and urban communities a portrait of themselves as successful, empowered, and confident leaders. With YES' mentorship, young people go on to become leaders among their peers, and within their schools, homes, and communities.

YES started as Project YES, a summer learning program providing West Virginia youth in public housing communities with academic enrichment, agricultural training, sports development, and mentorship. Project YES generated transformative stories, national accolades, and positive research outcomes that have since informed the organization's direction.

Etched in the fabric of YES is the value of community-centered programming and the vision for communities to adopt enrichment initiatives. Project YES communities embraced this self-sustaining practice and now operate YES-like programs in many West Virginia locales. This same spirit influenced YES's move to Pittsburgh, where it became a primary intervention to address urban blight, academic underachievement, and drop-out among teens in center city Pittsburgh. Since its transition, YES has maintained its passion for helping young people realize their goals and dreams and has committed to a mission focused on empowerment, experiential opportunities, academic enrichment, and summer employment.

YES has created a unique confluence of traditional institutions such as the Allegheny County Department of Human Services, local foundations, and university partners to create a synergy that embeds success among its students and families, mentors, staff, and board of directors. The organization's partnerships, collaborations, long-term funding sources, and other internal and external support continue to make YES the prize jewel of community empowerment in the city of Pittsburgh.

College Preparation?

Because of the deep impact a college degree has on the economic prospects of individuals and their families, promoting access to and preparation for college is a social-justice issue (Feigenbaum, Jones, & Jones 2018). Systemic factors, first and foremost the opportunity gap, contribute to a massive college degree divide, with low-income students and students of color attending and graduating from college at much lower rates than white students from middle- and upper-income backgrounds (Jones, Feigenbaum, & Jones, 2018). YES attempts to address this opportunity gap by designing programming to support students through the college application and transition processes. Both in local communities and nationwide, significant efforts have been made to increase the college attendance rates of low-income students of color. However, scholars suggest that efforts to increase college access must also be met with targeted programming and actively providing support for students to persist to graduation, because getting students enrolled is only a portion of the equation (Feigenbaum, 2018). As such, YES offers college going youth the opportunity to enroll in year-round college preparation, followed by summer sessions that equip them with resources and skills to grapple with college scheduling, manage time effectively, navigate predominately white campuses as students of color, respond to challenges, and seek services and campus resources. To date, over forty- youth have been supported through this program and have obtained over four million dollars in grants and scholarships from universities across the nation. Youths' efficacy is supported by important program components and information displayed below.

Program Model

The college preparation program is comprehensive in nature and occurs over three program phases. Each phase is designed to support students through a unique part of the college process and to meet their personal application needs. We envision the college matriculation process as a literal journey, one that requires fuel, security, and direction. In Phase One, we help students fuel their "engines" by telling their stories and preparing financially, personally, and academically for college. We also help students package themselves as attractive candidates amongst their peers through discovery analysis sessions. More specifically, Phase One helps students:

- Secure federal financial support and access selective scholarship dollars,
- Access the tools to successfully perform on college admissions testing,
- Become knowledgeable about the admissions standards for each school,
- Explore colleges that align with their personal and academic profiles, and
- Develop and refine materials that will help create a holistic admissions application.

Additionally, in Phase Two, students secure their "spot on the trip" by submitting highly refined and polished college applications to their desired schools. As students engage in this phase, they narrow their choices and eliminate schools in which they become disinterested. Students also locate additional scholarship and enrichment opportunities for which they are eligible. More specifically, Phase Two helps students:

- Submit highly refined college applications along with their supplemental information,

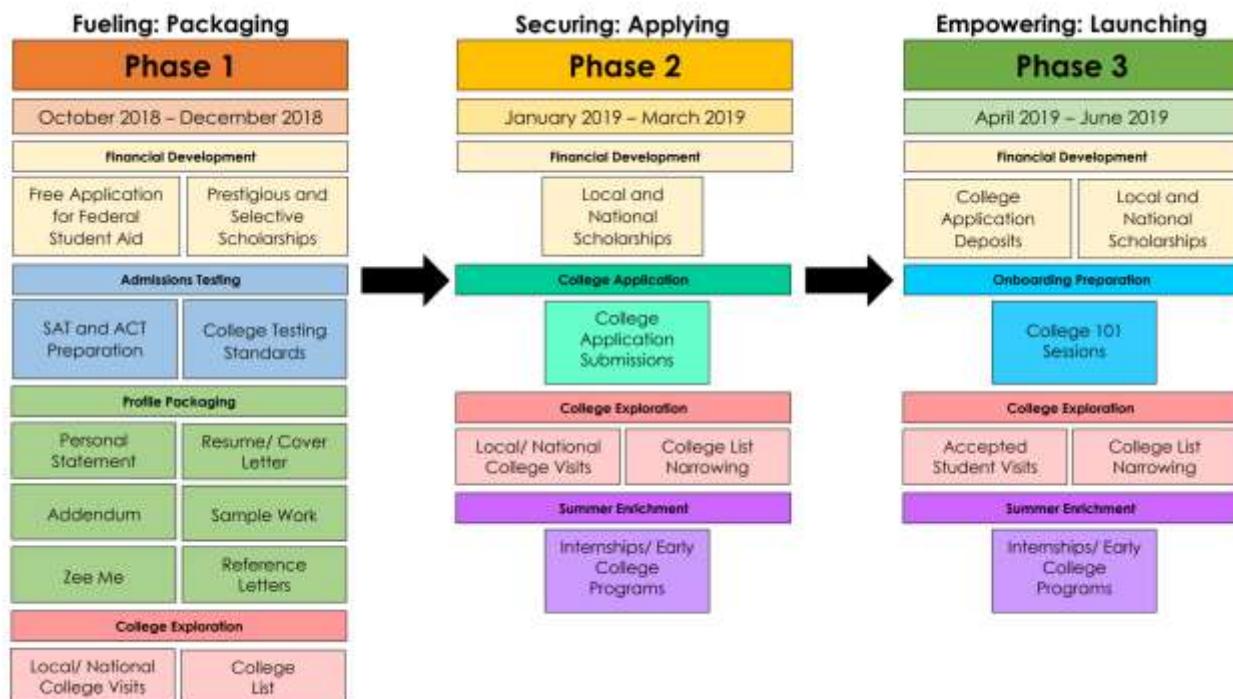
- Identify and apply for summer enrichment opportunities aligned with their career interest, and
- Narrow college choices.

Phase Three complements the others in that it empowers students to solidify their college choices and feel comfortable navigating the college onboarding process. Phase Three focuses on transitioning students from applying to schools and securing funding and enrichment opportunities to managing life on college campus, building capacity to persist, and learning the hidden curriculum that often exists on campus. More specifically, Phase Three helps students:

- Determine the right college fit,
- Negotiate additional financial support,
- Navigate the college onboarding process and prepare for first year experiences and beyond, and
- Advocate for additional resources.

Below is a visual representation of the college preparation process in which students are packaging, applying, and launching. Figure 1 demonstrates how students are preparing for the journey ahead.

Figure 1: College Preparation Process



Program Scope

Students meet the goals of each phase by engaging in various program components: admission testing support, iMentor Meetings, College Application Development Sessions, College 101 Sessions, and College Tours. Each program area is described in more detail below.

Admission Testing Support



Weekly sessions are held giving youth access to personalized assistance with their SATs and ACTS. Sessions are 3 hours in length and consist of English and Math workshops, writing, and practice exams. This is ideal for students looking to improve their scores or become more prepared for their first exams.

iMentor Meetings



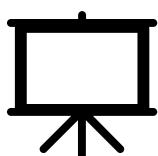
Students are paired with a YES staff member to begin planning for college. Staff assist students in choosing a college or university, filling out applications, ensuring students have all the necessary paperwork completed and turned in, assessing their needs/wants in a college, etc. YES staff work with students twice per month to customize a plan and timeline specific to student needs.

College Application Development Sessions



These sessions are designed to help students complete applications, write application essays, and work on their resumes and cover letters. Colleges have different application processes, which can be overwhelming for students. As such, YES staff helps streamline the process. Students also receive edits and feedback on their writing, so they can ensure their work meets university standards.

College 101 Sessions



Once a month, students attend College 101 sessions to learn more about financial aid, major selection, campus life –the hidden curriculum! These factors are extremely important when selecting a college or university. As such, College 101 gives students opportunities to ask any and all questions regarding college, the application process, financial aid and scholarships, school selection, and other concerns.

College Tours and Visits



Students attend group tours and select two out-of-state tours of colleges they would like to visit. These opportunities are at no costs to students and help them gain exposure to schools they would not otherwise be able to visit.

The remainder of this report contains student narratives and submitted student work products that paint a more complete and accurate depiction of our youth (personal statements, cover letters, resumes, addendums, and work samples).

Student Narratives

Anesa Reed

In all her beauty, Anesa is our most dynamic flower. Just like flowers blossom once rooted in good soil, watered habitually, groomed properly, and exposed adequately to sunlight, so did Anesa. Anesa joined YES as a "seed" who needed planting. She had potential, ability, and qualities unknown to this world, but was without a space to cultivate her skillsets. She found "good soil" in YES and through our program was "buried," pruned, poured into, fed, watered, challenged, supported, and encouraged. This process ultimately led to her growth and development. As she experienced personal and academic transformation, Anesa reached unimaginable heights, gained exposure to unique academic and professional experiences, was selected to speak at national conferences, informed our programming models and services, and remains the face of our organization. She is one of our most creative and innovative minds and continues to transcend every boundary people set for her. As a senior at Allderdice High School, she aspires to pursue a Business degree in college, which is a real feat. If you were to ask Anesa four years ago whether she would envision herself attending college, she would have boldly said no! However, today she has shifted her perspective and is ready to gain the skills necessary to support her hair business, Lavish Studio, and to build her intellectual capacity as an entrepreneur.

McKayla Dixon

Like a child learning to ride their bike for the first time, McKayla, too, is learning to trust the process and ultimately herself. Once unsure of her own self-efficacy, McKayla is now tapping into her gifts and skills and realizing that she deserves a seat at the table. McKayla is one of our most talented seniors and is navigating her space in the world as she prepares for her collegiate journey! A senior at Allderdice, McKayla has grown tremendously over the last four years and has found purpose in her work at YES. She has had an opportunity to serve as a summer camp counselor, a community investigator and data analyzer in our lead (pb) project, and an intern with a local technology firm. These experiences have led her to pursue a career in technology and computer science, where she hopes to challenge and demystify the current narrative about black women in STEM. She believes strongly that she can and will be successful in STEM and hopes to change the future for black girls by paving the way with her own academic and professional pursuits.

Quelyn Holt

A jack of all trades, Quelyn is an unusual combination: a performer and an aspiring engineer. He is one of the most prolific lyricists and writers, profound thinkers, and skilled students with whom we engage. Put simply, he is multi-dimensional. Quelyn is passionate about the ways in which language and music can be used as powerful mechanisms to change the world. He is conscious about the world around him and deliberately engages these tools to make life better. He is serious about his craft and is unafraid of the big stage. He loves learning, academic stimulation, and creating. His lyrics are thoughtful and biting and address injustices that he and his peers face as black males from urban enclaves. As a four year YES student, Quelyn has landed internships with local engineering firms and wastewater authorities. These experiences have confirmed his interest in

pursuing an engineering degree. As a YES participant, Quelyn has engaged in relevant research topics ranging from consumer satisfaction to perceptions of football player safety. Quelyn, a Westinghouse High School senior, has been invited to present his work at local conferences and continues to be a leader amongst his peers. He is the change the world needs to see.

Jo-Nell Arrington-Epperson

Jo-Nell is a fighter in the boxing ring and although she has been knocked down, she continues to rise without noticeable signs of defeat! A teen single mother and Westinghouse senior, Jonell has fought through every hinderance. She has proved the naysayers wrong and continues to amaze everyone with her tenacity, strength, and drive. She has a sense of purpose and a desire to succeed that is rare in her peers. She has made a commitment to pursuing a post-secondary education, despite the challenges of balancing motherhood and student responsibilities. A three year YES participant, Jo-Nell has had experience advocating for youth rights, learning graphic design techniques, and operating the camera in her internship. She has expressed the desire to combine these interests and pursue both Business and photography in college. Jo-Nell stands out as both a stellar employee and researcher who explored malnourishment among Homewood youth and gender bias in diagnosing bipolar disorder. These two projects demonstrate Jo-Nell's skills and abilities and further inform the work she will continue to do. Jonell's daughter remains the impetus behind her desire to excel in life; we have no doubt she will, as the world is her oyster.

Kiyamee Johnson

Quiet and unassuming, Kiyamee has yet to comprehend how truly talented, skilled, and smart he is. Kiyamee is a creative artist, an amazing athlete, and a brilliant young mind! With this combination, he has made a mark on his Westinghouse school community, on his peers, and on his YES family. At YES, he has engaged in summer camp counseling, served as a leader on the communications and graphic arts team as part of the lead (pb) project, partnered with the Health Department to address opioid abuse, and supported his peers by facilitating sessions on mental health. Through these experiences, Kiyamee has contributed greatly to YES and has built an extensive academic and professional profile. Despite this, Kiyamee remains unsure about what to pursue in his post-secondary life, and whether he will work toward a vocational certificate or a four-year degree. Whichever route he takes, he will be successful and use his skillsets to improve the lives of those around him.

Willie Knight

Willie is the full package – he is creative, witty, thoughtful, and clever, and exhibits academic excellence, intellectual curiosity, and athletic acumen. Once the class clown, Willie has become serious and focused and is ready to tackle the road ahead. With an imagination out of this world, Willie is one of the most dynamic young people with whom we have engaged. He is sincere in his engagements with his peers and adults and is a leader people follow. As a four year YES participant, Willie has been a breath of fresh air as he demonstrates what it means to be a well-rounded and unashamed scholar. He has engaged in YES in multiple capacities and has been successful as a camp counselor, a spatial analyzer and GIS mapper for the lead (pb) project, and a lead researcher for the Health Department's opioid project. He has examined the impact of trauma

on high school athletes and more recently investigated the cultural shift of durag wearing. He continues to challenge the narrative about his school and who he should be as a black male from inner-city Pittsburgh. As a senior student athlete at Westinghouse High School, Willie is undecided about where he will pursue his post-secondary education but hopes to attend a university that will foster his love for learning and support his continued desire to change systems, structures, and norms that hinder people's social advancement.

Asa Collins

A closet intellectual, Asa is navigating two worlds: one in which he is a scholar and one in which he is the king of the streets. A second year YES participant and current Perry Traditional Academy senior, Asa is bright, charismatic, and engaging. He has a myriad set of skills and competencies, but is unsure of which world to pursue, especially since he is constantly being pulled between the two. Despite his contemplation, his recent engagement in our success mapping sessions, male mentoring program, and summer employment initiatives have helped Asa shift his life trajectory and see the benefit in pursuing college. Asa is a natural born leader who can influence anyone. With targeted support and guidance, Asa can use his leadership qualities to transform this world and reach any goal he sets. He comes from a family of air force men but has expressed the desire to attend college. In the coming months, he will make big decisions about which path to pursue. Like a diamond in the rough, Asa is being shaped and formed, crystalized and processed for the future. He is challenging everyone's perceptions and expectations of him. We are excited to see what choice he makes and the environment he ultimately pursues, knowing he is destined for greatness.

London Wright

Although London is now a butterfly soaring high, she was once a caterpillar constrained by her encapsulating shell. Since her engagement with YES, London has ripped off the restricting layers and branched out in her academics and extracurricular endeavors. As an Oakland Catholic senior, she serves as both the captain of her school's step team and a peer leader to her high school classmates. She has also assumed a natural leadership role amongst her YES senior peers, through which she has paved the way for their transformational journeys and set an example for their college process. She is someone who has grown amazingly in her talents and gifts. She started engaging with YES as a camp counselor for the Boys and Girls Club, transitioned into working at a dry cleaners, and later became the leader of the lead (pb) project as a community investigator. During the previous summer, she interned at a technology firm and solidified her decision to pursue information technology in her post-secondary education. She has explored interesting research projects that have also informed her academic pursuits. Her topics have ranged from police involved shootings to variances in black and white college students' academic preparation for STEM careers. Her latter project was seminal in helping her understand her role in STEM and confirmed her desire to study IT.

Selena Williams

Like an untouched, blank canvas, Selena came to YES with no blueprint or plan except to find a safe haven. She was unsure of her value, her talents, and abilities, but wanted a community of people with which to belong. A dynamic vocalist and talented musician, with more gifts than she

realized, Selena quickly made a positive impression on YES and her peers. Through her first year, she began unpacking her story and found purpose in her life as she engaged in our summer and fall programming. Selena committed to coming to YES more frequently and realized she belonged here all along. She applied for the University of the Arts Jazz Institute through one of our summer planning sessions. Although she was unsure of whether she would be accepted or qualified, she applied with childlike faith. In doing so, she was accepted into the competitive arts program, received a full scholarship, and engaged with some of the most prestigious experts in the field. This experience catalyzed her continued growth and provided her with exposure to new opportunities. She was so enthralled by her experience that she continued to engage her peers in a research project that focused on how the institute shaped and formed their artistic identity. This project served as a platform for her other summer and school year work! As a CAPA senior, Selena is still finding her place in this world, but is on her way. While she is undecided about her major, she is excited about amalgamating her passion for music, social justice, and English into her post-secondary pursuits.

Lidia Pietrusza

Lidia is a creator and a visual artist with a keen eye for detail who can make something out of nothing. That's been her life story – turning trash into treasure, doing a lot with a little, juicing lemons into lemonade. Beyond her astuteness, dexterity, adeptness, and multi-talented nature, Lidia has a heart and passion for service and volunteerism. Whether she is helping elementary youth learn to read, teaching art to youth at the local library, or facilitating sessions on healthy life practices, Lidia is selfless and is committed to serving and making people's lives better. She believes her life is not her own and is always willing to help. This concept is rare in youth today! In addition to her volunteerism commitment, Lidia loves learning and always places it at the center of her priorities. She is an avid reader and enjoys challenging herself through advanced and summer college-preparation courses. At YES, she has done incredible work: conducting participatory research on the impact of cultural appropriation on black teens, serving as a mentor for high school truant youth, facilitating peer sessions at summer mentor training camps, and creating an entrepreneurial platform for her artwork. Lidia is unsure about her post-secondary major but is certain that it must include her desire to help others and her artistic energy. As it stands, the rest is still unwritten.

These narratives are brief descriptions of our students' unique qualities and work with YES. Although they only capture a small portion of who they are, additional documents are included that speak to each youth's story of resilience, perseverance, and hope. I invite you to read more about their experiences and stories and learn about how these young people are destined to change the world. I am confident that their dynamic spirits and boundless energy will vibrate the heartbeat of any university campus. I know their best is yet to come.

Anesa Reed

Every morning, I wake up, prepare for school, and engage in a short conversation with my mom. On most mornings, she comments on my outfit, ensures I eat breakfast, and responds to my hair style. More recently, my mom greets me with suggestions for my future. In one conversation, she shared the following: "You don't need to go to college...You just need to go to Empire Beauty School...I'm going to give you an application." However, in another instance, she remarked: "Without an education and money, you cannot be or do anything in this world." And finally, the most piercing commentary, "I don't trust you being away from home. You barely can handle what you have going on here."

These consistent messages cause me to feel overwhelmed, betrayed, and mostly confused. Do I pursue a four-year degree and become one of the first in my family to graduate? Or do I settle for beauty school and continue my craft as a hairstylist? It is hard to believe that someone like my mom, who has so much influence on my actions, would suggest I limit myself and attend beauty school. I love my mom dearly, but I cannot understand how she could look me in my eyes and place doubt on my ability to excel in college.

After much reflection, I realized that most of my mom's suggestions stem from her own experiences with trade school, not having the opportunity to attend college, and being a single mother while working a minimum wage job. I began to understand her frustration and inquired further. As I sought more insight into this, I wondered: "Why does it have to be one or the other? Why can't I do both - pursue college and refine my craft together?"

For weeks, I continued styling hair out of my home-based hair salon, Lavish Studio. It has been two years since I designed and implemented my own business and it does not seem right to forgo this opportunity altogether. After finishing one client's hair, I paused and realized that I belong in college – in an environment where I can build both my capacity as a business owner and refine my craft as hairstylist. With nothing but excitement and security in my heart, I am defying all my mother's set limitations by applying to college.

In college, I hope to pursue a degree in business. By pursuing business, I will develop knowledge of operations and business theory, and gain targeted skills to enhance my own enterprise: marketing, accounting, and management. Simultaneously, I plan to secure my cosmetology license. I will continue to refine my craft by offering services to my peers and taking continuing education classes. I want to become more than an average hairstylist - I would like to own my own hair salon, teach and educate my clients, create my own hair line of healthy beauty products for people of color, and remain in an environment where I can give back to the community around me. This requires an intentional plan - one that involves growing my intellectual capacity and my current skill sets in a place that values gaining knowledge and hands on learning.

Anesa Reed

Dear Admission Representative:

My name is Anesa Reed, and I am currently a senior at Allderdice High School. I am writing this letter to provide insight into my life as a student, researcher, leader, and entrepreneur. I believe my diverse experiences make me an ideal candidate for your university.

Through my involvement in Youth Enrichment Services (YES), I have engaged in many enrichment and leadership opportunities to prepare me for the rigors of college. Each summer, I have explored problems and examined solutions through research. Whether I was investigating teens' perceptions of police-involved shootings, partnering with the Allegheny County Health Department to examine lead exposure in vulnerable communities, or sharing evidence gathered regarding the toxicity of black hair care products on Allegheny Front's Environmental Justice Radio show, I have grown as a scholar, refined my skillset, and remained connected to challenges in my community. I have greatly benefited from these opportunities and have established the role I hope to play in my college community. Youth Enrichment Services has taught me how to better myself academically and intellectually and has deposited a seed within me to give back to my community.

My efforts to give back include tutoring middle school children who need additional academic assistance and teaching students how to knit. I also aided families in Flint, Michigan by providing them with water during the lead exposure crisis.

In addition to my volunteerism, one of my biggest accomplishments has been designing and implementing my own hair business. Since 2016, I have operated Lavish Studio. I developed a business plan to secure the necessary funds, engaged in marketing campaigns, and managed social media accounts to promote my business offerings. I have expanded my clientele, refined my brand, and learned valuable skills that I hope to build on in college.

I have detailed more of my unique experiences in my resume. Please see the attachment for a full description of my academic, leadership, research, and service experiences. I can be contacted via email at anesareed112@gmail.com or by phone at (412)608-2798. I look forward to hearing from you soon. Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Anesa Reed

Anesa Reed

Education

Taylor Allderdice High School, Pittsburgh, PA **Aug. 2015 - Present**

Work Experience

Youth Counselor, Boys and Girls Club, Pittsburgh, PA **June - Aug. 2015**

- Informed youth of daily tasks and activities
- Supported youth in their academic and personal growth and development over the summer
- Engaged in community cleanup events, including trash and recyclable removal along streets in Wilkinsburg
- Gained experience in community engagement and environmental education

Summer Scholar, Youth Enrichment Services, Pittsburgh, PA **June - Aug. 2016**

- Conducted research on police involved shootings, "Don't Shoot:Teen's Perceptions of Police-Involved Shootings"
- Participated in experiential learning classes around African American Studies
- Presented research results at YES' Research Symposium, which indicated
- Supported Mount Ararat's Summer Camp by providing sanitation, food, and recreational services

Owner, Lavish Studio, Pittsburgh, PA **June 2016 - Present**

- Design and implement hair business specializing in various styles
- Manage funds and social media marketing to promote business efforts

Advanced Summer Scholar, Youth Enrichment Services, Pittsburgh, PA **June - Aug. 2017**

- Partook in a research project investigating the influence of Lead Exposure in Lincoln-Lemington
- Engaged in national conversation around the Lead Crisis on a trip to Flint, Michigan
- Developed and administered survey to residents to better understand: 1) sources of lead, 2) parent/child conversations around lead, 3) sanitary practices, and 4) overall lead awareness
- Coded residents' responses using excel
- Implemented culturally relevant health intervention to Lincoln-Lemington residents

Researcher, Allegheny County Health Department, Pittsburgh, PA **Jan. 2017 - Mar. 2018**

- Surveyed local convenience stores to investigate how companies advertise tobacco products to youth of color in low-income communities

Summer Intern, Allegheny Front, Pittsburgh, PA **June - Aug. 2018**

- Researched the toxicity of black hair care and beauty products and was featured on their environmental justice
- Presented research results at YES' Research Symposium

Leadership

Conference Presenter, CCCC, Pittsburgh, PA **March 2019**

- Selected as a student representative to present Performing Trust through Wise Mentorship on behalf of Youth Enrichment Services at the Conference on College Composition and Communication

Guest Speaker, Women for Healthy Environments, Pittsburgh PA **November 2018**

- Shared words from my article on black hair care
- Introduced Madame Athena Chang, an international health expert

Extracurricular

Student Ambassador, Allderdice High School **Aug. 2015 - Present**

BSU Member (Black Student Union), Allderdice High School **Sept. 2015 - Present**

Academic Enrichment, Youth Enrichment Services **June 2015 - Present**

FeWi (Female Empowerment Wellness Initiative), Youth Enrichment Services **Jan. 2018 - Present**

College Preparation, Youth Enrichment Services **Sept. 2018 - Present**

Volunteerism

Student Volunteer, Allderdice High School, Pittsburgh, PA **Aug, 2015 - Present**

- Supported students with special needs

Student Volunteer, Flint, Michigan **June 2017**

- Disseminated water to families impacted by lead crisis
- Reconstructed and cleaned local community garden

Award

Distinguished Researcher, Youth Enrichment Services, Pittsburgh, PA **August 2017**

- Awarded to students for making outstanding contributions in research and demonstrating sustained commitment to advancing the frontiers of the final research project

Legacy Award, Youth Enrichment Services, Pittsburgh, PA **August 2018**

- Awarded to students who have been committed to YES' mission, to leading others in motivation and purpose, to mentoring peers, and to serving greater community

Leadership Award, Youth Enrichment Services, Pittsburgh, PA **August 2018**

- Awarded to students for their outstanding ability to provide leadership that has a significant and positive impact toward peers, YES programming, and the community

References

Ms. Denise Jones

Program Director, Youth Enrichment Services

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Addendum

Whether investigating lead exposure in my local community, facilitating culturally relevant public health discussions with peers and community members, creating a hair business, or addressing environmental injustices through an internship with a local radio program, my most meaningful and valuable learning experiences have taken place outside the classroom. I have engendered a

love for learning that truly transcends my school walls but that has not translated onto my transcript or SAT scores.

Unfortunately, I do not have the academic profile that illustrates stellar academic performance throughout high school. Within my school context, I have performed at a mediocre level - better than my peers, but lower than my full potential. My school environment has been toxic in many ways, because I have fallen through the cracks. This is easy to do when over 1600 students attend your school and few instructors have the capacity to hold you accountable to do better.

I have so much untapped potential that I am just now realizing. When I look in the mirror, I know I can do so much more than what I have demonstrated. I have unique skills in coding data, creating surveys, engaging community members, coordinating large scale projects, organizing supplies, and facilitating sessions. Despite my subpar academic performance, I want to attend college. I had an epiphany last year. Since then, I have grown academically and shifted my mindset in the classroom. My business class has been particularly influential, as it has helped me find a pathway to apply the innovative and creative skills I know so well from outside the classroom.

Although my progress is not fully reflected in my current GPA, I am proud of not remaining stagnant and in turn shifting my perspective before it is too late. Moving forward, I know I have the fortitude to overcome and perform - I have done this in other settings and am excited to bring this energy to my college classes.

I feel alive when I engage in learning experiences that have real world application and relevance. I know college will create this platform and learning environment, and if given the chance, I will prove that I am worthy and capable.

It is my plea that the admission team recognize my growth and honor the ways in which I have valued learning holistically. Although my academic profile depicts me as a low achiever, I am in fact more excited about learning now than I have ever been. I know the future holds new opportunities, and I am hopeful that college is the first of many.



Hazard over Health : Exploring Toxicity in the Black Beauty Industry

Anesa M. Reed

Youth Enrichment Services



Problem Statement

According to researchers, 75% of hair care and makeup products targeted to Black women contain potentially toxic ingredients. With such limited cosmetic options and targeted marketing strategies, these populations remain vulnerable to dangerous products. Despite this documented research, many black women are unaware of this toxicity.

Purpose

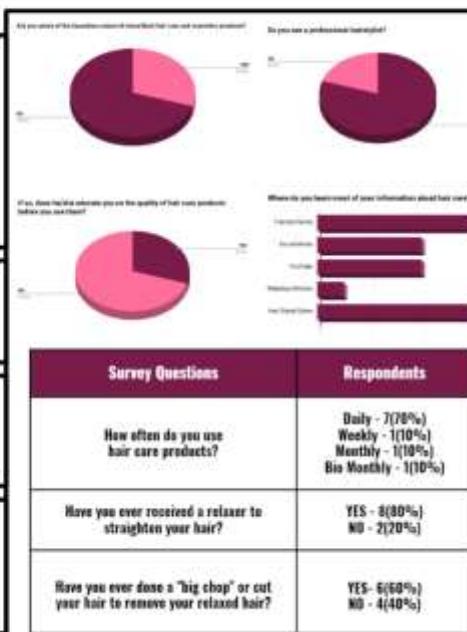
The purpose of this study is to investigate black consumers' awareness of hair care toxicity.

Leading Research Question

Are black women aware that most hair care and cosmetic products specified for them are hazardous?

Hypothesis

Black women are unaware of the toxicity of the products they use; this is due to black women being more concerned about good results compared to healthy results.



Chemical Relaxers are Linked to:

Baldness
Premature Birth
Low Infant Birth Weight

1 in 12 products
targeted towards to
African American
women
*
Highly Hazardous

Top 3 Hazardous Products:

Relaxers
Hair Dye
Foundations

Population

Black women and children who consume hazardous hair care and cosmetic products.

Research Design

I conducted a survey inquiring about awareness of Black hair care and cosmetic products. The survey was given to Black women and contained 14 study specific question asking about their awareness, use of products and brands and also their education on hair care.

Discussion/ Conclusion

Based on results from the survey, some black women are unaware of the hazardous nature in hair care and cosmetic products. Most of the respondents learn information about hair care through friends, family and also hair salons or stylist. Many of the respondents have received a hair relaxer that has resulted in chemical burns, irritation and hair loss, but didn't choose to remove the relax by cutting it out. Overall Black women need an effective intervention to understand the importance of healthy well being of the body and also the hazardous of toxic products.

ANESA REED • AUGUST 31, 2018

ESSAY HAZARDOUS TO YOUR HEALTH HEALTH

While the trend toward sourcing the ingredients in food has been years in the making, more people are becoming aware of what's in the cosmetics and hair products they use. The Allegheny Front's summer intern, 17-year old Anesa Reed, started taking a closer look at the products she and her friends like most. Here's her story.

Like a lot of days, I do my friend McKayla Dixon's hair, which can take up to an hour, depending on what style she's doing. Kayla likes it curly, with kind of a wet look to it.

I still use a chemical relaxer to straighten my hair. Kayla did too when she was little...

"I got my hair relaxed I think it was like seven maybe eight. Was it a choice? No. My mom did it. She was tired of doing my hair," she tell me.

The lye used in most relaxer can cause burns and irritation. She told me when her mom used these relaxers, her hair broke off and became kind of short and dry.

Capturing the Conversation between Parents & Children on Sources of Lead Exposure in Lincoln-Lemington

Anesa M. Reed
Youth Enrichment Services

Leading the Discussion on Lead One Individual and Family at a Time

<p>Introduction: Researchers, although aware of the effects of lead poisoning on children, are unaware of the conversation had between parents and children. This research examines these conversations.</p> <p>Objective:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Identify parents with small children in Lincoln-Lemington Complete survey/interviews Record discussion <p>Protocol: We created a survey based on the communication, sanitary practices, and lead awareness in individuals and families in Lincoln Lemington.</p> <p>Methods: What, if any, conversations are parent having with children around sources of lead exposure?</p> <p>Cross Sectional Survey Research Design</p> <p>Actions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Use survey data to inform response on the frequency of conversation between parent and children Construct a means and frequency table that enumerates the occurrence of these conversations Identify themes and/or sub themes Analyze data Narratively summarize the data <p>Benefits: Focus on studying and drawing inferences from existing differences between people, subjects, or phenomena.</p> <p>Challenges: Possibility that a study could have differing results if another time-frame had been chosen.</p>	<p>Discussion on Lead Exposure</p> <p>Findings: 9 out of 23 participants w/ children or 39.1%</p> <p>Parent Demographics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Female 8 (88.9%) Black 9 (100%) Income range <\$10,000 and \$30,000-\$59,000 Single 5 (55.6%) Employed 5 (55.6%) Some College 5 (55.6%) <p>Children Demographics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Female 8 (88.9%) Black 12 (92.3%) Not applicable for education 8 (44.2%) Chronic Health: Asthma 2 (76.9%) Lead tested 7 (46.2%) <p>Parent/Child Conversation Frequency Tables</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Dis. Source:</td> <td>Sometimes 2(22.2)</td> <td>Rarely 3(33.3)</td> <td>Never 5 (55.5)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Dis. Mouth:</td> <td>Often 3(37.5)</td> <td>Rarely 1(11.1)</td> <td>Never 5(66.6)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Dis. Soil:</td> <td>Often 2(22.2)</td> <td>Rarely 2(22.2)</td> <td>Never 5(55.5)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Dis. Paint:</td> <td>Often 2(22.2)</td> <td>Sometimes/Rarely 2(22.2)</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Dis. Food:</td> <td>Sometimes 3(37.5)</td> <td>Rarely 1(11.1)</td> <td>Never 5(66.6)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Dis. Dust:</td> <td>Often 1(11.1)</td> <td>Sometimes/Rarely 2(22.2)</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Dis. Wood:</td> <td>Sometimes 1(11.1)</td> <td>Rarely 2(22.2)</td> <td>Never 5(55.5)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Dis. Environment:</td> <td>Sometimes 2(22.2)</td> <td>Rarely 1(11.1)</td> <td></td> </tr> </table> <p>Discussion: Lincoln-Lemington residents were unaware of lead and were later aware after given surveys and the intervention. I was able to inform the community on lead to lessen their exposure. People didn't have time or refusing to take the survey and little people came to the health education intervention. Do research where the population needed is most located at.</p>	Dis. Source:	Sometimes 2(22.2)	Rarely 3(33.3)	Never 5 (55.5)	Dis. Mouth:	Often 3(37.5)	Rarely 1(11.1)	Never 5(66.6)	Dis. Soil:	Often 2(22.2)	Rarely 2(22.2)	Never 5(55.5)	Dis. Paint:	Often 2(22.2)	Sometimes/Rarely 2(22.2)		Dis. Food:	Sometimes 3(37.5)	Rarely 1(11.1)	Never 5(66.6)	Dis. Dust:	Often 1(11.1)	Sometimes/Rarely 2(22.2)		Dis. Wood:	Sometimes 1(11.1)	Rarely 2(22.2)	Never 5(55.5)	Dis. Environment:	Sometimes 2(22.2)	Rarely 1(11.1)	
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Anesa Reed, Pittsburgh Allderdice, 11th Grade, 16, Research Assistant

"Don't Shoot": Teens' Perceptions of Police-Involved Shootings

Mckayla L. Dixon, Anesa M. Reed & London M. Wright

<p>Background: So far in 2016, 123 black men, mostly unarmed, have been killed by White police officers. These incidents of police-involved shooting of unarmed Black men can influence black teens' perceptions towards white, or all, police officers.</p> <p>Problem Statement: Police-involved shootings have taken a toll on plenty of communities with black teens. These communities have responded with riots. Recent riots after police involved shootings of unarmed black men demonstrated that people, specifically African Americans, are fed up with these unjust and unarmed occurrences.</p> <p>Existing Research Question: How do police-involved shootings affect teens' perceptions of police?</p> <p>Hypothesis: If police-involved shooting have changed the perceptions of teens then it could be expected to influence their behavior and actions.</p> <p>Purpose: The purpose of this study is to explore the impact of police-involved shootings on teens' perceptions of these officials.</p>	<p>Population: Black teens between the ages of 13-18 who reside in the city of Pittsburgh and have witnessed directly or indirectly the encounters of police involved shootings of unarmed black men.</p> <p>Research Design: The arrows to the left represent our research design. We had a total of 10 survey specific questions, 3 linear scale questions, and 2 short answer questions. After we collected the data we analyzed it, and created a table.</p> <p>Results: The data from the survey indicated that teens have a negative perception on police officers and that the training and methods of officers should be reformed and changed.</p> <p>Discussion: The limitations of our study were finding articles for the literature review. Our information would help scientists understand the influence police-involved shootings have on Black teens. Our research can advance police officers' training efforts and lay the groundwork for future scholars.</p>																												
<p>DS</p> <p>AS</p> <p>AD</p> <p>SD</p> <p>PI</p>	<p>Age</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Age Group</th> <th>Percentage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>15</td> <td>3.4%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>16</td> <td>10.0%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>17</td> <td>38.3%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>18</td> <td>48.3%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Table 1</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Question</th> <th>Yes</th> <th>No</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Are you aware of the recent police-involved shootings of unarmed Black or African American men taking place in the United States?</td> <td>30</td> <td>0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Does police involved shooting change your perspective on police officers?</td> <td>27</td> <td>3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Have you thought about talking about against police?</td> <td>17</td> <td>13</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Do you think police officers should use more non-lethal weapons (i.e. beanbag gun) to subdue unarmed black men?</td> <td>29</td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Do you think police officers should have the probability test every 3 years during their time on the force?</td> <td>28</td> <td>2</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Age Group	Percentage	15	3.4%	16	10.0%	17	38.3%	18	48.3%	Question	Yes	No	Are you aware of the recent police-involved shootings of unarmed Black or African American men taking place in the United States?	30	0	Does police involved shooting change your perspective on police officers?	27	3	Have you thought about talking about against police?	17	13	Do you think police officers should use more non-lethal weapons (i.e. beanbag gun) to subdue unarmed black men?	29	1	Do you think police officers should have the probability test every 3 years during their time on the force?	28	2
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McKayla Dixon

Video games allow me to enter a world of imagination and creativity - they are a thrilling escape and a transporting experience. I can control my life and harness the talents I possess - in the SIMS, I am a rich, married homeowner with two kids and a dog named Cupcake. In NBA 2K, I am Steph Curry or James Harden dominating the basketball court. In Madden, I am a member of the Atlanta Falcons throwing touchdowns and catching interceptions. Although I have never played sports and am not overly athletic, I am one of the *best* players when I compete in these video games.

My success as a video gamer has helped me develop a true love and appreciation for technology. The ability to create my own world or captain my own team are feelings I could not feel in real life. Technology gives me power in the game world, but I want this *power* in real life. The more I reflect on my future, the more I realize gaming must be a part of it. Although I have always joked about being a videogame tester, I never considered video games to be part of an actual career choice. However, while visiting a potential college last year I began to see this as a reality.

I sat in on a computer science class where I was exposed to coding and programming. This opened a whole new world. Instead of merely playing games, I realized, I could create them. I have always enjoyed creating things and have been inspired by how technology is changing the world, but I had not realized the possibilities these passions offered. While sitting in that computer science class, I determined that I wanted to develop and design my own video games.

Over the summer, I interned at Carnegie Learning, a tech company in Pittsburgh. During my internship, I observed a lack of black professionals in the work space. I became discouraged, but also hopeful that I could start to change the narrative. I questioned, *why doesn't anyone look like me? How can I enter a field where no one resembles me?* My curiosity led me to investigate this issue further. While doing more research, I found that 9% of people in STEM careers are black, and an even smaller percentage are black women. Many black professionals also report experiencing discrimination in the workplace. I felt like this was an important conversation, so I developed a research project to further investigate these issues. I explored the lack of black professionals in STEM and examined whether differences existed between white and black students' preparation and training for STEM careers. I presented my findings in front of community stakeholders and engaged my peers in deeper conversations on this topic. Although this project was for the summer, I believe this conversation needed to continue.

As I prepare for my future, I plan to continue exploring the representation of black females in STEM. I also want to move from mere conversation to action and be part of the change that is necessary. I want to engage in the field and counter the current narrative that black females do not belong in STEM.

It is nice that black females like myself can consume video games, but we can also create them. I want to generate, innovate, and direct the course of the field. By following this dream, I hope to inspire other young black females and show them that they can turn their passion into a career they enjoy.

McKayla Dixon

Dear Admissions Representative:

My name is McKayla Dixon, and I am currently a senior at Taylor Allderdice High School. I am writing this cover letter to express my interest in attending your university. As an individual engaged in academic enrichment, leadership development, and community service, I believe I am an ideal candidate for your university and can positively contribute to your campus community.

Throughout high school, I have taken honors and advanced placement courses to build my intellectual capacity and to expand my academic acumen. By taking such coursework, I have experienced the rigors of college and the workload I will receive. These academic experiences have prepared me for my collegiate career at your university.

Since freshman year, I have engaged in employment and enrichment experiences through Youth Enrichment Services. As a participant, I have gained valuable work experience in a variety of fields and developed a thirst for learning that transcends my school's walls.

As an Advance Summer Scholar, I obtained an internship at Carnegie Learning, a technology company located in Downtown Pittsburgh. My responsibilities included providing feedback for a new user interface, managing product data using Microsoft Excel, and developing a student textbook. Because of my interest in technology and computer science, this experience was eye opening and allowed me to expand my technical skills and knowledge. I am sure this experience will aid me as I explore a STEM career.

Lastly, I have engaged in multiple summer research projects each spanning the course of 3 months. I have researched the effects of lead on communities and children, explored how shootings of unarmed black men affect black teens, and investigated the disparity of black professionals in STEM fields.

I have detailed more of my unique experiences in my resume. Please see the attachment for a full description of my academic, leadership, and service experiences. I can be contacted via email at kayladixon2233@gmail.com or by phone at (412)513-5151 to further discuss these opportunities. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Best,

McKayla Dixon

McKayla Dixon

Education

Taylor Allderdice High School , Pittsburgh, PA	Aug. 2015 - Present
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Honors and AP coursework• Honor Roll Student	

Work Experience

Summer Scholar , <i>Youth Enrichment Services</i> , Pittsburgh, PA	June 2016 - Aug. 2016
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Conducted research on police involved shootings, “Don’t Shoot: Teen’s Perceptions of Police-Involved Shootings”• Participated in experiential learning classes around African American Studies• Presented research results at YES’ Research Symposium, which indicated• Supported Mount Ararat’s Summer Camp by providing sanitation, food, and recreational services	
Advanced Summer Scholar , <i>Youth Enrichment Services</i> , Pittsburgh, PA	June 2017 - Aug. 2017
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Partook in a research project investigating the influence of Lead Exposure in Lincoln-Lemington• Engaged in national conversation around the Lead Crisis on a trip to Flint, Michigan• Developed and administered survey to LL residents to better understand: 1) sources of lead, 2) parent/ child conversations around lead, 3) sanitary practices, and 4) overall lead awareness• Coded residents’ responses using excel• Implemented culturally relevant health intervention to Lincoln-Lemington residents	
Researcher , <i>Allegheny County Health Department</i> , Pittsburgh, PA	Jan. 2017 - Mar. 2018
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Surveyed local convenience stores to investigate how companies advertise tobacco products to youth of color in low-income communities	
Summer Researcher , <i>Youth Enrichment Services</i> , Pittsburgh, PA	June 2018 - Aug. 2018
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Investigated the lack of black professionals in STEM by creating and administering a survey• Logged results of college students using excel• Presented research results at YES’ Research Symposium	
Summer Technology Intern , <i>Carnegie Learning</i> , Pittsburgh, PA	June 2018 - Aug. 2018
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provided feedback for new user interface• Partnered with other departments of Carnegie Learning to test new projects• Managed product data using Microsoft Excel• Generated K-12 math resources	

Extracurricular

African American Center for Advanced Studies , <i>Allderdice High School</i>	Aug. 2015 - Present
BSU Member (Black Student Union) , <i>Allderdice High School</i>	Sept. 2015 - Present
Academic Enrichment , <i>Youth Enrichment Services</i>	June 2015 - Present
FeWi (Female Empowerment Wellness Initiative) , <i>Youth Enrichment Services</i>	Jan. 2018 - Present
College Preparation , <i>Youth Enrichment Services</i>	Sept. 2018 - Present

Volunteerism

Volunteered in Flint, Michigan	June 2017
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Disseminated water to families impacted by lead crisis• Reconstructed and cleaned local community garden	

Award

Distinguished Researcher, *Youth Enrichment Services*, Pittsburgh, PA **August 2017**

- Awarded to students for making outstanding contributions in research and demonstrating sustained commitment to advancing the frontiers of the final research project

Legacy Award, *Youth Enrichment Services*, Pittsburgh, PA **August 2018**

- Awarded to students who have been committed to YES' mission, to leading others in motivation and purpose, to mentoring peers, and to serving greater community

References

Ms. Denise Jones

Program Director, Youth Enrichment Services
6031 Broad Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15206
dlj2125@tc.columbia.edu | (412)401-9840

Addendum

For most students, transitioning from middle school to high school is difficult. I too felt this challenge as I transitioned into my high school. As one of 1500 high school students, I found it extremely difficult to distinguish myself amongst a sea of peers and to find my place in the unfamiliar territory of such a large school. Because of this, I was lost, separated, and unengaged. Although my 9th grade performance was subpar, it is not indicative of my performance throughout the remainder of my high school career. I have since improved my approach to school and my grades have trended upward. Additionally, my grades in math and engineering are not reflective of my passion for these subjects or my ability to be successful in them. I hope the admissions team reviews my application holistically and recognizes that these numerics do not define or characterize me. I also hope that these numerics do not deny me acceptance.

Variation in Black College Students' Preparedness for Careers in STEM

McKayla L. Dixon & London M. Wright
Youth Enrichment Services

Introduction

Historically, black individuals are less represented in the STEM industry. Research shows that blacks account for only 8% of general engineering majors, 7% of mathematics majors, and only 5% of computer engineering majors. We believe the lack of black professionals is associated with college preparation and training. While PWIs typically provide students with more resources and funding, HBCUs provide students with affirmation, community, and identity. It is hard to know which type of institution best prepares black individuals for STEM careers.

Research Question

Is there variation in how PWIs and HBCUs prepare black students for careers in STEM?

Hypothesis

We hypothesize that Predominantly White Institutions better prepare black students for careers in the STEM fields because of resource allocation and funding.

Methods

We surveyed 13 individuals. Our target population was black individuals majoring in STEM at Public PWIs, Private PWIs, Public HBCUs, or Private HBCUs.

To collect our data we sent out our survey to various individuals who fit our target audience via online platforms, word-of-mouth, and text-messages.

Our survey consisted of 13 research questions. First we asked demographic questions such as gender, age, income, and household status. We followed this section with questions specific to college preparedness.

Research Steps:

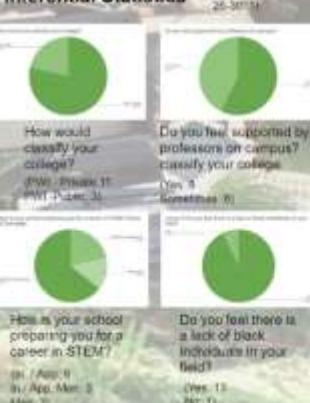
BR → PS → RQ → RS → E → P

Results

Descriptive Statistics:



Inferential Statistics:



Discussion

Although none of our respondents were from HBCUs, our research shows that students from Predominantly White Institutions feel somewhat prepared for the STEM field with the support from their professors. We noticed internships and support from job mentoring helped students to feel confident in their field. These results lead one to ponder whether resources or identity and affirmation matter more for black students' success in STEM.

Conclusion

In conclusion, we found that students at PWI private schools and PWI public schools, majority feel as if there is a lack of black individuals in their field. Studies show this may have to do with discrimination or intentional weed out practices, not being exposed at an early age, or not being prepared properly in college.

Preliminary Findings on Lead Awareness of Lincoln-Lemington Residents: A Review of Pre/Post Results following a Health Education Intervention

McKayla Dixon, Ki'Arra Johnson, & Diamond K. Turner

Youth Enrichment Services

Introduction

Pittsburgh has a lead crisis similar to Flint. Whereas, individuals and families, especially low-income poorly educated blacks are disproportionately affected by lead. Research shows lead poisoning is associated with physical, mental, and cognitive deficits in individuals contaminated by this metal. Therefore the need to increase the awareness of lead among the target population is increasingly critical. The research aims to examine a health education intervention poised to increase the awareness of lead among attendees.

Methods

Research Question: What, if at all, is the overall awareness level of residents' knowledge about lead?

Research Design: Action Research Design

Benefits of Action Research Design

- Design focuses on a solution
- Has the potential to increase the amount that someone learns as a result of their experience with the action
- Direct and obvious relevance to improving practice
- No hidden controls
- Most useful in community settings/situations

Drawbacks of Action Research Design

- Buy-in from the community
- Personal involvement of researcher may bias the results

Action Steps:

- We constructed a survey on google docs to find out if residents in LL are aware of lead in their community.
- Went out into the community and administered the survey to community members by doing home visits.
- Coded data into a google sheet.
- Analyzed the data to see if community members are aware. The data showed they were not.
- Informed community members with a health education intervention.



Objectives:

- Increase lead awareness among LL residents
- Use these findings to inform later research in this area

Findings:

Demographic Information

Gender	Male: 4 (57.1%)	Female: 3 (42.9%)
Race	White: 2 (28.6%)	Black: 5 (71.4%)
Age Range	16-70	

Results:

Pre Test Scores	1	2	3
1	13/15 (86.7%)		
2	13/15 (86.7%)		
3	9/15 (60%)		

Post Test Scores	1	2	3
1	12/15 (80%)		
2	12/15 (80%)		
3	8/15 (53.3%)		

Discussion:

- We found that post scores decreased after the health education intervention. We attribute this loss due to interruptions and other issues that impacted the learning process.
- We were able to inform the community on lead to lessen their exposure. Although overall scores were low, participants seemed to maintain the same awareness in lead exposure areas.
- A challenge we encountered was not having a lot of usable data from the prepost tests due to lateness.
- I would advise other researchers to advertise on social media to increase participants' participation.



Lake Fong/Post-Gazette

Floyd Jones, executive director of Youth Enrichment Services, takes students McKayla Dixon, left, Anesa Reed, both 16, and Diamond Turner, 15, through the Lincoln-Lemington neighborhood as part of a lead education program.

FIGHTING LEAD EXPOSURE ON THE HOME FRONT:

Education, blood tests, water pipes and housing remediation

By Jill Daly
Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

Getting the word out about the dangers of lead, and how it threatens the health of young children and pregnant women, has taken to the streets this summer.

Pittsburgh high schoolers Willie Knight, 16, and Charles Powell, 14, spent a warm afternoon recently tracking customer traffic at two stores in Lincoln-Lemington as research for a lead education program designed and carried out by young people.

They shared the task of counting customers at the Brooklyn Food Market and LA Market, both located near multiple bus stops. The next step will be sharing their results with other teens who may return to talk to people there about preventing lead exposure

and fixing lead hazards in their homes.

"If people know their house has lead paint," Willie said, "it's better to fix it when you know there's a problem."

The two teens are also part of a team that is using a computerized geographic information system to map neighborhood housing data, which includes the year a home was built, the construction material, its condition and number of floors. Willie, who will be a junior at Westinghouse this fall, showed how he has color-coded the age of properties on a map, accessible on his cell phone, from oldest to new.

The information can be analyzed as part of a report on their research. This summer 20 students are developing the health education outreach as participants in the nonprofit Youth Enrichment Services Learn &

Earn program, according to program director Denise Jones.

"There seemed to be a disconnect between the Allegheny County Health Department and the community accessing information firsthand," Ms. Jones said. "Students can bridge the gap between the community and the health department."

Karen Hacker, health department director, said community involvement is important to the lead safety effort.

"We really need them to get messages out there," she said.

Meeting families in low-income areas with aging housing stock is just part of the communication strategy underway to reduce people's exposure to lead in homes,

SEE LEAD, PAGE C-3



Mckayla Dixon, Anesa Reed, and Keth Jumian are employed by Youth Enrichment Services this summer to teach people in Pittsburgh's Linwood-Lenington neighborhood about lead exposure. Photo: Kara Holsopple

TEENS EARN AND LEARN WHILE EDUCATING THEIR NEIGHBORS ABOUT LEAD EXPOSURE

KARA HOLSOOPPLE • AUGUST 17, 2017

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"Don't Shoot": Teens' Perceptions of Police-Involved Shootings

McKayla L. Dixon, Anesa M. Reed & London M. Wright

Background

So far in 2016, 123 black men, mostly unarmed, have been killed by white police officers. These incidents of police-involved shooting of unarmed Black men can influence black teens' perceptions towards white, or all, police officers.

Problem Statement

Police-involved shootings have taken a toll on plenty of communities with Black teens. These communities have responded with riots. Recent riots after police-involved shootings of unarmed Black men demonstrates that people, specifically African Americans, are fed up with these unjust and unfair occurrences.

Existing Research Question

How do police-involved shootings affect teens' perceptions of police?

Hypothesis

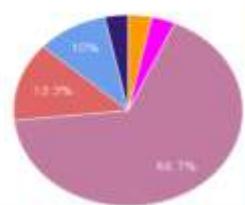
If police-involved shooting have changed the perceptions of teens then it could be expected to influence their behavior and actions.

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to explore the impact of police-involved shootings on teens' perceptions of these officials.



Age



Population

Black teens between the ages of 13-18 who reside in the city of Pittsburgh and have witnessed directly or indirectly the encounters of police involved shootings of unarmed black men.

Research Design

The arrows to the left represent our research design. We had a total of 10 survey specific questions, 3 linear scale questions, and 2 short answer questions. After we collected the data we analyzed it, and created a table.

Results

The data from the survey indicated that teens have a negative perception on police officers and that the training and methods of officers should be reformed and changed.

Discussion

The limitations of our study were finding articles for the literature review. Our information would help scientist understand the influence police-involved shootings have on Black teens. Our research can advance police officers' training efforts and lay the groundwork for future scholars.

Table 1	Yes	No
Are you aware of the recent police-involved shootings of unarmed Black or African American men taking place in the United States?	30	0
Does police involved shooting change your perspective on police officers?	27	3
Have you thought about taking action against police?	17	13
Do you think police officers should use more non-lethal weapons if a deadly gun is used on unarmed black men?	29	1
Do you think police officers should have the psychology test every 3 years during their time on the force?	28	2

Quelyn Holt

I am a man who enjoys seeing progress, and even the slightest bit encourages me. I have let the progress I have made catalyze and guide me as I have grown older. In the past few years, this personal growth has shown through music. I am an artist if not by standards set by society, then by my own.

My earliest memory of anything musical is not a pleasant one. It was an elementary school choir class performance. We had practiced for weeks, I had learned the words by heart, I knew the tune backwards and forward, I was ready. Once placed in front of over a hundred unfamiliar adults, however, I froze. Becoming a block of ice cursed with paranoia and fear, my vision grew clouded and I began to panic. After being pulled away from the performance by our grade counselor, I sat in the office alone, slowly calming down. I said to myself, "I'll never perform again."

During this same time, life at home was a wreck. I was surrounded by persistent conflicts within my family. They escalated to various degrees. Listening to music louder than the screaming in the house was my only escape, and I began to develop a deeper appreciation for it. My older brother is a rap artist, and seeing his outlet made me want to pursue my own. By middle school, I was writing daily in a journal, trying to match the artists I heard on the radio and saw on YouTube. While my dexterity did not get to that level, I felt as though I was quickly progressing.

Friends would hear me mumbling my own lyrics, never quite sure of what I was saying. I liked it that way. I had no need or desire for outside recognition. This went on until seventh grade, when I had opened a little, letting only certain people read from my notebook and give feedback and critique.

The end of the year approached, issues at home only grew worse, and our only option became to move out of my grandmother's home. My last day at Steel Valley Academy had arrived, and during lunch it just so happened that my classmates were 'battling' one another. Listening in, I was not truly impressed, and no lyric stood out. They noticed my blank expression and called me on it. As it was my last day, I figured that there would be no consequence for anything I did right or wrong. I stepped up to the plate and engaged. Going on to say things such as "I'm a beast, anyone in front of me a meal and I'm gone' eat. They call me king, I own the ring, just pay attention when I speak. I want to teach a lesson, so you decide, you want the knowledge first and beating second. Vice versa, this is a body go and get the hearse to take it out." By the time lunch was over I had exceeded everyone's expectations, including my own.

I moved with a newfound confidence in myself as I continued to refine my craft in my spare time. I wrote late at night, on family trips, and on my own until the beginning of high school.

In ninth grade, I joined a media arts program. Since then, I have been a steady and key member of the program, creating many songs, working with incoming students looking to move forward with a life in music, leading performances, and collaborating with other peer artists on projects. I have been told: "Your life is on that stage, Quelyn." While I never made music the forefront of my career choice, it is a part of my being. It brings out a different, freer side of me that nothing else has managed to. It is not my only pursuit, but I will always agree that the true me is on stage with a microphone, performing my heart out to a crowd.

Quelyn M. Holt

Dear Admissions Representative:

My name is Quelyn Holt, and I am currently a senior at Westinghouse Academy. During my time in school, I have challenged myself academically and been involved in enrichment and employment programs such as S.T.R.E.A.M., YMCA's Lighthouse, and Youth Enrichment Services' Learn and Earn to further advance my skills. Participating in these programs filled my life with invaluable experience outside of the classroom, allowing me to develop skills that have made me a well-rounded individual. Working in programming, creating lines of code, and learning various media software has allowed me to effectively run music sessions and continuously enhance my stage presence and performance etiquette as a producer and musician. My most recent display of these skills was in late December during a school outing to the University of Pittsburgh during which I performed a song as a poetry showing. I also had the unique opportunity to perform at a showing of Lin-Manuel Miranda's Hamilton.

While participating in these programs, I have been assigned various leadership roles, engaged in higher and advanced learning during the summers, interned in professional working environments, and committed myself to long term research projects. As I reflect on these experiences, I have learned that I am a reliable, professional, determined, and thorough leader who would contribute to your university.

Although I have engaged in extremely diverse experiences, my most meaningful ones occurred when I furthered my collaboration with Youth Enrichment Services during 2018. I interned at the Alcosan Water Treatment Facility. I studied the process of treating wastewater and devised more efficient means of monitoring and communicating between field workers and lab analyst through GIS mapping software. I also contributed to a collaborative project with current college students. Finishing my portion of our project ahead of schedule, I further engaged in research, transcription, and presentation preparation. I have also conducted my own research examining the football players' perception of their safety on the field. Through this project, I generated a research question, developed a survey and an academic presentation detailing my project results, and presented before a panel of distinguished YES stakeholders. This opportunity led to me presenting my work as part of the Remake Learning Showcase.

The experiences and skills I learned through my curricular and extracurricular opportunities will help me flourish in college. Through these unique opportunities, I have zoned in on my passions - engineering, songwriting, and stage performing - and I explored them at every opportunity presented. Until my goals have been met, I will continue to reach and push on, especially in a college setting.

In my resume, you will find a more descriptive layout of other academic, leadership, and service experiences. I can be contacted via email at quelynhyes@gmail.com or by phone at (412) 721-9324 to further discuss these opportunities. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

I thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Quelyn Holt

Quelyn Holt

Education

Westinghouse Academy 6-12, Pittsburgh, PA Aug. 2015 - Present

- Honor Roll Student
- CAS and AP Coursework

University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA Aug. 2018 - Present

Highschool to College Program

- Course: Introduction to Social Justice
- Conduct research on a topic using a youth-involved participatory framework
- Engage in community service and events throughout Homewood

Work Experience

Intern, YMCA Lighthouse Media Arts Program Nov. 2018 - Present

- Assigned to supervise and facilitate activities within the program, as well as handling the space and studio during tours

Advanced Summer Scholar, Youth Enrichment Services, Pittsburgh, PA June 2018 - Aug. 2018

- Partook in a research project investigating lead exposure in Lincoln-Lemington
- Gained experience with coding, as well as GIS mapping techniques to identify how the built and social environments contribute to water waste
- Conducted research on the perception of safety held by athletes and the parents of athletes
- Presented research results at YES' Research Symposium, which highlighted perceptions of young athletes and how they interpret the risk of playing the sport

Summer Intern, Alcosan, Pittsburgh, PA June 2016 - Aug. 2018

- Developed projects, supported program functioning, and collaborated with peers to generate more efficient models for water waste plant

Summer Scholar, Youth Enrichment Services, Pittsburgh, PA June 2015 - Aug. 2015

- Engaged in Math and English enrichment courses
- Participated in job readiness training
- Developed research project on the fiscal health of black businesses in Homewood community
- Trained as a peer mentor using Sean Covey's 7 Habits for Highly Effective Teens

Leadership

Student Envoy Council Member, George Westinghouse Academy Sept. 2016 - Present

- Selected as a student representative to represent the voice of the students on matters concerning the wellbeing and management of the student body

A.A.C.A.S Council Member, Pittsburgh, PA Sept. 2018 - Present

- Selected as a leader among my peers and positioned to contribute to organizing annual symposiums displaying the capabilities and strengths of my fellow classmates

Conference Presenter, Remake Learning Showcase, Pittsburgh, PA December 2018

- Selected as a student representative to present my research on the safety of players participating in contact sports on behalf of YES at the Remake Learning Showcase event

Extracurricular

YMCA Lighthouse Media arts Program, Homewood Brushton YMCA August 2015 - Present

Young Men's Development, Homewood Brushton YMCA November 2017

Academic Enrichment and College Prep, Youth Enrichment Services October 2017 - Present

Volunteerism

Homewood Health Matters**July 2017**

- Completed the 5k Run-Walk, 10k Bike Ride, and Health Expo
-

Awards

Distinguished Researcher, Youth Enrichment Services, Pittsburgh, PA**August 2017**

- Awarded to students for making outstanding contributions in research and demonstrating sustained commitment to advancing the frontiers of the final research project
-

Legacy Award, Youth Enrichment Services, Pittsburgh, PA**August 2018**

- Awarded to students who have been committed to YES' mission, to leading others in motivation and purpose, to mentoring peers, and to serving greater community
-

References

Ms. Denise Jones

Program Director, Youth Enrichment Services
6031 Broad Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15206
dlj2125@tc.columbia.edu | (412)401-9840

Addendum

I attend a school with an arguably subpar reputation. Teachers frequently come and go, and many students lack the care for their education. In fact, many would not come to school if it was not a requirement. This environment was toxic to my personal hopes of learning until I took a step back to see the larger picture. *Why was I at school?* I thought. After much reflection, I realized that I am in school to learn and proceed forward with my own life. I don't have to make the same choices as some of my classmates.

There is no real punishment for students who seek only to disturb others, and teachers are unable to give their all because of it. They have to deal with every issue that arises within the classroom as well as curriculum design. This is a huge challenge for both teachers and students who are motivated to learn.

I am intellectually curious, and at my core, I enjoy learning. It has been difficult to maintain this curiosity in Honors and AP classes that are distilled with students who have not met the prerequisites because basic classes are not offered. It is discouraging being in an environment that lacks a commitment to students' success. I have not always excelled in the classroom, but an in depth look at the work I have done and submitted, in and outside of the classroom, shows that when I commit to a task I will meet it with the utmost excellence and thoroughness that I can provide.

My hunger for more learning took me on a hunt for out of school enrichment opportunities. I found this space at Youth Enrichment Services, where I have engaged in enrichment and employment experiences for over three years. Since my tenure with YES, I have produced community-based participatory research projects, interned at my county's Sanitary Authority, and gained experience in engineering, facilitating presentations, and solving complex issues impacting local residents. My work with YES accentuates my ability to engage and succeed, especially when it is student driven, relevant, innovative, and pushes me beyond my known understandings of the world.

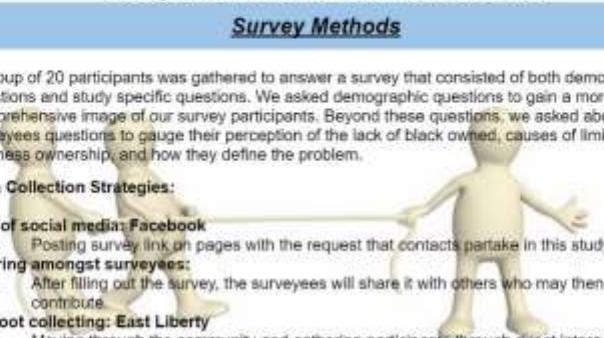
I hope that my potential is considered by the admissions team so that I may demonstrate what I am truly capable of in a productive environment that is committed to student learning. I am self-motivated to learn because I have gained a new appreciation for the value of education.

"Safety on the field, 2 points not afforded": Examining Players' Perception of Safety Quelyn Holt & Tyler Williams Youth Enrichment Services				
Background: Research shows that new equipments are being improved, tested, and implemented into the NFL almost yearly such as the newly crafted Riddell helmet. These efforts align with the goal to once again lower the injury percent which increased 16% between the two most recent seasons. Though many of the new and older modeled equipment have not been released to the public for recreational use.	Race	Black/African American (100%)		
	Age	15 & under (18.2%) 16-20 (81.8%)		
	Gender	Male (100%)		
	Education	9th- 12th (81.8%) H.S.G (18.2%)		
	Household status	S.P (54.5%) T.P (45.5%)		
	Household Income	10,000 (36.4%) 10,000-25,000 (18.2%)		
Problem Statement: The safest equipment being distributed to the Nation Football League is not available to school students, therefore the youth are more susceptible to injuries and concussions.	Survey Questions	Responses	Total	Percentage
Research Question: How safe do these young football players feel, and what is the perception they have of their equipment?	Have you ever been afraid that the equipment wouldn't protect you?	No	10/11	90.9%
Hypothesis: The players will not be very concerned about the safety because they feel rather protected on the field.	Have you ever considered quitting the sport due to safety issues?	No	8/11	72.7%
	Do you believe your parents have ever been worried about you playing?	No	6/11	54.5%
	Have you ever been injured while playing in a football game?	Yes	8/11	72.7%



Who's pulling the strings?: Examining the Lack of Black Owned Businesses

Quelyn M. Holt and Darriton S. Jones

Introduction	Survey Methods	Results																
<p>According to the Association for Enterprise Opportunity, there is-and has been-a lack of black owned businesses, even in the majority black communities. This void prevents majority black communities from being as self sufficient and flourishing, due to the wealth being circulated out of them. While this problem occurs in communities across America, this study focuses on East End communities in Pittsburgh and residents' perception of limited black ownership.</p>	<p>A group of 20 participants was gathered to answer a survey that consisted of both demographic questions and study specific questions. We asked demographic questions to gain a more comprehensive image of our survey participants. Beyond these questions, we asked about surveyees questions to gauge their perception of the lack of black owned, causes of limited business ownership, and how they define the problem.</p> <p>Data Collection Strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use of social media: Facebook <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Posting survey link on pages with the request that contacts partake in this study Sharing amongst surveyees: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> After filling out the survey, the surveyees will share it with others who may then also contribute On foot collecting: East Liberty <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Moving through the community and gathering participants through direct interactions. 	<p>Our study reveals important and interesting findings. Though many felt that black owned businesses are no more acclimated to failure than any other business. The lack of black owned businesses had been attributed to a variety of reasons, financial problems being one that was emphasized, suggesting other institutional forces are at work. Residents suggest the need to address a paucity of black businesses.</p>																
<p>Research Question</p> <p>How do residents in East End Pittsburgh communities feel about the lack of black owned businesses?</p>	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Survey Questions</th> <th>Responses</th> <th>Totals</th> <th>%</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Do they feel the lack is a problem?</td> <td>Yes, I do</td> <td>19</td> <td>63% (12)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Why do you think there are not many black owned businesses in this area?</td> <td>Lack of investments/a variety of reasons</td> <td>19</td> <td>32% (6) 26% (5)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Do you think that black owned businesses are acclimated to failure?</td> <td>No, I don't think so</td> <td>19</td> <td>68% (13)</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Survey Questions	Responses	Totals	%	Do they feel the lack is a problem?	Yes, I do	19	63% (12)	Why do you think there are not many black owned businesses in this area?	Lack of investments/a variety of reasons	19	32% (6) 26% (5)	Do you think that black owned businesses are acclimated to failure?	No, I don't think so	19	68% (13)	<p>Discussion/Conclusion</p> <p>We found that the stated hypothesis was supported by the evidence in this study-as nearly 63% felt concerned about the lack of black owned businesses. Black owned businesses were once the fabric of the black community. Research shows they attributed to prosperous and thriving times. The absence of black businesses is felt and has created issues that plight neighborhoods. Future scholars should investigate how to restore these opportunities.</p>
Survey Questions	Responses	Totals	%															
Do they feel the lack is a problem?	Yes, I do	19	63% (12)															
Why do you think there are not many black owned businesses in this area?	Lack of investments/a variety of reasons	19	32% (6) 26% (5)															
Do you think that black owned businesses are acclimated to failure?	No, I don't think so	19	68% (13)															

What's in your shopping cart?:
Analyze the impact of local stores on the East Liberty Community
 Quelyn M. Holt, Kristian D. Peppers, & Khalil K. Stowers

Background

Low-income communities have always been more reliant on their local stores. When local store prices rise, they often become unfair and have a more negative impact than positive. We are investigating whether the residents believe that this is apparent in East Liberty.

Problem Statement

In some communities, the local stores are more harmful than helpful to the residents. This is relevant in East Liberty, particularly with recent development.

Research Question

How do the local stores local and businesses affect the community?

Hypothesis

The local stores have a positive impact and influence on East Liberty residents and their community.

Purpose

The purpose of our study was to examine how East Liberty stores influenced the community.

Target Population

Residents of East Liberty, who utilize the stores in the community.

Results

The average survey participant was an African American female in her early forties (41.6) with at least a college level education. All participants agreed that the food purchased from grocery stores was healthy for the body. The majority of our subjects felt the prices were unfair, which aligns with our hypothesis. The majority of our participants had at least a college level education.

Discussion

With any study, there are limitations. Some limitations of our study include limited time to collect data. We also found challenges creating questions that zero in on our research topic. Our research suggests that residents feel that the local stores are in fact beneficial to the community. Though the stores were found useful, the prices were deemed unfair and often heightened. This is useful to the sciences because it lays the groundwork for future cost-analysis. Future researchers should investigate the push and pull factors that create this unfair pricing. In future studies, researchers should expand the search to neighboring areas to get a more diverse group of participants. This has implications for people who cannot afford to utilize their community's stores.

Race	Black (66.8%)		
Gender	Female (53.6%)		
Household income	501\$-1000\$ (63.4%)		
Household status	Non-Family household (55.4%) Non-Children household (76%)		
Education	Bachelor's degree (28.6%)		
Table 2	Respondent (Yes)	Total Respondents	Percentage
Do you think locally grown food at the grocery store is healthy?	7	7	100%
Are the local stores a useful resource?	3	7	42.9%
Has Target been a helpful impact in your daily life?	4	7	57.1%
When you are finished shopping do you find you've gotten all you need at a fair price?	3	7	42.9%

Willie Knight

Until very recently, I felt like an eagle in a chicken coop. The environment in which I have grown up and lived is comparable to the fable of the eagle who was mistakenly placed in a henhouse. The eagle grew up alongside chickens and engaged in their daily routines: poking in the soil for insects, flying a few feet at a time, and clucking around. One day, the eagle looked into the sky and saw a majestic creature soaring through the bright blue skies. "What is that?" he questioned. His comrade responded: "that is an eagle, a powerfully built bird, a master of the sky. We, however, are birds of the ground."

This folktale ends with the eagle living and dying as a *chicken*, never fully reaching his potential through no fault of his own, but simply because he was not exposed to the resources to discover his true identity. I, too, allowed my environment to dictate my actions, until I recognized that I was destined for more.

I attend one of the district's lowest performing schools, where underachievement and failure are often the norm. My school is surrounded by a community inundated with crime, violence, and strife, and infested with drugs and substance abuse. This is a community where poverty and unemployment are a reality, and living beyond high school, is for many black males, unlikely.

It is easy to fall prey and succumb to the pressures of this environment. Even though I was capable of more, I became content with performing below my capacity. I got distracted by my peers and superficial desires. I performed in a way that was considered acceptable for my environment.

After my first two years of high school, I had an epiphany. I knew I wanted to attend college and achieve more. When I compared my grades with those of my peers and realized how low I had been performing, I realized I needed to change. I had been applying myself in sports, but not in academics. This required me to make a decision: to perform according to my abilities or to remain stagnant. I chose the former. In fact, I began exceling by making education a priority and engaging in extracurricular activities that opened my eyes and exposed me to an unfamiliar world. I decided to focus and do things independent of my peers. Freeing myself from the expectations of my environment and others was an important decision in accomplishing my goals. However, I did not make this decision alone.

I have been exposed to programs that have allowed me to see the world and the changes I am able to make. Through my involvement in Youth Enrichment Services (YES), I engaged in investigating community health risks like lead exposure and tobacco and opioid abuse, supporting day camps, and exploring the cultural shifts of durag wearing in a research program. By sitting on panels, presenting at conferences, networking with professionals, and traveling around the world, I have seen what I can do and become. This exposure served as a catalyst for me. My time in Homewood Children's Village was similar. I was exposed to successful black men who were leaders in their homes, communities, and professions, and this was incredibly powerful and mind-blowing for me.

The people "who make it out" of my neighborhood are few. Often, they never get a chance to fly - resulting in untapped potential and unrealized talent. Fortunately, gaining exposure to unique opportunities and being raised by a single mother who values education helped me choose the path of furthering my education. I am determined to pursue what brings me genuine happiness, and the many opportunities that come along with it. Although I am not the first in my household to attend college, I am determined to be the first to finish. I am leaving the nest, and I look forward to soaring high like an eagle.

Willie Knight

Dear Admission Representative:

My name is Willie Knight, and I am currently a senior at Pittsburgh Westinghouse High School. I am a dynamic individual who is involved in academic enrichment, leadership development, and community service. I believe my educational, leadership, and athletic experiences make me an ideal candidate for your university.

I come from an impoverished, disenfranchised community where it is a fight to stay focused and invested. By virtue of this phenomenon, I have experienced many challenges such as neighborhood strife, systemic injustices, and educational inequities in my school system. Despite these challenges, I have taken honors and advanced placement courses to build my academic acumen and challenge my intellectual capacity.

Although my school offers limited resources, I have engaged in several academic enrichment opportunities to prepare me for the rigors of college. I have enrolled in college classes at the University of Pittsburgh and engaged in scholastic programs through Youth Enrichment Services' Learn and Earn Program. These experiences have assisted me in refining my skill set, growing as a scholar, and exposing me to a world with which I was unfamiliar as a black male.

I have gained valuable skills as the captain of the varsity football team during my junior and senior years. I expressed my love for the game while developing important character-building skills: hard work, teamwork, and integrity. Because I played with a diverse team from all over the city, I have come to appreciate the importance of diversity and difference. I have also learned how to navigate multiple tasks; this has helped me refine my time management skills as I took on the responsibility of being a student-athlete.

I have been a determined student since childhood, irrespective of my personal circumstances. I have never let anything get in the way of my future, and I believe this same fortitude will help me excel at your university.

I have detailed more of my unique experiences in my resume. Please see the attachment for a full description of my academic, leadership, and service experiences. I can be contacted via email at willieknight514@gmail.com or by phone at (412) 320-0500. I look forward to hearing from you soon. Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Willie Knight

Willie Knight

Education

Westinghouse Academy 6-12 , Pittsburgh, PA	Aug. 2015 - Present
• High Honor Roll Student • CAS and AP Coursework	
Taylor Allderdice High School , Pittsburgh, PA <i>Engineering CTE Program</i> • Course: Engineering Exploration	Aug. 2017- Present
University of Pittsburgh , Pittsburgh, PA <i>Hghschool to College Program</i> • Course: Introduction to Social Justice • Conduct research on a topic using a youth-involved participatory framework • Engage in community service and events throughout Homewood	Aug. 2018 - Present

Work Experience

Advanced Summer Scholar , <i>Youth Enrichment Services</i> , Pittsburgh, PA	June - Aug. 2018
• Partnered with the Allegheny County to investigate the opioid epidemic in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania • Conducted research on the culture shift of durag wearing.	
Intern , <i>Youth Enrichment Services</i> , Pittsburgh, PA	Sept. - May 2018
• Developed slogans and content for lead awareness marketing materials (coffee sleeves, and wristbands) in partnership with the Allegheny County Health Department .	
Advanced Summer Scholar , <i>Youth Enrichment Services</i> , Pittsburgh, PA	June - Aug. 2017
• Partook in a research project investigating lead exposure in Lincoln-Lemington • Gained experience with coding, as well as GIS mapping techniques to identify how the built and social environments contribute to lead in the Lincoln-Lemington community. • Assisted with the implementation of a culturally relevant health intervention to Lincoln-Lemington Residents. • Engaged in the national conversation around lead crisis with stakeholders in Flint, Michigan.	
Summer Intern , <i>Youth Enrichment Services</i> , Pittsburgh, PA	June- Aug. 2016
• Conducted research on mental health, “How Athletes’ Injuries Affect Their Mental Health” • Presented research results at YES’ Research Symposium, which indicated an increase in Post Traumatic Stress Disorder among athletes who experienced sport injuries • Facilitated and supported the daily operation of the Mount Ararat’s Summer Program to enhance children’s literacy skills and reading ability	
Youth Intern , <i>Youth Places</i> , Pittsburgh, PA	June 2014 - Aug. 2014
• Engaged in community cleanup events, including trash and recyclable removal along streets of Homewood in Pittsburgh, PA	

Leadership

Conference Presenter , <i>CCCC</i> , Pittsburgh, PA	March 2019
• Selected as a student representative to present Performing Trust through Wise Mentorship on behalf of Youth Enrichment Services at the Conference on College Composition and Communication	
Conference Presenter , <i>Remake Learning Showcase</i> , Pittsburgh, PA	December 2018
• Selected as a student representative to present my research on the cultural shift of durag wearing on behalf of Youth Enrichment Services at the Remake Learning Showcase event	
Football Team Captain , <i>Westinghouse High School</i> , Pittsburgh, PA	Aug. 2016 - Present

- Organize practices and assist coaching staff in promoting team unity, building positive team spirit and camaraderie, and ensuring teammates' well-being
- Two-year varsity letter award winner

Wrestling Team Captain, Westinghouse High School, Pittsburgh, PA **Aug. 2015 - Mar. 2017**

- Organize practices and assist coaching staff in promoting team unity, building positive team spirit and camaraderie, and ensuring teammates' well-being
- Three -year varsity letter award winner

Extracurricular

Academic Enrichment and College Prep, Youth Enrichment Services	October 2017 - Present
Book Club, Urban Pathways Charter School	October 2017 - Present
Boys to Men, Homewood Children's Village	Sept. 2018 - Present

Volunteerism

Student Volunteer, ACHD - CASPER **June 2018**

- Completed service project on the opioid crisis in specific areas of Pittsburgh

Homewood Health Matters

- Completed the 5k Run-Walk, 10k Bike Ride, and Health Expo

July 2017

Student Volunteer, Flint Michigan

June 2017

- Disseminated water to families in need

Awards

Certificates

- Scholar Athlete Certificate of Achievement **June 2018**
- Black Excellence - Barack Obama Perseverance Award **April 2018**
- Integrity Award **August 2017**
- Distinguished Researcher Award **August 2017**
- Summer Excellence Award **August 2017**
- Work Placement Award for Mount Ararat Summer Camp **September 2016**

Medals

- Youth Enrichment Legacy Award **August 2018**
- Bulldog Scholar **July 2018**
- Westinghouse Wrestling Leadership Award **May 2017**
- Men's Tennis Most Improved **May 2017**
- 210 lb. Second Place All-City Championship **March 2017**

References

Ms. Denise Jones

Program Director, Youth Enrichment Services

6031 Broad Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15206

dlj2125@tc.columbia.edu | (412)401-9840

Addendum

I entered high school as one of the most popular students, with straight As and student-athlete status. I was highly celebrated and famed - and known by everyone. Because of this, I became distracted. I prioritized sports and popularity over my academics and only fulfilled the minimum academic requirements to remain eligible. I was content with performing below standards as long as I was excelling on the field, in a match, or on the court. Although I was enrolled in honors and AP classes, I did not have the best grades.

As the notoriety waned and my perspective shifted, I realized that I wanted more than to be seen or recognized for sports, but that I also wanted an opportunity to attend college. This desire fueled me to embrace a scholar mindset. Although it took time, I finally shifted my perspective and improved my grades in the process. I am excited about the academic and personal growth I have achieved in my junior and senior years.

My academic, professional, and leadership experiences are a true testament to my shift in focus. Now as a top student in my graduating class, I have challenged myself by taking advanced placement coursework and have prepared for the rigors of post-secondary education by attending college-prep and enrichment programs. I have extended my learning opportunities by engaging in research and scholarship on pressing issues in my community such as trauma, sport injuries, and lead (pb) exposure. Beyond these endeavors, I have gained invaluable professional experience at local non-profits, where I garnered employability skills and workplace etiquette. I have also taken on leadership roles which have connected me to wonderful people in my neighborhood.

My SAT scores were lower than I anticipated. I do not believe that my scores determine my ability as a student. I have taken this test many times over, and took preparation courses, yet, my results have only increased by a few points. Standardized tests do not capture my intellect. I prefer to display my wit in ingenious manners. You cannot surmise my creativity from any form of testing.

All in all, my body of work suggests that I am so much more than my sports performance, my GPA, and even my SAT score, which was lower than I anticipated. Through it all, I have learned valuable lessons about overcoming obstacles, perseverance, and stick-to-it-ness. I hope that the admissions team recognizes my growth and reviews my application holistically, and that these numbers and factors alone do not deny me acceptance.

<p style="text-align: center;">The Cultural Shift of Durag Wearing Willie J. Knight Youth Enrichment Services</p>																				
<p>Background Historically durags have been worn by men of color to preserve their style of hair during sleep. More recently, this protective hair cloth has become politicized and, in some ways, misinterpreted. Research explores this concept but falls short.</p>	<p>Research Design Survey Design Study - I developed a survey of 18 demographic and study specific questions and disseminated it via text, in-person, and word of mouth to 20 individuals. After I collected the data, I analyzed it to find consistent themes and relevant results and then recorded responses.</p>	<p>Results Based on the research gathered, many respondents believe there is an evolution occurring in the ways in which durags are portrayed in popular culture and in society. The largest cultural changes stemmed from friends, social media influencers, and rappers.</p>																		
<p>Research Question How and why has the culture of wearing durags shifted?</p>	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="2">Demographic Characteristics</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Age</td> <td>16-18 (44.4%)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Race</td> <td>African American/Black (83.3%)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Gender</td> <td>Male (61.5%)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Household Status</td> <td>Two Parent Household (33.3%)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Household Income</td> <td>\$50,001 (44.4%)</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Demographic Characteristics		Age	16-18 (44.4%)	Race	African American/Black (83.3%)	Gender	Male (61.5%)	Household Status	Two Parent Household (33.3%)	Household Income	\$50,001 (44.4%)	<p>An overwhelming number of respondents stated that durags were connected to stereotypes based on gang banging, thugs, and being black.</p>						
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<p>Hypothesis The culture of wearing durags has shifted and have become more of a fashion item than a protective hair accessory because it has become part of popular trends in the music and sports industries.</p>	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Selected Topic</th> <th>Background Research</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Developed Question</td> <td>Tested Hypothesis</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Collected Data</td> <td>Analyzed Data</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Selected Topic	Background Research	Developed Question	Tested Hypothesis	Collected Data	Analyzed Data	<p>Most of the respondents did not wear durags themselves, but those that did felt they were perceived negatively by society overall. Yet, they did believe that durags should be considered a fashion accessory like headwraps for women are.</p>												
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<p>Target Population This study's target population include males, females, ages 13 and older.</p>																				



Proposal Status Announcement

Dear Willie Knight,

Thank you for your patience during the proposal review process. The response to the 2019 Conference on College Composition and Communication's Annual Convention Call for Proposals was enthusiastic. More than 1,500 proposals for individual, concurrent, and roundtable sessions went through the peer-review process. As is typical, competition for a space on the program was keen, and selecting from among the many high-quality proposals submitted was difficult.

We are pleased to be able to notify you that your proposals have been accepted:

Performing Trust through Wise Mentorship

Thursday, March 14, 2019 4:45 p.m.-6:00 p.m.

Use of GIS to Analyze the Built Environment Characteristics on Sources of Lead Exposure in Lincoln-Lemington
Willie Knight & Charles Powell
Youth Enrichment Services

Mapping the Built Environment Influence on Lead Exposure in Lincoln Lemington

<p>Background</p> <p>My research stems from a trip to Flint, Michigan, where I discovered there may be a relationship between Flint and Pittsburgh age and conditions of home and lead contamination. Based on the age of the home, lead may be a problem in Lincoln-Lemington, similarly to Flint. Therefore, I decided to create a map of Lincoln-Lemington to emphasize this possible lead problem.</p> <p>Research Question</p> <p>How does the built environment, specifically the age and condition of homes effect lead exposure in Lincoln-Lemington?</p> <p>Objectives</p> <p>(1) Examine the condition of homes by zone as measured by Allegheny County home conditions scale. (2) Use spatial analysis to map age of home by zone on a community map. (3) Determine zone saturation of homes built before 1978;</p> 	<p>Home Age Indicated Map of Lincoln-Lemington</p>  <p>Age of Home by Zone in Lincoln-Lemington:</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>Purple</th> <th>Light-Purple</th> <th>Dark-Blue</th> <th>Light-Blue</th> <th>Green</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Zone 1</td> <td>13 (6.74)</td> <td>162 (83.9)</td> <td>0 (0)</td> <td>0 (0)</td> <td>18 (9.32)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Zone 2</td> <td>40 (8.69)</td> <td>325 (70.6)</td> <td>0 (0)</td> <td>0 (0)</td> <td>95 (20.7)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Zone 3</td> <td>59 (10.8)</td> <td>477 (87.0)</td> <td>0 (0)</td> <td>0 (0)</td> <td>12 (2.2)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Zone 4</td> <td>21 (5.64)</td> <td>226 (60.7)</td> <td>1 (.268)</td> <td>2 (.537)</td> <td>122 (32.8)</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Purple	Light-Purple	Dark-Blue	Light-Blue	Green	Zone 1	13 (6.74)	162 (83.9)	0 (0)	0 (0)	18 (9.32)	Zone 2	40 (8.69)	325 (70.6)	0 (0)	0 (0)	95 (20.7)	Zone 3	59 (10.8)	477 (87.0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	12 (2.2)	Zone 4	21 (5.64)	226 (60.7)	1 (.268)	2 (.537)	122 (32.8)	<p>Objectives</p> <p>Research Design: Spatial Analysis Benefits of Design: - Useful in displaying a (visual) picture of the problem. Challenge of Design: - Time and labor intense. - Technology may impact the quality and precision of bounds. Action steps: (1) Retrieved publicized parcel information on Lincoln Lemington through the WPRDC (2) Formatted and uploaded the data into QGIS (3) A map, specifically of Lincoln-Lemington, was shown. (4) We color coded the information and asked the computer to create a color ramp that reflects the year it was built.</p> <p>Findings</p> <p>Zone 4 has the highest percentage, roughly 38.2% of homes built after 1978. Zone 1 & 2 are at greatest risk of possible lead exposure given the age of homes in these areas. Zone 3 has the higher proportion of homes than all other zones.</p> <p>Discussion</p> <p>Homes in Lincoln-Lemington may be contributing significantly to lead exposure given their condition and age.</p> <p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Homes in Lincoln-Lemington are in dire need of repair.</p>
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Students learn about lead hazards to help others

By Jill Daly
Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

This summer's Learn & Earn program offered by the nonprofit Youth Enrichment Services is doing real-world research about lead exposure in Pittsburgh's Lincoln-Lemington community. While developing a health education program, the 20 teenagers — most from Pittsburgh city schools — are improving academic and social skills as well.

Denise Jones, YES program director, serves as project manager. The students are divided into community engagers (who have conversations with residents and build relationships with them); investigators (who interview families and develop and produce health education materials); disseminators (who put together flyers and pamphlets to share information with the community); and analyzers (who use a computerized geographic information system in as they collect and then ana-



Lake Fong/Post-Gazette

Charles Powell, left, 14, a sophomore at Barack Obama Academy, and Willie Knight, 16, a junior at Westinghouse High School, use a geographic information system to track information to see how the environment influences lead exposure.

lyze data on how the environment influences lead exposure, such as the age and quality of housing, by location).

Willie Knight, 16, a Westinghouse Academy junior this fall, said the goal of the analyzers is to understand how the built environment influences lead exposure in Lincoln-Lemington and also to understand how people socialize in the neighborhood. Together with Charles Powell, 14, a Barack Obama Academy of International Studies sophomore, they were counting patrons of two neighborhood stores at a busy intersection one recent afternoon.

"We're setting up for other

groups; it's a step before they go house to house," Willie said.

He said a trip to Flint, Mich., in June taught him a lot about the water crisis there, how corrosive chemicals led to contaminated water. And how rescue efforts sometimes fell short: "One man with two kids got six cases of water a day, but it wasn't enough." They had hands-on experience in a community garden there and learned about the process of replacing water lines containing lead.

Now, he said, he would tell people to protect themselves: "Get lead levels checked if you move

SEE SERVICE, PAGE C-3

The Impact of the Built and Social Environment on Lead Exposure in Lincoln Lemington

Adeena S. Bailey, Omari K. Johnson,
Willie J. Knight, Charles T. Powell

The Opioid Epidemic Crisis In Pittsburgh

Kyarra Finch, True Magwood, Willie Knight, Adeena Bailey, & Kiyamme Johnson

"If It Doesn't Kill You, It Will Make You Stronger": The Impact of Injuries on Mental Health and Recovery amongst Student Athletes

Willie J. Knight, Jeremiah R. Nash, & Jamain A. Stephens

Background

Researchers have specifically studied the effects of athlete rehabilitation are apparent on the college and professional level. However, scholars know little about the impact sport injuries have on urban high school athletes' mental health and recovery.

Problem Statement

Student athletes experience injuries that affect their mental health and their ability to recover or return to their desired sport.

Research Question

What impact do injuries have on mental health and recovery amongst student athletes?

Hypotheses

H₀: Sport injuries do not have a significant impact on athletes' mental health and recovery.
H₁: Sport injuries have an impact on athletes' mental health and recovery.

Purpose

The purpose of this research is to observe how sport injuries affect student athletes' mental health and recovery.

Target Population

Our research is based on student athletes who attended schools in Pennsylvania between ages 14-30 that play organized sports and have incurred an injury.

Research Design

Below is our research design. We developed 23 questions. These questions consist of 10 yes/no questions, three linear scale questions, and two short answer questions. After we collected our data, we analyzed it to find consistent themes and recorded their responses in a table.

Table 1 Average

Age 20-30(30.1%)

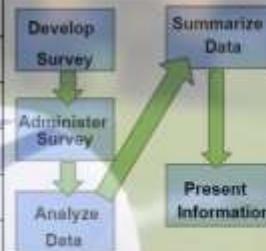
Race African American(50.0%)

Gender Male(52.2%)

Household Status 2-parented home(50%)

Household Income Didn't know(34.8%)

Table 2



Respondents Percentage

Have you ever taken a CST (Concussion Symptom Test) in case of a concussion? yes 19 no 4 82.6%

Did you go to physical therapy after your injury? yes 18 no 5 78.3%

Did you visit with a sport psychologist after your injury? yes 9 no 2 81.8%

Did you return to the sport that caused your injury? yes 21 no 2 91.3%

Results

We had several interesting findings from our survey responses. Athletes who have incurred an injury are more likely to return to their sports, according to our data.

Our data suggests that several of our participants took action after they were injured. A majority of our participants obtained a personal trainer, visited a sport psychologist, and took the CPTI(Concussion Symptom Test). Furthermore, we examined athletes' recovery times and the majority(27.3%) of the participants recovered between 6-11 months. Our results suggest that athletes' mental health and recovery were slightly impacted as athletes hesitated to return to their desired sport. This implies that injuries can have a mental impact on athletes.

Discussion

Our study experiences limitations. It was difficult to reach our targeted population, due to a lack of responses, survey inaccessibility, and because of our limited access to injured athletes. We addressed this by widening our population to include athletes who were older than 18. In future studies, researchers should focus on the severity of the injury because this would likely determine whether athletes experience mental traumas, as a result of their injuries.

London Wright

Junior year was the time to break out. I had two different solo steps, and I moved my dance line position from the back to the front. I was nervous. Behind the curtain anticipating the traditional introduction that blares through the gym speakers, I toyed with my gold chain. The crowd roared, and I glanced at the ground as I led my team out into our formation. I stood in my spot, my heart racing, butterflies in my stomach. I thought to myself, "Don't mess up, you can't mess up." I went through my solo steps the same way I always did, but as we transitioned into the dance line, a different wave of energy emerged. I began to dance with force and attitude, my anxiety dissipated, and the crowd roared. Center stage, I could hear people screaming, "Yes, London!" "Go, London!" I felt so elated. When the performance ended, my coach was so proud. She witnessed my progress and so did my teammates.

This moment was magical for me. No matter how many times I rehearsed and practiced my routine, this performance came from somewhere deep within. I let myself flow into freedom and comfort in front of a crowd of fans, teachers, friends, and strangers.

If anyone were to ask me a few years ago if could I see myself as the captain of Oakland Catholic's Step Team, I would have chuckled and replied no. When I began performing, I was not as confident, sharp, or energetic as my teammates. There were plenty of girls I envisioned becoming step performers and captains, but not me.

However, my junior year performance led to my promotion. Being captain taught me leadership, responsibility, and sisterhood. I had to be an example to my teammates, friends, and the youth around me, to guide them in the right direction but through their own light. I had to teach them how we control the crowd and command the gym with our energy and attitude. I had to uphold responsibilities at home, within school, and within my team. I had to sacrifice and be held accountable by the people who depend on me the most: my team. Being on the step team for three years allowed me to connect with new people, make friends with unique individuals from my school community, and showed me this was exactly where I needed to be.

Growth comes with work and patience, but mostly from within. Although my confidence and breakthrough shined through me the night of my first junior year performance, they were crystalizing the moment I stepped out for tryouts.

As I reflect on my step career, and on school in general, I realize that step was the platform that helped me take on challenges, walk in unfamiliar territories, and push myself beyond my known limits. I learned the importance of overcoming doubt and persevering through obstacles, no matter the circumstances. Even if something seems out of reach, I now know it is never impossible. I learned that growth is humbling and inevitable, if I put my mind and heart to it.

As I "step" into my collegiate career, I recognize that I may not always lead from the front, but that I will always lead from within - and this will ultimately help me achieve success in any endeavor in which I engage.

London Wright

Dear Admission Representatives:

My name is London Wright, and I am currently a senior at Oakland Catholic High School. I am writing to express my interest in attending your university. I am a dynamic individual who is involved in various enrichment, leadership, and extracurricular activities. I believe my diverse experiences make me an ideal candidate for your university.

Throughout high school, I have taken honors, advanced placement, and dual enrollment courses to build my intellectual capacity. By engaging in such coursework, I have familiarized myself with the rigors of college course work and classes. This exposure has undoubtedly prepared me for the workload I will receive upon matriculating into college.

As a member and later team captain of the Oakland Catholic Step Team, I gained leadership skills and learned the importance of hard work, teamwork, and integrity. I created a safe space to support the diverse backgrounds of my team. The demands of managing a team provided important lessons in navigating multiple tasks, managing time and resources, and committing to excellence.

Participating in the Student Ambassador program at Oakland Catholic High School provided additional leadership experience. As a Student Ambassador, I represent Oakland Catholic's mission of scholarship, service, and spirituality. During my time as an Ambassador, I attended our annual 8th Grade Day to serve as a student contact and to show future students a brief experience of Oakland Catholic. I have also been a representative for the school's Open House, providing tours for prospective students and parents and supporting students' transitions.

As a part-time employee, I developed time management skills by balancing employment and school commitments. I receive a plethora of homework nightly. However, I have learned to prioritize my assignments while simultaneously managing my work schedule. I believe this has prepared me for success in college.

I further developed my leadership and academic skills through Youth Enrichment Services. This program has taught me to authentically express my ideas with confidence. It has also helped me become a proactive leader in my community and school. Every year, we organize research projects to better our community and keep them informed about pressing health issues. I have greatly thrived from this experience of leadership and it has significantly established the role I will play in my college community.

I have detailed more of my unique experiences in my resume. Please see my resume for more information on my academics, leadership, and service opportunities. I can be contacted via email at rytlwright924@gmail.com or by phone at (412) 742-1394 to further discuss my experiences. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Thank you for your consideration.

Best,

London Wright

London M. Wright

Education

Oakland Catholic High School, Pittsburgh, PA **Aug. 2015 - Present**

- Honors coursework
- Advanced Placement coursework
- College Equivalency coursework
- Honor Roll Student

Anticipated Graduation **May 2019**

Work Experience

Barista, *Starbucks*, Monroeville, PA **November 2018 - Present**

- Perform many different tasks within the store during each shift
- Prepare food and beverages to standard or customized recipe changes
- Engage with efficient customer service
- Manage cash handling and cash register functions
- Meet store operating policies and standards at all times

Team Member, *Sincerely Yogurt*, Monroeville, PA **May 2018 - Oct. 2018**

- Organize work throughout to improve efficiency
- Ensure service experience standards are met and surpassed at all times
- Promote beverage and yogurt sales
- Record and account for store funds
- Manage cash handling and cash register functions

Summer Intern, *Carnegie Learning*, Pittsburgh, PA **June 2018 - Aug. 2018**

- Provided feedback on new user interface
- Partnered with internal departments to test new products
- Managed product data using Microsoft Excel
- Offered student voice and perspective on educational initiatives

Summer Researcher, *Youth Enrichment Services*, Pittsburgh, PA **June 2018 - Aug. 2018**

- Developed and administered surveys to discover college students' STEM preparation, access to STEM resources, and collegiate experiences
- Presented Research on the Black Colleges Students' Preparedness for Careers in STEM at YES' Annual Research Symposium

Advanced Summer Scholar, *Youth Enrichment Services*, Pittsburgh, PA **June 2017 - Aug. 2017**

- Partook in a research project investigating the influence of Lead Exposure in Lincoln-Lemington
- Engaged in national conversations around the Lead Crisis on a trip to Flint, Michigan
- Developed and administered surveys to Lincoln-Lemington residents to understand: 1) sources of lead, 2) parent/ child lead conversations, 3) sanitary practices, and 4) overall lead awareness
- Coded residents' responses using excel
- Implemented culturally relevant health intervention to Lincoln-Lemington residents
- Acquire research and presented results from *Recommendations to Medical Personnel on Elevated Lead Blood Levels and Childhood Health*
- Created marketing materials and literature for Health Education survey and intervention

Summer Scholar, *Youth Enrichment Services*, Pittsburgh, PA **June 2016 - Aug. 2016**

- Conducted research on police involved shootings and presented *Don't Shoot: Teen's Perceptions of Police-Involved Shootings*
- Presented research results at YES' Research Symposium
- Participated in the African American studies exponential learning classes
- Supported Frank & John's Cleaners with daily business operations, customer management and care, and clothing preparation

Youth Counselor, Boys and Girls Club, Pittsburgh, PA

June 2015 - Aug. 2015

- Informed youth of daily tasks and activities
- Supported youth in their academic and personal growth and development over the summer
- Engaged in community cleanup events, including trash and recyclable removal in Wilkinsburg
- Gained experience in community engagement and environmental education

Leadership

YES Council Representative, Youth Enrichment Services, Pittsburgh, PA Nov. 2017- Present

- Support YES executive leadership team with fall programming
- Attend monthly council sessions
- Advocate for various issues with peers
- Engage in outreach to build capacity in local community

Teen Mentor, Youth Enrichment Services, Pittsburgh, PA

Jan. 2016 - Present

- Mentor public housing youth in their high school transition and provided preventive services to reduce truancy and chronic absenteeism
- Attend Bi-weekly Mentor Enrichment Sessions to build mentorship capacity
- Trained as a peer mentor using Sean Covey's 7 Habits for Highly Effective Teens

Extracurricular

Step Team, Captain, Oakland Catholic High School

Oct. 2016 - Present

Student Ambassador, Oakland Catholic High School

Aug. 2015 - Present

Black Student Union, Board Member, Oakland Catholic High School

Sept. 2016 - Present

Volunteerism

Student Volunteer, Oakland Catholic High School, Pittsburgh, PA

Nov. 2017 - May 2018

- 25 hours of community service

Awards

Leadership Award, Youth Enrichment Services, Pittsburgh, PA

Aug. 2018

- Awarded to students for their outstanding ability to provide leadership to peers and stakeholders and support YES programming

Legacy Award, Youth Enrichment Services, Pittsburgh, PA

Aug. 2018

- Awarded to students who have been committed to YES' mission, to leading others in motivation and purpose, to mentoring peers, and to serving greater community

Summer Lead Researchers Award, ACHD, Pittsburgh, PA

Aug. 2017

- Awarded to Lead Students for their commitment to improving and educating the Lincoln-Lemington community

Respect Award, Youth Enrichment Services, Pittsburgh, PA

Aug. 2017

- Awarded to students who have shown respect to co-workers and supervisors.

Longevity Award, *Youth Enrichment Services*, Pittsburgh, PA **Aug. 2017**

- Awarded to individuals who have made significant contributions to YES and who have been long withstanding participants

Distinguished Researcher, *Youth Enrichment Services*, Pittsburgh, PA **Aug. 2017**

- Awarded to students for making outstanding contributions in research and demonstrating sustained commitment to advancing the frontiers of the final research project

Academic Excellence, *National Society of High School Scholars* **Aug. 2017**

- Awarded to students for their academic excellence in school

References

Ms. Denise Jones

Program Director, Youth Enrichment Services

6031 Broad Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15206

dlj2125@tc.columbia.edu | (412)401-9840

Ms. Michele Young

Executive Assistant, Carnegie Learning

501 Grant Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15219

micheleyoung@gmail.com | (412)304-5551

Addendum

Attending Oakland Catholic High School began as a challenge for me. Transitioning from a public school into a prestigious private school was a culture shock. Because of this, I initially struggled to adjust academically to the rigorous college-level curriculum. I persevered through the challenges of adjustment and of finding my haven as a black female in a predominately white institution, however, and have become a more prepared student. The improvements to my grades over time and my extensive extracurricular experiences are tangible proof of my transformation. I believe that my ability to overcome these significant challenges make me a stronger candidate.

My freshman year was all about adjusting to my new high school environment and becoming familiar with the curriculum. Knowing that I had to start over and make new friends was not comforting for me, initially. I was a reserved person who was used to meeting people through mutual friends. This changed, however, when I joined the step team – I found my community of support, friends, and family. During my sophomore year, I lost one of my childhood friends to gun violence. Because of this tragedy, I struggled to remain on top of my school work and my mental health. My academic performance suffered and my connectedness to school declined. However, with the support of my family and friends and my school counselor, my junior year performance trended upward.

Despite these challenges, my academic, leadership, and professional profile demonstrate my commitment to excellence. I challenged myself by taking honors, advanced placement, and dual enrollment courses. I broadened my learning experiences by engaging in summer research that addressed pressing issues within my community, such as lead exposure, police-involved shootings, and college preparedness among black STEM students. I gained invaluable professional experiences at local eateries and educational firms that equipped me with essential skills for my post-secondary education. I became a leader in my school as a Student Ambassador Representative and the captain of the Oakland Catholic Step Team.

Persevering through the loss of my childhood friend and the transition into a new school has shaped me into me to the strong young woman I am today. I am determined to continue moving forward through greatness and excellence. My GPA - and other numeric values - does not define who I am. Even though my GPA and SAT scores were lower than I anticipated, I have demonstrated that I can compete and complete the work. I hope the admissions team examines my application holistically and sees beyond these numbers. My previous adversities – and rigor coursework - have prepared me for the challenges that I will face and triumph over in college and beyond. I deserve a seat at the table.

Variation in Black College Students' Preparedness for Careers in STEM

McKayla L. Dixon & London M. Wright
Youth Enrichment Services

Introduction

Historically, black individuals are less represented in the STEM industry. Research shows that blacks account for only 8% of general engineering majors, 7% of mathematics majors, and only 5% of computer engineering majors. We believe the lack of black professionals is associated with college preparation and training. While PWIs typically provide students with more resources and funding, HBCUs provide students with affirmation, community, and identity. It is hard to know which type of institution best prepares black individuals for STEM careers.

Research Question

Is there variation in how PWIs and HBCUs prepare black students for careers in STEM?

Hypothesis

We hypothesize that Predominantly White Institutions better prepare black students for careers in the STEM fields because of resource allocation and funding.

Methods

We surveyed 13 individuals. Our target population was black individuals majoring in STEM at Public PWIs, Private PWIs, Public HBCUs, or Private HBCUs.

To collect our data we sent out our survey to various individuals who fit our target audience via online platforms, word-of-mouth, and text-messages.

Our survey consisted of 13 research questions. First we asked demographic questions such as gender, age, income, and household status. We followed this section with questions specific to college preparedness:

Research Steps:

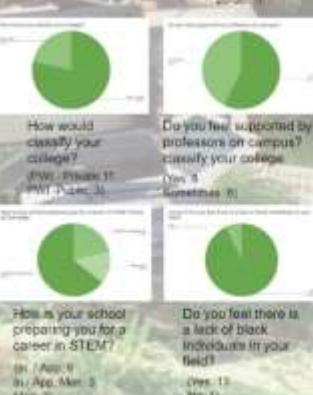
BR → PS → RQ → RS → E → P

Results

Descriptive Statistics



Inferential Statistics



Discussion

Although none of our respondents were from HBCUs, our research shows that students from Predominantly White Institutions feel somewhat prepared for the STEM field with the support from their professors. We noticed internships and support from job mentoring helped students to feel confident in their field. These results lead one to ponder whether resources or identity and affirmation matter more for black students' success in STEM.

Conclusion

In conclusion, we found that students at PWI private schools and PWI public schools, majority feel as if there is a lack of black individuals in their field. Studies show this may have to do with discrimination or intentional weed out practices, not being exposed at an early age, or not being prepared properly in college.

APB: Recommendations to Medical Personnel on Elevated Lead Blood Levels and Childhood Health

Keith D. Jamison & London M. Wright
Youth Enrichment Services

Introduction

Elevated lead blood levels in children less than 6 years old has been associated with physical and cognitive deficiencies that may not present until later in life. This presents a multitude of issues for doctors, parents and patients of etiology for later physical and mental health.

Purpose

The purpose of this literature review is to understand how low blood levels resulting from lead poisoning can be attributed to other health related outcomes. An additional goal is to provide recommendations to medical professionals regarding ways to improve care for children with lead poisoning.

Methods

Literature Review

- 1) Search for Literature Review pertaining to topic
- 2) Read 5 articles from Google scholar
- 3) Identify the type of research design we will be using for it. Our research design

Benefits: Gain an impression about the important aspects
Challenges: There is limited literature pertaining to topic.

Conclusions

Children ranging from the age of birth to 16 years old with low blood levels should be tested for findings of lead poisoning. Children tested for lead poisoning with a lead level of $>$ or $=$ 10 ug/dL should be then tested for intellectual deficits and behavioral problems.

Literature Review

Authors	Title	Main Findings	Project Connection
Lanphear et al.	Low-level Environmental lead exposure and Children's Intellectual Function: An International pooled analysis	This article examines the connection between intelligence test scores and blood lead concentration. For children who had maximal measured blood lead levels $<$ 10 ug/dL, Results from this study suggest that environmental lead exposure in children who have maximal blood levels $>$ 7.0 ug/dL is associated with intellectual deficits.	Children who have high lead levels and low blood levels have a connection with intellectual deficits.
Lanphear et al.	Cognitive deficits associated with blood lead concentrations $<$ 10 microg/dL in US Children and adolescents	The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between relatively low blood lead concentrations and evaluate the results of adolescents' performance on tests of cognitive functioning.	Low blood levels in children have an impact on their performance in school and makes the task at hand more difficult for them.
Nigg et al.	Low Blood Lead Levels Associated with Clinically Diagnosed Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder and Mediated by Weak Cognitive Control	This article found that ADHD and low-level lead exposure are high-prevalence conditions among children. Studies of large populations have suggested that these conditions are related.	Children with ADHD should be tested for lead poisoning to determine if the behavioral disorder is the cause.
Needleman et al.	The Long-Term Effects of Exposure to Low Doses of Lead in Childhood -- An 11-Year Follow-up Report	This article discusses how children with high lead levels during their childhood years transfers over to adulthood and the effects of lead poisoning transfer over.	Lead poisoning stays consistent throughout life with the effects of intellectual deficits.

Recommendations

We recommend medical professionals to:

- Have children tested at infancy for lead poisoning when low blood levels are present
- Engage in a procedure called chelation therapy with patients with high lead levels
- Examine individuals with intellectual deficits to see whether lead exposure may have contributed to their challenges
- Encourage parents to monitor children's lead levels and to frequently test for cognitive and developmental delays

Keith D. Jamison, Pittsburgh Allderdice, 12th Grade, 17, Research Assistant & London M. Wright, Oakland Catholic High School, 11th Grade, 16, Research Assistant

Understanding the Community: Examining Prevention Strategies of Parents and Awareness of Lead Exposure in Lincoln Lemington

McKayla L. Dixon, Keith D. Jamison, Anesa M. Reed, Diamond K. Turner, London M. Wright



"Don't Shoot": Teens' Perceptions of Police-Involved Shootings

McKayla L. Dixon, Anesa M. Reed & London M. Wright

Background

So far in 2016, 123 black men, mostly unarmed, have been killed by White police officers. These incidents of police-involved shooting of unarmed Black men can influence black teens' perceptions towards white, or all, police officers.

Problem Statement

Police-involved shootings have taken a toll on plenty of communities with black teens. These communities have responded with riots. Recent riots after police involved shootings of unarmed black men demonstrates that people, specifically African Americans, are fed up with these unjust and unfair occurrences.

Leading Research Question:

How do police-involved shootings affect teens' perceptions of police?

Hypothesis

If police-involved shooting have changed the perceptions of teens then it could be expected to influence their behavior and actions.

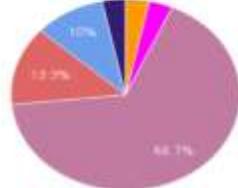
Purpose

The purpose of this study is to explore the impacts of police-involved shootings on teens' perceptions of these officials.



Age

- 12
- 13
- 14
- 15
- 16
- 17
- 18



Population

Black teens between the ages of 13-18 who reside in the city of Pittsburgh and have witnessed directly or indirectly the encounters of police involved shootings of unarmed black men.

Research Design

The arrows to the left represent our research design. We had a total of 10 survey specific questions, 3 linear scale questions, and 2 short answer questions. After we collected the data we analyzed it, and created a table.

Results

The data from the survey indicated that teens have a negative perception on police officers and that the training and methods of officers should be reformed and changed.

Discussion

The limitations of our study were finding articles for the literature review. Our information would help scientist understand the influence police-involved shootings have on Black teens. Our research can advance police officers' training efforts and lay the groundwork for future scholars.

Table 1	Yes	No
Are you aware of the recent police-involved shootings of unarmed Black or African American men taking place in the United States?	30	0
Does police-involved shootings change your perspective on police officers?	27	3
Have you thought about taking action against police?	17	13
Do you think police officers should use more non-lethal weapons (e.g. pepper spray) to subdue unarmed Black men?	29	1
Do you think police officers should take the psychology test every 3 years during their time on the force?	28	2

Selena Williams

We went about our day like any other - walking around without a destination, allowing the sun to slowly guide our adventures. AJ, a friend of mine who lived across the street, was a dancer. He was always dancing: in the comfort of his home, or somewhere in the streets of Lawrenceville while the neighborhood kids played outside together. He was a dance major at The Pittsburgh School for Creative and Performing Arts (CAPA). Together we hummed as we walked listening to his iPod; "Valerie" by Amy Winehouse started to play. Quietly, I let the words flow from my mouth, but as soon as AJ recognized my voice over hers, he paused the music. And, I stopped.

"Sing for me," he said, with an intriguing expression.

My throat clenched at the sound of those words, "Uhm, I'm not sure I can."

"Come on, I won't look." Assured by his words, I sang again.

"You need to audition for my school!" he said with immediate enthusiasm.

No one else knew I sang, but AJ's confidence in me helped me take the first step in changing that. I mentioned my desire to sing to my mom, but she looked at me with confusion. While my mom did not initially support me, she finally said, "Okay, let's hear you sing." From that moment, my mom has been there; at times the only one. She became two in one, filling the roles of both a mother and a father. My mom was persistent in helping me get into CAPA - and even fought to get my music teacher's letter of recommendation. My teacher was stunned when I expressed a desire to sing solo. I had to convince her that I would no longer be silent - that I would prove my worth through this opportunity. This was something I was passionate about and willing to work for.

My first day at CAPA, my dad walked me to the bus stop. He was physically weak, but he made it a point to always walk with me. He loved walking. I gave him a hug goodbye as the bus came. "I love you," he said.

Sometimes when I pictured my dad walking home alone it scared me: he was shaky and his legs were scrawny. His body would tremble because of his Parkinson's. *What if he falls? Who would help him?* I thought to myself.

As excited as I was to be at CAPA, I was also very grateful. I had not pictured my school journey working out the way it did. Can I consider myself a singer now, the way AJ considered himself a dancer? This was a question I kept asking. *Am I now an artist like he is?* I wondered.

A year passed at CAPA, my family moved, and my dad grew sicker. He never made it to any of my performances, as he required full time care. He passed away later that year.

I am not completely sure what held me back from singing for my father. Maybe it was a fear of being judged or never feeling good enough. But I wish everyday that I could have sung for him on his bedside. I wonder if it could have helped. Music seemed to cure everything in my eyes.

As the years have gone by, my love for music has only grown. I feel its power everyday. Singing through the halls with my friends, hearing the orchestra play only feet away, and observing my peers pour their hearts into performances helped me grieve the loss of my dad. I feel so safe when I sing. Music makes me happy, and I needed one thing that I could lean on that was not a person or a thing to get me through this time: and that was music.

And, just as dance was a life source to AJ, music became one to me.

Selena Williams

Dear Admissions Representative:

My name is Selena Williams, and I am currently a senior at The Pittsburgh School for the Creative and Performing Arts (CAPA). I have held diverse leadership positions, engaged in valuable summer initiatives, committed myself to year-round employment, and managed honors and AP courses throughout my high school career. I believe my educational, service, professional, and leadership experiences will make me an asset to your college.

Having the opportunity to attend an arts school allowed me to have a unique high school experience that provided the best of both worlds. I learned to balance academic rigor and my passion: music. This summer, I participated in a pre-college program at the University of the Arts in Philadelphia. Meeting and collaborating with musicians who have professional careers in the industry inspired me immensely. I learned that music is a powerful mechanism to inspire, transform, and empower. I was interested to know how the pre-college institute inspired or contributed to young artists identity as a musician. To find out, I created a research project in which program participants and professors reflected on their engagement. My research showed that this institute played a significant role in fostering a platform for confidence and growth. I presented these results at Youth Enrichment Services' yearly research symposium.

As a part-time employee at Naturoll Creamery and Panera Bread, I have learned to balance employment with my school and music commitments. Being a student, employee, and musician means being focused, driven, and accountable for my responsibilities. This takes persistence. It requires a lot of determination to complete the abundant homework I receive from AP and honors courses at school, along with practicing my music and being a dependable employee. I have had to learn efficient habits to ensure that I prioritize my time – and have been successful.

In my senior year, I was voted by my peers to be a member of the Superintendent's Student Advisory Council, a platform for students to voice their input and feedback in the public-school system. We serve on subcommittees on topics of choice that play a significant role in the school system, such as equity. We get insight on the faculty and board members and work along with them to better the environment and create opportunities for public school students. Being on the council has allowed me to highlight issues that many students confront. On top of this, interacting with board members and students from other Pittsburgh Public Schools has made me more conscious of the diversity of student experiences within the district.

In my resume, you will find a more descriptive layout of other academic, leadership, and service experiences. I can be contacted via email at williams selena40@gmail.com or by phone at (412) 443-4803 to further discuss these opportunities. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Best,

Selena Williams

Selena Williams

Education History

Creative and Performing Arts (CAPA), Pittsburgh, PA **Aug. 2012 - Present**

- High Honor Roll Student
- AP and Honors Coursework

University of the Arts, Philadelphia, PA **July 2018**

- Attended the Creative Jazz Institute with young artists, industry musicians, and renowned music faculty and professionals
- Engaged in a culminating performance at the Kimmel Center of performing arts

Work Experience

Ice Cream Artist, Naturoll Creamery, Pittsburgh, PA **Aug. 2018 - Present**

- Prepare customized customer ice cream requests
- Support daily store functioning by mixing batter, stocking produce, and sweets

Advanced Summer Scholar, Youth Enrichment Services, Pittsburgh, PA **June 2018 - Aug. 2018**

- Interned at 1Hood Media, a non-profit organization that raises awareness about social injustices through the arts
- Participated in Media Academy workshops, weekly sessions to discuss current and local events
- Developed a research project on the impact summer music programs have artists' identities
- Constructed a student and staff survey to identify the important aspects of artist development
- Presented research findings at YES' Annual Symposium
- Facilitated peer workshops involving mental health issues

Dining Attendant, Panera Bread, Pittsburgh, PA **Aug. 2017 - June 2018**

- Provided janitorial support for restaurant facility and furniture
- Replenished silverware, dishes, condiments, and sugars
- Made coffee and teas
- Performed other job-related duties as assigned by shift supervisor

Leadership

Co-President of Students in Action, CAPA, Pittsburgh, PA **Sept. 2018 - Present**

- Lead meetings on service projects
- Establish and maintain contact with organizations regarding volunteer opportunities

Youth Leader, Student Advisory Council, Pittsburgh, PA **Aug. 2018**

- Participated in a 4-day PPS Student Voice Summer workshop at Carlow University
- Attend monthly district wide school meetings
- Created an action plan at CAPA where we discuss strategies for the upcoming year where we plan for more out school opportunities, student centered learning, and teach others about other cultures and global issues

Youth Participant, South Fayette High school, McDonald, PA **April 2018**

- Partook in a school exchange program where I and other Pittsburgh Public peers shadowed students at South Fayette School
- Held an in-depth discussion about the vast differences financially and academically

Youth Presenter , <i>Shaler Middle School</i> , Pittsburgh, PA	May 2017
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Led a lecture and Interactive Seminar at Shaler Middle School's Diversity Day Engaged in discussions with 7th and 8th graders on social injustices and activism during which students voluntarily shared their personal narratives 	
Youth Participant , CAPA, Pittsburgh, Pa	April 2017 - Present
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Restorative practice trainee 	
Youth Presenter , <i>Black and White Reunion</i> , Pittsburgh, PA	January 2017
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Co-facilitated a workshop at The Summit Against Racism Conference titled, <i>The Effect of Art on Movements for Equality</i> during which participants of all ages created reaction art Brainstormed lesson objectives and presentation strategies Prepared presentation materials 	

Extracurricular

KRUNK Movement	Oct. 2018 - Present
Soccer Club , CAPA	Sept. 2018
Students in Action , CAPA	Sep. 2018 - Present
High School Student Apprentice , <i>Pittsburgh Opera</i>	Sept. 2018 - May 2019
Academic Enrichment and College Prep , <i>Youth Enrichment Services</i>	Sept. 2017 - Present
Black Student Union , CAPA	Aug. 2015 - Present

Volunteerism

Student Volunteer , <i>Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania</i>	Jan. 2018 - Present
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Volunteered at the Annual Summit Against Racism 2018 Packaged and gave away fresh produce and foods with East Liberty Presbyterian Church for residents Supported Black-Owned Business night Implemented Back to School Night at CAPA 	
Williams Sing-Off Finalist , <i>Pittsburgh Cultural Trust</i>	Dec. 2018
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Selected as one of five finalists (out of seventy applicants) to perform at Highmark First Night Pittsburgh 	
Determination Award , <i>Youth Enrichment Services</i>	Aug. 2018
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Awarded to those who persist in the face of setbacks, strive for excellence, set and reach high goals, and overcome obstacles 	
Responsibility Award , <i>Youth Enrichment Services</i>	Aug. 2018
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Awarded to those who honor commitments, fulfill obligations, account for actions, are dependable, and take care of those in need 	
Most Improved Vocalist , <i>Pittsburgh CAPA</i>	June. 2018
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Awarded to students who have shown exceptional growth over the course of the year 	

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References

Ms. Denise Jones
Program Director, Youth Enrichment Services
6031 Broad Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15206
dlj2125@tc.columbia.edu | (412)401-9840

Addendum

I attend a school where competition is stark and expectations are high. Because of this, it was easy to fall prey to comparison and self-doubt. Feelings of inadequacy permeated my mind, causing me to believe I was performing poorly and simply not good enough.

I had to pause and assess. When I began reviewing my academic profile, my commitment to the community, my involvement in extracurricular activities, and my leadership opportunities, I had no choice but to refute the lies I had previously believed.

I finally recognized that I deserve a seat at the table. In return, my confidence grew, my investment in my personal and academic growth commenced, and my search for colleges became more intentional and serious.

I have always managed quality grades while challenging myself by taking honors and AP courses. My engagement in extracurriculars has taken me beyond my school's curriculum. Through my enrichment experiences with Youth Enrichment Services and the University of the Arts' Pre-College Program in Philadelphia, my leadership opportunities as the Co-President of Students In Action Club and a student participant in the Superintendent's Student Advisory Council, I have demonstrated my capacity to be successful in a college setting.

Despite my successes, experiences, and opportunities, I performed poorly on my SAT. I make no excuses for my performance, but I hope you will recognize that this assessment does not define nor accurately represent me. It does not reflect the ways in which I have evolved as a person, my ability and drive as a student, or my hunger for collegiate success. I will not allow this assessment to control my narrative - or restrict me from experiencing the joys of college.

I hope the admissions team examines my application holistically and that these numbers alone do not deny me acceptance.

Examining How Young Artists are Impacted by Pre-College Music Programs

Selena Williams
Youth Enrichment Services

Introduction	Methods	Results	Discussion																				
<p>Introduction</p> <p>Research shows the importance of summer music intensives, programs that give students an opportunity to refine their music skills. The benefits of these programs are often valuable and life-changing. I had the privilege of attending a summer pre-college program to grow my craft and hone my vocal and other technical music skills. My time at the University of the Arts encouraged me to pursue art more seriously and focus my career. It was through this program that I thought more critically about artist development in these intimate settings.</p> <p>I have experienced firsthand the value of these programs. Little research, however, has been done to see how these experiences shape artists' identities. This study attempts to fill in the gap.</p> <p>Research Question</p> <p>How do summer intensives shape the identity of young artists?</p> <p>Hypothesis</p> <p>Summer intensives are beneficial to young artists and contribute to their development and career opportunities.</p>	<p>Methods</p> <p>I created a survey with 15 questions. Of the 12 surveys disseminated, 8 students reflected on their time in the summer program at the University of the Arts and how this experience impacted them personally as a young artist. I also asked professors to speak about their goals for students, how they mentor students, and what knowledge they hope students gain by engaging in the program.</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Category</th> <th>Percentage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Artistic</td> <td>40%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Technical</td> <td>30%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Musical</td> <td>20%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Personal</td> <td>10%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Category	Percentage	Artistic	40%	Technical	30%	Musical	20%	Personal	10%	<p>Results</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Race</th> <th>Caucasian (50%)</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Gender</td> <td>Female (75%)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Age</td> <td>16-18 (38%)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Household Status</td> <td>Two-parented (63%)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Household Income</td> <td>50,000+ (63%)</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>86% say that this program encouraged them to continue pursuing art careers.</p> <p>Respondents hoped to gain knowledge, confidence, and build connections.</p> <p>A majority said UArts helped them 1) incorporate music into their daily lives, 2) become more comfortable while performing, and 3) learn the importance of musicianship.</p> <p>Most students said that post - UArts they plan to pursue music in school.</p> <p>80% said this experience helped them out of their comfort zone and challenged them.</p>	Race	Caucasian (50%)	Gender	Female (75%)	Age	16-18 (38%)	Household Status	Two-parented (63%)	Household Income	50,000+ (63%)	<p>The results showed that most student participants were seeking to improve their craft, increase their knowledge, and gain confidence. Students shared that due to this experience they are more well-rounded musicians. Participants found that the most influential experiences were the ones in which they created relationships with artists across different art domains. Although there are many benefits, students also note challenges associated with the experience including: difficulty fitting in with fellow students and keeping up with the high skill level demonstrated by fellow students.</p> <p>Conclusion</p> <p>As shown by the survey results, summer intensives play a role in shaping young artists and allow them time to reflect on what they aspire to be and grow as artist. The benefits of this program should be accessible to others regardless of income and status.</p>
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**THE UNIVERSITY
OF THE ARTS**

Lidia Pietrusza

I held Jacob against my hip. The water was just up to my waist. He was shaking, but not because the water was cold. Jacob is eight, but he looks much younger. I approached the deep end and the water crept up to my chest.

As the water got deeper, Jacob became more anxious. I had always noticed his reluctance to swim. When I asked him why, he told me that his older brother once threw him in the pool and he had to be saved by a lifeguard. This upset me. I wanted to help him overcome this fear. He kept clutching my arms tighter and tighter, telling me not to let go.

"No! No!" Jacob yelled over and over. I held him against me again. I did not want him to feel like I was disregarding his concerns. I hugged him and said I would never let go. I felt him relax as he began to trust me and he allowed me to hold him suspended in the water. I started moving, and he swam along with me. Soon, he had had enough and wanted to get out. I was proud of him for pushing his own limits and trusting me, and proud of myself for helping him.

I reflect on this moment with Jacob often. My most meaningful and joyful memories as a lifeguard were when I was able to help and mentor kids like Jacob. Part of why lifeguarding brings me so much contentment is because I see myself in the kids I help. I watched my mom's health deteriorate before my eyes as a result of a recondite disease called Lipidemia for which we could not afford proper treatment. My dad has always provided the primary income for our family, and this brought him immense stress. He has dealt with alcohol abuse and other untreated mental health problems for my entire life. He lashed out at my mom and us four kids often because bills were not always paid on time.

I witnessed my mom become emotional because of my dad's outbursts. I have spent a lot of time in my room waiting for my dad to go to bed so that he would stop yelling. When I found out my parents were in an open marriage, the anger I held towards my mom for what I thought was cheating transformed into anger for her lack of honesty. I felt like Jacob in the deep end after his brother threw him in the pool: betrayed and alone.

When I was holding Jacob, I was able to help him deal with his feelings. He could let his guard down and explain why he was scared. I commended him for being open and expressing himself to me. I told him to breathe. I assured him that even though he felt stress, he could be brave and overcome his fear. I had to take responsibility for developing healthy coping skills independently of my parents, but this is a process that, like learning to swim, I believe no one should have to go through alone. I want to go back in time to when my parents were fighting or my dad was drinking and be there for myself the way I was for there Jacob. I now keep this in mind and use it to motivate me to reach out and listen to others.

My experiences as a lifeguard will always stay with me. In college and beyond, I will remind myself to open up to others, exercise healthy coping, and push my limits, just like I helped Jacob do. Service and mentorship are important to me. Whether in the pool or in life, I will always engender a commitment to helping people.

Lidia Pietrusza

Dear Admissions Representatives,

My name is Lidia Pietrusza, and I currently attend Pittsburgh Creative and Performing Arts High School (CAPA). As a senior, I am an active part of my school and local communities, and am involved in academic enrichment, athletic activities, leadership endeavors, and service. I believe these elements qualify me as an ideal candidate for your university.

During my time at CAPA, I have taken many honors and advanced placement classes to challenge myself and to gain exposure to higher level materials and concepts. In addition, I completed a freshman-level nursing class at Carlow University to further grow academically and to learn alongside like-minded peers during my time summer vacation.

In addition to my academics, I have also engaged in employment, enrichment, and mentorship opportunities through Youth Enrichment Services (YES). The YES program offered me a new perspective on the world and has challenged me intellectually, personally, and culturally. Through YES, I explored how black teens' self-image is impacted by others' cultural appropriation. I now partake in their fall and spring activities, including YES' entrepreneurial incubator and the Female Empowerment and Wellness Initiative.

One of my most rewarding experiences has been as a Reading Warrior at an elementary school in my neighborhood. My students were those who received scores under state benchmarks, so it was my job to work one-on-one with students to teach phonics and reading comprehension. I developed methods to work on different activities and skills and became familiar with each student's needs. Their curiosity was inspiring and refreshing. I currently volunteer at ProjectArt at the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh, where I help students put their creative thoughts down on paper in free after-school art lessons.

I have worked as a lifeguard for two years. Most of our patrons are kids who live in the neighboring public housing development and spend most of their summer days at the pool. I built strong relationships with these young people and even after work I would push them on the swings or play tag with them. On top of learning how to communicate well with them, I also learned how to work effectively with a team to maintain the cleanliness and safety of the large facilities.

After learning the value of volunteering through my own experiences, I joined the Students in Action club at CAPA. We organize volunteering opportunities and encourage students to be active in their communities. We connect with organizations and set up times for students to volunteer. It is inspiring to see so many students enthusiastic to donate their time to causes about which they are passionate.

I believe that these leadership, academic, and service endeavors illustrate my compatibility with the values of your university. If accepted, I look forward to taking my next steps as an open-minded, service-based, and hardworking college student.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Best regards,
Lidia Pietrusza

Lidia Pietrusza

Education

Pittsburgh Creative and Performing Arts (CAPA), Pittsburgh, PA **Aug. 2015 - Present**

- Honors and Advanced Placement coursework
- Honor Roll Student
- Stats:
 - GPA:
 - Unweighted: 3.45
 - Weighted: 3.9
 - SAT:
 - Evidence-based Reading and Writing: 760
 - Math: 700
 - ACT Composite: 30

Carlow University, Pittsburgh, PA **June 2017 - Aug. 2017**

- Freshman-Level Nursing Class
- 90% final grade

Work Experience

Lifeguard, Citiparks, Pittsburgh, PA **May 2017 - Present**

- Collaborate with a team of guards to maintain a safe facility
- Engage positively with patrons
- Assess and respond to risks and emergencies

Independent Art Entrepreneur, Youth Enrichment Services, Pittsburgh, PA **June 2018 - Aug. 2018**

- Refined visual arts crafts and techniques
- Completed 2 portraits to present at YES' Annual Symposium
- Facilitated a workshop on stress management and mental illness for teens

Tobacco Researcher, Youth Enrichment Services, Pittsburgh, PA **Jan. 2018 - May. 2018**

- Compiled data on tobacco companies' targeted advertising toward minors and people of color
- Worked with officials from the Allegheny County Health Department to discuss collected data
- Prepared material to discuss the implications of tobacco companies' advertising methods

Advanced Summer Scholar, Youth Enrichment Services, Pittsburgh, PA **June 2016 - Aug. 2016**

- Partook in a research project investigating the effect of cultural appropriation on black teens
- Supported East End Cooperative Ministry Day Camp as a junior counselor

Summer Scholar, Youth Enrichment Services, Pittsburgh, PA **June 2015 - Aug. 2015**

- Engaged in Math and English enrichment courses
- Participated in job readiness training
- Trained as a peer mentor using Sean Covey's 7 Habits for Highly Effective Teens

Leadership

Co-President of Students In Action Club, CAPA, Pittsburgh, PA **Oct. 2018 - Present**

- Lead meetings on service projects
- Establish and maintain contact with organizations regarding volunteer opportunities

African American History Bowl, Pittsburgh CAPA, Pittsburgh, PA **Jan. 2017 - Present**

- Study African American History with a partner
- Compete against other high schools in the district
- Earned 3rd place in 2018

Teen Mentor, Youth Enrichment Services, Pittsburgh, PA **Jan. 2017 - May 2017**

- Mentored public housing youth in their high school transition and provided preventive services to reduce truancy and chronic absenteeism
- Attended Bi-weekly Mentor Enrichment Sessions to build mentorship capacity
- Trained as a peer mentor using Sean Covey's 7 Habits for Highly Effective Teens

Extracurricular

Softball, Spirit Softball, Pittsburgh, PA

Sept. 2017 - Aug. 2018

Peer Helpers, Planned Parenthood, Pittsburgh, PA

Sept. 2016 - April 2017

Softball, Perry High School, Pittsburgh, PA

March 2016 - Present

Track & Field, Pittsburgh CAPA, Pittsburgh, PA

March 2016 – Present

Volunteerism

Reading Helper, Spring Hill Elementary, Pittsburgh, PA

Jan. - March 2017

- Aided teacher in supervising group of students
- Guided students individually during reading and comprehension activities

Teen Volunteer, Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh-Allegheny, Pittsburgh, PA

Jan. - March 2017

- Assisted ProjectArt teacher in administering activities and assignments
- Helped students ages 4-7 create pieces to add to their portfolios

Awards

Legacy Award, Youth Enrichment Services, Pittsburgh, PA

August 2018

- Awarded to students who have been committed to YES' mission, to leading others in motivation and purpose, to mentoring peers, and to serving greater community

Distinguished Researcher, Youth Enrichment Services, Pittsburgh, PA

August 2017

- Awarded to students for making outstanding contributions in research and demonstrating sustained commitment to advancing the frontiers of the final research project

References

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Addendum

During my time at CAPA, I have faced challenges in my personal life that have influenced my grades. Although the downfalls on my transcript are evident, they do not reflect my motivation or ability to succeed.

My mother completed various college classes, but never completed a degree. My father completed an associate's degree which was required for his apprenticeship as a sheet metal worker. Because they did not go through the steps that I am now going through, they do not have much help to offer me. They also both work long days to support me and my three siblings and are actively paying off various debts. My parents do value education heavily, but they do not quite know how to help me with my schoolwork and the college application process. In addition to the lack of support, the stress that my parents experience makes them hostile at home. My dad has always used alcohol to cope with his issues. There are times when I do not want to face my dad's anger and avoid going home after school. This makes it challenging to adopt a rigid homework schedule.

Because of my family's financial situation, I have always had to work my own job. This has taken up a significant amount of my time and is part of why I fell behind during my junior year. On top of taking advanced placement classes, I would go straight to work after school four days a week. I came home tired and only completed the things I had time for, which was not always all of my homework. This caused my grades to falter.

My circumstances at home have made it necessary for me to adjust. I had to adjust to the lack of support from my parents when their jobs became more demanding. I had to adjust to the lack of money and find a way to make my own. I also had to learn how to juggle these tasks. During college, I will put these adjustments into effect, using the time and money management skills I learned to keep myself on track to graduate and start my career.

Unauthorized Use: Cultural Appropriation and Its Impact on Black Teens

Amari Manker & Lidia G. Pietrusza

Problem Statement

Cultural appropriation, or the use of certain aspects of one culture or religion that is not yours, is an issue that affects all PoC. We are focusing on how it negatively affects the black community.

Hypothesis

Null: Cultural appropriation has no effect on black teens
Alternative: Cultural appropriation has a significant effect on black teens

Leading Research Question

What effect does the appropriation of black culture have on black teens?

Purpose

The purpose of our investigation is to expose and display the discrediting of black culture by white teens and to investigate whether this impacts black teens.

Population

Our sample population includes teenagers of any race, between the ages of 14-18

What is your ethnicity/race?	60% White(1), 23.3% Black(2), 10% Hispanic(3), 3.3% Asian(1) and 0.6% Other(2)
How old are you?	The average subject's age is 15.
What is the highest level of education you have reached?	22 have reached an 8th grade level(73.3%) and 8 have reached a high school diploma(6.6%).



Did you know what Cultural appropriation was before you started this survey?	100% of black participants answered yes
Do you think your culture has ever been appropriated?	85.7% of black subjects answered yes
How did it make you feel?	80% said it made them angry, 20% said they were indifferent.
Do you think cultural appropriation is an important topic and affects the black community in a negative way?	80% of black participants answered yes to this, and 20% said no.

Results

We encountered thirty people. All thirty completed the survey, and the majority of them answered that it is racist to appropriate a person of color's culture. Another staggering amount said cultural appropriation is in fact a major issue that affects the black community in a negative way.

Many participants said that it is important to understand the meaning behind emulating one's culture or religion. Alternatively, our respondents note that they have worn articles of clothing or styles with which they were unfamiliar.

Discussion

Like with all studies, we faced some limitations. Some of our limitations include the lack of diversity in our subjects. Although the study is focused on black teens, we had 60% white survey takers. Alternatively, we collected more data than we needed which helped us broaden the results. The information we gathered can help us better understand the effect of Cultural Appropriation on black teens and take action.

Next Steps

We hope our collected information can shed light on the prevalence and impact of cultural appropriation. We suggest that efforts be arranged to help people fully understand the implications of appropriating one's culture, specifically black culture.

Conclusion

The stories in this report demonstrate the depth and breadth of our young people. They speak to who they are holistically and confirm their dynamic nature. This work illustrates the importance of allowing students to tell their narrative in a way that is validating and empowering and speaks from a position of agency rather than victimhood. Not from deficits but strengths.

YES has employed narrative telling as a powerful rhetorical tool. We find the uniqueness in our students' stories and highlight the parts that make it extraordinary. Through trial and tribulations, our youth have risen – they are the master narratives of their story, and fortunately, the rest is still unwritten.