



YOUTH ENRICHMENT SERVICES

Community News, YES Updates, Spotlights, & more!

OCTOBER 2022

A Message from YES' Executive Director

Transformational is a term often used to describe the changes in the footprint of an organization or an individual as they move towards a more mature, stable, and, in many cases, powerful representation of either their ideals, actions, or view of success. YES is on the precipice of being a transformational organization, more so than ever before.

YES is transformative as evidenced by the recent data from our cohort of summer Learn and Earn students. The data shared in this issue of our newsletter will provide the type of scientific view of the transformation of the students who come into our program. As we've said before, students come to YES because they have to, and they stay because they want to. Students came this summer looking for employment and look what happened: nearly 80% of the young people continued their participation in YES' school year program offerings through PAP, VTM, FeWi, in our newly created Pittsburgh Civic Leadership Academy, or one of our advanced diversion services.

Be sure to check out our summer report and recent stories below to learn more about students' summer experiences and fall program opportunities.

Best wishes,

Dennis F. Jones

Summer Report

Through the support of staff and a cohort of young scholars at the University of Michigan, YES produced its annual summer report which highlights and details the robust programming opportunities available to students. The findings suggest that:

- Students participated in meaningful work experiences while gaining exposure to career opportunities and building their professional skills.
- Students' involvement in social and cultural outings enhanced their prosocial

behavior and contributed to their overall social development.

- Students' dedication to work-related training helped them cultivate leverageable hard and soft skills.
- Students learned the value of work-life balance through their own involvement in multiple academic, socio-cultural, and employment program offerings.
- Students' participation in wellness-related activities helped them prioritize their well-being and develop strategies to care for themselves holistically and productively.
- Students' self-beliefs have shown to influence their motivational regulation within YES' summer employment context.

Click this [link](#) to read more about students' amazing and transformational summer with YES.



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Pathways to Access Program (PAP)

This year PAP has undergone a small overhaul in effort to provide a more targeted list of services for students.

After hearing what students needed, YES implemented a new curriculum this fall that includes a variety of opportunities across grade levels.

PAP seniors have access to individual advising sessions, college tours of IUP, WVU, CCAC, and CAL U, campus tours of Pittsburgh Technical College and Chelsea Business Products and close bonding opportunities.



Junior students also gain similar exposure while also developing a future planning poster project that asks them to study and outline multiple pathways to their desired career field. In addition, students pair with A's vision, a local Pittsburgh Organization birthed out of tragedy and owned by Aaron Wade, to help students get their driver's licenses as well as other industry recognized credentials.

Last, but not least, our sophomores have begun their Social Emotional Learning Curriculum aimed at helping them dismantle barriers and become mindful of their presence in and out of the workforce.

Pathways to Access (PAP) will resume its normal work experience activities this spring.

Also, YES has partnered with Woodland Hills High School to serve 10 Seniors and 1 Junior student on site. Understanding how transportation and time can be barriers for county residing students, YES designed in-school programming to meet the students where they are. It has been great to welcome the WHHS students into the YES family.



Program Kickoff

Mayor Ed Gainey's newly created Pittsburgh Civic Leadership Academy is hitting the ground running as some of the region's most valued assets, which include the Senator John Heinz History Center, Partner4Work, Community College of Allegheny County, and Youth Enrichment Services, have joined forces with the Mayor's office to create this innovative leadership training program. About 30 young people are engaging in this unique program as they do a deep dive into the nuts and bolts of city government along with the history of the city of Pittsburgh and some of the untold origins of how this historic city grew to be so legendary and recognized in our nation's landscape.

Partner4Work has provided students with laptops and stipends for their work. CCAC, with Dr. Dave Manel as the faculty of record, is leading the students through their academic component of the program, which includes research and investigation into some of the problems identified by each of the city entities participants will interface with.

The Mayor's office has viewed this unique adaptation as a tool to expose more young people to the benefits of government, help them understand their role as citizens in advocating for resources in their community, and how to address problems from an activist and strategic perspective. We feel very strongly that this program can be used as a template to expand during future



iterations. Watch this space. Click this [link](#) to follow local news coverage.



Parent Council

YES' newly formed Parent Council has been meeting under the direction of Bonnie Mclain and with the staff support of Melinda Jones as they create a blueprint for how YES parents can become more active and engaged in the work YES does with young people. On their list of planned actions so far is a Halloween gathering to keep youth safe in a fun social setting, supporting youth and families during the holiday season, and how parents can utilize their own resources and expertise to support YES youth. Members of the Parent Council have also identified ways they can mentor other parents as they move through challenges.



STUDENT HIGHLIGHT

A YES Comeback Story: Janiece Mims

Janiece Mims joined YES during Summer Learn and Earn where she participated as a Summer Scholar. Due to fights and negative interactions with neighborhood peers, Janiece was unable to safely continue her summer endeavors. When school year programming began, Janiece expressed interest in returning to YES and collaborating with staff to create a safety plan. Janiece is now enrolled in the Pittsburgh Youth Civic Leadership Academy and is thriving as she works with students from around the city and Allegheny County to develop her leadership skills. YES staff can see noticeable changes in Janiece and we are excited and hopeful for her continued development.



GENERAL UPDATES

Fall Retreat

Chad Lawson, a world-renowned classical music artist, has agreed to travel to Pittsburgh on November 12th to conduct a workshop with his most recent album, *breathe*, to guide YES youth through methods for using music for relaxation, stress reduction, and meditation in

relation to working through the trauma and challenges associated with experiencing loss from gun violence. Mr. Lawson has agreed to donate his time and cover his travel and lodging expenses for his visit to [YES' Fall 2022 Retreat](#).



The Fall 2022 Retreat: Rest, Reconnect, and BREATHE will see nearly 60 young people traveling to Seven Springs Resort to engage in a series of workshops, outdoor leisure activities, and strategic action sessions from Friday night to Sunday afternoon. Several stakeholders from YES' summer 2022 Teen Public Safety and Violence Prevention Summit have agreed to participate in the Fall Retreat.

If you, or a young person you know, is interested in attending the Fall 2022 Retreat: Rest, Reconnect, and BREATHE, please register [here](#). Registration closes November 1st, 2022.

Annie E. Casey Grant

Last month, Sandra Wilkie of the Annie E. Casey Foundation met for breakfast with Dr. Jones to share the good news that YES is the recipient of a new partnership grant that will bring the Annie E. Casey Foundation, Department of Human Services, and YES together to eliminate the need for group placement. DHS and the Annie E. Casey Foundation has been working closely for some time and have invited YES on board as a community organization to implement some of the strategies they have come up with.



Lori Crawford, a 10-year YES veteran and current Creativity Curator, will lead these efforts alongside Jordan Snyder. Their first action related to this program is traveling to Atlanta, GA, accompanied by a YES parent and two young people, to meet with other cohort members from Connecticut and Oklahoma to further develop functional alternatives to group placement.

YES was greeted with open arms by DHS and is excited by this level of collaboration. This relationship is valued, appreciated, and very necessary as it does take a village to address the long-standing needs youth have. YES is extremely grateful for the opportunity and excited to utilize the resources we have established in the community to address this critically important undertaking.



Join our Team: YES is Hiring

YES is currently looking to hire three individuals for the following positions: Program Director, Operations Manager, and Manager of Academic and Mentoring Services. To

express interest or to learn more about these positions, please click this [link](#).

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