



YOUTH ENRICHMENT SERVICES

Community News, YES Updates, Spotlights, & more!

JANUARY 2024

New Year, New Digs: Message from Dr. Jones



Our Open House on January 18th was on fire! We want to thank all of those friends, stakeholders, board members, parents, funders and partners who came out to support our time together. It was truly an amazing event that helped us kick off our 30-year anniversary in fine style. We were happy to identify potential members of our advisory committee, as well as volunteers who want to support the planning of our 30-year anniversary celebration in September.

We were grateful to have a Black History Presentation regarding Black athletes in baseball by esteemed professor Rob Ruck. He shared portions of the documentary *Kings of the Hill* about the legacy of the Pittsburgh Negro League teams. This was truly an eye-opening presentation for the students to learn the history of the Homestead Greys and the Pittsburgh Crawfords and their achievements in producing some of the best baseball players in history, period!

Dr. Lanise Reynolds was a showstopper, too! She presented to members of our Teen Council regarding leadership development with the speech titled, "You Must Have Honor." Honor is a main ingredient as students develop their personalities, their charms, their civility, their politeness, and how they should carry themselves. Dr. Reynolds' words were truly empowering, emphasizing the leverage students have in being seen, respected, and elevated in the eyes of their peers and elders. Teen Council students also gave their own phenomenal presentations surrounding the socio-cultural issues teens are facing today.

Our own staff shared in small groups what they do within their respective program domains as well. We were overwhelmed by the responses from those who sat in on the sessions and their comments about what they've learned and how they wish to support.

Following the Open House, the YES Board of Directors met for the first time in 2024 and discussed the 30-year anniversary celebration. The 30-year anniversary celebration is now scheduled for September, and we will soon be seeking sponsorships and locating past YES participants, staff, and their families who were important in supporting YES through some of their growing times. We plan to recognize some of these legacy members, as well as acknowledge stakeholders and partners for their contributions to YES over the years. Date will be forthcoming soon -- watch this space!

We are still so excited about our new office space! Please feel free to contact our Office Administrator at officeadministrator@yespgh.org if you'd like to come by and tour the space next time you find yourself in East Liberty. We'd like to invite all of our sister

agencies who want to join our ecosystem and plan on continuing to partner with us to stop by and let us know how to best support you. We have identified over 60 agencies and we are moving forward with about a dozen of those agencies in a planned approach to addressing the 8 Big Ideas surrounding violence prevention. We encourage anyone who wants to be a part of an ongoing collective impact strategy to join us in addressing violence prevention and intervention.

We hope you all have stayed safe in the snow, and continue to be well!

Yours,



Dennis Floyd Jones, PhD
Executive Director, Youth Enrichment Services

YES Commences Anniversary Celebration with Open House



On Thursday, January 18th, Youth Enrichment Services opened our doors to friends, family, partners, stakeholders, and board members for an all-day open house. From noon to 6:30pm, our newly expanded and renovated office space truly came alive with visitors!



Programming included a conversation between staff members and stakeholders about current YES programs, a guest lecture led by University of Pittsburgh History Professor Rob Ruck on the history of Negro League baseball in Pittsburgh, student presentations from Teen Council members, and, of course, food for all! We cannot thank our guests enough for visiting and being a part of a truly special day in YES history.



NATIONAL MENTORING MONTH - JANUARY 2024



January is National Mentoring Month, and Youth Enrichment Services has a lot of reasons to celebrate! We are proud of our robust mentorship programs that run throughout the school year, such as our Female Empowerment and Wellness Initiative (FEWI), Voices to Men, and Teen Council. YES boasts a wonderful team of mentors who enthusiastically lead those programs with energy, passion, and a unique ability to connect with students. These mentors are truly the driving force behind Youth Enrichment Services' mission and success and we salute them!



YES also celebrated International Mentoring Day and Thank A Mentor Day to acknowledge the diverse mentorship approaches and to pay homage to the impactful mentors of our YES staff.

INTERNATIONAL MENTORING DAY *January 17th*

**SAHAR
HUSSAINI**



YESPGH.ORG

[#MENTORINGMONTH](https://www.instagram.com/MENTORINGMONTH)

In honor of National Mentoring Day, we featured staff member Sahar Hussaini the Youth Enrichment Services Instagram. Follow us on Instagram to read more about her story, as well as other posts from our staff dedicated to celebrating International Mentoring Day!

Thank Your Mentor Day - January 25, 2024

January 25, 2024 was Thank Your Mentor Day, and we asked our staff to thank a mentor who had a meaningful impact in their lives! Below are their accounts of impactful mentors.

Denise Jones

I can confidently say I am the writer, scholar, and mentor I am today because of the love, support, guidance, harsh feedback, and direction from Ms. Lisa Fevola. Ms. Fev (as I affectionately call her) pushed me beyond my known capacity and forced me to grow in areas of weakness. She rescued me even when I did not know I was sinking.



Ms. Fevola's no nonsense nurturing allowed me to meet high expectations and become confident in my own abilities. I am grateful that Ms. Fevola saw greatness in me well before I could see it in myself and took me under her wing to ensure I accessed every door and table I deserved to walk through and sit at. Ms. Fevola, I am because you are! Thank you, thank you, thank you!

Melinda Jones

Linda Yeboah is a beacon of light in the realm of education. She helped me during my first year teaching and I thank her for that. She helped me to focus on the parts of teaching that I can control and control them well. I take her advice into every realm of my life and I am better for it! She is a great person and I honor her as my mentor!



Dana Tuohey

Josh Schaldenbrand was a supervisor and friend during my time at CMU who really helped me grow in confidence as a young professional. He truly demonstrated an essential balance between having fun and getting work done. His humanity and sense of humor are a treasure to me!

Danielle Stewart

Margie Cox holds a special place in my heart as both a mentor, beloved grandmother, and friend- she was literally my penpal. She was really instrumental in my development into the person I am today. She fostered an environment where creativity was celebrated! She would always encourage me to explore new ideas and embrace my unique perspectives. Her nurturing of my imagination instilled a sense of wonder and possibility in me that continues to shape my approach to life, work, and even how I raise my children. I will forever be grateful for her guidance and the major role she has played and still plays in my life.



Dorian Laniear

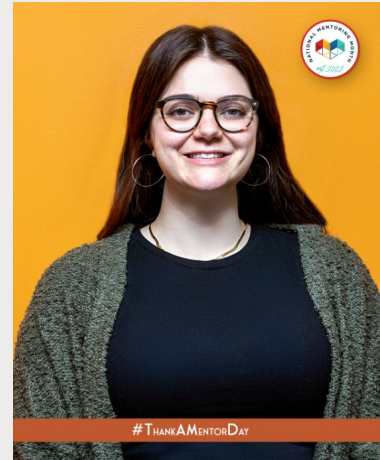
Malik Morris is someone who played a huge role in why I serve at-risk youth now. While growing up, I spent many days as a youth within his Leadership for Young Men Program at the Kingsley Center. Mr. Malik was not only a mentor, but also a father Figure/ older brother. He held



me accountable when I was wrong and right. He opened my eyes to the art of mentoring just based on his work ethic alone to give back to our community (Homewood). He never forgot where he came from but always uplifted the youth, and I strive to do the same with the youth I have and will work with throughout my life.

Olivia Kelley

Dr. Ellerbee has been a mentor to me since my time as student at the University of Pittsburgh. She has guided me through many internships and other community engagement opportunities, helping me understand the importance of relationship and trust-building in those spaces. She is a great example of successful University-community relationships and continues to be a guiding light for me as I continue on in my career. I know that I can always reach out to Dr. Ellerbee for guidance and she will be my loudest cheerleader.



Lori Crawford

Felicia breathes in oxygen and exhales love for the world. I was a shell of myself before I met Felicia, who tenderly held space for me to start to see myself as I really am, underneath the layers of who I've been expected to be. The tools she's given me over the past 5 years will carry me through the next 55 years with much self compassion, a commitment to humanity, and a reminder that critical kindness is a tool for holding ourselves and others accountable as we heal and grow together.

Miles Porter

Joseph Jones is someone who has played a big brother role in my life for several years. He provides a lot of mentorship and advice. He is the person I seek for guidance in many aspects of my life. He has helped me elevate in so many ways. His willingness to help has always been something I admired. I am grateful to have him as a mentor and friend.



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

New Year Programming Launches



Teen Council, led by Dr. Lanise Reynolds, is a weekly assembly of students who are passionate about violence prevention initiatives in their community. Every week, students assemble and discuss the different pathways through which youth can take initiative in their communities to be leaders in the movement for violence prevention.

YES Onboards Spring 2024 YCLA Cohort



Hot off the heels of our successful Fall 2023 cohort, the Youth Civic Leadership Academy team is already up and running again to get our latest cohort onboarded for the

Spring 2024 Semester! The Youth Civic Leadership Academy (YCLA for short) is a partnership between YES, Partner4Work, the Mayor's Office, and Community College of Allegheny College designed for students who are interested in careers in civic leadership. Groups of students are assigned a research project to complete throughout the semester, culminating in a research symposium during which they present their work to peers, family, and YES partners. Students are also engaged in work placements throughout the city, while also earning college credit.

We are so excited to usher in the third iteration of this program in the spring – a testament to the hard work, diligence, and care our staff and students have poured into this unique program.

Learn and Earn Summer 2024 - Now Recruiting



It's that time of year again - we are looking for students who are interested in joining Learn and Earn, a 6-week employment program designed to expose youth to various careers and post-secondary opportunities. Young people ages 14-21 are invited to fill out our [Student Interest Survey](#) as we begin to recruit for Summer 2024. If anyone has any questions, please feel free to reach out to Richard McClain at rmclain@yespgh.org.

STUDENT HIGHLIGHTS

YES Students Featured on SLB Radio Show for Martin Luther King Jr. Day

Several YES students were invited to join the Saturday Light Brigade Radio Show for their stream in honor of Martin Luther King Jr. and the Civil Rights Movement. One student, Ramin Hussaini, reflected on the experience:

"It was a great live stream on SLB radio. We talked about what MLK Jr. did in the Civil Rights Movement and it was my first time experiencing talking on the Radio live stream. It was very enjoyable and a great experience talking on the SLB radio show."



When asked about his favorite part of participating in the livestream recording, Ramin said, "One of the most impressive things that happened was we had a call during the live stream. The caller asked, "If you could teach a class about anything, what subject would you teach?" I said, "Business, it makes the economy of a country, and it is very important for people to know how to make money."

YES is so proud of our students who are contributing to conversations with community members, and making their voices heard.

STAFF HIGHLIGHTS

Dr. Deanna Sinex and Richard McClain Celebrate 1 Year as YES Team Members



The Youth Enrichment Services Team is truly fortunate to have the expertise of Dr. Deanna Sinex as Director of Research and Program Strategy. In her role, Dr. Sinex applies her past experiences and scientific training to ensure YES' goals, programming, and services align with science based methodologies by developing robust infrastructures, curriculums, and implementation strategies for YES' academic program offerings to support all YES students.

We asked Dr. Sinex about her favorite YES moment over the course of the last year, and here's what she shared:

"It is hard for me to pinpoint a favorite moment, because there have been many! In addition to cultivating relationships with countless YES students through tutoring and supporting research projects, my favorite moments are when I watch our students

transition from feelings of indifference and apprehension surrounding a topic or assignment, to feelings of excitement and confidence as they tap into unbridled potential!"

We also extend our deepest gratitude to our Violence Prevention Coordinator, Richard McClain. Rich has a passion for mentoring, coaching, and educating youth which is fulfilled with his daily duties. Rich lends his talents and strengths to Voices to Men, Teen Council, and FFISH. Rich believes education is key and enjoys having a positive impact on young people's successful academic progression. Thank you Rich for all you do!



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