



YOUTH ENRICHMENT SERVICES

Community News, YES Updates, Spotlights, & more!

JANUARY 2023

Survive to Thrive in 2023

YES' 2023 theme is Survive to Thrive. In 2023, we are doing everything we can so that our young people not only survive but thrive.

The other aspect of YES' theme is Collective Impact. YES is actively pursuing partnerships with youth organizations around the county that want to work closely together to share resources, access, information, and to provide youth with the best chance for success.

In the words of Benjamin Franklin, "we shall hang together or surely we shall all hang separately." We will only challenge the gun violence epidemic if we can work together in true partnership where everyone is invested. Everyone will bring their resources to the table, and we will work as a collective to reach as many as 2,000 youth. Watch this space and check out our updates below.



Best wishes,

Dennis F. Jones

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

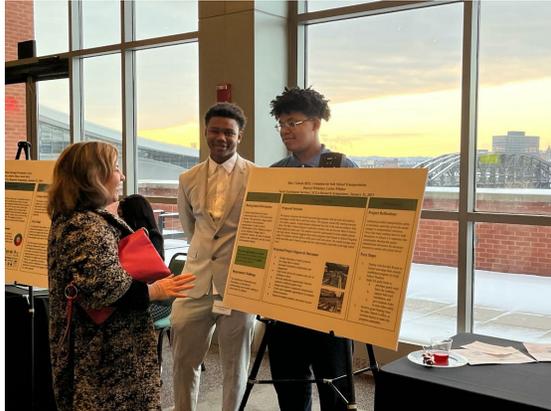
YES' Inaugural YCLA Cohort Presents at Research Symposium

On January 31st, 2023, Youth Enrichment Services held its Research Symposium for The Mayor's Youth Civic Leadership Academy. The event brought together the Mayor, stakeholders from the Heinz History Center,

P4W, CCAC along with departments within the city, host of media, and family and friends. This **event** was a culmination of 20 weeks of scheduled and unscheduled activities that the 24 youth who completed the project engaged in. Check out the students' work, here.



YCLA represents our vision for Collective Impact. We believe that now is the time for agencies to collaborate and partner in service of our young people who are victims of senseless and pervasive violence. Through the collaborative efforts of our partner agencies, we are planning to offer two YCLA cohorts in the fall and spring, with 40 students each, selected from open enrollment throughout the city. More details forthcoming.



Continuing 2022 Summer Impact



YES is excited to announce that it will continue its efforts from Summer 2022 into the upcoming summer 2023 programming slate. Our keynote speaker from the 2022 Violence Prevention Summit, NASA Special Agent David Daniels-Watanabe, has invited a group of up to 100 YES students to visit the NASA Research Center in Cleveland, Ohio. This 4-day visit will occur July 13th to 16th and include visits to the: NASA Research Center, Rock and Roll Hall of Fame,

Cleveland Guardians baseball game, Cleveland Zoo, Cleveland Clinic, Cleveland State University, and more activities to be announced at a later date.

This trip hopes to continue to reiterate to young people that they can not only survive, but thrive, by exposing them to careers in science and technology. We appreciate YES Board Member and retired FBI agent Don Seaton for making this trip possible.

STUDENT HIGHLIGHTS

Makaila Holston Smith, Future Leader in Agriculture

YES alumni, Makaila Holston Smith, has been selected as one of 30 college students in the USDA Future Leaders in Agriculture program. Makaila is a current student at Penn State University majoring in Biorenewable Systems with a focus in Agricultural Systems Management. As a recipient of this recognition, Makaila will travel to Washington, D.C. at the end of February to attend the USDA's 2023 Agricultural Outlook Forum.

According to a recent press release, the USDA

Future Leaders in Agriculture program “introduces undergraduate and graduate students to the work of USDA and partner organizations. The program also provides real-world learning opportunities in contemporary agribusiness, scientific research, and agricultural policy”.

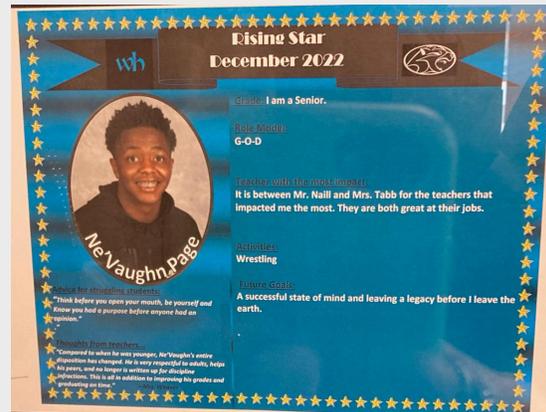
YES is extremely proud of Makaila for this recognition and is excited to see how she utilizes this experience in her future endeavors!

More information about the USDA Future Leaders in Agriculture program can be found [here](#).



YES' Ne'Vaughn Page, A Rising Star

Ne'Vaughn Page, a participant in YES' Pathways to Access Program (PAP) and youth representative on YES' Ending the Need for Group Placement (ENGP) Initiative with Annie E. Casey, was awarded the Rising Star Student Award for the month at Woodland Hills High School. Nevaughn's teachers said, “compared to when he was younger, Nevaughn's entire disposition has changed. He is very respectful to adults, helps his peers, and no longer is written up for discipline infractions. This is all in addition to improving his grades and graduating on time.” These responses demonstrate Ne'Vaughn's growth and transformation over the years. Congratulations on this awesome accomplishment, Ne'Vaughn.



STAFF HIGHLIGHTS

YES Welcomes Sarah London, Program Director

One of the joys of being a nonprofit in the city is that we experience a lot of the benefit from the individuals with whom we collaborate and partner. Our collaboration with Sarah London over the years has been unique because she is one of the most widely recognized and highly regarded youth mental health counselors in the region.

YES pulled off a major find when we convinced Sarah to work with YES full-time. Her role as Program Director will surround all of our programs with a mental health lens so that youth who exhibit areas of need related are able to meet with a licensed social worker. Sarah will provide 1on1, group, and overall mental health guidance for the organization as she will allow YES to have in-house mental health services. This is a game changer for YES.



Staff Retreat

YES Staff ended January by participating in a two-day retreat at the Rivers Club. Alongside a host of amazing expert professionals, YES Staff engaged in

sessions designed to build organizational and staff capacity, align their work with YES' 2023 vision, develop their professional toolkits with resources and strategies, and co-create integrative processes and systems to better support students and families. Staff had a productive and fruitful experience and are energized to take on the challenges ahead.



GENERAL UPDATES

National Mentoring Month

January is National Mentoring Month. At YES, staff celebrated by paying homage to their mentors and honoring those they mentor, given that mentorship is such an instrumental part of YES' mission and vision.



PCCD Grant & Senator Jay Costa

In January 2023, YES received notice that it had been awarded a grant from the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD) to create a Youth Led Peer Engagement Violence Prevention Hub. YES would like to extend its appreciation for Senator Jay Costa and his support with this endeavor. Senator Costa is a renowned and steady leader in our region and is able to provide meaningful resources and support for communities suffering from the impacts of gun violence. We thank Senator Costa and could not have done it without him.



CMU English Department Partnership



YES is brewing an amazing partnership with CMU's English Department which will allow Faculty, Students, and Staff to share their expertise with 10-15 youth in the inaugural YCLA program cohort. This opportunity includes visits to CMU's English department and campus, mentorship from campus representatives, and collaborations with students to share their YCLA experiences through self-expression and self-discovery. Ultimately, the hope is for students to publish their work. Students who participate in this program will receive stipends

and transportation from Mid March until June.

We look forward to expanding our collaboration towards developing an annual student research journal that will showcase the research efforts of YES' Learn and Earn scholars moving forward.

More details forthcoming!

[Visit Website Here](#) | Thank you for your support!



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