



YOUTH ENRICHMENT SERVICES

Community News, YES Updates, Spotlights, & more!

MAY 2023

Michael Pennington, Executive Director of the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency, is Coming to Pittsburgh

Mr. Pennington and members of his staff will participate in the 2023 Violence Prevention Summit, Out of Chaos - A Positive and Affirming Response to Gun Violence in Allegheny County. The Summit will be held on Thursday, July 13th and Friday, July 14th at the Petersen Events Center on the campus of the University of Pittsburgh. Details of Mr. Pennington's visit are still evolving. We are hoping he and his staff can engage with youth and partner agencies during this time in Pittsburgh, providing insight for our collective approach.



[Click here to register for the Summit!](#)

For over a year and a half, YES has been working with a cohort of like-minded community-based nonprofit agencies and stakeholders to define a collective impact approach to the challenges of addressing youth gun violence through a prevention lens. YES has had some success in these efforts, with more than 20 agencies signing on to participate in our violence prevention ecosystem. The goal of this ecosystem is to multiply our impact in the context of youth gun violence. We need to come together to best support our youth and families navigate these challenges.

[Click here to see our ecosystem and partner agencies!](#)

Director Pennington and the PCCD have provided over \$100 million in funding to support violence prevention efforts. The goal of inviting him and other members of the Commission is to support local nonprofits who are active members of the collective impact ecosystem through encouragement, advice, wise counsel, and strategizing. Director Pennington and his staff can support ecosystem members in building capacity to more effectively addressing gun violence and build long term growth in academic, personal, and workforce development initiatives.

In addition to Director Pennington and PCCD, a number of other entities have agreed to support the 2023 Summit, including local institutions such as the police, corporations, courts, schools, and Universities. University of Pittsburgh School of Education Dean Valerie Kinloch, Mayor of Pittsburgh Ed Gainey, Chief of Police Larry Sciroto, CEO of Partner4Work Robert Cherry, NASA Special Agent David Daniels-Watanabe, and local teens have all agreed to participate in the Summit in some capacity.

[Click here to see a draft of the program!](#)

YES' Most Consequential Spring To Date

Youth Enrichment Services has finished its busiest and most consequential spring to date with a list of activities that is impressive.

Our YCLA program, which recently partnered with the CMU Humanities Department, has been funded for a '23-'24 cohort through our partnership with the Mayor's office, the Heinz History Center, Partner4Work, and CCAC. Applications will be announced soon, and questions can be directed to Dr. Deanna Sinex at dsinex@yespgh.org.

YES has also been active with the Duquesne City School District, providing experiential learning opportunities for their middle school students. YES staff members traveled to Duquesne on Tuesdays and Thursdays with a cohort of experts who provided interactive sessions, talks, presentations, and demonstrations with the students, and we are looking forward to expanding on this partnership during the next school year.

Our newest violence prevention initiative, Fun Fitness Involving Sports and Health (FFISH), kicked off 6 weeks ago and has been overwhelmingly successful. Because of the popularity of the program, the initial cohort will continue over the summer, and new participants will also be given the opportunity to join. Additionally, planning for the second installment of the Teen Violence Prevention Summit, funded by the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD), is well underway. More information will be shared in next month's newsletter.

We're excited to announce another initiative! Ending the Need for Group Placement (ENGP), in partnership with the Department of Human Services and the Annie E. Casey Foundation, is beginning to have its impact felt. Monthly meetings continue to show steady growth in support and understanding of our goals, as well as continued evidence of the practical need to address the overwhelming problem with children being assigned to group homes that scholars have long since determined to be detrimental to kids' mental and physical health.

Lastly, our most engaging summer program, Learn and Earn, has kicked off! YES anticipates registering over 110 student participants that will be working in approximately 30 partner organizations. These experiences over the summer are in many cases life-changing for these young people. We are looking forward to a summer filled with hard work and FUN!

Best wishes,

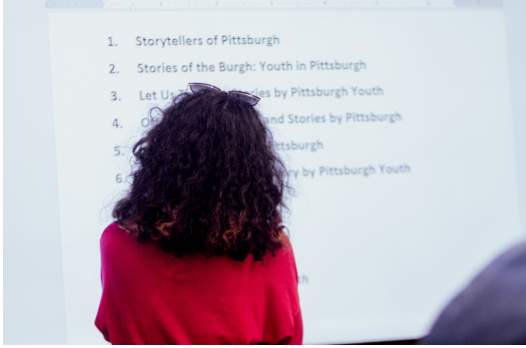


Dennis F. Jones

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

YCLA Storytellers

Carnegie Mellon University's Humanities Department, under the leadership of Dr. Danielle Wetzel and Shun-Sho Carmack, directed the 2nd phase of YES' Youth Civic Leadership Academy, affectionately referred to as "YCLA Storytellers." What started as a creative means for collecting students' reflections on their experience in the inaugural class of YCLA evolved into a beautiful



celebration of introspection, growth, and storytelling. We want to acknowledge the team at CMU for helping to bring more attention to these young people's stories, assisting them in magnifying their work, and enabling them to capitalize on the power of their message.

Power Hour

Since mid-March, YES has been providing tutoring and academic support to students 3-5 times per week. This program offering, known as "Power Hour," has been a passion project of YES staff member Dr. Deanna Sinex, who hopes to continue these services throughout the summer and into the '23-'24 school year. Special thanks to our dedicated tutors: Laura Sparling, Jack Beckman, and previous YES Intern, Tyshanti Montgomery.



Learn & Earn Programming

YES staff, especially Richard McClain and Melinda Jones, are busy recruiting and signing youth up for Learn and Earn 2023. During our summer programming, we continue to focus on pushing our youth to thrive within a post-COVID world and amidst the ongoing gun violence epidemic. We hope this summer will be a monumental leap forward as youth engage in some of the most challenging and rewarding programming YES has ever facilitated. For example, Special Agent David Daniels-Watanabe, the 2022 Summit keynote speaker, has invited 100 youth to Cleveland in August to visit the NASA Research Lab and engage in a weekend of celebrating science, astrophysics, and exposure to a once in a lifetime opportunity. The trip represents a sliver of what YES has in store for young people this summer.



Fun Fitness Involving Sports and Health (FFISH)

The newest violence prevention initiative called FFISH (Fun Fitness Involving Sports and Health) kicked off 6 weeks ago and has been overwhelmingly successful. Students ages 8-19 engaged with professionals and volunteers teaching coordination, conditioning, and basic athletic skills, along with health and wellness sessions. Students met at Westinghouse High School and the Kingsley Association on Tuesday/Thursday



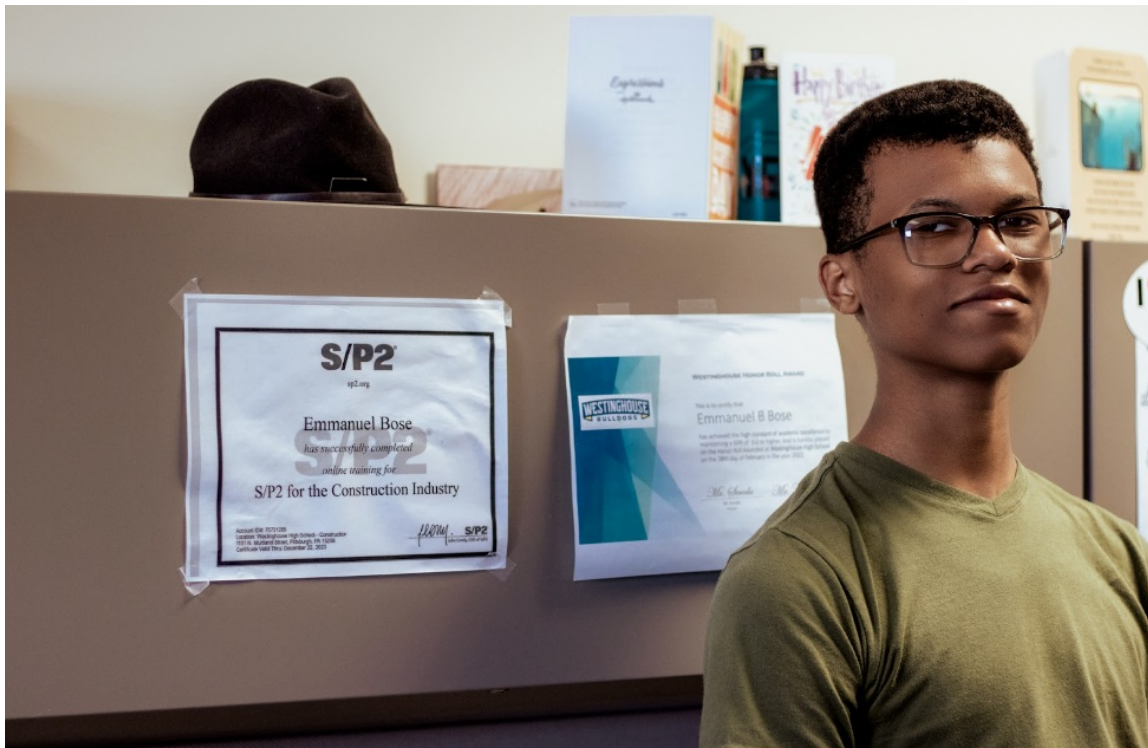
evenings and Saturday mornings. This program will graduate 50 participants at our recognition ceremony on May 31st. Because of the popularity of the program, the initial cohort will continue over the summer, and new participants will also be given the opportunity to join.

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

Working Towards a Dream

YES student Emmanuel Bose recently completed a career skills training course through Westinghouse High School, where he was paid for his participation and taught about topics like resumes and interviewing. He shared that his biggest takeaway from the course was advice to maintain eye contact when speaking to others.

Emmanuel noted that his original motivation for participating in the course was to earn money that could be used towards his vending machine business plan. While he admits that he did not spend his earnings as wisely as he could have, he plans to spend future earnings on obtaining his driving permit, securing an LLC, and saving/investing funds to be used for his business. This young man has an exuberant entrepreneurial spirit, and we are so proud of him for his continued hard work and dedication!



STAFF SPOTLIGHT

Welcoming New Staff

YES welcomed its new Office Administrator, Meredythe Hlasnik, at the beginning of May. She comes to us from a background in education, mental health, and nonprofit



work. She has been hard at work over the past few weeks getting up to speed, and she's looking forward to continuing to meet folks from the YES family over the coming months. Make sure to stop by the front desk to say hello the next time you're in the office, and feel free to reach out with any questions or needs that arise. Meredythe can be contacted at officeadministrator@yespgh.org or 412-728-1104.

GENERAL YES UPDATES

Improving Communication One System at a Time



CMU's Information Systems department runs a capstone program for juniors and seniors with the goal of helping students navigate people relationships through "experiential learning". Students are in teams of 3-4 serving as consulting experts to address a tech challenge for a client. Ultimately, this is a partnership aimed at helping organizations to build capacity.

During the Spring 2023 semester, YES served as a client for this program. The CMU students developed an app, which will be put to use during this summer's programming, to enhance YES's ability to communicate back-and-forth with students and families. Our hope is that this messaging system will improve the efficiency and reliability of our communication with those served by YES. Special thanks to Dr. Sinex, who served as the YES representative for this project!

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



Youth Enrichment Services | 6031 Broad St. , Suite 202, Pittsburgh, PA 15206

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Sent by okelley@yespgh.org