



YEP

YOUTH EMPOWERMENT PROJECT

ANNUAL REPORT 2018



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Melissa Sawyer, M.Ed.
Co-Founder & Executive Director



DEAR FRIENDS OF YEP,

I hope you enjoy YEP's 2018 Annual Report that highlights the impact we had during the year.

As a co-founder of the organization, I have had the privilege of watching YEP grow from a single program that supported 25 youth in our first year to the robust organization that it is today. In 2018, YEP operated 10 programs that encompassed mentoring, adult education, employment readiness and enrichment services. YEP served a total of 1,262 participants in 2018 and we had a staff of 50 employees. Some of the successes you will read more about in this report include the following:

- **98%** of YEP Mentors participants said the program connected them to caring adults
- YEP Educates has graduated **394** students who have earned their high school equivalencies
- **81%** of youth who completed YEP Works entered into workforce development opportunities
- **94%** of YEP Enriches participants said the program helped them to have hope for a positive future
- To date, YEP's Postsecondary Transition Services Coordinator has helped young people receive **\$719,657** in Financial Aid (Scholarships + Grants)

2019 marks YEP's 15th year and we are looking forward to another year of strengthening our programs and growing our impact. Thank you for your continued support of YEP and our work. It is because of generous, caring and dedicated donors and partners like you that our continued growth and success are possible.

Sincerely,

Melissa Sawyer
Co-Founder & Executive Director
Youth Empowerment Project



Our Core Values



RESPECT

YEP believes all people have value and should be treated with dignity



ACCOUNTABILITY

YEP is responsible to its participants, families, community, donors and other stakeholders



INTEGRITY

YEP is honest and sincere



PROGRESS

YEP believes in ongoing learning and innovation



KINDNESS

YEP is caring and generous

Core Value Icons design by Design Works participant Avery

OUR MISSION

YEP engages underserved young people through community-based education, mentoring, employment readiness and enrichment programs to help them develop skills and strengthen ties to family and community

Our Vision Statement

YEP envisions a community where all people have access to the opportunities, skills, resources and relationships they need to actualize their potential

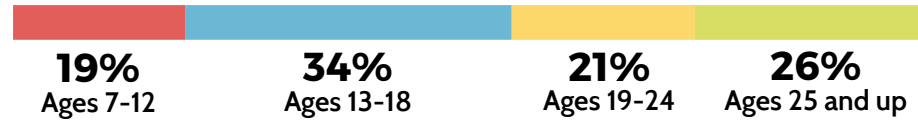
2018 OVERVIEW



- **14%** YEP Mentors
- **12%** YEP Works
- **59%** YEP Educates
- **15%** YEP Enriches

17

Average Age of YEP Participant



- **55%** Male Participants
- **45%** Female Participants



- **93%** African-American
- **5%** Caucasian
- **2%** Other



74%

of YEP participants resided in a single female headed household at intake



79%

of YEP participants reported an annual household income of under \$20,000 at intake



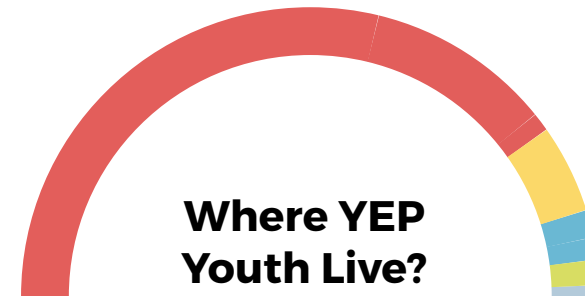
34%

of YEP participants reported justice involvement at intake

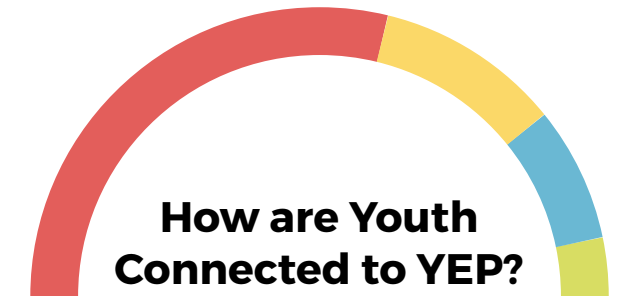


66%

of YEP Educates students reported being unemployed at intake



- **82%** Orleans Parish
- **10%** Jefferson Parish
- **4%** St. Charles Parish
- **2%** St. Bernard Parish
- **1%** Other



- **58%** Self-Referred
- **20%** The Court System
- **17%** School/Community-Based Organization
- **5%** Other

YEP MENTORS

Mentoring / Youth Advocacy

YEP's juvenile reintegration program was the organization's sole program when YEP was established in 2004. In 2018, 173 young people from the Greater New Orleans region benefited from YEP Mentors programming that operated out of our offices in Orleans and St. Charles Parishes.

Youth enrolled in YEP Mentors were referred through contracts with the Louisiana Office of Juvenile Justice (OJJ), the Orleans Parish Juvenile Court's Families in Need of Services Program (FINS), the 29th Judicial District's FINS Committee and community-based referrals. YEP Mentors supports youth between the ages of 8 and 21.

YEP's Youth Advocates

The key staff in YEP's mentoring/youth advocacy programs are youth advocates, or mentors, who are full-time employees. Youth advocates take a youth-centered approach focused on building trusting relationships with youth in order to help them set individualized goals, navigate systems and access the resources and opportunities needed to improve their lives.

Youth advocates visit clients at least three times per week - in their homes, schools and communities. Youth advocates provide mentoring, group enrichment activities, and essential resources to meet clients' basic needs such as transportation, groceries and utility bill assistance. The YEP Mentors team also works with teachers, other service providers, guardians and justice system representatives to monitor progress and ensure young people are connected to community-based resources they may need beyond YEP's scope of services.

173

youth served
in YEP Mentors

4,966

contacts were made
between youth enrolled
in YEP Mentors and YEP staff

94%

of YEP Mentors participants said the knowledge and skills they gained in the program would help them avoid crime and violence in the community

98%

of YEP Mentors participants said the program connected them to caring adults

100%

of YEP Mentors participants reported that their youth advocate responded to their needs and treated them with respect

Expanding Mentoring Services Across Southeast Louisiana

YEP has maintained an uninterrupted contract with the Louisiana Office of Juvenile Justice (OJJ) since our inception in 2004. During this time, YEP has established itself as an innovative organization that has a strong reputation for providing quality community-based services to youth engaged with the juvenile justice system in the Greater New Orleans region.

In 2018, YEP entered into a new contract with OJJ that significantly expanded our geographic reach in Louisiana. Through this contract, we are now providing community-based services to youth in seven parishes across Southeast Louisiana. In addition to expanding our service area, this new contract enables us to provide supportive services not only to young people, but also to their parents, guardians and other family members.



“The Louisiana Office of Juvenile Justice (OJJ) is pleased to continue to contract with such an effective program as the Youth Empowerment Project (YEP). The services that YEP provides in the community plays a vital role in maintaining youth we serve in the least restrictive setting possible while ensuring safety to the public. OJJ is confident that when a youth is referred to YEP, not only will the child receive necessary services, but family members will receive critical supports as well. OJJ looks forward to continuing this partnership for many years to come.”

- Deputy Secretary Dr. James Bueche, Louisiana Office of Juvenile Justice



Julien

Age: 18
Community-Based Mentoring

Football has been Julien's passion and he exhibited a natural talent for the sport from an early age. The 18-year-old's on-the-field skills, coupled with his academic success and strong personal attributes, are what landed him a full athletic football scholarship to Nicholls State University in Thibodaux, LA where he is currently enrolled as a freshman. YEP youth advocate Renell Gibbs has been a part of Julien's life for a decade now, supporting the young man at school and home as well as cheering from the sidelines at football games.

"Renell is like the big brother that I never had. He always had my back and never left me out. If I needed a ride or food or anything, he's always been there for me. He's like a real true brother to me," said Julien.

Julien became connected with YEP Mentors programming at the age of 8 and says his younger self didn't want to listen to other people and he would get into trouble at school. Julien says YEP helped him stay in New Orleans to finish school instead of joining relatives in Texas and he credits the organization for helping him graduate from high school. For other youth looking to YEP for support, Julien offers this guidance:

"[With YEP] you've got good people that will take care of you, even though you're going through ups and downs. You might have some anger issues, you might be bad in school but YEP has people that will help and care for you," said Julien.

Tyrian

Age: 16
Community-Based Mentoring

Tyrian likes to keep busy with extracurricular activities that include playing point guard on her high school basketball team and being a cadet in her school's JROTC. YEP staff say Tyrian is upbeat and has a positive attitude when she attends YEP Mentors programming.

Despite her optimistic outward appearance, Tyrian has struggled over the years with anger management and coping with challenges within her family. Tyrian joined YEP in March of 2017, referred to YEP Mentors through a contract that YEP has to provide supports to children engaged with the Families in Need of Services (FINS) programming in St. Charles Parish.

"It's nice to know I'm not alone. We have one-on-one and group discussions at YEP and our youth advocates take us out to eat. And, I get to speak with other young people who are going through similar things," said Tyrian.

Recognizing Tyrian's natural leadership skills, YEP has offered the 16-year-old the opportunity to earn a stipend while providing homework assistance to younger youth and assisting staff with setting up for weekly events and activities.

"YEP is there to support you with whatever you need. They don't go around telling your business to people. They're nice people to be around," said Tyrian.

Tyrian is currently a high school sophomore and has set her sights on pursuing a legal career or a career in law enforcement.



YEP EDUCATES

Adult Education / High School Equivalency Preparation and Postsecondary Transition Services

YEP Educates provides critical adult basic education and high school equivalency preparation classes to students from across the Greater New Orleans area, with a focus on out-of-school youth between the ages of 16 and 24. YEP Educates is one of only five programs in Orleans Parish that is recognized by the Louisiana Community and Technical College System (LCTCS) as an official provider of adult education.

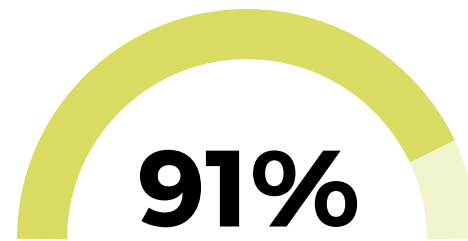
The Village, a subset of YEP Educates is specifically designed to meet the needs of students between the ages of 16 and 21 who were not successful in traditional high school systems. Village students receive daily high school equivalency instruction in self-contained, structured classes. All Village students also receive intensive wraparound supportive services from YEP staff throughout program participation. In an effort to prevent the disconnection of students dropping out of high school, the Village partners with local charter schools by supporting students who are at risk of withdrawing or being expelled from traditional high school settings. The Village becomes the primary academic provider for this group of students, sharing student data including academic progress and attendance to the schools until the students earn their HiSET diploma (formerly GED).

Postsecondary Transition Services

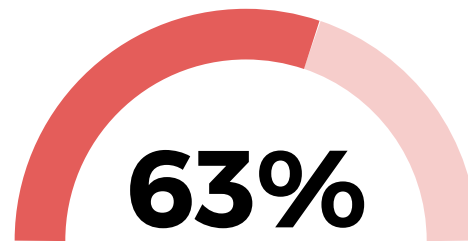
All individuals engaged with YEP can access YEP's Postsecondary Transition Services that help them transition into vocational training programs or two or four-year higher educational institutions. YEP's Postsecondary Transition Services Coordinator assists YEP participants with preparing and applying for college, financial aid, and helps students find the program that best suits their interests and situations so they excel in opportunities that meet their career and educational goals.

“YEP Educates has been instrumental in engaging underserved youth in the New Orleans area. Through its adult education programs, YEP students have access to free educational opportunities as well as individualized supports that help them transition into postsecondary employment opportunities.”

- Raye Nell Spillman
WorkReady U Services Director
Louisiana Community & Technical College System



of YEP Educates participants say that the knowledge and skills gained in the program will help them achieve educational goals



of YEP Educates students improved two grade levels which is higher than both state (48.5%) and national averages (43.9%)

740

number of adult learners served in YEP Educates

42

total number of HiSETs earned

\$719,657

to date, total amount of financial aid secured by YEP's Postsecondary Transition Services participants



6.6

average grade level of YEP Educates students at intake



Bard Early College – Dual Enrollment Programming

Since 2013, YEP has partnered with Bard Early College New Orleans (BECNO), an early college program supporting high school students to provide free early college education. YEP was the first community-based organization in New Orleans to partner with BECNO and provide dual enrollment for adult education students. The YEP-BECNO partnership allows students to practice the writing skills necessary to pass the HiSET exam by utilizing college-level literature and composition. Students who are dually enrolled in YEP-BECNO can also enroll in creative writing, poetry and profile writing. Since its inception, 74 YEP Educates students have taken advantage of this opportunity and 80% have successfully earned college credit.

Aaron

Age: 20
The Village

Even though Aaron's family was able to send him to a private school in the metropolitan New Orleans area, the traditional, tuition-based school environment lacked the structure he needed to be successful and thrive as a student.

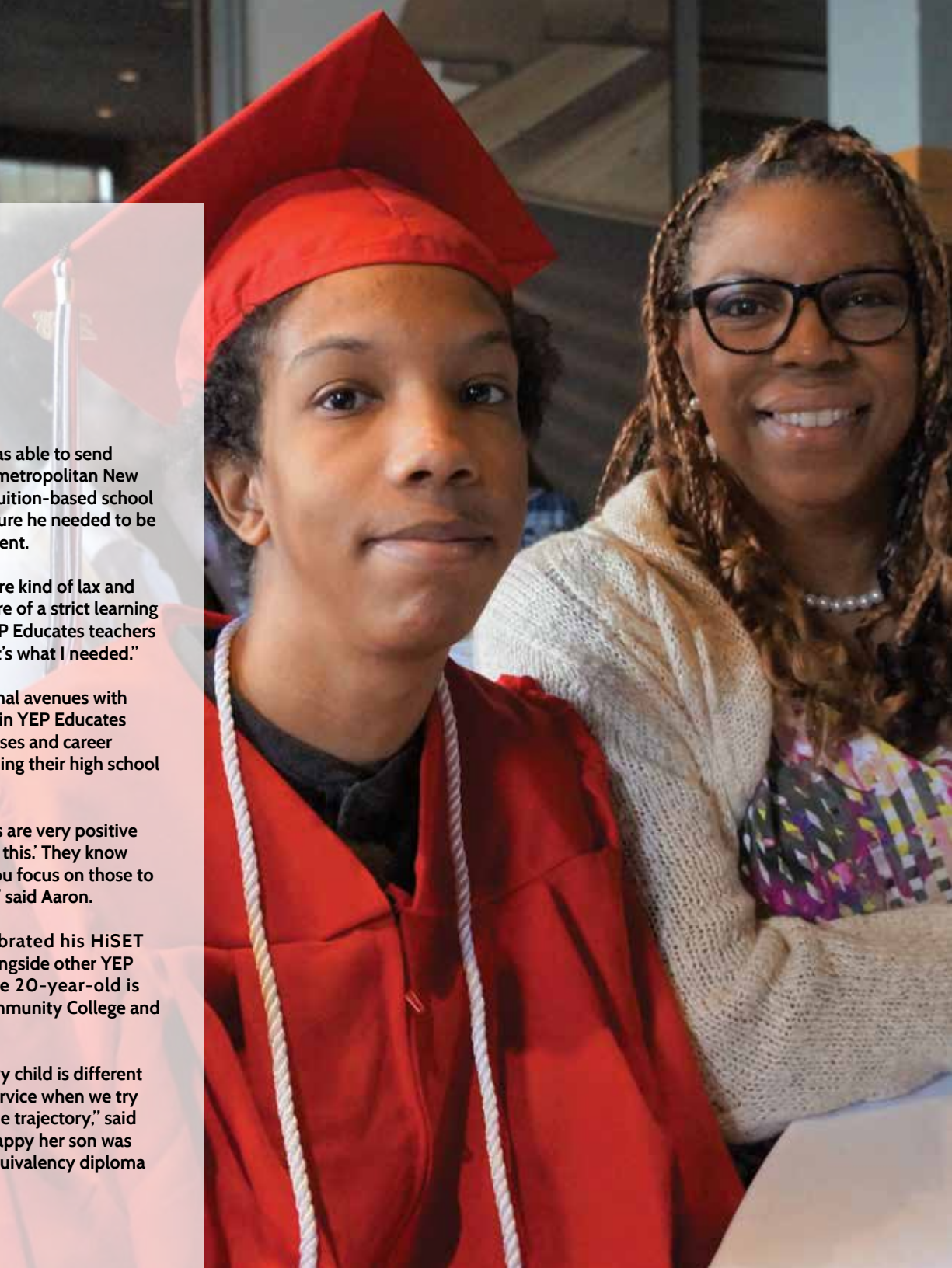
"The schools that I went to were kind of lax and gave you room and I need more of a strict learning environment," said Aaron. "YEP Educates teachers hold you accountable and that's what I needed."

Aaron tried different educational avenues with little success until he enrolled in YEP Educates which provides structured classes and career exploration for students pursuing their high school equivalency.

"All the YEP Educates teachers are very positive and say: 'We know you can do this.' They know peoples' strengths and help you focus on those to encourage you along the way," said Aaron.

In June of 2018, Aaron celebrated his HiSET (formerly GED) graduation alongside other YEP Educates graduates. Now the 20-year-old is taking courses at Delgado Community College and exploring degree options.

"Every family is different, every child is different and we do our children a disservice when we try to push them through the same trajectory," said Aaron's mother, Gina. She is happy her son was able to earn his high school equivalency diploma through YEP.



Johnnie

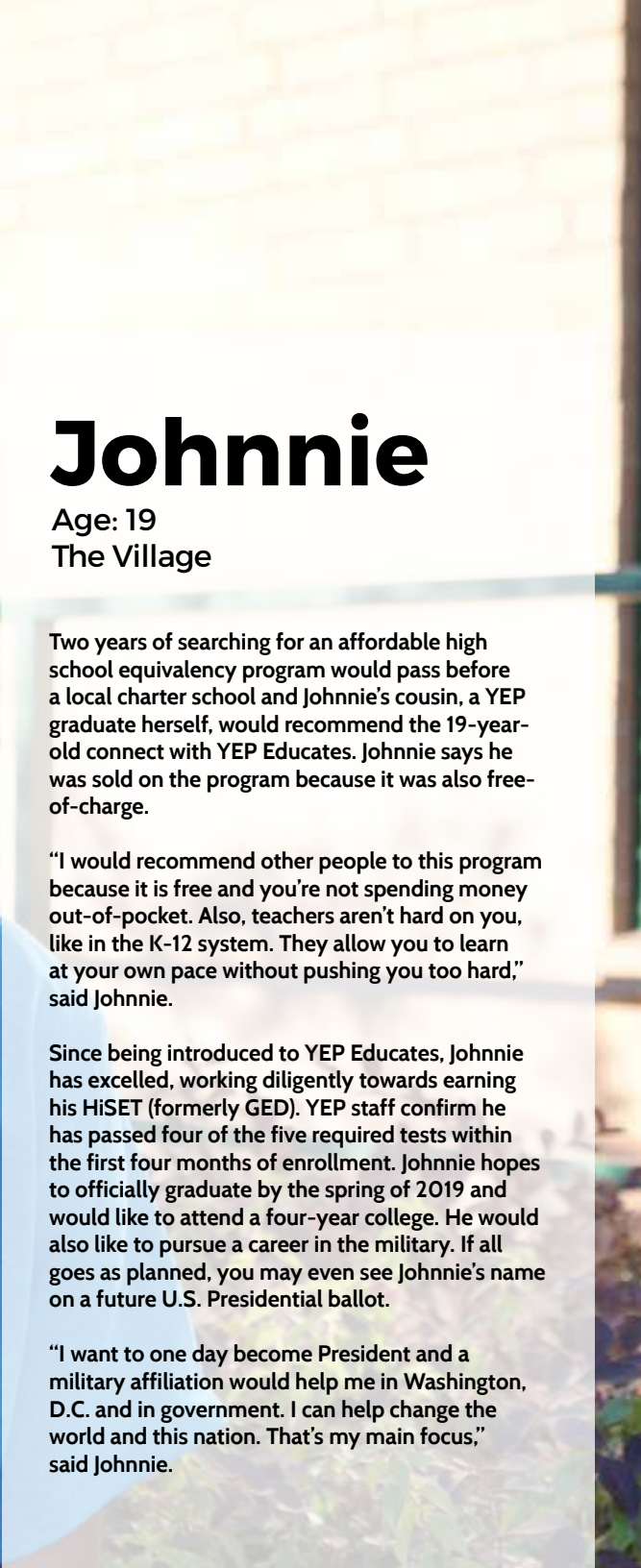
Age: 19
The Village

Two years of searching for an affordable high school equivalency program would pass before a local charter school and Johnnie's cousin, a YEP graduate herself, would recommend the 19-year-old connect with YEP Educates. Johnnie says he was sold on the program because it was also free-of-charge.

"I would recommend other people to this program because it is free and you're not spending money out-of-pocket. Also, teachers aren't hard on you, like in the K-12 system. They allow you to learn at your own pace without pushing you too hard," said Johnnie.

Since being introduced to YEP Educates, Johnnie has excelled, working diligently towards earning his HiSET (formerly GED). YEP staff confirm he has passed four of the five required tests within the first four months of enrollment. Johnnie hopes to officially graduate by the spring of 2019 and would like to attend a four-year college. He would also like to pursue a career in the military. If all goes as planned, you may even see Johnnie's name on a future U.S. Presidential ballot.

"I want to one day become President and a military affiliation would help me in Washington, D.C. and in government. I can help change the world and this nation. That's my main focus," said Johnnie.





YEP Youth Advocate & former YEP Mentors Participant



YEP Enriches Summer Camper



Members of the YEP Team



YEP Enriches Dance Team Members



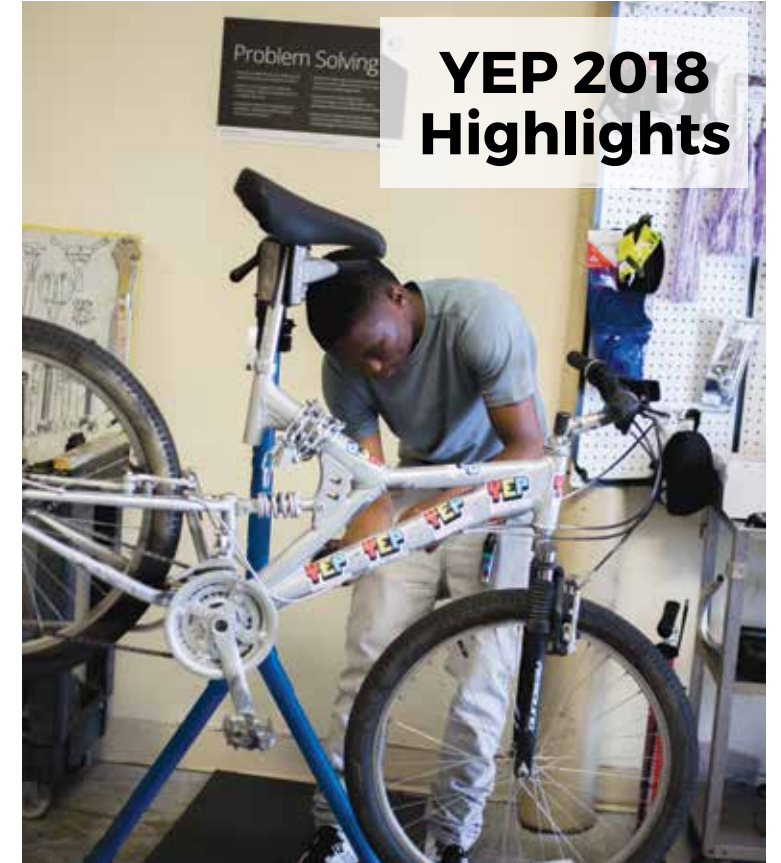
Inside Thrift Works



YEP Educates Student



YEP Educates "Boss for the Day"



YEP Bike Works Shop



YEP Educates Science Lesson



YEP Educates Graduates



YEP Enriches Afterschool Program



YEP Board of Directors & Executive Director/CEO

YEP WORKS

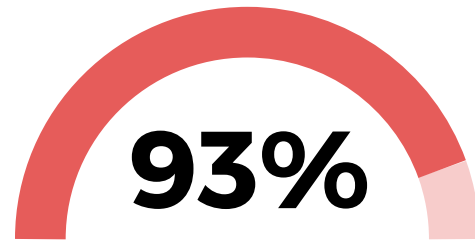
Employment Readiness

YEP Works provides employment readiness training to young people between the ages of 16 and 24. YEP Works is comprised of three hard skills training tracks which include bicycle repair (Bike Works), customer service (Thrift Works), and creative digital media (Design Works); all of which provide opportunities for youth to engage in “real world” work experience. Participants also receive soft skills instruction that teaches resume writing, interview techniques, workplace communication and teamwork.

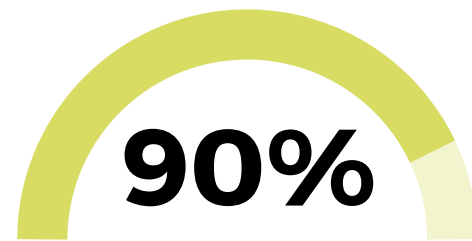
After youth complete on-site training with YEP Works, participants have the opportunity to engage in externships with YEP’s employment partners. Following the completion of the YEP Works program, youth can continue to receive support from staff with job placement assistance.

“Through our pathways-to-careers partnership with YEP Works, we’ve gained deeper knowledge about the challenges young New Orleanians face when entering the workforce, and about the remarkable level of support YEP offers them. From soft skills training that helps youth with time and money management, to transportation assistance, YEP ensures that young people are set up to succeed at work and in life.”

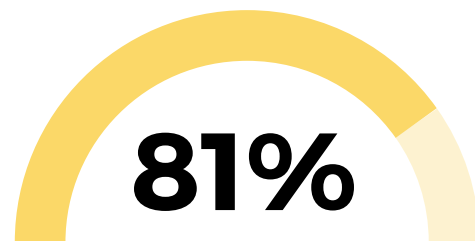
- Chefs Donald Link & Stephen Stryjewski
Link Restaurant Group/Link Stryjewski Foundation



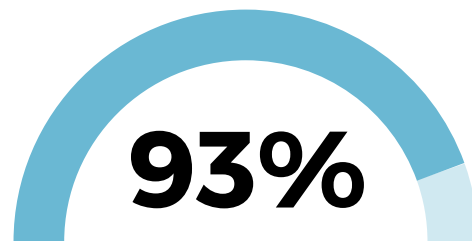
93%
of YEP Works graduates demonstrated a gain in hard skills



90%
of YEP Works graduates demonstrated a gain in soft skills



81%
of YEP Works graduates entered into workforce development opportunities



93%
of YEP Works participants said the knowledge and skills gained in the program will help them get and maintain a job

New Orleans Mayor LaToya Cantrell Hires Design Works for Logo Creation



Design Works, YEP’s youth-driven creative digital media studio, was hired by New Orleans Mayor LaToya Cantrell to create a logo for her newly established Office of Youth and Families. The YEP Design Works team visited New Orleans City Hall in September 2018 to meet with Mayor Cantrell and discuss the design project and process. The Design Works students presented several logo options to the Mayor and she shared her feedback with them. Design Works apprentices Elton and Sidney incorporated the Mayor’s feedback into their final logo design which was selected as the logo for the office. In 2018, YEP Design Works was hired by a total of 24 customers to create a wide range of creative digital media products.



\$204,993

total gross income generated by Bike Works, Thrift Works & Design Works

154

number of youth served in YEP Works



Ishman

Age: 21
YEP Works - Design Works

Talking with a friend during a restaurant shift is how Ishman learned about YEP's creative digital media program, Design Works. As a high school graduate with an interest in design and fashion, he felt the program would help expand his horizons. He was right.

"Going through YEP helped me a lot in getting up the ladder and sticking to my dreams. It was a positive step forward," said Ishman.

Ishman successfully completed phases I and II of YEP's Design Works program. After completing the training, YEP Works staff helped connect him to an externship opportunity with Queork, one of YEP's employment partners. Ishman is currently a full-time employee with the New Orleans based company that specializes in luxury hand-crafted products made from cork trees, and in his role he helps to design and manufacture some of those products.

"This is exactly what I want to be doing. YEP and Queork have given me the design experience I need to start my own business in design and fashion one day," said Ishman. The 21-year-old has an entrepreneurial spirit and wants to continue to learn more valuable on-the-job skills before launching his own business.

Summer

Age: 22
YEP Works - Bike Works & Thrift Works

"I love communicating with people and they love me! I always get good feedback at work with the customers. I really enjoy it," said Summer, who always considered herself an introvert until she enrolled in YEP Works.

The 22-year-old works at Calcasieu Private Dining, part of the Link Restaurant Group (LRG) - a YEP externship partner that provides support and training to graduates of YEP Works. After her externship with LRG, the company hired Summer as an employee.

Summer became connected to YEP Works through the recommendation of one of her teachers at a local charter school. Summer earned an educational stipend at YEP while gaining customer service experience in Bike Works and Thrift Works. Summer says the biggest lesson she learned while at YEP was how to become a better communicator.

"I have high anxiety and struggle with depression. I've always been a very private person and had trouble making eye contact," said Summer. "YEP taught me how to get and keep a job, how to not be nervous and how to communicate with other people, including coworkers." Summer never thought she would enjoy the restaurant industry as much as she does and wants to work her way up the ranks at LRG. Down the road, Summer hopes to enroll in college and pursue a medical career.

"I'm still interested in attending nursing school. A career in nursing has always been one of my passions," said Summer.



YEP ENRICHES

Out-of-School Time

The purpose of YEP Enriches is to provide youth and children with a safe, fun and supportive environment during out-of-school time. YEP Enriches offers a comprehensive set of year-round enrichment services:

Afterschool Program provides youth between the ages of 7 and 18 with academic support, daily meals, group enrichment activities, a variety of fun and educational field trips and assistance with basic needs.

Summer Camp provides youth between the ages of 7 and 12 with a fun, free and engaging summer experience. The six-week camp includes weekly field trips, daily meals, biweekly swimming lessons, arts and crafts projects and an array of recreational activities.

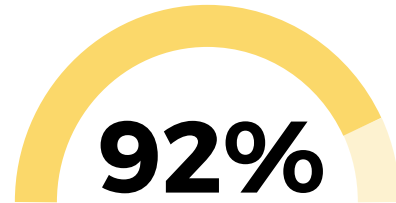
Camp Mariposa® is a weekend, overnight camp which supports children between the ages of 9 and 12 who are impacted by the substance use disorder of a family member. YEP hosts six camps annually, and provides supplemental enrichment and mentoring activities between camping trips. Created and supported by Eluna, Camp Mariposa® is a national mentoring and addiction prevention program.

“At IBERIABANK, our philosophy is to support our communities. Our partnership with YEP runs deep, and we are proud of the impact their programs have had in New Orleans. IBERIABANK’s commitment to YEP has strengthened throughout the years as their programs continue to contribute to the health and vibrancy of our community.”

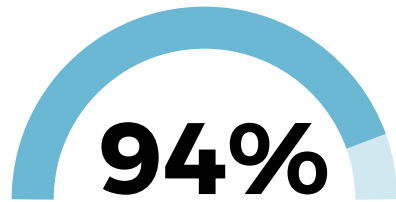
- Daryl G. Byrd, President & CEO of IBERIABANK



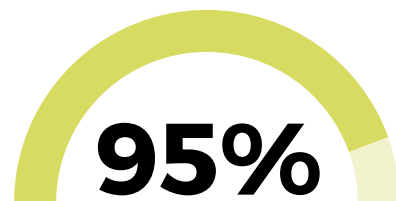
73% of Camp Mariposa youth increased their knowledge and awareness of strategies to avoid substance abuse



92% of YEP Enriches participants said YEP staff cared for them and treated them with kindness



94% of YEP Enriches participants said the program helped them to have hope for a positive future



95% of Summer Camp participants demonstrated an increase in the knowledge and skills they gained in enrichment and educational activities



YEP Enriches Music & Arts Program Expansion

In 2018, YEP received support from The ELMA Music Foundation to expand the music and arts services provided within YEP Enriches programming. With this additional support, YEP was able to add a Music and Arts Coordinator position to oversee the delivery of experiential music and cultural programming which incorporates YEP’s drumline and dance team. The YEP drumline and dance team performed at private and public events across New Orleans in 2018.

195

number of youth served in YEP Enriches

6001

number of nutritious meals served to Afterschool Program participants

YEP Afterschool Program Activities

An average of 39 youth attend YEP’s Afterschool daily



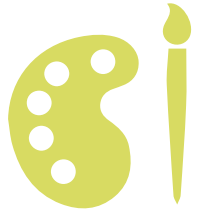
Basketball Games & Practice



Cooking Class



Dance Class



Arts & Crafts



Drumming Instruction



Field Trips



Computer Access



Homework

A close-up portrait of a young girl with dark hair pulled back, wearing a gold bow and a blue hoodie. She is smiling warmly at the camera.

TY'J

Age: 9
Afterschool Program,
Summer Camp
and Camp Mariposa

From dance class to swimming and weekend-long overnight camp trips, Ty'J embraces all components of YEP Enriches programming - the Afterschool Program, Summer Camp and Camp Mariposa.

Ty'J came to YEP in second grade after learning about YEP from her cousin. Now in fourth grade, she considers YEP a safe haven and looks forward to taking part in fun and educational activities. Ty'J will happily share her favorite activities with anyone who asks.

"My favorite thing about YEP is swimming and Camp Mariposa because it's fun and I meet new friends every time," said Ty'J. "We do camp fires, have talent shows, go swimming and canoeing. I always have a great time!"

Ty'J says her family is happy she attends YEP and that her grandmother signed her up for the enrichment programming. The 9-year-old says another added bonus about the Afterschool Program is that the staff members make sure she finishes her daily homework assignments.

"If I couldn't come to YEP, I would miss it. I would miss the other kids and the staff," said Ty'J.

A close-up portrait of a young boy with curly hair, wearing a white t-shirt. He is smiling at the camera.

DAVID

Age: 13
Afterschool Program

"I like the staff because they are very nice and they treat everyone like family," said David.

When David finishes school for the day he is excited to make his way to YEP's Afterschool Program where you will likely find him shooting hoops on the basketball court or brushing up on his musical skills as a member of the YEP Drumline.

"I get to socialize with everyone, have a nice time, play basketball - there is a lot to do," said David. "I really enjoy the cooking classes and the drumline, which is really fun too. I like that I get to learn a new instrument."

David discovered YEP after a group of his friends introduced him to the Youth Center where the Afterschool Program is held. Before YEP, David says he would spend his out-of-school time hanging out at a local outdoor basketball court. The 13-year-old plans on being a part of YEP for as long as he can and he would like to work at YEP someday.

"My mom thinks YEP is a good program," said David, "I think YEP is fun. You get to meet new people and learn new things!"

YEP FINANCIALS

Statement of Financial Position June 30, 2018

ASSETS

CURRENT ASSETS

Cash & Cash Equivalents	\$429,345
Investments	
Unconditional Promises to give	\$1,576,446
Reimbursement Receivable	\$134,885
Inventory	\$29,382
Prepaid expenses	\$36,850

TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS \$2,206,908

Assets restricted to investment in property, furniture and equipment	
Cost less accumulated depreciation	\$1,256,866

TOTAL ASSETS \$3,463,774

LIABILITIES & NET ASSETS

Accounts Payable	\$54,720
Mortgage Payable	\$22,595

TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES \$77,315

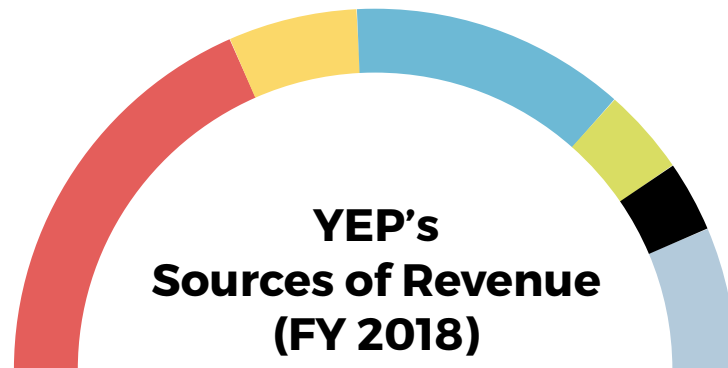
Mortgage Payable, Net of Current Maturities	\$496,689
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TOTAL LIABILITIES \$574,004

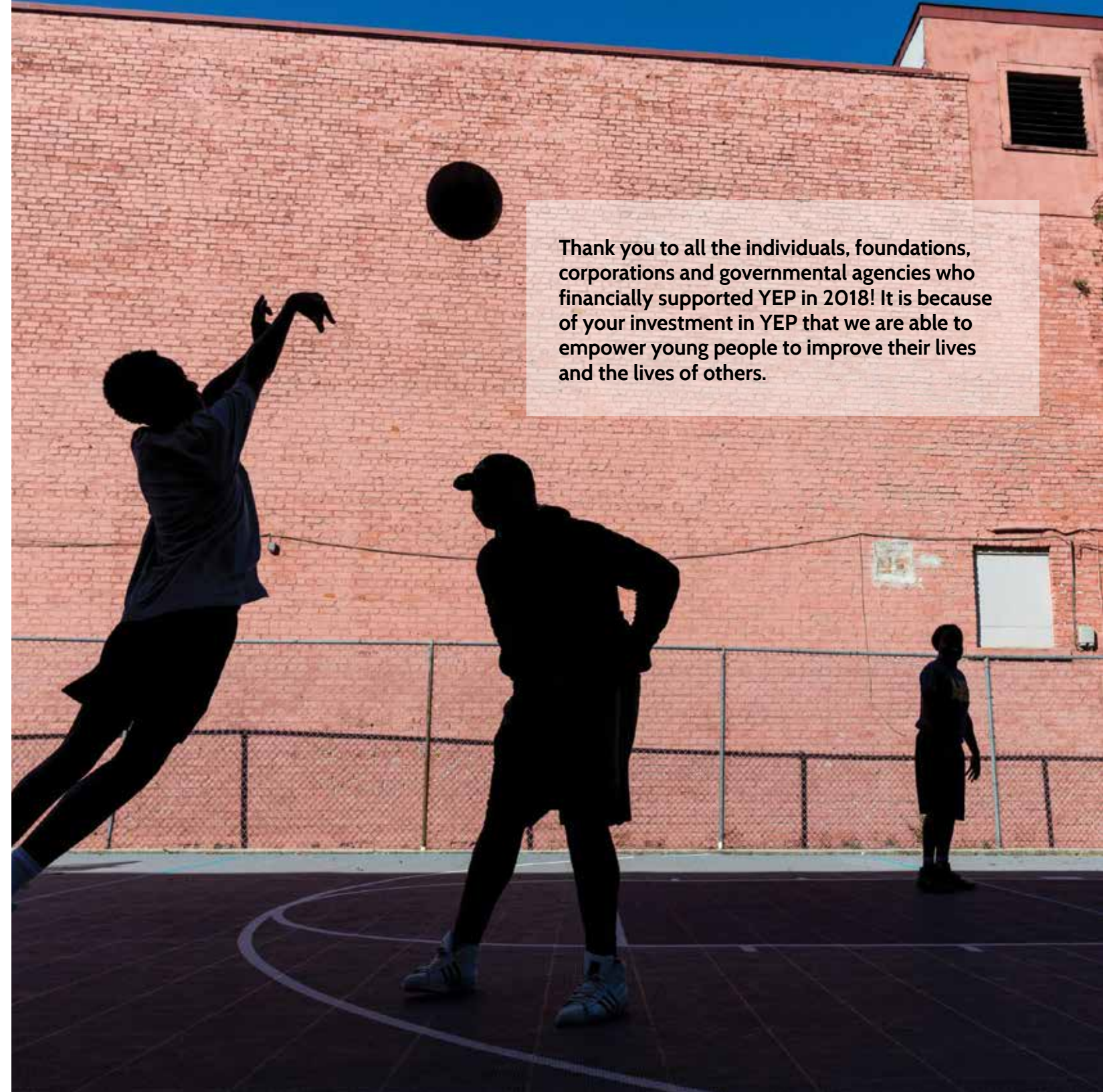
Net Assets Without Donor Restrictions	\$1,923,733
Net Assets With Donor Restrictions	\$966,037

TOTAL NET ASSETS \$2,889,770

TOTAL LIABILITIES & NET ASSETS \$3,463,774



- **37%** Restricted Grants
- **11%** Unrestricted Grants
- **24%** Public Support
- **7%** Earned Income
- **5%** Fundraising
- **16%** Individual Contributions



Thank you to all the individuals, foundations, corporations and governmental agencies who financially supported YEP in 2018! It is because of your investment in YEP that we are able to empower young people to improve their lives and the lives of others.



YEP

YOUTH EMPOWERMENT PROJECT

Youth Empowerment Project

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New Orleans, LA 70113

504.522.1316

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