



PATHWAYS TO SUCCESS

2024 SUMMER REPORT



DECEMBER 2024

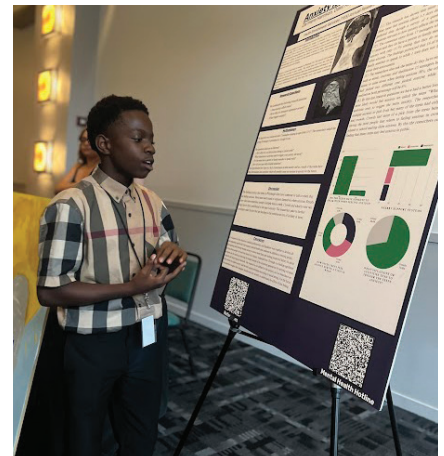


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WHAT IS YES?

Youth Enrichment Services (YES) is a grassroots non-profit organization located in East Liberty, Pittsburgh dedicated to serving the youth and families of our community and the greater Pittsburgh area. YES offers a wide range of programs designed to meet the specific needs of youth served, and constantly strives to help youth become their best selves and develop into their own greatest resource. Through efforts in mentorship, education, advocacy, and exposure, YES aims to equip, empower, and enrich students by providing educational, social, cultural, and workforce opportunities that prepare them for success.

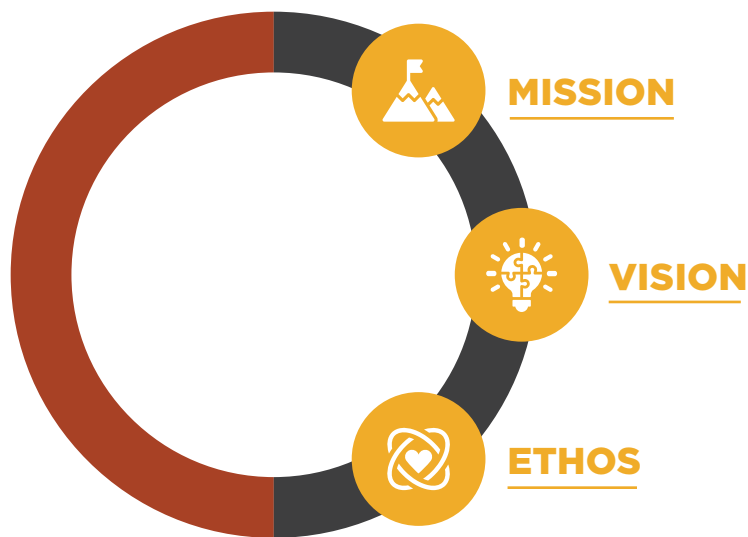


Since 1994, YES has served over 5,000 youth ages 6 to 24 through its year-round programming which includes: academic enrichment, alternative to detention, peer mentoring, life skills training, cultural enrichment, diversity awareness, workforce readiness, symposiums, and wellness-based programming. YES seeks to empower communities holistically to become their own best resource. To accomplish this, YES provides social and economically at-risk youth of color opportunities to explore, challenge, and rewrite the limiting and harmful narratives they have been given by society as a means of self realization, systemic change, and becoming intentional community stewards, despite barriers to success, like the school-to-prison pipeline. YES' position in the community is like the confluence of 3 rivers in its ability to prioritize serving youth on the margin by adapting to changing needs and directly confronting the social, economic, and academic injustices and disparities that overwhelmingly affect them.



VALUE STATEMENTS: MISSION, VISION, & ETHOS

Youth Enrichment Services, YES, was established to paint portraits for youth of themselves as successful, empowered, and confident leaders. With a research-driven programming model and a youth-centered focus, YES has created a lasting legacy of successfully preparing young people for their post-secondary futures. Through mentorship, experiential opportunities, academic enrichment, and summer employment, YES provides youth with opportunities to realize their goals and interests and develop strong professional relationships with various community entities.



MISSION

YES provides socially and economically at-risk youth the opportunity to achieve success through participation in mentorship, education, and enrichment programs.

VISION

YES seeks to empower communities to become their own best resource.

ETHOS

Every student matters and there are no throw away children.

MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

“

A summer of justice focused activities and events went true to form, and a good time was had by all.

”

Youth Enrichment Services has had an extremely consequential and impactful summer. There were over 100 youths that participated in the Learn and Earn Program sponsored by Partner4Work. Through the work on their research projects, sanctioned activities, paintings, quilts, and most importantly, measured goals, the summer's theme of Justice really took off. Because many of the research projects, activities, outcomes and objectives focused on justice, we saw many creative and positive civic learning projects that took on big questions, and had even larger solutions. The summer ended with over 200 parents, adults, stakeholders, gathered around a Research colloquium on August 7th at the Heinz History Center. Here, they witnessed the brilliance of over 100 youth presenters who displayed meaningful projects as a result of many weeks of hard work. Eye catching, intriguing, scary-good, and amazing, were just a few of the terms folks used to describe the youths' presentations. This was one of the more unique and innovative sets of presentations that came from YES students.

What made this program extra special was the confluence of summer interns, summer teachers, consultants, volunteers, and YES staff who were all focused on the same goal. They were one team with one dream. The dream being a community that bolstered student agency, interest, and achievement. YES is grateful to the Grable Foundation for their contribution to pay for some of the summer instructors, the Richard King Mellon foundation that helped fill the gap, and most importantly, Partner4Work. Partner4Work has been our best friend, colleague, and partner throughout this entire process. From initial recruitment, to the ultimate funding of over 94 students, who each had the potential to make over \$1,000 for the summer, Partner4Work was truly supportive.

While reading this report, you will see a recap of the 3 day trip to Detroit and Ann Arbor Michigan, where students toured multiple universities, visited historical museums, rogue car factories, and the automobile hall of fame. Approximately 100 students and staff were able to see first hand another part of the country, particularly a midwest city that is famous for the outward migration of African Americans who settled in the Detroit area. Individuals whose lasting legacy became noteworthy for many reasons. But among the most fruitful traditions included their contribution to the legacy, enterprise, culture, politics, and governance of a great city and community.

In brief, these students worked on advanced projects that helped them maintain high-level learning skills throughout the summer. In addition, they participated in a short course in partnership with the University of Pittsburgh, UPMC, and the Department of Children's Medicine, under the leadership of Dr. Allison Cylba and Dr. Karen Miller. A highlight of the summer was our 3rd Annual Violence Intervention Symposium, where over 250 youth and adults engaged in Violence Intervention Symposium efforts. All in all, after a successful summer and as we enter our 30th year of serving the city of Pittsburgh, it is safe to say that the YES star is still on the rise, and the best days are still ahead.

Dr. Dennis Floyd Jones
Executive Director





SUMMER THEME: DREAMS AFFIRMED THROUGH JUSTICE, SELF-ADVOCACY, AND CAREER EXPLORATION



Justice is the idea that all people are to be treated fairly, properly, and reasonably. However, we know that this is not always the reality. Many of us have experienced injustice and can identify when it occurs based on our previous experiences. But what if we do not have that lived experience? What happens if injustice happens in a way that is unfamiliar to us? How do we realize when injustice is happening? The ability to identify when your needs are not being met and speaking up for yourself is called self-advocacy. Self-advocacy involves communicating your needs clearly so that others understand how to support you. This is an essential skill in situations where you are NOT being treated fairly, properly, and reasonably. Self-advocacy helps you seek justice.

Recognizing injustice and learning to **self-advocate** are not always easy, but it becomes a lot easier when you have goals that you are passionate about achieving. Though it may not be obvious at first, **career exploration** is a great way to discover your passions and achieve your dreams. You can explore your interests, develop and improve old and new skills, and recognize what you value not just in a job, but in your life to come. Through this process, you will learn how to advocate for yourself and seek justice when appropriate.

REPORT SUMMARY

REPORT PURPOSE AND STRUCTURE

Annually, YES provides youth with summer experiences during which they engage in meaningful work, develop their academic skills, and gain exposure to Pittsburgh's social and cultural landscape. These immersive opportunities shape youths' interests and future possibilities and ultimately guide them toward their post-secondary journeys. This report reflects on the process, goals, and outcomes of YES' summer programming.





KEY FINDINGS

Data reveal that students engaged meaningfully in YES' summer program. Students also developed new academic and professional competencies, thought critically about their hopes for their futures, and engaged in a variety of spaces that uplifted youth voices and perspectives.

109

youth participated in summer programming

52%

of students were first time participants

\$136,650

paid to students in work and training wages

140

students worked on average

25

research projects were produced by students

62

students completed the FFISH Program

90%

of students enjoyed their course instructor

86%

of students gained friends through the program

72%

of students attended cultural outing to Detroit, MI

4

students presented at a leadership conference in Harrisburg, PA

24

students participated in a conference in Lancaster, PA

72%

of students engaged in Violence Intervention Symposium work

WHAT IS SUMMER LEARN AND EARN? HOW IS YES DIFFERENT?

YES' summer program provides youth with a transformative learning experience that moves beyond the traditional employment model. YES students not only engage as youth employees at their worksites, but they also participate in social and cultural outings and explore learning through experiential courses with their peers. These enriching experiences make YES' program distinct and impactful. YES' summer programming leverages evidence-based practices and literature that reinforces the importance of supplementing students' workforce skill building with peer relationship development and academic enrichment. YES intentionally integrates employability preparation, academic enrichment, and sociocultural development into its model to maximize students' summer experiences, prepare youth for future employment opportunities, broaden their academic possibilities, and deepen their peer and community connections. These components are critical to youths' development and are explored in further detail below.

EMPLOYABILITY PREPARATION

Employability preparation is a central component of YES' program model. YES exposes youth to diverse careers and work environments to help them develop knowledge of employer expectations and workplace behavior. Students work in the capacity of consultants, collaborators, and partners and contribute meaningfully to their workplaces' missions. These early work experiences help youth build their economic capacity, create valuable mentorship relationships, gain hard and soft skills, and solidify their educational and career interests.



ACADEMIC ENRICHMENT

Academic enrichment is an essential element of YES' program model. Given the nature of summer learning loss and educational disparities impacting underserved youth (Kuhfield and Tarasawa, 2020; Gonzalez, 2016; Cooper, 2007; Alexander et al., 2007), YES prioritizes experiential learning opportunities that help students improve their academic aptitude, post-secondary preparedness, and overall connection to learning. Students' academic experiences are channeled through experiential learning courses and participatory and project-based research projects that reflect youths' real-life experiences, interests, and curiosities. Youth are on the front line of these investigations and develop tangible skills that transcend their summer experience.

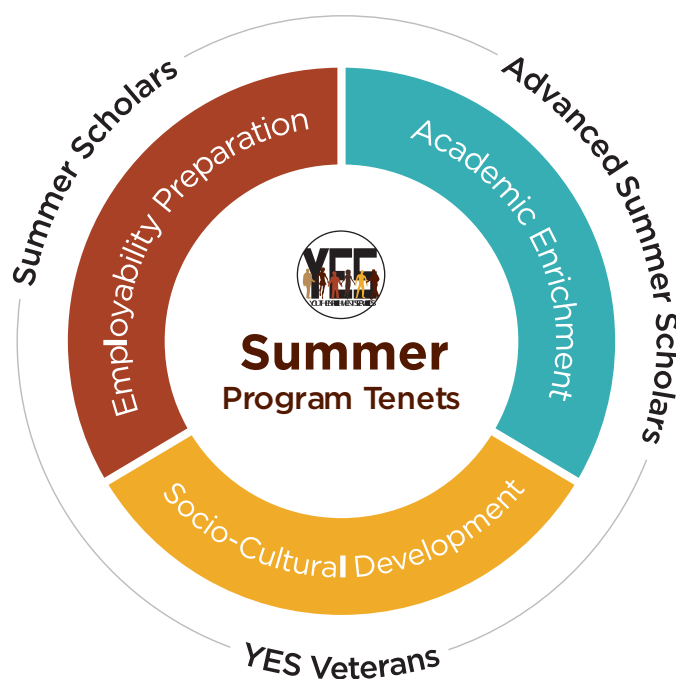


SOCIO-CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

Socio-cultural development is the final dimension of YES' program model. YES aligns with the belief that learning happens within social contexts and through peer interactions, which are mediated by culture, language, and environment. Because of this, YES cultivates a space for students to learn in community with others and through peer scaffolds. Given that learning is also a cultural process, YES creates socio-cultural experiences that expose students to new opportunities while also prioritizing their socially situated and culturally valued ways of knowing, being, and acting (Nasir et al., 2014). YES incorporates students' cultural practices and lived experiences into programming, especially through social and cultural outings which are unique learning venues for youth to strengthen peer bonds and develop alliances.



YES' summer program model is also unique in that it facilitates a graduated engagement process to make programming accessible to a broad range of students and to meet youths' developmental needs. YES' three-tiered program pathway, which tailors service provision to the above model components, involves Summer Scholars, Advanced Summer Scholars, and YES Veterans. Summer Scholars are youth with minimal work experience seeking experiential learning opportunities, peer development, and career exposure. YES' Advanced Summer Scholars program builds on this foundation and is structured for individuals with previous work experience. As YES students move through the various program pathways, they deepen their technical skills, build their leadership capacity in employment settings, and ignite their intellectual curiosity through research. YES Veterans are college- and career-bound youth who have engaged in YES programming for three or more years (or are older than 18) and are seeking high-level leadership positions or independent internships within YES or at local institutions.



SUMMER PROGRAM COHORTS		
<p>Summer Scholars</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > 14 year olds > Entering High School or 10th grade > Limited or no previous job experience 	<p>Advanced Summer Scholars</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > 15-17 year olds > Current high school students > Previous participant or limited prior work experience 	<p>YES Veterans</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > 18-21 year old > Graduates currently in college or postsecondary career paths > Longtime YES participants with ample work experience

YOUTH HIGHLIGHTS

YES is fortunate enough to have phenomenal youth that engage fully in summer programming activities. While we wish we could highlight several more, here are a few who engaged and showed passion throughout the summer.

CAMERON JONES

Cameron Jones, a Senior at Propel Andrew Street High School, has consistently led by example among his peers. Cameron is an active participant in YES' Teen Council, and has participated in multiple semesters of the Youth Civic Leadership Academy (YCLA). Over the summer, Cameron managed successfully completing two classes at CCAC, and taking on a leadership role during YES' Annual Violence Intervention Symposium Symposium. We are thankful for Cameron's passion and intentionality in his efforts to make the community a better place. We look forward to continuing to follow his journey as he begins college in the fall.



AMIRA BOGAN

Amira Bogan started at YES during summer 2023 as an Advanced Summer Scholar. She continued developing her leadership skills as a scholar in the Youth Civic Leadership Academy's (YCLA) Fall 2023 Cohort. This summer, Amira took the reins as a leader during our Annual Violence Intervention Symposium Symposium with a powerful call to action speech to her peers. Her perspective and leadership during group sessions was important and meaningful, and she was determined to speak up for others, even when the things that needed to be said and heard were unpopular. As a junior, Amira has continued as a YCLA VET and Teen Council advocate as we continue to see her emerge as a leader among her peers.



DANIELLE CHAVIS

Danielle Chavis, a YES VET, has participated in YES' Summer Learn and Earn for several years. This year, she served as lead intern and supported youth while working at Lady Carpenter. Through this experience, she demonstrated and executed effective work skills and set a precedent for YES VET engagement and future interns at Lady Carpenter. Way to go, Danielle.



THE ZEROUKI FAMILY

YES' FFISH program was specially designed to engage youth from Kindergarten through 8th grade in physical and mental health activities. We are proud of all of the youth who participated this summer. Adam, Noureen, and Aya have been a part of the FFISH program since it began in 2021, and have continued to participate through summer 2024. Adam, Noureen and Aya have engaged in swimming, basketball, and golf. We look forward to seeing these young people continue their participation in the FFISH program, and their transition into their school sports programs.



SUMMER STAFF HIGHLIGHTS



INSTRUCTOR HIGHLIGHT: SARAH NACKMAN

Instructors are an integral part of YES' Summer Programming and Academic Enrichment, and help actualize YES' **ETHOS** of "every student matters and there are no throw away children". By leveraging their career expertise, instructors develop and deliver engaging learning experiences that challenge our youth to explore and investigate topics of interest in ways that can open doors for new opportunities and aspirations.

Ms. Sarah Nackman earned her Bachelor's Degree in 2023, and Master's Degree in Public Health from the University of Pittsburgh in 2024. She started at YES as a Bridging the GAP summer intern in 2023, and developed a music production - centered apprenticeship for our Summer Scholars. Furthermore, she helped support the Summer Scholars in the completion of their Youth Participatory Action Research Projects (YPAR). Ms. Sarah's passion for our youth and YES' mission led her to return as the "Good to Go: Health Justice Lab" instructor this summer. Ms. Sarah's contributions to YES are immeasurable. She will be transitioning to the Americorps' National Health Corps at Children's Hospital in January, and we are excited for her future.





INTERN HIGHLIGHT: SOPHIE BEASLEY

Interns are an integral part of YES' School Year and Summer Programming. Interns help staff actualize YES' **ETHOS** of "every student matters and there are no throw away children". Our internships provide hands-on experience and direct opportunities to impact the community. Furthermore, our internships can be tailored to support students looking for jobs (paid hours), volunteer hours, and credit hours towards graduation.

Ms. Sophie Beasley is a senior Communication Science Major with a specialization in speech therapy, a minor in education, and an ASL certificate. Ms. Sophie began working with YES Fall of 2023, supporting our Youth Civic Leadership Academy (YCLA) and Power Hour Tutoring Programs. Ms. Sophie's ability to connect with our youth led her to stay and work with our Summer Scholars. Ms. Sophie co-taught our Leaning into the Freshman Experience (L.I.F.E.) lab where she creatively equipped our Summer Scholars with skill building and wellness techniques for a successful transition into high school.





GUIDING QUESTIONS

To better understand the overall impact YES had on the summer experiences of youth, we explored how effective YES was at achieving their goals for each program component. Within employability preparation, our goals were to expose youth to meaningful work experiences that supported their future career and professional interests, supporting the development of soft and hard skills that will allow them to succeed in their future work experiences. Within academic enrichment, we engaged students in research projects that were relevant and justice-focused. Within socio-cultural development, we supported the development of positive support networks with adults and peers and exposed students to wellness activities that supported their overall well-being.

To guide our understanding of youths' experiences and their alignment with our component goals, we asked overall research questions under each component. Each domain was explored through questions on a survey to youth before and after participating in our summer Learn and Earn Program. Quantitative and qualitative survey data regarding participant affect, self-reported skills, and motivations helped us gain a comprehensive understanding of program effectiveness and youth perspectives and outcomes.



EMPLOYABILITY PREPARATION

- Were students satisfied with their worksite?
- Did students learn skills that are essential to succeeding in the workforce?
- Did students' work experience support career development and work readiness skills?

ACADEMIC ENRICHMENT

- How did the summer learning courses impact students' understanding of research and social justice?
- How were research projects different from previous years?

SOCIO-CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

- What is holistic wellness, and how did it inform our Wellness Wednesday programming?
- Did students develop peer and adult relationships that were healthy and positive?

SPECIALITY OUTCOMES: LOOKING INTO THE FUTURE

- How did YES' Summer Learn and Earn program impact students' future career or educational goals?
- How does YES support the development of students' hoped-for possible selves and the steps they must take to achieve their self-identified possible selves?

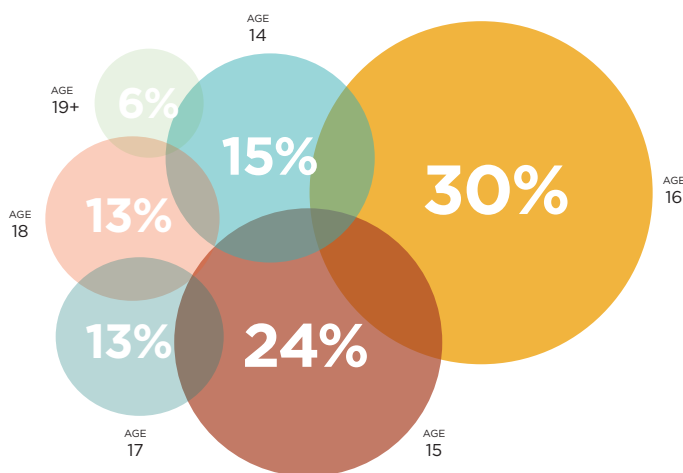


PROGRAM OUTCOMES

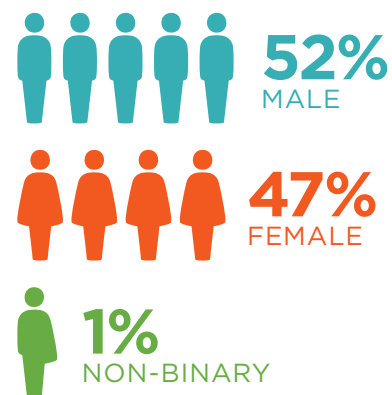
SOCIAL IDENTITY

The reported demographics, including age, gender identity, first language, and race/ethnicity, characterize the student population who participated in the YES Learn and Earn in Summer 2024.

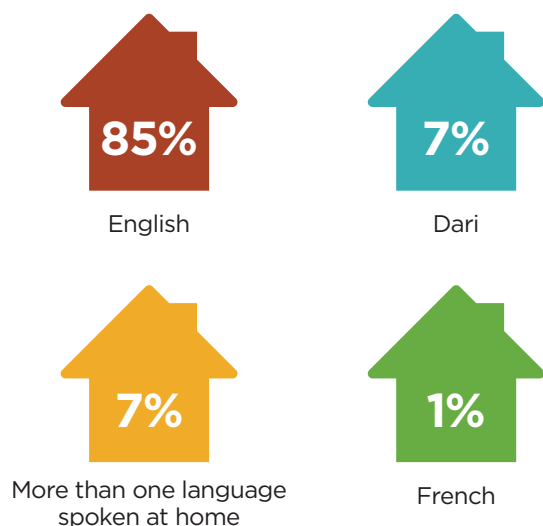
STUDENT AGE



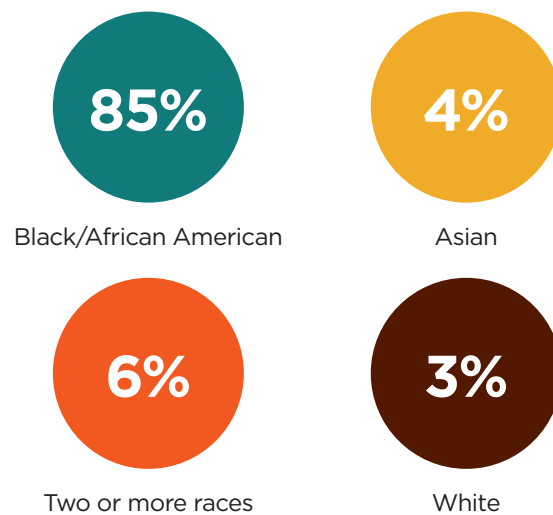
GENDER IDENTITY



MAIN LANGUAGE SPOKEN AT HOME



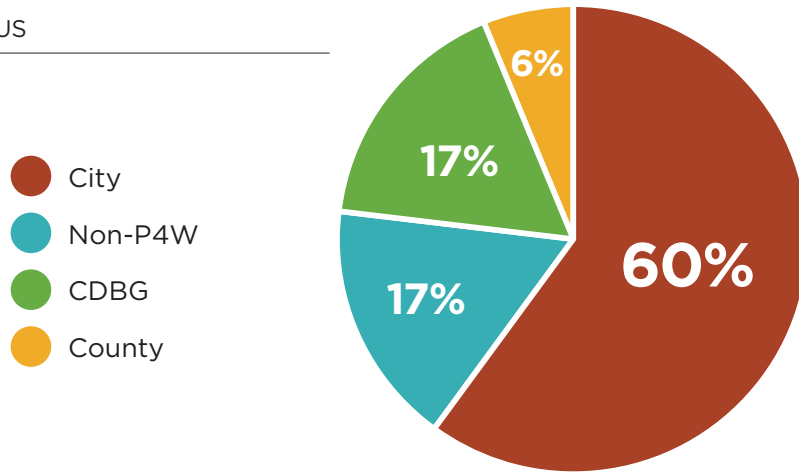
STUDENT RACIAL BACKGROUND



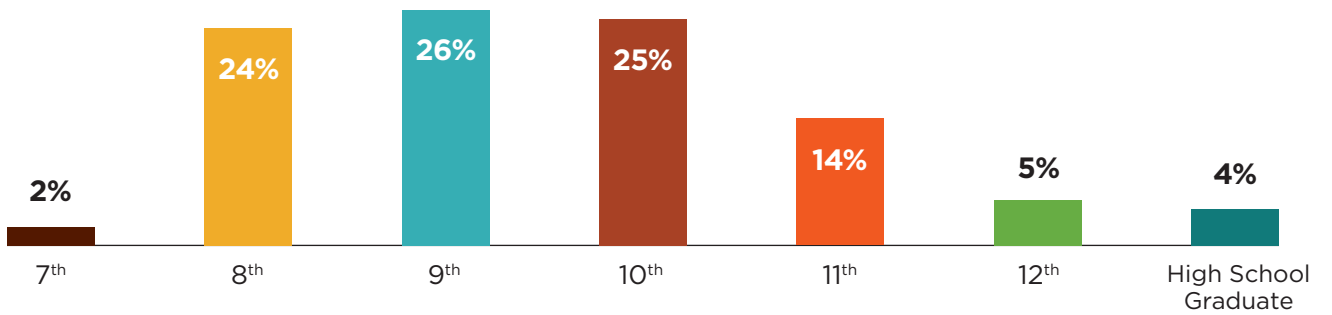
RESIDENCY AND EDUCATION

The reported demographics, including residency, grade, and school district, characterizes the educational background of the student population who participated in the YES Learn and Earn in Summer 2024.

RESIDENCY STATUS



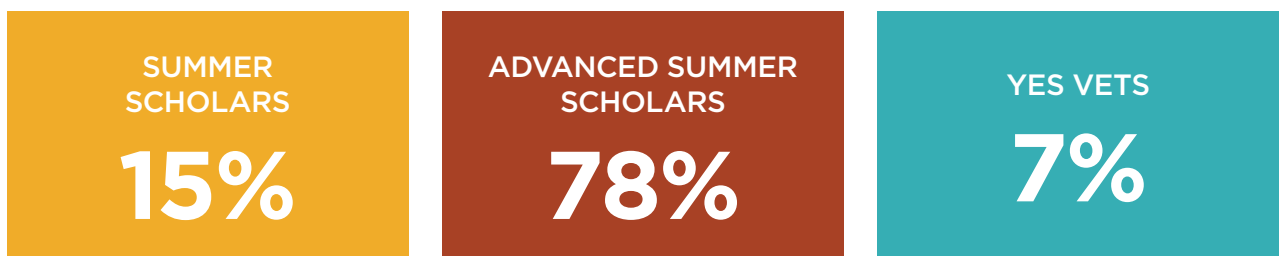
GRADE



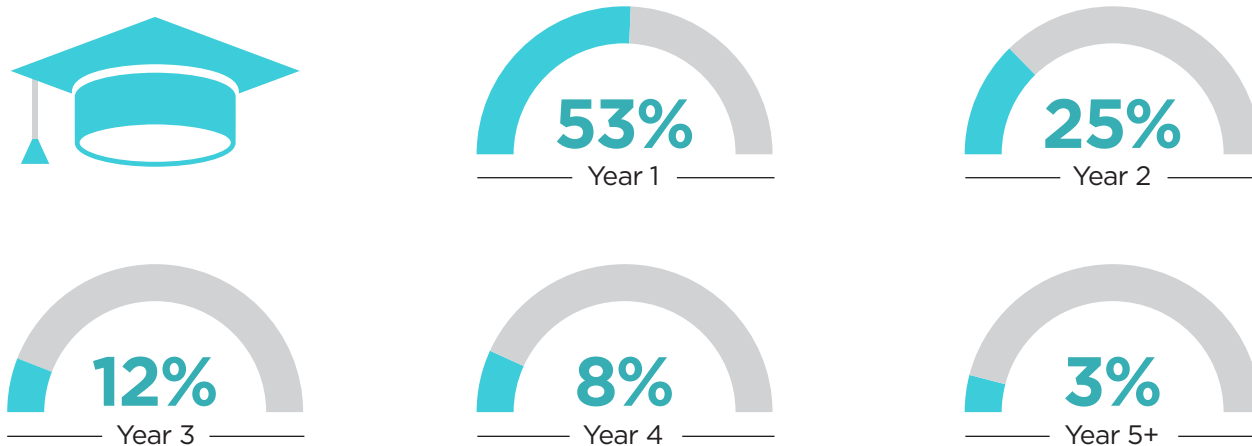
POSITIONING STUDENTS WITHIN THE YES COMMUNITY

The reported demographics characterize the YES Learn and Earn students for Summer 2024 in terms of their cohort type and years of participation in YES' Learn and Earn program.

COHORT



YEARS WITH LEARN AND EARN



Every year, YES strives to bring in new students and provide continued support to those who have participated in the past. More than **50%** of our participants join YES through the Summer Learn and Earn program, and many continue to participate in Fall programming and additional summers of Learn and Earn, as illustrated below. This year, **52.5%** of participants (n=53) experienced their first year in Learn and Earn with YES.

MOTIVATIONAL BACKGROUND

One crucial aspect of successful programming is understanding what motivates students to participate, which is crucial for tailoring and individualizing students' experiences in the Learn and Earn program to best meet their needs. In order to understand what motivates students to participate through their eyes, we asked students: Why did you choose to participate in YES' Learn and Earn program over other summer experiences? The question was open ended, and students wrote what most motivated them to participate in their own words. Student responses were analyzed using two overarching themes, extrinsic and intrinsic motivations, adapted from Ryan & Deci's (2000) work. To further understand students' participation motivation, common sub themes across students' responses were identified and then grouped to create 10 sub themes in total. A summary of these themes, their corresponding sub themes, and short descriptions, are provided below.

Note: Students were allowed to select multiple responses

INTRINSIC MOTIVATION

Intrinsic motivation consists of 5 sub themes that represent youth identifying goals and behaviors that are personally relevant and meaningful to them, and then taking actionable steps to pursue them. Overall, **57%** of students selected intrinsic motivators as their reasons for participating.

INTRINSIC MOTIVATION	
<p>WORK EXPERIENCE Motivated to participate in YES' Learn and Earn to gain work experience and develop/gain competence in aspects related to work.</p>	13%
<p>RELATIONSHIPS Motivated by the prospect of building, or already established, relationships with YES staff and/or other students attending programming. This theme also includes motivation to participate because they are interested in the community created by YES staff.</p>	11%
<p>PERSONAL INTERESTS & VALUES Motivated by personal interest in programming/curriculum, attending previous programming and enjoying it, love or like for learning in general, personal values.</p>	24%
<p>LONG-TERM TRAJECTORIES Motivated by the predicted ability of YES' learn and earn program to support youth's future endeavors, including: support finding future career, supporting college applications, and improving life in the long run.</p>	8%
<p>FAMILIARITY Motivated to participate in YES because they had previously engaged with YES in the past or a sibling did, but did not cite a personal reason for why they chose to continue to participate.</p>	12%

“

I chose this because of the benefits that it can give. It can help me with applying for jobs in the future, my resume for when I wanna go to college, to meet new people, and learn and view ways into human life.

”

EXTRINSIC MOTIVATION

Extrinsic motivation consists of 5 sub themes that represent youth who are motivated by reasons that are external in nature, or motivation that comes from something outside of personal interests and drives. Overall, **49%** of students selected extrinsic motivators as their reasons for participating.

EXTRINSIC MOTIVATION		
RECOMMENDATION Motivated by a recommendation from someone else, like a family member, coach, mentor, or YES staff.		9%
AUTHORITY COMPLIANCE Motivated by being told, or forced, to participate in this program.		3%
OBTAIN REWARD Motivated by money, or getting a job in order to get money.		20%
ENVIRONMENTAL Motivated by environmental/situational factors that are outside of a student's control, including: accessibility of YES' location, only program they know in the area, and nothing else to do.		15%
SOCIAL APPROVAL Motivated by building credibility/respect, acting as a role model to younger siblings, and generally seeking approval from others.		2%

An integral part of YES' programmatic model is not only the ability to recruit participants, but to provide programming that motivates students to come back year after year, illustrated by YES' motto, "They come because they have to, and stay because they want to." To explore the underpinnings of this motivational model, participant motivations within year 1, 2, and 3+ of participating in YES' Learn and Earn program were analyzed to understand how student's motivations change as the years they participate increases.

PROGRAM OUTCOMES

Overtime, students' motivations for engaging with YES' programming shifted from external factors, to more meaningful and concrete reasons for engagement. For students in their first year with YES' Learn and Earn program, **52%** selected intrinsic reasons for participation, while **65%** of students in their second year and **62%** of students in their third year or more selected intrinsic motivations. Furthermore, while **56%** of first years selected extrinsic motivations for participation, only **40%** of second years and **43%** of students in their third year or more selected extrinsic motivations for participation. A breakdown of student's reasons for participating by year is presented below.

INTRINSIC

THEME	YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3
Familiarity	6%	10%	29%
Work Experience	17%	10%	10%
Relationships	15%	5%	10%
Personal Values & Interests	21%	40%	14%
Long Term Trajectories	10%	5%	5%

EXTRINSIC

THEME	YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3
Recommendation	13%	5%	5%
Authority Compliance	2%	5%	5%
Obtain Reward	19%	30%	14%
Environmental	21%	0%	14%
Social Approval	2%	0%	5%

“
 Because I love the people in YES
 and I'm all about grounding myself
 in communities.
 ”



FACTS AND FIGURES

15,195

TOTAL HOURS WORKED

140

AVERAGE HOURS WORKED

\$136,650

TOTAL WAGES EARNED

\$1,250

AVERAGE WAGES EARNED

OVERVIEW OF YOUTH WORK EXPERIENCES

To best support students in developing the skills they need to be successful in their future endeavors, work experiences were tailored to fit the needs of students within each cohort, which includes a range of ages, previous work experiences, and future career interests. A summary of the work experiences provided to youth within each cohort is provided above.



Every year, **Summer Scholars** engage in unique apprenticeships. The purpose of these apprenticeships is to provide Summer Scholars with the necessary skills to successfully engage in work environments. Apprenticeships are designed by highly skilled interns, who turn their hobbies and unique talents into an opportunity for youth to explore new areas.

SUMMER SCHOLARS APPRENTICESHIPS

ART FOR RESILIENT TEENS (ART): PLYWOOD MURALS | 4 Students

ART is an arts-based, comprehensive apprenticeship program that allows teens in Pittsburgh to express themselves and aim for social change through community building and public/street art. Pittsburgh is one of the largest street art communities in the nation. That said, this apprenticeship aims to address the state of social injustice and health disparities in Pittsburgh's underrepresented communities through street art representation. By doing applied advocacy and activist art, we can strive to understand the impacts, connections, and creative possibilities of an art form that reaches beyond the classroom.

DISCOVER THE ARTIST WITHIN: A FIVE-WEEK PAINTING JOURNEY (ABSTRACT, STILL LIFE, PORTRAIT, LANDSCAPE) | 3 Students

Discover the Artist Within is a 5-week painting apprenticeship. Each week, participants explore new painting styles - from the bold expressions of abstract art to the intricate details of realism. Each session includes hands-on demonstrations, and personal projects, culminating in a group exhibition of work.

INTRODUCTION TO MUSIC VIDEO PRODUCTION | 4 Students

Introduction to Music Video Production is an apprenticeship designed to explore aspects of the music and video industry through the development of a music video. Through this medium, participants engage in developing concept maps, creating choreography, justifying fashion decisions, determining effective music selection, and how to piece these elements together using editing software.

IMPACT ON FASHION | 5 Students

Impact on Fashion is an apprenticeship designed to help participants learn what it takes to develop their own fashion pieces. Through this experience, participants learn how fashion is used to reflect messages about current events, life milestones, and identity. Participants learn the through-lines that impacted fashion years ago to modern day. Leveraging this knowledge and understanding, participants will create their own fashion pieces to convey a message, and possibly a solution to modern issues.

Advanced Summer Scholars gained their hands-on employment training through their external summer work placements at various community agencies and entities listed below.

SUMMER WORK PLACEMENT (# of students)					
ALCOSAN	2	Ammons Recreation Center	1	Andy Warhol	3
BFIIT	1	CCAC Community Impact Fellowship	3	Citiparks - Phillips	1
Citiparks - Paulson Recreation Center	1	City Theatre Company	2	Dreamz Hair Salon	2
East End Cooperative Ministry	4	Hope for Tomorrow	1	iShip & Pack	2
Learning to Learn Childcare Center	1	MOOKS Childcare Center	3	Mount Ararat Community Center	9
MYDC	1	Neighborhood Academy	1	North Way Christian Community	11
Parkway West Career & Technology Center	1	Pittsburgh Hardball Academy	1	Reading Mentors	1
Reformed Presbyterian Home	12	Simply Kidz Zone Early Learning Childcare, LLC	2	Summer Meal Support	2
The Lady Carpenter, LLC	2	Urban League of Greater Pittsburgh	8	Westinghouse Football	1

YES Vets obtained their employment training through internships and self-designed independent projects. These opportunities provided students with opportunities to design 6-week projects or internships that align with their career, academic, or personal interests.

<p>Independent Projects & Internships</p>	<p>Navigating the Pittsburgh Rental Market as a Black Woman</p>
	<p>Building Organizational Infrastructure to Support Community-Based Gardening Organization: Volunteer Community Gardens</p>
	<p>Developing Youth Leaders to Intervene Against Violence</p>
	<p>Creating Sustainable Housing and Living Communities in Pittsburgh</p>
	<p>Utilizing Natural Remedies to Support Individuals' Medical Needs in Pittsburgh</p>

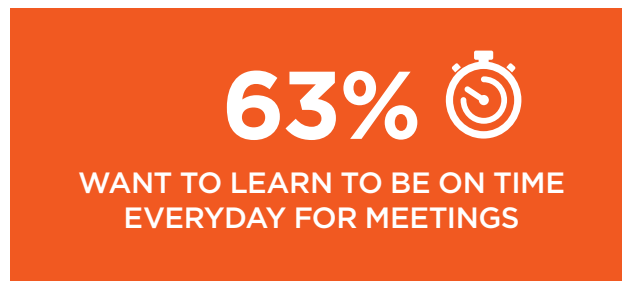
EMPLOYABILITY PREPARATION

YES firmly believes in not only providing youth with opportunities, but also preparing them to be their own best resource. Thus, students engaged in pre-employment training and exercises to prepare them for positive and successful experiences at their various worksites. Prior to the program, participants attended an employment showcase, where they were engaged with worksite representatives to help them select their top choices. Efforts were made to place students with their desired preferences.

Following pre-employment training, students were given a pre-survey to capture their feelings about their worksite placements, assess their confidence in their employability skills, and express what skills they hoped to develop through the experience. The results on the next page highlight youths' pre-work responses.



Q: Please rate how much you agree with the following statements about what you hope to learn from your summer work experience.

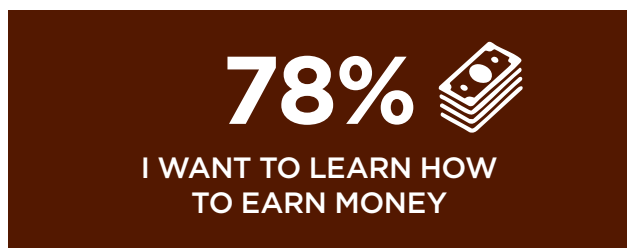


NOTE: Students were able to select multiple options.

Q: What is the greatest thing you hope to gain from YES' Learn and Earn program?

82% noted that learning a new skill was the greatest thing they hoped to gain from participating in the program, suggesting students were interested in further developing soft and hard work skills to support their future career interests.

Additional Responses:



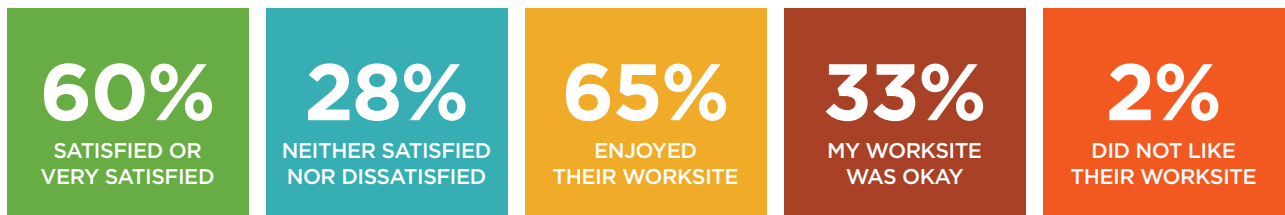
NOTE: Students were able to select multiple options.

ASSESSMENT OF WORK EXPERIENCE

WERE STUDENTS SATISFIED WITH THEIR WORKSITE?

Q: *On a scale of 1 to 5, how satisfied were you with your worksite placement?*

60% of students were satisfied or very satisfied with their worksite placement, while **28%** were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with their placement. Overall, more than half of students were satisfied with their worksite placement.



When asked if they enjoyed their worksite, **65%** of students noted that they enjoyed their worksite placement, and only **2%** of students did not like their worksite. This suggests that YES provided worksite options that were aligned with student’s interests and matched students with their top worksite choices.

DID STUDENTS LEARN SKILLS THAT ARE ESSENTIAL TO SUCCEEDING IN THE WORKFORCE?

Quantitative data was collected through a questionnaire developed by Partner4Work to determine skills gained and/or developed through the summer experience. When asked “*What was the greatest thing you gained from Learn and Earn,*” the majority of students said that learning new skills was the greatest thing they gained.

WHAT WAS THE GREATEST THING GAINED FROM LEARN AND EARN?	# of Studentss
LEARNING NEW SKILLS	40
MAKING MONEY	21
AN UNDERSTANDING OF WORK ETHICS AND PROFESSIONALISM	15
DEVELOPING RELATIONSHIPS WITH PEERS AND ADULTS	7
WORKING MY FIRST JOB	4

To better understand the nuance of the skills students learned over the summer, participants were provided with statements about soft and hard skill learning outcomes and were asked to rate their level of agreement on a scale of 1 to 5 (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree). When asked if *“I learned about jobs/careers I would like in the future,”* **41%** of students agreed or strongly agreed following their work experience. Participant responses ranged from **34%** to **47%** when asked to rate their agreement for the following additional statements regarding skills learned through their work experience:

47%	I learned how to work in a group, even when I didn't get along with everyone.	47%	I learned how to get through parts of work that I don't like.
46%	I learned about workplace ethics, so I know what's right or wrong behavior when you have a job.	43%	I learned to be on time everyday for meetings.
43%	I learned how to manage my time to complete projects.	41%	I learned how to talk in front of a group
41%	I learned a new skill that I did not have before.	41%	I improved my ability to use technology.
37%	I learned about how to use a bank account to manage my money.	34%	I learned how to read a pay stub.

Overall, the results suggest that under half of students learned and refined skills in YES' Summer Learn and Earn program that are critical to success in today's workforce, including: interpersonal skills, time management, dependability, digital literacy, professionalism, and public speaking. It is important to note that the majority of students, ranging from **43-50%**, chose “neither agree or disagree” to each statement, which may be attributed to students not yet fully reflecting on what skills they gained from their work experience or uncertainty of the statements alignment with their personal learning outcomes. The lowest agreement, ranging **34%** to **47%**, was related to financial literacy and understanding job-related documentation, suggesting that students may need additional support in managing their wages independently.

DID STUDENTS' WORK EXPERIENCE SUPPORT CAREER DEVELOPMENT AND WORK READINESS SKILLS?

Career Development

Students were asked questions to determine if their work experiences contributed to determining and working towards their career interests. **41%** of participants agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, "This work experience has helped me to develop and/or gain skills that will be useful in my future career." These results suggest that through students' perspectives, an outcome of their work experience they deem personally relevant is the skill development that is transferable and useful in future employment contexts. However, a smaller proportion of participants (**32%-38%**) agreed with the statement regarding the work experience's influence on their future career aspirations. This may be due to the younger ages of students attending programming (8th - 10th graders), where these students tend to engage in identity and career exploration and may not have fully conceptualized their future career aspirations.

41%	This work experience has helped me to develop and/or gain skills that will be useful in my future career.			
38%	This work experience helped me to think about my future career opportunities.	37%	This work experience aligned with my future goals.	
34%	My worksite helped me to develop new career interests.		32%	My worksite helped me to solidify my career interests.



Career Readiness

To gain an understanding of how YES' Learn and Earn program supported the development of career readiness skills, quantitative data was collected through a questionnaire developed by Partner4Work and questions adapted from the [Casey Life Skills Toolkit](#). For each question, participants were provided a statement regarding their knowledge about the basic logistics of getting a job, and were asked to rate their level of agreeance (1=Strongly Disagree, 5=Strongly Agree). Overall, about half of the participants agreed or strongly agreed that they feel confident in their ability to communicate effectively, suggesting that YES contributed to the development of interpersonal skills that can be applied across work contexts. Furthermore, about half of participants agreed or strongly agreed that they knew how to prepare and dress for a job interview, which are essential when presenting oneself and landing a job based on how they communicate during the interview. It is important to note that the majority of students chose “neither agree or disagree” to each statement, which may be attributed to survey fatigue or lack of students reading and answering the questions thoroughly.

50%	I know who to ask to get documents I need for work (e.g., social security card, birth certificate, state ID, or work permit).useful in my future career.	
49%	I feel confident in my ability to communicate effectively.	49% I know what workplace discrimination is.
48%	I know how to prepare and dress for a job interview.	47% I know people who can help me find a job.
45%	I know what workplace sexual harassment is.	44% I know how to fill out an online and paper job application.
43%	I can take feedback and guidance at work to improve my work.	42% I feel confident in my ability to interview for jobs.
42%	I know how to use a planner, calendar, or phone to plan out and keep track of important dates and assignments.	
40%	I possess the necessary technical skills relevant to my chosen career field.opportunities.	
38%	I know my legal rights as a part-time or full-time employee.	38% I have an up-to-date professional resume to use in my job search.

ACADEMIC ENRICHMENT



SUMMER SCHOLARS - YOUTH PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH JUSTICE LAB

For six weeks, **Summer Scholars** engage in Youth Participatory Action Research, also known as YPAR, an innovative approach rooted in social justice and community development principles (*Youth Participatory Action Research*, 2020). YPAR positions youth as knowledge producers, decision makers, and invested stakeholders to generate social, cultural, and political transformation. YPAR is an epistemic paradigm shift that values young people's wisdom and knowledge and challenges the traditional, adult-centered research regime. Through concerted and power-sharing efforts, young people, adults, and community members collaborate to conduct and lead systemic research to improve their lives, their communities, and the institutions intended to serve them. The YPAR process honors relationships and builds community trust by establishing mutual reciprocity and respect between researchers and the community. More details about student projects can be found on [our website](#).

Additionally, our youth participated in two other labs, described below:

CHANGEMAKERS OF PITTSBURGH

This summer, we focus on justice, advocacy, and activism as we equip youth to understand domains of justice, manage conflict, solve problems, make quality decisions, and recognize cultural bias. This lab is created to help youth explore what it means to be a changemaker through exploring past changemakers, meeting current changemakers through weekly field trips, and identifying ways in which they are, and can be changemakers themselves. This lab is meant to take youth on a journey of self-discovery to explore relevant issues meant to stroke curiosity, inspire action, and elicit youth voice. This student-centered experience serves as a vehicle through which we prepare our youth to become self-advocates and claim their futures.

LEANING INTO THE FRESHMAN EXPERIENCE (L.I.F.E)

This lab prepares students for high school by giving them tools, advice, and guidance on navigating this big life change. Creating a sense of community and support among students and encouraging conversation will help them feel confident in themselves to start high school.



ADVANCED SUMMER SCHOLARS - JUSTICE LABS



This summer, we focus on **justice, advocacy, and activism** as we equip youth to understand domains of justice, manage conflict, solve problems, make quality decisions, and recognize cultural bias. As a part of YES' commitment to serving as a community public health intervention, YES creatively blends social justice, research, and the social determinants of health to create a unique learning experience for program participants. The learning lab topics serve as the lens through which participants can explore relevant issues meant to stroke curiosity, inspire action, and elicit youth voice. This student-centered experience is coupled with YES' research curriculum as a vehicle through which we prepare our youth to become self-advocates and claim their futures.

This year, YES combined our standard research curriculum with our specialty courses to afford Advanced Summer Scholars the opportunity to dive deeper into focused topics. These scholars engaged in a rigorous research process with respect to their justice lab focus and identified claims of interest to explore. As a part of this experience, our youth developed surveys to explore public perception of the claim, and developed infographics to communicate this information. Furthermore, students leveraged creative expression to produce a variety of creative outlets. More details about student projects can be found on [our website](#).

THE STORIES WE SHARE: JUSTICE IN THE ARTS

This learning lab is designed to explore the nuance and power of art as a mechanism for justice through an investigative lens.

MORE THAN MONEY: ECONOMIC JUSTICE

This learning lab is designed to highlight the critical role that economics plays in the stability and efficacy of communities, particularly made-marginalized communities and communities of color.

BEYOND THE BLOCK: ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

This learning lab is designed to highlight how advocacy and activism are critical to address threats to the environment.

THE SUCCESS SETUP: EDUCATION JUSTICE

This learning lab is designed to identify how existing policies and educational structures can lead to “*dreams deferred*”.

GOOD TO GO: HEALTH JUSTICE

This learning lab is designed to explore the criticality of health literacy and challenges surrounding justice among all healthcare stakeholders: patients, hospitals, providers, insurance companies, etc.



JUSTICE LAB REFLECTIONS

53%
ENJOYED THE COURSE TOPIC

90%
ENJOYED THE COURSE INSTRUCTOR

29%
REQUESTED SHORTER
CLASS TIMES

81%
FELT THEIR INSTRUCTOR "CREATED
A WARM, INCLUSIVE ENVIRONMENT."

25%
REQUESTED MORE
RELATABLE
COURSE TOPICS

57%
REPORTED THAT THEY ENJOYED PRESENTING THEIR
RESEARCH PROJECT TO FAMILY AND FRIENDS





HOW DID THE SUMMER LEARNING COURSES IMPACT STUDENTS' UNDERSTANDING OF RESEARCH AND SOCIAL JUSTICE?

SOCIAL JUSTICE TAKEAWAYS

To assess the perspectives' of students in their own words, we leveraged an open-ended question to examine how summer learning courses impacted students' understanding of social justice. Students were asked "What does social justice mean to you?" A sample of quotes from student responses were selected to create a broad picture of how students understand social justice following the end of the summer learning courses. Overall, the majority of students understand social justice as something that supports fairness and equality for all members of society, not just the few. Furthermore, students indicate that social justice includes recognizing what is wrong and standing up for what is right.

“

- Social justice is about ensuring fairness and equality for all members of society, especially those facing disadvantages or marginalization.
- To me, social justice means recognizing justice or merit (right from wrong) in social scenarios or events.
- What Social justice means to me is the belief that no matter where you come from or who you are, you deserve to be equal.
- To understand and stand up for what's right and bring justice to everyone who deserves it.
- Social justice means advocating for fairness, equality, and opportunity for all individuals, regardless of their background, in order to create a more inclusive and equitable society.
- Social justice refers to a fair and equitable division of resources, opportunities, and privileges in society.

”

RESEARCH TAKEAWAYS

In addition to social justice focused courses, students also learned about and created research alongside their summer learning courses. Throughout the summer, students learned about the different stages involved in the research process, the skills necessary to conduct research, and the purpose behind research. When asked how research can make a difference in the world, students had a variety of responses that indicated a broad understanding of the interdisciplinary nature of research, including: machine learning, mental health, cures for diseases, Violence Intervention Symposium efforts, history, diverse representation in media, and artificial intelligence. Students were also asked “Is research important to you? If so, why?” to examine their personal reflections on the purpose and value of research within the context of their lives. Their reflections reveal that students value how research can help them to gain skills, understand and create new knowledge, support their personal interests, and have application in the real world. A sample of student responses can be found below.



“

- Yes, because research can teach people things they didn't know about before. I feel the point of research is informing people on topics they are uninformed about.
- Yes, researchers are very important to me because they find real life problems and they solve them.
- Research allows you to pursue your interests, to learn something new, to hone your problem-solving skills and to challenge yourself in new ways.
- Research allows you to pursue your interests, to learn something new.
- Yes, because it helps me get the information I need to have a clear understanding of what's happening in the world today.

”

RESEARCH COLLOQUIUM

Research Colloquium, held on Wednesday, August 7th at the Heinz History Center, was the best yet. Over 200 families, youth, stakeholders, and funders gathered together to enjoy students' creative and original research outputs. Our young people were supported by University of Pittsburgh and Carnegie Mellon University interns, YES staff, Pittsburgh Public School teachers, and local instructors. Youths' poster designs were professional and stylish and well-received by attendees. This year was especially unique. While we required youth to showcase their research through infographics, we encouraged creative outputs as additional deliverables. Students came up with deliverables such as podcasts, newsletters, t-shirt designs, music videos, art pieces, brunch events, fashion pieces, and more. Highlights of student projects can be found on [our website](#).





SOCIO-CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

Socio-cultural development is crucial to student development and success. This program component is actualized through our Wellness Wednesdays and Trip Thursdays. These experiences are available to all program participants. Through these programming efforts, YES aims to understand and support students' prosocial behavior and self-care practices.

WELLNESS WEDNESDAYS

The primary focus of Wellness Wednesdays was to provide opportunities for program participants to engage in weekly activities that promote and encourage habits that contribute to overall health and well-being, leading to a happier and healthier life. The goal of Wellness Wednesday was to raise awareness about the importance of taking care of one's mind, body, and soul, and to provide practical tips and resources for individuals to do so.



The wellness wheel that helped to inform and frame Wellness Wednesday programming consisted of six components, including: emotional, spiritual, social, physical, and intellectual health. Our students engaged in activities such as fitness classes, educational workshops, and group discussions, all aimed at fostering a sense of community and support around wellness. Participation in Wellness Wednesday activities substantially increased from the previous year, ranging from approximately **20-30%**, with an average of 31 students attending each wellness session. Following each session, students were asked to rate their level of enjoyment from 1 (hated it) to 10 (loved it). For each activity, **85-100%** of students rated the activity between 7-10, suggesting that the majority of students enjoyed the activities and the sessions were relevant to them. The wellness activities students engaged in, a short description of each session, and students self-reported enjoyment levels, are provided below.

Session Activity	Description	Enjoyment Level
Introduction to Wellness	Introduction to wellness and what that looks like. Students were able to share their wellness plans if they had any and what wellness meant to them. Students then engaged in an ice cream social.	85%
Breaking Free: Letting go of bad habits	The students identified habits that they needed to let go of in order to become their best selves. They wrote down the habits that they wanted to let go, on a piece of ceramic and they broke the ceramic piece.	91%
Calm down, let's take a breath	Students took this session to identify their triggers, learn a few strategies to calm down and take a moment.	89%
Healthy Living	Chef Butler came, with two colleagues in the health field, and spoke to our students about the ways to incorporate vegetables and fruits into their daily habits.	100%
Outdoor Benefits	We took the students outdoors for this session. They walked around Highland Park and were taught how to fish in Lake Carnegie in the Highland Park area.	93%
Vision Board Making	Students took the information from the summer and created wellness vision boards for the school year.	93%

NOTE: The enjoyment level percentages shown are based on activities rated between 7-10.

Furthermore, students were asked open-ended questions following each session to identify key takeaways and specific aspects of activities they enjoyed. Key themes suggest that students gained a comprehensive understanding of the different aspects of wellness, how to let go of bad habits and adopt good habits, anger management, healthy eating, and diving deeply into what they want for their future.

Q: What did you learn/take away from today's session?



- To focus on my financial, physical, and emotional health.
- I learned that people have many different perspectives of the word wellness.
- That sometime you don't gotta be rude back.
- How to control my anger.
- Never (or try not to) react off of straight emotion.



While students engaged in practices that encouraged them to think critically about a variety of wellness practices and how they can utilize them in their own lives, they also had fun doing it. Students reported a variety of things they enjoyed about Wellness Wednesdays, including: meeting new people, eating ice cream and smoothies, breaking plates, playing with the therapy dog, fishing, and making vision boards.

Q: What did you enjoy about today's session?



- The idea of breaking old habits and allowing new ones to form.
- I enjoyed reflecting on what I want for my future.
- The advocacy of health and treating your body right.
- I enjoyed the fact that the staff let us introduce ourselves and work together as a team.



TRIP THURSDAYS



Trip Thursdays were provided to further prosocial behaviors and provide outlets beyond students' work and academic experiences. These experiences included a diverse range of social and cultural outings that helped students develop positive peer relationships, gain exposure to the unique social and cultural footprint in Pittsburgh, invest in their social wellness, and build group cohesion.

In comparison to last year, Trip Thursday engagement substantially increased. During the Summer Learn and Earn 2023, an average of **30%** of students attended Trip Thursdays. This year, an average of **42%** of students attended Trip Thursday events, ranging from **32 to 55%** attendance. Overall, students responded positively to the different social and cultural experiences they were exposed to throughout the summer. In fact, when asked, "What part of the program did you like the most?," **47%** of students selected Trip Thursdays.



AMMONS FUN DAY



ZONE 28



HIGHLAND PARK SHELTER/
AMMONS POOL



ANDY WARHOL MUSEUM/
NORTH SHORE EXPLORATION

TRIPS THURSDAY EVENTS



DETROIT JOURNEY: CELEBRATING BLACK AMERICA'S LEGACY AND LESSONS LEARNED

From August 2nd - August 4th, **72%** of our learn and earn students traveled to Detroit, Michigan for a culminating social and cultural experience. Attendees had the opportunity to immerse themselves in this vibrant historical setting during this trip. We visited numerous cultural sites and historical landmarks that capture the deep history embedded in the streets of Detroit, Ann Arbor, and other cities across Michigan. One highlight was the African American Historical Museum, where scholars were particularly engaged by the exhibit on the final stop of the Underground Railroad. Enhancing this historical journey, we were joined by international students and families, who explored the similarities and differences between their own cultures and the narratives preserved in the museums.



VIOLENCE INTERVENTION SYMPOSIUM



This summer, students had the opportunity to engage meaningfully in a two-day symposium dedicated to violence intervention, which engaged community stakeholders and youth in exploring themes of wellbeing, advocacy, and working through trauma to build resiliency. The event included eight interactive breakout sessions, covering youth action, life skills, mentoring, communication as interventions, trauma recognition, and nutrition. Overall, the collaborative event worked to develop strategies to foster safer, healthier environments for young people. About **72%** of students who participated in YES' Learn and Earn program attended the Violence Intervention Symposium Symposium.

To gain an understanding of students' reflections on how they felt within the space, they were asked how much they agreed or disagreed with various statements. Overall, **71%** of students agreed or strongly agreed that *"I felt my voice was heard in this space."* Furthermore, **71%** of students agreed or strongly agreed that they *"felt safe in this space."* These results suggest that students felt that this was a safe space to share their thoughts and feelings. Students also walked away the symposium with strategies they could use to address violence, where **67%** of students agreed or strongly agreed that *"I feel more knowledgeable about strategies I can use for violence intervention in my community,"* and *"I feel like I have a better understanding of how to deescalate a situation that can lead to more serious issues."* Some qualitative reflections of all participants who attended the symposium are provided below.



Q: What was the most impactful moment of the 2024 Violence Intervention Symposium for you?

“

- Making a difference in the community, and motivating the young ambassadors to get out of the comfort zone to begin chasing their purpose, peace, and hope.
- The fact that everyone was able to come together and hear each other and felt safe enough to open up about vulnerable things.

”

Q: What was your biggest takeaway from the 2024 Violence Intervention Symposium better?

“

- You are in control of your trauma and the way your emotions move through you.
- Youth want tools to be better and are willing to show up and learn more together.

”

PEER & ADULT RELATIONSHIPS

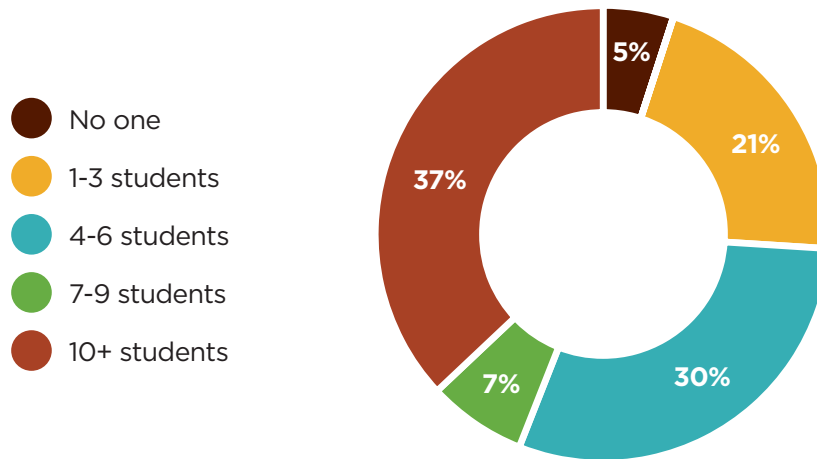
To understand if students developed authentic and supportive peer relationships, participants were asked how many people they knew that were part of YES' Learn and Earn program. While **29%** of students indicated that they knew at least 10 people, only 3 students (**5%**) did not know anyone in the program, suggesting that the majority of students are familiar with others within the YES community before they even enter the space. Furthermore, when asked if they made friends during the program, **86%** of all program participants indicated that they gained friends, regardless of the initial amount, indicating students were able to leave the experience with more friends than they began. Peer relationships are especially important to high school students as they transition to young adulthood, where friendships can provide a sense of belonging, prosocial skills, and act as a context for identity development.

“

I enjoyed my time with YES this summer and I truly believe being in the program for 3 years has made me into the person I am today.

”

The amount of individuals students knew by the end of YES' Learn and Earn program is provided below.



In addition to reflecting on their peer relationships, students were also asked to reflect on the relationships they built with YES staff and teachers. Mentorship is an integral part in YES' program model, where staff to students mentorship acts as a catalyst for the internalization of youth's motivational regulation and a context for physical, emotional, and academic development. Students were asked an open-ended question regarding feedback on both YES staff and teachers. A sample of student responses can be found below.

“

I really liked Miss Jackie and her way of teaching. She was very kind, welcoming, and understanding, and she does a very great job at what she does.

”

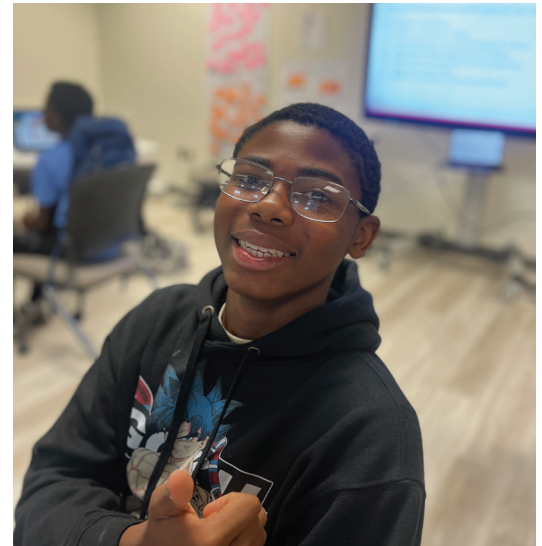
“

I liked Ms. Gabby a lot because she was so understanding and helped me see the brighter side of things.

”

SPECIALTY OUTCOMES: LOOKING INTO THE FUTURE

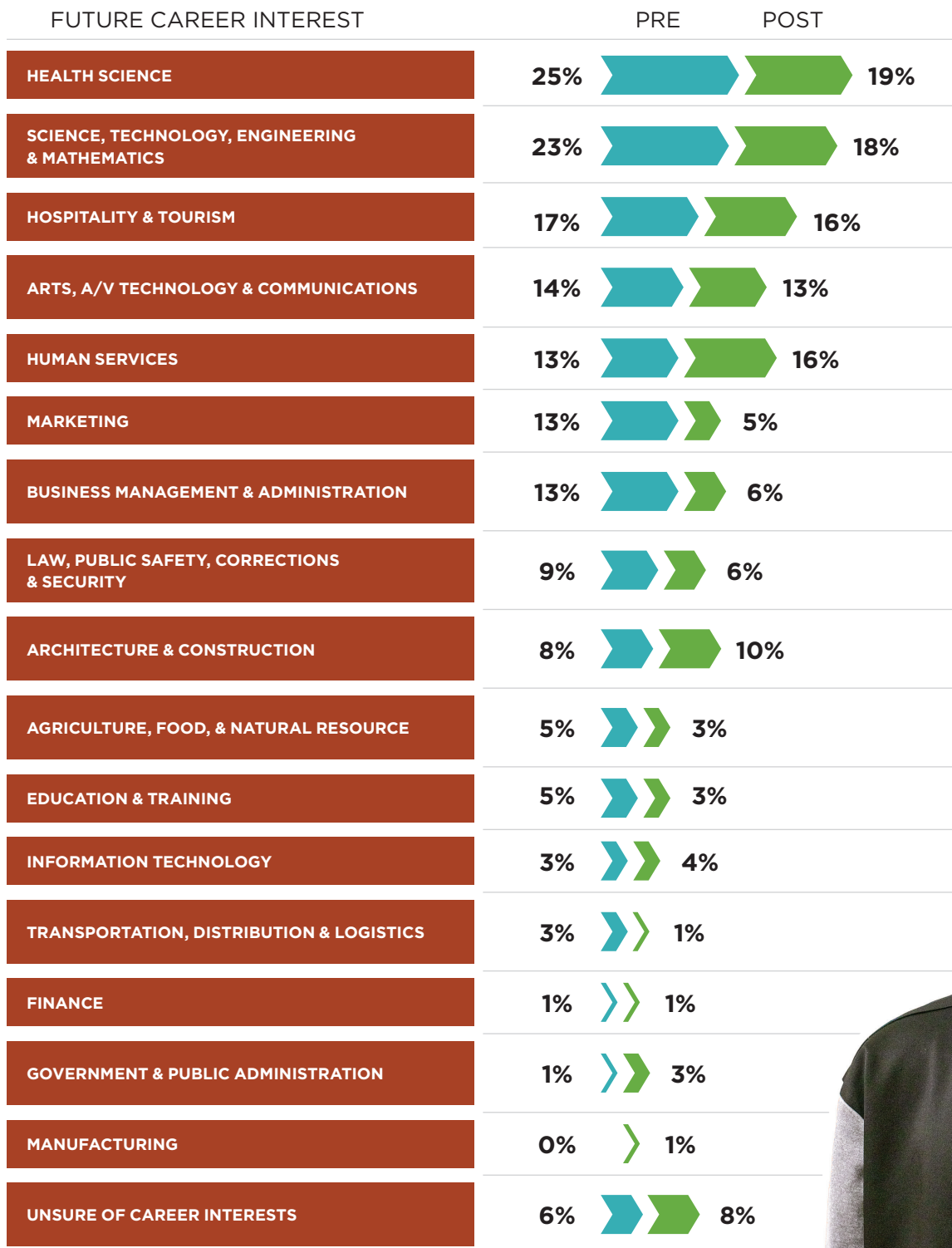
One important aspect of summer youth employment programs (SYEP) is their potential to influence students' future career goals, interests, and how they pursue and achieve their goals. While most SYEPs only offer students work experience, YES provides students with additional programming for students to hone their research skills, develop their academic capacities, and access opportunities that will support competitive applications in post secondary educational pursuits. Students were asked a variety of qualitative and quantitative questions to develop a comprehensive understanding of just how YES positively impacts students' personal, career, and educational goals over the course of the summer.



HOW DID YES' SUMMER LEARN AND EARN PROGRAM IMPACT STUDENTS' FUTURE CAREER OR EDUCATIONAL GOALS?

Before engaging in programming, students were asked true or false questions to understand how they were thinking about their future careers. **56%** of students selected true to the statement *"I need to find out what kind of career I should follow."* Furthermore, **67%** of students wanted to increase the number of occupations they are considering for their futures. These results suggest that students came into the experience hoping to identify and further expand their career interests. To understand the nuance of the specific careers students were interested in, and how they may have changed or stayed the same over the course of the program, students were asked, *"List the future jobs or careers you are considering for your future."* Students' short answer responses were analyzed and common career interests were organized using career clusters within [the National Career Clusters Framework](#). A comparison of students' career interests before and after they participated in the program, and examples, are provided on the next page.





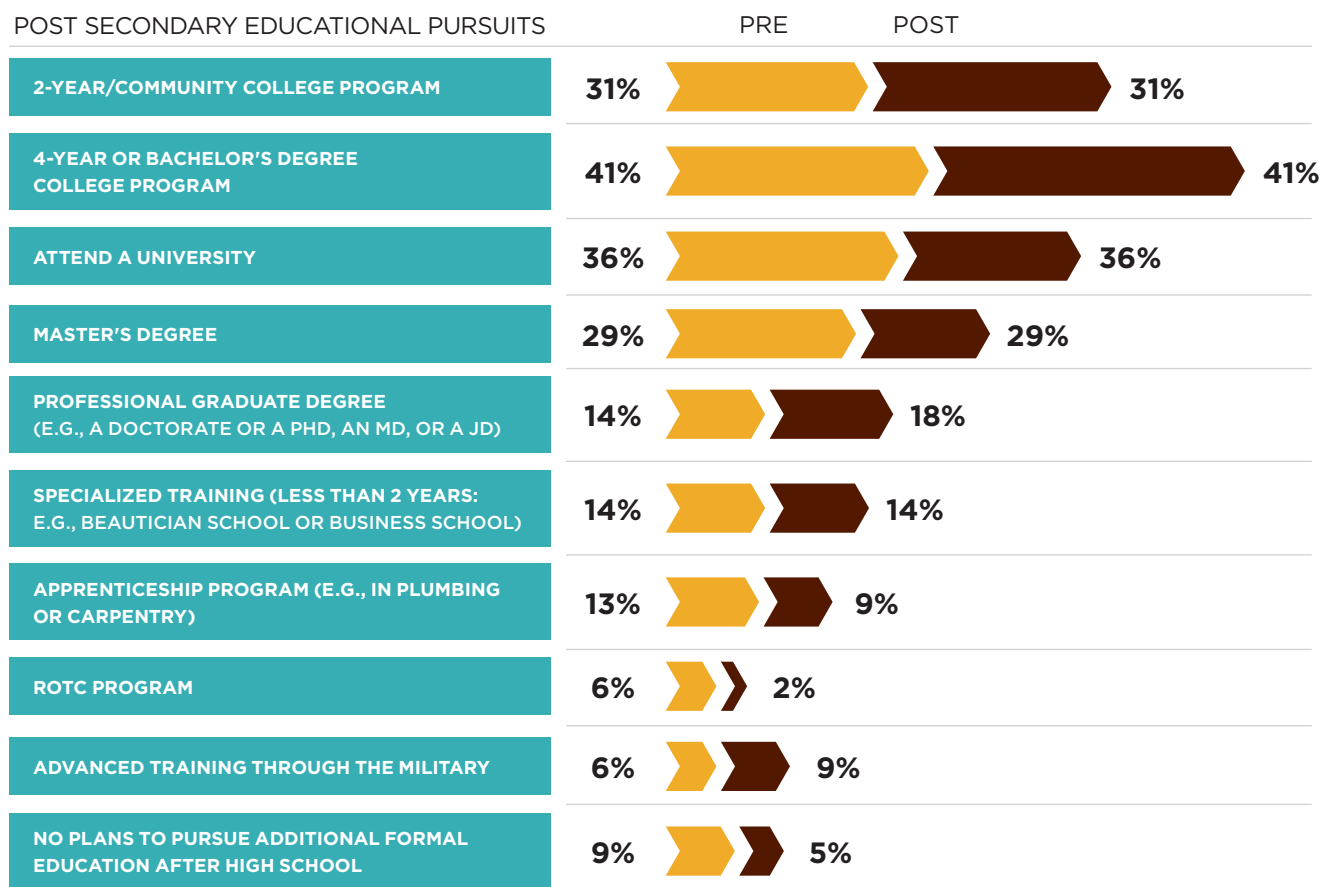
Note: Students were allowed to provide multiple career interests.



PROGRAM OUTCOMES

Overall, students had a wide variety of career interests before and after the program ended. The most common career clusters students' career interests were situated within health science and STEM, while the least common career clusters students were interested in were manufacturing and finance. Comparing student interests between pre and post, there was a slight decline across the majority of career clusters. However, students provided 123 career interests during the pre survey, and only 103 career interests in the post survey, suggesting students may have honed their career interests to more specific, rather than multiple, career pursuits.

Next, students were asked about their educational goals to understand how they may have changed, or remained the same over the course of the program. Students were asked "After completing high school, what additional type of education (if any) do you expect that you will complete?" Students were allowed to select from multiple predetermined options.



Overall, students' plans to pursue a 2 year college program, a 4 year college program, and a professional graduate degree increased over the course of YES' Learn and Earn program. However, students' plans to pursue a masters degree and attend a university decreased over the course of the program. Furthermore, students were asked if participating in YES' Learn and Earn program impacted their future career or educational goals, where **46%** of students said yes and **32%** of students said maybe. These results suggest that YES' supported student's plans and expanded their knowledge of pursuing post secondary education programs. Further research is needed to determine how it impacted students' interests in community versus university college programs.

HOW DOES YES SUPPORT THE DEVELOPMENT OF STUDENTS' HOPED-FOR POSSIBLE SELVES AND THE STEPS THEY MUST TAKE TO ACHIEVE THEIR SELF-IDENTIFIED POSSIBLE SELVES?

While previous questions were asked to gain an understanding of the concrete career and educational pathways they hope to pursue in the future, these questions did not fully capture all students' dreams and aspirations. To gain a broader understanding of what students' hopes were for their future, including responses outside of work-related pursuits, students were asked at the end of the program, "When thinking about the person you most hope to become in the future, what do you want to be like? When you envision who you most hope to become in the future, what kinds of things do you see yourself doing? Please list and describe three ideas of what you might be like in the future." These questions were informed by possible selves theory (Markus & Nurius, 1986), and Vernon's (2004) work related to measuring student's hopes and fears for their future selves.

“

A social worker and a self published writer. Someone who isn't working to live, and just living to experience and breathe and have fun and love. I think hardships are necessary, but so is rest.

”

PROGRAM OUTCOMES

Qualitative responses were analyzed themes identified by Halfond and colleagues (2013), which were adapted to better fit our context and student population. Overall, student responses generally fell into 8 key themes. Students were allowed to provide multiple responses. A summary of each theme, a corresponding description, and examples of student responses, are provided below.

	% of students
<p>SPECIFIC ACHIEVEMENT Hopes in relation to specific educational goals, career goals, and/or other achievement-related outcomes. Examples: Military, nursing, doctor, therapist, owning a hair business, designer, in college for nursing, medical school, firefighter, changemaker</p>	42%
<p>UNSPECIFIC ACHIEVEMENT Hopes that speak generally about the future, but not identifying specific educational goals, career goals, and/or other achievement related outcomes. This code includes wanting a job, but not including the type of job the participant hopes to have. Examples: Successful, have a job, college, a career</p>	24%
<p>RELATIONAL Motivated by personal interest in programming/curriculum, attending previous programming and enjoying it, love or like for learning in general, personal values.</p>	16%
<p>PERSONAL CHARACTERISTIC Motivated by the predicted ability of YES' learn and earn program to support youth's future endeavors, including: support finding future career, supporting college applications, and improving life in the long run.</p>	30%
<p>EMOTIONAL STATE Motivated to participate in YES because they had previously engaged with YES in the past or a sibling did, but did not cite a personal reason for why they chose to continue to participate.</p>	11%
<p>FINANCIAL-MATERIAL Refers to any mention of hopes for acquiring money or material possessions for personal purposes, like securing housing, a car, or a comfortable lifestyle. Examples: Having a car, having an apartment, financially stable, rich, living comfortably, secure</p>	17%
<p>UNSURE</p>	11%
<p>OTHER</p>	1%

Student hopes for their future expanded beyond just concrete achievements, showing their underlying motivations to pursue futures that are engaged, secure, and meaningful. While **42%** of students expressed that they were hoping to achieve specific achievements for their futures, **30%** of students hoped for specific personal attributes that they hope to emulate in their futures. Students expressed a wide variety of what they hoped to be like in the future, including: caring, bold, independent, trustworthy, and open-minded, among others. Additionally, **11%** of students expressed how they wanted their lives to feel in the future, expressing things like: being happy, anxiety-free, and emotionally stable. Some students expressed they were unsure about what they wanted their future to look like (**11%**), while others wished for being able to have certain possessions and/or financial stability in the future (**17%**). Overall, these results suggest that students are thinking critically about what they want their futures to look like, including their achievements, finances, mental states, and their personal identities.



“

In the future, I want to materialize my creative visions, make more art. I hope to be an assertive, bold leader, and fully analyze the spaces I'm in and have direction.

”





FFISH PROGRAM

The funding towards Violence Intervention Symposium efforts also afforded the opportunity to revitalize YES' commitment to physical health and wellness. This new initiative, known as **Fun and Fitness Involving Sports and Health (FFISH)**, is a sport-for-development program designed to support youths' physical activity, mental wellness, positive peer friendship development, and conflict resolution. This program is offered to



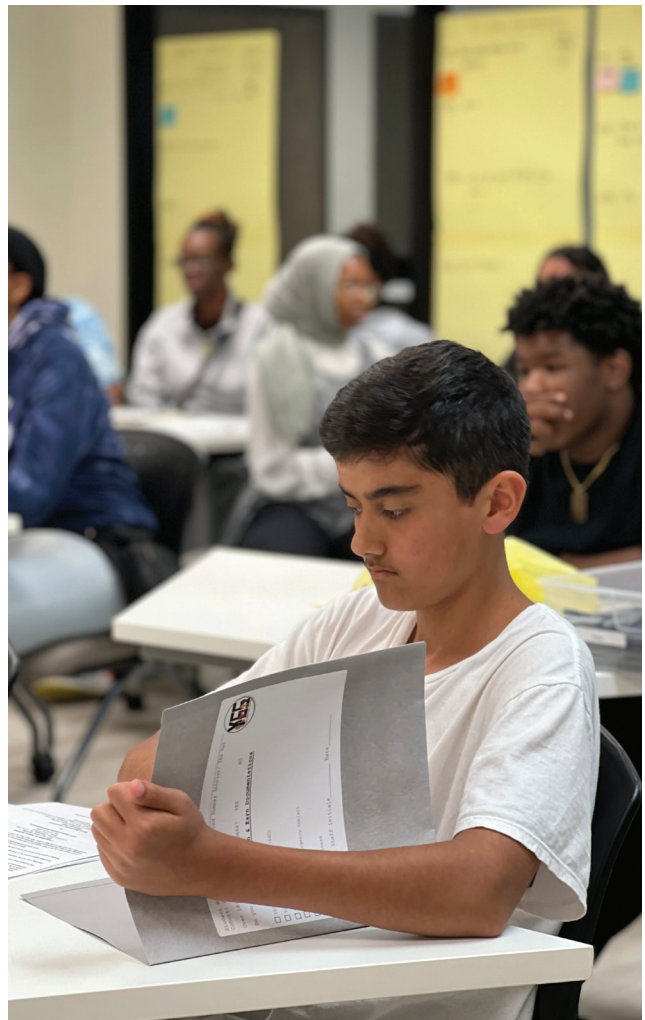
students across the city and county to youth in grades K-5 and 6-8. To date, this program has had over 150 students engage in several sports such as Golf, Boxing and Swimming - many of which are not accessible to YES youth. Now in its 5th iteration, YES considers a measure of success being that many youth who join the program continue to participate and try various sports. This summer, we had 58 students participate.





CONCLUSION

YES is an organization that believes in “doing the needful,” and during Summer 2024, we did just that. The fruition of Dr. Jones’ vision of *“Dreams Affirmed Through Justice, Self-Advocacy, and Career Exploration”* was overall a success. Our youth learned about justice and how to be changemakers through a critical research lens during justice labs. Our youth learned how to affirm and take care of themselves. Our youth had the opportunity to explore careers. To serve 112 students within the community and offer holistic programming that spans the domains of employment preparation, academic enrichment, and sociocultural development is no small feat - especially as a nonprofit organization of our size. YES hopes to continue to serve and provide quality evidence-based programming for the community for many years to come.





ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We are thrilled that our unique stakeholders joined together to make YES' Summer 2024 successful. Everyone's contributions, small or large, made a difference in the lives of our young people. At YES, we continue to punch above our weight and extend beyond our capacity. Although we made a sizable sacrifice in doing so, we see the return on our investment. We know that our students depend on us to provide a quality and meaningful summer experience and we owe them nothing less.

YES STUDENTS & FAMILIES

Our students are our biggest assets - we are so grateful to serve them and appreciate their investment in the program. When they buy in, they see results, and we are grateful that so many youth committed to their growth and development this summer. They made the experience purposeful. Thank you, students. Our families are one of the most critical parts of our summer in that they help to support our students - they cheer them on, correct them, and redirect them when necessary. Thank you parents for partnering with us this summer and for letting us work with your children.

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PARTICIPATING WORKSITES

A special thank you goes to our worksite partners for providing our young people with meaningful and enriching summer experiences. For some of our students, this was their first work experience. Our worksites play an important role in shaping our students' career interests and work perspectives. Many of these individuals take on our students in addition to their other work responsibilities, and for that, we are more than grateful.

YES would like to acknowledge **Will Jackson** for his design expertise in creating this report.

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If you are interested in reviewing our curriculum guide or appendices for our Summer 2024 Report, please email Deanna Sinex, PhD, Director of Research and Program strategy at dsinex@yespgh.org.

For more information regarding school year programming and opportunities, please contact info@yespgh.org to find out more.