



FOR DISCUSSION PURPOSES ONLY

YOUTH LEADERS OF CHANGE: (SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT)



Because of social media and increasing sedentary lifestyles, youth of today engage less in personal contact and activities that traditionally helped young people to naturally develop personal skills and to stay fit. With youth facing major challenges regarding crime, gangs, bullying, achievement gaps and increasing economic and social inequities, it is critical to provide youth with targeted programs to develop the necessary life skills essential to pursue a healthy and vibrant future.

Compounded by decreasing parental support, homelessness, and other social determinants of health, the primary purpose of our programs is to support parents to help their children develop healthy habits to meet the challenges of adolescence and equip them with the tools and knowledge to navigate many of life's pitfalls and temptations. Additionally, our goal is that each participant develops the essential personal empowerment behaviors, self-confidence, determination and compassion needed to become successful adults and community leaders.

To address these complex issue YLC provides integrated programs that include; collaborations, leadership and personal skills development, and college preparation programs in a safe and family-oriented platform to foster the development of vital habits that lends to social, academic and life-long successes.

Core Program Components

Leadership Component

- Intergenerational programming that pairs youth and senior in a series of activities; including fitness, gaming, mentoring, events. Collaboration with St. Therese Senior Services and other who serve seniors.
- Implementation of elements of the John W. Gardner YELL leadership curriculum: Active listening, Decision making, Public speaking and presenting, Group facilitation.

Life-Skills Component

- Personal development workshops and activities: goal & vision setting, life and academic mapping
- Entrepreneurial program – Business development workshops and servicing learning projects that include the launching of small business projects
- Implementation of elements of the John W. Gardner YELL leadership curriculum: Decision making, Public speaking and presenting, Debate and compromise, Research techniques, and analysis

College Prep Component Major Activities:

- ACT /SAT preparation and resources (Support youth attendance to the "Deltas" University of Minnesota)
- Personal coaching and strategic guidance
- Athletic and Non-Athletic scholarship funding coaching



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Program Overview:

One of Youth and Families determined to succeed guiding principles is to enrich the lives of others. Each of YFDS program participants enjoy these benefits as a result of the commitment staff, board, volunteers, and mentors have made to embrace the goals of the organization as they go about fulfilling its mission. As a primary objective, YFDS believes that youth development is not only an individual effort, but instead a collective process of development that involves the physical, mental, and personal development of a person to aspire to develop leadership and decision making skills that will help them accept and overcome life challenges. In essence, YFDS believes this aspect of a person's development is vital to ensure ones success in life. YFDS is also committed to ensure that proper guidance and mentoring by those with a vested interest in the future of our youth are crucial in order to understand and be able to view life challenges not as obstacles to success, but instead recognize obstacles and life challenges as opportunities to succeed.

Rationale:

To better prepare our youth to overcome obstacles and regard obstacles as an means to success, YFDS offers a Youth Leaders of Change program specifically designed to empower youth with cognitive leadership skills through a series of workshops, mentoring exercises, and classroom session to prepare for the ACT/SAT exam, as well as curriculum framed around the YELL approach to leadership development. The YELL leadership approach was pioneered by John W. Gardner, former Secretary of Health Education and Welfare (1965-68), and uses a model that focuses on Youth Engaged in Leadership and Learning as a framework for integrated leadership development and the basis of achieving success and the leadership skills vital to one realizing their full potential.

Outcome Objective:

Over the past several years, YFDS has been recognized for its success to instill values in young people about the importance self-esteem and the ability to reason plays in building character and improves ones understanding of how cooperation and effective communication is an important element in leadership development. YFDS uses its athletic and families 4health program to foster insight into how positive interaction in a team spirit is vital not only to athletic success and academic achievement, but also in ones profession. In this manner YFDS has been successful in narrowing the opportunity gap and in building the capacity for our young people to achieve excellence, and use positive reinforcement to improve individual self-esteem, and in the development of leadership skills that enable them to change their world.