




YEP

PROGRESS +

YOUTH EMPOWERMENT PROJECT 2025 | CONTINUING OUR MOMENTUM



PURPOSE

A young girl with dark hair, wearing a white short-sleeved shirt, a dark blue and green plaid vest, and a matching plaid skirt, is jumping rope on an outdoor basketball court. She is smiling and has her arms raised. The background features a brick wall at the top, a green chain-link fence in the middle, and a grey basketball court floor with white and blue lines at the bottom. A large red and black logo is visible in the bottom right corner. The text is overlaid on the left side of the image.

OUR MISSION is to engage underserved young people through community-based education, mentoring, enrichment, and employment readiness programs to help them develop skills and strengthen ties to family and community.

COMMUNITY + GROWTH





Looking Ahead to YEP's Next Chapter

Dear Friends,

This year has been a time of reflection at YEP - and for me personally - as I mark more than two decades as part of this extraordinary organization.

Twenty-one years ago, a small group of us came together to start YEP around a simple but powerful belief: that when young people are given opportunity, support, and strong relationships, they can improve their own lives and strengthen our community. With your partnership, that belief has grown into the YEP you see today - trusted, and firmly embedded in the fabric of New Orleans.

Because you chose to invest in our young people, YEP has been able to support thousands as they built skills, confidence, and pathways to brighter futures. I am incredibly proud of what YEP has become and deeply grateful to the many partners and supporters who have made this work possible.

This past year also marked an important milestone as we completed a strategic planning process that will guide YEP through 2030. The process brought together staff, board members, participants, donors, and community stakeholders. The priorities that emerged reaffirmed our commitment to formalizing YEP's Youth Advocacy Model, prioritizing succession planning at all levels, and ensuring that young people have access to the relationships and social networks they need to achieve long-term economic mobility.

With YEP strong and well-positioned for the future, I have made the decision that the time is right for me to pass the baton to the next generation of leaders. With the full endorsement of our deeply engaged Board of Directors, two longtime leaders - Jerome Jupiter and Darrin McCall, who together bring more than 35 years of service to YEP - will lead the organization forward while I transition into an advisory role. I do so knowing YEP is in excellent and capable hands.

Successful transitions are a sign of organizational health and strength, and I know that YEP's future is bright because of our tremendous team and deeply invested supporters like you who believe in the potential of our young people and invest in their success.

Thank you for being part of YEP's 21-year journey. It has been the privilege of a lifetime to build this organization alongside such a remarkable community, and I hope you will join me in supporting Jerome and Darrin as they lead YEP into its next chapter.

With immense gratitude for all that you have contributed to YEP.

Warmly,
Melissa Sawyer, Co-Founder & CEO

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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KINDNESS + INSPIRATION



YEP ENRICHES: MAKHI TRUMBLE



YEP Enriches provides a nurturing environment in Central City and New Orleans East, offering year-round out-of-school time programming focused on academic support, social-emotional learning, arts and music, recreation, and nutrition. Our success is bolstered by vital partnerships with volunteer groups like **Strong City**. Together, we ensure students have the **nurturing support** and **artistic outlets** needed to thrive. In FY25, the program served **208 youth**, providing safe spaces and confidence-building activities like our signature drumline and dance team. **Makhi Trumble's** journey captures this lifelong impact. Makhi first arrived at YEP as an infant with his mom, a YEP Educates Senior Student Advocate. Growing up through every YEP program, he flourished as both a participant and a dedicated volunteer. Following a recent internship with the **Downtown Development District**, the Edna Karr senior is now preparing for the **University of Louisiana at Lafayette**. Makhi's evolution from an infant at YEP to a college-bound leader highlights the power of providing a consistent, supportive community for youth to grow.



YEP EDUCATES: ANTOINETTE ROUSSELL



YEP Educates provides a vital lifeline for adult learners, serving as one of only five recognized providers in Orleans Parish by the Louisiana Community and Technical College System. In 2025, the program celebrated 142 graduates—including **Antoinette Roussell** from our Algiers location. Antoinette’s journey began with a **powerful goal**, to take more control of her life. **Over 12 years**, she navigated immense grief, including the loss of her mother, sister, and husband. Despite those who doubted her, she found unwavering support from YEP instructors and

the volunteers who sustain our mission. While staff provided the academic foundation, dedicated **volunteers like Mrs. Toni**—a retired professional who shares her expertise at our Mid City classroom—exemplify the encouragement that help our students thrive across all locations. Antoinette never gave up. Today, she is a **homeowner** and a proud **HiSET graduate**. Her resilience represents the 831 total YEP graduates now positioned to achieve **financial independence**.

DEDICATION + ACHIEVEMENT





TRUSTED + CONNECTION



YEP MENTORS: DONNIE JOHNSON



As our longest-running program, **YEP Mentors** was the first juvenile reentry initiative of its kind in Louisiana supporting young people 8-21. In FY25, this program supported **229 youth**, with **97% of participants** successfully avoiding further justice system involvement. **Donnie Johnson's** journey with YEP began at a pivotal moment in his life, where he discovered a transformative opportunity to grow. Over two and a half years, Donnie focused

on building his character and direction with the **individualized guidance** of his Youth Advocate, Jermal Watson. "He is someone I can talk to and trust," Donnie says. "YEP is the place to start if you want to become a better version of yourself." Through our Community-Based Mentoring program, supported by the **Oscar J. Tolmas Charitable Trust**, YEP pairs youth with trained, culturally competent staff who provide the **accountability** and **intensive mentoring** needed to navigate challenges like poverty and trauma. By fostering **resilience**, YEP helps young people successfully redefine their life's path.

YEP WORKS: ISAIAH TURK



YEP Works provides job training and mentorship for New Orleans youth ages 16–24, bridging the gap to economic mobility through work-based learning. This approach creates **life-changing career pathways**—like the journey of 21-year-old **Isaiah Turk**. While a student at The Net, Isaiah joined YEP Works and interned at **YEP Bike Works** in Central City. His talent quickly caught the eye of **Blue Bikes NOLA**, who hired him mid-internship. Today, Isaiah is a lead Bike Instructor

maintaining their e-bike fleet. Our **impact is amplified** by dedicated partners like the **Junior League of New Orleans**, whose volunteers and donations for **Thrift Works**—our thrift store and second youth-led business—ensure students have the diverse professional environments and resources needed to succeed. From the classroom to a career, YEP Works helps ensure graduates like Isaiah don't just find a job—**they build a future**.

A young man and woman are shown in a clothing store. The woman, in the foreground, has long brown hair and is wearing a bright green hoodie. She is holding a pair of dark brown leather loafers. The man, behind her, has dark curly hair and is wearing a black jacket. They are both looking towards the right. In the background, there are racks of clothes and blue storage bins.

GOALS + OPPORTUNITY

2025: OUR YEAR IN REVIEW

1,067

PARTICIPANTS SERVED (9% increase from last year)

KEY DEMOGRAPHICS

BY AGE

- 13%** 12 and younger
- 10%** 13 to 15
- 13%** 16 to 17
- 36%** 18 to 24
- 28%** 25 and older

BY GENDER

- 46%** male
- 54%** female

BY RACE

- 78%** African American
- 14%** Hispanic/Latino
- 6%** Caucasian
- 2%** other

HOUSEHOLD INCOME

- 70%** under \$20,000
- 81%** below poverty level
determined by household income and size (\$31,200 for a family of four in LA in 2025)

PARTICIPANTS BY PARISH

- 69%** Orleans
- 18%** Jefferson
- 5%** St. Charles
- 3%** St. Bernard
- 2%** Lafourche
- 3%** Other Parishes

HEAD OF HOUSEHOLD

- 70%** single female
- 10%** single male
- 20%** two parents



2025: OUR IMPACT

96%

Overall Participant Satisfaction

98%

Overall Parent Satisfaction

86%

Average Academic Improvement, Across Programs

141

Average Daily Attendance

81%

Emotional Wellbeing Improvement

178

Employed or Received a High School Equivalency

PROGRAMS BY THE NUMBERS



229

youth were paired with a Youth Advocate **(29% increase from last year)**

97%

of participants had no further justice system involvement at the time of program completion

87%

of participants improved their academic performance



460

students engaged in educational pursuits

142

people obtained their high school equivalency (HiSET) diplomas, totaling 831 since YEP Educates began in 2006

132

individuals engaged in HiSET en Español or English Language Learner classes



208

young people enjoyed out-of-school time enrichment

89%

of youth who received educational support demonstrated improvement in school performance

100%

of youth who participated in music and arts programming increased their skill in the arts



170

participants served **(48% increase from last year)**

96%

of participants completed the National Retail Federation customer services credential

54

participants moved into YEP Works internships at YEP Bike Works or Thrift Works

OUR PROGRESS

Since its founding in 2004 with a \$235,000 budget and a team of five, YEP has grown into a \$6 million organization with a team of more than 45 dedicated professionals.



2025 FINANCIALS

ASSETS

Current Assets

Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 543,362
Investments	3,998,750
Accrued interest	25,673
Promises to give, net	115,833
Reimbursements receivable	466,634
Inventory	39,110
Prepaid expenses and other assets	<u>52,888</u>

TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS **5,242,250**

Investment - endowment	245,796
Assets restricted to investment in property, furniture, and equipment at cost less accumulated depreciation	1,248,146
Operating lease right-of-use asset	<u>110,936</u>

TOTAL ASSETS **\$ 6,847,128**

LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS

Current Liabilities

Accounts payable	\$ 116,583
Deferred revenue	50,000
Operating lease liability	<u>27,712</u>
Total current liabilities	194,295
Operating lease liability, net of current maturities	<u>83,224</u>
Total long-term liabilities	<u>83,224</u>

TOTAL LIABILITIES **\$ 277,519**

Net Assets

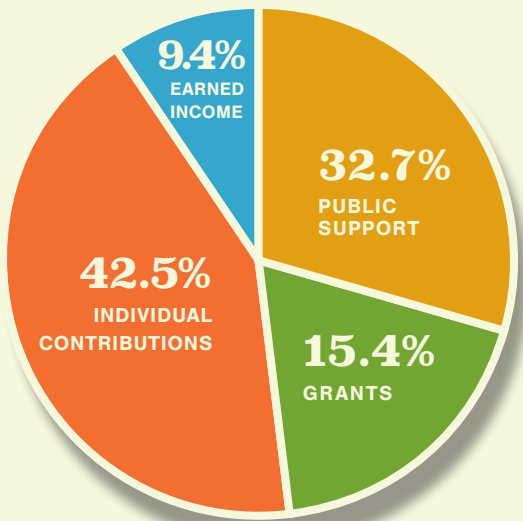
Without donor restrictions	\$ 6,323,813
With donor restrictions	<u>245,796</u>

TOTAL NET ASSETS **\$ 6,569,609**

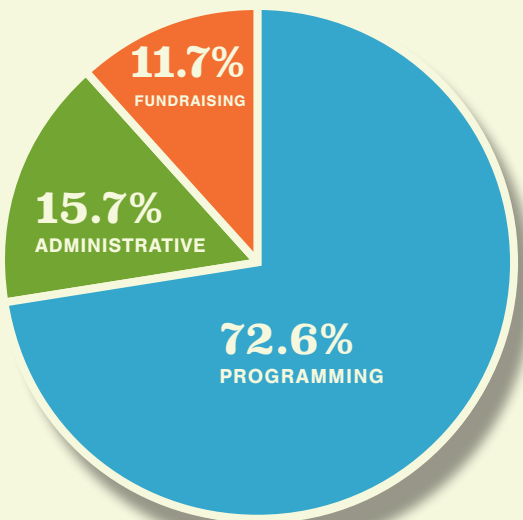
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS **\$ 6,847,128**

SOURCES OF INCOME

Our Corporate and Foundation Partners are integral to this funding matrix, with their vital investments represented across our Grants and Individual Contributions categories.



EXPENSES



OUR CORE PURPOSE

is to empower young people to improve their lives and the lives of others.

OUR CORE VALUES

are accountability, respect, progress, integrity and kindness.

WE ENVISION

a community where all young people have access to the opportunities, skills, resources, and relationships they need to reach their full potential.



INVEST + CONNECT

THANK YOU FOR BEING A VITAL PART OF THE YEP STORY.

Because of you, our young people have the resources and opportunities they need to thrive. As we look ahead, we invite you to continue this journey with us.

Help us build a brighter future—here is how you can make a lasting difference:

INVEST IN THE FUTURE

- Give Sustainably: Provide long-term stability through monthly, honorarium, or estate gifts.
- Double Your Impact: Check if your employer offers a donation matching program.
- Become a Sponsor: Directly fund a student's journey, a program, or a community event.

LEND YOUR TIME AND TALENT

- Volunteer: Assist with workshops, homework help, or as a YEP Educates assistant.
- Share Expertise: Offer professional skills like marketing, legal advice, or tutoring.
- Corporate Groups: Partner with us for a high-impact company service day.

GIVE THROUGH GOODS & SERVICES

- Shop & Donate: Support YEP Bike Works and Thrift Works. Purchases and donations directly fund youth employment training.
- Host or Fuel an Event: Donate venue space, catering, or beverages for our celebrations.
- Provide Supplies: Donate art supplies, technology, or sports equipment for our classrooms and spaces.

DEEPEN YOUR CONNECTION

- See the Work: Schedule a tour at one of our five locations to see your impact in action.
- Spread the Word: Follow us on social media and share our stories to help us reach new supporters.
- Meet the Team: Connect with us to align your philanthropic interests with our mission.

