YOUTH PHILANTHROPY INITIATIVE

Youth Philantrophy Initiative
Impact Assessment

Contents

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Youth Philanthropy Initiative (YPI), established in 2005 with support from the Charles and Lynn Schusterman Family Philanthropies, is dedicated to providing empowering experiential learning for youth. The following report provides an impact-focused assessment of the program's 18 years of service in the Tulsa community. It is unique from previous YPI assessments in that it seeks to evaluate the cumulative progress the program has made toward achieving its overall mission and strategic objectives since its inception.

The evaluator finds ample evidence to support the conclusion that YPI has been highly successful in its stated mission to provide empowering, holistic experiential learning for youth that sets the foundation for a lifetime of leadership and community service. Evidence, analysis and conclusions are presented according to each of YPI's strategic objectives, providing new insight into YPI's lasting impact toward the cultivation of a new generation of philanthropic leaders.

Objective 1: YPI is a developmental experience, whereby youth are nurtured in social conditions that support their holistic growth and wellbeing.

- Guiding question 1.1: To what extent does YPI foster the conditions of psychological need satisfaction for healthy youth development?

- Guiding question 1.2: To what extent do current students, parents and alumni perceive the program as a positive and valuable developmental experience?

Objective 2: Youth build essential skills and knowledge in the core teachings of self-realization, leadership and philanthropy.

- Guiding question 2.1: To what extent do students build skills and knowledge related to core teachings in self-realization?

- Guiding question 2.2: To what extent do students build skills and knowledge related to core teachings in leadership?

- Guiding question 2.3: To what extent do students build skills and knowledge related to core teachings in philanthropy?

Objective 3: Youth act as effective changemakers in their community and beyond.

- Guiding question 3.1: What is the positive impact of cohort projects in the community (during the program and beyond)?

- Guiding question 3.2: After graduation from YPI, how do alumni continue to act to effect positive change in their community and world?

YPI Program Overview

Launched in 2005 with the support of the Charles and Lynn Schusterman Family Philanthropies, the mission of the Youth Philanthropy Initiative is to provide empowering, holistic experiential learning for youth that sets the foundation for a lifetime of leadership and community service. This goal rests on three strategic objectives:

1. YPI is a developmental experience, whereby youth are nurtured in social conditions that support their holistic growth and wellbeing;

2. Youth build essential skills and knowledge in the core teachings of self-realization, leadership and philanthropy; and

3. Youth act as effective changemakers in their community and beyond.

Cohorts of approximately 25 high school students are selected to participate in an intensive three-year process, whereby they are tasked with designing and implementing an intervention that addresses a community need. Along the way, students receive in-depth training and mentorship in core YPI teachings on **self-realization, leadership and philanthropy**. By the end of the three-year experience, participants emerge as self-aware leaders equipped to champion real change.

The program is distinguished by its unique curriculum that promotes a vision and framework for philanthropy that is highly empowering and accessible to all people regardless of age, profession, or socioeconomic status. YPI's approach models philanthropy as a highly engaging developmental experience for youth, which transforms the impulse to do good into an organized and empowering activity. The curriculum emphasizes the interconnectedness of philanthropy, leadership and self-realization as mutually-reinforcing activities than anyone can practice and hone, with the ultimate goal of empowering individuals, groups and communities to thrive.
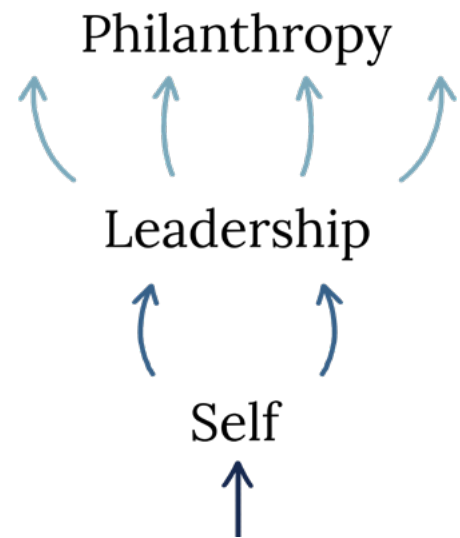
Other notable components of the program include:

- **A student-led process.** YPI is a truly student-led program, whereby students select their focus issue and lead all aspects of project implementation. These high expectations for students allow them to develop a true sense of ownership over the project, and drive them to push beyond their comfort zone to develop new skills and expertise.

- **The philanthropy project.** The project is an essential part of the experiential learning model and complement to the YPI curriculum, providing a real world focus for cohort members to directly apply new knowledge and turn ideas into action.

- **Robust community engagement.** YPI participants demonstrate the power of youth as community change agents, and themselves benefit greatly from the opportunity to collaborate with and learn from community leaders while researching, designing, and implementing their project.

- **Commitment to excellence.** YPI is a demanding, long-term program with high expectations for participant engagement that exceeds those of most other student organizations. By elevating philanthropy to a "varsity sport," the program seeks to maximize the transformational developmental impact of philanthropic education for participants, while also driving high student motivation to achieve tangible, lasting change in the community.

Demographic Note

Over the past 18 years of service, YPI has supported a total of **15 cohorts** and over **360 individual high school students** across the Tulsa area. YPI students have represented **25 public and private schools**, with some of the highest participation from **Booker T. Washington High School, Holland Hall, Jenks High School, and Union High School**. The gender balance is approximately **66% female and 34% male**. Students represent a wide range of groups across race, religion, political, and socioeconomic identities.

Schools	Students
25	358

Broken Arrow	1
Berryhill High School	1
Bishop Kelly High School	23
Bixby High School	5
Booker T. Washington High School	100
Cascia Hall	21
Central High School	1
Edison Preparatory School	11
Evangelistic Temple School	1
Holland Hall	45
Home School	3
Jenks High School	64
Memorial High School	3
Metro Christian Academy	9
Nathan Hale High School	2
Owasso High School	1
Charles Page High School	3
Riverfield Country Day School	3
Sapulpa High School	2
Tulsa School of Arts and Sciences	3
Tulsa Honor Academy	3
Union High School	48
Victory Christian School	2
Webster High School	2
Virtual School	1

Previous studies of the YPI program were conducted in 2008, 2011, 2013, 2014, and 2017. These studies tended to follow a process evaluation model with relatively narrow lines of inquiry; i.e. whether the program was implemented as intended and/or achieved expected results for a defined number of program beneficiaries in a limited time window. As such, the studies typically evaluated the experiences of active or recently graduated cohorts (usually up to three cohorts per study), such as by measuring the participant's immediate developmental benefits, their level of skills/knowledge gained, and/or their cultivation of a philanthropic/ service-oriented mindset.

Only one study in 2013 focused explicitly on the experience of alumni by surveying recently-graduated students on their overall levels of satisfaction with the program and continued involvement in philanthropic and/or leadership activities. A 2011 study also included a short survey of a small group of parents of current students to better understand their perspective of the program and its immediate impacts. To date, no study has attempted to evaluate YPI's impact among the wider Tulsa community and/or the long-term impact of cohort projects.

The **purpose** of this assessment is to accurately capture the impact of the YPI program's 18 years of service in the Tulsa community. It is unique from previous assessments in that it seeks to evaluate the cumulative progress the program has made toward achieving its overall mission and strategic objectives since its inception. It integrates and builds on the qualitative and quantitative data collected from previous studies, creating a cohesive picture of the program's long-term impact on students. It also expands the focus beyond the immediate student experience to better understand the lasting impact of the program from the perspective of alumni, parents, and other Tulsa community members.

The evaluation launched in April 2023 with an in-depth desk review of previous YPI studies and internal historical program records including grant reports. Based on this review and a gap analysis of existing qualitative and quantitative data, initial lines of inquiry were defined according to each objective. Online surveys for current students (Cohorts 14 and 15)[1], alumni, parents and community members were developed and distributed in May-June 2023 (see Attachments 1-5). In addition to the online surveys, a series of semi-structured virtual interviews of alumni and community members (approx. 35) were conducted throughout summer 2023 to provide a more in-depth understanding of these stakeholder's reflections on the program and its long-term impacts. Final analysis of the data was completed in August 2023.

....

1   At the time of completing the survey, Cohort 14 students had recently finished their second year in the YPI program, while Cohort 15 students had finished their first year.

Objective 1: YPI is a Developmental Experience

The study was guided by the following guiding questions (GQs) in order to assess *Objective 1: YPI is a developmental experience, whereby youth are nurtured in social conditions that support their holistic growth and wellbeing.*

Guiding question 1.1: To what extent does YPI foster the conditions of psychological need satisfaction for healthy youth development?

Guiding question 1.2: To what extent do current students, parents and alumni perceive the program as a positive and valuable developmental experience?

Psychological Need Satisfaction: Theoretical Framework

The study utilized ***self-determination theory*** to determine the extent to which YPI meets students' psychological developmental needs (GQ 1.1). According to this theory, when youth are placed in nurturing social conditions, they will experience positive outcomes in mental health, social adjustment, and psychological growth. Nurturing social conditions are specifically

defined according to the three criteria of autonomy, competence, and relatedness.

- **Autonomy**– defined as personal violation that can accompany any act[2]. Youth in an autonomy-supportive environment may feel that their personal perspective and skills are valued and taken into account, and/or that they have control and ownership over their work.

- **Competence**– defined as one's sense of efficacy or one's propensity to have an effect on his/her environment. Youth in a competence-supportive environment may feel that they are succeeding in tasks that are optimally challenging and attaining desired outcomes.

- **Relatedness**– defined as one's desire to feel close or connected with others. Youth in a relatedness-supportive environment may experience high levels of emotional security and/or peer acceptance.

As an additional tool, the study utilized the *Search Institute's Developmental Assets Framework* to assess the satisfaction of students' developmental needs. This framework identifies 40 positive supports and strengths that young people need to succeed.

....

2   Volition is here defined as "the organismic desire to self-organize experience and behavior and to have activity be concordant with one's integrated sense of self."

Half of the assets focus on the relationships and opportunities they need in their families, schools and communities (external assets). The remaining assets focus on the social-emotional strengths, values and commitments that are nurtured within young people (internal assets). The 40 Developmental Assets for youth aged 12-18 are categorized under the following headings: Support, Empowerment, Boundaries and Expectations, Constructive Use of Time, Commitment to Learning, Positive Values, Social Competencies, and Positive Identity.

In general, youth that have a higher number of assets are found to have greater chances for positive, healthy development. While the Search Institute defines the optimal number of assets as between 31-40, on average youth report having only 20 out of the 40 possible assets, and only 11% of youth report experiencing an optimal level of assets.

Self Determination Theory: Relatedness, Competence, Autonomy

To measure the extent to which YPI provides nurturing social conditions according to self-determination theory (GQ 1.1), the evaluator created and administered an online survey for current YPI students (Attachment 1). In order to maximize comparability of data with previous YPI studies, the survey was adapted from a 2017 process evaluation that assessed YPI's support to psychological and developmental needs for Cohorts 7-9. Student responses were anonymous in order to minimize reporting bias.

The survey includes an adapted Basic Need Satisfaction at Work Scale (BNS-W) to determine whether elements of self-determination theory are supported when students participate in YPI. The BNS-W scale lists a series of 21 statements that relate to the three psychological needs of autonomy, competence, and relatedness. It is scored by a Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (not at all true) to 7 (very true).

Students rated the truthfulness of the statements as they pertain to their involvement in YPI. Illustrative statements included:

- I feel like I can make a lot of inputs to deciding how my work gets done. (Autonomy)

- I really like the people I work with. (Relatedness)

- I have been able to learn interesting new skills through YPI. (Competence)

Students from Cohort 14 (N=12) and Cohort 15 (N=11) completed the survey in May-June 2023. The results of the surveys are listed below, and include data collected from the 2017 study of Cohorts 7-9 for comparison. Responses are deemed by the evaluator as significant at values of 5 and higher because an average of 5 is greater than the midpoint value of 4.

	Competence	Autonomy	Relatedness
C14 Average	5.8	5.3	5.9
C15 Average	5.7	5.1	5.6
C14-15 Average	5.7	5.2	5.8
C7-9 Average	5.8	5.4	5.9

The data indicates that YPI has consistently supported all of the psychological conditions considered necessary for self-determination theory, with students scoring high (significant) levels of competence, autonomy and relatedness. Other notable observations from the data include:

- High (significant) scores for competence, autonomy and relatedness are consistent across cohorts, including Cohorts 7-9.

- Relatedness consistently scores the highest on average, followed by competence and autonomy.

- A comparison of data between C14 and C15 indicates that scores increase with time in the program; i.e. more time in the YPI program delivers greater developmental results to participants.

Search Institute Developmental Assets
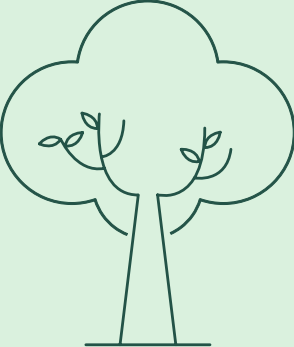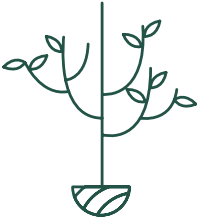
The above-mentioned student survey also included a section corresponding to the Search Institute's 40 Developmental assets in order to determine whether they are being addressed as part of the YPI program process (GQ 1.1). Each of the assets was listed with a short description. Students were prompted with the question "On a scale from 1-5, how well does YPI address the following developmental assets?" Students were provided with a Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (does not address) to 7 (fully addresses).

The survey results indicate that 28 out of the possible 40 developmental assets are applicable to YPI, of which 22 assets are adequately addressed by the program. Thirteen assets are found to be strongly addressed (i.e. at least 90% of surveyed students ranked 4 or above), and eight are addressed (i.e. at least 75% of students ranked 4 or above). An additional seven assets are somewhat addressed and/or applicable to the YPI program (i.e. at least 50% of students ranked 4 or above).

These results are consistent with the previous study of Cohorts 7-9, for which 26 developmental assets were found to be applicable to the YPI program, and 22 assets were considered adequately addressed.

Table 1: Search Institute Developmental Assets Addressed by YPI			
Strongly Addressed	Caring School/ Program Climate	Youth as Resources	High Expectations
	Community Values Youth	Safety	Achievement Motivation
	School/Program Engagement	Caring	Equality and Social Justice
	Planning and Decision Making	Responsibility	Interpersonal Competence
	Peaceful Conflict Resolution		
Addressed	Other Adult Relationships	Service to Others	School/Program Boundaries
	Adult Role Models	Positive peer Influence	Bonding to School/ Program
	Cutlural Competence	Positive View of the Future	
Somewhat Addressed/ Applicable	Family Support	Positive Family Communication	Youth Programs
	Integrity	Honesty	Resistance skills
	Sense of Purpose		

These results suggest that YPI facilitates a highly developmental program, with the ability to provide a wide variety of core developmental supports that youth need to succeed. The fact that 28 out of the possible 40 assets are applicable to YPI is significant, indicating that YPI students have the opportunity to develop a total number of assets that far exceed the national average of 20 assets. It is also noteworthy that a single extra-curricular program such as YPI would have the ability to fulfill such a large proportion of a student's developmental needs, not counting other sources of asset-building in their home, school and community.

Notably, YPI addresses three assets designated by the Search Institute as "least common" among youth: community values youth, youth as resources and adult role models. This indicates that, in addition to supporting a high number of assets, YPI provides a unique developmental experience that students cannot readily find elsewhere.

Perceptions of Developmental Utility: Students

In order to investigate the extent to which current students perceive the program as a positive and valuable developmental experience (GQ 1.2), the evaluator created and administered a second online survey for current YPI students (see Attachment 2). The survey was shared at the in-person joint cohort meeting in May 2023 as part of a larger reflection questionnaire, which prompted students to evaluate their experience and personal growth in the program over the course of the 2022-23 school year.

Students from Cohort 14 (N=19) and Cohort 15 (N=24) completed the survey in May-June 2023. In order to investigate whether the program is perceived as a positive and valuable developmental experience, the survey aimed to elicit student perspectives on the **culture** and **utility** of the YPI program. To maximize comparability of data with previous YPI studies, this survey was adapted from a 2014 cross-sectional evaluation of Cohorts 6-8.

In order to determine student perspectives on YPI's **culture**, the survey prompted students to describe the culture of YPI by selecting words from a list of 14 possible adjectives, which included both positive and negative descriptors. Additionally, students were prompted to list any descriptors of the culture of YPI that may have been missing from the list.

The top positive adjectives selected by students included "friendly" (32 responses), "energizing" (26), "inviting" (25), "stimulating" (23) and "caring" (22). This is extremely consistent with data from Cohorts 6-8, which showed "friendly," "energizing" and "stimulating" and "professional" to be the most common descriptors. No students selected the negative descriptor of "unsupportive," and only two students selected "unstable."

Additional program descriptors proposed by the students included: "thought provoking" (3 responses), "exciting" (3), "fun" (3), "cohesive" (2), "engaging" (2), and "collaborative" (2).

Figure 1: Top adjectives selected by Cohort 14-15 students to describe the culture of YPI

In addition, the survey included a series of statements designed to measure current students' perception of YPI's **utility**. For each statement, students were provided with a Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Agreement was defined by a rank of 4 or higher.

Student responses indicated a high level of agreement with the perception that YPI is a high-utility experience. This is consistent with data from Cohorts 6-8, which similarly concluded that participants view YPI as useful.

Utility Statement	Level of Agreement
My time in YPI has been well spent.	92.86% of students agree
I have learned things in YPI that I can apply in other situations.	97.62% of students agree
YPI has provided me with new ways of thinking about things.	97.62% of students agree
I would recommend YPI to others.	100% of students agree

The survey also prompted students to reflect specifically on what aspects of YPI they find most valuable. The long form responses touched on a number of characteristics of the program, including:

The student-led nature of the program:

"YPI **gives teens an adult task** and adult methods of handling it while still acknowledging their value *as teens.*"

- **Cohort 15 student**

"[I value] the unique experience of **having our voices heard in a meaningful way**."

- **Cohort 15 student**

"Especially as a teenager, I don't see many programs geared towards individual success and development as YPI is. I love that the coaches prioritize communication that is actually effective, and it **makes the participants take initiative instead of handing us everything**."

- **Cohort 15 student**

The opportunity to make a difference in the community and work on a real-world issue:

"[I value] the experience you get with helping a real world problem."

- **Cohort 15 student**

"I think the ability to create our "own" project is most valuable for me. A lot of other school projects have a lot of restrictions and criteria while we were able to come to a consensus on our own."

- **Cohort 14 student**

The relationships formed with fellow cohort members and adult coaches:

"YPI is extremely valuable to me because I have met so many amazing, ambitious people that I connect with better than most at my school and other extracurriculars."

- **Cohort 15**

"The mentorship from both Adam and April is remarkable, as well as the **diversity in thought, leadership, and scope of experience from my cohort peers.**"

- **Cohort 15 student**

"[I value] the environment of working with other people in my age group in a setting outside of school, we're all here because we want to be, which I think has led to an engaging experience."

- **Cohort 15 student**

YPI's impact on their personal development and growth as a team-member, leader and philanthropist.

> "[I value] the overall change you see in yourself. Social, mental, academic, etc. I've not only gained a few things but I've also **grown on what I already had and made them better**."
>
> *- Cohort 15 student*

> "[I value] the things I learn about philanthropy, my community, and how to be more successful in my life."
>
> *- Cohort 15 student*

> "YPI has taught me how to work in a team where everyone is very different and has varied ideas of how things should be."
>
> *- Cohort 15 student*

> "I find that **life education** is the most valuable part of YPI. It allows me to take these lectures into my school and work life. Being able to manage my time on projects and take leadership roles with confidence."
>
> *- Cohort 15 student*

Perceptions of Developmental Utility: Parents

The evaluator created an online survey (see Attachment 3) for parents of current and former YPI students in order to elicit their feedback on the overall utility of the program (GQ 1.2). The survey was distributed via email and made available on YPI's website from May-June 2023, eliciting 17 total responses.

Parent responses indicated a high level of agreement with the perception that YPI is a high-utility experience. Notably, when asked whether they would recommend the program to others, 100% of survey respondents gave the highest possible affirmative response (5 out of 5).

The survey also prompted parents to describe their overall impression of the YPI program and specific changes they have observed in their child. Via long form responses, **100%** of respondents shared positive associations with the program and its role in their child's development, particularly in the areas of self-confidence and feeling of agency. Illustrative examples include:

> "Amazing opportunity for youngsters. YPI has done as much as we have done as parents, for [our child]."
>
> *- Cohort 7 parent*

> "I credit so much of [my child's] growth, leadership, and passion for service to YPI. **It truly changed her trajectory**."
>
> *- Cohort 9 parent*

> "The main change is the improvement in her self confidence and **trust that she can be beneficial to her surroundings even at this young age**."
>
> *- Cohort 15 parent*

> "Her confidence level has gone up, and I have witnessed such a change in her leadership capacity, and **willingness to speak up for herself and others**."
>
> *- Cohort 15 parent*

Perceptions of Developmental Utility: Alumni

The evaluator distributed an online survey (see Attachment 4) for YPI alumni in order to elicit their feedback on the overall utility of the program (GQ 1.2). The survey was initially created and distributed among alumni in June 2022, and was re-distributed for the purposes of this impact study in May 2023. A total of 42 responses were collected.

Alumni responses indicated a high level of agreement with the perception that YPI is a high-utility experience. When asked whether they would recommend the program to others, **100%** of survey respondents gave an affirmative response (score of at least 4 out of 5).

When prompted to reflect on how YPI influenced their self-perception, several alumni shared the extent to which they felt YPI was a transformative developmental experience. Unlike current students, alumni are uniquely able to share insight on the long-term developmental impact of the program by reflecting on their time since graduating from the program.

*"When I feel out of alignment, particularly in my professional life, and that I have forgotten who I am at my core, I remember the person I was in YPI. I will forever be grateful to YPI for introducing me to the awareness of **how it feels to embody my best self for the good of the collective**."*

*- **Cohort 4 student***

*"I feel like YPI played a major role in shaping me into who I am today. When I entered YPI, I was in a bit of an identity crisis, as many early high schoolers are, but what I was exposed to in YPI influenced my values and **helped me discover who I wanted to be in the world**. Philanthropy and leadership education contributed to this significantly, for these were subject areas I didn't learn much about outside of YPI. I developed a passion for philanthropy and social entrepreneurship and discovered how leadership skills can help me pursue these passions."*

*- **Cohort 11 student***

> *"YPI allowed me to grow at an early time before entering college. As a Latina student, it's really difficult to become confident enough to know that you belong in certain environments. YPI was one of them. I was always so hesitant to speak up and voice my thoughts because I believed someone else could say it better than myself. However, I'm grateful that **YPI became the first experience where I could grow my confidence**."*
>
> *- **Cohort 12 student***

> *"**I found purpose in YPI** at a time when I felt powerless and confused about my identity and role within the world."*
>
> *- **Cohort 5 student***

Alumni were also asked to reflect on the most significant change that they experienced in their life as a result of the YPI program, and noted several positive developmental impacts:

> *"I grew in **personal confidence**. I was a quiet kid who never said anything but observed everything when I started in YPI. By the end, I was doing things that even surprised me! I carried those skills and confidence into college and the professional world."*
>
> *- **Cohort 5 student***

> *"The most significant change I experienced was definitely the **personal growth and self-development** I underwent during YPI. Before YPI, I didn't have a strong sense of self and didn't really feel like I had a sense of belonging in the world, but thanks to the lessons and practices I learned in YPI, I was able to gain a better understanding of myself and my passions and how I could **utilize my skills to make a difference in the world**."*
>
> *- **Cohort 11 student***

> *"I consider joining YPI one of the best decisions I have ever made - I would actually say it is in the top 3 most important life decisions I've made. I say this because the program **played such a role in shaping me and setting me on a positive course** at a time in my life when I was very impressionable and I could have taken many different paths. YPI **gave me skills that many people don't learn until later in life** (if at all) and I have taken these skills into all sorts of experiences since YPI. I strongly believe I would not be where I am today without having this experience and I am forever grateful."*
>
> *- **Cohort 1 student***

> *"I think YPI helped instill a deep sense of confidence within me that I am not sure I would have gotten had I only been going to school and participating in typical extracurriculars. I think it is **so important as a teenager to feel like you are really be *seen* and valued**. YPI did such a wonderful job of facilitating that experience."*
>
> *- **Cohort 3 student***

> *"I think YPI gave me the **confidence to go and try new things** I would have previously held back on. I am less fearful of failure and more likely to look at "failure" as a learning experience that can be built on. A lot of this thinking came from my time at YPI."*
>
> *- **Cohort 5 student***

> *"Coming into to YPI, I was a freshly teenage gymnast who devoted their life to gymnastics. While in YPI, I let go of gymnastics and put that time and energy toward helping other people. The discipline, resilience, and dedication I gained from gymnastics were translated into the lessons I learned in YPI. Looking back, I am so proud of the growth, confidence, and grace I have gained since my first day in YPI. I would not be here or have accomplished what I have without YPI."*
>
> *- **Cohort 9 student***

*"I gained confidence in myself while taking part in YPI. While I always did well academically as a kid, I always struggled with feeling like I was prepared for the real world. YPI provided **one of my first chances to actually apply my skills in a pragmatic way**. Writing a grant and getting funding for an important program as a teenager made me feel like I could actually contribute and make a difference in a group of skilled and intelligent people."*

*- **Cohort 1 student***

*"YPI gave me **exposure to walks of life and individuals unlike myself** that prompted me to expand my perspective and cultivate inclusivity. It forced me out of my comfort zone of my insulated high school experience and gave me a greater sense of community and purpose to serve Tulsa."*
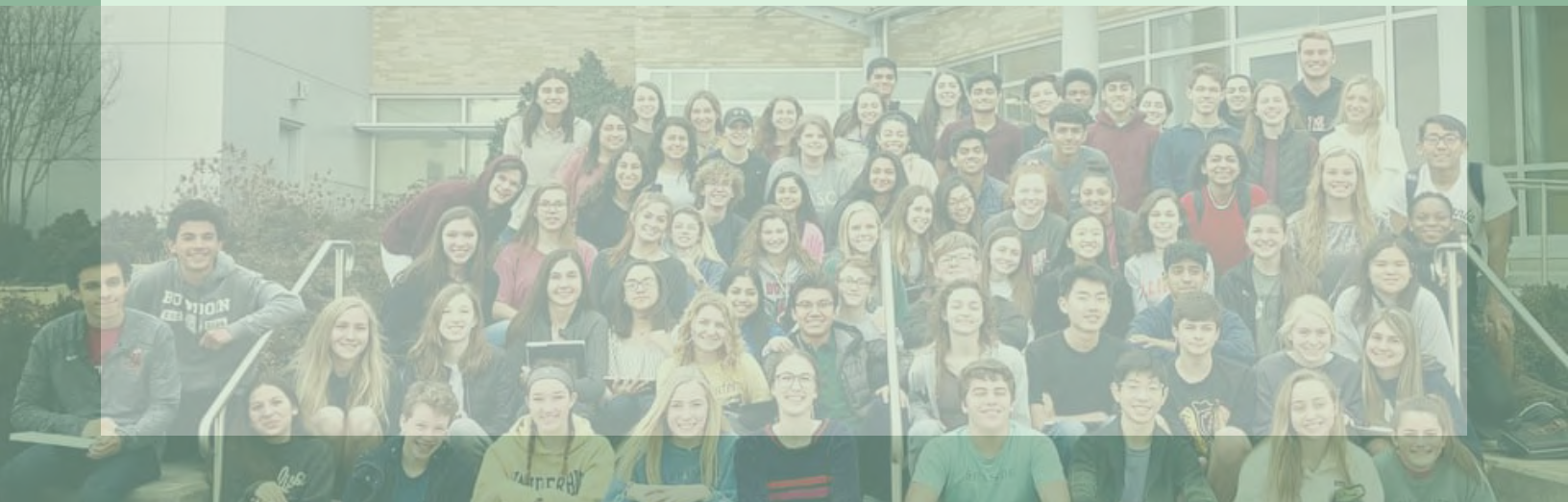
*- **Cohort 4 student***

16

Objective 1: Conclusions

The evaluation finds that YPI is highly successful in fulfilling its first stated objective: "YPI is a developmental experience, whereby youth are nurtured in social conditions that support their holistic development and wellbeing."

Guiding question 1.1: To what extent does YPI foster the conditions of psychological need satisfaction for healthy youth development?

Data shows that **YPI provides nurturing social conditions considered necessary for healthy youth development**. Students surveyed across multiple cohorts consistently reported experiencing significantly high levels of competence, autonomy and relatedness in relation to their time in YPI. Data indicates that student scores increase with time in the program, meaning that more time in the YPI program may deliver greater developmental results.

Moreover, through their participation in YPI, **students have access to a high number of supports and strengths needed to succeed**. Twenty eight out of the possible 40 Search Institute Developmental Assets are applicable to YPI, of which 22 assets are adequately addressed by the program. This demonstrates that YPI students have the opportunity to develop a total number of assets that far exceed the national average of 20 assets, putting them far ahead of their peers. YPI also addresses three assets designated by the Search Institute as "least common" among youth, suggesting that YPI provides a unique developmental experience that students cannot readily find elsewhere.

Current YPI students, parents, and alumni reflect **overwhelmingly positive associations with the program's positive developmental impact for students. 100%** of surveyed YPI students, parents and alumni would recommend the program to others.

Current YPI students have a high estimation of the **positive culture** and **utility** of the program:

- "Friendly," "energizing," and "stimulating" are among the top adjectives students choose to describe YPI.

- Students highlight several characteristics of the program as among the most valuable:

    - The student-led nature of the program.

    - The opportunity to make a difference in the community and work on a real-world problem.

    - The relationships formed with fellow cohort members and adult coaches.

    - YPI's impact on their personal development and growth as a team-member, leader and philanthropist.

Parents and alumni are uniquely positioned to share insight on YPI's long-term developmental impacts. Survey responses consistently reflected the opinion that the YPI program was unique and even transformational, with many parents and alumni going so far as to name YPI as **among the most significant developmental experiences in the student's life:**

- Parents noted significant growth in their child's self-confidence and sense of agency.

- Alumni named growth in confidence and a sense of self as among the most significant changes they experienced in their life as a result of the YPI program. Moreover, they felt the personal growth they experienced in YPI **put them ahead of their peers in their ability to succeed in later life**.

- Several alumni shared the view that YPI **put them on a positive trajectory in life at a time when they lacked direction and/or purpose.**
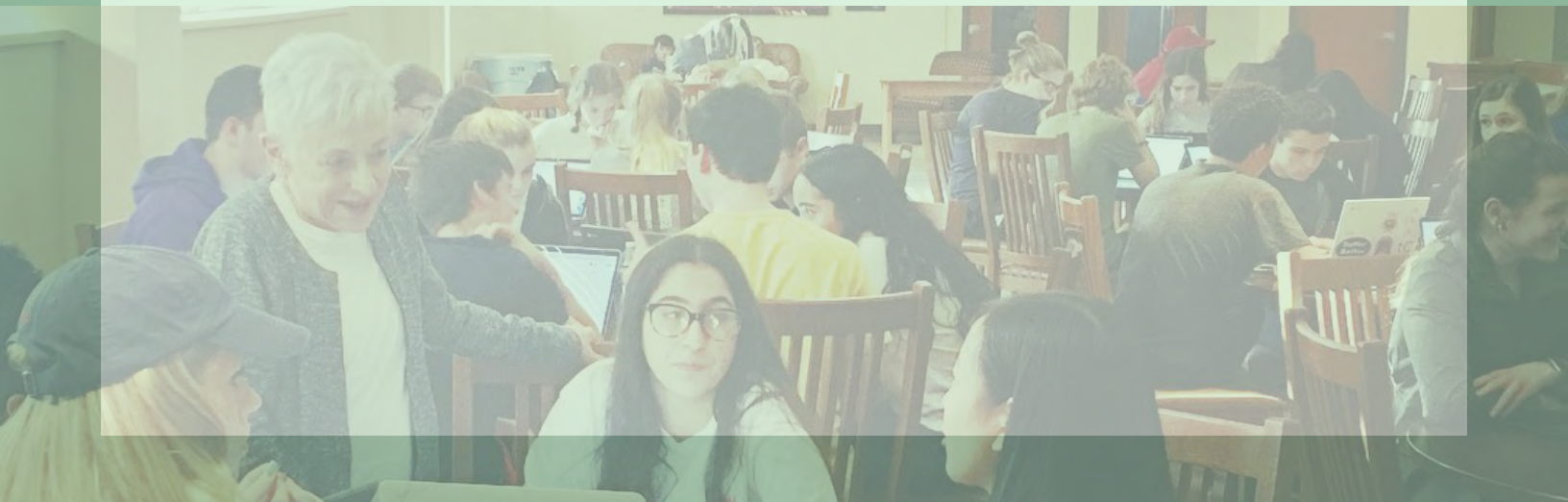
Objective 2: Youth Acquire Knowledge in Self-Realization, Leadership, Philanthropy

The study investigated the following guiding questions in order to assess *Objective 2: Youth build essential skills and knowledge in the core teachings of self-realization, leadership and philanthropy.*

Guiding question 2.1: To what extent do students build skills and knowledge related to core teachings in self-realization?
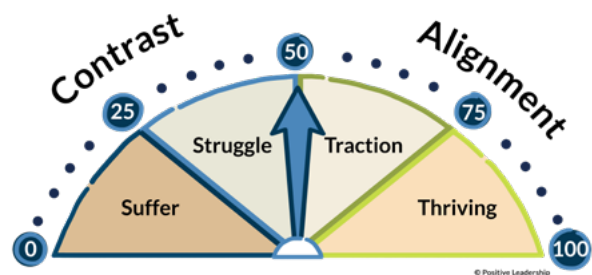
Guiding question 2.2: To what extent do students build skills and knowledge related to core teachings in leadership?

Guiding question 2.3: To what extent do students build skills and knowledge related to core teachings in philanthropy?

Self-Realization: YPI Curriculum Framework

YPI's teachings on self-realization are designed to help students develop a strong foundation and sense of self that they can carry forward productively into the rest of their lives. Importantly, self-realization is modeled as an accessible activity which students can practice and even improve their performance at through purposeful application of the program's unique tools and methods. Key learning outcomes of YPI's self-realization curriculum include:

- **Self-awareness**— Students develop awareness of their authentic self and personal assets (i.e. strengths and innate resources) and how they can uniquely contribute to a team or social setting.

- **Self development**— Students are supported as they push through their comfort zone, intentionally building upon their strengths while being mindful of their "blind spots."

- **Self management**— Students learn to identify alignment and contrast in all aspects of their lives and practice cultivating individual-environment fit; i.e. intentionally fostering external conditions (social, structural, etc.) that align with their internal purpose, goals and needs.

- **Self-assertion**— Students recognize their innate power to create change and gain fluency in deploying their assets and agency to achieve desired outcomes (i.e. thriving) in YPI and beyond.

Self-Realization Learning Outcomes: Current Students

To measure the extent to which YPI students achieve learning outcomes related to self-realization (GQ 2.1), the evaluator utilized the online survey for current YPI students (Attachment 1). Student responses were anonymous in order to minimize reporting bias.

In the survey, students were prompted with a series of statements that relate to various aspects of their self-perception and self-efficacy (adapted from the International Personality Item Pool), and asked to rank responses on a Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (not at all true) to 7 (very true).

The results of the surveys are listed below. Negatively-worded questions are reverse-scored by the evaluator, with a higher score denoting higher positive self perception. Responses are deemed by the evaluator as significant at values of 5 and higher because an average of 5 is greater than the midpoint value of 4.

Self-Realization Statement	C14 Average	C15 Average	C14-15 Average
I feel comfortable with myself.	5.7	5.4	5.5
I dislike myself.	6.1	5.6	5.9
I am less capable than most people.	5.9	5.4	5.6
I feel that my life lacks direction.	5.7	4.7	5.2
I question my ability to do my work properly.	5.8	4.7	5.3
I take responsibility for making decisions.	5.5	5.5	5.5
I feel that I am unable to deal with things.	5.5	4.8	5.2
I know my strengths.	5.6	5.2	5.4
Total Student Average	**5.7/7**	**5.2/7**	**5.5/7**

The data indicates that YPI students score relatively highly in self-realization learning outcomes, with each cohort achieving high (significant) scores. Notably, a comparison of data between C14 and C15 indicates that scores increase with time in the program; i.e. more time in the YPI program delivers greater learning outcomes. For example, while C15 scored relatively lower (4.7) on questions like "I feel like my life lacks direction" and "I question my ability to do my work properly," C14 scored significantly higher (5.7-8) on these same questions.

In addition, in the second reflection questionnaire (Attachment 2) students were asked to reflect on the change in their self-perception via a long form response. In response to the question "Has your YPI experience helped you to become more self-aware? If so, how?" **100%** of respondents answered affirmatively that they have become more aware through YPI. The responses highlighted several areas where positive impacts are most felt, including:

Knowledge of strengths:

"[YPI] made me realize who I was, it confirmed traits of me that I only thought I had."

- ***Cohort 15 student***

"I found myself noticing all different kinds of patterns in my work and behavior that I've not noticed before. Although there are still aspects to my behavior that are spontaneous, but I really am not as unpredictable as I thought I was before YPI."

- ***Cohort 14 student***

"[YPI] lessons make me look at life in a different perspective and overall I realized I am better than I thought and could make a larger impact."

- ***Cohort 15 student***

"[YPI] has helped me define my own skills and what I am good at. This helps me know how I work in a team and why I do what I do."

- ***Cohort 15 student***

Social and situational awareness:

"I am more conscious of other viewpoints that I don't interact with often. Additionally, I am more aware of others' emotions and feelings and can tailor my actions better to accommodate them."

- ***Cohort 14 student***

"[YPI] informed me of how others perceive me and how certain qualities hinder my progress."

- ***Cohort 15 student***

"The YPI experience has equipped me with the experience of being around people in both a professional and friendly environment. Due to this, I have learned more about myself in these situations and my tendencies."

- ***Cohort 14 student***

Self-management:

"YPI has helped me be more self-aware in the sense that I can be more specific and driven with my thoughts, ideas, and time."

- ***Cohort 15 student***

"I have been so much more intentional with my actions and aware of my thoughts pertaining to myself and others."

- ***Cohort 14 student***

"I am far more aware of my gaps as well as my strengths and finding what environment is my best fit."

- ***Cohort 15 student***

"[YPI] has shown me how much stuff I had on my plate and it has shown me what I can handle and what I cannot."

- ***Cohort 15 student***

Self-Realization Learning Outcomes: Parent and Alumni Perspectives

YPI parents and alumni have unique and valuable perspectives in regards to YPI's impact as it relates to self-realization learning outcomes (GQ 2.1). When asked the specific changes they have observed in their child since joining YPI (Attachment 3), parents of current and former YPI students highlighted a number of changes related to self-realization, including increased confidence and social awareness:

> *"[My child] is open minded and able to work cooperatively and navigate in groups of diverse backgrounds and belief systems I believe in large part to the goal, planning and group building opportunities through YPI."*
>
> *- **Cohort 7 parent***

> *"[My child] has grown in self confidence, self awareness, social awareness, concern for others, etc."*
>
> *- **Cohort 14 parent***

> *"I believe so far [my child] has better been able to navigate communication in conflict of ideas in a group, voice her opinion and practice listening. She has felt more confident approaching those she doesn't know well as she has had to in YPI."*
>
> *- **Cohort 14 parent***

The online survey for YPI alumni (see Attachment 4) prompted respondents to reflect on the question "Looking back, how did YPI influence your view of yourself and your place in the world?" Responses highlighted several areas where positive impacts are most felt, including:

Knowledge and application of strengths:

> *"I learned so much about myself. My skills, weaknesses, potential contributions and value add to professional situations, etc. I learned self awareness lessons that most people learn at 26 while I was 16. This gave me so much confidence in personal and professional relationships. I learned early on what I brought to the table and what I didn't. It also helped me define a career path. I was easily able to identify a profession that was a good fit for my strengths."*
>
> *- **Cohort 5 student***

> *"Every time I have to talk about myself in any formal setting I gravitate toward using the terms and language that I learned in YPI -- I think the biggest takeaway for me was that the overlap and intersection of my talents can help me navigate what roles, projects, tasks, etc. that I'm attracted to and help me make decisions about what to take on! More generally, I think YPI gave me a lot of confidence when adjusting to college clubs and internships that involved navigating professional and "real world" environments."*
>
> *- **Cohort 8 student***

> *"YPI instilled in me a level of confidence in my ability to navigate the challenges of university life as well my life beyond my schooling. I felt far better equipped than my schoolmates, and later, my coworkers. I was particularly driven by this self assurance to motivate, inspire, and serve my community with social responsibility and empathy."*
>
> *- **Cohort 14 student***

Self-Management:

> *YPI helped me evaluate myself… and enabled me to better realize when things are not working and what factors I can change to move myself to 'thriving.'"*
>
> *- **Cohort 12 student***

> *"YPI showed me how important an individual can be… It is our job to do the best we can with what we have to work with (our strengths, environment, etc.) and continue to contribute as best we can to our family, community, and country."*
>
> *- **Cohort 10 student***

Empowerment to create change:

> *"YPI increased my view of my own ability and the idea that I could make an impact in the world."*
>
> *- **Cohort 8 student***

> *"I felt like I could make an impact on a bigger scale and contribute to the development of new ideas."*
>
> *- **Cohort 1 student***

> *"YPI gave me so much more confidence in myself and the skills to be able to pursue anything I wanted."*
>
> *- **Cohort 12 student***

> *"YPI helped me realize that with the support of mentors and like-minded people, I truly have the ability to create tangible change in the world."*
>
> *- **Cohort 11 student***

Leadership: YPI Curriculum Framework

YPI's curriculum related to leadership is rooted in an experiential learning model that allows participants to develop and hone leadership skills in real time while pursuing the greater goal of doing good. Like self-realization, leadership is modeled as an accessible *activity* for which students can practice and improve their performance through purposeful application of the program's unique tools and methods. Key components of YPI's leadership curriculum include:

- **The Positive Leadership framework**. YPI utilizes the unique Positive Leadership curriculum developed by YPI founder and director Adam Seaman, which draws on a range of disciplines and philosophies such as leadership theory, organizational development and positive psychology. This framework emphasizes that anyone can practice leadership regardless of their formal title. Leadership is taking positive actions that evoke positive reactions from others with the goal to progress toward mutual thriving.

- **Leadership begins with self.** Building on YPI's core self-realization teachings, YPI instills the notion that true leaders naturally emerge from strong personal foundations and connection with authentic self.

- **Strategic planning and project management.** Students learn a wide range of strategic planning and project management methods and tools that they practice in the "real world" via their philanthropy project.

- **Managing team dynamics.** Students learn to take ownership of and accountability for cohort dynamics, understand the link between team dynamics and productivity, and gain tools to foster positive team culture and engage in collective problem solving.

Leadership Learning Outcomes: Current Students

To measure the extent to which YPI students achieve learning outcomes related to leadership (GQ 2.2), the evaluator utilized the online reflection questionnaire for current YPI students (Attachment 2).

In response to the question "Do you consider yourself a leader?" **100%** of respondents from both cohorts answered in the affirmative, or answered that they could be a leader if the situation required it.

Students were asked to reflect on how views on leadership have changed since beginning YPI. Answers reflect that students successfully internalized key concepts in YPI's leadership curriculum:

> *"I see leadership differently in that it is less about voicing your own opinion and telling other people what to do and how to do it and more about **facilitating the voices of others**, and making sure all opinions can be heard, and evaluated equally."*
>
> *- **Cohort 15 student***

> *"I always saw the leader as someone who would order everyone around, but now I see that it's more than that. A leader takes time to know everyone in their group and **place everyone where they could do the most good**."*
>
> *- **Cohort 15 student***

> *"Before YPI, I thought leadership was about being loud. My YPI experience has taught me that quiet leaders **lead by example** rather than catchy slogans."*
>
> *- **Cohort 14 student***

> *"I used to think a leader was someone who had a prestigious title and told everyone what to do. Now, I know a real leader is someone who has **passion and initiative**, even if they aren't recognized for their leadership."*
>
> *- **Cohort 14 student***

> *"[YPI] has taught me that being a leader does not mean you have to have an opinion about everything. Sometimes it means **stepping aside** to let someone else talk or explain their ideas."*
>
> *- **Cohort 14 student***

> *"I noticed that **every single person is a leader**. There are many types of leaders (extroverted, quiet; expressive verbally, visually, and in actions)."*
>
> *- **Cohort 15 student***

These positive learning outcomes related to leadership are consistent with the 2014 cross-sectional evaluation of Cohorts 6-8, which found that students successfully internalized key leadership concepts. This study also found that a high majority of students identified themselves as leaders, and that students' knowledge of leadership improved with time in the program.

Leadership Learning Outcomes: Parent and Alumni Perspectives

When asked the specific changes they have observed in their child since joining YPI (Attachment 3), parents of current and former YPI students highlighted a number of "soft" and "hard" skills related to leadership, including:

> "[My child] has an **improved sense of responsibility**, engagement, listening to others opinions, empathy, compassion."
>
> *- Cohort 14 parent*

> "[My child] is **comfortable taking charge in meetings**, organizing meetings, meeting new people and presenting ideas."
>
> *- Cohort 11 parent*

> "[My child] became much more comfortable speaking in front of a group, **delivering his ideas in a collaborative fashion** and in making the case for ideas that he felt were sound."
>
> *- Cohort 11 parent*

Similarly, the online survey for YPI alumni (see Attachment 4) prompted respondents to list "the most useful practical skills that they learned in YPI." The alumni generated a list of "soft" and "hard" skills related to leadership that have continued to serve them since graduation from the program:

- Strategic thinking and planning
- **Critical thinking and problem solving**
- Time management
- **Project management (from inception to completion)**
- Meeting facilitation and crafting an agenda
- **How to research and deeply understand a social issue**
- Professional communication (oral and written)
- **Public speaking**
- Effective advocacy and public outreach
- **Negotiation and and conflict management**
- Working with / managing diverse groups
- **Team building**
- Community organizing and networking

Alumni further reflected on how the experience learning these leadership skills at a young age benefited them later in life:

> "Many of the skills I obtained through YPI **went on to benefit me in other areas**… I was paying tuition for a graduate level course about project management… I kept thinking "hey, we learned about this in YPI for free!"
>
> *- Cohort 1 student*

> *"No other program or venture I pursued in high school created such readiness in me to succeed beyond the bounds of my youth… YPI gave me a foundation to pursue community relations and philanthropic efforts throughout my college years and beyond, and I found myself **excelling faster than my counterparts** due to the advanced concepts and skills I was taught in YPI… I can confidently say that what I learned in YPI … **gave me the skills to harness the power of collective action to bring about meaningful change**."*
>
> *- **Cohort 4 student***

> *"YPI taught me social and emotional skills that put me years ahead of my peers in college. I found myself naturally in leadership positions in multiple organizations including the president of my Student Government. I believe that **YPI gave me the foundation of leadership qualities that allowed me to find success in college**."*
>
> *- **Cohort 8 student***

Alumni were asked to reflect on the question "Looking back, how did YPI influence your view of leadership?" Responses highlighted several core leadership teachings that alumni continue to carry with them, including:

> *"YPI helped expose me to the **difference between leaders and those who are simply in a position of authority**. This differentiation is critical for those placed in positions of authority, because their relative power is meaningless if they aren't effective leaders."*
>
> *- **Cohort 10 student***

> *"When I entered YPI, I thought leadership meant being in the front of a corporation, team, or venture. I never quite saw myself as a leader because I lacked the confidence (or so I thought) to stand in front of a large crowd and declare a path forward. I learned through YPI that **leadership comes in many forms**, and none of them involve unilateral decisions. Leadership at its best is a collaborative process that can be practiced by introverts and extroverts alike."*
>
> *- **Cohort 5 student***

> *"One of the most important aspects of leadership is **knowing when to follow**… Those best-suited to lead are those who are able to listen to others, whether they be close confidants or assertive contrarians."*
>
> *- **Cohort 10 student***

> *"[YPI] has made me look at people differently and see that sometimes the best leader isn't the loudest in the room or the one that can do everything themself, but **the person that supports their team the best**, and harnesses their team's talents to lead everyone to the common goal."*
>
> *- **Cohort 8 student***

> *"YPI taught me that **leadership is a moment of accountability**. Anyone can step up to the plate and take charge for certain tasks. This fluidity is what makes good teams great teams."*
>
> *- **Cohort 8 student***

> *"YPI showed me that **leadership can be taught and learned**. I used to believe that people were just natural born leaders/naturally good at public speaking. However, YPI encouraged many people who didn't fit the typical leader archetype, like me, to take space as a leader."*
>
> *- **Cohort 11 student***

Moreover, several alumni referred to YPI as a foundational experience in developing their own identity as a leader and cultivating essential leadership skills that continue to serve them in life:

> *"YPI was **one of the first places I learned to be a leader**. I was actually pushed out of my shell to start honing leadership skills that I never even knew were there. Because of that, I was prepared to take on different leadership roles, having the confidence and knowledge of knowing how to be a transformational and servant leader."*
>
> - ***Cohort 3 student***

> *"As someone who feels called to leadership, **YPI was the first spark** that lit a passion in me to strive as a leader in both my professional and personal life."*
>
> - ***Cohort 4 student***

> *"Everything that I learned in YPI has contributed to **who I am, how I lead, how I serve, and how I will continue to do those things in the future**."*
>
> - ***Cohort 9 student***

Philanthropy: YPI Curriculum Framework

YPI's curriculum models philanthropy as a highly engaging developmental experience for youth, which transforms the impulse to do good into an organized and empowering activity. Key components of YPI's philanthropy curriculum include:

- **Philanthropy is for all.** YPI's curriculum is grounded in philanthropy's core definition of "love of humanity." At a time when popular culture increasingly portrays philanthropy as inaccessible to those without great wealth, YPI seeks to promote a vision and framework for philanthropy that is highly empowering and accessible to all people regardless of age, profession, or socioeconomic status.

- **If leadership begins with self, philanthropy begins with leadership.** Building on YPI's core teachings on self-realization and leadership, the program promotes the view that philanthropy is ultimately a selfless act of authentic leadership in service to the thriving of others.

- **Intrinsic motivation.** Students are supported in developing their own sense of philanthropic purpose, and are taught to distinguish this from disingenuous external motivations such as prestige, wealth, etc.

- **Community service.** Students cultivate a keen sense of connection to their local community and an appreciation of its needs.

Philanthropy Learning Outcomes: Current Students

To measure the extent to which YPI students achieve learning outcomes related to philanthropy (GQ 2.3), the evaluator utilized the online reflection questionnaire for current YPI students (Attachment 2).

In response to the question "Do you consider yourself a philanthropist?" **100%** of respondents from both cohorts answered in the affirmative, or answered that they were on the path to becoming one in YPI.

Students were also asked to reflect on how views on philanthropy have changed since beginning YPI. A large number of students responded that their level of knowledge of philanthropy prior to YPI was quite low, and/or they associated philanthropy only with donation of funds.

*"Before, I had a notion of philanthropy as rich donors donating their money, however I now view **philanthropy as an action anyone can take**. Resources can include money, but also time and expertise."*

- Cohort 14 student

*"I used to think philanthropy was just donating large amounts of money to help people. But now I see it as just helping people in need and **money does not necessarily have to be involved**."*

- Cohort 14 student

*"**At first philanthropy never crossed my mind**, of course doing good things did but I just didn't know there was a word for it. Now I think about it all the time and what I can do to be a better philanthropist."*

- Cohort 15 student

These positive learning outcomes are consistent with the 2014 cross-sectional evaluation of Cohorts 6-8, which found that students successfully internalized key philanthropy-related concepts. The same study also found that a high majority of students identified themselves as philanthropists.

Philanthropy Learning Outcomes: Parent and Alumni Perspectives

When asked the specific changes they have observed in their child since joining YPI (Attachment 3), parents of current and former YPI students credited YPI for playing a significant role in cultivating their student's philanthropic mindset:

*"**Philanthropy is engraved in her**. As a result of YPI, she will be a great contributor to society."*

- Cohort 7 parent

*"We are fortunate to have the YPI program in Tulsa… My [child] completed the YPI program and it **played a significant role in shaping her as a servant leader** who wants to create a positive impact on humanity."*

- Cohort 11 parent

*"She has developed more maturity through the way she articulates her thoughts on many topics that affect teens. **She feels like her voice matters**."*

- Cohort 14 parent

*"She has **compassion for those in need** and knows that philanthropy comes in all shapes and sizes."*

- Cohort 7 parent

The online survey for YPI alumni (see Attachment 4) prompted respondents to reflect on the question "Looking back, how did YPI influence your view of philanthropy?" Responses highlighted several of YPI's core teachings on philanthropy that alumni continue to carry with them, including:

> "It was very important for me to learn how philanthropy does not have to mean giving money. I think about philanthropy as a **state of mind** - it impacted my decision to become involved in student and community organizations."
>
> - **Cohort 8 student**

> "Philanthropy requires more than kindness and a willingness to care for people. While good intentions are a great start, in order to actually create change you need the ability to **convert those plans into reality**. The 3 Ts of philanthropy (Time, Treasure, and Talent) are something I still share with others to this day."
>
> - **Cohort 8 student**

> "YPI demonstrated the extent to which philanthropy can affect a community. Looking at the previous cohorts' work and its place in the Tulsa community and now **seeing my cohort's project still in effect clearly indicates just how important philanthropy is to the success of a community**. Furthermore, it helped both broaden my perspective to the world around me while also concentrating my focus on the community I was a part of for so long. **Philanthropy truly focuses an individual on those around them.**"
>
> - **Cohort 10 student**

> "YPI broadened my view of philanthropy - I had been passionate about community service prior to YPI… but understanding **how large, systemic social change happens** came for me through YPI."
>
> - **Cohort 1 student**

> "YPI taught me it wasn't just big donations to good causes that made one a philanthropist. It is the **lifelong dedication to wanting to see another triumph**." - Cohort 3 student
>
> - **Cohort 3 student**

Several alumni referred to YPI as a foundational experience in developing their own identity as a philanthropist and cultivating a service-oriented mindset that has continued to this day:

> "I felt empowered that **I could have a voice at the table** in my community to evoke positive change, and knew I wanted that role to be a part of my life in some way, no matter where I ended up!"
>
> - **Cohort 7 student**

> "YPI introduced me to a world of service and helped me discover capacities in myself that I never knew. This introduction was critical in building my confidence as a change agent. YPI was instrumental in helping me understand that our generation will ultimately not be judged by our technology, design or intellect but instead by the character of our society - how we treat each other, the poor, the discriminated and the marginalized."
>
> - **Cohort 3 student**

Leadership and Philanthropy Learning Outcomes: Community Partner Perspectives

The evaluator created an online survey for community members (Attachment 5) and conducted approximately 15 semi-structured virtual interviews with community members in summer 2023. Based on their direct experience with YPI students, **100%** of interviewed community partners highly rated the leadership and philanthropic skill sets demonstrated by students, including project management, professional communication and knowledge of community issues.

Founders of [Tulsa Changemakers](#) Andrew Spektor and Jake Lerner were among those community members who highlighted the YPI program's unique place in the ecosystem of Tulsa-based organizations that specialize in philanthropic and leadership education. While Tulsa Changemakers works primarily in service of elementary and middle school populations, Andrew and Jake point out that YPI is essentially **the only program of its kind that serves the high school demographic**. Thus, YPI plays a unique and essential role in the "pipeline" for youth philanthropic and leadership education in Tulsa, providing a crucial stepping stone for youth to develop their skills and interests in this area:

> *"YPI is an important part of the pipeline and ecosystem of youth leadership development in Tulsa… It's great that Tulsa has this rigorous long-term development leadership program. At Changemakers, we are always thinking about how we can prepare students for YPI… We would like to see YPI become more accessible, so that a greater number of our students can participate in the program."*
>
> *- Andrew Spektor and Jake Lerner*

Objective 2: Conclusions

The evaluation finds that YPI is highly successful in fulfilling its second stated objective: "Youth build essential skills and knowledge in the core teachings of self-realization, leadership and philanthropy."

In general, data shows that **current students consistently achieve significant learning milestones** related to the YPI curriculum during their time in the program. This conclusion is consistent with previous studies of YPI cohorts. Moreover, YPI is the **only program of its kind** that serves the Tulsa-area high school demographic, making it a scarce and coveted resource for youth to develop this targeted knowledge and skillset.

The evaluation reveals **new insights regarding the extent to which alumni retain and utilize this knowledge and skillset into the long-term**. The evaluation finds that alumni not only retain knowledge from YPI, but that they also go on to develop a deeper understanding and personal connection to learning and concepts introduced by the program after graduation. Thus, while current students reflect a basic understanding and fluency with the curriculum, **alumni demonstrate a progression and maturation of this learning based on lived experience**. Alumni also consistently report experiencing the long-term practical value of YPI teachings, as they **regularly apply these tools to navigate life challenges** and reach greater individual thriving in all aspects of their lives (personal, academic, professional).

> **Guiding question 2.1: To what extent do students build skills and knowledge related to core teachings in self-realization?**

Data shows that **YPI students score highly in self-realization outcomes, with positive views of self-perception and self-efficacy**. Student scores also increase with time in the program, suggesting that more time in the YPI program delivers greater outcomes in this area.

100% of surveyed current students report that they have become more self-aware through YPI. Surveys of parents and alumni confirm that students experience high levels of self confidence related to self awareness and social awareness.

Current students highlighted several areas where positive impacts are most felt, including:

- **Knowledge of strengths.** As a result of YPI, students understand themselves better and recognize their potential to productively apply their strengths to achieve goals.

- **Social and situational awareness.** Students are more aware of how they relate to others, and can adjust their behaviors to meet the needs of a given situation.

- **Self-management.** Students become attuned to feelings of contrast and alignment in relation to their environment and take steps to foster conditions that better align with their authentic self and purpose.

Alumni also reflected on the positive long-term impacts they have experienced as a result of exposure to YPI teachings on self-realization, often reflecting a more mature integration and application of the concepts and tools:

- **Knowledge and application of strengths**. By developing a keen sense of self-awareness at a young age, alumni feel that they are better equipped than peers to navigate life. Knowledge of their strengths gives them self-assurance to act decisively and productively in service to themselves and others.

- **Self-management.** Alumni feel confident in their ability to live a purpose-driven life and foster conditions that align with their authentic self. Looking back, alumni recall specific instances when YPI teachings helped them to evaluate critical life milestones (academic, professional, personal) and take action to course-correct toward a more authentic path.

- **Empowerment to create change.** Alumni feel confident in their own ability to achieve meaningful, large-scale change in their community and world.

Guiding question 2.2: To what extent do students build skills and knowledge related to core teachings in self-realization?

Surveys indicate that YPI students experience significant learning outcomes in regards to YPI's leadership curriculum. **100%** of current student respondents consider themselves to be a leader, or recognize that they have the ability to be a leader if the situation requires it.

Current students consistently shared the view that, since joining YPI, **their understanding of leadership had changed dramatically:**

A leader is…	
View Before Joining YPI	**Present-Day View**
Someone who orders everyone around/tells them what to do and how to do it	Someone who facilitates the voices of others and makes sure all opinions are heard
Someone who is loud	Someone who leads by example
Someone who voices their opinion	Someone with passion and initiative
Someone with a prestigious title	Every single person is a leader

Alumni also highlight a number of key messages related to leadership that have continued to shape their views to this day:

- **Leadership and authority are distinct concepts.**
- **Leadership comes in many forms.**
- **Leadership is knowing when to follow and how to listen.**
- **Leadership is supporting a team and harnessing that team's talents toward a common goal.**
- **Leadership is a moment of accountability.**
- **Leadership is an activity that anyone can practice and improve at.**

Alumni consistently referred to **YPI as a foundational experience in developing their own identity as a leader** and cultivating essential leadership skills that continue to serve them in life. Parents, alumni and community members also identified a list of **"soft"** and **"hard" skills** related to project management, people management, professional conduct and community organizing that students develop through participation in the program.

> **Guiding question 2.3: To what extent do students build skills and knowledge related to core teachings in philanthropy?**

Surveys indicate that YPI students experience significant learning outcomes in regards to YPI's philanthropy curriculum. **100%** of surveyed current students identify themselves as a philanthropist, or feel that they are on the path to becoming one in YPI.

Current students reflected that **before joining YPI, their level of knowledge of philanthropy was quite low**:

Philanthropy is...	
View Before Joining YPI	**Present-Day View**
	An action anyone can take
Rich people donating their money	Helping people in need
	Money isn't necessarily involved

Alumni also highlight a number of key messages related to philanthropy that have continued to shape their views to this day:

- **Philanthropy is a life-long state of mind.**
- **Effective philanthropy requires individuals to utilize their assets (time, treasure and talents) to convert plans into reality.**
- **Philanthropy is about caring for others and helping them to thrive.**

Parents of current and former YPI students **credited YPI for playing a significant role in cultivating their student's philanthropic mindset**. Alumni also referred to YPI as a foundational experience in developing their own identity as a philanthropist and cultivating a service-oriented mindset that has **continued to this day**.

Objective 3: Youth Act as Effective Changemakers

The study investigated the following guiding questions in order to assess *Objective 3: Youth act as effective changemakers in their community and beyond.*

Guiding question 3.1: What is the positive impact of cohort projects in the community (during the program and beyond)?

Guiding question 3.2: After graduation from YPI, how do alumni continue to act to effect positive change in their community and world?

Cohort Project Impact: Methodological Note

To measure the extent to which cohort projects positively impact the community (GQ 3.1), the evaluator conducted a series of semi-structured virtual interviews of alumni and community members (approx. 35) throughout summer 2023. Based on these interviews and other available historical records in YPI files and public records (media reports, etc.), the evaluator created updated narrative records of each cohort's project and long-term impact (see Attachment 6).

It is important to note that these narratives do not claim to represent a comprehensive account of all impact; however, they provide an indication of the possible scope of this impact based on the available evidence.

It is also important to note that the YPI program does not place a great emphasis on the "success" of cohort projects per se. Rather, the philanthropy project is a tool and platform for empowering, holistic experiential learning that drives the greater goal of developing the next generation of kind, committed, and capable leaders. YPI Director Adam Seaman is explicit in this distinction, often explaining that "the real project of YPI is student development."

Thus, GQ 3.1 is considered a proxy indicator of the larger goal of Objective 3, which focuses specifically on manifestations of youth action, rather than project "success" and related metrics.

Cohort Project Impact:

Over the past 18 years, fifteen YPI cohorts have chosen to develop projects that address a wide range of challenges facing their peers and community at large. Their work has involved direct collaboration with a number of community institutions across educational, nonprofit and government sectors at local, regional, and national levels. Project approaches are often highly innovative and differ widely from cohort to cohort, with activities ranging from education/awareness, to advocacy, to direct interventions in schools and other community platforms.

The list of projects to date are as follows (see full impact narratives in Attachment 6):

Adolescent Depression Awareness Program (2006-09). Cohort 1's project utilized a high school-based curriculum to increase student awareness about the nature of depression, indicators of depression and available treatments.

Redefine: New Rules, Better Relationships (2007-10). Cohort 2's project promoted healthy relationships among Tulsa teenagers in order to enhance their skills to socialize constructively and reduce the frequency of physical and emotional abuse.

Unmask: Mind Over Media (2008-11). Cohort 3's project worked to counteract the negative effects of media saturation by teaching teens to think critically about their media consumption.

REV: Teen Volunteer Revolution (2009-12). Cohort 4's project sought to revitalize the image of volunteering among youth by helping them to connect to opportunities that align with their interests and passions.

Fuel: Eat to Live (2010-13). Cohort 5's project worked to empower youth to take ownership of their health by improving their nutritional awareness.

REV 2.0 (2011-14). Cohort 6 built on Cohort 4's project to revolutionize the way teens view volunteerism.

MESH Connect (2012-15). Cohort 7's project worked to create inclusive social environments at school and integrate students with special needs into the general education population.

Spark Karts (2013-16). Cohort 8's project sought to to inspire Tulsa-area elementary students to engage in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM).

Brink: College Bound, College Funded (2014-17). Cohort 9's project focused on increasing the accessibility of higher education by working to grow the use of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) across Tulsa Public Schools.

Teens on Board (2015-18). Cohort 10's project promoted age diversity and teen perspective in the philanthropic sector by helping to create youth advisory boards in Tulsa-area nonprofits.

CultureBridge (2016-20). Cohort 11's project focused on increasing city-wide empathy for the immigrant experience through first-hand experiential learning.

The CommonWealth Project (2017-21). Cohort 12's project worked to help teens build skills in constructive civil discourse and grow as active citizens through experiential learning opportunities.

DiscussWell (2018-22). Cohort 13's project focused on improving the mental and emotional health of teens by working to destigmatize topics that often go undiscussed and ultimately lead to unhealthy patterns.

TrafickQ: Start Learning, Stop Trafficking (2021-24). Currently in its third year of development, Cohort 14's project seeks to aid teens to recognize and prevent human trafficking with accurate, reliable information.

Foster Care Transition (2022-25). Currently in its second year of development, Cohort 15's project aims to support teens transitioning out of the foster care system to improve their quality of life and chances of success.

Interviews with community partners that worked directly with the students shed light on multiple areas where YPI brought value to their institutions and work in service to the community:

Youth perspective and expertise. Several partners noted the high level of expertise and thoughtfulness that the students demonstrated in designing and implementing their interventions. Moreover, the students' unique experience and viewpoint as youth was described as major assets that helped to drive innovation and new thinking in their intervention area to the benefit of the wider community.

- **Redefine / Cohort 2** – Former OU-Tulsa researcher Emily Lester (Curzon) reflects that the project served as a significant contribution to the field of healthy teen dating relationships by approaching the topic with a healthy, positive framework. The students' work also contributed to the creation of a new evaluative tool, the Healthy Teen Relationships Inventory, that measures teen perceptions of healthy dating relationships.

- **Unmask / Cohort 3** – Media expert Erin Walsh highlighted the value of the youth perspective in the media education field, which she describes as typically dominated by adult perspectives.

- **CultureBridge / Cohort 11** – Former City of Tulsa representative Christina Starzi-Mendoza (da Silva) reflected Cohort 11's active contribution to the visioning process for the New Tulsans Initiative helped the City realize its goal of integrating diverse perspectives. Moreover, the students were helpful in identifying gaps in the City's research and programming.

Youth as effective collaborators. A number of community partners reflected that they came to value youth voice and collaboration for the first time as result of the partnership with YPI students. They described the partnership as a "lightbulb moment"

when they realized that youth could be highly effective partners to advance their work and mission. Several organizations took steps to more actively engage youth voice and leadership following their experience with YPI. Moreover, several organizations report specifically soliciting current and former YPI students as top performing interns.

- **Adolescent Depression Awareness Program / Cohort 1** – ADAP founder Dr. Swartz reflected that she would never have considered working with youth prior to her experience with Cohort 1. However, she ultimately came to see that the students were able to leverage unique assets that were ultimately transformative for ADAP's long term expansion and success.

- **Spark Karts / Cohort 8** – Former Tulsa Regional Stem Alliance Executive Director Xan Black reflected that she was inspired by Cohort 8's high level of competence and ability to drive change. As a result of the partnership, TRSA hired a number of cohort students as interns and formalized youth participation on their board.

- **Teens on Board / Cohort 10** – Founders of Tulsa Changemakers, Andrew Spektor and Jake Lerner, reflected that, by showing what youth were capable of, YPI students have played a role in positively influencing the city-wide narrative around youth voice and student participatory action.

- **CultureBridge / Cohort 11** – Christina Starzi-Mendoza (da Silva) reflected that Cohort 11's contribution to the New Tulsans Initiative was the first time that the City actively involved youth in the development of policy, and that the positive experience led to efforts to build more youth leadership into the City's efforts. At a personal level, Christina says that her YPI experience helped her "understand the power that youth have" and that she continues to find ways to prioritize youth leadership in her new position with the City of Houston.

YPI as an "incubation lab" for projects. Several partners described the YPI cohorts as playing an essential role in developing and piloting ideas and projects, allowing the adoptive organization to easily build on the model and community momentum for long-term success.

- **Spark Karts / Cohort 8** – TRSA representative Dr. Emily Mortimer credits the original Spark Karts idea as essential in paving the way for the development of the organization's highly popular STEM Rx and "STEM in a bag" programs.

- **Brink / Cohort 9** – ImpactTulsa representative Laura Latta reflected that Cohort 9 contributed to the creation of a highly effective and resonant advocacy campaign which ImpactTulsa was able to easily build upon in their later programming.

- **Teens on Board / Cohort 10** – Andrew Spektor and Jake Lerner reflected that they previously had a strong interest in developing youth voice on nonprofit boards, but lacked the resources to get the idea off the ground until the partnership with Cohort 10. "By creating a first draft, [the cohort] was essential in propelling the work forward," they commented.

The analysis shows that several cohort projects continued to demonstrate significant impact years after the students' graduation from YPI. Illustrative examples include:

- **Adolescent Depression Awareness Program / Cohort 1** – ADAP has grown into a highly respected nationwide program that provides virtual training and curriculum to schools free of charge. The program has reached over 130,000 students and 3,400 instructors across 22 states.

- **Spark Karts / Cohort 8** – TRSA permanently gifted the carts to regional schools in need of STEM labs for long-term use. The Spark Karts idea directly led to the development of STEM Rx and "STEM in a bag" programs that have served over 100,000 students and families to date.

- **Teens on Board / Cohort 10** – Through Teens on Board and its later iterations under Tulsa Changemakers, multiple non-profits in the Tulsa area have created youth advisory boards.

Notably, many adoptive organizations who are not currently actively implementing cohort projects remain convinced of their ongoing value and relevance, and continue to look for opportunities and resources to revitalize them. In many interviews, the obstacles to long-term implementation are due to a lack of resources, rather than a lack of interest.

Interviews of YPI alumni revealed that a considerable number of students have remained highly invested and involved in their cohort's mission, whether through engagement with the adoptive organization or other like-minded initiatives. Illustrative examples include:

- **MESH / Cohort 7** – Based on his interest and expertise in serving students with special needs developed under MESH, alumnus Christopher Loerke spearheaded the effort to create Sooner Works as an undergraduate student at OU. Sooner Works is a four-year comprehensive integrated program for students with an intellectual or developmental disability who desire a postsecondary experience on a college campus.

- **Spark Karts / Cohort 8** – TRSA provided internships to several YPI alumni to continue to directly support the Spark Karts mission. These students were instrumental in helping to develop the later STEM Rx and "Stem in a bag" programs.

- **Teens on Board / Cohort 10** – Alumna Abigail Swank stayed involved with Changemakers and Teens on Board throughout her college years, including by helping to organize the youth boards for Hunger Free Oklahoma and Little Light House. Abigail recently joined the Changemakers team as an intern and is working to further develop the Teens on Board model.

Beyond YPI: Alumni as Changemakers

To measure the extent to which alumni continue to act to effect positive change in their environment, the evaluator utilized the online survey for alumni and conducted a series of semi-structured virtual interviews with alumni (N=20). Based on this data, the evaluator created several illustrative student spotlight narratives reflecting these students' long-term trajectory and experience as it relates to YPI (see Attachment 7).

Data shows that **100%** of surveyed alumni continue to actively practice some form of philanthropy and leadership in their daily life. With over 300 alumni spread across the world, these YPI changemakers are **applying their skills and knowledge in a wide variety of professions and geographies**, reflecting YPI's core teaching that philanthropy and leadership are mindsets that applicable in any professional or life situation:

- Alumni have gone on to attend elite universities such as Harvard, Yale, Stanford, Vanderbilt, and Cornell. At the same time, a significant number of students (approx. 30% of respondents) stay in Tulsa to study and/or build a career, with OU and TU as the two most commonly attended universities.

- Alumni have pursued a wide diversity of professions, with medicine, engineering, science, and social/non-profit work among the most common.

Those who have remained in Tulsa are emerging as **highly effective members of the city's workforce**, particularly in the nonprofit sector. These alumni are part of the rising vanguard of Tulsa's next generation philanthropic leadership.

- **Sheyda Brown (Cohort 3)** currently serves as Deputy Director of the Terence Crutcher Foundation. Sheyda previously served as a Program Associate at the Charles and Lynn Schusterman Family Philanthropies and a Program Coordinator at the Oklahoma Center for Community and Justice.

- **April Gordon (Cohort 3)** currently serves as the Associate Director of YPI and also works as a non-profit consultant in support of several local organizations.

- **Anna Bebermeyer (Cohort 6)** currently serves as the Grants Manager at the George Kaiser Family Foundation.

- **Abigail Swank (Cohort 10)** currently serves as an intern with Tulsa Changemakers. She is completing her undergraduate degree in leadership and nonprofit business at ORU.

Alumni devote their time, treasure and talent to a wide array of philanthropic causes that matter to them. In addition to taking leadership roles in community organizing, alumni also report regularly volunteering and giving financially to causes important to them. Illustrative "passion areas" highlighted by alumni include:

- Support of marginalized and underrepresented communities
- Support of native and indigenous populations
- Social work
- Supporting community health/medical outcomes
- Peer mentoring
- Fostering community among local youth and young adults
- Support for a vibrant college campus
- Service to religious organizations
- Maternal morbidity and mortality for minority women
- Environmental sustainability and conservation
- Support for veterans
- Support for children with incarcerated parents
- Blood donation
- Promotion of labor rights for university student employees
- Prison abolitionism
- Promotion of women in science
- Mental wellness in the healthcare profession
- Teaching coding to disabled students
- Innovations in the justice sector

Several alumni have demonstrated success in **starting philanthropic or pro-social initiatives** in their own institutions or communities. Without exception, these alumni credit their YPI experience as instrumental in preparing them to succeed in these endeavors.

- **Parth Singh (Cohort 3)** – Led efforts to create the "Beyond Bounds" social enterprise at the University of Michigan, which established a seminar taught to all rising sophomores on how to align personal values with career choices.

- **Ritvik Ganguly (Cohort 8)** – Led efforts as an OU medical student to develop a course for OU's clinical medicine curriculum on the topic of delivering sensitive news to patients. Now taught to all second year med school students; approximately 450 students have completed the course to date.

- **Christopher Loerke (Cohort 7)** – Spearheaded the effort to create Sooner Works as an undergraduate student at OU. Sooner Works is a four-year comprehensive integrated program for students with an intellectual or developmental disability who desire a postsecondary experience on a college campus. Approximately 40 students are currently enrolled in the program.

- **Lane McCoy (Cohort 12)** – Revitalized the Student Heros program as an undergraduate student at OU. According to Lane, the program had been discontinued due to lack of student leadership, so he took the opportunity to reshape Student Heros into a "YPI-like program" with a mission to make positive change in the Norman community by identifying problems and implementing solutions via student-led projects. Student Heros currently has over 200 active members conducting 20 service and research projects.

Objective 3: Conclusions

The evaluation finds ample evidence that YPI is highly successful in fulfilling its third stated objective: "Youth act as effective changemakers in their community and beyond."

Guiding question 3.1: What is the positive impact of cohort projects in the community (during the program and beyond)?

Over the past 18 years, fifteen YPI cohorts developed projects that address a wide range of challenges facing their peers and community at large. Their work has involved direct collaboration with a number of community institutions across **educational, nonprofit and government sectors at local, regional, and national levels.**

Community partners highlight multiple areas where **YPI brought direct value to their institutions** and work in service to the community, including:

- **Youth perspective and expertise.** Students' unique experience and viewpoint as youth are major assets that helped to drive innovation and new thinking in their intervention area.

- **Youth as effective collaborators.** Many community partners came to value youth voice and collaboration for the first time as result of the partnership with YPI students and took steps to more actively engage youth voice and leadership in their institutions following their experience with YPI.

- **YPI as an "incubation lab" for projects.** YPI cohorts played an essential role in developing and piloting ideas and projects, allowing the adoptive organization to easily build on the model and community momentum for long-term success.

Several cohort projects continued to demonstrate significant impact years after the students' graduation from YPI, **reaching hundreds of thousands of additional beneficiaries**. These successes are often tied to the **continued investment by alumni in their cohort's mission**, whether through engagement with the adoptive organization or other like-minded initiatives.

Guiding question 3.2: After graduation from YPI, how do alumni continue to act to effect positive change in their community and world?

100% of surveyed alumni continue to actively practice some form of philanthropy and leadership in their daily life. With over 300 alumni spread across the world, these YPI changemakers are **applying their skills and knowledge in a wide variety of professions and geographies**.

Approximately **30%** of surveyed alumni choose to stay in Tulsa to study and/or build a career, and are emerging as highly effective members of the city's workforce. Several alumni currently work in Tulsa's non-profit sector, representing **Tulsa's next generation of philanthropic leadership.**

Several alumni have demonstrated success in **starting philanthropic or pro-social initiatives** in their own institutions or communities. Without exception, these alumni **credit their YPI experience** as instrumental in preparing them to succeed in these endeavors.

Other alumni are devoting their time, treasure and talent to a wide array of philanthropic causes that matter to them, as part of a lifelong philanthropic practice that will continue to create **positive ripple effects far into the future.**

Concluding Observations

This evaluation of the Youth Philanthropy Initiative reveals the program's resounding success in fulfilling its core objectives.

Firstly, YPI excels in nurturing the holistic development and wellbeing of youth. Students experience an environment that supports psychological need satisfaction, and consistently name YPI as one of the most significant developmental experiences of their life.

Through YPI's focus on self-realization, leadership, and philanthropy, students and alumni develop essential skills and knowledge. Alumni, in particular, exhibit a deeper integration and application of these teachings, leading to positive transformations in various aspects of their lives.

YPI effectively cultivates leadership skills and perspectives. Students' understanding of leadership matures over time in the program, fostering a sense of empowerment to effect change. The program's impact extends beyond its curriculum, equipping alumni with life-long practical tools for navigating challenges and thriving in personal, academic, and professional spheres.

YPI's emphasis on philanthropy yields impressive results. Students and alumni embrace philanthropy as a lifelong mindset, effectively utilizing their strengths and assets to make a difference. Community engagement through cohort projects showcases the program's value as an incubation lab for innovative initiatives, promoting youth voice and collaboration.

The success of YPI's objectives is evident through alumni's continued commitment to philanthropy and leadership, as well as their positive impact on their communities and beyond. By fostering a deep connection between youth, philanthropy, and holistic development, YPI not only shapes individual lives but also contributes to the growth and thriving of the wider community.

YPI Current Student Survey

Thank you for participating in this survey about Youth Philanthropy Initiative. The data collected will provide useful information regarding the impact of YPI and may assist with further program development.

Your answers are completely **anonymous and confidential**.

Please answer as truthfully as possible.

1. What cohort are you currently in?

   Mark only one oval.

   ◯ Cohort 14
   ◯ Cohort 15

The following questions relate to the Search Institute's 40 Developmental Assets for youth.
On a scale of 1-5, how well does YPI address the following developmental assets?
Note that you are NOT being asked if you personally experience these developmental assets in your life, but rather if YPI as a program touches on these topics.

2. Family support - Family life provides high levels of love and support

   Mark only one oval.

   Does Not Address

   1 ◯
   2 ◯
   3 ◯
   4 ◯
   5 ◯

   Fully Addresses

3. Positive family communication - young person and her or his parent(s) communicate positively, and young person is willing to seek advice and counsel from parents

   Mark only one oval.

   Does Not Address

   1 ◯
   2 ◯
   3 ◯
   4 ◯
   5 ◯

   Fully Addresses

4. Other adult relationships - young person receives support from three or more nonparent adults

   Mark only one oval.

   Does Not Address

   1 ◯
   2 ◯
   3 ◯
   4 ◯
   5 ◯

   Fully Addresses

5. Caring neighborhood - young person experiences caring neighbors

   Mark only one oval.

   Does Not Address

   1 ◯
   2 ◯
   3 ◯
   4 ◯
   5 ◯

   Fully Addresses

6. Caring school climate - school/program provides a caring, encouraging environment

   Mark only one oval.

   Does Not Address

   1 ◯
   2 ◯
   3 ◯
   4 ◯
   5 ◯

   Fully Addresses

7. Parent involvement in schooling - parent(s) are actively involved in helping young person succeed in school

   Mark only one oval.

   Does Not Address

   1 ◯
   2 ◯
   3 ◯
   4 ◯
   5 ◯

   Fully Addresses

8. Community values youth - young person perceives that adults in the community value youth

Mark only one oval.

Does Not Address

1 ⬭

2 ⬭

3 ⬭

4 ⬭

5 ⬭

Fully Addresses

9. Youth as resources - young people are given useful roles in the community

Mark only one oval.

Does Not Address

1 ⬭

2 ⬭

3 ⬭

4 ⬭

5 ⬭

Fully Addresses

10. Service to others - young person serves in the community one hour or more per week

Mark only one oval.

Does Not Address

1 ⬭

2 ⬭

3 ⬭

4 ⬭

5 ⬭

Fully Addresses

11. Safety - young person feels safe in the school/program

Mark only one oval.

Does Not Address

1 ⬭

2 ⬭

3 ⬭

4 ⬭

5 ⬭

Fully Addresses

12. Family boundaries - family has clear rules and consequences and monitors the young person's whereabouts

Mark only one oval.

Does Not Address

1 ⬭

2 ⬭

3 ⬭

4 ⬭

5 ⬭

Fully Addresses

13. School boundaries - school/program provides clear rules and consequences

Mark only one oval.

Does Not Address

1 ⬭

2 ⬭

3 ⬭

4 ⬭

5 ⬭

Fully Addresses

14. Neighborhood boundaries - neighbors take responsibility for monitoring young people's behavior

Mark only one oval.

Does Not Address

1 ⬭

2 ⬭

3 ⬭

4 ⬭

5 ⬭

Fully Addresses

15. Adult role models - adults model positive, responsible behavior

Mark only one oval.

Does Not Address

1 ⬭

2 ⬭

3 ⬭

4 ⬭

5 ⬭

Fully Addresses

16. Positive peer influence - young person's peers and friends model responsible behavior

Mark only one oval.

Does Not Address

1 ◯

2 ◯

3 ◯

4 ◯

5 ◯

Fully Addresses

17. High expectations - teachers encourage the young person to do well

Mark only one oval.

Does Not Address

1 ◯

2 ◯

3 ◯

4 ◯

5 ◯

Fully Addresses

18. Creative activities - young person spends three or more hours per week in lessons or practice in music, theater, or other arts

Mark only one oval.

Does Not Address

1 ◯

2 ◯

3 ◯

4 ◯

5 ◯

Fully Addresses

19. Youth programs - young person spends three or more hours per week in sports, clubs or organizations at school and/or in the community

Mark only one oval.

Does Not Address

1 ◯

2 ◯

3 ◯

4 ◯

5 ◯

Fully Addresses

20. Religious community - young person spends one or more hours per week in activities in a religious institution

Mark only one oval.

Does Not Address

1 ◯

2 ◯

3 ◯

4 ◯

5 ◯

Fully Addresses

21. Time at home - young person is out with friends "with nothing special to do" two or fewer nights per week

Mark only one oval.

Does Not Address

1 ◯

2 ◯

3 ◯

4 ◯

5 ◯

Fully Addresses

22. Achievement motivation - young person is motivated to do well in school/program

Mark only one oval.

Does Not Address

1 ◯

2 ◯

3 ◯

4 ◯

5 ◯

Fully Addresses

23. School engagement - young person is actively engaged in learning in school/program

Mark only one oval.

Does Not Address

1 ◯

2 ◯

3 ◯

4 ◯

5 ◯

Fully Addresses

24. Homework - young person reports doing at least one hour of homework every school day

Mark only one oval.

Does Not Address

1. ◯
2. ◯
3. ◯
4. ◯
5. ◯

Fully Addresses

25. Bonding to school - young person cares about her or his school/program

Mark only one oval.

Does Not Address

1. ◯
2. ◯
3. ◯
4. ◯
5. ◯

Fully Addresses

26. Reading for pleasure - young person reads for pleasure three or more hours per week

Mark only one oval.

Does Not Address

1. ◯
2. ◯
3. ◯
4. ◯
5. ◯

Fully Addresses

27. Caring - young person places high value on helping other people

Mark only one oval.

Does Not Address

1. ◯
2. ◯
3. ◯
4. ◯
5. ◯

Fully Addresses

28. Equality and social justice - young person places high value on promoting equality and reducing hunger and poverty

Mark only one oval.

Does Not Address

1. ◯
2. ◯
3. ◯
4. ◯
5. ◯

Fully Addresses

29. Integrity - young person acts on convictions and stands up for her or his beliefs

Mark only one oval.

Does Not Address

1. ◯
2. ◯
3. ◯
4. ◯
5. ◯

Fully Addresses

30. Honesty - young person "tells the truth even when it is not easy"

Mark only one oval.

Does Not Address

1. ◯
2. ◯
3. ◯
4. ◯
5. ◯

Fully Addresses

31. Responsibility - young person accepts and takes personal responsibility

Mark only one oval.

Does Not Address

1. ◯
2. ◯
3. ◯
4. ◯
5. ◯

Fully Addresses

32. Restraint - young person believes it is important not to be sexually active or to use alcohol or other drugs

Mark only one oval.

Does Not Address

1 ◯

2 ◯

3 ◯

4 ◯

5 ◯

Fully Addresses

33. Planning and decision making - young person knows how to plan ahead and make choices

Mark only one oval.

Does Not Address

1 ◯

2 ◯

3 ◯

4 ◯

5 ◯

Fully Addresses

34. Interpersonal competence - young person knows how to plan ahead and make choices

Mark only one oval.

Does Not Address

1 ◯

2 ◯

3 ◯

4 ◯

5 ◯

Fully Addresses

35. Cultural competence - young person has knowledge of and comfort with people of different cultural/racial/ethnic backgrounds

Mark only one oval.

Does Not Address

1 ◯

2 ◯

3 ◯

4 ◯

5 ◯

Fully Addresses

36. Resistance skills - young person can resist negative peer pressure and dangerous situations

Mark only one oval.

Does Not Address

1 ◯

2 ◯

3 ◯

4 ◯

5 ◯

Fully Addresses

37. Peaceful conflict resolution - young person seeks to resolve conflict nonviolently

Mark only one oval.

Does Not Address

1 ◯

2 ◯

3 ◯

4 ◯

5 ◯

Fully Addresses

38. Personal power - young person feels he or she has control over "things that happen to me"

Mark only one oval.

Does Not Address

1 ◯

2 ◯

3 ◯

4 ◯

5 ◯

Fully Addresses

39. Self-esteem - young person reports having a high self-esteem

Mark only one oval.

Does Not Address

1 ◯

2 ◯

3 ◯

4 ◯

5 ◯

Fully Addresses

40. Sense of purpose - young person reports that "my life has a purpose"

Mark only one oval.

Does Not Address

1 ⬭

2 ⬭

3 ⬭

4 ⬭

5 ⬭

Fully Addresses

41. Positive view of personal future - young person is optimistic about her or his personal future

Mark only one oval.

Does Not Address

1 ⬭

2 ⬭

3 ⬭

4 ⬭

5 ⬭

Fully Addresses

The following questions concern your feelings about your personal experience in YPI thus far. Please indicate how true each of the following statements is for your given your experiences with YPI.
Remember that your YPI coaches will never know how you responded to the questions.

42. I feel like I can make a lot of inputs to deciding how my work gets done

Mark only one oval.

Not at all true

1 ⬭

2 ⬭

3 ⬭

4 ⬭

5 ⬭

6 ⬭

7 ⬭

Very true

43. I really like the people I work with

Mark only one oval.

Not at all true

1 ⬭

2 ⬭

3 ⬭

4 ⬭

5 ⬭

6 ⬭

7 ⬭

Very true

44. I do not feel very competent when I am at YPI

Mark only one oval.

Not at all true

1 ⬭

2 ⬭

3 ⬭

4 ⬭

5 ⬭

6 ⬭

7 ⬭

Very true

45. People at YPI tell me I am good at what I do

Mark only one oval.

Not at all true

1 ◯

2 ◯

3 ◯

4 ◯

5 ◯

6 ◯

7 ◯

Very true

46. I feel pressured at YPI

Mark only one oval.

Not at all true

1 ◯

2 ◯

3 ◯

4 ◯

5 ◯

6 ◯

7 ◯

Very true

47. I get along with people at YPI

Mark only one oval.

Not at all true

1 ◯

2 ◯

3 ◯

4 ◯

5 ◯

6 ◯

7 ◯

Very true

48. I pretty much keep to myself at YPI

Mark only one oval.

Not at all true

1 ◯

2 ◯

3 ◯

4 ◯

5 ◯

6 ◯

7 ◯

Very true

49. I am free to express my ideas and opinions at YPI

Mark only one oval.

Not at all true

1 ◯

2 ◯

3 ◯

4 ◯

5 ◯

6 ◯

7 ◯

Very true

50. I consider the people in my cohort to be my friends

Mark only one oval.

Not at all true

1 ◯

2 ◯

3 ◯

4 ◯

5 ◯

6 ◯

7 ◯

Very true

51. I have been able to learn interesting new skills through YPI

Mark only one oval.

Not at all true

1 ◯

2 ◯

3 ◯

4 ◯

5 ◯

6 ◯

7 ◯

Very true

52. When I am at YPI, I have to do what I'm told

Mark only one oval.

Not at all true

1 ◯

2 ◯

3 ◯

4 ◯

5 ◯

6 ◯

7 ◯

Very true

53. Most days I feel a sense of accomplishment from participating in YPI

Mark only one oval.

Not at all true

1 ◯

2 ◯

3 ◯

4 ◯

5 ◯

6 ◯

7 ◯

Very true

54. My feelings are taken into consideration at YPI

Mark only one oval.

Not at all true

1 ◯

2 ◯

3 ◯

4 ◯

5 ◯

6 ◯

7 ◯

Very true

55. With YPI I do not get much of a chance to show how capable I am

Mark only one oval.

Not at all true

1 ◯

2 ◯

3 ◯

4 ◯

5 ◯

6 ◯

7 ◯

Very true

56. People at YPI care about me

Mark only one oval.

Not at all true

1 ◯

2 ◯

3 ◯

4 ◯

5 ◯

6 ◯

7 ◯

Very true

57. There are not many people at YPI that I am close to

Mark only one oval.

Not at all true

1 ◯

2 ◯

3 ◯

4 ◯

5 ◯

6 ◯

7 ◯

Very true

58. I feel like I can pretty much be myself at YPI

Mark only one oval.

Not at all true

1 ◯

2 ◯

3 ◯

4 ◯

5 ◯

6 ◯

7 ◯

Very true

59. The people I work with through YPI do not seem to like me much

Mark only one oval.

Not at all true

1 ◯

2 ◯

3 ◯

4 ◯

5 ◯

6 ◯

7 ◯

Very true

60. When I am working on YPI I often do not feel very capable

Mark only one oval.

Not at all true

1 ◯

2 ◯

3 ◯

4 ◯

5 ◯

6 ◯

7 ◯

Very true

61. There is not much opportunity for me to decide for myself how to go about my work at YPI

Mark only one oval.

Not at all true

1 ◯

2 ◯

3 ◯

4 ◯

5 ◯

6 ◯

7 ◯

Very true

62. People at YPI are pretty friendly toward me

Mark only one oval.

Not at all true

1 ◯

2 ◯

3 ◯

4 ◯

5 ◯

6 ◯

7 ◯

Very true

63. I feel comfortable with myself

Mark only one oval.

Strongly disagree

1 ◯

2 ◯

3 ◯

4 ◯

5 ◯

6 ◯

7 ◯

Strongly agree

64. I dislike myself

Mark only one oval.

Strongly disagree

1 ◯

2 ◯

3 ◯

4 ◯

5 ◯

6 ◯

7 ◯

Strongly agree

65. I am less capable than most people

Mark only one oval.

Strongly disagree

1. ◯
2. ◯
3. ◯
4. ◯
5. ◯
6. ◯
7. ◯

Strongly agree

66. I feel that my life lacks direction

Mark only one oval.

Strongly disagree

1. ◯
2. ◯
3. ◯
4. ◯
5. ◯
6. ◯
7. ◯

Strongly agree

67. I question my ability to do my work properly

Mark only one oval.

Strongly disagree

1. ◯
2. ◯
3. ◯
4. ◯
5. ◯
6. ◯
7. ◯

Strongly agree

68. I take responsibility for making decisions

Mark only one oval.

Strongly disagree

1. ◯
2. ◯
3. ◯
4. ◯
5. ◯
6. ◯
7. ◯

Strongly agree

69. I feel that I am unable to deal with things

Mark only one oval.

Strongly disagree

1 ⬭

2 ⬭

3 ⬭

4 ⬭

5 ⬭

6 ⬭

7 ⬭

Strongly agree

70. I know my strengths

Mark only one oval.

Strongly disagree

1 ⬭

2 ⬭

3 ⬭

4 ⬭

5 ⬭

6 ⬭

7 ⬭

Strongly agree

Google Forms

Cohort 1: 2006-09
Adolescent Depression Awareness Program (ADAP)

YPI Cohort 1 selected the topic of adolescent depression. The students were drawn to the topic because they all knew loved ones who suffered from depression. Through research and analysis, they concluded that depression was a root cause for many challenges facing youth.

Cohort 1 chose to focus their efforts in supporting a program developed at Johns Hopkins University by Dr. Karen Swartz, called the Adolescent Depression Awareness Program (ADAP). ADAP utilizes a high school-based curriculum to increase student awareness about the nature of depression, indicators of depression and available treatments.

After researching the program, the cohort contacted Dr. Karen Swartz and proposed a partnership to bring ADAP to Tulsa schools. At the time, ADAP was a relatively small but promising program that had been tested within youth populations in the Baltimore area. Dr. Swartz was interested in expanding the program to other locations and testing its effectiveness in a different population. She agreed to work with the YPI students to make Tulsa the first pilot site for expansion. In an interview, Dr. Swartz reflects that she was surprised to hear from the students but was quickly won over by their professionalism and dedication:

"I remember it really struck me that the students were so professional. I wouldn't typically have considered working with a group of students… I was also impressed with their depth of understanding and commitment to the topic," she said.

A partnership was created whereby the YPI students promoted and secured permission for the use of ADAP in Tulsa-area schools. The cohort arranged for Dr. Swartz to come to Tulsa in-person to deliver training to a group of medical students and psychiatry residents from the University - Tulsa School of Medicine. Once trained, the OU-Tulsa personnel visited high schools to teach ADAP as part of the physical education curriculum for 9th graders.

In the Cohort's third year, ADAP was implemented in six Tulsa-area high schools, reaching over 700 students. After Cohort 1's graduation, the trained OU-Tulsa personnel continued to implement the program in Tulsa high schools for an additional 1-2 years. The program was ultimately discontinued due to turnover of trained personnel.

While the partnership with OU-Tulsa did not continue into the long term, Cohort 1's partnership with Dr. Swartz and the Baltimore-based ADAP program yielded far reaching results. In parallel to the implementation of the program in Tulsa schools, YPI students also collaborated with Dr. Swartz to collect data on the effectiveness of ADAP via pre- and post tests delivered to Tulsa students who participated in the course. This data was ultimately published by the ADAP team in a 2013 study in the Journal of Affective Disorders entitled "Depression knowledge in high school students: Effectiveness of the adolescent depression awareness program."

According to Dr. Swartz, the data collected through the partnership with YPI and the resulting publication was a huge milestone in ADAP's history, as it "allowed ADAP to receive a grant of $1 million to complete a proper randomized control trial. This was essential to establish ADAP as an evidence-based program."

Today, ADAP has grown to a highly respected nationwide program that provides virtual training and curriculum to high schools free of charge. To date, ADAP's impressive achievements include:

- **131,012 students taught**
- **3,449 instructors trained**
- **257 schools involved**
- **22 participating states (including D.C.)**

Dr. Swartz credits the partnership with YPI as instrumental to ADAP's long-term success and impact. "It was an incredibly important collaboration in our own transformation from a little project in Maryland to a national program," she reflects. "YPI came at exactly the right time for us to expand. It pushed us to something that was a little out of our comfort zone, and was a proof of concept that our training model could really work… Having a big win and big success was very critical for our development."

Cohort 2: 2007-10
Redefine: New Rules, Better Relationships

Cohort 2 selected the topic of healthy dating relationships. The students were drawn to the topic because they all knew someone who was in a verbally, emotionally or physically abusive relationship.

The purpose of the [Redefine project](#) was to promote healthy relationships among Tulsa teenagers. Through education and advocacy, the cohort worked to enhance the skills of their peers to socialize constructively and reduce the frequency of physical and emotional abuse.

After reviewing curricula from across the nation, the students realized that there was a lack of attention to promoting healthy behaviors in relationships. To fill this gap, they decided to create their own curriculum with the mentorship of Laurie Lenora, a wellness expert at Holland Hall. At the time, Laurie was in early stages of drafting her own curriculum on the topic, and the cohort was able to support this effort and provide a valuable teen perspective. By the end of the cohort's second year, the full curriculum was complete and was presented to community and education leaders at a showcase event in April 2008. The students also created a website that provided resources to youth and launched an awareness campaign through local media.

In their third year, the cohort partnered with the University of Oklahoma - Tulsa to pilot their curriculum in Tulsa high schools and test its effectiveness. Emily Curzon (Lester), a graduate assistant from OU-Tulsa's School of Social Work, was engaged to teach Redefine as part of the wellness curriculum for 9th graders.

In the cohort's third year, the Redefine curriculum was taught in four Tulsa-area high schools, reaching approximately 160 students. The students also worked with OU-Tulsa to collect data on the effectiveness of the program via pre- and post tests delivered to students who participated in the course. The results were ultimately published by the OU-Tulsa team in a 2014 study in the School Social

Work Journal entitled "Teen Dating Violence: A Comparison of Self-Reported Measures." While the data on the effectiveness of the program was largely inconclusive, the study was the first of its kind to develop and utilize a new evaluative tool, the Healthy Teen Relationships Inventory (HTRI), that measures teen perceptions of healthy dating relationships.

Emily Curzon reflects that the student's project served as a significant contribution to the field of healthy teen dating relationships: "The student's curriculum was unique. All of the existing programs were about domestic violence. There wasn't anything with a healthy, positive framing."

Cohort 3: 2008-11
Unmask: Mind Over Media

Cohort 3 chose to address the topic of the media's harmful impact on teenage self perception. The purpose of the Unmask project was to counteract the negative effects of media saturation by teaching teens to think critically about their media consumption.

In their second year, the students launched a multi-faceted campaign to raise the awareness of local youth on this topic. The campaign included several elements including:

- Conducted a speaking tour throughout Oklahoma, presenting at youth camps, churches and schools. The tour reached over 1500 youth.

- Presented at the Oklahoma Student Council State Convention in 2011 to an audience of 3000 youth from across the state.

- Served as panelists at the 2nd annual OUCEC (Oklahoma University Community Education Center) Southwest Regional Conference 2010 on the topic "Consumed: Teenage Captives in a Media-Saturated Society.

- Facilitated a "Dear Media" essay contest, calling on students to write letters expressing how they feel about the media. The cohort received 75 submissions to the contest, and awarded the winners small cash prizes.

The awareness campaign culminated in the University of Oklahoma-Tulsa's Seed Sower Series. Cohort 3 partnered with OU-Tulsa to organize the 2010 edition of the university's annual public-facing lecture series. The students organized a series of three evening lectures delivered on a weekly basis in spring 2010. For the first two lectures, the students identified expert guest speakers and worked with them to tailor the topic of their presentations. The first speaker was media expert Erin Walsh from the National Institute on Media and the Family, who the students flew in to Tulsa for the occasion. Ms. Walsh spoke on the topic of the power of major media conglomerates.

The second speaker was Dr. Robert Block, president of the Academy on Violence and Abuse, who spoke on the media's harmful youth-oriented messaging related to sexuality, drug abuse and other topics. The third and final lecture was conducted by the students themselves, who spoke on the topic of how teenagers can recognize and resist the negative effects of media.

In year three of the program, the cohort converted their materials from the awareness campaign into a video curriculum and infographics. The materials were made available on their project website for free public use.

To find a permanent home for their materials, Cohort 3 ultimately chose to partner with the Search Institute, a non-profit that promotes youth development through research. The project's materials were made publicly available on the Search Institute's website, which attracts over 65,000 unique visitors per month.

In an interview, Erin Walsh reflected on the high quality and utility of the students' materials in her own work advocating for media awareness: "The students made excellent materials that I continue to share with partners. I shared their video materials at multiple speaking engagements and conferences. Their work was so valuable in showing that young people have a critical lens on a topic that is usually dominated by adult perspectives."

"I spend a lot of time speaking across the country, but the YPI experience really stuck out. It is so rare to have a youth perspective on this topic – usually the approach is command and control by adults," said Erin.

Erin also suggests that the students were ahead of the curve in selecting this focus issue. "At the time everyone [in media expert circles] was talking about internet safety. I remember being very excited that the students were focusing on an area that was under addressed… They had a clear understanding of their angle and what they wanted me to do. That shows a lot of research into this field…"

"The [YPI] model felt really exciting and powerful, especially since we had funding… It is so rare that young people are given the time and resources to reclaim narratives and have efficacy in the media space. I would love to see more of that."

Cohort 4: 2009-12
REV: Teen Volunteer Revolution

Cohort 4 selected the topic of teen volunteerism. The students noted that among teens there was a generally negative perception of volunteerism, largely due to the culture of compulsory volunteer hours and general lack of engaging volunteer opportunities for teens in the community. In response, the REV project sought to revitalize the image of volunteering among youth by helping them to connect to opportunities that align with their interests and passions. In short, REV's purpose was to launch a teen volunteer REVolution!

The students launched a multi-faceted campaign to mobilize local youth as volunteers. The campaign includes several elements including:

- Created a project website with a link to resources including a national registry of volunteer options that is searchable by zipcode. The registry was promoted to youth as an easy way for youth to quickly identify volunteer options that matched their interests. The cohort also systematically contacted Tulsa-area nonprofits to encourage them to post relevant opportunities on the registry website.

- Visited 12 Tulsa-area high schools to promote positive volunteerism. The cohort created a booth that they set up at schools, where students could learn about and sign up for volunteer opportunities.

- Presented at the Oklahoma Student Council State Convention in 2011 to an audience of 2000 youth from across the state.

- Held a Teen Volunteer Summit in 2011 with the participation of over 40 local non-profit organizations.

- Organized two Volunteer Flash Mobs, which mobilized a total of 30 student volunteers to serve at a variety of local non-profits on full-day weekend events.

The mobilization campaign culminated in the MLK Day of Service in January 2012. The cohort partnered with the MLK Society, and engaged the Talmadge Powell Creative marketing company to advertise and recruit

teen volunteers for the event. As a result of these efforts, more than 300 youth volunteers participated in the Day of Service at the Drillers Stadium by touring the REV booth and packaging food for the Tulsa Food Bank.

Cohort 4 member Christine Williams reflects on the experience: "[The MLK Day of Service] at the baseball stadium stands out as my favorite memory from YPI. It was so gratifying seeing our work become something tangible and actionable."

In year three of the program, the students converted their materials and lessons learned from the awareness campaign into a REV manual that other communities could utilize and incorporate. The manual was made available on their project website for free public use.

Cohort 5 selected the topic of healthy eating. Students were concerned that youth weren't aware of the impacts of unhealthy eating, leading to high levels of obesity and other issues. The purpose of the Fuel project was to empower youth to take ownership of their health by improving their nutritional awareness.

To tackle this challenge, the cohort developed a method for coding foods in a way that would make identifying healthy choices simpler and easier. Working with a dietician expert at the University of Oklahoma - Tulsa, the students created a rating system in accordance with USDA Dietary Guidelines. They also created a comprehensive system to promote and teach the use of the Fuel ranking tool in both elementary and middle schools.

The cohort was intentional in devising an approach to teaching the Fuel system in schools in a way that would be fun, positive and approachable for children. They created their own cartoon character with a backstory that explained the rationale for Fuel. The character - an alien named Maverick - used the Fuel system to save his home planet. Maverick's story was revealed in a series of video lessons and activities that students would follow as they progressed through the Fuel curriculum. This curriculum was designed to be complemented by labels in the school cafeteria that reflected the Fuel ranking system, so students could apply their

knowledge to make healthy food choices. The cohort also created an online calculator on the Fuel project website, where students could check the Fuel rating for various foods.

In their third year, the cohort partnered with Union 8th Grade Center to pilot the launch of Fuel in schools. The students worked closely with Union's dietician to train teachers and cafeteria staff in the curriculum and food labeling protocols. The successful pilot ultimately convinced Union leadership to adopt Fuel system-wide. Following the cohort's graduation, cohort member Tori Patrock was hired by Union in a part-time summer role to support the transition of the program to Union Schools. However, a continuation of the program at Union was ultimately not pursued.

In addition to Union, Cohort 5 launched a scaled-down version of Fuel at Metro Christian Academy in October 2012. The Fuel system and curriculum was used during the school's healthy kids week for Pre-K through second grade. Cohort members came to Metro to present the first videos and entertained the students by dressing up in food costumes. Students were encouraged to document their eating choices over the week, and the winning class received a prize. In all, 300 students participated in the Fuel program at Metro Christian Academy.

Dody Patrock, School Nurse at Metro Christian Academy, was highly impressed with the Fuel program: "I can't speak any more highly of my experience. [The cohort] did a great job communicating with me. I remember being very impressed by their administrative skills… They had a clear structure that flowed really well in terms of who would do what, that made it easy for staff to implement."

Before graduation, Cohort 5 converted their materials into an implementation manual and corresponding videos that are freely available to enable schools to adopt Fuel in their schools. Ultimately, feedback from schools showed that the logistical burden of labeling cafeteria food was a major hurdle for Fuel's sustained use. Nevertheless, Dody Patrock doesn't discount the idea that Fuel could still be transformational. "I wanted to make Fuel a foundational part of our nutrition program. I might dust Fuel off and use it again."

Cohort 6: 2011-14
REV 2.0

The first YPI cohort to resurrect a previous cohort's topic, Cohort 6 adopted Cohort 4's vision of revolutionizing the way teens view volunteerism. The aim of their REV 2.0 project was to shift the perspective from that of "mandatory community service"–itself seemingly an oxymoron–to a lifelong dedication to meaningful philanthropy. By picking up where Cohort 4 left off, Cohort 6 enjoyed the benefit of having more time to expand the scope of REV in terms of programming offered, populations served, and recognition gained.

Building from Cohort 4's implementation manual, the students launched efforts to mobilize youth volunteers in the Tulsa community, including:

- Created a project website with a link to resources including a national registry of volunteer opportunities to quickly link students to local volunteer opportunities.

- Visited four Tulsa-area high schools to promote positive volunteerism. The cohort created a booth that they set up at schools, where students could learn about and sign up for volunteer opportunities.

- Organized two Volunteer Flash Mobs, mobilizing students to serve at the Living Arts' "Dia de los Muertos" event and the American Diabetes Association's Tour de Cure event.

- Presented at the Oklahoma Student Council State Convention in 2013 to an audience of 1800 youth from across the state.

- Partnered with the Tulsa Area United Way to support the Day of Caring in 2013, mobilizing over 400 students from around Tulsa to volunteer.

A major highlight of Cohort 6's efforts was the Volunteer Summit held in September 2013. Over 20 local non-profits attended a luncheon to learn about the REV project. OU-Tulsa President Gerry Clancy and former mayor of Tulsa Kathy Taylor were the keynote speakers, and guests also heard about the potential for effective teen partnerships from Tom Taylor, Executive Director of Emergency Infant Services, and Cohort 6 student Anna Bebermeyer, who

also served on EIS' junior board of directors. Approximately 60 attendees left with a better understanding of Cohort VI's efforts to build partnerships between local youth and not-for-profit organizations to create meaningful, sustained philanthropy for generations to come.

The mobilization campaign culminated in the MLK Day of Service in January 2014. The cohort partnered with the MLK Society to advertise and recruit teen volunteers for the event. As a result of these efforts, more than 100 youth volunteers participated in the Day of Service at Guthrie Green by packaging 3,240 pounds of food for the Community Food Bank of Eastern Oklahoma. The cohort garnered great media coverage to help Tulsa see the power of teen volunteers, getting spots on three different news programs.

In an interview, YPI alumna Anna Bebermeyer reflects on her cohort's experience and growth in the program. "I feel it was a transformative experience for our cohort. I watched over those three years as my peers evolved in a remarkable way. Many of them expected YPI to be easy, because they were good at school and other extracurriculars. But the truth is that we had to struggle to make a meaningful difference, and that in itself was an important lesson in philanthropy and real life… All the lessons learned along the way were what made the program so valuable and unique."

Cohort 7: 2012-15
MESH Connect

Cohort 7's mission was to be a positive force for the inclusion of teens with special needs. The MESH Connect project worked to create inclusive social environments at school and integrate students with special needs into the general education population.

To tackle this challenge, the cohort worked to create systematic change in the way schools approached the integration of students with special needs in the general education population. Elements of their project included:

- Increasing general ability awareness among students. The cohort created educational videos focused on education for their peers by raising awareness about various special needs and how to be more knowledgeable and sensitive about students in this population.

- Direct fellowship with students with special needs through the MESH Connect lunchtime social club, whereby student volunteers would connect with special needs students on a weekly basis to grow friendships and participate in a planned activity (game or craft).

- Creation of new structures for school administration to meaningfully support special needs integration. The Cohort created an audit process for schools to self-as sess their performance in integrating students with special needs. According to the students' vision, the audit would be complemented by the creation of a school-based steering committee (composed of administrators, students and parents) tasked with advancing integration outcomes.

In their third year, Cohort 7 partnered with Union High School to pilot the MESH Connect program. MESH was highly successful, with over 100 student volunteers regularly engaging with 40-50 students with special needs.

Based on their success with Union, the Cohort decided to convert MESH Connect into a franchisable model that other schools could freely adopt. A group of students hosted a booth at the annual Oklahoma Student Council State Convention in 2014 to promote the program and create connections for other Oklahoma schools to adopt it. The students also meet with TPS Superintendent Debra Gist to explore options to expand MESH to other TPS schools.

Ultimately, Cohort 7 chose to partner with the Arc of Oklahoma to become the program's long-term home. The Arc's mission is to promote the rights and full inclusion of those with intellectual and developmental disabilities. The cohort gifted their remaining project funds to the Arc to support a new position, Student Inclusion Coordinator, to continue MESH programming. The Arc continued to oversee the implementation of MESH in Tulsa-area schools for five years, through 2020. The program was ultimately discontinued with the outbreak of COVID-19.

Reflecting on the collaboration with YPI, Lisa Kelly, Chief Executive Officer of the Arc, notes that "There was relatively little awareness or work being done in schools at that time… I was thrilled and amazed that a group of students recognized the lack of inclusivity in their high school and decided it was something they wanted to work on." Looking forward to the Arc's upcoming 70th anniversary, she is actively exploring ways to continue to grow youth voice and perspective at the organization to advance its mission.

Beyond the partnership with the Arc, MESH Connect lives on through the continued activity of Cohort 7 alumni. Alumnus Christopher Loerke reflects that he felt himself drawn back to the issue while pursuing an undergraduate degree at the University of Oklahoma. Christopher recalls his concern that individuals with special needs lacked opportunities to have a college experience:

"One of the girls I met in MESH had down syndrome. I learned that she was going to leave the state in order to go to a special college program in Missouri. I thought it was a shame she had to leave the state to do that. I talked about it with [YPI Director Adam Seaman] and he encouraged me to try to address it. I learned that in every state except Oklahoma and West Virginia, students with special needs had access to college transitional programs. That really motivated me to do quite a bit of research. I spoke to lots of programs across the country to learn their best practices. I shared what I learned with stakeholders at OU and was able to connect with professors who were also interested in developing a special education program. We teamed up, and the program was ultimately approved by OU."

According to the OU website, the "Sooner Works is a four-year comprehensive integrated program for students with an intellectual or developmental disability who desire a postsecondary experience on a college campus. Students in Sooner Works live on campus and take traditional university courses in conjunction with courses specific to Sooner Works. In addition, students participate in internships and social organizations on the beautiful University of Oklahoma campus."

The program launched in the fall of 2019, and the first cohort of three students graduated in spring 2023. Christopher, who is now at OU's Medical School, continues to serve on the program's board. According to Christopher, "we currently have 40 students enrolled. Everyone from our first graduating class has a job in the OKC community and is on track to lead independent lives."

"[Sooner Works] would not exist without YPI," Christopher reflects. "I consider it the accomplishment of my life."

Cohort 8's mission was to inspire Tulsa-area elementary students to engage in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM). According to a 2016 op-ed by YPI alumna Layla Mortadha, "Reflecting on our elementary school experiences, we saw a correlation between those of us who had science and math enrichment and those of us engaged in STEM. We shared a mutual appreciation for the STEM opportunities our schools provided us, but quickly realized this was not a universal experience… Our goal is to create a program for elementary school students that will spark a lifelong interest in the STEM subjects."

To achieve this, Cohort 8 created Spark Karts, a collection of 10 mobile carts that are packed full of STEM enrichment resources. Each cart has a unique theme that covers different educational topics based on Oklahoma's standard curriculum for first grade science and math. According to the cohort's vision, the carts would be available for teachers to check out of the school's library to use to expand a lesson plan or show a real world application to a STEM concept.

Cohort 8 worked closely with the Tulsa Regional STEM Alliance (TRSA), led by Xan Black, to develop the concept for the Spark Karts and implement them in schools. The students regularly attended TRSA board meetings, while Xan attended cohort meetings. Cohort 8 alumna Cybil Seneker reflected on the value of the partnership with TRSA: "Partnering with TRSA helped us a lot. They had already been

working on this topic and had more knowledge and connections. By working with them, we were able to pick up speed and have a clear direction with a narrow scope and focus." Another alumna, Faith Nichols, reflected on Xan's role: "It meant so much to have an adult who believed in us, guided us, and really wanted to hear our feedback."

In an interview, Xan Black also reflected on her experience of the partnership: "When I met the students for the first time, I remember being amazed that they were so empowered. They knew what they wanted to do and had great ideas. They were not playing around - very focused and driven. They inspired and pushed me, not the other way around."

In coordination with TPS Library staff, the students selected 10 schools based on their socioeconomic makeup to receive the first Spark Karts. The first launch took place at Zarrow International Elementary School. It was

well received by the school principal and staff, as well as local media. The cohort collected data on the use of the Karts for continual improvement and enhancements.

TRSA became the permanent home for the cohort's project upon the students' graduation. TRSA oversaw the Spark Karts' rotation among Tulsa-area for the 2017-18 school year, and ultimately chose to permanently gift the Karts to rural schools in need of STEM labs.

The Spark Kart story did not end there, however. TRSA retained its connection to Cohort 8 students, and provided internships to several YPI alumni to continue to support the Spark Karts mission. These interns helped to develop TRSA's STEM RX program, which repurposed Spark Karts materials to provide fun STEM themed games and activities to children receiving medical care in the Tulsa area. The program operated for several years at St. Francis Hospital and the Cancer Treatment Center for America.

TRSA's popular "STEM in a bag" program became another important offshoot of the Spark Karts concept. Similarly to STEM RX, the program packaged STEM activities in bagged kits that could be easily distributed in schools. The program exploded during COVID, while students had reduced access to hands-on learning experiences. In total TRSA distributed over 100,000 STEM kits during the pandemic, serving 57 school districts. Today, the STEM in a bag program continues to be popular, and provides STEM kits free of charge to educators and families.

In an interview, Dr. Emily Mortimer, V.P. of Ecosystems at TRSA, reflects on the partnership with Cohort 8: "[The students] were able to really think deeply about a need. They were able to develop the first iteration of an idea that was really valuable. Without YPI, we never would have had STEM in a bag."

According to Dr. Mortimer, "YPI was the start of bringing more structured youth voice into the organization." Shortly after the experience with Cohort 8, TRSA decided to formalize youth participation on its board.

Xan Black reflects on this decision: "[The cohort] helped me to understand that I had not fully leveraged the ability, leadership and strengths of students. It was important that we not only ask students to do specific things but that we actually invite them to lead. We need to have them at the table, not ask them later…"

"You've got to work with [the students] to understand what they're truly capable of. I realized that they could totally do my job - they could lead the whole thing! Just think of what we could do in the world with thousands of kids like this…"

"My relationship with the students continues to this day. On Linkedin I still see them succeeding, moving and shaking. The fire hasn't died in them whatsoever."

Cohort 9: 2014-17
Brink: College Bound, College Funded

Cohort 9's project Brink: College Bound, College Funded focused on increasing the accessibility of higher education by working to grow the use of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) across Tulsa Public Schools. The cohort felt strongly that an individual's financial situation should not dictate whether or not they can attend college. Moreover, the cohort's research showed that FAFSA was an under-utilized resource for Oklahoma students to gain financial aid.

Cohort 9 worked closely with ImpactTulsa to develop the concept for Brink and implement it in the community. At the time, ImpactTulsa was in early stages of developing its Graduate918 programming to promote FAFSA, and the students decided to turbo-charge this effort. Students regularly attended ImpactTulsa board meetings, while ImpactTulsa Community Engagement Director Alex Paschal attended cohort meetings.

In close coordination and partnership with ImpactTulsa, Cohort 9 worked to create a comprehensive system to streamline the FAFSA completion process and foster a culture of FAFSA-mindedness in schools. The cohort created a suite of resources and tools for administrators and teachers to support students in navigating the application process, including instructional videos, powerpoint presentations, announcements, and a calendar of important dates and tasks. The cohort also created guidelines for the formation

of a FAFSA steering committee of parents and students who would work to promote FAFSA in their school districts. These steps were complemented by a full-scale awareness campaign with ImpactTulsa's communication team to raise students' awareness of FAFSA, including through the wide distribution of fun posters, stickers and t-shirts with the slogan "Get off your FAFSA!"

Alex Paschal reflected on the co-creation process with students: "It was a fun, reciprocal relationship. They'd have big ideas, and then we'd work together to figure out the smaller components…"

"One of the biggest areas of added value was the perspective [the cohort] provided as students. They were a sounding board for what would resonate with other kids - their peers. They had first-hand experience with what resources students had access to and what gaps we needed to fill," she reflected.

In year three, the students conducted extensive outreach to promote Brink's message and encourage its adoption in schools and other relevant organizations. These efforts included:

- A Brink Summit in September 2016, bringing together representatives from the US Department of Education and local schools including Memorial and Union High Schools, Rogers State University and the University of Tulsa;
- A informational webinar that was attended by 50 organizations across Oklahoma, Kansas and Missouri; and
- Outreach to the US Department of Education, resulting in the Brink project being spotlighted on the Federal Student Aid website.

Upon the cohort's graduation, ImpactTulsa became the Brink project's permanent home. Dr. Laura Latta, ImpactTulsa's former Director of Post-Secondary Partnerships and Research, served as the organization's lead on FAFSA promotion and similar initiatives. Looking back when she took on the role in 2019, she was impressed with the quality of the content and materials that she inherited and were originally developed under Brink. Dr. Latta confirmed that ImpactTulsa has continued to pull from those resources in its ongoing FAFSA-related programming in the years that followed. ImpactTulsa also sustained lasting relationships with Cohort 9 students. For example, as a result of the Brink connection, alumna Stevie Dowler-Vineyard interned with ImpactTulsa in 2019.

Ultimately, ImpactTulsa's data shows that Cohort 9's efforts contributed to a 4% increase in city-wide FAFSA completion rates in 2016-17. Dr. Latta further reflected on the long-term impact of the partnership with Cohort 9: "[The students] really helped to draw a lot of awareness to the importance of FAFSA, and were effective in getting people to turn their attention to this… It helped to stir a lot of community awareness that lasts to this day." She also notes that recently there has been a rejuvenated interest in FAFSA completion in the Tulsa community. In her current capacity as Executive Director for the Tulsa Higher Ed Consortium, she still thinks of the Brink materials as an asset she can draw upon. "I'm starting to think about dusting off some of the Brink materials again. It's lasting work that still resonates."

Cohort 10: 2015-18
Teens on Board

Cohort 10's mission was to promote age diversity and teen perspective in the philanthropic sector by helping to create youth advisory boards in Tulsa-area nonprofits. Their project, Teens on Board, aimed to bring valuable youth perspectives to community changemaking while providing youth with exposure to the nonprofit sector and a meaningful opportunity to have their voice heard on important issues.

To bring this plan to reality, the students worked to research the legal considerations of youth advisory boards (for example, they determined that such a board must be non-voting) and created a set of bylaws and a participation and nondisclosure agreement for each youth board to implement. They also created and promoted a project website whereby Tulsa-area youth could apply to and be connected with an advisory board at a local nonprofit.

As a pilot of the model, the cohort helped to incubate the first youth advisory boards at ImpactTulsa and the Mental Health Association Oklahoma. The students built on these organizations' existing interest in youth voice by helping to formalize a sustainable board structure. According to ImpactTulsa's Alex Paschal, the advisory board functioned essentially as a focus group, providing valuable feedback on the organization's ongoing initiatives from a teenage perspective.

Upon Cohort 10's graduation, Tulsa Changemakers became the long term home for Teens on Board. To facilitate the transition, the students created a franchising toolkit, which included instructions on recruiting teens from across the community, working with nonprofits, marketing the project, and facilitating the creation of a youth advisory board.
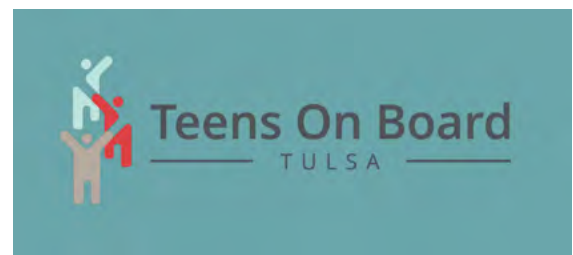
In an interview, Changemakers' founders Andrew Spector and Jake Lerner reflected on the partnership with Cohort 10. At the time, Changemakers had a strong interest in developing youth voice on nonprofit boards, but lacked the resources to get the idea off the ground. They reflect that the students' project was a perfect fit for their needs, providing the all-important manpower to jump-start this work and build initial momentum in the community. "The act of engaging with us in that conversation and providing a template was so valuable… Developing a project like this involves rapid prototyping and iteration to hone the model. By creating a first draft, [the cohort] was essential in propelling the work forward."

Since adopting Teens on Board, Changemakers has continued robust work to promote and implement youth advisory boards among local nonprofits. In partnership with the Opportunity Project, Changemakers supported the development of youth boards at organizations including the Urban Coders Guild and Hunger Free Oklahoma. Jake and Andrew observe that, in recent years, the city-wide narrative around youth voice and student participatory action has changed for the better: "The city does talk more about this sort of thing now. More funders are interested in youth voice. YPI had something to do with that by showing what youth are capable of."

Cohort 10 alumna Abigail Swank has been an important part of the long-term success of the Teens on Board vision. Abigail stayed involved with Teens on Board throughout her college years, including by helping to organize the youth boards for Hunger Free Oklahoma and Little Light House. Currently a senior in leadership and non-profit business at ORU, Abigail recently joined the Changemakers team as an intern and is working to further develop the Teens on Board model.

Cohort 11: 2016-20
CultureBridge: Creating Empathy, Connecting Communities

Cohort 11's project focused on increasing city-wide empathy for the immigrant experience. Drawing from the experience of several cohort members from immigrant families, their project CultureBridge: Creating Empathy, Connecting Communities sought to provide non-immigrants with a deepened understanding of the immigrant experience in the US and in Tulsa specifically. From accessing services to cultural barriers, CultureBridge worked to shed light on the many challenges facing immigrants and show why these citizens should not only be treated with compassion, but seen as a national asset.

The student's project coincided with the launch of the New Tulsans Initiative, an initiative led by the City of Tulsa and the Mayor's Office to build a more immigrant-friendly city. Cohort 11 students worked closely with the City to support this initiative, including by participating actively in the public visioning and strategic planning process. Students participated in the New Tulsans Initiative Summit, a roundtable discussion with Mayor Bynum, and several thematic task forces organized by the City, providing a valuable youth perspective. The head of the New Tulsans Initiative and Assistant to the Mayor for Community Development Christina da Silva (Starzi-Mendoza) worked closely with the students, and attended several cohort meetings.

Christina reflected on the unique collaboration: "We were in the first year of implementation [of the New Tulsans Initiative], so everything

was still very new. We were still in the process of imagining what it was and what it could be… I was excited that we had youth interest… They had a creative perspective on how to help Tulsa be a more welcoming city."

"I loved the questions they brought up… Sometimes it was a question I didn't have the answer to, so it helped me to understand where we needed more research. It was refreshing to learn from them and see things from their perspectives."

"The New Tulsans Initiative was the first time we had youth helping us to develop policy. It was new for us to have youth at the same table as the Mayor talking about what they see for the future of their city. It showed everyone that we need to be including youth in this discussion."

"After [the experience with YPI], the Mayor had a big push to build more youth leadership into the City's efforts. The Resilient Tulsa plan had some elements of engaging youth. We also started some youth focus groups and revamped the youth commission."

In addition to their ongoing visioning work with the New Tulsans Initiative, Cohort 11 concentrated their efforts in a partnership with the OU-Tulsa Simulation Center. After participating in one of the Center's simulations about poverty, the students were inspired to create an interactive simulation allowing teens and other participants to learn experientially about systemic barriers and cultural benefits related to immigration. To design the simulation, the students conducted extensive research and interviews with local immigrants - including family members of Cohort 11 students - that captured data from their lived experience.

In year three, Cohort 11 piloted their simulation with peers from other YPI cohorts and then expanded to friends and family, making continual improvements with each iteration. The final version of the simulation was structured around individual immigrant stories that would allow participants to walk through decision-making exercises created to emulate the authentic and diverse experiences of immigrants. It included Character Cards that participants will choose as their guide through the experience, which included the detailed stories of real Immigrants.

In total, over 100 participants from the Tulsa community walked through CultureBridge, including representatives from the George Kaiser Family Foundation, Communities in Schools, Growing Together Tulsa, Tulsa Changemakers, and the Tulsa Mayor's Office. Upon Cohort 11's graduation, the OU Simulation Center added the CultureBridge simulation to its catalog of offerings for OU-Tulsa students. As the cohort's graduation coincided with the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, the in-person simulation could not be immediately implemented at that time.

Christina da Silva was among the simulation participants in 2020. "The legwork that the students did to collect stories and make it relevant to Tulsa was really impressive," she recalls. "I loved that they showed the struggles and challenges, but also the resilience and how these populations contribute. It's a hard balance to strike, and they did a great job… My favorite part was that they were honest that these were stories of people who live in Tulsa. This was what the New Tulsans Initiative was all about."

In a recent interview, Director of the Simulation Center Kristin Foulks (Rodriguez) noted that the themes and content in CultureBridge remains highly topical and relevant to OU-Tulsa students. She shared that the Center is considering revitalizing the simulation as an offering for the upcoming 2023-24 school year.

Cohort 12: 2017-21
The CommonWealth Project

Cohort 12's tenure coincided with the 2020 experience of a global pandemic and a contentious presidential election. The students saw an opportunity to promote constructive civil discourse in an environment that was becoming increasingly heated and polarized. The vision of the CommonWealth Project was to help teens to build these skills at a young age, so that they would be better prepared to engage as active citizens and be a positive force in their community and world.

Inspired by the previous cohort's CultureBridge project, Cohort 12 chose to partner with the OU Simulation Center to create an experiential learning simulation for participants to grow their practical skills in civil discourse. The goal was for participants to build active listening skills and learn how to remain open minded and composed, even in heated discussions. Working with Director of the Simulation Center Kristin Foulks (Rodriguez), students crafted scenarios labeled "low heat, medium heat, and high heat," whereby participants engaged in conversations with varying levels of intensity.

Kristin recalled the co-creation process with the students: "That was a wonderful experience.

We introduced them to the idea of the low, medium and high system and then they really took the idea and ran with it. They came up with all the good ideas themselves… I was really impressed with how intuitive they were."

To complement these scenarios, the students also created video interviews of prominent local community members about their experiences in civil or uncivil discourse. State Representative Monroe Nichols and City Councilor Phil Lakin were among those interviewed by the students, sharing personal stories of political engagement at the local level.

In their third year, the Cohort 12 piloted the simulation with a small group of friends and family. Due to in-person restrictions around COVID-19, they were unable to share it more widely with the Tulsa community before graduation. The OU Simulation Center added the CommonWealth Project simulation to its catalog of offerings for OU-Tulsa students. In a recent interview, Director of the Simulation Center Kristin Foulks noted that the themes and content in CommonWealth remains highly topical and relevant to OU-Tulsa students.

COMMONWEALTH

Despite the fact that the COVID-19 pandemic constrained the cohort's ability to meet in-person, students reflect that YPI was still a highlight of their high school experience. In a student survey conducted in their third year, several Cohort 11 students reflected on YPI's role in their life during the pandemic:

"YPI helped me connect with others during a time when that wasn't really possible. I lost touch with some friends at school in the transition to distance learning, but since YPI is already such a tight-knit community, the transition online wasn't awkward and I didn't feel much disconnect between my peers."

"YPI has given me something to look forward to in a really confusing year. It is so exciting how close our project is to being done and really rewarding to see where we came from."

"YPI has been consistent. Despite the uncertainness of everything this year, YPI has remained intact. Even though our last couple of years look differently than we have imagined they would be, we have managed to keep YPI in our lives. I have something to look forward to every Sunday and every other Friday. YPI has been a huge part of my high school life, and I am glad that unlike many other things in our lives today, YPI wasn't taken from us."

Cohort 13: 2018-22
DiscussWell

Cohort 13 merged their interest in medical awareness, mental health and eating disorders into a project that would address many issues they believed are "undiscussable" among teen culture. With DiscussWell, their focus was to improve the mental and emotional health of teens by working to destigmatize topics that often go undiscussed and ultimately lead to unhealthy patterns.

The cohort's interest in helping teens to "discuss the undiscussable" was born out of the cohort's unique experience during the COVID-19 pandemic. This group more than any other in YPI history had to embrace transition in almost all areas of their lives shifting from in-person to virtual to hybrid. As they advanced their project, they explored the ways these transitions impacted the mental wellness of their peers as well as themselves.

To tackle this problem, the cohort created a five chapter curriculum for teens that explains ways to address mental stigmas, create psychologically safe environments, support the feelings of others and improve one's own wellness. The curriculum, which consists of a series of videos and interactive activities, is adaptable to in-person or virtual learning.

While developing the curriculum, the students worked closely with experts at the Mental Health Association Oklahoma (MHAOK). Coordinator of MHAOK's Youth Mental Health Program Dr. Cheryl Delk reflected on the partnership with the students. "The kids were amazing to work with - driven and determined, at the top of their game. Our role was guidance, suggestions and editing. It was truly student-led, and we were very mindful of that boundary - we followed their lead."

As a result of the partnership, MHAOK agreed to use and distribute the DiscussWell curriculum as a resource in its programming. The curriculum has also been approved for widespread use by Tulsa Public Schools. Dr. Delk notes that it has also been a valuable resource for MHAOK: "[The DiscussWell curriculum] is particularly valuable because it bridges the gap between mental health and mental wellness… The materials are easy to share and flexible to use in multiple settings. It's a great resource that my co-workers and I use regularly."

Name:	Ritvik Ganguly
Cohort:	8
Project:	Spark Karts
Education:	University of Tulsa (B.S. Biochemistry - Pre-Med)
Current Occupation:	Medical Student at the Oklahoma University College of Medicine
Current Place of Residence:	Oklahoma City, OK
CliftonStrengths:	Individualization, Learner, Achiever, Competition, Focus

Ritvik Ganguly

Ritvik Ganguly was only in YPI's Cohort 8 for one year. As a rising sophomore at Union, he was presented the opportunity to transfer to the prestigious Oklahoma School for Science and Mathematics and Oklahoma City. He says YPI Director Adam Seaman helped to mentor him through the decision to change schools: "It was a difficult decision. I loved YPI and the leadership lessons. We had just picked the STEM carts as our focus issue."

Despite his short tenure, Ritvik reflects that YPI made an outsized impact in his life and personal development: "I got the condensed perspective of YPI - just the initial lectures on leadership, etc. That in itself really permeated through the rest of my life."

"[YPI facilitators] Adam and Terrie really treated us like colleagues and showed us that we could really make a difference. They showed us the steps and the process to make positive change at scale. It was so rare as a high schooler to have an opportunity that gave you that level of autonomy and creativity - we were used to focusing on homework, just following what others told us to do within structures that were provided."

When he entered college, Ritvik had the opportunity to participate in the first iteration of the College Philanthropy Initiative (CPI), a new program at the University of Tulsa that was a direct outgrowth of YPI and expression of the curriculum and model. Taught by YPI Director Adam Seaman, CPI was a two-year college credit course that was part of the prestigious President's Leadership Fellowship (PLF), dedicated to "preparing a cadre of TU graduates who are skilled in creating a just, humane and creative world."

According to the program design, In the first year a group of approximately 100 PLF freshmen are selected to enroll in a course directly adapted from the YPI curriculum, including topics of self-realization, leadership and philanthropy. In the program's second year, a smaller cohort of dedicated students are provided a budget and one year to design and launch a social start-up that benefits the community. Ritvik reflected on his participation in CPI: "When I first went to TU, I was surprised to see Adam and Terrie. I immediately wanted to participate in CPI. It was similar to YPI but with more mature and adult content."

"The first year gave us a strong foundation. We learned about topics like how humans behave with each other, emotional intelligence, and social entrepreneurship. We would also go through case studies - examining all the challenges facing our state and city… I was a pre-med and there were lots of engineers in the class - if not for CPI, we would've had no idea what was happening in the city."

In the second year, Ritvik joined a cohort of 25 students with the daunting task of making a positive change in Tulsa. After months of research, the cohort honed in on the topic of improving mental health on college campuses. The project, affectionately named Happy Hippo Campus, created a survey for student well-being that could be utilized on any college campus to provide an accurate snapshot of holistic student wellness. While TU already had a student well-being survey, the CPI students felt that they could create a survey that more accurately measured student needs and perspectives.

According to Ritvik, the cohort made sure that this would not be your typical "boring" survey. He described the cohort's strategy for the survey's launch on the TU campus: "We needed a shock and surprise factor. On a random Friday we put up posters that said 'The hippos are coming!' The next Monday we all put on hippo costumes and set up shop in the student union. We went to classes in the hippo costume and promoted it everywhere. We also worked closely with professors and other students to share the link to the survey with their classes. We effectively got the entire campus involved in this."

"Previously TU only had an 11% rate of response for their survey. After day one of launching the Happy Hippocampus survey, we immediately hit 53%. Something like 900 responses.

The cohort presented a final report on the survey data to the interim president of TU, and hoped to introduce the model to other universities for adoption. Unfortunately, a tumultuous change of leadership at TU and the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic prematurely curtailed these sustainability efforts. Due to related issues, the CPI program itself was also discontinued. Despite this, Ritvik still describes his time with CPI as a valuable learning experience: "We were really upset at the time… But we did get a lesson in reality and how the world works."

After completing his undergraduate degree at TU, Ritvik enrolled as a medical student at OU. He reflected on his mentality going into this chapter of his life: "I've always known I wanted to be a doctor since 7th or 8th grade - that was always the end goal for me. But YPI was genuinely the first experience that made me realize that there is so much more to life than just your job and career. Adam and Terrie would say that we don't just want you to be good professionals, we want you to be professionals that do good. I realized that, just because I want to be a physician, doesn't mean that it is the extent of my identity."

"YPI was genuinely the first experience that made me realize that there is so much more to life than just your job and career… Just because I want to be a physician, doesn't mean that is the extent of my identity."

"I knew I was interested in the social entrepreneurship side of things, but wasn't sure how it applied to my path as a medical student. In undergrad I participated in OU's Summer Institute for Community Medicine, and learned about the social determinants of health and other facets of well being. On the last day, we had the opportunity to interview a patient and their family. It was my first experience taking a patient's social history…"

"I interviewed a 50 year old patient with Alzheimer's and his caretaker wife. It helped me to understand what the patient and caretaker go through - they burn out, need their own support system and therapy, etc. It opened my eyes to the humanism of medicine, rather than only the scientific side. YPI planted the seed in me that humanism and emotional investment in people is important."

"At that interview, I asked one question that changed the trajectory of my life. I asked the caretaker what she would change about her experience with the medical system. Immediately said she would change the way that she was informed about her husband's diagnosis. She was told very callously over the phone while she was driving with the family in the car, and there was no follow up by the medical provider on next steps for treatment or care. That first diagnosis delivery really set the tone for her whole experience - she felt like the medical staff didn't care."

> "YPI planted the seed in me that humanism and emotional investment in people is important."

"I walked away from the Summer Institute upset with the system of care in Oklahoma," Ritvik reflected. Fast forward a few years, he had an interesting idea: "How does medical school prepare students to give bad news?"

Where others might've been daunted, Ritvik knew how to get the answer to his question. "I was a master at conducting surveys from YPI and CPI," he recalled. "I surveyed all the clerkship directors [who oversee medical students' progress through clinical rotations] and asked 'At any point in their medical education do you teach your students how to deliver serious news?' and 'Do you think it is important for them

to learn this?'" The survey results confirmed that this subject was not part of the standardized rotation for medical school students. Ritvik called it a "dangerous assumption" that medical students would be able to pick up these critical skills without formal instruction.

"I teamed up with a friend in the medical school with the goal to do something to address this. My training from YPI and CPI kicked into overdrive – I knew how to do this! And I didn't need grant money or anything. I reached out to Adam and Terrie about our plans, and they were very helpful and encouraging as we honed our ideas."

Based on their own research, Ritvik and his team developed a curriculum that combined proven protocols with experiential learning simulations. They made the pitch to OU and TU and were approved for their materials to be used in the official clinical medical curriculum taught to all second year medical students beginning in fall 2020. They also were approved to conduct a research project on the efficacy of their curriculum, which Ritvik expects will be published in the coming months. To date, approximately 450 students have successfully completed the program.

In his interview, Ritvik was clear in highlighting that this success was a group effort achieved in partnership with his fellow medical students. Nevertheless, he asserts that "Everything I learned in YPI enabled me to do this. My small idea would have remained a small idea if not for YPI and CPI."

Name:	Parth Singh
Cohort:	3
Project:	Unmask: Mind Over Media
Education:	University of Michigan (BA in Business Administration and Social Work)
Current Occupation:	Deputy Director of Disaster Response and Mutual Aid Programs, Voluntary Action for Social Transformation
Current Place of Residence:	Houston, TX
CliftonStrengths:	Restorative, Individualization, Achiever, Arranger, Responsibility

Parth Singh

Parth Singh describes his younger self as a serious student from a strict immigrant family who didn't have any prior experience with community service before YPI. "Studying was very important in my household… When I heard about community service and YPI, I thought it would be a way to get out of the house and develop myself socially." Parth quickly realized that service work suited him. "[YPI Director] Adam was the first person to see my passion for service work as something to be developed."

Parth reflects on his growth in the program: "YPI provided me with a lot of personal development opportunities. The lessons on servant leadership and social entrepreneurship were particularly impactful and made me think about philanthropy and leadership in a different way."

"YPI helped me understand how to organize a diverse group and mobilize towards a cause… It also showed me the importance of 'giving back.' I became fascinated by the courage of young people and ordinary citizens who wanted to make a difference in their communities."

"I remember doing a photo shoot - we were trying to be professional and get more people to take us seriously as adults and listen to our research [from the Unmask project]. The photo shoot was a particularly memorable experience because I grew up trying to assimilate myself into American culture, and had to fit a norm that I thought was acceptable. The photo shoot was the first time I was seeing myself through the lens of other people – someone who mattered and had value to give to the world. It made me feel like I had worth."

Parth recalls that YPI had a strong influence on his long-term career trajectory: "I initially thought I wanted to go into law because I wanted to create systematic change in the world. YPI showed me that there was an alternative path. Law is reactive – by the time something gets to court the event has already happened. YPI showed that I could be proactive in pushing social movement forward by organizing, building capacity, bringing people together, and utilizing skill sets. YPI gave me this lens. A lightbulb went on in my head that we can do things in a way that is sustainable, self-empowering – we don't have to rely on the existing system."

Parth immediately put these ideas into action upon entering college. Together with a few peers, he created a social enterprise called Beyond Bounds. "The idea was to create intentional spaces where students could reflect on their passions and find tangible ways to bring their personal values to their career," he recalls. "At the time, we as students were at the intersection of a lot of different movements like Black Lives Matter; schools of thought for fields like social entrepreneurship and development were in flux. Lots of people were unsure what they wanted to pursue in their careers. I organized Beyond Bounds with a few of my friends who were also troubled by these social dynamics…"

"We worked with the education, business and social work departments at the University of Michigan to develop a curriculum. We were able to get funding from a few sources. Ultimately it resulted in the creation of a summer developmental program for rising sophomores that is still being used at the University."

"YPI taught me the tactical methods of how to organize around a cause. Purpose-Method-Outcome, fans on three, facilitating meetings and making sure everyone's voices are heard – these were all skills that I developed in high school that I relied on when developing Beyond Bounds."

Upon graduation, Parth took a position as a business analyst with a for-profit tech company. "I had a lot of ideas of what I wanted to do, but also felt a lot of pressure to get a well-paying job to cover student debt," he recalls. "I managed sales and operations planning for a multimillion dollar portfolio. Also, I didn't see daylight. It was the grind and it was tough. I lost all my hair. I was becoming someone that I didn't recognize because of the pressure and the stress. Now having distance from it I can appreciate it as a big learning experience for me."

According to Parth, he entered a period of "soul searching." He was very concerned about societal trends he was observing in the US and his home country of India. "I applied for jobs in India and ultimately got hired with the World

> "A lightbulb went on in my head that we can do things in a way that is sustainable, self-empowering – we don't have to rely on the existing system."

Bank to work on an agricultural project. I utilized my program management skills and social work degree to implement a financial literacy program in rural areas, so that agricultural workers could improve their financial skills. I organized around 300 different volunteer groups across the country. This ultimately culminated in reaching 10 million people."

Following his experience with the World Bank, Parth has gone on to pursue a dynamic career in disaster response, crisis intervention and community development, working in various positions in the US and abroad, in organizations such as PeaceCorps and AmeriCorps. Most recently, he contributed to the establishment of an India-based organization called Voluntary Action for Social Transformation (VAST). According to Parth, VAST focuses on community organizing, mutual aid, advocacy and education work in rural communities in northern India.

Looking back, Parth reflects on how YPI shaped his life trajectory: "YPI introduced me to a world of service and helped me discover capacities in myself that I never knew I had. This was critical in building my confidence as a change agent."

"YPI helped me engage with the world in a way that is the perfect combination of courage and humility. To engage with the world, and not step away from difficult truths… It was instrumental in helping me understand that our generation will ultimately not be judged by our technology, design or intellect but instead by the character of our society - how we treat each other, the poor, the discriminated and the marginalized."

Name:	Abigail Swank
Cohort:	10
Project:	Teens on Board
Education:	Oral Roberts University (BA in Leadership and Non-Profit Business)
Current Occupation:	Student at ORU
Current Place of Residence:	Tulsa, OK
CliftonStrengths:	Strategic, Woo, Positivity, Developer, Futuristic

Abigail Swank

Abigail Swank recalls her early days in Cohort 10: "I was completely terrified on the first day of YPI. I was homeschooled and felt like I was very different from the other cohort members. I was the odd duckling… At first I had a hard time finding my way, but I found my grounding as we developed our project."

"At first I had a hard time connecting with people. But as I started working with [the cohort] we all realized that we weren't that different from each other. And even if we weren't friends, we could build really healthy working relationships. We could depend on each other and reach out if we needed help… YPI gave me the opportunity to understand the difference between a work environment and a personal environment. That's something so incredibly unique."

In year three of YPI, Abigail was on the cohort's partnerships committee tasked with managing the project's hand-off to Tulsa Changemakers. "Changemakers was very new at the time," Abigail recalled. "[Changemakers founders] Jake

and Andrew were extremely passionate about our project, and we were so happy when they agreed to take it on."

When she graduated, Abigail kept up the relationship with Changemakers. "I would call them 2-3 times a year for an update on Teens on Board. Eventually they invited me to facilitate the youth advisory board for Hunger Free Oklahoma. I would hold 2-3 meetings per month for 3-4 hours at a time. We created a project to gather data on what students think about the quality of food at their schools."

Abigail developed a reputation in the community as an authority on youth boards. "The Little Lighthouse invited me to run their youth board. I led the board from 2019-21, and grew it from 6-8 members to around 25. It is still going strong."

Abigail is currently a senior at Oral Roberts University studying leadership and non-profit business. "I love non-profit work," she said. "I'm particularly interested in equitable housing

for low income families in Tulsa. I also have an interest in real estate... In the future, I'd love to create a non-profit that combines these two interests."

Abigail is continuing to grow her non-profit experience while working as an intern at Changemakers. "I was so excited for the opportunity to work with Changemakers," she reflects. "I now work on various programs including youth voice fellowship, which is based on Teens on Board. I am developing a curriculum for youth advisory boards and am working with several local organizations to help them run their boards."

"I tell people about my experience with YPI a lot. It built me as a female entrepreneur. It gave me grit and the confidence to understand that I was able to build and develop and be a part of something bigger than myself. It also gave me a set of tools that I didn't have before walking in."

"The biggest thing I learned from YPI is that youth voice and empowerment is essential and valued. The fact that adults saw our potential gave us the confidence to be who we are today. Particularly when I look at my peers today who didn't go through YPI, I can see that I have a certain kind of confidence that couldn't be bought or learned in any other way."

"I am developing a curriculum for youth advisory boards and am working with several local organizations to help them run their boards."

"The biggest thing I learned from YPI is that youth voice and empowerment is essential and valued."

Name:	Sheyda Brown
Cohort:	3
Project:	Unmask: Mind Over Media
Education:	University of North Carolina and University of Oklahoma (Masters of Social Work), University of Oklahoma (Bachelor of Arts in Sociology and Social Work)
Current Occupation:	Deputy Director, Terence Crutcher Foundation
Current Place of Residence:	Tulsa, OK
CliftonStrengths:	Activator, Maximizer, Achiever, Includer, Woo

Sheyda Brown

Sheyda Brown says she had already started identifying herself as a leader before joining YPI. "I always thought I was maybe a leader. Coming into YPI, I knew certain things about myself. But YPI helped me to refine my skills and strengths so that they could be maximized to their full potential, rather than standing in the way of what I wanted to accomplish."

"Looking back at my younger self, I realize I could be overbearing and loud, and take up too much space. [YPI Director Adam Seaman] gave me direct feedback that helped me to become a better leader and team member. We had a conversation about how my energy in a room could really shift the dynamics, and that this was something that I could be more intentional about. It could be positive or negative depending on how I used it."

"Another thing about YPI that really stuck out was the fact that the experience pushed us as students to stick through hardships and failures and come through the other side. It made me strong in that way. Before YPI, if something

started going wrong I would just distance myself or walk away. In YPI, I never walked away during the entire three year journey. The fact that the program gave us the space to fail or mess up and continue through the whole experience was really powerful."

Sheyda also reflects that YPI played a significant role in shaping her career trajectory. "Any time I talk about my career path, a conversation I had with Adam sticks out as very consequential. I was trying to figure out what to major in. He encouraged my interest in social work - really validated that path based on my interests. He also helped me understand about myself that I wanted to do something impactful and significant with my life and showed how a career path could help me do that."

Sheyda went on to get degrees in social work for her bachelors and masters education. Ultimately she developed a strong interest in community organizing. "I saw a lot of parallels between YPI and community organizing," Sheyda recalls. "Working collectively, the role of

nonprofits, etc. All these lessons from YPI really prepared me for community organizing."

After graduating with her masters, Sheyda took a job as a full time community organizer in Houston, TX. "The goal was always to come back home," she said. "I left Oklahoma to challenge myself and so I could bring value back to my community."

"I left Oklahoma to challenge myself and so I could bring value back to my community."

And come back she did! After three years in Houston, Sheyda returned to Tulsa and took a job at the Charles and Lynn Schusterman Family Philanthropies. Sheyda reflects that she felt connected to the Foundation from her YPI days, and also recognized the power of philanthropy as a positive force for change in the Tulsa community.

In 2021, Sheyda moved to her current position at the Terence Crutcher Foundation. "This job was the perfect role for me because it brought together all my experiences - social work, policy, organizing, fundraising, philanthropy, etc. I now feel like I can be the kind of leader that I always wanted to be."

Reflecting on her career so far, Sheyda says that one of her proudest moments was a community organizing initiative she spearheaded with her sister in 2021 to change the mascot for Union Public Schools from Redskins to Redhawks.

"During the pandemic there was a lot of popular attention and momentum around the topic of addressing insensitive public monuments and symbols. Indigenous activists had been trying to change Union's mascot for decades… this finally felt like a national spotlight moment that we could take advantage of."

"Our strategy was to show that this was a change that the Union community wanted. I went to Union and my kids will go there one day. We created a Facebook group with alumni, teachers, and parents and mobilized people to speak at board meetings with shared 'asks' and goals. We also had an educational component and brought in experts to talk on the issue. It was a very effective approach and took about six months for the district to vote to approve the change."

"It is powerful for me to think that my kids will go to [Union] in the future. Actually being able to see the difference I am making for them to go there and be proud of their school is huge."

Sheyda also explained that the experience with Union was symbolic of the kind of changemaker she wants to be in Tulsa. "I am proud of this experience because it was a perfect example of how community organizing can be transformative in Tulsa, and I want more people to know how to do it," Sheyda explained.

"I now feel like I can be the kind of leader that I always wanted to be."

"A personal goal of mine moving forward is to train more young people in community organizing in Tulsa. It would be similar to YPI's focus on philanthropy and leadership, but with a specific focus on community organizing skills."