



ANNUAL REPORT 2015

Expanding Opportunity. Empowering Youth.

Dear Friends,

Rudy created a public service announcement to promote water conservation.
Christian engineered a model car using household materials.

Sofia and Gabriela learned how to work together and cook healthy meals at the same time. Over 1,500 youth flourished in our programs in 2015—developing their minds, their relationships, and their aspirations for the future.

Alongside the growth in our youth, our organization grew as well. Y.O.U. embraced a new name: Youth & Opportunity United. Our organization has always worked to unite youth with opportunities that empower their futures. Now, we're emphasizing that goal through our name. You can still call us Y.O.U., but the letters now stand for what's really at the heart of our mission.



And our name change was just the beginning. We encourage our youth to dream big and embrace bold aspirations. In 2015, we did the same, launching a Campaign for Youth Opportunity that strives to broaden our program impact, enhance our sustainability, and develop a new youth center and headquarters.

This was a momentous year for Y.O.U., and we could not have realized our full potential without YOU—our volunteers, our donors, and our community partners. In celebrating our impact and growth in 2015, we are truly celebrating the collective effort of our community.

Thank you for joining us in expanding opportunity and empowering youth!

Tom Scott
Board President

Seth Green
Executive Director

Y.O.U. in 2015

2015 was an exciting time at Y.O.U. as we expanded our programming and launched our Campaign for Youth Opportunity.

We served more youth, in more locations, with deeper support than ever before. Our youth had the opportunity to travel, to learn, to imagine, and to develop life skills. Together, we provided transformational opportunities to over 1,500 young people and their families.

OUR IMPACT

- **Academic performance:** 88% of Y.O.U. youth are improving or maintaining their academic performance.
- **Social development:** 85% of Y.O.U. youth feel it is important to help other people.
- **Emotional health and wellness:** 82% of Y.O.U. youth report having positive self-identity.

The data above is based on pre- and post-surveys of teachers and youth.

1,500+

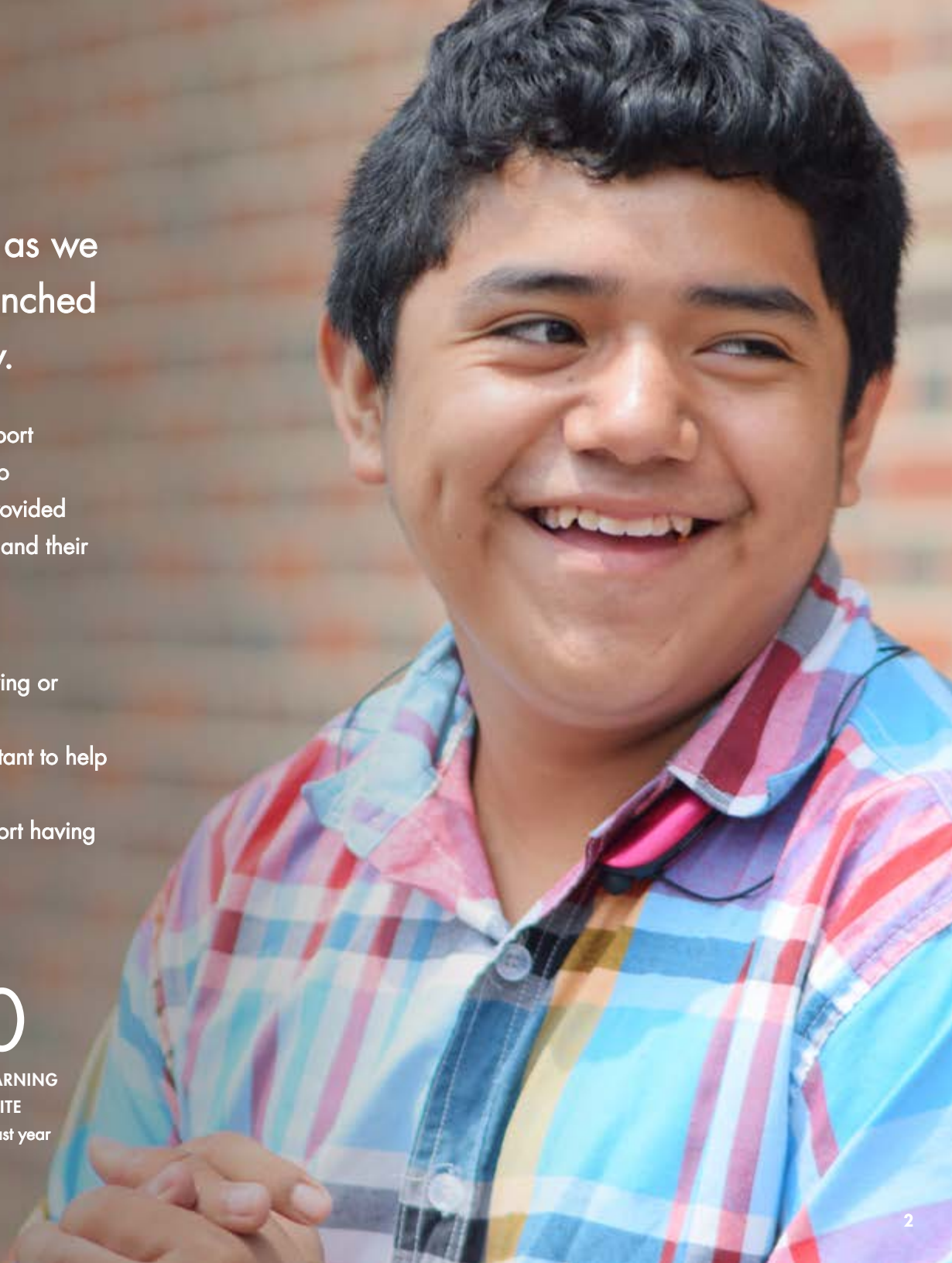
YOUTH SERVED
300 more than last year

11

SITES
3 more than
last year

750

HOURS OF LEARNING
AT AVERAGE SITE
90 more than last year



“

I have often said that if you boil Y.O.U. down to one word, that word is relationships. Genuine, caring, healthy, supportive relationships sit at the heart of all that Y.O.U. does.”

Don Baker
Y.O.U. Founder and Director Emeritus



Out-of-school Time

The average youth spends 80% of their time outside of school—and Y.O.U. helps ensure those hours are filled with enjoyment and learning.

Our out-of-school programs have three goals: **academic enrichment**, **social development**, and **emotional support**. Our programs support youth in developing academic skills and behaviors. Equally important, our programs immerse youth in fun, experiential activities that build their social and emotional skills. Over the last year, we expanded our out-of-school time programs to three more school sites and enhanced our life skills curricula.

On school days, the hours from 3 to 6 p.m. are the peak hours for juvenile crime and experimentation with drugs, alcohol, and sex. We transform these most dangerous hours in the lives of youth into the most empowering hours.

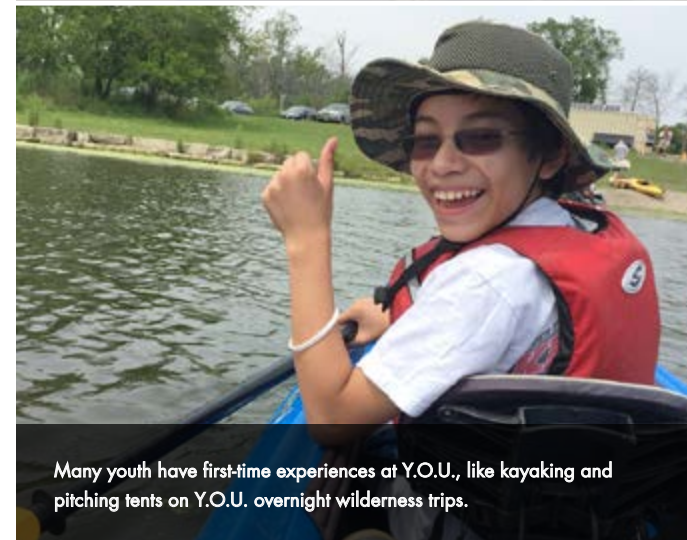
“

“I recently asked my daughter what her favorite activity at Y.O.U. is and she responded by telling me that they teach her life skills. And I thought that a 10-year-old talking about life skills was unbelievable. But then I thought about it and I realized the power in those words. The term ‘life skills’ implies a skill that is not only important in 5th grade, but also when you’re 21, 41, and 61. Y.O.U. is teaching our children skills that can be helpful throughout their lives.”

—Omar, Parent of a 5th Grader at Oakton



Y.O.U. youth explored environmental activism through the Quest 4 Earth elective by creating their own public service announcement video.



Many youth have first-time experiences at Y.O.U., like kayaking and pitching tents on Y.O.U. overnight wilderness trips.



Y.O.U. youth learn about science with Northwestern University mentors by creating their own food with household ingredients.

Academic Enrichment

We provide an array of activities—from homework assistance to hands-on science experimentation—that engage students' academic minds. We also provide an affirming atmosphere where education is valued and prioritized.

SPARKING ACADEMIC CURIOSITY

The value of education doesn't solely rest on understanding facts, but also on being able to think critically about the world. Y.O.U. programs kindle curiosity in our youth, leading them to ask questions, solve problems, and experiment. For example, the final project for Engineering in Evanston, a collaboration between Y.O.U. and Evanston/Skokie School District 65, challenged youth to build model cars out of recycled materials. The challenge was based on a race held in Dakar, Senegal. The lesson encouraged youth to tackle problems with an entrepreneurial spirit and also built their understanding of world cultures, economics, and human resourcefulness.

CREATING A LEARNING ATMOSPHERE

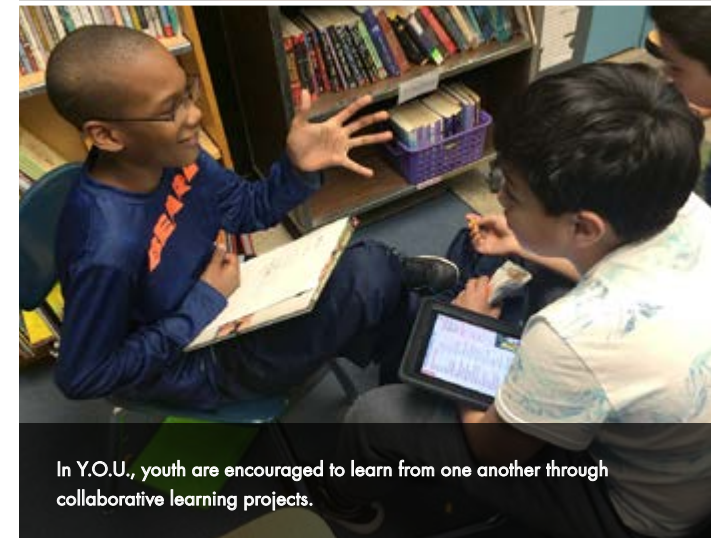
We encourage our youth to embrace life-long learning by exposing them to new opportunities, career paths, artistic pursuits, and more. This year, for example, professional dancers worked with our youth on original choreography; a Broadway star coached our youth on their stage performances; and a first-generation college graduate who became a CEO spoke with our youth, encouraging them to set ambitious goals for their education and their careers.

>90%

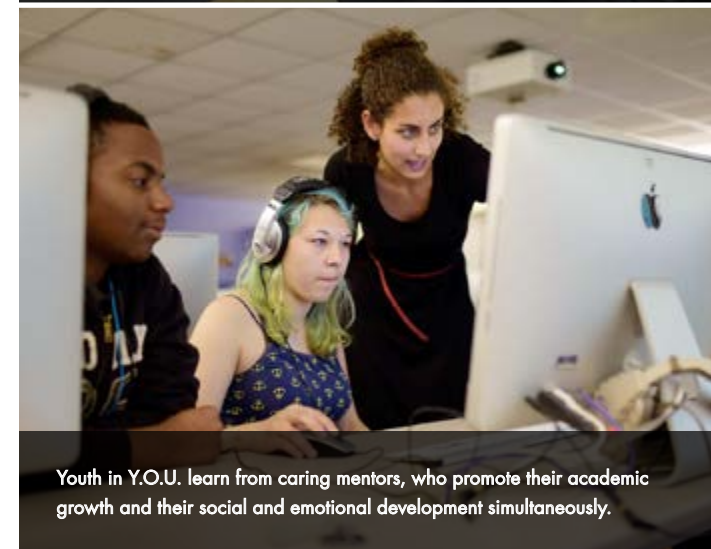
More than 9 in 10 Y.O.U. youth say they are academically motivated.



Youth learn about science through participation in hands-on experiments with the natural world.



In Y.O.U., youth are encouraged to learn from one another through collaborative learning projects.



Youth in Y.O.U. learn from caring mentors, who promote their academic growth and their social and emotional development simultaneously.



Meet Clinton

Clinton is a 6th grader at Nichols who enjoys reading and enrichment activities at Y.O.U. In fact, he credits Y.O.U. with helping him in the transition to middle school. "It's scary to start at a new school where you're not used to everyone and everything," he says. But he adds, "A lot of friends I know go to Y.O.U., so it helps that I get to do the things that I love with the people that I like and cool staff."

Meet Enijay

Enrichment activities build valuable skills and also foster personal growth. Take Enijay—at first he was hesitant to participate in Urban Elements, a group that teaches expression through diverse art forms like spoken word and graffiti. But through working with his peers and the group's mentors, he developed his creative talents and also found his unique voice. At a poetry performance, Enijay had the confidence to deliver his original work in front of an audience. In his words: "I was really nervous to present my poem, but I looked out at all the Y.O.U. people who were my friends and supported me and I realized that this was going to be fun."



I wish
I wish we had a world
that
was free of
all the
violence
I wish we had superheroes
to watch
our us like
Batman and Robin
I wish we could tell good
from evil and god from
the devil. I wish we
all had dreams that
we had
would come
true
or maybe even a
debt
I wish we could tell the good
cops from the bad
cops I wish people could
come from hate I wish
people wouldn't
call each others niggers
just because of their
skin color or race
I wish that people didn't talk
about people because
of who they choose to be
whether they are gay lesbian
or bisexual
love is not a sin
it's a word
that
can
spell
it
true

Social Development and Emotional Support

Every day, youth in Y.O.U. take part in fun activities designed to foster their social and emotional growth.

Youth learn how to build and maintain positive relationships, cope with social challenges, feel in control of their emotions, and believe in themselves.

LEARNING TO MAKE HEALTHY CHOICES

In 2015, health enrichment activities included youth growing their own produce, learning mindfulness techniques, and developing the skills to cook for their families, safely and on a budget. One group of youth in our culinary elective—called The Chew—even visited Grace, a Michelin 3-star restaurant. They cooked alongside owner Chef Curtis Duffy, who shared how he overcame a turbulent childhood to turn his dream into a career.

DEVELOPING LEADERSHIP SKILLS

This year, The Leadership Project tackled two big issues: micro-aggression and criminal justice. Using social media and launching an “I, too, am a Wildkit” campaign, youth engaged over 500 of their peers in forums that challenged common micro-aggressions (i.e., small acts of discrimination). The group also partnered with an exhibit at Northwestern University’s Block Museum on the death penalty to raise a community-wide conversation on the justice system.

>70% Over 7 in 10 youth report gaining confidence through Y.O.U. programs.



While visiting Grace restaurant in Chicago, Y.O.U. youth in “The Chew” culinary group cooked up healthy salads and competed to identify the most exotic fruits and vegetables.



Youth in Y.O.U.’s Leadership Project met with criminal justice experts and artists before leading a public conversation on the death penalty at Northwestern University’s Block Museum.



Y.O.U. staff members forge supportive, consistent, and caring relationships with youth by being where youth need them the most—right in their schools, every day.

Clinical Counseling and Street Outreach

Our clinical support is directly integrated into Y.O.U.'s out-of-school program to support the mental health of our youth and their families.

Y.O.U.'s clinical team also provides 24/7 crisis counseling, one-on-one case management, family support, safe space groups, and emotional support services at client homes and sites throughout the community. Meanwhile, our street outreach workers engage disconnected young people and connect them with positive youth development, educational resources and employment services through partnerships with the City of Evanston, the Youth Job Center, and the YWCA Evanston/North Shore.

In 2015, Y.O.U. increased the scale and intentionality of its clinical program. By hiring additional clinical staff, we were able to impact more youth. We also increased family access—more than half of our clinical staff are now multilingual. We also continued our commitment to creating safe spaces for our youth by investing in valuable programs like sexuality education and peer groups for LGBTQ youth.



The growth in Y.O.U.'s clinical staff allowed more youth and families to be served and expanded our language access for families. Our team now provides therapeutic support in English, Spanish, and Arabic.



Clinically-informed groups allow youth to learn interpersonal skills and develop creative stress-management techniques.



Our street outreach workers build relationships with disconnected youth, advocating tirelessly for their wellbeing by matching them with resources to meet their unique needs.



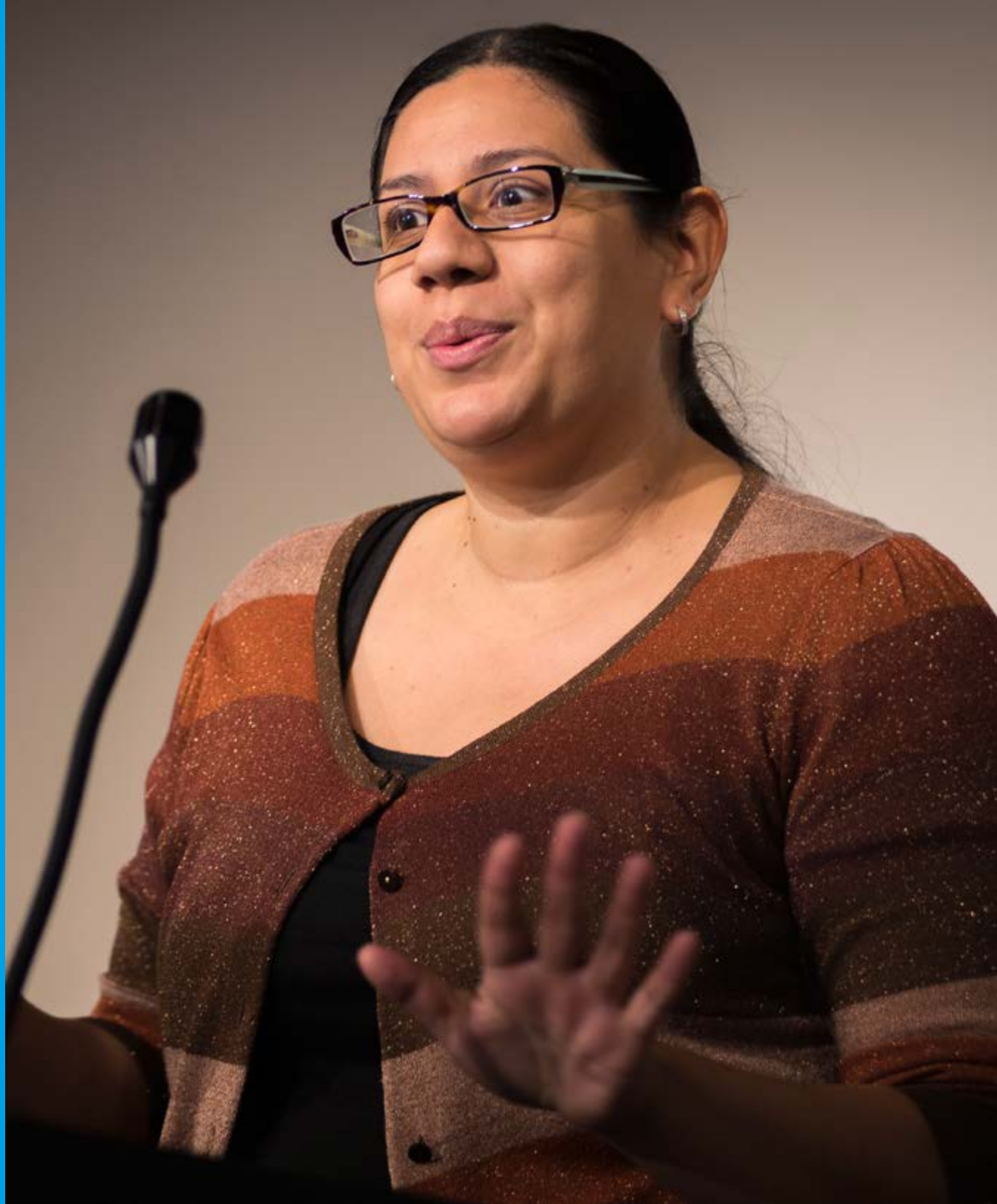
Meet Taisia

As a 16-year-old, Taisia didn't have the resources she needed to succeed. She was expelled from one school and was struggling in her new school when she met Y.O.U. staff member Antasia Maddox. They worked closely together over the course of three years. Taisia said, "I knew that I wanted to go back to work and back to school, but sometimes you need that push and Antasia was that push. When you come to Y.O.U., you get support. What you say doesn't fall on deaf ears; they actually put in the work to help you do better with your life." Taisia has now graduated from high school, secured a job, and applied to college.

“

Two years ago I was only a participant in the parent leadership group and in fact I wasn't sure whether I'd be able to finish the training. Now I'm going to be able to help other families achieve their goals the way that I was able to achieve mine. I've seen how Y.O.U. has changed my family's life.”

Sandra
Parent Leader



Community Schools

Y.O.U. is the lead organization in implementing the Community School model at Chute Middle School in Evanston and Lincoln Jr. High School in Skokie.

The Community School model seeks to simultaneously empower parents as leaders and transform schools into hubs of integrated services to support improved student learning, stronger families, and healthier communities. Highlights from 2015 include:

- Connecting individuals with free, fresh produce and other groceries through a Healthy Kids Market. The Market runs bi-weekly in partnership with the Greater Chicago Food Depository and is staffed by volunteers, including parents, teachers, administrators, and community members, who manage the food booths and bring the school community together.
- Training parents to become facilitators themselves. Parents who participated in our leadership training in 2014 had the chance to train a new group of parents, growing the numbers of engaged families and strengthening their involvement in the community.
- Getting more caregivers involved. We developed a caregiver network specially tailored to support and promote peer learning among grandparents raising grandchildren.



Parent leaders of the Community School program at Chute Middle School lead initiatives to coordinate resources through the school—including developing and volunteering at the Healthy Kids Market.



Y.O.U. parents and staff were honored by the Federation for Community Schools at its annual gathering. Parent leader Elizabeth Averyhart spoke on a plenary panel while staff member Erin Moore received the Community School Leadership Award.



Through Community Schools, parents take on leadership roles in the community and their schools, including planning culture nights to celebrate the community's diversity.

Collective Impact

Y.O.U. works with more than 50 partners to serve our youth holistically and impactfully. Examples include:

ALLIED AGAINST VIOLENCE

In 2015, our first class of 38 high school boys graduated from Allied Against Violence. This 10-week program, developed and implemented in partnership with the YWCA Evanston/North Shore, engaged young men in conversations around masculinity with the goal of preventing domestic violence and training these young men to become anti-violence mentors to middle schoolers.

METAMEDIA

In 2015, Evanston saw the opening of MetaMedia, a new space for middle schoolers housed in the McGaw YMCA. The YMCA, Northwestern University, and Y.O.U. collaborated to develop MetaMedia, which connects youth to technology, workshops, and resources for “META” activities—Media and Making, Engineering, Technology, and Arts. Y.O.U. youth are thriving in this new space—completing self-directed projects including app creation, music recording, filmmaking, digital design, and more.

SCIENCE IN SOCIETY

Northwestern University partners with Y.O.U. for many enriching programs and activities—for example, Northwestern University’s Science in Society initiative brings graduate students together with Y.O.U. elementary students to serve as mentors and teachers. One recent session challenged youth to design a prosthetic arm for a girl in Afghanistan. Another saw students delving into the science of food and concocting healthier versions of common junk food. Partnerships like this immerse youth in the hands-on, creative, joyful fun of scientific learning.



A mom and her daughter enjoy a special Y.O.U. Family Night at Northwestern University’s Block Museum.

Financial Report 2015 Fiscal Year

OPERATING REVENUE

Government	2,187,571
United Way	480,000
Contributions	1,126,153
Special Events	283,301
TOTAL	\$4,077,025

OPERATING EXPENSE

Programming	3,095,396
Management & Support	506,803
Outreach & Development	286,496
TOTAL	\$3,888,695
NET SURPLUS	188,330

*The FY15 audit was substantially complete at the time of this publication; thus, these figures represent expected financial results.

“

As a supporter of Y.O.U. for more than 25 years, I have a strong and deep commitment to the organization. Y.O.U. offers necessary and important programming which addresses an inequality of access and opportunity in our community. When you visit the programs, and see the enthusiasm of the youth first-hand, you feel good about giving to the organization.”

Mark Hall

Y.O.U. Board Member

and Chair of the Finance Committee



The Campaign for Youth Opportunity

In 2015, Y.O.U. publicly launched the Campaign for Youth Opportunity, a \$15 million fundraising initiative that will significantly improve the lives of youth and families.

A close-up, vertical photograph on the left side of the page shows a person's hair, possibly braided or styled in a similar fashion, wearing a dark jacket. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

Investing in Our Youth

Y.O.U. announced its Campaign for Youth Opportunity in October of 2015 as part of a “World of Opportunity” family enrichment day attended by over 300 youth, family, and community members. Our Campaign has three goals:

- **Expand and sustain high-quality services.** Our programs make a meaningful difference by building deep relationships between our youth and staff. Our Campaign will expand this impact by allowing us to serve more youth even more holistically.
- **Build a transformational center for youth learning.** Our youth deserve imaginative spaces in which to grow and learn. Our new youth center will offer experiential learning, family support, and counseling.
- **Ensure the organization’s long-term stability.** Our new endowment and 90-day cash reserve will ensure we can continue serving youth for generations to come.

THE ENDOWMENT MATCH

The Finnegan Family Foundation has generously pledged to match every gift to our new endowment, dollar for dollar, up to one million dollars. That means every gift pledged to the endowment goes twice as far in making sure Y.O.U. youth thrive.

“

We are pleased and excited to welcome Y.O.U. to the 5th Ward. We know that this new facility at 1911 Church Street will help them expand their services for youth and families and that this will benefit the whole Evanston community.”

Delores Holmes
Alderman for Evanston's 5th Ward



Rendering by Studio Talo Architecture

Take a virtual tour of our new building by visiting youthopportunity.org/campaign



Donors 7/1/14-6/30/15

Y.O.U. is grateful to our many generous donors. Every effort is made to list donors accurately. We sincerely apologize for any omission or errors in spelling.

\$500,000+

Finnegan Family Foundation
Illinois State Board of Education
Col. Jennifer N. Pritzker*

\$250,000+

The Lewis-Sebring Family Foundation
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\$100,000+

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\$5,000+

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The Don Baker Circle for Youth is a special giving society established to recognize supporters who make annual fund contributions of \$1,000 or more to Y.O.U.

* Denotes a member of the Don Baker Circle for Youth.

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\$1,000+

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We are extremely grateful to our many volunteers for their critical support of our youth and families.

Volunteers shared skills and passions, advised youth on college and career options, gave youth feedback on projects, and tutored youth in a wide array of subject matters. We are also grateful for the volunteers who helped with event planning, advised our programming through our Community Counsel, and helped us build a strong future through their work on our Capital Campaign.

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