

**Y.O.U.**  
YOUTH & OPPORTUNITY UNITED

**2017  
2020**  
STRATEGIC PLAN

A fourth grader creates  
a puppet to help express  
his emotions.



A high school senior reflects  
on ten years as a Y.O.U.  
participant as he writes his  
college essay with support  
from a Northwestern mentor.

# THIS IS

A seventh grader collaborates with professional engineers to create an app and enrolls in an accelerated math course in school.



A parent connects with resources and builds a network of support after their family's recent move to the U.S.

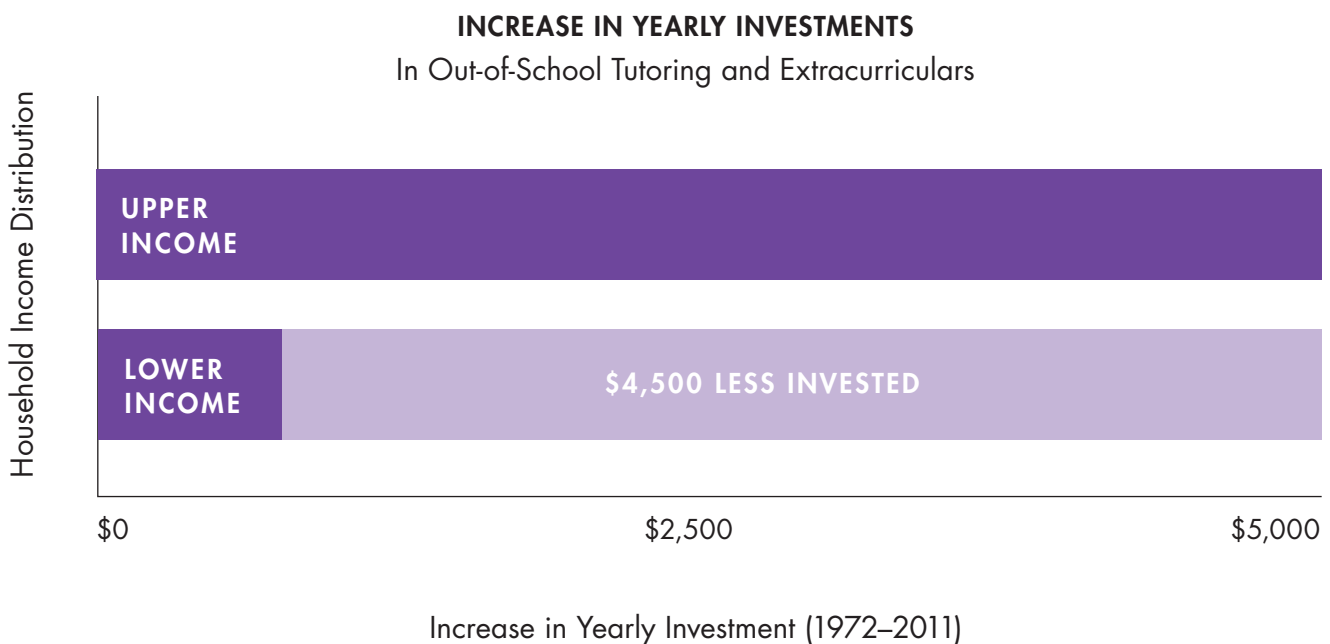
# S.Y.O.U.

## OUR BIG GOAL

# Post-Secondary & Life Success

Y.O.U. closes the opportunity gap by preparing youth for post-secondary and life success.

Since 1972, upper-income parents have increased their yearly investments in out-of-school tutoring and extracurriculars by over \$5,000 (adjusted for inflation) while lower-income parents have increased their yearly investments by less than \$500 due to financial constraints.



## OUR ROLE

# Supporting Youth on the Path to Young Adult Success

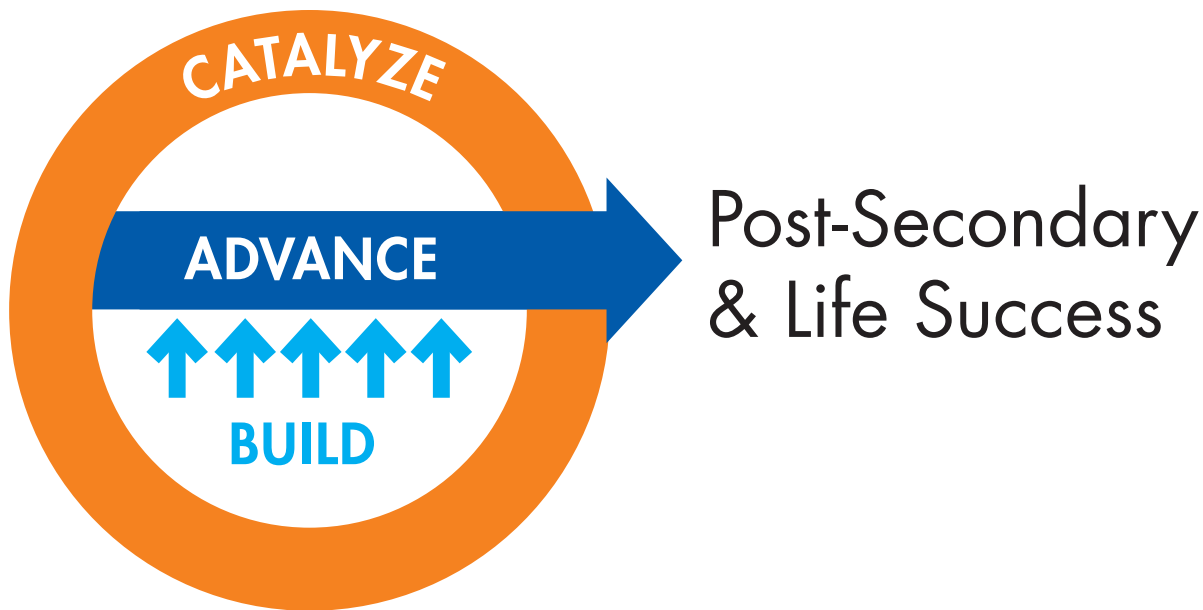
We partnered with the UChicago Consortium on School Research in our strategic planning process and ultimately embraced their “Framework for Young Adult Success,” which indicates that successful youth development relies on experiences and relationships which encourage youth to explore, interact with, and reflect on their identity, goals, and community.





# Our Strategy

Y.O.U. has a three-pronged strategy for realizing our big goal.



## Advancing Youth Success

Through our Out-of-School Time Program, we provide free, high-quality learning, social-emotional enrichment, and trauma-informed support services for 1,000 youth across 11 schools.

### Building Youth Resilience

Through our Clinical and Outreach services, we provide mental health counseling, case management, and 24-7 housing crisis intervention to support youth's resilience.

### Catalyzing Parent Networks

Through monthly family nights, leadership development opportunities, and caregiver support groups, we engage parents as advocates and leaders in our programs.

## STRATEGY #1

# Advance Youth Success

Our Out-of-School Time (OST) Program offers a “high expectations, high support” pathway to post-secondary and life success. Our OST Program is offered at the eleven highest-need public schools across Evanston and Niles Townships. We provide free, high quality learning, social-emotional enrichment, and trauma-informed support services that help youth to grow in four areas: skills and knowledge, self-regulation, mindsets, and values.

## Priorities for Deepened Impact

**Enhance Academic Foundations:** We seek to launch a volunteer-based tutoring program; deepen STEM learning through our Maker Space; and foster a love of reading through weekly literacy workshops.

**Strengthen our Pathway:** We seek to launch an 8th-to-9th grade bridge program to support youth’s transition into high school and beyond.



# 85%

of Y.O.U. youth are improving or maintaining their academic performance.

## The Need

More than 2 in 3 parents in low-income households agree that the current economic conditions have made it difficult for them to afford placing their children in an afterschool program.





“ I was first told in 3rd grade about this amazing afterschool program. I wasn't doing so well then. But I started Y.O.U., and they helped me change all that. Y.O.U. is like my second family. I want to become a counselor one day and help people too. Like Y.O.U. does for me, I'll be that person for someone else.

—MAYA



Y.O.U. makes you feel like you're responsible for your own self, like you are powerful. They are always there for you no matter what you need. And they teach people to be socially aware. At Y.O.U., there's no judgement.

—BREZAH

## STRATEGY #2

# Build Youth Resilience

Our Clinical and Outreach Team provides mental health counseling, case management, and 24-7 housing crisis intervention to build the resilience of youth. We integrate group therapies and counseling services directly into our OST Program to support the emotional health and wellness of youth and families. We also link disconnected youth to shelter, job readiness, family support, and educational resources.



## Priorities for Deepened Impact

### **Expand Psychoeducational Opportunities:**

We seek to scale our psychoeducational support groups to offer more youth access to new experiences that build key social-emotional competencies.

**Ensure Whole Child Support:** We seek to hire additional Youth and Family Counselors to deepen our capacity to provide consistent clinical supports across all of our sites.

## The Need

Children and youth from low-income households are at an increased risk for mental health needs, but are less likely to receive mental health supports. Unfortunately, unmet mental health needs often lead to lower rates of academic engagement, achievement, and school completion.

# 93%

of Y.O.U. youth report greater confidence after participating in Y.O.U. programs.

## STRATEGY #3

# Catalyze Parent Networks

We promote the development of parent networks through monthly family nights, leadership development opportunities, and caregiver support groups. These strong parent networks help caregivers in supporting their children's healthy development and in ensuring their successful connection to school and their community.

## Priorities for Deepened Impact

**Enhance Parental Engagement:** We seek to scale our clinically-informed caregiver support networks across our eleven OST sites to engage parents as key advisers.

**Expand Family Counseling:** We seek to engage more families in asset-based support groups and enhance resources for refugee and immigrant families.



## The Need

Children whose parents are more engaged in their educational experience achieve greater academic success, attend school more regularly, and are more likely to persist on to post-secondary education.



88%

of Y.O.U. parents say that Y.O.U. has helped them feel more involved in their child's learning.



# Measuring Our Progress

Y.O.U.'s robust data collection system has already allowed us to show a strong correlation between our services and the academic, social, and emotional growth of youth in our programs. In order to ensure continued improvement and progress toward our goals, we seek to enhance our evaluation capabilities by:

1

More closely aligning our evaluative indicators with our "Big Goal" of preparing youth for post-secondary and life success.



2

Formalizing our collection and usage of data to drive decision-making and programmatic improvement.





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