



Serving Youth and Young Adults
IMPACT REPORT 2020–2022

YOUTH EMPLOYMENT
PARTNERSHIP

50 Years

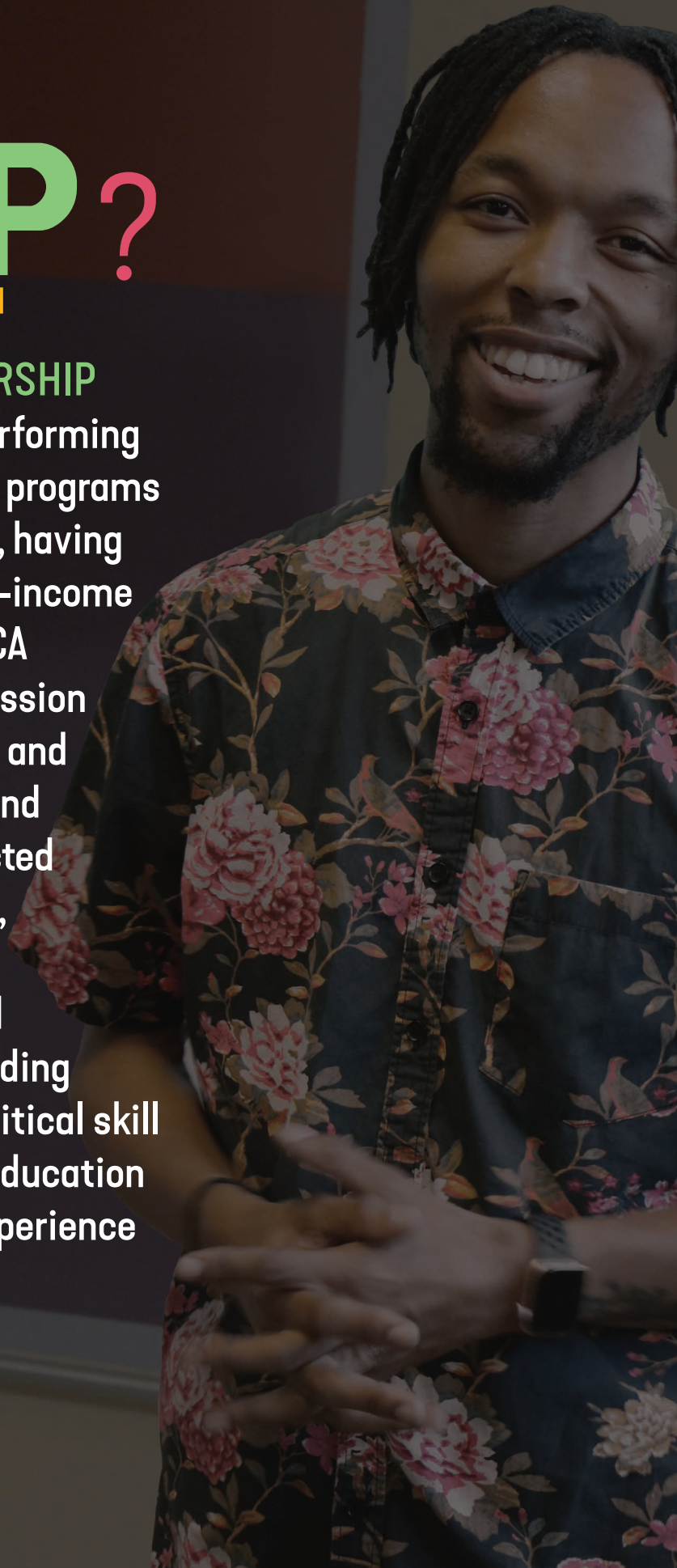
1973–2023



What is YEP?

YOUTH EMPLOYMENT PARTNERSHIP

[YEP] is one of the highest-performing youth workforce development programs in the San Francisco Bay Area, having served more than 34,000 low-income young people in the Oakland, CA flatlands since 1973. YEP's mission is to improve the employment and education outcomes for Oakland youth and young adults impacted by poverty, the justice system, foster care, homelessness, school underachievement and other barriers to work by providing transformative job training, critical skill building, and contextualized education paired with hands-on work experience in a living classroom.



Toward Brighter Futures for Oakland Youth

YEP has been showing up for the young people of Oakland for 50 years — half a century. That’s quite the feat for a community-based organization.

For perspective, YEP began when the U.S. was still embroiled in the war in Vietnam, Black Panther co-founder Bobby Seale was running for Oakland mayor, and The Exorcist was a newly released box office hit. YEP has thrived under ten different presidential administrations, worked with eight Oakland mayors, and watched the Raiders leave, come back, and then leave again.

As you’ll see through this impact report, YEP has always changed with the times. By being sensitive to the shifting needs of our city’s youth and responsive to the fluctuating labor market, **YEP has learned to evolve and innovate in order to fill the many gaps that have been trying to swallow our young people up for far too long.**

I’ve seen many of these gaps firsthand. Apart from my time volunteering as a Director on YEP’s Board, **I’ve spent the past 40 years of my professional life as a public school teacher and administrator, with the latter half of those working in Oakland schools.** I’ve taught middle school students, served as a high school site disciplinarian, and supervised court and community schools throughout Alameda County. Working in support of Oakland youth, many who have fallen victim to the system’s myriad shortcomings, one thing has always been clear: **all students would like to succeed, but we, the adults and educators, have not succeeded with all students.**

THIS IS WHERE AN AGENCY LIKE YEP HAS STEPPED IN.

When I discovered YEP in 2007, Oakland and Alameda County schools were known as “dropout factories.” A Harvard University Civil Rights Project report found that only 48 out of every 100 freshman entering Oakland schools were retained until graduation, no doubt a combination of many factors proving detrimental to our students’ futures. In response, YEP had an onsite charter school meant to stabilize disconnected youth so they could return to traditional school, as well as GED preparation courses paired with vocational and employment training.

Not only did YEP’s approach boost young people’s academic engagement by **pairing classroom learning with dynamic work**

...CONTINUED

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experience, but it also introduced them to well-paying and fulfilling careers in the building trades, offering a supportive bridge for youth while addressing the community's need for skilled workers. And I saw that this model was succeeding.

Additionally, YEP programs weren't just tailored for young adults who had slipped through the cracks of the traditional public school system. They also supported Oakland youth who were still engaged in high school but challenged with other life barriers—poverty, foster care, juvenile justice entanglement. **YEP's afterschool and summer programs were designed to keep teens aspiring for higher academic success through tutoring, career exploration and community connection, and paid internships in a variety of roles.**

YEP's dynamic learning model—workforce development + foundational education practiced in a living classroom environment—continually finds new ways to unlock doors that many youth often cannot open on their own. Even as YEP has evolved across the years, this model of learning has always remained central to the agency. As an example, there's no longer a GED program but a thriving Alameda County Office of Education community high school onsite, a development I helped initiate. Likewise, YEP's newest programmatic additions—two transitional housing sites for homeless and housing insecure young adults—demonstrate how we innovate to meet our young people's immediate needs while still using a living classroom of learning as the base from which to engage, motivate, and achieve economic stability.

The work, as you can imagine, is never finished. It is an evolving practice that is mirrored in the evolution of YEP as a leading service provider for the past 50 years. This report is meant to showcase and celebrate our high-impact work as we continue to serve Oakland youth. We know that with the continued support of the Oakland community, YEP will be able to thrive and provide for our city's youth and young adults.

YOUTH EMPLOYMENT PARTNERSHIP ORGANIZATION IMPACT: 2020–2022

1,206 youth
and young adults enrolled

95% of participants
completed employability
soft skills training

62,325
hours worked

\$1,435,415
earned in wages & bonuses

nearly
\$30,000
received in transportation
support

4,000+ hours
of case management
received

Thanks,
Adrian V. Kirk,
YEP Board Member



ABOUT YEP VIDEO



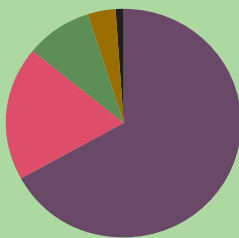
PROGRAMS OVERVIEW

STRATEGIES	YOUNG ADULT PROGRAM	SUMMER JOBS PROGRAM	AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAM
ENROLLED (per year avg.)	100–150	300–350	100–150
AGES	18–24 years old	14–18 years old	15–17 years old
DURATION OF ENGAGEMENT	6 months–1.5 years	2–3 months	3–6 months
SERVICES RENDERED	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vocational training in construction, culinary arts, public works, warehouse & logistics Paid work experience High school credit recovery Transitional housing Tutoring Supportive services Industry-recognized credentials Job placement support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pre-employment training Financial literacy Resume development Interviewing practice 100-hour career internships Academic support Weekly soft skills workshops 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pre-employment training Financial literacy Resume development Interviewing practice 100-hour career internships Tutoring & academic support Weekly soft skills workshops

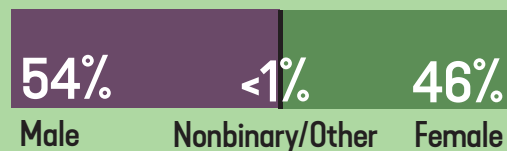
YEP DEMOGRAPHICS

RACE/ETHNICITY

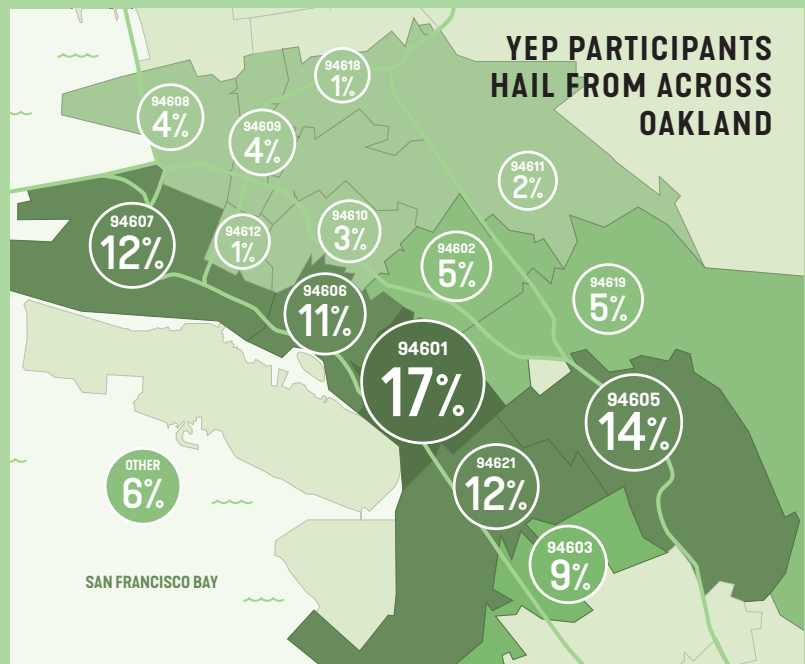
Black	67%
Hispanic/Latino	19%
Multiracial	9%
Asian	4%
Other	1%



GENDER



YEP PARTICIPANTS HAIL FROM ACROSS OAKLAND



YEP
DYNAMIC
LEARNING
MODEL

WORKFORCE
DEVELOPMENT + FOUNDATIONAL
EDUCATION
X PRACTICED IN A LIVING CLASSROOM

- Increased employment
- Advanced academics
- Improved well-being
- Healthier city

Celebrating 50 years

of serving Oakland youth, YEP has come a long way.



HUMBLE SUMMERS

1973 The agency humbly began as a summer jobs program in 1973, operating out of St. Elizabeth High School in the Fruitvale neighborhood. Known then as the St. Elizabeth Youth Employment Corporation, it was launched by a group of committed teachers and civic leaders to reduce learning loss and idleness by increasing summer employment and education opportunities.

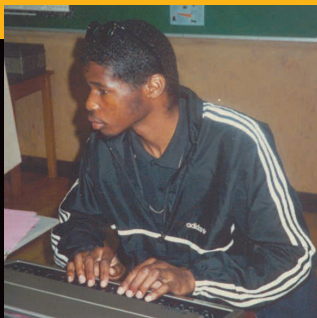
1989 In 1989, the agency transitioned to an independent organization, relocated to the old Bank of America building — equipped with a real walk-in vault! — on Fruitvale and E. 14th Street (now the headquarters of Red Bay Coffee), and expanded beyond summer programming to provide year-round support for Oakland's systems-impacted and high-risk youth.



BUILDING UP (AND BREAKING DOWN) THE BAY

1991 A couple years later, in 1991, three other local youth providers, Oakland Youth Works, Oakland Auto Tech, and Doweling Jig, merged under St. Elizabeth to form The Youth Employment Partnership, Inc.

In the mid-1990s, YEP realized it wasn't just high school-aged youth needing support to transition into healthy adulthoods, but also Oakland's young adults — particularly those who had exited high school prematurely. YEP expanded its focus to include young adult comprehensive services, integrating GED classes and tutoring with vocational skill development and paid work in construction. This integration improved learning, incentivized credential attainment, and built real skills that led to long-term employment.



Demolition provides 'green' jobs for youths

YEP rescues, resells high-quality lumber

By Sadie Jo Smokey
STAFF WRITER

OAKLAND — Demolition is the easiest way for Shawntell Charles to describe what she does at the Port of Oakland. It's self-explanatory, and admittedly, a little glorified.

"I tell them we do it by hand," said Charles, hands buried deep in the pockets of her dirty tan overalls. "And I still get a lot of 'wows' and 'oohs' and 'It's really cool you do that.'"

Youth Employment Partnership of Oakland provides Charles and other low-income adults the opportunity to be part of a human demolition team, working hard and getting dirty while learning job skills.



Program promotes house-building careers

► **GRANT**, from Local 1
them with the education they

well done and local communities get more affordable housing in the process."

Similar concerns were expressed during a community forum recently at the East Oakland Youth Development Center, where youth leaders

say despite a
economy, con-
re o
blem
ack
said



1990s AND EARLY 2000s

Starting in the late 1990s, YEP created a "living classroom" for construction training by rebuilding and performing down-to-the-studs renovations of dozens of homes across the city, which were sold to low-income families.

It was also at this time that YEP ran one of the largest and most successful Welfare-to-Work programs in the state of California, which involved deconstructing several massive WWII-era warehouses, piece by piece, at the U.S. Navy Fleet & Industrial Supply Center, located at today's Middle Harbor Shoreline Park in the Port of Oakland.

Instead of throwing the material into a landfill — the prevailing recommendation from demolition companies — YEP discovered that the half-million board-feet of old-growth redwood and Douglas fir could be salvaged and sold to environmentally and fiscally minded builders across the world, and launched an international green lumber business to support the venture, selling recycled wood to countries as far as Scotland and Chile. Deconstruction of the buildings diverted over 95% of the waste — 1,530 tons — from landfills, while preparing hundreds of youth for high-quality careers along the Port of Oakland.



NEW (RE)MODELS

2000 At the turn of the millennium, YEP outgrew the beloved bank building and acquired the current workforce training facility, located just down the street in the lower San Antonio neighborhood, sitting vacant at the corner of 23rd Avenue and International Boulevard.

Before remodeling began, YEP opened the building to the community for two days and had a massive neighborhood roller skating party. Over the next decade, young people designed and constructed the

26,000 sq. ft youth center quadrant by quadrant — using much of the salvaged lumber from the Navy Supply deconstruction — gaining a host of carpentry skills, earning diplomas, and transitioning into a better life while creating an enduring local asset for their peers and successive generations of youth and young adults.

2012 Like with the deconstruction project, YEP has always sought innovative ways to reduce its agency-wide carbon footprint and environmental waste while offering quality training that stays ahead of the curve. In 2012, YEP partnered with Mosaic Inc., an Oakland-based social responsibility investment startup, to launch a crowd-funded campaign to install solar panels on YEP's facility rooftop. Through small investments from 51 individuals (who all received positive returns), YEP constructed a 47-kilowatt system to run on the sun, powering YEP's job training operations, computer lab, education rooms, and administrative offices. This move saved over 90,000 pounds of CO2 from entering the atmosphere, reduced long-term electricity costs — with saved money put back toward training Oakland youth — and won a Champion of Change Award from the Obama White House for innovative project crowdfunding.



Oakland program trains young women in construction trades

By Michele R. Marcucci
STAFF WRITER

OAKLAND — Youth Employment Partnership Inc.'s storefront on International Boulevard was abuzz

gram to train disadvantaged young women to work in the construction trades.

"This project is a perfect example of what type of difference you can make in a community," Bradshaw said to a gaggle of Oakland city officials, press and others.

It's also a way for the state to



EXPANSION + EVOLUTION

Although construction training has remained a core offering, YEP established many other vocational pathway programs over the years to meet industry sector needs and the diverse interests of young people. YEP, for example, has provided training in child development, office technology, counseling, as well as operated two social-enterprise cafes throughout the 2010s—one at Oakland International Airport and the other at the Alameda County Juvenile Justice Center.

Along with new vocational programs, YEP has also sought better educational pathways for young adults who've dropped out of high school. Although YEP had experimented with an internal OUSD charter school throughout the 2000s, and had been providing GED classes for even longer, neither method achieved the fully desired results.



2016 Thus, in 2016, YEP tried something new, partnering with Alameda County Office of Education's Student Programs and Services to pilot a public charter alternative high school located on the YEP campus. Using a unique model of "credit recovery," the initial trial of the Opportunity Academy saw overwhelming success attaining diplomas that has become a permanent fixture of our young adult programs.



Another recent venture, developed from youth feedback and a careful review of projected labor growth and career mobility potential, was the creation of a 1,190 square foot commercial production kitchen at YEP. Completed in 2018, the kitchen launched YEP's Culinary Arts career training pathway and social enterprise, which equipped trainees with commercial restaurant essentials while they produced daily meals for local homeless communities, community schools, and Oakland community events.



READY FOR WHAT MAY COME NEXT

2020 YEP, like the rest of the world, suffered a shock from the novel coronavirus pandemic and subsequent lockdown in March 2020. After the first few weeks, when it became apparent that a grand re-opening of society was far off, we pivoted to provide modified programming that included home delivery drop-offs and pick-ups of education packets, along with 1-on-1 virtual tutoring, to keep our trainees engaged and earning credits. We also became a neighborhood food distribution hub for community members, our trainees, and their families to access boxes of vegetables, fruits, and other nutritious goods to stay well-fed during uneasy times.

Owing to our expansive training facility space, abundant outdoor areas, and fresh-air-circulating HVAC system, YEP was able to offer enriching summer job opportunities for hundreds of Oakland youth who had been left socially isolated and rudderless by the pandemic's overwhelming force.

Despite its setbacks, the 2020 program year provided YEP the space to reflect, reenvision, and finally realize our next major projects: transitional housing for homeless and unstably-housed youth. Over the next few years, YEP, as described in this report, completed construction of two major housing facilities which will be integrated into our suite of existing workforce training and education services. The tiny home community will provide six-months of emergency housing for homeless youth, while the career- and college-readiness dormitory, across the street, will provide longer-term transitional support for youth to complete community college degrees and other postsecondary credentials.


2023 Entering our 50th year, we embark on a whole new era. Having gone from a small summer job program, to a nationally recognized youth and young adult education and employment agency, and now a provider of innovative workforce training youth housing, YEP remains fastidiously committed to improving the community.



PHOTO BY AJUNTARD HENDERSON

Whatever may come next, YEP will be looking ahead of the curve to serve, support, and uplift Oakland's new generation.





“The ACOE+YEP partnership offers an integrated program to young people seeking a high school diploma while simultaneously getting employment training, access to jobs, and necessary support services. Our collaboration under one roof allows for a one-stop-shop experience where students can pursue multiple goals in a personalized and consistent environment.”

— Monica Vaughan, Chief of Schools
for Alameda County Office of Education’s
Student Programs & Services

Young Adult Programs

Our young adult programs are designed to help young people tap into their full, promising potential. We do this by combining job training and paid work experience in high-demand local career pathways while building foundational educational skills.

YEP's young adult services specialize in helping **Oakland's Opportunity Youth** — those disconnected from school and work — reconnect to advance their education and credentials, improve their employability and vocational skills, and enter into **college and career-track employment**. YEP's comprehensive support not only improves individual lives, but makes for a happier, healthier, safer city. Since the shelter-in-place orders began in March 2020, YEP has succeeded in **re-enrolling over 100 young adults** into our onsite high school, Opportunity Academy, operated by Alameda County Office of Education (ACOE), of which **82 have since earned a diploma**.

In the morning, trainees at YEP receive significant 1-on-1 attention from the tutors in our education lab and from ACOE teachers. In the afternoon, they enter their career pathway internships where they apply their school work to real work-based projects.

This model has been such a success in securing diplomas for young people who left high school prematurely that it is now being replicated at other community organizations across the city and county.

For the young adults who joined YEP with a diploma, but were neither employed nor in school, their mornings are spent studying for drivers' licenses and industry-recognized credentials, which position them to enter the labor market at a higher wage.

YOUNG ADULT PROGRAM IMPACT 2020–2022

240
unduplicated trainees

16,000+ hours
of work experience

10,000+ hours
in education at YEP

80% earned a
high school diploma
(82 out of 103)

91% who worked
50+ hours earned
a diploma

\$20/hr. avg. wage for
job placement (PY 21–22)





YEP YOUNG ADULT PROGRAMS

CONSTRUCTION

Construction is one of the fastest growing sectors in the East Bay with some of the highest projected job openings for middle-wage work. In the Oakland-Hayward-Berkeley metropolitan area, carpenters, for example, earned a mean annual salary of \$80,918 in the first quarter of 2022. Along with a high school diploma and industry-recognized credential, YEP prepares trainees for a smooth transition into these promising construction careers by providing foundational training in tool use and building site safety, as well as a host of hands-on carpentry skills, such as demolition, framing, plumbing, electrical, sheet rocking, and painting.

Beginning in our expansive woodworking and construction lab, YEP trainees learn the basics of hand and power tools, construction fundamentals, and complete introductory tasks, such as cutting wood and building a practice wall frame, before advancing into real-world construction projects. While YEP has been building affordable homes in partnership with the Oakland Community Land Trust for many years, two of the most recent projects were YEP's tiny home community and YEP's 6,430 sq. ft., 30-unit dormitory for housing insecure young adults.

While working on these dynamic building projects, some trainees also studied for the National Center for Construction Education and Research's (NCCER) Construction Core credential. As one of the only NCCER training and assessment centers in the East Bay region, YEP trainees who obtain this credential stand out among the applicant pool, signaling to employers and building trades unions that they are qualified and ready to work.

TINY HOMES CONSTRUCTION

Before the pandemic, YEP's back lots were nothing but loose gravel and open space. Once the pandemic struck, this outdoor area offered optimal room to not only safely continue construction training, but to stage an emergency housing site for young people in need. YEP construction trainees planned, prepped, and built a community of 12 tiny homes from the ground up. Every piece of wood cut, every nail hammered, and every panel of sheetrock was assembled by the YEP construction crew with the guidance of industry trainers.

DORMITORY CONSTRUCTION

Once the tiny homes were built, permitted, and ready to inhabit, trainees then moved onto a much larger construction project and a longer-term solution to the growing crisis in youth homelessness and housing instability. Originally built in 1925, the two-story dormitory required total gut demolition, redesign, and renovation to become a modern living space for up to 30 career and college-bound housing insecure young adults.

Like with the tiny homes, trainees helped with nearly every aspect of the renovation, including demolition, framing, electrical, plumbing, fire suppression, tiling, flooring, painting — you name it.

Digging in after dropping out

Cristhian grew up just five blocks from YEP. During his adolescence, he had been witness to drugs, violence, and poverty. All he wanted to do was avoid these pitfalls, pass his classes, and stay out of trouble. Although he wasn't a superstar in school, he admitted to himself, he was at least on a trajectory to complete high school.

That all changed, however, once the COVID-19 pandemic struck. Cristhian stopped attending remote classes and soon started to fail. He began engaging in unhealthy behaviors and then dropped out completely. Hearing about his struggles, a YEP counselor pitched him on joining the high school credit recovery program and learning construction. This was what he truly wanted: to use his hands, put money in his pocket, and get his diploma. He decided to enroll.

Cristhian found it to be a perfect balance. He could manage school at his own pace while having one-on-one support. Along with getting paid for accomplishments, like earning credits, he got the chance to work with his hands in the afternoon. Cristhian had virtually no construction experience when he first joined, but Michael Rigsby, YEP construction trainer, showed him how to tape and apply mudding to the sheet rock inside one of YEP's new tiny homes. Michael then passed the drywall knife to Cristhian, encouraging him to try on his own.

Soon after, Cristhian was building frames for the tiny home floors, sides, and roofs. He worked on everything from the bathroom and outdoor kitchenette plumbing to the ramps, landings, and stairs. By the time Cristhian and his team completed six tiny homes, he was not only proficient in a range of carpentry skills, but he also graduated high school and obtained his industry-recognized NCCER Construction Core credential.

After a brief stint working as a carpenter's apprentice, Cristhian was hired full time at Architectural Fenestration & Restoration (AFR), specializing in window-glazing, waterproofing and historic restoration services. He eventually came full circle, returning with his new job and skillset to restore and install the historic windows at YEP's newly renovated dormitory.

When asked about his future, Cristhian said he plans to attend community college and some day run his own construction business, a path made possible by YEP.



"This program is really helpful for anyone that struggles in school," Cristhian said. "It's the best way to get that diploma."



YEP YOUNG ADULT PROGRAMS

CULINARY ARTS

In 2017, after conducting an extensive listening session with young people and an analysis of labor market projections, YEP built a fully-equipped, 1,190 sq. ft. commercial training and production kitchen to introduce Culinary Arts as one of our career pathways for young adults.

This year, YEP's production was operating at a significant capacity, giving trainees a sense of what working in a fast-paced, high-output culinary setting is truly like. YEP trainees produced daily breakfasts and dinners for City of Oakland-sanctioned emergency homeless site Turning Point Community Cabins, as well as lunches for ACOE Oakland alternative high school Quest Academy and YEP's own construction, culinary, and warehouse young adult interns.

Along with extensive kitchen production skills, YEP culinary arts trainees obtain a ServSafe Food Handler certificate or the higher-level industry-recognized ServSafe Food Protection Manager certification. Job seekers who hold these certifications are highly coveted in the culinary industry, as each facility is required by California law SB 602 to have an employee with ServSafe Manager accreditation on staff.

The ServSafe Manager enables trainees to enter into supervisory and management roles. Food Services Managers in Alameda County earn an hourly mean wage of \$34.02 with job growth at 13.5% projected over ten years. By earning this credential before entry into the industry, young people are well-aligned to ascend the career ladder into general management positions with annual salaries ranging from \$75,000–\$100,000+.



WAREHOUSE & LOGISTICS

The Port of Oakland is the 5th busiest port in the nation and 48% of all warehouse space in the San Francisco Bay Area is located in the East Bay, as Oakland is connected to major transit highways and railways that feed into Northern California and beyond. Through hands-on training in our 5,000 sq. ft. training warehouse, YEP prepared young adults for these local booming careers in the warehousing & logistics industry. Like the other vocations offered, warehouse & logistics trainees receive hands-on work experience in YEP's warehouse palletizing loads to prepare for safe and secure shipping, pulling orders and maneuvering a fully-loaded forklift around obstacles, and learning inventory and documentation techniques.

While they're learning hands-on, transferable skills, trainees simultaneously finish their high school diploma credits and study for the Manufacturing Skill Standards Council (MSSC) Certified Logistics Technician (CLT) industry-recognized credential. The CLT credential is nationally portable and developed by logistics industry experts, in close consultation with employers to address warehouse employment needs.

After 50 hours of skills training in YEP's warehouse, warehouse trainees enter directly into internships with one of our local warehouse employer partners while continuing to match education hours at YEP, until they successfully attain their MSSC CLT credential and are ready to start their new career.





EVERY YEAR BRINGS
NEW BURSTS OF COLOR
AND THE PROMISE OF A
BRIGHTER FUTURE, AND
THESE PAST FEW COHORTS
OF SUMMER TRAINEES
WAS PROOF OF THAT
RISING POTENTIAL.

Summer & Afterschool Jobs for Youth

SUMMER & AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS IMPACT 2020–2022

822 unduplicated trainees

96 local business internship worksites

46,000+ hours worked in first-time/early job experience

~\$1 million earned by low-income Oakland teens

Offering the largest summer youth employment program in the city, YEP gives low-income Oakland teens the early workforce experience they need to build their skills, recognize their potential, envision a brighter future, and make positive long-term choices.

Each summer YEP enrolls and trains nearly 300 high schoolers and places them in positions throughout Oakland. By summer's end, each trainee completes up to 100 hours of work at one of 100 different local employers. In all, summer trainees collectively earn over \$300,000 in hourly wages and bonuses—a significant contribution to struggling households—for attending work, completing trainings, and reaching various program benchmarks.

Yet summer jobs are hardly just a nice way to get paid: research shows they can divert teens from the dire threat of violence and criminal justice contact. Studies by groups like the National Bureau of Economic Research have found that participation in summer youth employment programs in large cities similar to Oakland have consistently reduced criminal justice involvement, including decreases in violent crimes, drug offenses, and incarceration. Moreover, these positive effects not only occurred during programs but endured for months and sometimes years after.

At summer's onset, new participants complete an orientation and job readiness training, which include guidance on job etiquette, professional communication, and alleviating conflict in the workplace. They also receive case management and support services from YEP staff, ensuring they don't navigate this new workplace journey alone.

Our many program partners are also by their side, providing a bevy of experiences on the job site. The positions on offer include construction and maintenance; office administration and assistance; restaurants and cafes; barbershops and salons; bike repair and auto mechanic shops; environmental restoration and neighborhood beautification; child and youth recreation assistance; and many more.



YEP SUMMER & AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS

One such employer was Cocobreeze, a popular East Oakland Caribbean restaurant and vegan bakery. Founder and head chef Anne Goodridge said that while she imparted kitchen basics like sanitation and knife skills to her trainees, proper work etiquette was the most important order of the day. “They have to be attentive as soon as they come in,” she said. “They say, ‘Good morning, good evening, I’m ready to work.’” By the end of the summer, Chef Anne said, “they changed a lot. They were mindful, respectful, and on time.”



Zinzi Zareef of Mizaan Boutique in East Oakland was also thrilled with the demeanor and performance of Jenisis, a 17-year-old summer trainee who stocked inventory, assisted customers, and worked the register. “She was an asset to the business,” Zareef said, “a very professional, honest worker who was great with customers and supervisors.”

Zareef said training programs like YEP’s give Oakland youth a fair shot at economic stability. “It takes a lot of money and determination just to survive and have a good quality of life here in the Bay Area,” she emphasized. As there’s so many ways young people can fall by the wayside, Zareef said, “it’s good to start early in making an honest living.”

For our youngest participants, EMT training was one of several programs offered to 14-year-olds, one where trainees got an exciting look into the life of a first responder. In addition to trying on a real-life firefighter suit, participants received CPR training and had to prove their rescue resolve in a real-life scenario. After receiving an emergency prompt by their EMT instructor, they had to quickly check their training mannequin for pulse, apply compression and use a mock defibrillator with steady precision.

Our participants have always had a hand in the construction and design of our building, and some of their creative achievements will be on display at YEP for years to come. Our digital arts trainees spent four weeks in our computer lab learning how Photoshop and Canva could bring their visions to life. The trainees put together posters including meaningful graphics, messages of social justice, and statements of local pride that were hung in our 23rd Avenue windows. And after weeks spent carefully cracking and placing tiles, then grouting on scaffolds with the help of YEP instructor and project designer Debbie Koppman, mural trainees completed a stunning, overflowing garden panorama tile mosaic in our outdoor dining area.





AFTERSCHOOL JOBS

YEP also provides afterschool jobs, year-round, for high school-aged youth that need extra support.

Like summer jobs, youth complete a week of pre-employment job readiness training, followed by a 100-hour afterschool internship at one of our local business partners, accompanied by weekly soft skill development workshops and comprehensive case management.

Our afterschool program keeps youth, many of whom are on probation and court-involved, focused on engaging in school, building employment skills, maintaining positive adult relationships, and feeling more socially connected to their community through work.

“Teen employment is associated with higher-quality jobs in adulthood”

— Metropolitan Policy Program at Brookings



YEP SUMMER & AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS

TEAM OAKLAND

Connecting Oakland teens with local ecology and fostering responsibility for its streets and green spaces, the Team Oakland summer program allows trainees to beautify their hometown. In partnership with Oakland Public Works, YEP provided Team Oakland summer internships to over 100 youth in 2022, developing their employability and leadership acumen while they cleaned and greened from West Oakland to the Deep East.

The Team Oakland program helps youth develop effective work practices while taking pride in their neighborhoods. Every weekday morning and afternoon, Team Oakland litter abatement crews spread across the city, from Hegenberger to Mosswood to Lower Bottoms, tidying streets and public parks. By the program's end, the crews had collected over 150,000 pounds of refuse. "We were literally cleaning in front of my house," said 16-year-old team member Jada.

Local nature organizations played a huge role in Team Oakland's numerous special projects and summer field trips. Growers at East Oakland's Planting Justice, an organic nursery and urban farm committed to food justice and sovereignty, led participants through their massive greenhouses and gardens, teaching the benefits of growing one's own food. Rotary Nature Center Friends provided weekly programming for two Team Oakland crews at Lake Merritt involving science and stewardship activities like water testing, landscape maintenance, marsh planting and bird watching. A guided tour of the enormous Waste Management facility in San Leandro had the team seeing with their own eyes how waste is sorted, processed and stored.

At their nursery in Joaquin Miller Park, Friends of Sausal Creek (FOSC) had interns potting plants native to Oakland's watershed and shoring up creek beds with mulch.

In all, the 115 Team Oakland trainees worked over 6,700 hours and, like all YEP summer jobs, earned competitive wage rates and bonus incentives. At the end-of-summer celebration picnic in Middle Shoreline Park, 18-year-old Kiennywayne said he'll be bringing the lessons of Team Oakland to his next job. "I learned that taking work seriously and showing up every day is important," he said, "and it can pay well."



Geovanni, 18, said working outdoors with FOSC was his favorite part. "Weeding, planting, seeding – [we did] all these simple things that made me feel good about staying connected with nature," he said.

150,000
pounds of refuse
collected by the
2022 Team
Oakland crew



Long-time YEP summer trainee gets prepped for college



“You learn how to make our community better for the three months you’re working.”

Eighteen-year-old East Oakland native Jayshon is a YEP veteran. He joined Team Oakland at 15 and has returned to the program every summer since, even spending a semester in the YEP afterschool construction program. “I like working hands-on,” he said, “I don’t like sitting at a desk.”

Team Oakland gave him plenty of opportunities to get his hands dirty. In addition to performing litter abatement across the city every weekday and digging in community gardens, the program took him on field trips to ecological sites and natural landmarks where he learned about the storied history of his city’s environment. “It’s not just a boring job where you pick up trash,” he said.

Over his years at YEP, Jayshon said he became more comfortable with himself and grew to enjoy the dynamic of working as a team with other Oakland youth. “At first I was shy and antisocial,” he admitted, “but [Team Oakland leadership] gave me a lot of communication skills.” In his final Team Oakland summer, he and his teammates successfully worked to collect the most bags of trash and win the end-of-summer contest.

Jayshon argued that teenagers need something to get them active and out of the house during summer. His time in the programs allowed him to collect a check while also growing relationships and skills. “If you’re not doing sports or clubs,” he said, “I would advise kids to go to YEP because you’re going to get paid and will have team members and staff to help you out.”

This was Jayshon’s last summer working at YEP. He has graduated high school and will attend Bethany College, a private Christian university in central Kansas, where he’ll be putting his hands to use intercepting passes while playing cornerback for the Bethany Swedes football team. When he’s not blocking out opposing wide receivers, he’ll be studying civil engineering, which means long hours at a desk alongside a chance to use his physical gifts. He credits his time at YEP for preparing him for the challenges ahead.

“I’m a hard worker and they push you every day to go hard,” he said.

YEP Housing for a Stable Future

The Bay Area housing crisis shows few signs of abating, and its impact on Oakland youth cannot be understated.

Between 2019 and 2022, Oakland saw a 24.7% increase in homelessness, and it's widely acknowledged that this is a drastic undercount. Homeless youth not only sleep on the streets, but bounce from house to house, emergency shelters, and short stays in motel rooms — survival accommodations which many at YEP currently endure and which have lasting adverse consequences if left unaddressed.

The challenge of attending classes, gaining employment, and maintaining financial stability are simply too much to bear for young people without a place to rest. Thus, YEP found it critical to intervene: youth housing will now be a major feature of the agency's services, thanks to two newly developed supportive transitional housing projects that will give hundreds of young people safe shelter while they pursue their employment futures.

In early 2022, YEP construction trainees completed 12 units of tiny home emergency housing. Located on YEP's back lot parcel, each tiny home is a fully insulated, fully heated, single-occupancy unit with a bed, study desk, storage, electricity and lighting, as well as a communal outdoor kitchenette, bathrooms, showers and laundry machines. Residents will not only participate in YEP's workforce training and education programming, but will also receive 24/7 onsite

25% of the 18–24 year olds YEP serves are homeless or experience extreme housing insecurity, and many others are at heightened risk.



case management and daily breakfast and dinner prepared by YEP culinary arts trainees.

This on-site community will allow each resident the stability, structure, and support to advance their education and employability by earning their high school diploma, obtaining high-demand industry skill sets, credentials, and work experience, and transitioning into longer-term housing and quality careers.

SAFE, SUPPORTIVE HOUSING FOR THE LONG TERM

Across the street, an even more impactful project is in the works: a 30-bed supportive housing dormitory equipped for career- and college-bound homeless and housing insecure young adults in Oakland. The residence, located adjacent to YEP's 26,000 sq. ft. workforce training facility, will provide a safe, stable, and supported living environment for young adults as they pursue advanced education and develop the key ingredients for a self-sufficient adulthood.

With the help of YEP construction trainees, this two-story, 6,430 sq. ft. residence — originally built in 1925 — was completely gutted, redesigned, and fully renovated to create optimal space for the comfort, privacy, and productivity of young residents. Along with 30 resident beds in single and double-dorm rooms, the dormitory hosts a large kitchen, dining room, living room, laundry rooms, bathrooms and showers, administrative office, live-in RA room, and study spaces.

YEP's workforce and education dormitory, in addition to meeting immediate housing needs, will generate a credential-building and school-going culture to encourage residents to get their high school diploma, succeed in community college, earn industry-recognized credentials, and gain the experience necessary to move into career-track employment and four-year universities.

As the needs of young Oaklanders change, YEP's newest facilities show that the agency's breadth of services will always meet the challenge.



YEP WELCOMED ITS FIRST COHORT OF TINY HOME RESIDENTS IN NOVEMBER 2022.



Senior staffer supports youth from her neighborhood

Growing up in Deep East Oakland, Dariyona would pass by YEP's training facility five days a week on her bus ride to Oakland High. She learned about YEP's services through one of her classmates — who had returned home from juvenile detention and joined YEP's afterschool program — and saw it having a positive impact on her once-struggling peer.

Later, at 19, Dariyona joined YEP staff as a Team Oakland 2019 summer Team Leader, mentoring a crew of teen trainees from the same neighborhood where she grew up. She had just completed her sophomore year studying at Dillard University, an HBCU in New Orleans, which allowed her to talk about her experience going away for college. Many, she said, had never been outside of Oakland and didn't think college could ever be a possibility. After teaching them how to access the many financial aid opportunities available for low-income applicants, she watched this aspiration for further education blossom in the minds of her crew.

Dariyona came back on staff in 2020 after completing her junior year at Dillard and weathering the early months of the Covid pandemic. Following the closure of Dillard's campus, she opted to stay in Oakland and take YEP's offer of a full-time job as an In-School Youth Counselor. This allowed her to take her classes remotely and simultaneously gain the internship hours she needed to complete her B.A. in Social Work. Her coursework, paired with real, paid experience counseling youth, enriched both her classes and job.

Following her graduation from Dillard in May 2021, Dariyona decided to plant her roots in Oakland. After successfully navigating the pandemic, she was promoted to a Senior Counselor, where she now advises young adult clients often facing more complex barriers. In this role, she teaches employability development workshops, like financial literacy, and coordinates with their vocational internship supervisors to ensure their success.

When asked about her future plans, Dariyona said that she hopes to eventually become a Program Coordinator, helping to direct programming that prevents young people from going down the wrong path and not realizing their full promise and potential.

Dariyona hopes to eventually become a Program Coordinator, helping to prevent young people from going down the wrong path and not realizing their full promise and potential.



YEP alumna takes her skills to new heights

“In my experience, getting a job in the city wasn’t easy,” said YEP alumna Guadalupe Navarro, describing her time as a teenager and first-generation American living in East Oakland in the mid-1990s.

Her family had emigrated from Mexico in the 1970s and were pulling together a living from factory and house cleaning jobs. Pursuing other professions, or going to college, simply couldn’t be considered.

Lupe credits her time at YEP for providing an abundance of opportunities that shaped her path: job training, summer engagement, and the inspiration to pursue higher learning. In the time since, Lupe became the first of her family to graduate from college, receiving a B.A. in Sociology and an M.A. in Education from Sonoma State University. She recently served as Executive Director for the non-profit Latino Service Providers Sonoma County, and is now the Community Engagement Manager at Sonoma County Regional Parks.

Lupe was paid for all her onboarding, training and on-site work experience at YEP, financial support her family simply couldn’t do without. “I come from a low-income household,” she said. “If I wanted school supplies and a new pair of shoes, I had to work. That’s the reality for BIPOC communities.”

Lupe was inspired to recreate this model, giving low-income youth the financial stability necessary to level up their skills and employment prospects. At Sonoma County Regional Parks, she oversees a youth crew program where young people are paid a stipend to perform maintenance and peer-mentoring in natural open spaces. It sends young trainees a critical message: “Your time and skills are valuable, and you should be compensated,” Lupe said.

Expanding the horizons of young people is a mission YEP and Lupe share. As a YEP administrative assistant, she had served alongside college-educated employees for the first time. “Working in an office was completely different from what I was seeing in terms of employment,” she said. It made her believe a career and degree were truly possible.

Lupe has dedicated her professional life to recreating the opportunities she received at YEP for today’s young people, who might not realize how high they can reach.



“For our youth, it’s not until you experience the feeling of ‘I can do more’ that you will decide to do more,” she said.

YEP is able to provide comprehensive workforce training and education services for over 500 Oakland youth each year because of you. Donations provide the critical “glue” we need to stay nimble in overhead and always innovative.

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FINANCIALS (2021 & 2022)

INCOME

71%	Contracts	\$6,426,538
18%	Foundation	\$1,624,671
	Grants & Individual Giving	
9%	Misc. Income	\$785,768
3%	Social Enterprise	\$232,352
	Income	

TOTAL \$9,069,329

EXPENSES

35%	Vocational Training,	\$3,162,602
	Case Management, Education Services	
23%	Tiny Homes & Dormitory ...	\$2,096,074
	Purchase / Renovations	
16%	Trainee Wages,	\$1,435,415
	Bonuses, Benefits	
11%	Administrative	\$963,606
9%	Operations & Other	\$847,978
6%	Training Facility Expenses ...	\$563,654

TOTAL \$9,069,329

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