

Mental Wellness, Opportunities & Successes

Mental Wellness for YEA Youth

YEA is thrilled with the addition of Destini Montez to our staff in June 2022. YEA was awarded a 3 year grant through Caring for Denver that provides support for mental wellness advocacy and workshops for all youth participants. As YEA's Youth Advisor, Destini will be meeting 1:1 with YEA youth and assisting them to reach their education, employment and mental wellness goals. In addition, she will be coordinating mental wellness workshops and more in-depth therapy through our partner Urban Collective Counseling. Destini has already made a huge impact with our youth, from providing emotional support to guidance on resources for basic needs.

Therapist Tamika Thomas of Urban Collective Counseling has worked with YEA throughout the years, but with our Caring for Denver grant, she has stepped into an even larger role. Tamika is providing mental wellness workshops for youth in all our industry academies and internships as well as providing 1:1 therapy and resources. Through her mental wellness workshops, Tamika provides education on mental health issues as well as tools for youth to take with them. Feedback has been outstanding with 95% of workshop participants saying they became more aware about mental health issues and 89% saying they learned a new skill to cope with challenges.



Top: Art piece from the "Draw your Inner Bully" workshop.
Below: Destini connecting with youth during class.



Building Equity in Access to Performing Arts

YEA recently formed a new partnership with COCETA, a non-profit whose mission is to provide access to Denver area performing arts events for underserved youth, especially those identifying at BIPOC. Through this partnership, youth from any of the programs in YEA will be able to attend events such as the ballet, symphony, immersive art, and theater. In September, 10 participants were able to experience Cirque du Soleil. Everyone was astounded by the performers, costumes, music, and stage design. Our youth were clapping and cheering through the entire performance. In October, 10 additional youth attended the Colorado Ballet's Dracula- experiencing ballet for the very first time. Meow Wolf and Disney on Ice are up next. We are so grateful for COCETA and their donations and are looking forward to introducing YEA participants to many new experiences in the arts.

Top: Youth awaiting Dracula ballet
Below: Cirque de Soleil performance.

Youth Successes

Arts Street celebrated youth artist and YEA participant Adama Bamba on his 21st birthday. Adama has participated in Arts Street since he was 15 and has evolved into a youth leader and program arts assistant. This summer Adama worked on the Edible Artscapes project, leading the video component and even teaching some of the creative technology workshops. This fall Adama is continuing to assist with Arts Street high school level classes while also attending college full time. Most recently, Adama was interviewed and his photography featured in Community College of Denver's Talon magazine (link to that article). Adama is majoring in art education, and we are eager to have him continue to grow with our organization.



Top: Photograph taken by Adama on the cover of the CCD magazine.
Below: Adama helping youth with Adobe Illustrator



Graduation 2022



Congratulations!

We are so pleased to congratulate all our YEA 2022 high school graduates. This graduating class had many challenges over their time in high school, with figuring out new ways to go to school during a pandemic and missing out on many social activities. However, they stayed motivated and positive and earned their diploma.

Many of our graduates are planning on attending college and are already working to save up some money. One of those is Tony N., a West High School graduate. (photo to left).

Tony has completed several Creative Industries academies with Arts Street and has also worked as an intern during the school year at the Arts Street studio. Tony is currently employed at Safeway and plans to attend college in the fall 2022 and major in graphic design. An amazing artist, we are so proud of Tony and all our other amazing graduates.



Graduation 2021

In May, YEA was able to celebrate reaching big goals with many of our youth, both virtually and in person. We saw youth graduate from high school, community college and even one YEA graduate who earned her Masters in Public Health! Congratulations to all the YEA youth who made it through a difficult year and who are on their next step of their journey towards a very bright future!!!!



Above (right to left): CHSC valedictorian Moriah, CCD graduate Zipporah, photo from graduation parade for Darrick.



Right to left: Screenshot from graduation live stream for Sam, graduate Alex with his diploma.



Left to Right: Masters degree graduate Zam Zam, CHSC graduation celebration and ceremony with Tyrone and Alex.

Graduation 2020



Working with youth virtually in 2020 made for even more celebration when graduation finally came. Congratulations to all of our grads, especially those at Colorado High School Charter who made it through a very challenging spring to get here.