

FORMER WORK STUDY SUPERSTARS GRADUATE, TAKING Y.O.U. EXPERIENCES WITH THEM



7th grader Marilyn Herrera and Y.O.U. Staff Member Zochilt Suarez at a Cubs game

“We don’t go easy on the student,” Patterson says. “We want them to get something from (the experience) to feel they are better as a result, and they leave this place better than (it was) when they came.”

Approximately 90 college students worked at Y.O.U. this school year as part of their university work-study program. Some students choose the work-study position because working with

youth aligns with their career goals, and sometimes the experience can help to shape their goals if they weren’t already clearly defined.

Between the three participating schools, approximately \$220,000 in federally funded work study awards is available for positions at Y.O.U., which translates into 20,000 work hours. A handful of work-study students work in the Y.O.U. office, but the majority of these students spend a few hours at least twice a week in the after-school or summer programs as “mentor-tutors.”

Suzy Sanchez, who is graduating from Loyola in December with a degree in psychology, began working part-time at Y.O.U. three years ago. She originally chose working at Y.O.U. as her work-study job because it was related to her future career goal to work in social services. “Working

at Y.O.U. has made all the difference,” Sanchez says. “I have gotten so much good training here. I loved working in social services before, but I love it even more now.”

Participating in after-school tutoring of Washington Elementary School students and planning activities for students has helped to further shape Sanchez’s career plans. “Before, I wasn’t sure I wanted to do teaching, but now I know I want to do teaching,” she explains. “So many students need help.”

After graduation, Sanchez plans to attend graduate school to earn a master’s degree in elementary education, possibly at Louis University in Romeoville, Ill.

Princess Fouch graduated from Loyola in May with a degree in political science and women’s studies. She has worked for Y.O.U. for nearly three years. As a Y.O.U. part-time youth development worker at Chute Middle School, Fouch has been able to get to know most of the students who participate in the program.



Staff member Princess Fouch helps 7th grader Saudi Joseph during a Northwestern field hockey clinic

“I had always been involved with kids through church,” she says. “Working with kids was one of my passions. That’s why I started working at Y.O.U.”

Fouch says that growing up on the South Side of Chicago and later moving to the suburbs, she can see a lot of herself in many of the Y.O.U. participants. Sharing her own experiences, Fouch says she hopes she can “change mindsets” of many of the students who come through the program.

Fouch plans to do paralegal work or possibly work for a non-profit organization for a year before heading to law school. She says she’d like to attend either Georgetown or the University of Texas.

Zochilt Suarez began working at Y.O.U. three years ago when she attended Loyola University. Suarez has since transferred to DePaul University, where she will receive her degree in psychology in December.

After graduation, Suarez will continue to work with youth in 2008. She says she plans to take the GRE exam this August with the hopes of eventually earning her Ph.D. in psychology and teaching at a university.

Suarez says that working at Y.O.U. has taught her how to “trust her instincts” and has built her confidence in her decision-making skills.

“Y.O.U. does impact kids’ lives – we do that every day,” she says. “It’s a really good organization... for the kids that it does benefit. I am proud and happy to be a part of that.”

Jonathan Stack graduated from Loyola in May with a degree in history and education. He has been a youth development worker for two years at Evanston Township High School.

“I want to be a high school history teacher, and I figured there would be no better opportunity to get a chance at some real life experiences,” he explains. “Y.O.U. offered me a chance to use a lot of the skills I learned in education classes.”

Post-graduation from Loyola, Stack plans to complete a second bachelor’s program at Illinois State University before embarking on a year of volunteer work on the East Coast. While he is sad to see his time working at Y.O.U. coming to a close, Stack says he will use the life skills he learned working at Y.O.U. forever.

“I can say without a doubt that Y.O.U. has and will continue to be a part of my life,” he says. “Not only is working with kids so emotionally rewarding when the light bulb clicks on, but I have realized that if you can affect just one kid, it is worth it.”

WELCOME NEW BOARD MEMBERS!

This spring, the Y.O.U. board of directors gained two new members with exceptionally strong ties to the Evanston community.

Dr. Allan Alson is executive director for the high school transformation project for Chicago Public Schools. He is also a Senior Fellow for the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and a founding member of the Board of Minority Student Achievement Network, a national consortium of 25 urban-suburban school districts, as well as a member of the National Association for School-Based Health Centers. Allan worked to establish an on-site office for Y.O.U. at Evanston Township High School during his 14-year tenure as superintendent of ETHS District 202.

D’Wayne Bates recently completed a year of student-teaching at ETHS where he will be a full-fledged U.S. and World History instructor beginning in the fall. He is also an assistant football and basketball coach at ETHS. After graduating from Northwestern University in 1998 with a bachelor of science in education and psychology, D’Wayne played wide-receiver for the Chicago Bears for three seasons, the Minnesota Vikings for two seasons and the Tampa Bay Buccaneers for one season. Throughout his years with the NFL, D’Wayne maintained a residence in Evanston and has volunteered for Y.O.U. as his schedule permitted since 1994.

Have you considered including Y.O.U. in your will?

Please contact Hannah Dallmann at 847-866-1200 ext.231 or by sending an email to hannah.dallmann@youevanston.org



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ETHS STUDENTS BRIDGE GAPS WITH MEANINGFUL VOLUNTEER SERVICE

Y.O.U. participants at Evanston Township High School are getting to know their elders as well as their younger counterparts a little bit better these days. Two volunteer initiatives have been taking place throughout the spring; one program called “Big Buddy Little Buddy” pairs a group of high school students with Y.O.U. elementary school participants, and another project called “Memory Bridge” pairs another group of ETHS students with Alzheimer’s patients.



Y.O.U. participant Kensley Souffrant works with older adults at the Geriatric Health Care Center

like making eye contact or reaching your hand out.” After meeting with their buddies, Memory Bridge participants get a chance to discuss their experiences with Michaels and the rest of the group.

ETHS sophomore David Ternier chose to participate in Memory Bridge because he is interested in medicine and hopes to be a doctor someday. “This helps me to grow more patience with people with Alzheimer’s,” he

explains. “It helps me to grow more mature.” Ternier’s own grandmother has Alzheimer’s, so participating with Memory Bridge has helped him to better understand her disease, as well.

Junior Kensley Souffrant says he has learned a valuable life lesson through Memory Bridge. “Don’t treat people differently just because they have something that makes them different,” he says. “People are still normal even though they have different disabilities.”

“Big Buddy Little Buddy came from my desire and the same desire from staff at the elementary site to link up the program sites,” ETHS Site Coordinator Brian Williams explains. The ETHS students mentor and tutor elementary students from Washington Elementary School one afternoon a week.

Patrice Downie, an ETHS junior, says she looks forward to meeting with her “little buddy” Imari.

“We had the Cinco de Mayo celebration,” Downie says. “The big buddies went over (to Washington) to support their little buddies. I thought it went very well.”

The buddies participate in various sports, skits and other “ice-breaker games” that allow the younger and older students to get to know each other.

Washington Youth Worker Niya Kelly says the program is beneficial for both the elementary and high school students. “It gives the high schoolers some responsibility,” Kelly says, “And for the little buddies, they have someone who actually cares and comes to visit them.”

Other ETHS students are visiting Alzheimer’s patients at the Lieberman Geriatric Health Centre in Skokie as part of the Memory Bridge initiative. Memory Bridge is run by the Foundation for Alzheimer’s and Cultural Memory, whose mission is to promote communication with and memory preservation for individuals with Alzheimer’s disease.

Working with Memory Bridge is a good opportunity for the students to volunteer and have a “civic responsibility,” Williams says. “As a young adult there is more that you can do than receive service. You can give services by being a leader.”

For 12 weeks, participants meet with Memory Bridge facilitator Terri Michaels to first learn about Alzheimer’s disease, and then have the opportunity to meet with their buddies on four separate occasions.

“These students are learning skills they can use in other places in their lives,” Michaels says, explaining that the patients can often be confused or have difficulty communicating verbally. “The students are learning ways to connect (with individuals) without asking lots of questions – non-verbal ways to connect

ANNUAL DINNER BUILDS ON SUCCESS

Y.O.U.’s 36th annual dinner was true to its theme, “Building on Success.” Held on February 24 at the UBS Tower in Chicago, the event honored outstanding supporters and Y.O.U. participants while bringing in more than \$62,000 for Y.O.U. programs.

The Women’s Club of Evanston was honored for their sustaining support of Y.O.U. over the past 13 years, while ETHS student Henry Ternier received special recognition for being “somebody who has really thrived in Y.O.U.’s program and particularly thrived by moving beyond obstacles in his life,” according to Executive Director Don Baker.

More than 230 guests enjoyed a cocktail hour, dinner and live music entertainment by Y.O.U. participants who are learning how to play samba music through The Music Institute of Chicago’s Escola de Samba. Dave Eanet, Sports Director of WGN Radio and “Voice of the Wildcats” was the emcee for the evening.

More than 150 silent auction items were available for bidding throughout the night, plus a live auction including luxury vacation packages, a sailing cruise, and a private gourmet dinner for eight.

A highlight of the evening was the “stop the auction,” when Baker stopped the live auction to describe this year’s pressing need for Y.O.U. In less than five minutes, three individuals generously donated \$5,000 each to help provide healthier, more substantial snacks in Y.O.U.’s after-school and summer programs.

“The spirit of the dinner this year was just fabulous,” Baker said. “Folks were having a great time and bidding on the items and also really wanting to know about Y.O.U. and our services.”

The theme links the agency’s years of growth and development with the recent acquisition of the building housing the Nichols Center and administrative offices. Legos and brick centerpieces hinted at plans to come.



Patty Sprague and Horton Kellogg

Congratulations

Don!
On April 26th, the Evanston Chamber of Commerce honored Don Baker, Y.O.U.’s executive director, as the first recipient of the Public Service/Nonprofit Award for demonstrating innovation, commitment, and leadership in youth work. Y.O.U. is grateful for this recognition and for the Chamber’s leadership in acknowledging the vital contributions of the not-for-profit sector to the Evanston community.