

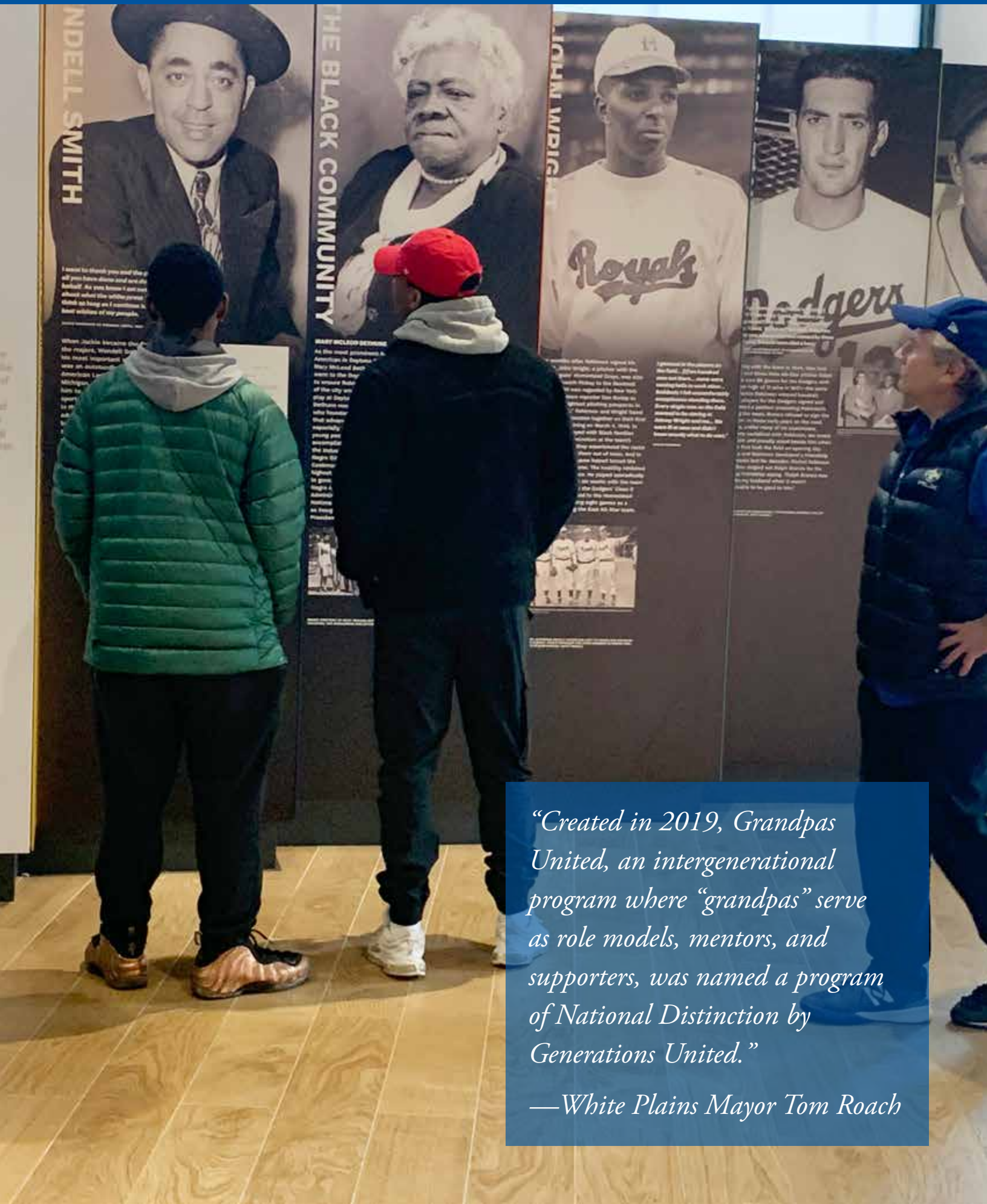


WHITE PLAINS YOUTH BUREAU
2022 ANNUAL REPORT

Building Bridges:

POLICE AND
YOUTH INITIATIVES





“Created in 2019, Grandpas United, an intergenerational program where “grandpas” serve as role models, mentors, and supporters, was named a program of National Distinction by Generations United.”

—White Plains Mayor Tom Roach



Mayor Thomas Roach

From the Mayor

I am pleased to present the White Plains Youth Bureau 2022 Annual Report. Our Youth Bureau, School District, and community partners, emerged from the pandemic with a renewed commitment to work together to ensure our children, youth, and families, have the resources and opportunities they need to achieve success.

The City of White Plains continues to do extraordinary work by attracting and retaining talented staff, tapping into the volunteer spirit of our residents and leveraging the unique skills within our community, so we may work toward a common goal: providing essential programs and services for our youth.

During the pandemic the Youth Bureau had to take a new approach to ensure that our youth remained engaged and connected. Executive Director Frank Williams and the talented Youth Bureau staff answered the call, and in 2022 they were recognized nationally for their efforts. Created in 2019, Grandpas United, an intergenerational program where “grandpas” serve as role models, mentors, and supporters, was named a program of National Distinction by Generations United. This recognition highlights the incredible work that our Youth Bureau is able to do in a short period of time.

Today, as we recover from the pandemic there are new challenges which require new solutions. In 2022, the Youth Bureau focused on promoting mental health and well-being, and developing meaningful relationships between our youth and law enforcement officials. The Youth Bureau successfully launched “The Nest” which provides a safe gathering place for local youth to connect and communicate about their mental and emotional needs. The Public Safety Youth Citizens Academy and Explorers Program provide much-needed opportunities to encourage goodwill and understanding between our youth and dedicated law enforcement officials. These programs illustrate how a dynamic Youth Bureau meets the needs of White Plains youth and the community.

During my tenure as Mayor, the Common Council and I have championed efforts to augment and invest in youth services and programs in the City of White Plains, and today I am incredibly proud of what we have accomplished together. We recognize that the work we do for our young people not only benefits them but strengthens the community as a whole. I look forward to another year of success and thank everyone for the contributions they have made.

Sincerely,

Thomas M. Roach
Mayor



“This work centers on building bridges: providing pathways for youth to pursue careers in public safety and enhancing the relationship between our youth and Public Safety.”

— Frank Williams
WPYB Executive Director

From the Executive Director and Board President



Dear Friends of the White Plains Youth Bureau,



Frank Williams
WPYB Executive Director



The Hon. Victoria Presser
WPYB Board President

On behalf of the Mayor’s Youth Board, Friends of the White Plains Youth Bureau, and Youth Bureau staff, we are pleased to present our 2022 Annual Report. It reflects the energy, enthusiasm, and responsiveness of City government in providing our young people with health and safety education, civic engagement, economic opportunities, and the knowledge and skills that build lives and change futures.

The White Plains Youth Bureau endeavors to be a light in the life of all youth in the City of White Plains, and our commitment to our young people is strong, steady, and growing. Over the last several years we have strengthened our partnerships with the White Plains Public Safety Department. This work centers on building bridges: providing pathways for youth to pursue careers in public safety and enhancing the relationship between our youth and Public Safety. We commend Commissioner David Chong and all members of White Plains Public Safety for their commitment and engagement with helping our young people reach their potential.

This Annual Report documents the passion and dedication with which the Youth Bureau fulfills its mission. We are proud of the Youth Bureau administration and staff, who give their all in this important work and help our young people define their futures. In addition to the accomplishments you will read about in these pages, we welcomed a new Deputy Director in 2022: Elizabeth Almonte. A longtime White Plains resident, Elizabeth has outstanding leadership, education, business, and youth development skills that will help the Youth Bureau achieve even greater success.

Our youth development model recognizes that young people are full of untapped talent, skills, potential, and promise that are waiting to be exposed. Our job is to cultivate and nurture youth to be everything they’ve ever dreamed they could become. We want to express our sincere appreciation to our parents and community supporters for your unwavering support!

Sincerely,

Frank Williams

Victoria Presser

Bridging Relations



Each year, we engage more than 7,000 youth in programming that prepares them to succeed and be good citizens. From hard skills like coding, resume-writing and how to interview well, to not-so-incidental lessons about the value of teamwork, communication, and perseverance, we are here to motivate and support. And, to ensure every young person has something to aspire to. On trips to explore culture and history, at college visits, and in conversations with professional and mentors, we get kids excited about the infinite possibilities that await beyond high school.

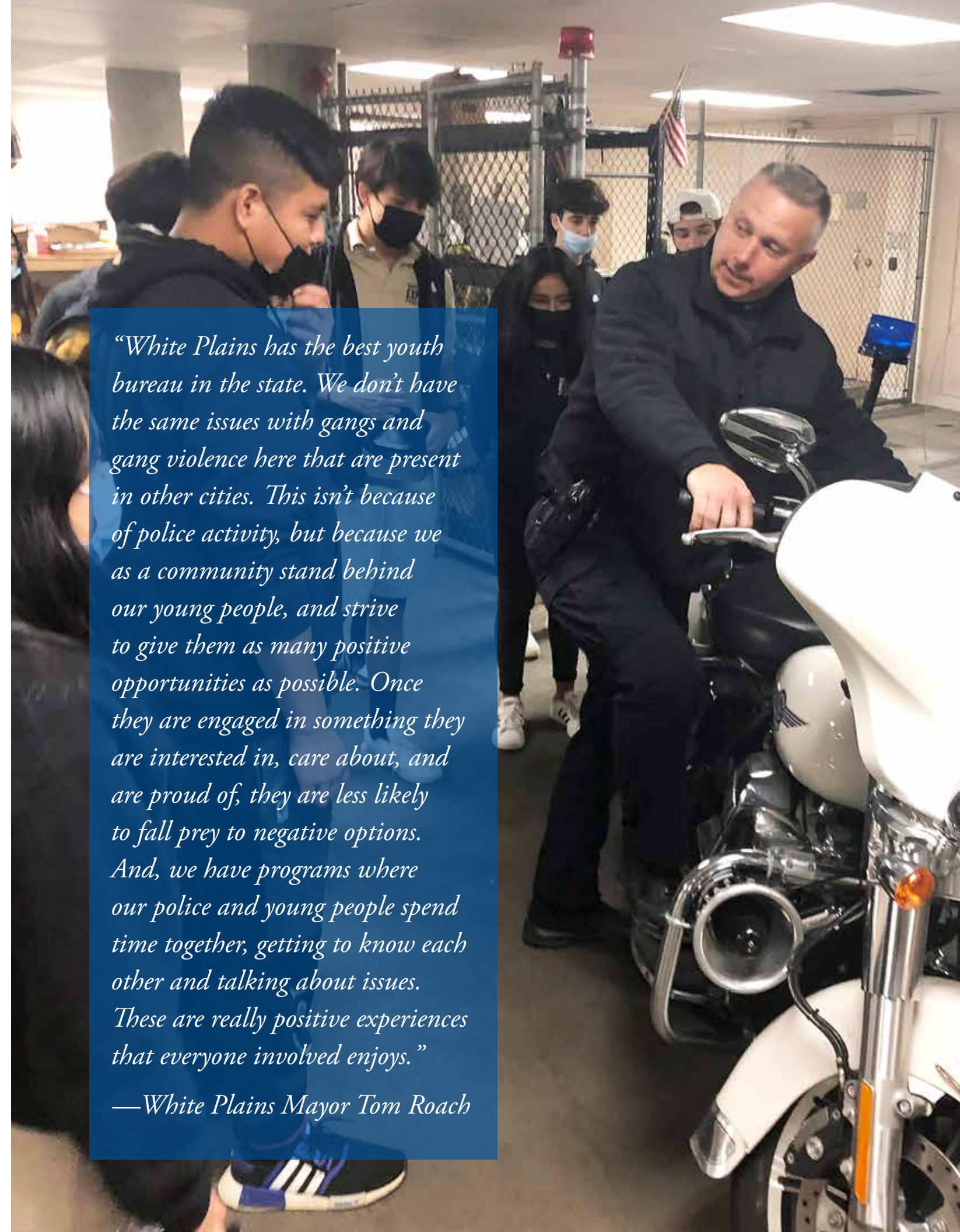
We must also encourage and empower our young people to recognize the risks and challenges that could put their futures in jeopardy. To that end, we embrace every opportunity to engage them in conversations and activities that will help them create positive relationships, develop listening skills and empathy, consider consequences, and make thoughtful choices.

Our work centers on building bridges for our youth – between where they are today and where they want to go in life, and between them and their peers and community members.

One of the most significant bridges is between young people and public safety professionals. In this report, you will read about our initiatives to forge positive connections between youth, particularly young men of color, and police officers, and about other programming that promotes positive development. •

“White Plains has the best youth bureau in the state. We don’t have the same issues with gangs and gang violence here that are present in other cities. This isn’t because of police activity, but because we as a community stand behind our young people, and strive to give them as many positive opportunities as possible. Once they are engaged in something they are interested in, care about, and are proud of, they are less likely to fall prey to negative options. And, we have programs where our police and young people spend time together, getting to know each other and talking about issues. These are really positive experiences that everyone involved enjoys.”

—White Plains Mayor Tom Roach



Youth and Police Initiative (YPI)



YPI is a structured program that brings young people of color and police officers together for deep discussion and activities designed to break down barriers, and build trust and mutual respect. Participants meet to talk about issues and concerns, get to know each other on a personal level, and learn from each other. These meaningful conversations help overcome stereotypes and negative perceptions, allowing teens and police to see each other as human and understand each other's challenges.

"We are always looking for ways to improve how we interact with and help young people in White Plains, and the Youth Bureau is a great partner in those efforts," said White Plains Chief of Police Joseph Castelli. "Frank Williams and his team understand the benefit of the police being seen as a resource and a friend to kids. Through outreach and collaboration, we can rebuild trust and work together to address challenges."

YPI, a program of the North American Family Institute (NAFI), was re-instated in 2022 after a long hiatus—with 17 youth and 12 police officers—as one of the community engagement actions recommended by the City of White Plains Police Reform Committee in 2021. At the graduation ceremony, the teens stood and shared what the program meant them, highlighting how their perspectives toward police changed.

"Our relationship with the Youth Bureau is invaluable, and what sets White Plains apart from many other communities," said Captain James Spencer. "Early on, kids get to meet and build relationships with police officers, and the officers get to know the kids and their families. This initiative, and our partnership over many years, are purposeful and purpose-driven. We are getting people

Old relationships are new again (circa 2007)

The New York Times

In a Room, Police and Youths Talk, and Maybe See Their Similarities



Nicole Bengiveno/The New York Times

White Plains police officers and young men who live in or near the Winbrook Apartments attend a Youth Initiative Training session.

By [FERNANDA SANTOS](#)
Published: June 29, 2007

WHITE PLAINS, June 27 — Like two tribes, they faced each other. One group wore the uniform of their trade: dark-blue outfits adorned with shields and badges, guns tucked in leather holsters. The other donned what could be defined as the uniform of a generation: oversize pants, loose T-shirts, chains dangling from their necks.

Unlike their previous encounters, this meeting at the Winbrook Apartments, the largest public housing complex in this city of 57,000, was not rooted in confrontation. Instead, a dozen police officers and an equal number of young men who live in or near the housing project convened for an exercise in understanding. The notion was that through frank conversation laced with street bravado, they might learn what makes each other tick and figure out how to avoid the flare-ups that define their interactions on the streets.

"I'm starting to get the feeling that we're all just people," Davon Melvin, an 18-year-old with reddish-brown hair and doe eyes, said as he ambled across the room.

The meeting was part of a two-week program, called Youth Initiative Training, begun here last year after a spate of violence around Winbrook, its \$10,000 cost covered by a grant from Westchester County and money forfeited in drug raids. Similar sessions, run by the North American Family Institute, a social-services agency based in Massachusetts, have taken place over the last few years in Baltimore and Boston, and more recently in Yonkers.

In this suburb 30 miles north of Midtown Manhattan, where condominiums and office towers are fast replacing old downtown structures, gentrification has given rise to tensions between well-to-do newcomers and low-income youths whose lives are in the shadow of the building boom. The officers

To read entire article, go online:



SCAN ME



together to learn from and about each other.”

The official YPI program was just the beginning. Those involved continued to gather throughout the year, at an ice cream social, a cookout, and to go bowling. While having fun together, respect and understanding continued to grow.

Dr. Jim Isenberg, co-founder of our Grandpas United program, is the former Executive Director of the New York Region of NAFI, where he co-founded YPI in 2003. “Bringing YPI back to White Plains was a really big success for the city, and the Grandpas were proud to support it,” he said. “It’s all about breaking stereotypes between kids and police, and building trust instead.” Our Grandpas are integral to the success of these efforts and are involved and supportive every step of the way. They participated in the YPI program and the subsequent recreational gatherings,

have gone through the Civilian Police Academy to learn more about the functionality of the department, and serve as mentors in our Youth Court. (More on that later in the report!)

How will these efforts translate on the street? “We hope that young people in White Plains can feel comfortable walking up to any police officer, and that police officers will reach out to young people,” said Chief Castelli.

Captain Edward Robinson, who coordinates YPI for the police department, also hopes that some of the participants will decide they want to become police officers themselves. And indeed, two YPI graduates enrolled in the Explorer Program! •



White Plains Girls YPI and EMS



Explorer Program & Youth Civilian Academy



To gain insight into career opportunities related to police, fire and emergency services, young people ages 14-20 can participate in the City of White Plains Public Safety Explorer Program. Throughout the school year, they learn about responding to calls for service, radio operating procedures, report-writing, and normal daily routines. They also receive training related to fire safety, emergency medical treatment procedures, and crime scene investigation, like evidence collection. Along the way, youth gain life skills, good citizenship, character education, and leadership experience as they participate and assist in public safety events like parades and other public gatherings. Facilitated by school resource officers, the Explorers Program is another opportunity for youth to talk with officers regarding current events and the challenges and opportunities associated with community policing.

The Youth Civilian Academy is a six-week program that brings youth and public safety professionals together in an informal educational setting. In this interactive setting, high schoolers gain insight into the inner workings of the department and knowledge of law enforcement practices and policies. •



Clubman Higher Aims

For African American and Latino students who need an extra push to help them achieve the excellence they are capable of, we host a daily after school program that provides academic support, mentoring, exposure to cultural, social, and leadership experiences, and enhanced social-emotional learning.

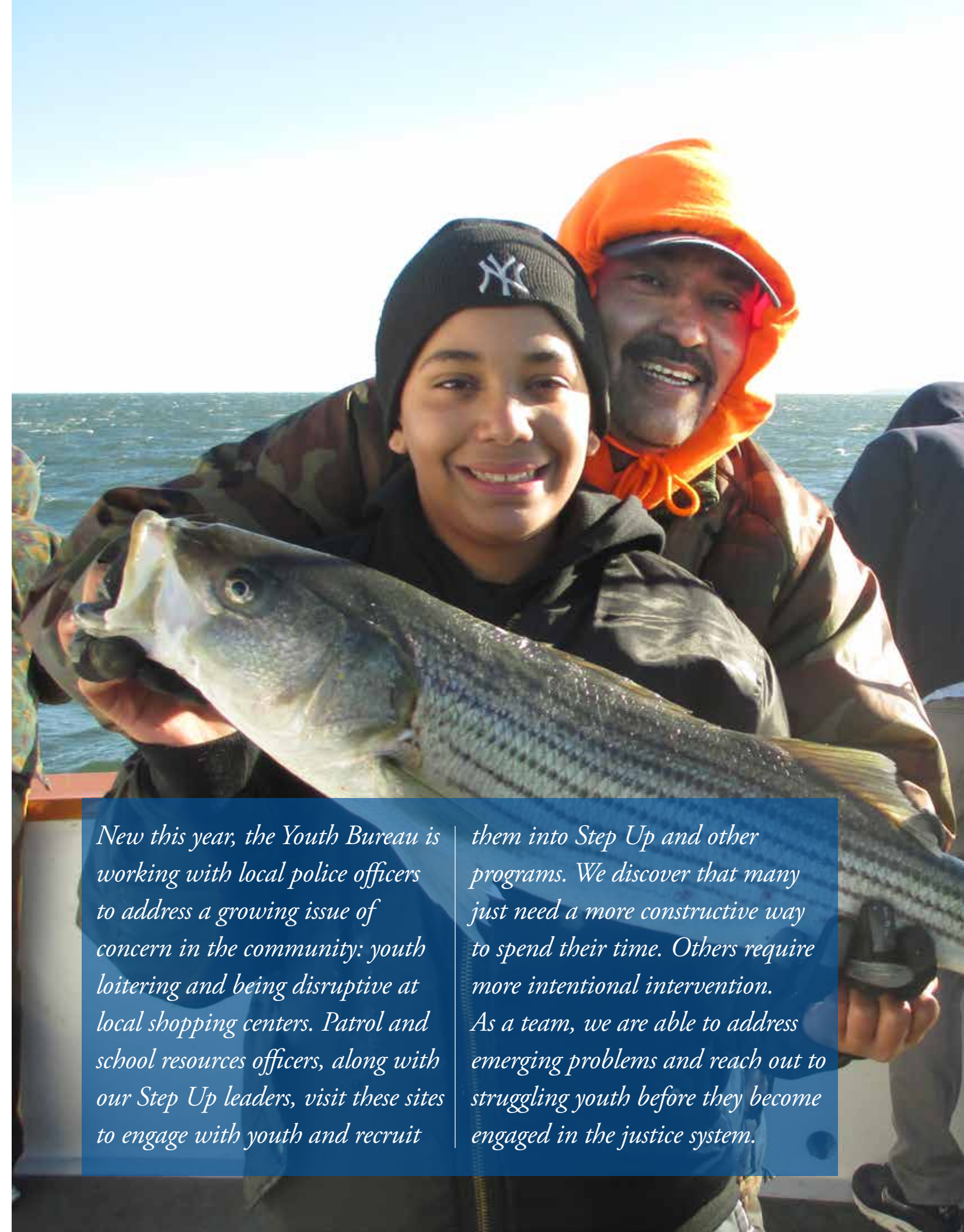
According to Program Director Jason Roberts, the key to succeeding in Clubman Higher Aims is mindset. Students should have the desire and ability to grow and improve, and be willing to hold themselves and their peers in the group accountable. Programming includes a daily homework session and a weekly academic check-in, guest speakers who share their own stories, including how they define success and how they navigate challenges in their own lives, a public speaking program, community service projects, lessons in financial literacy and entrepreneurship, college tours, and a variety of social and cultural excursions. Every youth in Higher Aims also learns how to play chess, as a way to sharpen their critical thinking skills. •



Step Up!

For young men who are struggling and at risk of dropping out of school, future unemployment, family problems, and negative police interaction, we offer Step Up. This program provides case management, counseling, and personal enrichment opportunities to young men ages 12-21, primarily African American and Latino, who are referred by the school district, their parents, the police department, and school resource officers. Here, they develop good habits, build their character, and learn to make choices that will serve them well.

Activities are designed to raise self-esteem, teach social and interpersonal skills, address behavioral issues, and provide the tools to succeed in academics and career. At weekly roundtable discussions, young men discuss issues related to peer pressure, coping skills, decision-making and goal-setting. They practice interviewing skills, filling out job applications, and public speaking. They take enrichment trips, where they are often joined by police officers purely for the opportunity to have fun, bond, and build relationships. Last summer, youth and police officers went to Playland together and more recently, six police officers joined the Step Up youth at the Puzzle Parlor, where they worked together to get out of “escape rooms.” Solving problems as a team is what it’s all about! •



New this year, the Youth Bureau is working with local police officers to address a growing issue of concern in the community: youth loitering and being disruptive at local shopping centers. Patrol and school resources officers, along with our Step Up leaders, visit these sites to engage with youth and recruit

them into Step Up and other programs. We discover that many just need a more constructive way to spend their time. Others require more intentional intervention. As a team, we are able to address emerging problems and reach out to struggling youth before they become engaged in the justice system.

Young MENToring Group

The high school students who participate in this fun and informal mentoring initiative know that there is a whole group of role models who have their back, believe in them, and want them to succeed. Twice a month for two hours throughout the school year, students meet with mentors to talk about whatever is on their minds, review their latest progress report or report card, and enjoy fun outings from bowling locally to attending a Broadway musical. The adult male mentors, who appreciate the opportunity to reciprocate the support they received as young people, include police officers, firefighters, teachers, professionals and others. We even have a mentor who used to be a mentee in this very program! •



Boys Saturday Academy

We put our weekends to good use at the Youth Bureau! On Saturdays from 9-2, students of color get academic support, cultural and social enrichment, and build leadership skills. Saturday Academy is offered at two levels: 4th-8th grade, and 9th-12th grade.

For younger students, we focus on reading and writing, include a fun STEM component, and build a toolkit of skills for success. In discussions and activities led by program coordinator Robert Tuck, students learn to think critically – for example, how to distinguish which sources of information they should trust. They begin to understand the importance of working hard, and how the decisions and effort they make today will affect their futures.

For older students, the focus moves to life beyond high school. Program coordinator Marty Rotberg works to help students develop critical interpersonal skills and broaden their horizons about what opportunities lie ahead for them. Weekly “quizzes” about current events, mock interviews, resume-writing sessions, community service projects, colleges tours, lessons in financial literacy and coding, and visits from business owners and public safety professionals, teach valuable skills and help open their minds to possibilities. After all – how can you decide whether to go to college, and which one to choose, if you have never been to campus? How can you thoughtfully consider a career as a firefighter if you’ve never heard what it’s really like? We are empowering boys of color to dream! •



Grandpas United Mentoring

One of the many ways the White Plains Grandpas support the Youth Bureau is by serving as mentors.

In Youth Court, run by trained high school students who process cases of low level crime for youthful offenders in White Plains, they are a great source of comfort to the defendants. In an effort to demonstrate the value of accountability and steer first-time offenders away from criminal activity and into community life, Youth Court “sentences” include community service, letters of apology, and counseling. Every young person referred for processing is assigned a mentor who will help support them during the process. Program Director Kassandra Mindingall shares that she often sees young people looking for their mentor in the audience at court, and drawing strength from having someone there in their corner – and that many keep in touch for years, far beyond the extent of the initial program.

In Grandpas Go To School, a cohort of fifth grade boys at Church Street Elementary spend lunchtime with their Grandpa mentor every other week. They talk, play games, and learn valuable life and interpersonal skills. Kassandra feels there’s tremendous value in the removal of the generation between young kids and grandpas. The kids don’t view the Grandpa as just another parent telling them what to do; the Grandpas get to connect with and understand the younger generation, and both are able to learn from one another. It is a great example of how important it is to spend time together in order to remove labels and dispel misconceptions!

Grandpas also participate in YPI and the social youth/public safety events, and serve as mentors in Step Up. •



Fatherhood Youth Leaders

To ensure young men have support as they come of age, and understand that there are people in the community who care about them, we established Fatherhood Youth Leaders in partnership with White Plains Schools Superintendent Dr. Joseph Ricca and High School Principal Emerly Martinez. This one-day character-building program for teen boys, hosted by Reverend Erwin Trollinger at Calvary Baptist Church, provides connectivity with fathers and grandfathers within the community who want to help guide, motivate and mentor young men. Participants are encouraged to work hard, stay in school, and pursue their dreams. Conversations and activities are designed to address issues they may be facing in school, educate them about financial literacy and health habits, and help prepare them for summer employment. •



My Brother's Keeper

When we joined President Obama's My Brother's Keeper (MBK) initiative in 2016, we already had many programs in place to address the inequities and challenges facing boys of color in our city so they may achieve their full potential and avoid negative involvement with the justice system. The MBK White Plains Community Action Plan identified four milestones to focus on. We used these to guide our efforts to enhance existing initiatives and develop new opportunities in partnership with a wide variety of stakeholders in the community, including the City of White Plains and the White Plains City School District. They were:

- Getting a healthy start and entering school ready to learn
- Graduating from high school ready for college and career
- Successfully entering the workforce
- Keeping at-risk youth on track and giving them a second chance

Today, those MBK goals remain the pillars of all we do here at the White Plains Youth Bureau, and we prove over and over again that we know the prescription for success: Show young men what's possible, provide pathways to get there, support them along the way, and work purposely to remove the incentive and opportunity for negative behavior. Working together as a community that cares deeply about its youth, we pour all we can into them through mentoring, recreation, education, job training, and so much more. •



Financials



■ Grant Funds

■ In-Kind Contributions

■ City Funds

2022 REVENUE



City Funds	\$2,937,000	51%
Grant Funds	\$2,745,000	48%
In-Kind Contributions	\$75,000	1%
Total	\$5,757,000	

Your Support is Vital!



All children are born with great potential. When we challenge them, create opportunity, and support them with our words and actions as they age...when we remove barriers and encourage good decision-making... when we expose them to enough exciting possibilities, they reach that potential.

With your help, the Youth Bureau equips young people in White Plains with the tools they need to survive and thrive in today's world: faith in themselves, the courage to dream, job and interpersonal skills, grit, and so much more. These things are woven into every activity and interaction in our 50+ programs, serving 7,000 youth!

The Youth Bureau staff are dedicated, caring, and determined. But we cannot do this work alone. We are immensely grateful for the generous support of our funders and donors and invaluable partnerships with our city, our school district, and many community organizations. •

Thank you!

Thank you for believing in the young people of our community, and in the Youth Bureau. Your donation will help ensure we can continue our vital work.

You can contribute online, at: <https://friendsofwpyb.org/>, or by check made payable to:

Friends of the White Plains Youth Bureau
and mailed to:

Friends of the White Plains Youth Bureau
11 Amherst Place
White Plains, New York 10601



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Honorable Nadine Hunt-Robinson
Honorable John M. Martin
Honorable Richard Payne
Honorable Victoria Presser
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