

City of White Plains
Youth Bureau

Summies



2024 Report



Y.E.S. 2024

by the numbers

194 youth employed

128 YOUTH EMPLOYED WITH CITY OF WHITE PLAINS FUNDS

26 YOUTH EMPLOYED THROUGH TANF FUNDS (GRANT)

8 YOUTH EMPLOYED THROUGH WESTCHESTER COUNTY YOUTH BUREAU FUNDS (GRANT)

5 YOUTH EMPLOYED THROUGH YOUTH COURT (GRANT)

14 YOUTH EMPLOYED THROUGH FUNDS FROM SUNY PURCHASE COLLEGE - PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM (GRANT)

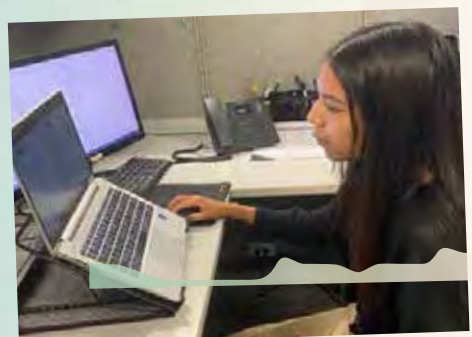
13 YOUTH EMPLOYED IN THE READI PROGRAM (GRANT)

2024 STATS...

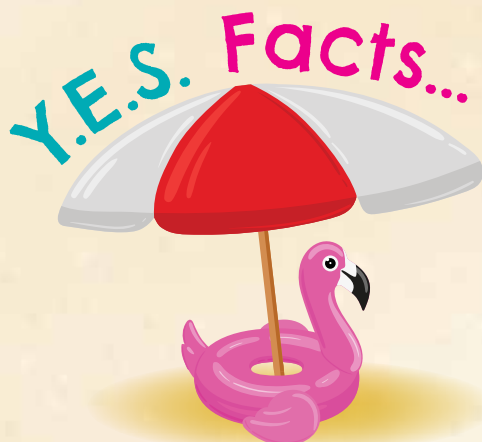
194 STUDENTS HIRED

87% PLACED IN CHOSEN POSITION

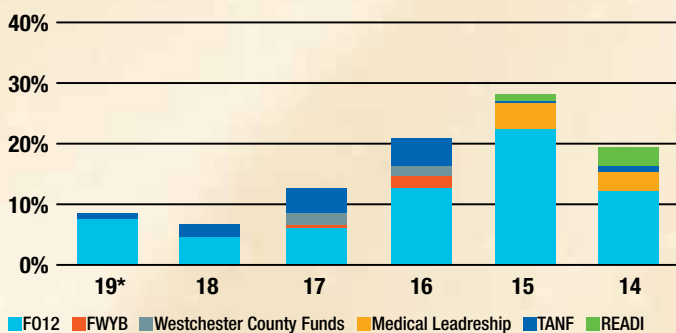
69% NEW TO SUMMER EMPLOYMENT



ISABELA SANPOVAL, AN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS MAJOR AT DELAWARE STATE, SPENT HER SUMMER AT COMMUNITY HOUSING INNOVATIONS. ISABELA FELT HER EXPERIENCE AT CHI WAS "EXTREMELY VALUABLE" BECAUSE SHE LEARNED A LOT ABOUT COMMUNITY OUTREACH. ONE OF HER MAJOR PROJECTS WAS DRAFTING EMAILS AND LETTERS TO HUD CERTIFIED ORGANIZATIONS TO CREATE NEW PARTNERSHIPS. ISABELA SHARED THAT "THIS ASSIGNMENT HAS HELPED STRENGTHEN MY COMMUNICATION SKILLS AND THANKS TO THIS EXPERIENCE I LOOK FORWARD TO JOINING KAMALA HARRIS' CAMPAIGN FOR PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES WHEN I RETURN TO SCHOOL THIS FALL."



Age Breakdown of 2024 Summer Employees



Summer Highlights



- YES RECEIVED **207** APPLICATIONS FOR THE 2024 SUMMER EMPLOYMENT SEASON.
- OUR ANNUAL JOB FAIR TOOK PLACE AT THE SONESTA HOTEL ON FRIDAY, JUNE 14TH.
- **163** YOUTH ATTENDED AND WERE DRESSED TO IMPRESS.



SHARIYA HASAN INTERNEED AT CUONO ENGINEERING, WHERE SHE WORKED IN THE FIELD OF STRUCTURAL ENGINEERING. SHARIYA WILL ATTEND COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY THIS FALL PURSUING A DEGREE IN ENGINEERING. SHE WAS EXCITED FOR THE OPPORTUNITY TO LEARN HOW TO USE CAD SOFTWARE. SHARIYA STATED SHE "LOVED THE ATMOSPHERE AT CUONO" AND APPRECIATED THE "REAL WORLD" ASSIGNMENTS, WHICH INCLUDED EDITING CLIENT PROPOSALS AND PARTICIPATING IN THE COMPANIES FRIDAY LUNCH AND LEARNS.

THROUGH GRANT FUNDS FROM THE WESTCHESTER ONE-STOP EMPLOYMENT CENTER, **EDWIN PERALTA VAZQUEZ** A 2024 WPHS GRADUATE WAS ABLE TO PURSUE HIS DREAM OF BECOMING A BARBER AND WAS PLACED AT ERWIN'S BARBERSHOP TO LEARN AND HONE THE CRAFT!

EDWIN BEGAN HIS APPRENTICESHIP IN MARCH OF 2024, AND IS NOW A FULL TIME BARBER WITH HIS OWN CHAIR!

CONGRATULATIONS EDWIN!!



INTERNS **EZRA RIVAL & ALISHA AHMED**, WORKED IN THE CITY OF WHITE PLAINS MAYOR'S OFFICE TO WORK ON THE VISION ZERO INITIATIVE. THE INITIATIVES MAIN GOAL IS TO ELIMINATE VEHICULAR DEATHS AND SERIOUS CRASHES. WHITE PLAINS IS CURRENTLY CREATING AN ACTION PLAN WHICH INCLUDES PUBLIC OUTREACH OPPORTUNITIES, INFRASTRUCTURE CHANGES, AND ROAD DATA. EZRA SHARED "THIS INTERNSHIP WAS A GREAT LEARNING OPPORTUNITY!"



SHANIYA HASAN WORKED AT THE UNITED WAY OF WESTCHESTER WHERE SHE PACKED HUNDREDS OF FOOD KITS, ACTIVITY KITS AND BACKPACKS FOR THE COMMUNITY! SHE STATED THAT SHE "ENJOYED THE HANDS-ON WORK AND THAT THE HIGHLIGHT OF HER SUMMER WAS HAVING THE OPPORTUNITY TO DISTRIBUTE THE KITS TO CLIENTS."

Growing White Plains

Mary, Mary, Quite Contrary. How does your garden grow?

The answer is simple, in leaps and bounds!

Despite enduring the three hottest days ever recorded and the high humidity levels, the Growing White Plains garden looks amazing. With a new design featuring three new plot sizes to better accommodate gardeners on every level, new designated areas marked for compost, top soil, wood chips, garden debris and the addition of several decorative flower beds the garden has become a more accommodating and beautiful garden to work in and visit.

The youth were outstanding! From day one they took the garden to the next level weeding, planting, nurturing, and growing a bounty of fruits and vegetables. The youth researched four ways of planting ranging from raised beds, ground beds, mulched beds and beds protected by lawn fabric. The reason for the variety of planting techniques was to compare and evaluate what worked best and why. The winning method became the standard for all the additional planting done over the summer.

On days when the heat was too oppressive to garden, we utilized the Battle Hill Center for classes and research. Indoor activities included studies in pollination, irrigation, insects, organic gardening, composting and sustainability. All of the classes paid off when we won the **Youth Climate Action Fund Grant sponsored by the Bloomberg Philanthropies**. The grant challenges youth to get involved and take action on climate change in innovative ways. Without missing a beat, the youth brainstormed ideas that would address the challenges of both the garden and climate change. As a team we decided upon installing a solar shed that would be powered by solar panels. The shed would not only capture solar energy from the sun but also rainwater runoff to create an irrigation system. Unused power will be harvested to charge environmentally friendly batteries for gardening tools. The shed design would also provide a cool covered area for classroom, meeting or resting area for gardeners. Before the project was submitted the youth pitched the idea to the Commissioner of Buildings, and representatives from the Planning Department and the Youth Bureau. The proposal was approved and we were awarded the grant! This was the first grant proposal any of the youth ever worked on and they were thrilled to hear of the approval.

Over the summer The Garden received an unexpected visit from the Westchester County Planting Westchester Initiative. They were so impressed with The Garden they returned to interview the youth and feature the program in their summer report. One of the visitors commented: **"The Growing White Plains Garden is the MOST robust garden we've visited this summer!"**

While the children learned about the life of a plant from seed to table and they saw the food they grew delivered to local food pantries, Growing White Plains grew more than just vegetables. We grew a clear understanding of environmental science, organic gardening, history, partnerships and community engagement. Additionally, this group of students, many of whom did not know each other, were able to grow new connections, create a sense of community, work ethics and friendships. One of my favorite quotes from one of the youth was **"I liked gardening but I loved making new friends this summer."**



Greening Project



This year's Greening Project was an amazing work experience. Youth participated in numerous activities throughout Westchester County focusing on environmental education and sustainability. The students grew their own vegetables in the community garden at Baldwin Farm and assisted other local organization including DIG farm and the Hammond Museum & Japanese Stroll Garden in North Salem. The Native Plant Center in Valhalla, and the Greenburgh Nature Center. Students learned how to identify native and invasive plants, the importance of maintaining a balanced ecosystem, the process of food production from farm to table, and much more. Youth visited local preserves and historical sites including Cranberry Lake in West Harrison and Lenoir Preserve in Yonkers, with the purpose of learning about the many environmental resources in our local community.

Sebastian Hernandez shared "this summer was interesting. I got to learn and help my community at the same time. I discovered walking trails and nature preserves that I didn't know were so close to me."

Genesis Garcia added "the summer was fun. I liked going to all the different places, especially the Hammond Museum & Japanese Stroll Garden. It looked really beautiful, and I thought the pond was peaceful".

Not only does the Greening Project expose young people to new experiences, it also provided opportunities for them to directly engage with their community. The

Greening Project visited the Bedford Presbyterian Church, where the students prepared and cooked meals for the church's food pantry, utilizing produce harvested from DIG Farm and Hilltop Hanover Farm. Youth learned about the importance of knowing where your food comes from, and also had an opportunity to give back to those in need.

While environmental education is a large part of the Greening Project, this program also provides an opportunity to develop valuable job skills, including initiative, dependability, and teamwork. For several of the participants this was their first work experience.

Ashley Brice stated "I was very happy to work. I always dreamed of earning money and helping my mom since she has always helped me. This summer was also fun because I got to try new things like climbing the rock quarry at Cranberry Lake." **Jesus Perez Jr.** added "it was thrilling being outdoors and doing all the hands-on activities. I want to do more jobs like this, where I can be outside and active."

This group of students worked very hard to care for their own garden, assist other local organizations, and to become positive members of their community. The youth were able to connect the work of previous program participants to their current experiences. Because of this experience, participants are more aware of their connection to the world around them, and gained knowledge and skills that will have a positive impact on their lives going forward.



Bits N' Pieces Summer

Time flies when you are having fun in the sun! Our six-week camp was another year of fun-filled, hands-on activities for 180 campers first through fifth grade.

This year's camp theme centered on *The Olympics*. Our teachers and instructors ingeniously incorporated the Olympics into their lessons and activities that made learning fun and exciting for our campers. We offered academic modules in English Language Arts, Math, Science, Nutrition, Mindfulness, and Percussion. In addition, our beloved Susan Katz returned as a volunteer with our two first grade groups, and she worked with our two second grade groups this year, to bring them "Book Club", the literacy program she created. We also offered Art, Experimental Central, Mix it Up, Recreation, Fitness and Teamwork and our social emotional component entitled How You Doin'? The science program offered hands-on experiences with science apparatus that helped students understand physical science. Lessons on Buoyance highlighted the concepts of density, mass, volume and states of matter.

This year's Nutrition classes incorporated the theme of the Olympics ("Health and Fitness") by discussing how a healthy diet and physical activity can significantly influence ones' energy level, recovery time, muscle growth and overall performance. The students identified and discussed the five main food groups and named a variety of examples in each group. There was particular attention given to identifying foods high in fat and sugar content and knowing the benefits of limiting the consumption of fat and sugar. Implementing a healthy lifestyle was a key focus of the lessons. Physical activity, adequate water consumption and getting enough sleep were key elements used to help students evaluate their lifestyle and design small steps to improve their overall health.

Our **MATH** instructors fostered a warm, welcoming and fun atmosphere that engaged and held the student's attention, while they learned new math and reviewed familiar math concepts to prepare for the new school year. Many students were not thrilled but we discussed the challenges and related them to obstacles that Olympians face. We fostered a caring environment where failures and disappointments are not the end, they are the beginning if you practice and believe in your abilities, success and triumphs are achieved.

ELA (English Language Arts)

- Our first and second graders continued with our tradition of writing morning messages – to aid in articulating thoughts and feelings. We work with campers using the subject of the Olympics to understand and use new words, read words by sight, improved phonics, and engaged in active listening and retelling.
- The third, fourth and fifth graders wrote personal narratives and drew pictures about their knowledge of Olympians. The students routinely engaged in reading Scholastic News magazines, grade level written passages, poetry and free choice ELA material. Regular review of spelling and grammar including punctuation. The exercises enhanced their spelling, and improved their vocabulary, reading and writing skills.

ART This year, student art excelled to include 3-D images, matrix paper cut- out collages and a variety of designs related to the Olympic Games.

MUSIC Percussion was this year's musical art form. Drum circles were used to focus on rhythm and beats, and students were encouraged to play "in the moment" without being restricted to specific cultural or musical traditions. We focused on the various genres of music represented at the Olympic Games in Paris, France. Campers learned



Tutorial Camp

how to play boom-whackers and create a song based on the sounds that they heard. Karaoke and musical chairs were a favorite for all ages.

SPORTS The culminating event of the summer B N' P "Olympic Field Day" at Gardella Park consisted of an intense compilation of races and games. The students were extremely competitive. It was a great celebration to close out our theme for the Camp.

Bits 'n Pieces campers enjoyed trips to Playland Park and Quassy Amusement Park. In addition, Grandpa's United sponsored an Ice Cream Dance Party on July 30th with a DJ and the Ice Cream Emergency mobile ice cream parlor.

We have enjoyed another amazing summer at Church Street School where our campers were engaged in fun, positive and exciting academic and recreational activities!



Entrepreneurial Training Program

The Entrepreneurial Program six-week program welcomed **11** students to participate in a fun-filled, educational and illuminating experience. We challenged participants to create 'mock' businesses that fell into the category of either product or service and gave them a 'mock' budget of \$1000 to achieve these tasks based on their life experience and interests.

We exposed students to four areas of entrepreneurship: Life Skills, Management, Marketing and Finance. We tasked them with creating a business plan, an elevator speech, a 30 second to 2-minute video advertisement, a brochure or prototype, and a final PowerPoint presentation

The Curriculum

The curriculum for the program included classes with their coordinator, Dornella Johnson several field trips, guest speakers, Kahoot's quizzes, one-on-one breakout sessions and final presentations to a panel of judges.

The **Life Skills** component of the curriculum focused on helping students align their life experiences, hobbies and interests with a viable business concept that highlighted their proficiencies.

The **Management** component of the curriculum focused on the logistics of creating a viable business. We asked students to think about what type of business they would be interested in creating and why. Would they rather create a product or a service oriented business? Because the management of any business calls for organization, they were required to create a timeline for the business.

The **Marketing** curriculum focused on naming their product or service, advertising and branding. We asked them to understand and detail who their customer would be. What is the business name? What is the product name? Students were asked to create taglines and to create an advertising plan that detailed where they would plan to spend any advertising dollars. What forms of free advertising could they possibly take advantage of and would business cards, brochures, flyers, websites and other forms of getting the word out be used?

The **Financial** curriculum forced students to breakdown every aspect of spending to create a budget that took into account all materials and supplies needed, pricing for products and services and projected earnings. Students had to create spreadsheets that detailed expenditures and profits.

Field Trips

In the first week, we challenged our cohort to a Business Scavenger Hunt where students contacted businesses in White Plains and made an appointment to visit them to ask three poignant questions about their business.

Our cohort of Entrepreneurs enjoyed trips to the following various local businesses to hear their entrepreneurial journey:

- Universal Moms whose tag line is Uplift, Motivate and Stay Fit! – shared their story, their theory and their successes and failures.
- The Pamplermousse Café: shared the intricacies of running a café, serving food and drink, overhead and city ordinances that require certifications, sprinkler systems multiple bathrooms and more.

- DNK Events with offices in both White Plains and an event space and warehouse in Mount Vernon provided an incredible presentation and engaged our cohort on the dynamics of not only running one business, but also building multiple businesses under one umbrella.
- Ice Cream Social received our group with high-energy and high regard for the program sharing their journey from concept to implementation.
- Teens Under Construction (TUC) hosted the entrepreneurs at their offices where they set up a 'Shark Tank' experience for the cohort by inviting five judges to hear our entrepreneur's business pitches. TUC collaborated with Citizens Bank to provide a \$250 award to the winner!
- Eduardo Accostupa Jewelry received the group with a well thought out presentation detailing the owner's love of jewelry design. He showcased his craft and the very realistic nuances involved in developing a business based on his love of jewelry making.

Guest Speakers

The Youth Bureau's various partnerships afforded us a pool of talented professionals to pull from to invite as guest speakers to share their stories and knowledge. Peter Padilla, an Entrepreneur alumnus, from last year presented weekly to the cohort on the stock market and financial awareness. Other speakers included:

- **Jess Friedlander** of Volunteer New York
- **Zahira Martin**, owner of ULift and Inferno 365 physical Fitness
- **Carl Byrd**, Disc Jockey
- **Yocasta Jimenez and Shamar Moore**, CEO and COO of Teens Under Construction
- **Gabriella Nanna** of Westchester's Children's Association
- **Citizens Bank** on Paycheck Management

By the end of the six weeks, students have mastered the following skills:

- Elevator pitch – 30 seconds
- Business plan - included:
- Vision and mission statement
- Timeline (1 year of your business)
- Marketing Plan: Advertising/Branding/Video
- Pricing
- Budget and allocations
- Prototype (Products Only)
- Brochure (Services Only)
- Final presentation of Business Model

They worked hard and the results were evident in their deliverables. Students concluded the program with better insight not just of the product or service they created but also of themselves. They realized that every business starts as someone's dream or aspiration. They walked with improved self-esteem and oratory skills knowing that they can manifest any idea. With hard work and commitment, they could be the next Bill Gates, Oprah Winfrey or Magic Johnson. More importantly, it all started in the summer of 2024 at the White Plains Youth Bureau!



STEM Camp



STEM Camp hosted **28** rising 6th, 7th & 8th graders who are too old for traditional summer camp and too young to work with summer employment. Our goal is to prevent “summer slide,” keep youth engaged and prepare them for the next grade all while making Math and Science fun and exciting. Each year our STEM Camp grows with a new addition to the curriculum. This summer, it was an honor to have a Certified Technology Instructor, Mr. Doug Thron join our team; he was a great asset to our program model. Mr. Thron teaches K-5 Technology at Ridgeway School here in White Plains.

Our summer curriculum engaged youth through coding with Finch robots, Ozobots, drones and numerous team design and building activities. We emphasized the Engineering design process.

Ask: Identify the Need & Constraints
Research the Problem
Imagine: Develop Possible Solutions
Plan: Select a Promising Solution
Create: Build a Prototype
Test: Evaluate Prototype
Improve: Redesign as Needed

Aviation continues to be a central component, exposing students to the field of Aviation not only as pilots but also to all other careers that support the industry. We introduced the students to 3-D printing and it was a great success. Danielle Mitchell, a rising junior at White Plains High School and member of the Civil Air Patrol, led the workshops. Danielle is pursuing her pilot's license. She made the love of Science and Technology cool because students could see themselves in her.

Our summer included two incredible field trips: 5th Dimension Virtual Reality here in White Plains, and to the Intrepid Sea, Air and Space Museum in New York City. For some students it was their first time going to New York City!

Students departed the program with increased knowledge and a thirst for learning about new initiatives in the field of STEM.



READI/SRAEP

22 teens participated in workshops that addressed life skills and soft skills essential for work.

The READI program covered the attributes:

Respect, Enthusiasm, Articulate, Dependable and Initiative in two-hour sessions. The sessions allowed the teens to express their opinions and experiences with these attributes and values.

The majority of teens were first time employees many of whom found the information in the videos helpful not only for work but also in their personal lives. We focused heavily on self-respect and self-determination by learning to set goals and manage progress over time.

Learning to express themselves clearly and listen for understanding was a challenge for some teens but with more effort, those that struggled with this soon understood the importance. The group was able to see the value of asking questions and also “staying in your lane.” This helped them learn how to reduce conflict.

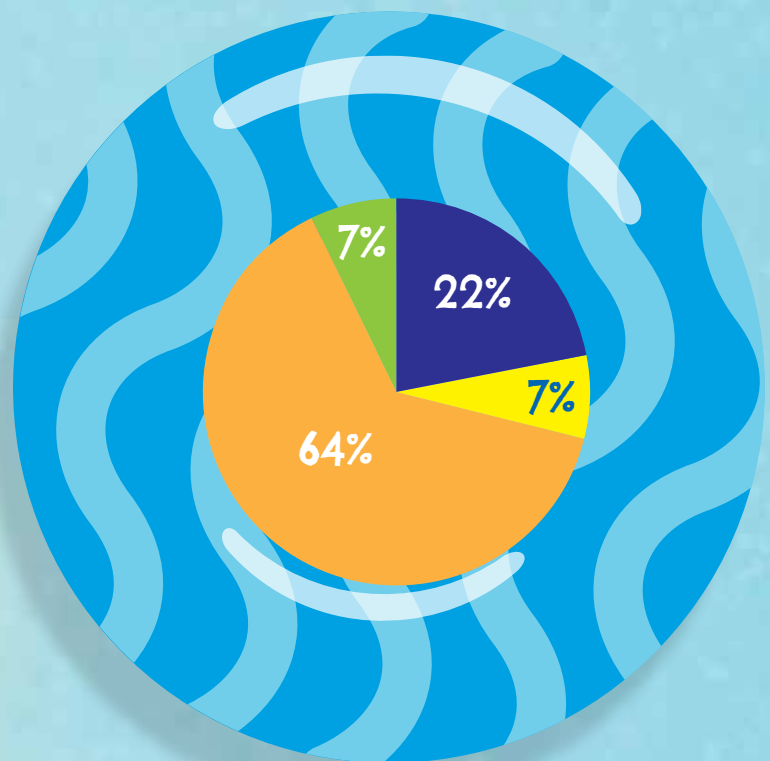
Public speaking is an area that causes anxiety for many students. To combat their anxiety, students were tasked with making presentations on a variety of topics that were relevant to their lived experiences. The topics ranged from my experience having a nut allergy attack while eating out to personal descriptions of their family. The speeches were 2 to 3 minutes long with the opportunity to redo the speech with revisions and corrections from their peers.

Teens Under Construction will conduct the SRAEP component during the first week of school.

For the employment segment, teens were placed in various roles with local organizations and departments within the City of White Plains such as The Kensington White Plains, Ecumenical Food Pantry, the Youth Bureau Community Garden, and STEM Summer Enrichment program.

Overall the summer was a success! Teens learned to ask questions, resolve conflicts, improve time management, and work as a team.

READI/SRAEP Demographics



L.I.F.E. Program

(Lifting Individuals For Ever)

This summer we piloted a new employment-training module entitled the

L.I.F.E. program (Lifting Individuals For Ever). The program provides older youth 16-18 years with career exploration, life skills, retail and hospitality training and work preparation. The goal is to help participants gain concrete work experience, develop social skills, increase their confidence, build their character and teach the importance of working in a team-based environment. The program focused on the careers the youth were interested in pursuing which included: healthcare, real estate, fitness, childcare, digital arts, and tattoo artistry. In addition to career exploration, the youth were engaged in Financial Literacy workshops with Citizens Bank.

The L.I.F.E. program commenced with teaching the foundational components required to have a successful employment experience. The module included creating a concise and well-written resume, completing a job application and interviewing skills. The students

engaged in activities and scenarios that taught them the importance of communication skills, which included Verbal, Non-Verbal and Active Listening. The program explored the retail and hospitality industries in White Plains with walking tours. In addition, participants explored real life scenarios that required them to problem solve issues related to: budgeting, housing, schooling, self-care and employment.

Students enjoyed tours and presentations from various local businesses, colleges and organizations. We were proud to partner with Family Services of Westchester Center For All Ages, Pedigree Ski Shop, Big Joe's Tattoo Shop, ArtsWestchester, Cody Black, College of Westchester, Maurice Johnson, a local personal trainer

Student Highlight!

Emily Portillo.

During my time at Harold, Salant, Strassfield, & Rotbard, LLP it exposed me to amazing opportunities and it gave me more clarity in my career for the future. In my internship, I reviewed cases and often proof-read affidavits and paperwork for errors prior to submission to the courts. Furthermore, I was fortunate to go to court with one of the Attorneys and I loved the experience and the atmosphere. All the cases were so different, but interesting. Going to court with the Attorney, made me realize that Law is something I want to pursue. I was debating whether law or politics was right for me but being in court was the best feeling for me. My internship allowed me to form connections within my workplace and I have developed amazing bonds with Jill, Paula, and Greg. I truly appreciate them for providing me with me

so many opportunities to gain knowledge about law and life. I will miss them dearly! I have created wonderful memories with all of them.



and fitness coach, Nick Wolff, a real estate agent and Alvin Alcara, a hotel general manager who spoke about the hospitality industry. The youth have learned what skill sets are required for specific careers and the academic requirement for each field.

Reflecting on their summer experiences, **Zabeth Zarate** shared **"One thing I learned is to be more confident and be able to present in front of people"**.

Christopher Vasquez shared **"I learned to be more mindful, professional, social and to never be afraid to ask for help when needed."**



**Career Exploration
field trip to Loola Doola
fashion design studio**



**Career Exploration
field trip to Arts-
Westchester**

Social Justice for Youth/ Community Youth Court

The White Plains Youth Bureau Social Justice for the Youth Program/Community Youth Court had an exciting six-week virtual summer training. We received 20 new members, making it a 42-member youth court.

New members learned about the Juvenile Justice System and the Youth Court Diversion Program. They were virtually visited by a Westchester County Probation Officer and a Federal Magistrate Judge, a former Federal Defender as well Federal Prosecutors all from the Federal Courts of the Southern District of New York. Students learned how to collect evidence from a mock crime scene and how to work collaboratively as an investigative team.

Youth Court processed four "real" cases during the summer in addition to training and internships. Many new members served as jurors on these cases.

As a culminating activity, the Youth Court members presented a Mock Trial at the Westchester County Supreme Court to show off their newfound knowledge and skills.

Youth Court members put their skills to test in a variety of law enforcement work environments:

- Seven Youth Court members participated in six-week training programs with local Civil/ Criminal Law Firms, and the Westchester District Attorney Office.
- Three participants completed a one-week Scales of Justice course with the Bronx District Attorney's office.
- Four Youth Court members attended an in person federal trial, from jury selections to jury deliberation. They observed opening statements, closings and questioning of many witnesses.

A major component of Youth Court is the development and enhancement of participant's oratory skills. The newest Youth Court members were required to present on a variety of topics that included the Overturning of Roe v. Wade and Its Impact, Fossil Fuel Treaty, the Women Rights Movement, the Importance of Early Childhood Education and the Impact of Artificial Intelligence vs. Human Intellect. The members presented well thought out arguments that were passionate and relevant to society.

This year's summer session was a huge success. New partnerships have been formed with more law firms in our community, and additional connections with more Elizabeth Haub School of Law Professors.



Be a Doctor, Nurse, Medical Technician or Some Other Healthcare Provider

14 high school students grades 9 through 11, completed a six-week Medical Career Leadership program. This initiative, funded by **SUNY Purchase and the Liberty Partnership Program**, equipped participants with fundamental skills necessary for pursuing careers in healthcare. The program featured workshops and presentations by a diverse group of professionals, including dentists, physicians, nurses, EMS workers, and other healthcare specialists.

Students engaged in a series of informative tours, visiting **White Plains Hospital, New York Medical College, Westchester Medical Center, Burke Rehabilitation, The College of Westchester, and SUNY Purchase College**. Additionally, **New York Medical College** provided mentorship by assigning three medical students to guide the participants throughout the program.

Students spoke with the Head Nurse of the White Plains Community School District, Maggie Racioppo, regarding her role as a health professional in a school based setting. Financial Literacy was a key component this year with workshops conducted by the team at PCSB Bank. Mr. Donnie Simmons spoke to the participants about career goals and building strong strategies to be successful. To address social/emotional wellness, Yocasta Jimenez and Shamar Watson from Teens Under Construction led workshops focused on building resilience, self-care and overcoming personal/life challenges.

Youth visited **The College of Westchester** where they met representatives from the admissions office and participated in several medical training exercises. Students also visited Feeding Westchester where they toured the warehouse and learned about hunger in Westchester County.

Samantha Castro remarked, "The experience was incredibly valuable. I had the opportunity to meet inspiring individuals, and the excursions were enjoyable."

Montana Fahnestock noted, "It was an outstanding way to spend the summer."



Healthy & Fit For Life

Funded by the Invest in Kids grant, the Healthy & Fit For Life Summer Camp supported 20 middle school student's grades 6th – 8th per three-week session. The program provided a diverse mix of fitness, social-emotional, and recreational activities that prepared campers for healthier lifestyles and equipped them with valuable life skills as they transition into the new school year.

Program Activities:

- Sports: Engaged campers in soccer, volleyball, basketball, kickball, and pickleball.
- Swimming: Offered relaxation and water safety skill development.
- Aeroponic Gardening: Introduced modern agricultural practices and the benefits of reducing water usage and promoting local food production.
- Nutrition: Hands-on cooking classes promoted healthy eating habits.
- Social Emotional Workshops: Helped campers understand and manage emotions, build healthy relationships, and make responsible decisions.
- Substance Abuse Prevention Education: Empowered campers to recognize and manage peer pressure and develop strategies for a drug-free lifestyle.
- Body Brain Yoga: Enhanced holistic wellness through mindfulness, relaxation, and breathing exercises.
- Field Trips: Included visits to Splash Down Water Park, LegoLand, Skyzone, and Boundless Adventures, reinforcing STEM education, outdoor appreciation, teamwork, goal setting, risk-taking, and confidence building.

Outcomes:

- Skill Development: Campers improved interpersonal communication, substance abuse prevention, and problem-solving through role-play exercises.
- Social-Emotional Growth: Workshops fostered self-respect, self-identity, self-worth, self-esteem, and leadership skills in a supportive environment.
- Socialization: The caring counselors nurtured a community that enhanced HFL campers' interpersonal skills and experiential learning.



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Let's Get Ready SAT & College Prep

25 students registered for our nine-week virtual Let's Get Ready SAT & College Prep program and received intensive SAT preparation. Students developed a greater understanding about the SAT math and reading demands. The students collaborated with coaches who were knowledgeable, reliable and personable. They demonstrated an ability to adapt to the student's needs, maintained a professional environment and built a positive rapport with the students throughout the summer.

As students became more familiar with the test format and test questions students increased their understanding about testing strategy. Ultimately, students gained greater confidence in their ability and approached the SAT test with a sense of clarity. The daily sessions paired with homework assignments helped to keep students engaged and accountable. Furthermore, all students had access to additional tutoring and support through phone calls, texts and emails. To reinforce daily lessons, taped virtual sessions were available to those who wanted to review class instruction at their leisure.

Participants were required to take two full diagnostic SAT exams. The first exam established a baseline

measure and group students with academic coaches. The second test allowed students to measure their level of improvement. In addition to the SAT training, the students were given the opportunity to access a trained college student mentor who was readily available to assist students through the college application process that included researching, creating a list of colleges, FAFSA support, and reviewed the components of a personal statement. The Let's Get Ready program has created an authentic, student-centered platform that is passionate about creating educational equity and equality for all.



LGR Demographics

