



YOUTH EMPOWERMENT PROJECT

*Trinity, 12*

*Traashaud, 8*

*Travon, 11*

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# FALL 2020

# BACK ON TRACK



## Jade 17 years old

Jade came to YEP in January to finish high school. She knew she could get back on track with YEP's high school equivalency preparation classes. Unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic arrived and presented a new set of challenges. Jade had just signed up to take the first section of her HiSET exam in March when testing centers closed and YEP transitioned to virtual learning. She continued taking online classes with YEP, but she didn't have access to a computer. After a few months of doing her best to complete her schoolwork with her phone, Jade received a Chromebook from a generous YEP donor. **"I couldn't really manage being on Zoom on my phone anymore," she says. "I'm glad I have the computer now."** Through a mix of online and in-person classes, Jade is now getting ready to take her HiSET online at YEP.

## Casey 11 years old

Casey started coming to YEP's Afterschool program with his cousin a little over a year ago, and he finds comfort in being at the youth center. Since he started coming to YEP, Casey has made lots of friends and works hard as a member of the YEP Drumline. Even though he knows why it was important to stay home, Casey is happy to be participating in in-person programs again. **"At home, I don't really express my feelings," he says. "I don't come out of my shell. But at YEP it's a whole different story. I can have kid dreams here."**



## Athena 17 years old



As a visual artist, Athena came to YEP to explore her creative instincts. She was a week away from completing her employment readiness training at YEP Works when the stay-at-home order began. Her classes at UNO moved online, and the toy store where she was working closed. After several months at home with little to do, Athena came back to YEP in August as a Communications Intern, where she applies her graphic design skills to projects like this newsletter. **"I was really excited to get this opportunity," she says. "People say it's hard to have a job in art, but this has definitely opened up my mind about what kind of jobs I can have in the future."**





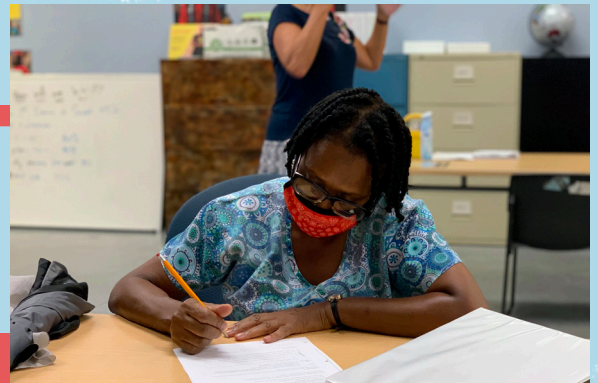
# PROGRAM SNAPSHOTS

We're now offering in-person programming again, and we continue to provide virtual options as well so we are accessible to as many participants as possible.



YEP Drumline practices look a little different these days, but youth are practicing in person again. With masks on and proper distancing, our young people haven't missed a beat.

Our students are back on site at YEP Educates to continue working towards their high school equivalency diplomas. As a bonus, we're now offering online HiSET exams directly at YEP.



The YEP thrift store and bike shop have both reopened to customers, and they continue to provide work-based learning opportunities for young people looking to join the workforce.

# WRITING EXCERPTS FROM SUMMER CAMPER



What would **YOU** do if you  
were in **CHARGE**  
of the **WORLD?**

"I would have free money, free help if you need help, free houses, free food, free friends, and no bad people."

**Rylie,**  
11 yrs old

"If I were in charge of the world, I would make it a better and happier place by first stopping racism and the killing of innocent people. There would be no pandemic going on in the world right now. I would help the people in need because that would make me feel good to make other people happy."

**Joi,**  
12 yrs old



"I would make sure people know the world loves them and make sure kids get the education they need."

**Ty'J,**  
11 yrs old



# YOUR SUPPORT IN ACTION

**S**ince March, we have worked to coordinate home internet access for young people so they could continue to participate in group and individual activities remotely. Our instructors offered online classes each week. YEP's mentors provided phone and video mentoring services for each of their mentees. Enrichment staff offered virtual after school and camp sessions via Zoom, and our employment readiness team connected out-of-work youth to available jobs.

This fall, we are focused on addressing educational equity by supporting youth and schools facing the challenges of distance learning. We are doing this by providing flexible, out-of-school resources for youth, including deep mentoring relationships, tutoring, supportive services, alternate educational pathways, creative career exploration, and extracurricular activities.



YEP is an organization founded on the principle of caring for one another. The strength of our work is grounded in our ability to build strong relationships with young people, their families, and the community we serve.

**And we could not do any of that without the generosity and commitment of you, our partners and donors.**

We anticipate a long and uneven road to recovery once the pandemic finally subsides. But YEP was here for Hurricane Katrina and the aftermath, and we're here now, working with our community to build a future in which all young people have equal access to opportunity.

**Together, we can empower young people to improve their lives and the lives of others.**



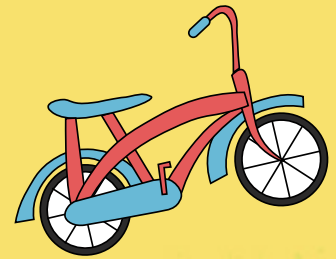
1600 Oretha Castle Haley Blvd.  
New Orleans, LA 70113

**FOLLOW US!**

   @yepnola

 [youthempowermentproject.org](http://youthempowermentproject.org)

# GET INVOLVED



## MAKE A YEAR-END GIFT

Your support provides young people with the opportunity to develop the skills, resources, and relationships they need to thrive in a challenging environment. Thanks to matching pledges from the Oscar J. Tolmas Charitable Trust and the Rusovich Family Foundation, your gift will have twice the impact this year.

### **DONATE AT**

[youthempowermentproject.org/donate](http://youthempowermentproject.org/donate).

## SHOP YEP

Our stores are open to customers, and we are also collecting donations.

### **CURRENT HOURS**

#### **YEP BIKE WORKS**

Monday-Friday, 12pm-5pm  
1604 Oretha Castle Haley Blvd.

#### **YEP THRIFT WORKS**

Monday-Friday, 10am-3pm  
1626 Oretha Castle Haley Blvd.