



May 2024



Program Update - Springfield Trip

In April, YCC members Alex, Yoahly, and Ismael went to the 2024 YouthBuild Illinois Leadership Summit in Springfield with YCC Staff members Dan Knight, Steven Panos, and Executive Director Jennifer Yonan. The summit included team building activities with other YouthBuild programs from across the state, followed by a full day of building activities. The YCC team showcased their skills by building a luxury doghouse that made its new owner, who observed the construction from her office window, very happy!

On Day 3, the team went to the state capitol to meet state leaders and politicians, including State Senator Adriane Johnson and State Representative Rita Mayfield. It was an inspiring and energizing experience for everyone!



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Partnership Connections



Connect Lake County

Many of our members at YCC experience challenges with digital equity – lacking access to technology that enables them to work, learn, and contribute to the community via online resources. Through our partnership with ConnectLakeCounty, we are addressing this need and providing training and tools for our members to bridge the digital divide. A ConnectLakeCounty facilitator has been with YCC members on a weekly basis for digital training. At the end of the 7-week program, members who complete the training will be provided with a laptop computer to take home, free of charge.



DK Organics



Thanks to our friends at DK Organics, our 27 raised garden beds are well-nourished and ready to grow. DK Organics provided two truckloads of mulch so the food crops that members have planted will thrive this year! Our garden beds will yield tomatoes, zucchini, corn, and much more, which will be offered free of charge to our neighbors around our Waukegan facility.

Grainger and ToolBank USA Picnic Table Build

Our corporate partners are amazing! In April, Grainger's Black Enterprise Network and Latino BRG worked with ToolBank USA and YCC members on a volunteer project at our YCC location in Waukegan. Our partners and YCC students built 20 picnic tables and 20 benches that were donated to local nonprofit organizations such as the Boys & Girls Club, Community Works, CLC Urban Farm, Staben Center, and local food pantries.



Staff Shoutout: Mr. Fred Williams



We are proud to report that our very own Fred Williams was selected by the American Red Cross of Greater Chicago as one of the 2024 class of Red Cross Heroes. Honorees were chosen by an independent committee of leaders in the business and civic community. Mr. Fred and the other Heroes will be honored in May at the annual Red Cross Heroes Breakfast at Navy Pier. The class of Red Cross Heroes are an exemplary group of individuals who have gone above and beyond in their efforts to build better communities, and who have made a lasting impact on others in the process. At YCC, we have always known how amazing Mr. Fred is!

Rockegan Recap



On April 18 YCC hosted our annual celebration and fundraiser, Rockegan, at the Genesee Theater in Waukegan. Featuring local superstar musician Ivy Ford, the event was an enormous success!

Thank you to all who attended and supported the event, to our members who shared their experiences, and to all of our sponsors who made it possible.

Check out the selfie gallery

Thank you sponsors for your support.



Member Q&A with Springfield Trip Participants Alex and Ismael



Q: Tell me about your experience in Springfield.
Alex: It was really exciting and fun to meet new people and build things with my partners from YCC. It was also good to meet new people from other YouthBuild programs. Everyone communicated well with each other and it was a really nice experience.
Ismael: It was nice to meet elected officials like Rita Mayfield, who represented YCC at the Capitol. The build-off was fun and the food was good! Visiting the Capitol was cool – the governor was there! There were lots of paintings and the building had tunnels underneath it.
Q: What was the most memorable part of the trip?
Alex: Meeting all the government representatives and seeing how they work and communicate with other people. It was really cool seeing how the government operates behind the scenes.
Ismael: Breakfast! Just kidding. Seeing all the other YouthBuild programs in action and all the different methods they used was really interesting. A lady across the street from where we were working offered to buy the doghouse we built and we gave it to her for her dog.
Q: What are your plans for the future?
Alex: After I leave YCC I want to apply to a painting job or else I want to come back here and join the graduate program and work towards an even better job.
Ismael: I'm waiting for carpenters' union test and pre-apprenticeship opportunity to open this summer. I want to join the union and apprentice for four years and then climb the ranks as a professional carpenter. If that doesn't work out I'm thinking about joining the army.
Q: Is there anything else you'd like to add?
Ismael: I want to say thank you to the YouthBuild Coalition of Illinois for providing all the materials.

In our next issue
Spring Campaign – Coming soon!
Breaking ground for hands-on training
Celebration of Achievement
Partner volunteer day at Arbor Park
Golf Outing

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