



# Annual Report 2017

**Y.O.U.**  
YOUTH & OPPORTUNITY UNITED

# Dear Friends,

During the past year Y.O.U. made great progress, and we have solid plans to continue that momentum into the coming year.

We adopted a new three year strategic plan and a big goal: to close the opportunity gap by preparing youth for post-secondary and life success. We will do this through enhanced out-of-school learning, counseling and support, and parent engagement. We now have a clear pathway for our students from third through twelfth grade. With a clear vision, a great plan and a talented staff we are well positioned for 2018 and beyond.

We successfully completed the third pillar of the Campaign for Youth Opportunity when we moved into our new headquarters and youth center at 1911 Church Street in late January 2017. The results have been dramatic.



We are using the new facility to transform our services, expand our impact, and broaden our reach. Here are some examples:

- Local chefs are partnering with our staff to use our state-of-the-art kitchen to teach the culinary arts and help our youth build life skills including leadership and teamwork.
- Our Gathering Space has lived up to its name as we have hosted numerous local groups and partners. We are having a positive impact in the community.
- We look forward to opening our Makerspace soon and creating a touchpoint for exploratory activities to build youth proficiency in the sciences, technology, engineering, arts and math.

We have been carefully preparing for our transition and will soon welcome a new leader to guide us in fulfilling our mission—following the inspirational footsteps of Seth Green and Don Baker.

We are grateful for the support of our community and all of you who have helped lay the groundwork for a future that allows us to empower youth and families. Thank you for helping Y.O.U. achieve its potential in 2017!

**Sue Brenner**  
Board President

**Marianne Moberly**  
Interim Executive Director



# Y.O.U. in 2017

In 2017, we adopted a new strategic plan and with it, a “Big Goal”: to prepare youth for post-secondary and life success.

Our three-pronged program strategy is designed to achieve this “Big Goal” by: 1) Advancing youth success; 2) Building youth resilience; and 3) Catalyzing parent networks. These “ABC’s” had a powerful impact on youth and families in 2017:

## ADVANCE

**85%** of Y.O.U. youth are improving or maintaining their academic achievement.

## BUILD

**94%** of Y.O.U. youth report strong self-confidence.

## CATALYZE

**88%** of Y.O.U. caregivers report that Y.O.U. has helped them feel more involved in their child’s learning.

**1,600+**  
YOUTH SERVED

**4,000+**  
FAMILY MEMBERS REACHED



OUR BIG GOAL

Y.O.U. closes the opportunity gap by advancing youth success, building youth resilience & catalyzing parent networks.



# Advancing Youth Success

Our Out-of-School Time (OST) Program offers a “high expectations, high support” pathway to post-secondary and life success.

Our OST Program is offered at the eleven highest-need public schools across Evanston and Niles Townships. We provide free, high quality learning, social-emotional enrichment, and trauma-informed support services that help youth grow in four areas: skills and knowledge, self-regulation, mindsets, and values.

Over the last year, we deepened our pathway model with the launch of an 8th-to-9th grade bridge program and partnered with the University of Chicago Consortium on School Research to embrace their “Framework for Young Adult Success” within our programming.

“

Y.O.U. helped my daughter understand what she was taught in class through review and homework support. If Y.O.U. did not exist...she would not be exposed to extracurricular activities which give her an opportunity to have fun and learn new skills.

*Y.O.U. caregiver*

89%

Nearly 9 in 10 Y.O.U. youth demonstrate strong leadership skills.





ADVANCING YOUTH SUCCESS

# Academic Enrichment

Y.O.U. supports students in their current academic work and sparks curiosity and aspiration-building for their futures.

## SUPPORTING CRITICAL TRANSITIONS

Research indicates that the transition from middle to high school is pivotal in determining youth's post-secondary and life success. Based on this evidence, in 2017, Y.O.U. launched PEER—an 8th-to-9th grade bridge program to strengthen our pathway and more deeply support youth and families as they transition into Evanston Township High School. The first cohort of rising 9th graders convened three times per week during the summer before their freshman year to learn about academic expectations, explore career opportunities, and build time management and study skills for success in high school.

## PROMOTING A LOVE OF LITERACY

At Y.O.U., we offer academic supports that ensure youth engagement, enthusiasm, and inquiry. This year, in the elementary space, we launched a Reader's and Writer's Workshop literacy program that is designed to create a safe space for youth to explore their interests and practice their reading and writing skills in an affirming environment. This evidence-based workshop model offers youth access to an array of high-interest, skill-appropriate books that focus on characters that are representative of the youth we serve and deal with issues that youth can relate to.



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96%

More than 9 in 10 Y.O.U. youth report strong academic motivation.





## Meet Brianna

Brianna, a 5th grader at Edison Elementary School, is in her third year of Y.O.U. programming and describes herself as “active, talkative, smart, and brave.” One of Brianna’s favorite activities at Y.O.U. is the weekly Readers and Writers Workshops. These workshops are designed to provide youth with a safe space to build confidence and excitement about literacy. Brianna notes, “I’m reading *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* and am almost done!”



## Meet Carl

Carl is a Y.O.U. 8th grader at King Arts who wants to be an architect. The academic challenges he faced sometimes made him shut down and have trouble opening up to his family and friends. After working closely with Y.O.U. Afterschool Program Manager, Jafet Melendez, in a safe, welcoming space, Carl was able to improve his communication skills and get the support he needed to be confident in his homework. Carl is excited to begin high school and work toward his goals for the future.





# Social Development & Emotional Support

Across our programs, Y.O.U. youth participate in activities that build healthy relationships, communication and teamwork skills, and social-emotional coping strategies.

## MAKING HEALTHY CHOICES

Y.O.U. youth learn by doing—especially in our learning garden! In partnership with The Talking Farm, Y.O.U. launched a new gardening initiative called F Cubed (Food, Farming, Future), where high schoolers learn the ins and outs of food production, farming, cultivation, and healthy eating. This spring, youth took it outdoors to build raised beds for the garden; grow, tend, and harvest vegetables; and even sell their produce at Evanston's West-End Farmers Market.

## DEVELOPING LEADERSHIP SKILLS

This year, Y.O.U.'s #MediaQueens - a group of female-identified middle school youth—worked in site teams to explore how women are portrayed in various forms of media and to identify aspects of healthy relationships. At the end of the 8-week cycle, the groups came together to take over the McGaw YMCA's MetaMedia Center and celebrate one another through activities such as a body-positive photo booth and creating female superheros.

93%

More than 9 in 10 Y.O.U. youth know how to set goals for their future.





# Building Youth Resilience

Our Clinical and Outreach Team provides integrated mental health counseling, case management, and 24-7 housing crisis intervention to build the resilience of youth.

## EXPRESSING EMOTION

Our clinicians develop innovative counseling programs to create a safe, informal environment for youth to engage in trauma-informed and equity-based practices. For example, in 2017, our culinary therapy program, The Chew, moved into our brand-new demonstration kitchen, giving youth access to state-of-the-art culinary equipment while building pro-social and coping skills.

## RESPONDING TO EMERGING NEEDS

Our clinical and outreach team meets youth where they are, delivering integrated, trauma-informed services within our OST Program and linking disconnected youth to local resources and agencies. Our new building offers two private clinical counseling rooms and space for weekly drop-in services to ensure access and enhance services for youth and families.

# 94%

More than 9 in 10  
Y.O.U. youth report  
knowing how  
to make healthy  
choices.



# Future Outdoor Explorers

This summer, Y.O.U. middle schoolers explored the great outdoors thanks to the FOX (Future Outdoor Explorers) program.

This clinically-informed wilderness program was designed by Y.O.U. clinician Trevor Pontillo and focuses on building psychoeducational skills—such as mindfulness, self-exploration, and emotional regulation—as well as wilderness skills like compass navigation, setting up a tent, and survival methods.

“Taking youth out of their normal environment and bringing them to the wilderness, which is often uncomfortable and new, helps them explore their identity,” Trevor explains. “Youth are always looking forward to the group, and their parents notice they are more engaged at home.” At the end of the summer, these young explorers journeyed to Mammoth Cave National Park in Kentucky to put their wilderness skills to the test.





# Partnering for Post-Secondary Success

This spring, parents at Chute and King Arts schools identified college access resources as an urgent need across their school communities.

In order to address this need, Y.O.U. staff partnered with Evanston Scholars, Loyola and Concordia Universities, Evanston Township High School, and Northwestern's Center for Talent Development to offer tips and information about post-secondary planning during middle school years.

Over 85 students, caregivers, community members, and school staff across Chute and King Arts attended these events to build knowledge about college access, high school enrollment and courses, and learn about new resources and agencies.



**TOP LEFT PHOTO:** Youth and families at a Walker Elementary Family Night practice mindfulness and yoga techniques in Y.O.U.'s new gathering space.





# Catalyzing Parent Networks

We support strong parent networks through monthly family nights, leadership development opportunities, and caregiver support groups.

## **SUPPORTING STRONG FAMILIES**

Our clinicians facilitate trauma-informed support groups to offer skill-building and psychoeducational services to parents and caregivers. These groups meet monthly to support caregivers in navigating their child's school and other institutions; supporting their child's social-emotional growth; and building leadership skills to engage in their community.

## **ENGAGING PARENTS AS PARTNERS**

Alongside Y.O.U.'s bi-weekly elementary literacy program, we engage families as partners in supporting and encouraging youth literacy. This year, our Dawes and Washington Elementary sites held a joint Family Night at the Evanston Public Library. Families could tour the library, register for a library card, and even take home a brand new book of their choice thanks to the generosity of the Evanston Public Library.

# 88%

Over 8 in 10 Y.O.U. caregivers say that Y.O.U. has helped them feel more involved in their child's learning.

# Our Headquarters

In January 2017, we moved into our brand-new youth center and headquarters, located in the heart of our community at 1911 Church Street in Evanston. This facility offers transformational spaces for youth development activities, mental health counseling, and community gatherings.

## Makerspace

Our youth are innovators, artists, and engineers. In our Makerspace, they have the tools to build, design, and create. Whether it's film-editing software, 3-D printers, or circuit boards, youth have access to the equipment and mentorship they need to become master creators.



## Demonstration Kitchen

Nothing brings people together like cooking and sharing a meal. In our kitchen, youth have access to commercial-grade equipment as they learn to make healthy choices, explore other cultures through food, and create lasting bonds.





## Learning Garden

Being in green spaces offers multiple educational and health benefits for youth. Our learning garden provides youth with the opportunity to learn about scientific concepts such as photosynthesis, explore eco-friendly activities like composting, and grow and harvest their own vegetables and fruits to be used in our demonstration kitchen and even sold at Evanston's West-End Farmer's Market!

## Gathering Space

Our central gathering space is a place to build community – where youth, families, staff, and community members can join together in learning and celebration. The multi-purpose room is also open for partners to reserve and embodies the spirit of collaboration at the heart of Y.O.U.'s program model.



## Counseling Rooms

Our counseling rooms provide a consistent, confidential, and comfortable space for youth and families to engage in clinical counseling, case management, and outreach services. These rooms help our staff ensure continuity and trust when supporting youth in crisis.

# Financial Report

*2017 Fiscal Year*

## OPERATING REVENUE

Government	2,365,066
United Way	537,500
Contributions	1,462,111
Special Events	337,167
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$4,701,844</b>

## OPERATING EXPENSE

Programming	3,389,405
Management	678,727
Outreach & Development	344,796
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$4,412,928</b>

<b>NET SURPLUS</b>	<b>288,916</b>
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\* The FY17 audit was being conducted at the time of publication; thus, these figures do not represent audited financials.





# Don Baker Circle for Youth

Named for our visionary Founder and Director Emeritus Don Baker, the Don Baker Circle for Youth is a special giving society established to recognize supporters who make annual fund contributions of \$1,000 or more to Y.O.U.

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Y.O.U. is grateful to our many generous donors.

Every effort is made to list donors accurately. We sincerely apologize for any omissions or errors in spelling.

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A planned gift helps unite the past and the future. Y.O.U. Legacy Partners was established in 2017 to recognize planned gifts to Y.O.U. and to allow our dedicated supporters to provide lasting support for the youth we serve. Planned gifts help grow our endowment—ensuring that Y.O.U. continues to expand opportunities and youth success to future generations. To become a founding member of Y.O.U. Legacy Partners, visit our website at [youthopportunity.org](http://youthopportunity.org).

“

Take a moment, take the opportunity to make the difference. I believe in providing in the present for the future.

—Jackie Quern, Legacy Partners Founding Member



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