



YOUTH • AGENCIES • ALLIANCE

YOUTH LEADERSHIP CIRCLE 2018

FINAL REPORT

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Youth Leadership Circle (YLC) is a six-week summer program for youth aged 10-14. Initially developed to address gang issues in Winnipeg's inner city, the Youth Leadership Circle (YLC) program has evolved into a hands-on program that promotes community engagement and skill-building within a supportive environment. Through mentorship, volunteering, and educational activities, we seek to show youth how they can contribute positively to their neighbourhoods.

Youth Agencies Alliance (YAA) is a network of 16 different youth-serving organizations across Winnipeg. YAA coordinates the program and each member agency is eligible to host a YLC site with up to 10 participants (dependent on funding). Since YAA member agencies primarily serve marginalized youth through their programming, we are well-positioned to identify youth who would most benefit from the YLC program. YLC aims to break down barriers vulnerable youth face through providing a safe and supportive environment for them to engage in positive activities during the summer. Over the course of 6 weeks in July and August, the participants gain valuable work and leadership experience, and contribute a minimum of 60 volunteer hours to their agency, neighbourhood and city.

2018 IMPLEMENTATION

In May, Youth Agencies Alliance (YAA) member agencies committed to hosting a 2018 Youth Leadership (YLC) program signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with YAA that detailed the goals, expectations, and job descriptions for the program. 13 of YAA's 16 members participated in the 2018 program, with one organization having 6 sites, resulting in a total of 18 YLC sites.

YAA agencies are responsible for hiring or designating a member of their staff to be their YLC Site Coordinator. Site Coordinators are essential to the program. They plan and implement their site's daily activities and also mentor and supervise their youth throughout the program.



The 2018 YLC Site Coordinators with the YAA Program Coordinator.

In June, Site Coordinators underwent three orientation sessions, became certified in Nonviolent Crisis Intervention and Emergency First Aid/CPR, and participated in a Behavior Management training. During the orientation sessions, each Site Coordinator was given a binder and USB stick containing all the necessary information and documentation such as the MOU, evaluation and tracking materials, and required forms needed to run and report on the YLC program.

Site Coordinators were responsible for creating a six-week activity calendar that reflected the YLC program's 1/3 policy, that a third of the planned activities must take place at their agency, a third must incorporate their immediate neighbourhood, and a third must explore the city at large. Site Coordinators were also encouraged to partner with other sites for an outing as well as host a fundraiser. The YAA Program Coordinator reviewed the draft calendars and provided feedback and assistance in making changes to ensure the planned activities aligned with the YLC program goals.

At the end of June, the YLC participants ("Youth Leaders") applied and went through a selection process for the program. Due to limited funding, 12 sites were allowed to select up to 8 participants for their program and the one agency that hosted 6 YLC sites was allowed to choose 5 participants for each of their sites.

The program officially began Tuesday, July 3 and ran until Tuesday, August 14. Throughout the six weeks Youth Leaders dedicated a **total of 10,181 hours** to the program. They participated in a variety of activities, including park clean ups, cooking classes, internet safety and resume writing workshops, tending to community gardens, visiting the Canadian Museum for Human Rights, and touring the Winnipeg Fire Station and the University of Winnipeg. Youth Leaders also volunteered at local charities such as Winnipeg Harvest.



Cooking Class



Speech Writing Workshop



Volunteering at St. Matthews



Human Rights Museum Visit



Winnipeg Fire Department Tour



Community Garden Upkeep

YLC sites also hosted fundraisers, such as a bake sale, art sale and car wash to raise funds for a charity of their choice. A **total of \$2,230.37** was raised and donated to places such as the United Way of Winnipeg, Bear Clan, Cancer Care Manitoba, Winnipeg Harvest, Ronald McDonald House, and the Winnipeg Humane Society.



Bake Sale



Car Wash

In July, the YLC participants also participated in the YAA Art Show, which is an annual program that brings together youth to work on an art centered on a specific theme and medium. The 2018 Art Show “Word on the Street” explored interpretations of popular buzzwords frequently heard on the news, on social media and in conversation. Using videography, as well as costume design, hairstyling, makeup artistry, performance art and interviewing skills, participants engaged with members of the public at the Forks to gather a range of perspectives about one of the following words: Community, Power, Reconciliation, Diversity, and Truth.



The YLC program concluded with a graduation ceremony which was held at the West End Cultural Centre on August 9th. Here, Site Coordinators, agency staff, Youth Leaders, their family and friends, community members, and funders came together to **celebrate the hard work and dedication of 154 Youth Leaders**.

This event was also combined with the Art Show Film Screening, which showcased 2 videos, one being the compilation film of the various interviews the youth conducted and the other being a mini documentary that provided an inside look into the workshop process.



During the graduation, 6 Youth Leaders were presented with a Valedictorian award. Nominated by their Site Coordinator, these Youth Leaders were recognized for truly embracing the spirit of the program by consistently going above and beyond expectations. As Valedictorians, they were each given the option to speak at grad and share their favourite moments from the program. This part of the ceremony was a positive experience for not only the audience who gets to hear directly from youth about their experiences, but also serves as an opportunity for youth to gain speech writing and public speaking skills.



The YAA Program Coordinator with the 2018 YLC Valedictorians.



As part of their participation, each Youth Leader was awarded a stipend that reflected the number of hours they contributed to the program. Site Coordinators took their Youth Leaders on a supervised shopping trip to purchase an item (or items) of their choice. Clothes, shoes, an iPod and school supplies were among the items that were most often purchased during the shopping trip. For many of the youth, this was the first time they were able to purchase something with money they earned themselves, which works to instill a sense of accomplishment and pride within the participants.

Once graduation and the shopping trips were complete, the Site Coordinators were given until August 28th to complete their paperwork and evaluations and submit it to YAA. This marked the official conclusion of the 2018 YLC program.

OUTCOMES AND EVALUATION RESULTS

Overall, this summer's Youth Leadership Circle program ran smoothly. The feedback we receive from both the Site Coordinators and their Youth Leaders captures how successful the program was in fulfilling its goals. Summarized in this section are the participant and staff evaluations that highlight the impact our program had on youth and their communities.

Due to funding, we had to reduce the number of youth per site to 8 for each of the 12 agencies hosting only one program site and to 5 participants for the one agency hosting 6 program sites when the program began. We were also unable to cover the costs of the Site Coordinator training or the program expenses. A few weeks into the program, we did receive confirmation for another grant which allowed us to give each agency \$250 which they were able to use towards having another youth in the program or towards program expenses and transportation. At the end of the program, we were awarded another grant, which will be used to reimburse Youth Agencies Alliance for program coordination costs, training and other program costs.

Despite these funding insecurities, the participants' experiences in the program was not affected due in large part to the dedication and contribution of each participating agency. When we were initially not able to cover program expenses, agencies were willing to allocate their own dollars towards their program site, as well as some agencies invited additional youth into their program and covered stipend costs. **Art City sponsored 10 youth, Broadway Neighbourhood Centre sponsored 2 youth, Ma Mawi sponsored 3 youth, and Teen Stop Jeunesse sponsored 2 youth.** Even after we were able to cover program costs, some agencies still put their own money towards program expenses in order to increase the quality and/or variety of activities the youth could participate in. **These commitments by individual agencies to the program shows the meaning this program has to their agency as well as to the youth and neighbourhood they serve.**

Every summer, we have typically hosted a Funder Tour during the summer. This event has served to provided funders with the opportunity to directly experience the program in action. This past summer's Funder Tour was set for August 2nd, but was unfortunately cancelled. The majority of our funder representatives ended up being on holidays that week and were therefore unable to attend. Due to the lack of rsvp's for the event, we made the decision to cancel it. This event has proven to be very positive for both the participants and the funders, so we do hope to host this event in the upcoming years.

LONGITUDINAL STUDY

Last year, YAA introduced the Youth Longitudinal Study (YLS). This evaluation tool was developed to demonstrate the long-term positive impacts the YLC program has on participants. We will be documenting and tracking their experiences with work, volunteering, and extracurricular activities they are involved with, post YLC program participation. YLS participation is voluntary and youth who chose to participate will be contacted for a fifteen-minute interview once a year for five consecutive years and will be given a \$10 honorarium for each interview they participate in. Once the study is concluded, the results will be shared with the participants, the community, and program funders.

Site Coordinators briefed Youth Leaders about the YLS during their first day of program and were given paperwork to bring home, discuss with their parents, and decide whether or not they wanted to participate. In 2017, we received 9 completed forms for the YLS and this fall we will be conducting our first round of phone interviews. This past summer, we received one completed form. Given the voluntary nature of the study, we understand that participation will vary year-to-year. We will continue our efforts and brainstorm ways to make this study easier to understand for youth and parents to understand the importance and necessity for the study.

YOUTH LEADER EVALUATION RESULTS

This year 305 youth applied for the YLC Program for 126 spots. A total of 143 youth were provided the opportunity to be Youth Leaders in the program (with 17 spots being sponsored by agencies). This reveals that **only 47% of those who applied were initially accepted into the YLC Program**. When additional money came through for the program, given the timing of the grant confirmation, agencies were given a choice to either allocated the additional dollars to having a youth join into the program or to allocate that money to program costs. From there, 5 additional youth were accepted into the program.

To help ensure all the stipend money is accounted for, each YLC site is allowed to have up to two youth who are designated as “on call”. These youth are not officially part of the YLC program, but may be called upon to join the program when a Youth Leader is unable to attend one or more days of program and is unable to make up those hours. This year 7 “on call” youth contribute hours to the YLC program and were part of the youth celebrated at the YLC Graduation.

This year we had 154 YLC program graduates. Of those youth, **79% of Youth Leaders completed the program start to finish and 21% partially completed the program**. Unfortunately, 1 youth was unable to complete the program. Given the population we serve, we are aware of our youth’s needs and understand that there may be factors that prevent them from being able to finish the program. Site Coordinators strive to provide support to youth that are struggling to meet expectations and work with them to prevent them from having to leave the program.

Below is our participant age breakdown, based on 145 pre-program surveys collected.

Age 9 – 1%	Age 13 – 21%
Age 10 – 12%	Age 14 – 14%
Age 11 – 22%	Age 15 – 3%
Age 12 – 24%	Age N/A – 3%

30% of Youth Leaders had participated in YLC in previous years. Assuming these statistics are similar for youth who did not complete the survey, we would have **engaged approximately 102 new youth this year**.

Similarly to previous years, Youth Leaders were given a pre-program and post-program evaluation to fill out. Below are some of the highlights from the youth evaluations.

PRE-PROGRAM RESPONSES:

By indicating 'yes' or 'sometimes'....

- 95% of youth indicated they like their neighbourhood
- 90% feel like they belong in their neighbourhood
- 100% like learning/doing new things
- 96% like working with others
- 99% like helping other people
- 97% want to make the world a better place to live

If you could change one thing about the neighbourhood you live in, what would it be?

- "New houses, bigger schools, biking trails, more modern, bigger playgrounds."
- "For people to get along and stop bullying people, stop getting drunk all the time, and stop gang violence."
- "Keep it safer for children, more colourful and happy."
- "To stop people from throwing garbage on the ground."
- "Change roads to better accommodate biking and skateboarding."

Why did you choose to join Youth Leadership Circle?

- "I love helping, it makes me feel like a better person. Also the money would be a great help to my family."
- "My siblings were in YLC and suggested I join it"
- "To help new people and get inspired, also to make new friends."
- "It gives me something to do during the summer, and I want to help my community and have fun."
- "To get work experience, to work with others, become independent, work on not being shy."
- "Wanted to do something new and out of my comfort zone, learn new things about the community."

POST-PROGRAM RESPONSES:

By indicating 'yes' or 'sometimes'....

- 100% of youth got along with their Site Coordinator**
- 100% got along with other youth**
- 98% felt they tried and learned new things
- 96% felt they improved or gained new skills
- 95% felt they made a difference in their community
- 98% felt they learned things helpful for their life

***The relationships Site Coordinators build with their Youth Leaders are essential to the success of this program. Not only do they develop close, supportive, one-on-one relationships with each of their Youth Leaders, they also help to facilitate relationships between the participants. We know that the participants did not necessarily get along 100% of the time, but the work they put into building teamwork and interpersonal skills throughout the six-weeks allowed them to reflect on their time spent together as a positive experience.*

What jobs exist that you didn't know existed before?

- "Tour Guide"
- "Community Investments Manager"
- "Sound Technician"
- "Dietician"
- "Carpenter"

What was your favourite part of Youth Leadership Circle this summer?

- “volunteering” (x14)
- “learning about my community”
- “making new friends and trying new things”
- “everything” (x17)
- “spending time with the group, trying new things together and building new friendships”
- “YAA Art Show” (x4)
- “going to the United Way and meeting the investment manager”

SITE COORDINATORS EVALUATION RESULTS

Site Coordinators are central to the success of the YLC program. They work directly with the Youth Leaders every day and support them throughout the program. Site Coordinators are role models for the Youth Leaders and have the potential to inspire them to pursue their interests.

Below are some of the key insights that were shared in the 19 evaluations that were submitted.

- Of the 19 Site Coordinators hired this year, 4 of them participated in the YLC program as youth.
- 13 of the 19 Site Coordinators indicated in their program went as planned this year. Those that said that the program did not go as planned identified their level of agency support, group dynamics of the youth as well as personal health reasons as obstacles they had to address during the program. At times this resulted in changes to the activity schedule in order to accommodate the needs of the staff or youth. However, these adjustments did not have an overall negative impact on the program.
- When asked about the strengths of their programs most Site Coordinators indicated that the youth themselves were a strength, stating:
 - “Having a group of youth leaders with such bubbly personalities. Always participating and adding to the conversations! Lots of joking around and good laughs.”
 - “The youth continually asked questions! No matter what the activity was, the youth were always engaged and wanting to learn more.”
 - “Determination and positivity. Youth knew how to find good in a bad situation, were determined to finish their tasks.”
- Overall, the Site Coordinators were satisfied with how YAA supports them in running the program at their site. Some identified that receiving more funding and resources, as well as opportunity to bring youth together would have been helpful to making a more well-rounded program.
- 100% of Site Coordinators indicated that their relationship with the youth at their site was positive or very positive, and they unanimously agreed that being involved in the YLC program this summer was a very positive experience for the youth.
- When asked to describe what they learned from the youth this summer, Site Coordinators shared:
 - “They have reminded me how exciting the little things can be, like pulling a carrot from a garden or eating lunch with your peers. Their spirit is infectious.”
 - “Youth who do not have much in common are capable of working together as a team and becoming good friends.”
 - “Running this program, I am reminded time and time again at just how much potential these young people have, they will accomplish so much, they are amazing.”
- 100% of Site Coordinators rated the Youth Leadership Circle program as ‘good’ or ‘excellent’ and the majority of them would like to serve as a Site Coordinator in the future.