



**NYC YOUNG MEN'S INITIATIVE
ANNUAL REPORT 2013**





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MISSION STATEMENT

The NYC Young Men's Initiative (YMI) transforms lives by connecting young men of color with the tools they need to succeed. YMI views each young man as a valuable asset to his family, his community and his city. It invests in our common future by providing Black and Latino young men with innovative programs, services and policy solutions focused on education, employment, health and justice. By focusing New York City's resources in a smart and strategic way, this unprecedented \$127 million public-private partnership has created a global model for helping young men to reach their goals, break the poverty cycle and build stronger communities.



FROM THE CO-CHAIRS

Opportunity. Access. Engagement.

Commitment to these values, and the belief that all young people can thrive if they have the right support, is central to our work. We are honored to co-chair the Advisory Board for the NYC Young Men's Initiative (YMI). Helping Black and Latino young men build stronger futures for themselves and their families is not just our mission, it's essential for our city to continue to thrive.

In the pages of this year's annual report, you will learn how increased access to education, health care, mentorship and jobs programs is enabling young men of color to thrive and our city to succeed. You'll hear these success stories from the young men in their own voices, and we promise you'll emerge as inspired as we are.

In only the second year of implementation, YMI is reshaping how NYC addresses the needs of these youth. Through improved public policy and service delivery across all five boroughs, young men are taking charge of their own lives.

Small steps are adding up to big change. Counselors are guiding young people through the process of obtaining a GED and taking them on tours of college campuses. Experts on job training and job placement are working to help young men develop the skills they need to find meaningful employment. Justice professionals have learned new approaches that help young men of color avoid the criminal justice system and make the changes needed to stay on the right side of the law.

We're proud of this unparalleled effort's early successes, including:

- Alternatives to probation and incarceration that give young men a second chance. Juvenile crime is 30% lower this year compared to last year. It has dropped 18% since 2006.
- The Expanded Success Initiative of YMI has invested in 40 high schools — reaching 4,000 freshmen — that are committed to the success of their Black and Latino students. Career readiness is increasing, and graduates are attending colleges across the country — some with prestigious scholarships.
- An average 28% drop in gun violence in certain neighborhoods after the introduction of Cure Violence, a program designed to treat violence as a public health issue. This effort enhances public safety and saves lives.

NYC faces an important transition with a new Mayor and administration coming in January 2014. This new administration will bring new energy and fresh ideas to meet the needs of all New Yorkers. We welcome the opportunity to engage with these leaders and hope to share with them how YMI is helping build stronger peer networks, stable families and future leaders.

Youth are the future of our city, and they deserve the promise of a better day. YMI is removing barriers, tackling disparities and providing opportunities to enable these young men to take their rightful place as leaders in their families, communities and our city.



Richard Buery, Advisory Board Co-Chair
Children's Aid Society



Elba Montalvo, Advisory Board Co-Chair
Committee for Hispanic Children and Families

OVERVIEW

In August 2011, the data on life outcomes for Black and Latino young men was bleak. Across New York City's five boroughs, Black and Latino young men had a poverty rate 50% higher than White and Asian young men. Their unemployment rate was 60% higher. They were two times more likely not to graduate from high school. They were more likely to become teen fathers. And more than 90% of young murder victims and perpetrators were Black or Latino.

The NYC Men's Initiative (YMI) was launched in August of 2011 as an unparalleled effort to address these broad disparities and better support young men of color in reaching their educational, professional and personal goals.

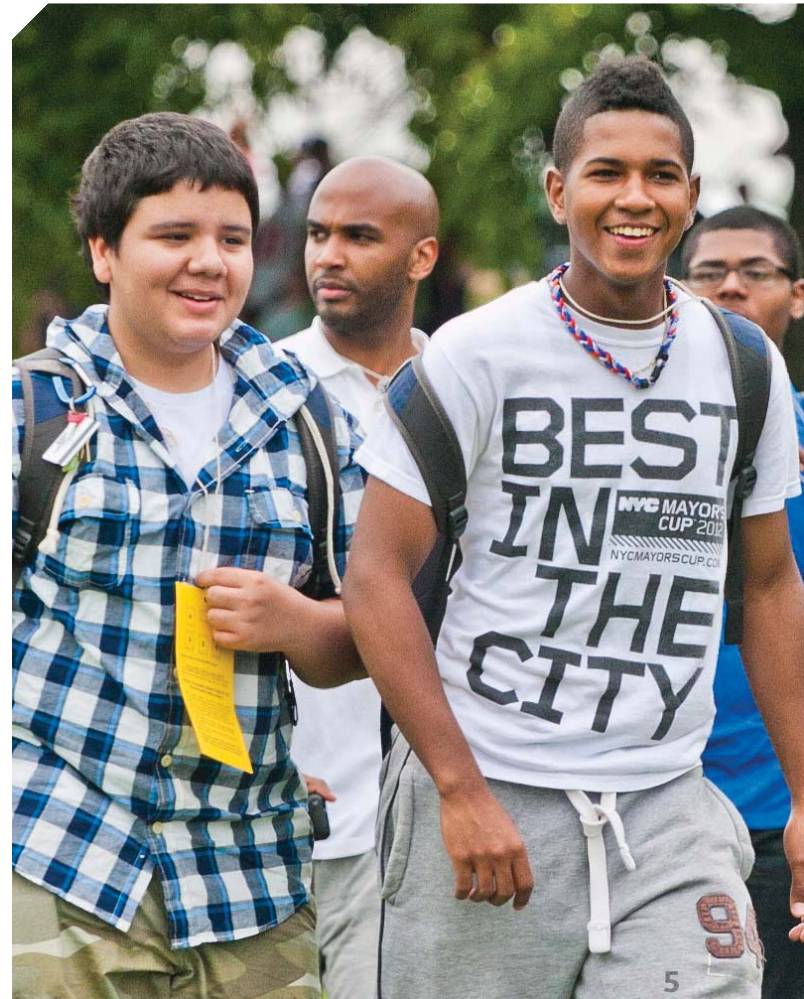
A historic \$43 million annual investment, YMI represents a groundbreaking partnership of the City of New York, Bloomberg Philanthropies and the Campaign for Black Male Achievement at The Open Society Foundations. Using this combination of public and private funds, YMI is working with more than 20 city agencies on programs and policies specifically designed to bolster Black and Latino young men and remove barriers on their pathways to success.

Just two years later, the results are promising. YMI has already begun to help Black and Latino young men turn the tide. Violence and murder rates have dropped, and incarceration rates are down. High school graduation rates are rising significantly, and more young men of color are attending schools specifically designed to prepare them for college and careers. Programs devoted to skill development and enhancement are finding young men where they live and are engaging them in industry-focused preparation. Youth in the justice system are being served in their communities and maintaining the vital connections to family and neighbors. And young

men themselves are stepping up as students, mentors, job seekers, engaged fathers and leaders empowered to shape their own futures.

It's imperative to continue to expand opportunity, access and engagement for Black and Latino young men, who represent 60% of the young men between the ages of 16 and 24 in New York City. They are not a special interest group; they are the future of New York. We need their health, well-being, full participation and leadership to continue to grow and thrive as a city.

In these pages, young men themselves will share the story of YMI's success. We invite you to learn more about how YMI is making a difference in their lives, and we hope you will join us.

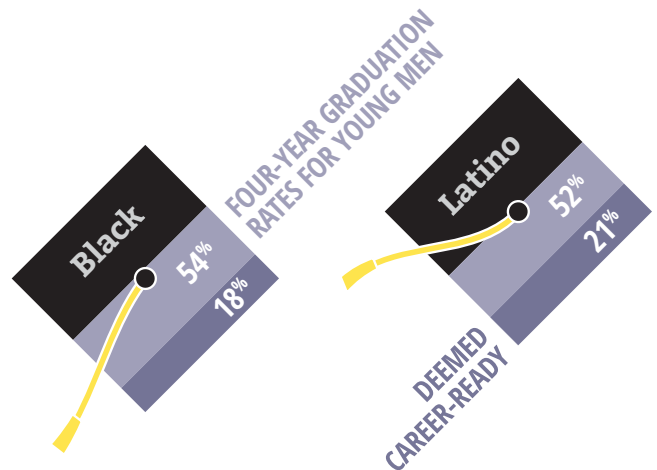


EDUCATION

Education is the most influential factor in anyone's life. It shapes outcomes for economic security, good health and civic engagement. However, many young men lagged behind their peers in school, didn't graduate from high school and became trapped by low expectations and economic hardship. Changing NYC's schools to reverse this trend is central to the YMI mission.

In only their second school year, YMI's programs and policy reforms are closing the opportunity gap and helping NYC's Black and Latino young men thrive in the classroom and find success in college and the workforce. This investment is providing promising returns, increased school success, stronger male role models in underserved communities and a cultural shift to high academic expectations.

The four-year graduation rates for Black and Latino young men are 54% and 52%, respectively. And only 18% of Black male college graduates and 21% of Latino male college graduates are deemed career-ready.



YMI EDUCATION PROGRAMS

The Expanded Success Initiative (ESI)

ESI uses new and creative solutions to narrow the achievement gap for Black and Latino young men to help them succeed. Through ESI, 40 NYC high schools will improve their academics, youth development programs and general culture for young men of color. ESI will observe and evaluate the 40 schools to recommend best practices for all high schools in NYC to better serve young men of color.

IMPACT (Improve My Progress At College Today)

IMPACT is an alumni-led peer mentoring initiative at the City University of New York that pairs GED program graduates with young men enrolled in GED programs. Students receive GED guidance, advice on college applications, information on financial aid and more. About nine out of 10 young men involved with IMPACT pass the GED, and many pursue college.

Young Adult Literacy Program (YALP)

YALP, overseen by the Department of Youth and Community Development, boosts youth literacy to pre-GED standards through instruction, internships and support at its sites in NYC. YMI funded YALP with \$1 million, adding five new sites to the existing 17 and spreading literacy among YMI's targeted youth with the expectation that they will advance to GED programs or employment training.

“YMI is working to end the school-to-prison pipeline and keep Black and Latino young men on a path to success. We must keep this up; there is more to do for their futures and the nation’s future.”

—Judith Browne Dianis
Co-Director of the Advancement Project
and YMI Advisory Board Member

Dariel Vasquez’s Success Story

The Choice Offered Was Hell or Prison. I Chose College.

As a young, Afro-Latino man from the projects in Harlem, I believed that by the age of 16 I had two choices in life: hell or prison. I came very close to becoming a statistic and fulfilling every negative and racist stereotype society holds for us. No matter how much love and support I receive from my parents, the truth is, growing up a young man of color is a dangerous thing.

I’m exactly like the other boys and young men who are running the streets, rotting in jail or dead. My only escape was my understanding that I could change my direction for the better.

Thurgood Marshall Academy, an anchor school in the NYC Young Men’s Initiative (YMI), opened another path for me. I found that my teachers and guidance counselors had the same expectations that my parents always had for me: college. My advanced placement biology teacher, Ms. Lall, pushed me harder than anyone, and my guidance counselors urged me to stay on top of my college essays and school visits.



I joined Brothers on a New Direction (BOND) and attended City College before going to daily high school classes. I started reading about history, politics and the society they shape. I read *The Pact*, a story about three young black men from Newark who kept the promise they made to each other to all grow up to be doctors. I joined a mentorship program through JPMorgan Chase, hoping to influence and impact young boys that look just like me and let them know that they too have another option for the future.

Thanks to a full-ride academic scholarship, I’ll be one of the only black male faces at Bard College. I know that some of my white peers may look at me and think “he’s an affirmative action choice,” but I’ve learned to rise above those who say we are “takers.”

But I am taking my AP biology credits to start my new path toward becoming an orthopedic surgeon.

health

CUNY

Fatherhood Academy

ACS

Adolescent Preventive Services Program

DOHMH

Promote Policies to Facilitate Teens' Utilization of Health Services

DOHMH/HHC

Pure Justice
Teen-accessible Clinics Criteria

DOE

Sex Education Mandate

HHC

HHC Teen and Young Adult Health Program

VARIOUS

NYC Dads: The Fatherhood Initiative

NYC

YOUNG MEN'S

An unprecedented citywide effort, the **NYC Young Men's Initiative** is a cross-agency effort across agencies in education, health, justice, and employment to raise awareness about our programs and policies.

justice

DOP

AIM: Advocate, Intervene, Mentor

Arches: Transformative Mentoring

Community Education Pathways to Success-CEPS

ECHOES

Justice Community

Justice Scholars

Neighborhood Opportunity Networks (NeONs)

RAP Sheet Clean Up

CUNY

NYC Justice Corps

ACS/DOP/CJC

Juvenile Justice Reforms/Realignment

Close to Home

DCAS

Executive Order 151: Consideration of Criminal Convictions in Hiring

DOC

ABLE: Adolescent Behavioral Learning Experience

employment

DYCD/DOE

Summer Youth Employment

SBS

Expanded Men's Training/Jobs

HRA/NYCHA

Jobs-Plus

INITIATIVE

The YMI targets innovative programs in education, justice, and employment. Learn more about these programs at www.nyc.gov/youngmen

education

DYCD

Cornerstone:
After School Mentoring
Young Adult Literacy Program (YALP)

CUNY

IMPACT Peer Mentoring for Young Adult Literacy

DOE

Accountability/School Progress Reports
Expanded Success Initiative
Special Education Reforms
Strategies to Reduce School Suspensions

HHS/NYC SERVICE

Citywide Mentoring Programs

DOE/CJC

Mentoring For Real

NYC SERVICE

Mentoring Training and Technical Assistance

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

Mayor's Youth Leadership Council

VARIOUS

Executive Order 150:
Helping New Yorkers Access Identification
Work Progress Program

DYCD

Young Adult Internship Program (YAIP)

partner agencies

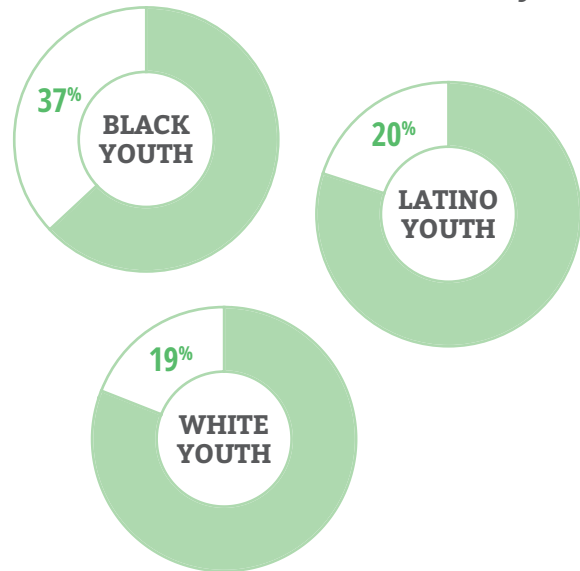
ACS	Administration for Children's Services	● ●
CJC	Criminal Justice Coordinator	● ●
CUNY	City University of New York	● ● ●
DCAS	Department of Citywide Administrative Services	●
DOC	Department of Correction	●
DOE	Department of Education	● ● ●
DOHMH	Department of Health and Mental Hygiene	●
DOP	Department of Probation	●
DYCD	Department of Youth and Community Development	● ● ●
HHC	Health and Hospitals Corporation	●
HHS	Health and Human Services	●
HRA	Human Resources Administration	●
NYCHA	New York City Housing Authority	●
SBS	Small Business Services	●

EMPLOYMENT

New York City's economy is growing, but Black and Latino young men are still disproportionately unemployed or underemployed. Being disconnected from the job market traps young men in a cycle of economic hardship that can last for generations. These young men need equal opportunities to find good jobs for their futures and for NYC to continue its economic recovery. When employers can access the full participation of well-prepared young people, their businesses will thrive.

YMI has worked with NYC agencies since 2011 to provide young men of color with the internships, job training and placement that are essential to help level the playing field. Experts have found that employment programs work best when youth are engaged, learning both soft and hard skills for today's jobs.

The unemployment rate in NYC for males, ages 16–24, is 20% for Latino youth and 37% for Black youth versus 19% for White youth.



YMI EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMS

Executive Order 150: Helping New Yorkers Access Identification

State-issued identification is critical to gaining employment, enrolling in public benefit programs and opening a bank account. Executive Order 150 is a public awareness campaign that provides New Yorkers with vital information on how to obtain state-issued photo identification.

The Young Adult Internship Program (YAIP)

YAIP is spearheaded by the NYC Department of Youth and Community Development and serves more than 3,000 Black and Latino youth, more than 16% of whom are neither working nor in school. YAIP lowers that percentage through a three-phase process of assessment, educational workshops and placement in advanced training courses or jobs.

Jobs-Plus

Jobs-Plus helps all working-age residents of NYC public housing developments, where 56% of residents do not report employment and 84% of households earn below NYC's average median income. Jobs-Plus improves on-site access to employment-related services, promotes rent-based work incentives to help workers retain paychecks and supports activities that promote household-to-household networking.

“We can’t afford to leave young men of color behind. We need everyone to help level the playing field to ensure equal opportunities so NYC achieves economic growth and prosperity.”

—Mindy Tarlow

CEO of the Center for Employment Opportunities
and YMI Advisory Board Member

Joaquin Capehart’s Success Story

Poetic Justice

I owe my professional success and my start on the late-night open mic circuit to the Young Adult Internship Program (YAIP).

Armed with nothing more than a high school diploma and one semester of college, at 20 years old, I jump-started my career and pursuit of poetics at Henkels & McCoy (H&M) Training Group.

As a YAIP participant, I interned at the CUNY Catch Program at LaGuardia Community College and learned basic, but significant, on-the-job skills like how to communicate effectively and how to prioritize tasks and responsibilities. This program also helped me build confidence in myself and my abilities.

No amount of self-assurance, however, could prepare me for my job hunt following the completion of my internship. I diligently applied to position after position and went on several interviews that turned out to be dead-ends.



I joined the H&M’s Out-of-School Youth Workforce Development Program, Career Connections, and after receiving counseling, I realized I could continue to build my skills and earn occupational credentials while continuing to pursue employment. I also began performing my poetry around the city at local cafés and even at Career Connections.

Fast forward a few months later to when H&M was looking to hire an administrative assistant. I applied for, was offered and accepted the job.

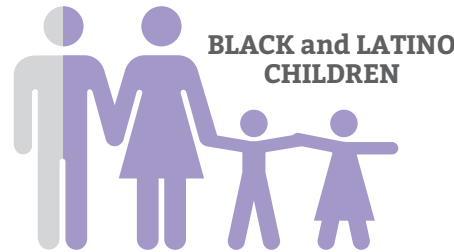
The NYC Young Men’s Initiative led me to an internship that resulted in a full-time job offer, an associate’s degree from Berkeley College and a recently-published book of poetry titled “Thoughts of a Spoken Poet.”

HEALTH

NYC's young men of color need healthy, vibrant and safe communities to reach their full potential, but too many Black and Latino youth live in communities plagued by violence and poor access to quality health care.

YMI is coordinating the efforts of the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, Health and Hospitals Corporation, City University of New York and other health-related city agencies to improve the health of Black and Latino young men. Neighborhood clinics are taking new approaches to engage youth, ensure access to health care, connect young men to mentors and support a community-based approach to violence prevention. Additionally, The Fatherhood Initiative is successfully encouraging young men to take a more active role in the lives of their children, families and communities.

About half of Black and Latino children in NYC are raised in a fatherless home, compared to about one-tenth of White children.



YMI HEALTH PROGRAMS

Center for Teen Health Improvement

The Center for Teen Health Improvement facilitates access to sexual education and makes health care more accessible. Participants learn simple ways to care for themselves and best practices for health as they transition into adulthood and take on more responsibility. The Health and Hospitals Corporation implements this outreach by learning how to treat, educate and further address the sexual needs of young people, primarily young men.

Cure Violence

Cure Violence is an evidence-based violence reduction model that treats violent crime as a public health issue. Certain neighborhoods in NYC have seen gun violence drop by up to 40%. Jointly administered by the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene and the Health and Hospitals Corporation, outreach staff and violence interrupters work with high-risk young people to defuse violent activity before it happens.

CUNY Fatherhood Academy

Far too many Black and Latino children grow up without the emotional and financial support of their fathers. The CUNY Fatherhood Academy at the City University of New York provides Black and Latino fathers with college prep, internships and parenting skills. These, in turn, help them remain connected to their families and improve the quality of life for their children.

“ So many young men of color don’t know where to turn for health services. We have to keep removing barriers so these men can take care of themselves and their families, and YMI is doing just that. ”

—David L. Bell, M.D., M.P.H.
Medical Director for the Young Men’s Clinic
at the New York-Presbyterian Hospital/
Columbia University Medical Center
and YMI Advisory Board Member

Rajib Gonzalez’s Success Story

Raising Rajib

Born in Brooklyn, living in the Chelsea Projects, I was unemployed and struggling to define myself as a man. I had my first child at 17. Two more followed.

I didn’t understand the responsibility I had to my children. My life and the relationships I had with my family were just going in the wrong direction.

I realized that I couldn’t control everything and that I needed to accept reality. I had communication issues with the mothers of my children, and I knew I had to make a change.

When I saw a flyer for the CUNY Fatherhood Academy, it put a spark in me. As part of the NYC Young Men’s Initiative, the staff at the Fatherhood Academy listened to me and challenged me to make changes in my life. They helped me overcome the barriers I had



with my children’s mothers, so now we can communicate effectively for our kids’ sake.

I’m focused on my education and studying accounting at LaGuardia Community College. I am also tutoring young men to help them get their GEDs. I feel strongly that this is my destiny, helping other young fathers succeed.

The impact my actions have had on my kids has been enormous. This year, I attended my 7-year-old daughter’s birthday party for the first time.

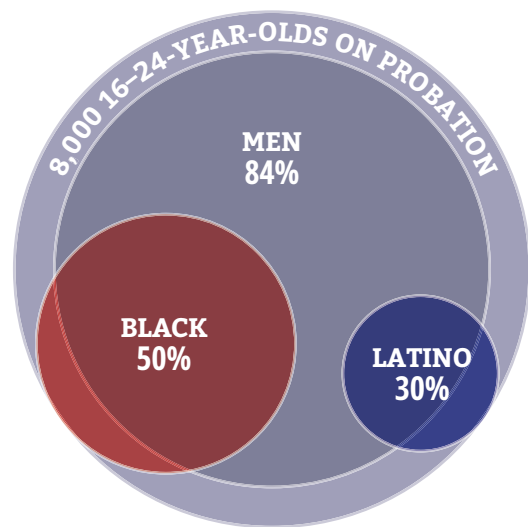
Finally, at 25 years old and thanks to the Young Men’s Initiative, I’ve grown up. I’m a man, and I’m a father.

JUSTICE

Involvement in the criminal justice system at an early age, which is the reality for a disproportionately high number of NYC's Black and Latino young men, can prevent youth from the building the lives they want for themselves.

YMI improves outcomes by combining new policy approaches and programs to support Black and Latino young men to change the trajectories of their lives. Through collaboration with NYC agencies, YMI helps those who are incarcerated by easing their transition from prison back into society and reducing the likelihood of re-arrest to keep NYC's communities safe and thriving.

About one-third (8,000) of the 27,000 people on probation in NYC are ages 16–24. Of these young people, an overwhelming 84% are men, 50% are Black and 30% are Latino.



YMI JUSTICE PROGRAMS

Arches

Arches is a group mentoring program for young probationers that helps prevent future court involvement by strengthening attachment to education, work and community. Participants gain a better understanding of personal responsibility and enhance their social skills, which in turn improves peer relationships, self-esteem and problem-solving skills. Arches also connects participants to educational, vocational and therapeutic programs as necessary.

Neighborhood Opportunity Networks (NeONs)

Young people on probation are more likely to succeed if they can access opportunities in their own communities. The NYC Department of Probation has co-located NeONs staff with organizations in communities where large numbers of young probationers live to develop effective networks that expand access to quality resources and services in probationers' neighborhoods.

Justice Community

Justice Community provides young, court-involved adults with case management, education on legal rights around employment, career support, opportunities to participate in community benefit projects and more. Participants gain a local peer group and the life skills that provide them with an alternative to negative social networks and a brighter future.

“ We’re literally changing the trajectory of these young men and giving them access to a second chance. YMI helps to get them out of the justice system and keep them where they belong: in their families and communities.”

—JoAnne Page
President of The Fortune Society
and YMI Advisory Board Member

Tyree Hicks’ Success Story

My Escape from Rikers Island

In 2012, I served time at Rikers Island for attempted criminal possession of a firearm.

It’s no surprise that’s where I ended up given my previous record. When I was 13, I was already selling drugs and committing crimes. I found myself in and out of jail several times between the ages of 15 and 23. In between my illegal activities, I had a son when I was 20 years old.

I left Rikers and escaped the path I was on. My probation officer led the way by referring me to the New York Center of Interpersonal Development’s Arches program.

Through Arches, I attended the Young Advocate Leadership Training (YALT) hosted by the Children’s Defense Fund. The training prepared me, and other young people, to get involved with community organizing for issues they care about. I started to see a different path for my



life, and most importantly I was supported by people who believed in me.

When I returned to New York, I served on the panel for the Arches Employment Summit. I also co-facilitated a presentation on anger management with my Arches program coordinator at the Staten Island Cease Fire Youth Summit. It makes me proud to be able to help other young men avoid the mistakes I’ve made.

Through the NYC Young Men’s Initiative, I’ve been given a second chance. I’m using this opportunity to deal with my anger and help me build a better relationship with my son.

THE FUTURE

With the Young Men's Initiative, NYC made an unparalleled commitment to change the tragic patterns of the past. Millions of boys and men of color faced odds stacked against them, and it was an exception to escape generational cycles of poverty, violence and neglect.

Innovative public and private leaders dedicated to leveling the playing field began to marshal the forces of policy innovation, targeted investment and evidence-based programming to change the odds. YMI became a promise to make the success and well-being of young men of color integral to the story of our city's evolution.

As we pass the second anniversary of this amazing investment in the potential of our young men, we can look back on a track record of success. But we can't stop here.

Now that we have an approach that works, we must continue to build upon early successes by expanding opportunity to every young person in need of guidance. We must also share YMI's innovative model with cities across the nation and around the world. That's why YMI is currently working to share solutions with five other cities in the U.S. as well as international capitals like London and Paris.

The barriers and obstacles that prevent young men of color from realizing their full potential were built up over decades. YMI is tearing down those walls with a multi-faceted approach to education, health training, job skills, mentorship, guidance and support for our young men of color. They are the seeds of our future, and we will reap tomorrow what we sow today. Our future is on the line. YMI is working every day to make it a brighter one for all.





Young Men's Initiative

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Roger Blissett
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Sheena Wright
United Way of New York

Alfonso Wyatt
Strategic Destiny, Inc.



The Young Men's Initiative is building for a successful future: optimizing city and private resources to increase access to opportunities for better education, health, employment and engagement so Black and Latino young men can take their rightful places as leaders in their families, communities and our city.

www.nyc.gov/youngmen

Follow us on Twitter: @NYCyoungmen