

Yonkers NYGEAR UP Summer Program 2015

NYGEAR UP (Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs) is designed to increase the number of students who are prepared to enter and excel in postsecondary education. During the summer 2015, Yonkers Public Schools (YPS) implemented a four-week summer program with the cohort of 7th grade students now entering 8th grade in the 2015-2016 school year. Students and their families were also provided with the opportunity to participate in St. John's University's summer camp. YPS was awarded the grant funds late in the 2014-2015 school year, and therefore, the time available to recruit students for the summer program and summer camp was limited.

St. John's University

St. John's University offered a residential summer camp held on their Queens Campus on June 27-28, 2015 for students and parents in any NYGEAR UP program throughout the state. The attendees had an opportunity to tour the campus, stay in the dorms overnight, network, and attend workshops. Student workshops included improving study skills, transitioning into high school, and getting into college, while parent workshops included financing postsecondary education and helping your child become successful in school and life. There were two male students and their families (one boy attended with his grandparents and the other attended with his mother) from Yonkers who attended the camp. The YPS Project Director also attended the June 27th Saturday night activities. The Yonkers NYGEAR UP attendees indicated that they thoroughly enjoyed the experience and found it educational. They highly recommended that other parents attend this program in the upcoming years.

YPS NYGEAR UP Summer Program

For four weeks, from July 7 through July 30, 2015, the YPS NYGEAR UP summer program was held Monday through Thursday at Saunders Trades and Technical High School with 79 students and seven teachers. The students were split into six groups of approximately 10-15 students. With small class sizes, teachers were able to engage with each student more effectively throughout discussions and were able to minimize distractions.

There was one core teacher who was assigned to each group and one floater teacher who supported the program and pushed into classes that needed additional support. Each teacher received one hour of professional development in collaborative lesson planning up to twice weekly from a CareerVisions mentor, from 7:30am to 8:30am. The CareerVisions mentor also provided instructional coaching during the scheduled CareerVisions activity. For the students, the program ran from 8:30am – 12:30pm and included transportation as well as breakfast. Each day, there were three periods of partner activities (see below) and/or activities led by the nurse where students received first aid and babysitting certifications.

Partners

The following partners participated in the 2015 Summer YPS NYGEAR UP program:

- **CareerVisions, Ltd.** provided career and community-focused activities to students through the provision of collaborative lesson planning and instructional coaching to each the teachers. Through CareerVisions, students were engaged in an in-depth exploration of careers related to health and their personal interests.
- **Interactive Health, LLC**, collected data, created surveys, and analyzed and presented the results.
- **Nepperhan Community Center Inc.** conducted personal development workshops for identified targeted students. These workshops were designed to encourage students to make healthy behavior choices, while enhancing student's critical thinking skill and developing life skills.
- **Yonkers Partners in Education (YPIE)** conducted a four-part series to each of the six groups of students. The four topics covered were: 1) Self-Awareness: Who Am I? 2) My Education – Why should I make 8th grade count? 3) What Can I Control? 4) The Angel Moorer Show, showcasing the life of a recent graduate of Roosevelt High School and how she turned her life around through a series of good decisions and with the help of supportive YPIE staff and school administrators. Ms. Moorer is currently a freshman at Morgan State University.

Demographics

There were 89 students who enrolled and 79 students who attended the program for an average of 15 of the 18 days (attendance rate of 83%). There were slightly more girls (60%) compared to boys (40%) who participated in the program. Of the participants, 11% were English Language Learners and 72% were Hispanic, 25% Black, 1% Asian, and 1% White.

Student Questionnaire

At the end of the program, 48 students (61% response rate) completed an 11 question two-page survey, with items adapted from the *Colorado Trust's After-School Initiative's Toolkit for Evaluating Positive Youth Development*. Most (66%) students indicated that they greatly enjoyed the YPS NYGEAR UP program. Most (60%) strongly agreed that the program helped them to think about jobs or future careers, and most (61%) strongly agreed that the program helped them to think about college or other training after high school. The students' favorite activity was Nepperhan Community Center Life Skills activity, followed by first aid certification, and CareerVisions. Their least favorite activity was the babysitting certification. Through the written comments, students stated that they learned a lot, the program helped them to be more focused on the future, they liked the activities and met new people. They also indicated that they wanted more activities, more field trips, and better food.

Teacher Questionnaire

At the end of the program, there were seven teachers (100% response rate) who completed a 19 question survey, with items adapted from the *New York State After-School Network Program Quality Self-Assessment Tool*. They agreed that the program provided a supportive environment, featured activities that were appropriate for the age and skill level of the students, and provided opportunities to develop personal responsibility, self-direction, and leadership. The teachers believed that the students' favorite activity was CareerVisions and their least favorite activity was the first aid certification, which differed from what the students indicated. Most (72%) of the teachers thought the CareerVisions mentors were extremely helpful and they learned useful information by working with their mentor. Through the written comments, the teachers stated that the best thing about the program was that they were able to work with students. They also indicated that more collaboration throughout the school year would be helpful.

Conclusion

The program was well received by both students and teachers and had a relatively high attendance rate for a summer program, which was held four days a week for four weeks. The program could have handled more students attending; however there was not much time to market and recruit students. Barriers included that some computers at the school did not work, thus compromising several lessons and there were some scheduling conflicts. In addition, partners commented that teachers were distracted at times, including using their phones. Overall, despite these barriers and lack of time to prepare for implementation and recruit students, students were engaged and the teachers, students, and partners were satisfied with the YPS NYGEAR UP summer program.

Yonkers NYGEAR UP Summer Program Student Survey Results 2015

At the end of the program in July 2015, students participating in the YPS NYGEAR UP program completed an 11 question survey, with items adapted from the *Colorado Trust's After-School Initiative's Toolkit for Evaluating Positive Youth Development*. Below are the results of **48 completed surveys** (61% response rate).

1. Gender:

Girl	Boy
52%	48%

2. How often did you attend the GEAR UP program?

All the time	Most of the time	A few times
64%	25%	11%

3. Why did you attend the GEAR UP program?

It seemed interesting	24%
I thought I would learn something new	20%
A teacher suggested it	27%
My parents suggested it	19%
My friends were attending the program	10%
Other:	
- I was forced	
- Failed more than 1 class	

4. Coming to this program has helped me to...	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Feel better about myself	20%	59%	15%	6%
Feel better about my future	53%	36%	9%	2%
Try new things	32%	59%	7%	2%
Think about jobs or future careers	60%	31%	7%	2%
Think about college or other training after high school	61%	28%	9%	2%
Learn about new careers	46%	43%	11%	-
Learn about people in my career field of interest	30%	50%	20%	-

5. Being involved in this program has helped me to...	Strongly	Agree	Disagree	Strongly
	Agree			Disagree
Stay out of trouble	29%	31%	29%	11%
Avoid violence and fighting	27%	40%	22%	11%
Make better decisions	50%	35%	13%	22%

6. What was your MOST favorite activity during the GEAR UP program?

Nepperhan Community Center - Life Skills Activity	48%
YPIE - College Readiness	9%
CareerVisions	15%
Baby Sitting Certification	2%
First Aid Certification	26%
Other:	
- Going outside	
- I liked everything	

7. What was your LEAST favorite activity during the GEAR UP program?

Nepperhan Community Center - Life Skills Activity	13%
YPIE - College Readiness	28%
CareerVisions	11%
Baby Sitting Certification	33%
First Aid Certification	15%

8. How much did you enjoy the GEAR UP program?

A lot	Some	Little	None
66%	28%	6%	-

9. Would you recommend that other students attend the GEAR UP program?

A lot	Some	Little	None
48%	50%	2%	-

10. What did you like best about this program?

Learning/Careers/Future

- I like the program because I at least learned something.
- What I like best about the program was I learned a lot. Also, we had fun activities and I knew things about my future job and skills to prepare.
- I learned about the careers involved with my interests.
- What I liked about the program was that I go to learn about making good decisions and careers.
- I liked that the fact that they helped us and guided us into really leaning about our future jobs and the teachers and children.
- I like that they gave us suggestions on how to do good in the future.
- Helping me be more focused on what I want to do in life.
- Learning new stuff.
- The thing I liked best in the program is how we learned about different careers.
- What I liked about this program is that it helps you to succeed in life.
- The thing I liked best about this program is that it made me feel good about myself.
- It helped me to choose a career.
- I liked that they helped us and guide us with information for the future.
- It helped me learn who I wanted to be and how to express myself in different situations.
- I like that this program gives me other interests and job career to look into.

Programs/Activities

- I liked the activities (2 responses).
- Nepperhan Community Club (2 responses).
- I liked the CareerVisions and Nepperhan.
- What I liked about this program was the life skills activity we did with Nepperhan Community Center.
- I liked the best the Nepperhan community center life skills activity.
- What I like about the program is first aid certification.
- Babysitting certification and First Aid certification.
- What I liked best about this program was the students and Nepperhan Community Center
 - Life skills activity.
 - Gym, first aid, bus ride.

Friends/Meeting People

- Seeing my friends.
- Meeting new people.
- Meeting new people and learning new things.
- Meeting new people and learning about careers.
- Making new friends.
- The thing that I liked the best about this program was meeting new people and making new friends.
- I got to meet new people and do some fun activities.
- I got to meet new friends, and try new things.

People

- The people who I was with were very positive. The people I worked with really helped me to gain social skills.
- I like how friendly and likable everyone was.
- What I like best about this program is that everyone is confident.

Staff

- Teachers (2 responses).
- Mr. Thiam.
- Ms. Scott.
- Mr. Thiam (Nepperhan Community Center – Life Skills Activity).

Other

- I really like everything.
- The travel agent.
- The experience of being in a high school.
- We usually go outside and go to the library.
- Going outside or being with friends.

11. What can we do to make this program better?**More program/lessons/activities**

- Have more activities (5 responses).
- Put more activities and the program will be better.
- Teach us more and have better activities.
- Have more lessons.
- The program can be better if they added more projects.
- By having more things to do or we can stay a little longer.

Trips

- Takes us on trips (4 responses).
- Do robotic things and go on trips like playland/sixflags.
- Plan a fun fieldtrip and make us learn.
- We can do more outside activities and go to different trips.

Food

- Food (2 responses).
- To have better breakfast (2 responses).
- Better food and to take us on trips.

Other

- More acting out things like what would you do if you are low on self-esteem.
- If the bus comes earlier.
- Make it more fun.
- Add a little more teachers.
- This program can be more interesting by providing a little more information about the future.
- Make the schools warmer.
- What you can do is arrange some college tours.
- We could go outside a little more.
- Longer days because it was so much fun.
- More days.

No Improvement

- This program does not need improving from what I know.
- Nothing, I like it the way it is.
- It is already perfect.
- The program is great, it doesn't need to change.

Yonkers NYGEAR UP Summer Program Teacher Survey Results 2015

At the end of the program in July 2015, teachers participating in the YPS NYGEAR UP program completed a 19 question survey, with items adapted from the *New York State After-School Network Program Quality Self-Assessment Tool*. Below are the results of **7 completed surveys** (100% response rate).

1. Provides a stimulating, welcoming, and supportive environment for all young people.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
86%	14%	-	-

2. Uses program space that is safe and clean.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
86%	14%	-	-

3. Has program space that is appropriately equipped and suitable for activities being conducted.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
72%	28%	-	-

4. Has a culture that allows participants to take initiative and explore their interests.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
86%	14%	-	-

5. Has staff that respect and communicate with one another and are role models of positive adult relationships.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
100%	-	-	-

6. Treats participants with respect and listens to what they say.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
100%	-	-	-

7. Teaches participants to make responsible choices and encourages positive outcomes.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
86%	14%	-	-

8. Is sensitive to the culture and language of participants.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
100%	-	-	-

9. Features activities that are commensurate with the age and skill level of the participants and enable participants to develop new skills during the program year.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
86%	14%	-	-

10. Includes activities that take into account the language and culture of the participants.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
86%	14%	-	-

11. Integrates opportunities for the development of personal responsibility, self-direction, and leadership throughout the program.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
86%	14%	-	-

12. Which activity do you believe participants enjoyed the MOST?

Nepperhan Community Center - Life Skills Activity	14%
YPIE - College Readiness	-
CareerVisions	72%
Baby Sitting Certification	-
First Aid Certification	14%

13. Which activity do you believe participants enjoyed the LEAST?*

Nepperhan Community Center - Life Skills Activity	-
YPIE - College Readiness	-
CareerVisions	-
Baby Sitting Certification	-
First Aid Certification	100%

*one teacher did not answer this question and commented that she felt that they enjoyed all of the activities.

14. How helpful was your CareerVisions Mentor?

Extremely Helpful	Very Helpful	Moderately Helpful	Slightly Helpful	Not at All Helpful
72%	-	14%	14%	-

15. I learned new approaches through my CareerVisions mentor.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
72%	14%	14%	-

16. Did working with your mentor result in any of the following:

	Yes	Somewhat	No
More useful information about a subject.	72%	28%	-
More skills that are applicable to my work in the classroom.	72%	28%	-
A change in my attitude/values as a teacher/professional.	72%	14%	14%

17. Would you want to use the CareerVisions Model in your regular classroom? Why or why not?

- No.
- Yes.
- Yes, students thinking about their future careers would be great.
- Yes, CareerVisions provided the students with opportunities to explore areas of interest and informs students how to prepare for college and transition after high school.

18. What is the best thing about the summer GEAR UP program?

- Working with the students (2 responses).
- YPIE component.
- The program exposed students to college readiness.
- The collaboration of various entities (i.e., CareerVisions, NCC, YPIE).
- Small group setting.
- The program exposes students to college readiness.

19. What, if any, suggestions do you have for improving the summer GEAR UP program?

- The opportunity to collaborate throughout school year (2 responses).
- More collaboration throughout the school year would be helpful amongst teachers.
- Less outside agencies, more supplies, more time with students working on the computer.