



1999



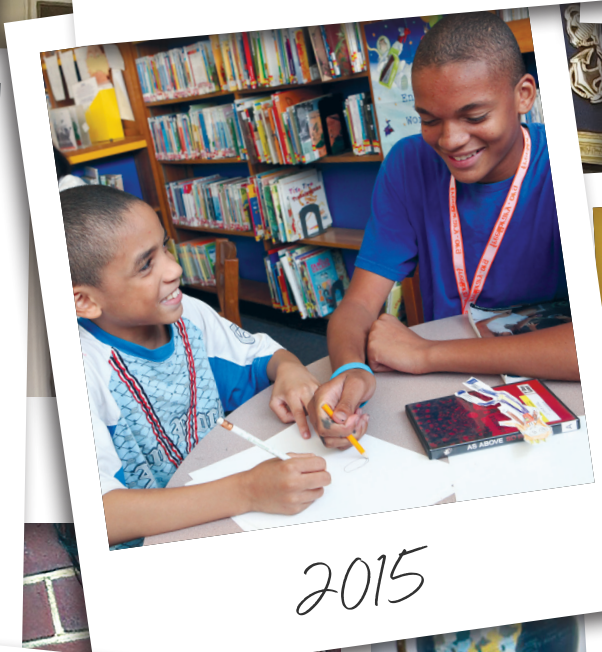
2014



2017



2009



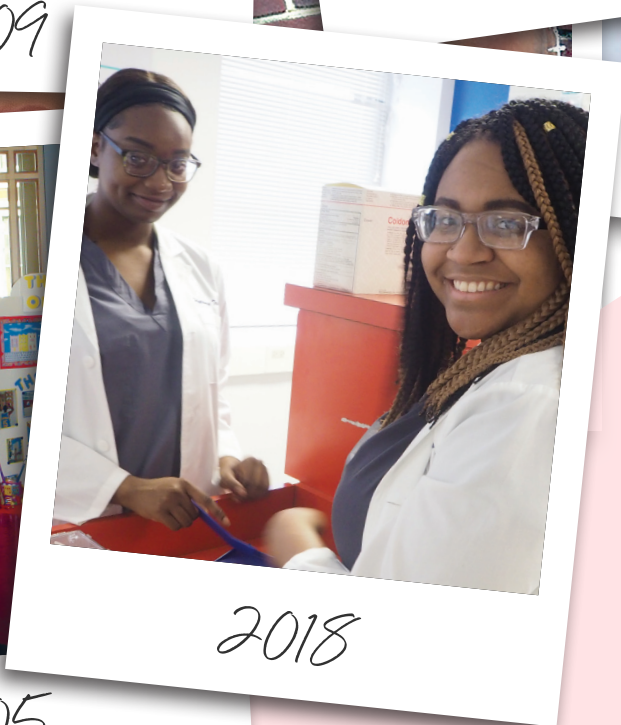
2015



2004



2005



2018

SNAPSHOTS

20 YEARS OF IMPACT



FOREWORD

In 1999, the Philadelphia Youth Network emerged as an organization leading the new youth workforce system designed to make sustainable connections between education and career success. For 20 years, we've been proud to build solutions for education and employment that equip Philadelphia's young people with the tools and resources necessary to thrive in an evolving workforce. Since PYN was founded, we have worked together with our partners to create **more than 192,000 high-quality opportunities** for Philadelphia's young people.

Philadelphia is brimming with untapped talent. Each year, thousands of young people in Philadelphia seek and apply for education and employment opportunities through PYN. We strive to connect as many as possible, providing **17,020 opportunities last year alone**. These opportunities help young people build important transferrable workplace skills, form a network of support and transition to their next step. The alumni featured in this book provide perspective on how pivotal these early

opportunities are in relation to their successes today.

These stories are snapshots, one from each year of PYN's history. They represent a mere glimpse of the much larger landscape. These 20 voices represent the impact of the nearly 200,000 experiences we have provided to date, and we know there are many more ahead of us. In sharing these snapshots, we are celebrating the incredible talent that Philadelphia is producing. For each story that you read, we invite you to join us in celebrating not only these incredible individuals, but also the thousands of young people who have similar stories, backgrounds and, most importantly, bright futures.

As we look back at the past twenty years, we share gratitude to those who helped make these successes possible. Looking ahead, we ask you to join us in creating even more opportunities so that every young person can develop the skills needed to accomplish their personal successes, meet economic demands, and transform our communities.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

<i>DeAndre Jones</i>	4
<i>Aaliyah Monroe</i>	5
<i>Greg Hopkins</i>	6
<i>Odelia N. McFadden</i>	7
<i>Jocelyn Barnett</i>	8
<i>Kara Hopkins</i>	9
<i>Terri Lomax-Burden</i>	10
<i>Jannette Rivera Perodin</i>	11
<i>Olivia Manning-Richardson</i>	12
<i>Jessica Dixon</i>	13
<i>Kimberly Pham</i>	14
<i>Cherelle Dessus</i>	15
<i>Tien Tran</i>	16
<i>Kevin Yang</i>	17
<i>Darius Saxby</i>	18
<i>Justin Newsome</i>	19
<i>Jude Husein</i>	20
<i>Curtis Handy</i>	21
<i>Richette Walton</i>	22
About	23



DeAndre Jones

**Assistant Dean,
Division of Access
and Community
Engagement
Community College
of Philadelphia**

As a participant of YouthWorks, PYN's original employment program that evolved into what is known today as WorkReady, DeAndre Jones received his first job opportunity at age 14. "Working then made me realize that I always wanted to have a job and ever since that summer, there has never been a period of time that I didn't have a job," said DeAndre. "I am proud of that." That first summer, he worked for the Free Library of Philadelphia's Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped. He helped manage the institution's book warehouse by properly re-shelving returned books and searching for the books that were requested by customers. As he sits in his office, he cannot help but smile, reminiscing of his internship that taught him the necessary skills to be successful in the workplace.

"I had to be accountable," said DeAndre as he began recalling his commute from West Oak Lane to Center City. "I learned how to navigate the city and show up somewhere every day, on time." He also learned money management, budgeting and understanding the value of hard

work with every paycheck he earned. "You get a paycheck, but I had to be mindful that I needed to make that money stretch until the next paycheck," said DeAndre.

While learning important power skills, DeAndre also discovered the satisfaction in helping people, specifically the library patrons. The Free Library gave him the opportunity to make an impact on his community. This desire to help others has continued throughout his professional path. Previously, DeAndre served as an academic advisor at Temple University and was a director of undergraduate student services at Rosemont College.

Currently, he serves as an Assistant Dean at the Community College of Philadelphia, and aids students who face barriers by guiding and ensuring that they stay on track to graduate. His position allows him to manage programs that provide nontraditional students with access to higher education. He currently serves as the worksite coordinator for the summer jobs program at CCP, ultimately giving young interns a work experience like the opportunity he had.

**Executive Assistant
to the President &
CEO**
Philadelphia
Youth Network



Aaliyah Monroe

After losing both of her parents at an early age, Aaliyah's focus shifted from high school to helping her grandmother raise her three younger siblings. Recognizing that she wasn't achieving what she should have, and given the absence of home support, Aaliyah and her friend signed up for a pilot program managed by PYN with advisors that offered information and help with homework. That was when she met the first life changing mentor, Syreeta, along her path. "People come and go. I had lost both of my parents by the time I was 12, so I had a pessimistic outlook at that point," said Aaliyah.

The program not only provided her with school support, but connected her to summer jobs, broadened her reading genres, helped expand her vocabulary, spruce up her writing skills and ensured she scored her best on her SATs. Her mentor soon became more like family by traveling with Aaliyah to visit colleges and helping her every step of the way from the college essay to federal student aid and earning scholarships.

"I ended up graduating high school and was accepted to 11 colleges," said Aaliyah who earned her Bachelor of Arts in Psychology at

Cheney University.

Thanks to the relationships she built with the staff of what is now the E³ Power Centers, she was connected to PYN and began employment through seasonal positions during her college semester breaks.

Aaliyah then pursued post-secondary education eventually graduating with her master's in School Counseling and Secondary Guidance Counseling at Immaculata University and became a drug and alcohol therapist as well as a school guidance counselor. "I loved what I was doing, but I felt like I needed to create a greater impact," said Aaliyah. "I took some time to figure out what I wanted to do, and it led me back to my roots at PYN."

That was when PYN's former President & CEO, Stacy Holland, introduced her to Chekemma Fulmore-Townsend. "I had so much love for PYN because of the network of support and the opportunities that were provided to me, so I took the job as the program services associate under Chekemma," said Aaliyah. "Then when she was up for President & CEO, we worked so well together, I took the position as executive assistant and board liaison and the rest is history."



Greg Hopkins

Firefighter Recruit Philadelphia Fire Academy

Being the oldest of six children, Greg had to take on a lot of responsibility as a teenager. He was first connected to a summer job through school. “Getting my first paycheck was gratifying, rewarding and definitely needed,” said Greg. “If I could get a couple extra dollars I could alleviate some financial burdens on my parents and be able to do a little more for my brothers and sisters.”

Greg’s family moved around North Philadelphia a lot from neighborhoods such as Olney and Cecil B. Moore. In addition to working a summer job, Greg would work as a bus boy in a seafood restaurant in Old city since ninth grade. Through the ACES program, a pilot program focused on dual enrollment in partnership with the Community College of Philadelphia, Greg worked at the Please Touch Museum for about a year and a half.

One day out of the week during the school year, they would work in a different department of the museum, while during the summertime, they would work four or five days out of the week. This gave Greg the opportunity to give speeches in front of children and put on shows, take trips to other museums around Philadelphia, and participate in the Outward-Bound experience, where they went away for about a week.

“The museum had a diverse group of people—personalities and everything,” said Greg. “We had

to learn how to communicate and speak in front of crowds.” The program taught Greg many skills including how to communicate, how to manage time between working and going to school and prepared him for interviews. In 2004, Greg graduated from Thomas A. Edison High School, and continued to work at the Please Touch Museum and the restaurant. After two semesters at community college for computer graphics, something that his internship inspired him to do, he had to leave due to health issues with a family member.

After the program ended, he had a job as a dietary aid in a nursing home, then went to work for the City of Philadelphia’s streets department. During his time there, he was able to get his Commercial Driver’s License (CDL) to drive trucks and manage the trash routes throughout the city. In early 2019, Greg decided to transition from the street’s department to fire department. “I always had an interest in helping people,” said Greg. “Even when I had a job that didn’t necessarily require it that much, so I thought that this would be a good opportunity to put that to use, which I think is one of my stronger qualities.”

He has since completed his third week in fire academy and believes that this career choice is the best for him and his family. Greg has been married to his wife for eight years and has three children ages 11, 10 and 6.

Lieutenant
Medical Service
Corps, United States
Navy, Naval Hospital
Camp Pendleton



Odelia N. McFadden

Odelia was connected to PYN's summer jobs through Mr. Lessick, the Program Coordinator at Olney High School, and spent all four years of high school interning at St. Christopher's Hospital for Children. During her senior year of high school, she worked in the Adolescent Medicine Department as a peer-mentor to teens who were pregnant and/or HIV positive which was fundamental in her decision to pursue a career in the field of psychology, as she learned how to instill a sense of hope and help youth to live their lives according to how they saw fit. After graduating from high school, Odelia attended Rosemont College where she earned both a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology and a Master of Arts in Professional Counseling Psychology and Addictions Counseling. Odelia was accepted into the clinical psychology doctoral program at Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine (PCOM), and will receive her Doctorate of Clinical Psychology degree July 2019.

While working at St. Christopher's during her senior year, Odelia also worked for the United States Navy as a civilian serving in the capacity of a Program Manager and Workforce Planning Analyst. During her 10 years as a Navy civilian, Odelia's primary responsibilities were hiring, training and retaining veterans and Wounded Warriors. While the majority of the veterans and Wounded Warriors who she worked with had physical disabilities, there were also a few who were experiencing psychological difficulties. Her exposure to working with veterans experiencing mental health challenges and helping to

secure reasonable accommodations set the foundation for her decision to put on the uniform and provide support on the front end. Odelia commissioned into the Navy as a Lieutenant in July of 2016, completed her predoctoral internship at Walter Reed National Military Center in 2017, and is currently stationed at Naval Hospital Camp Pendleton in California where she provides psychological services and treatment to sailors and marines. Upon passing her licensing exam, Odelia will be a Navy Clinical Psychologist.

Looking back at her time in the program, Odelia remembers the fundamentals of what she learned to include, professionalism, effective communication and accountability. Her experiences in the program also helped her to develop specific medical and leadership skills that she was able to use in college and beyond. Upon completing the program, Odelia worked with the Program Director, Barbara Liccio, to develop a college prep program which provided participating students with strategies for applying to college, paying for college, and staying in college.

Odelia had this to say about her experience, "PYN has been an invaluable resource for the city and community and has afforded so many deserving youths with the opportunity to develop personally and professionally through WorkReady experiences. I hope to see the program continue to expand so that other teenagers can benefit from the guidance, mentorship and unwavering support of those who are invested in the future of today's youth."



Jocelyn Barnett

Jocelyn Barnett is a proponent of hiring high school interns at organizations and uses her voice in the human resources department to explain how programs, like PYN's, help young people gain real-world work experience and create a talent pipeline for the business. Her first summer job was at a summer camp where she worked with campers who were under 5 years old. The following year, she was connected to Children's Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP) through PYN's employer paid internship program.

During her time at CHOP, she helped out with an interview day and planning the logistics of what goes into putting that together. Her supervisor during the program learned that she had an interest in becoming an emergency room pediatrician and was able to set up a shadowing session. For four hours one night, Jocelyn followed an emergency room pediatrician at the hospital. She was thankful for this experience, because she learned that it was not what she really wanted to do, and that she really enjoyed working in the human resources department.

After graduating high school, Jocelyn went to Dickinson College in Carlisle, Pennsylvania. After seeing how expensive a post-secondary education was going to be at Dickinson, she transferred to community college. When she returned to Philadelphia, she received a college internship at

Nurse Recruiter Tallahassee Memorial Healthcare

CHOP which led to a permanent position while she finished her degree at Temple University. One of the benefits of working at CHOP for 11 years, was tuition reimbursement which helped her to pay for her education.

Jocelyn moved around a lot and grew up in a lower-income household. "Knowing that made me realize that I had to work harder than some of my other peers," said Jocelyn. "I was going into college having only taken one AP course, because they just weren't offered at my neighborhood high school. I was up against students who were taking AP courses since their junior year of high school."

Jocelyn saw her early work experiences and professional development sessions as an opportunity to build skills and show skills that she already had. "I enjoyed the professional development sessions," said Jocelyn. "I learned about resume building, how to work effectively with my peers and we talked about our experiences and what we were learning, and I felt like that was a good reflection."

She began working in nurse recruitment and felt like it was something she could really do since she enjoyed the work and helping people connect with managers to find jobs. "In five years, I'm looking to have two more professional HR certifications and start to think about management positions within an HR department," said Jocelyn.

Entrepreneur Music Production



Kara Hopkins

2005

Growing up with a single parent and five other siblings, Kara's dad connected her to the summer jobs program where she received her first work experience and many more to follow. "Having my first job meant freedom," said Kara. "The experience alone gave me access to money that I would not have had access to. It wasn't a lot of money, but it gave me financial freedom."

One of her most memorable experiences was spending two summers working at Simon Gratz. She and her siblings who were involved in summer jobs, learned about health and fitness. Through creating brochures about healthy living, working out, and winning an award and a gift card to Whole Foods for being the most athletic in the program, this experience changed her perception on health and fitness.

After graduating high school, Kara was accepted and attended Mansfield University. Unfortunately, due to her invisible disability, the stress of school coupled with being hours away from family forced her to pause schooling and return to Philadelphia. She received a position as a dietary aid, however, she was not fulfilled. After connecting with the Attic Youth Center, she received an internship through PYN where she was a communications assistant at the Philadelphia Gay News. During this time, she published two articles for the publication and did administrative work.

After her internship, Kara decided it was time to

return to college. She attended Rosemont College so that she could remain close to family, where she majored in clinical sociology. To pay for college and support herself, she had a summer job and participated in a work study program as an administrative assistant at a martial arts nonprofit. "They told me that they hired me because of my position at the Philadelphia Gay News," said Kara. "I didn't realize it at the time, but that internship helped my life, literally."

"I also realize that because of those work experiences and because I grew up in a low-income environment, any job that I took I made sure that they would be stepping stones that would help my life."

After graduation, Kara worked as a case manager at a nonprofit, but began to experience nonprofit burnout. She has always been creative and after realizing that the producers she was working for were trying to fit her into a mold and couldn't get her sound, she realized that she could produce it herself and do better. She followed her passion and produced her own album titled, Superhuman. Currently, Kara is working toward achieving her dream of getting the equipment to launch her own multimedia production company.

"These jobs made me feel more responsible," said Kara. "Shaped the way I felt about my future because my jobs kept getting progressively better and then in my adult life, I always made sure they got better."



Terri Lomax-Burden

After walking downtown with a bare resume, Terri received her first summer job that jumpstarted the impressive resume she has built today. She remembers the impact it has had on her career and the influential advice she had received on resume structure and building as well as interview preparation.

“I would go to City Hall every day and it built confidence as well as taught me what it was like to be a professional,” said Terri, who was a receptionist at a councilwoman’s office. Her duties ranged from greeting guests at the office, to filing paperwork and attending and contributing in meetings. “It was definitely the catalyst for my career, and it prepared me for where I am today.”

Today, Terri lives on the west coast in San Francisco and is a customer success manager at Asana, an online platform designed for project management. After becoming a first-generation college student, graduating from Kutztown University and starting the MBA program at Salisbury University studying business, she found herself in what she refers to as a “quarter-life crisis.” Recognizing that she wanted to be more than just an employee fulfilling her job duties, Terri followed her passion of writing and public

Customer Success Manager
Asana,
Motivational Speaker
Cool Speak,
Blog Owner
Mocha Girls Pit Stop,
Cohost
H.E.R. Space Podcast



2006

speaking, and took her challenging past to create a bright future of empowering women of color.

“Where I grew up and where I came from, there were teen parents, drugs deals, I was verbally and physically abused, my father had passed away, my mom and other family members were in and out of prison,” said Terri, remembering the barriers she faced within in her community. “But these barriers inspired me, by showing me what I didn’t want my future to be. I saw college as my ticket out of poverty, so for me, it was a non-negotiable.”

Through motivational speaking, blogging, and co-hosting a podcast, Terri’s mission is to create a supportive space and inspire youth to overcome life’s obstacles. She urges youth to think about where they want to be and maximize resources around them to get there.

“This program provides access to resources and people who can answer questions and point you in the right direction. Oftentimes, when kids come from backgrounds like me they don’t have people in their family that can hold their hand and help them achieve their goals. Using the resources provided to you is crucial,” said Terri.

**Senior Labor and
Employee Relations
Analyst**
Mayor's Office of
Labor Relations



Jannette Rivera Perodin

Living in a single parent household with a mother who dealt with mental health issues, Jannette had to grow up quickly looking for opportunities that she could have in order to end the cycle of poverty. Born in Philadelphia, she grew up in deep poverty and bounced to Massachusetts and back to Philadelphia after experiencing homelessness on multiple occasions.

After being disconnected for a year of high school due to their financial situation, Jannette reconnected at Kensington International Business High School. "I think by the third week of school. I realized that the education within the public-school system was a bit different from where I was in Massachusetts. I was kind of learning some of the same material," said Jannette. "I went down to my principal's office in tears to tell her that she was cheating me out of my education." Advocating for herself, she ended up working with the principal, different community partners and stakeholders to help prepare students for post-secondary education and graduated as the valedictorian of her class.

Thanks to her mentor and community partners, she was connected to PYN's summer jobs program and had her first work opportunity at Financial Integrity Resources Management, then Independence Blue Cross the following two years. "I was offered an

opportunity to work for the CEO, and that was a big deal," said Jannette. At the time, she didn't realize how crucial that connection was. "PYN opens the door for so many opportunities," she said. "I developed skills that were pertinent to the workforce—especially leadership skills."

Jannette was accepted to Connecticut College and received almost a full ride scholarship thanks to various mentors, including the CEO of Independence Blue Cross who mentored her and wrote a letter of recommendation. Today, she is a student at West Chester University receiving her Master of Public Administration degree with an emphasis on human resources management. She is a Senior Labor and Employee Relations Analyst with the Mayor's Office of Labor Relations for the City of Philadelphia where she handles investigations, trains employees on policies and serves as a business partner for the HR community. Jannette is also now a board member at PYN, "paying it forward."

"They invested in me as a youth and it taught me things that quite frankly, my family could never teach me," she said. "I now get to pay that forward to not only the youth within our community, but other individuals that I come in contact with on a daily basis."



Olivia Manning-Richardson

Quality Control at Dental Manufacturing Company, Reigning Miss Black Delaware USA

Olivia knows that your first job isn't always what you plan on doing for the rest of your life. A variety of experiences teaches us important transferrable skills and what inspires us as well as teaches us what doesn't motivate. When Olivia filled out her interests on her summer jobs application, she knew she was interested in the environment. Thanks to this interest at that time, she was connected to Eastwick Regional Playground, where she interacted with people, did site clean ups and completed a group video project.

"Getting my first job felt amazing!" said Olivia. "I remember when I was able to get my work permit and how impactful it was to finally be able to work and earn a paycheck."

The following summer, she was connected to PNC Bank, where she learned interviewing skills. It was the first time I was interviewed with three people, and while she felt it was intimidating, it taught her how to remain calm under pressure and keep myself collected." The summer after that, she was connected to PRWT Services, Inc. "While I knew that a job like the one at PRWT wasn't what I wanted to do, at that job I was surrounded by women who were established in their field," said Olivia, who was influenced by this and to this day mimics some of their routines.

In 2011, she graduated from World Communications Charter School. She went to Delaware State University and earned her Bachelor of Science in Chemistry and a minor concentration in Theatre Arts. While she currently works in quality control at a dental manufacturing company, she is transitioning to a social media role, following her passion of working with people and helping them build their businesses.

Olivia was the reigning Miss Black USA representing Delaware. Since then, she competed in two pageants after that and is currently competing in Mrs. America which supports the Victoria's Voice Foundation. Her platform is mental health awareness and she is working to destigmatize mental health by promoting healing, encouraging, learning and preventing mental illnesses in children and adolescents. Through this, she utilizes her writing skills for Write for Hope which promotes writing as a therapy and a release that deals with negative emotions.

She recognizes the chain reaction of opportunities, starting with PYN that led her to who she is today. "It eventually led me to the Upward Bound math and science program at Temple University, which led me to want to go to college", said Olivia. "It was a snowball effect and it started here, and each time I would apply to another job that wanted me to have experience, I had it thanks to this organization."

Sixth Grade teacher KIPP Charter School



Jessica Dixon

In 2010, a group of summer jobs participants and their supervisor, Sam, took a photo on the Benjamin Franklin Parkway. Years later, this photo serves as a reminder not only of her day exploring the city, but of the entire experience she had working and learning side by side with other young people throughout the summer. These were not just her summer colleagues, but her friends.

Although this is a special reminder of her experience, what she learned from WorkReady extends beyond the limitations of a picture frame. Her first day of work at Temple University was also the first time she ever stepped foot on a college campus. Sitting in the classrooms, eating from the food trucks, and being mentored by Sam, who was a student at the time studying to be a pharmacist, inspired Jessica to be the first person in her family to attend college.

Jessica graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in English from Temple University, the very campus where she had her WorkReady experience, she also went on to earn her master's degree at Relay Graduate School of Education.

Today, Jessica's passion for education continues to grow. As a sixth grade teacher at the Knowledge is Power Program (KIPP) Philadelphia Charter School, she strives to "make a difference in other children's lives like somebody made in [hers]." She also helps her current students connect to summer jobs and career exposure programs, understanding how fundamental these programs are.

Jessica credits the development of her computer, writing and communication skills as well as the ability to advocate for herself to the work experience she received during the summers. When asked what advice she would give to current participants, Jessica said, "Networking and maintaining those relationships is so important, and just take in everything you can. You may feel that this is not important right now, that you are not gonna use this in the future. But you are."

While a summer job may seem like a just snapshot in life, it's actually a foundational frame of tools and skills youth will need and use to be successful in the future of work and creates memories that will last a life time.



Kimberly Pham

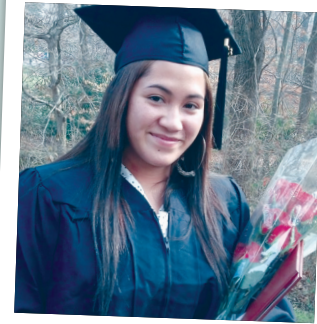
Born and raised in Kensington, Kimberly grew up in what she calls a toxic environment. There was a lot of violence, trauma, and her brother was abusing drugs. During seventh grade, Kimberly lost interest in school and began skipping class, ultimately leading to truancy and involvement with the Juvenile Justice System.

“I recognized as a young person that there are different learning environments,” said Kimberly. “There were personal barriers that I faced, but also systemic barriers along my journey, too” She recognizes that access to resources and supports aren’t existent in Kensington, a community that she believes is fractured.

After returning from the Juvenile Justice System, she realized what she needed to do in order to have a future that she felt was better. When she got home, Kimberly re-engaged with her neighborhood high school. Unfortunately, she once again found herself in the same environment ultimately leading her to disconnect again.

Through her case worker, Kimberly was connected to District 1199C Training & Upgrading Fund, one of PYN’s providers, who connects out-of-school youth without a credential to education support and into a career pathway.

Event Manager Opportunity Youth United



2010

“I received a lot of support, not only from District 1199C, but from PYN too,” said Kimberly who received her GED in 2009 by the time she was 18. She then began earning her associate’s degree from Eastern University in early childhood development, while working in a daycare. After earning her associates, Kimberly began working in the public service—learning more about structures, systems and opportunities for young people. She is currently studying social work at Temple University and plans to graduate in 2020.

Kim was nominated to be a young person on the Youth Council and eventually transitioned to the Project U-Turn steering committee. “I was able to have a voice in this work and bring my experience of the different opportunities and pathways as well as my journey to the table,” said Kimberly. “Young people shouldn’t have to go through so many different trajectories to figure out how to get a diploma.”

She currently advocates locally and nationally to improve the conditions for young people by reshaping the narrative of communities and their young residents. She is an event manager for Opportunity Youth United, a movement of young leaders who are collaborating for a change to increase opportunities for young people.

**Business Account
Manager**
Center for
Employment
Opportunities



Cherelle Dessus

During her senior year at Philadelphia High School for Girls, Cherelle Dessus applied for a summer job. Cherelle worked at a branch of TD Bank where she saw the fast-paced world of finance firsthand and was able to gain customer service skills.

“They really gave us a great opportunity,” Cherelle said. “Finance wasn’t my strong suit.” However, Cherelle gained more than just banking experience, she learned how powerful networking is, how much harder it is to build work opportunities if you don’t have these important connections and how meeting someone goes a long way.

Cherelle studied Government and Political Affairs at Millersville University of Pennsylvania. During her college experience, she interned at the Pennsylvania State Employees Credit Union (PSECU). PSECU requires all interns to have

previous bank experience, which disqualified many of Cherelle’s peers.

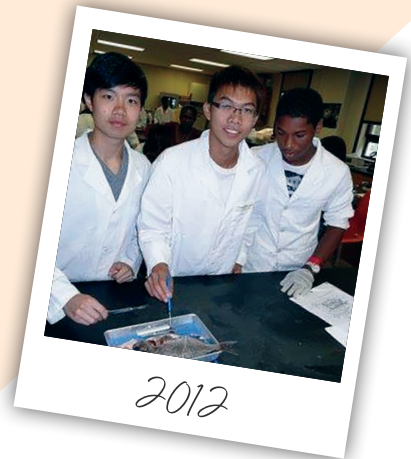
After graduating college in 2016, Cherelle moved to Washington D.C. to work for the Mennonite Central Community. In this role, she led legislative reform regarding criminal justice, gun violence and racial justice. Currently, she works in the workforce development field in Philadelphia assisting those on probation and parole to find long-term employment opportunities. Cherelle enjoys making a difference in the world, and her work reflects her passion.

“It’s all because of my connections,” Cherelle states. She continues to stay connected with her colleagues from the banking industry, but she has begun to broaden her network to members of Congress and their staff.



Tien Tran

Project Engineer W.S. Cumby Builders



2012

Tien Tran was born in Vietnam and immigrated to the United States when he was ten years old. He lived on the west coast for three years before settling in Northeast Philadelphia. Tien was introduced to the world of work through the summer jobs program. Through this experience he had employment opportunities at Drexel University, the Philadelphia Water Department and Onion Flats, a developer, architecture and building company.

Each summer enabled Tien to try different things. “The jobs don’t always necessarily tell you what you want to do, but it gives you a sense of what you think you’re interested in.” said Tien. “I guess it’s sort of building off opportunities.” Prior to his experiences, he wanted to go into financial services, then after giving construction a try, he changed course.

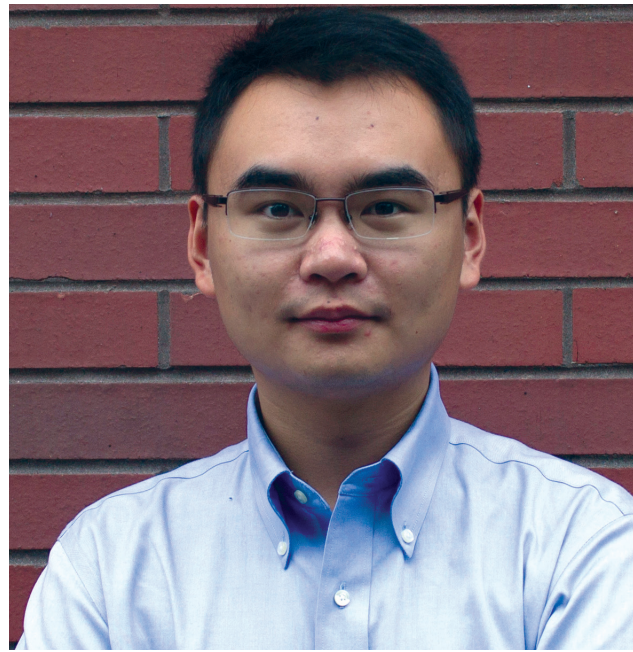
After graduating high school, Tien received a scholarship to attend Lafayette College, one of the nation’s top schools for undergraduate engineering, where he studied industrial

engineering and economics. Throughout his college career, he worked in various fields and continued to try new things carrying both the experience and the lessons he learned from his summer jobs, which helped shape his decision to combine his love of construction with his passion for policy.

After college Tien was hired in New York as the project engineer for the renovation of one of the busiest airports in the country, LaGuardia Airport, which is undergoing a \$4 billion renovation. Today, Tien continues to use the foundational skills he learned in WorkReady like networking and communication to take his career to new heights.

“You have to make sure you’re willing to put yourself out there and recognize that you may need some help or you might not be successful on the first track,” said Tien. “But with the right resources and the right support network, there’s always something there to be gained.”

College Student University of Pennsylvania



Kevin Yang

Growing up in South Philly, Kevin was always at the Charles Santore Library branch of the Free Library of Philadelphia. After inquiring about how to get more involved, he learned about the summer job opportunity. During his first year of WorkReady, Kevin was a summer literacy coach and created lesson plans and organized education activities to help keep kids reading and stimulate their education. That summer taught him how to work with a very diverse customer base and become a better communicator.

His next summer job was an internship at Independence Blue Cross, where he learned how to organize an excel spreadsheet, develop an excel macro automation tool that helped contribute to the streamlining of their internal processes and help with the opening of Independence Live. Through this opportunity, he was able to network with healthcare professionals and realize that he was more interested in policy and the business side of healthcare rather than his original career goal of being on the medical side. “It was an industry exposure I never expected,” said Kevin. “Growing up I never thought that I would go into health insurance.”

Today, Kevin is a junior at the University of Pennsylvania where he is majoring in Political

Science and Finance. He does a lot of community service and social impact work, which was inspired by his experience at the Free Library of Philadelphia. “A lot of the kids that I worked with in the library were the first in their family to get an American education,” said Kevin. “And that was very similar to my own experience as a first-generation low-income student.”

Recognizing that he shared a lot of similar experiences with the library patrons, he took his experiences to add value to the communities he is a part of now. At Penn, Kevin facilitated logistics for the University’s IvyG conference, the largest conference for first-generation, low-income students, with the goal to create a space for these students to connect and empower each other. Through the conference, he met an alumnus from Penn and helped the alumnus build Rise First, a technology solution that serves as a resource platform for first-generation, low-income students across the country.

“There are a lot of different programs you can do in high school,” said Kevin. “This program gives exposure to something that feels more connected to the workforce with a well-rounded internship experience that gives you an edge.”



Darius Saxby

College Student
LaSalle University

2014

Starting in 2014, Darius was connected to PYN's career exposure program through a counselor who told him and his mother about it. They recognized that this would be a great opportunity to explore various careers while learning about the various skills associated with those careers. That summer, Darius went on field trips observing career opportunities and learned what it takes to be a counselor—his original career goal. The following summer, he worked as a camp counselor gaining experience in workforce skills. These jobs would help build his resume and his workforce skills which would come in handy as Darius was once working three jobs while going to school.

Darius grew up in North Philadelphia in Kensington and attended High School of the Future, in West Philadelphia. Throughout school, he never missed a day and prides himself on his perfect k-8 attendance. Through school, he was connected to the Hub at PA CareerLink® West, a PYN pilot program that connects young people who live, work, or go to school in the West Philadelphia Promise Zone with education and employment opportunities.

His participation at the Hub helped him learn how to build his resume, dress professionally

and prepared him for interviews. It also led him to an employment connection at The Chamber of Commerce for Greater Philadelphia.

"I was the youngest person working at the Chamber," said Darius. "I was very shy, but I was able to open up and became close to people who worked there. I remember Patty, she would always help me, and I call her my mother of the workplace."

Being in a professional setting, Darius learned a lot about professionalism, sharpened his networking skills and grew his professional network. His experience with the Chamber was so positive, that they were able to hire Darius as an employee. "As I was getting older, I became open-minded and started thinking about new ideas and new ways of life," said Darius. "So, since business interested me, I became curious in learning more."

This experience inspired him to want to become an entrepreneur and own two of his own businesses—an e-commerce business as well as a franchise. He also received a letter of recommendation from the Chamber, which helped him to receive a scholarship for college. Today, he is a college student at LaSalle University studying computer science.

College Student Community College of Philadelphia



Justin Newsome

Growing up in West Philadelphia, Justin grew up with his mother, grandmother and siblings. Being shy and uncomfortable around people, Justin found himself not having friends at school. Then due to financial struggles, he and his mother made the decision to withdraw him from private school. They tried various alternatives such as cyber school, however Justin was not receiving the hands-on and one-on-one attention he needed. That was when Justin was connected to E³ Power Center West, managed by PYN.

“I didn’t know where I was going, if I was going to finish school,” said Justin. “Because my oldest brother and my sister went a different route and earned their GED, my mother thought that was the best option so that I could move on with my life.”

That year, Justin and his family faced a lot of challenges, and he had recently lost his dad. “I was just skating by trying to find who I was as a person,” said Justin. After enrolling at E³ Power Center West, Justin was approached about an opportunity called Post-Secondary Bridging, a pilot program that re-engages young people who are disconnected from high school to be successful in dual enrollment. While Justin was finishing up his GED, he was also taking classes at the Community College of Philadelphia (CCP).

“Before they came into my life, I didn’t know what I wanted to do with my career, or if I thought that I could potentially have one,” said Justin. “And then after I met them, they made the transition a little bit easier for me to decipher what it is and what I wanted to do.”

Through the program, Justin learned the ins and outs of how to be a successful college student. He learned how to take good notes, effectively communicate with professors, write papers, fill out FASFA, look for grants and find different scholarship opportunities.

After he took his first college class in 2016, Justin never looked back. He earned his GED in 2017 and is currently enrolled at CCP set to complete his associate’s degree in summer 2019. Justin wants to transfer his credits to a 4-year college or university where he will earn his bachelor’s degree. His goal is to work creatively in either digital media as a photographer or a director, or even be part of a print magazine publication.

“I definitely feel like I’m accomplishing my dream,” said Justin. “I’m able to be as creative as I want to without that many restrictions. I’m able to talk to my peers who are also passionate about film and involved in either the acting or writing side of film.”



Jude Husein

College Student LaSalle University

With ambitious goals, emerging leader Jude Husein aims to be the first Arab American female to sit on the National Security Council for the White House. As a Kensington native and recent graduate from George Washington High School, Jude attends college classes at both La Salle University and Philadelphia Community College. In order to pursue these big dreams, she has been preparing to enter a career in law and studying for the Law School Admission Test (LSAT).

Through PYN's summer job program, Jude received an opportunity to work at the District Attorney's office during a six-week internship. Learning responsibility and accountability, among other critical transferrable skills, Jude took on tasks such as listening to prison tapes and taking notes, organizing files, following cases all the way through each court date and watching the case come together.

"Working for the District Attorney's Office has verified that my career goals are something

that I definitely want to pursue and something I'm capable of doing," said Jude. "It was what I needed to establish myself as a productive student, not only in the classroom, but outside."

In summer 2018, Jude was hired as a seasonal employee at PYN in the communications department while also working part-time as a sales supervisor at Michael Kors and continuing to advocate for youth.

Jude has spoken at School District of Philadelphia School Reform Commission (SRC) meetings, she is a mayoral appointee for the Philadelphia Youth Commissioner and chairman of Jobs and Economics committee of Philadelphia Youth Commission. She represented the United States in 2018 at the United Nations International Youth for Human Rights summit and works with the New Sanctuary Movement of Philadelphia, an interfaith, multicultural immigrant justice movement organizing communities to help immigrants, regardless of status.

High School Student



Curtis Handy

After a summer job provided by Greener Partners in 2017, an interest in agriculture was ignited in Curtis. But the work experience he received dug much deeper than just gardening. “Summer jobs changed my perspective of agriculture,” said Curtis. “I was able to see how every role can be played in this industry, from teaching, learning, gardening, cooking and more.”

On Mondays and Tuesdays, Curtis and his colleagues would work at the North Philadelphia Guild House Farm where they would harvest seasonal crops. This type of work taught Curtis and his peers patience, teamwork and communication skills and offered hands-on agricultural science, customer service and sales experience. On Wednesdays, the group would sell their goods at Common Ground Farmer’s Market on Broad Street in North Philadelphia. Through the WorkReady program provided by Greener Partners, Curtis learned how to market products to consumers as well as financial accountability using a cash register in a fast-paced environment. On Mondays and Wednesdays, Greener Partners would take the group to a senior living community to create healthy meals using fresh garden goods for the residents.

All his hard work and enthusiasm during his summer employment paid off as it blossomed into a part-time job with Greener Partners. During the school year, Curtis has the opportunity to teach workshops at Girard College, a boarding school in Northwest Philadelphia. He helped the school launch its own garden and demonstrates cooking lessons to ensure that students understand the importance of food portion, serving size as well as making healthy eating choices.

His leadership in the classroom is also reflected in his personal life. Curtis has taught his family how to cook and eat healthy meals. One day a week, he takes charge to make a meal to feed his house. “My family has noticed a difference after eating healthy meals. Many people don’t know that losing weight is 70-percent diet,” said Curtis. “My family feels better and realizes that healthy food tastes good too!”

While Curtis has not yet graduated high school, he looks forward to pursuing a career in agriculture. “This experience overall inspired me to get into the background of agriculture and learn about food justice,” said Curtis. “I see how food and agriculture are the cornerstone of life. Everything starts here.”



Richette Walton

College Student

When Richette walked into the CareerLink® in West Philadelphia to print out copies of her resume, she walked out as a participant of the Hub at PA CareerLink® West, a pilot program managed by PYN. “The lady at CareerLink® directed me to the Hub, where I started talking to the youth navigator about life, my goals and what I actually needed in that moment,” said Richette. As a participant, she was able to receive resume support, interview preparation, career clothes through a partnership with Career Wardrobe and a connection to employment and college.

“I feel like the Hub really made me proactive in my career planning,” said Richette. “After I began working I felt like I was able to start going to the community college. I spoke with my youth navigator and found out that I was able to get more assistance because of the barriers I faced as a child.”

She faced barriers from being a child in foster care since the age of 13. With no record of a birth certificate or a social security number she struggled through the trial and error, tedious process of locating her documents in a search that led her all across Philadelphia.

Richette had to work throughout high school and was focused on making money in order to feed and clothe herself. She attended a high performing college preparatory high school, however,

disruptions in her home life caused the quality of her schoolwork to decline.

“When I aged out of foster care, I turned 18 and it was February of my senior and I had to figure out how to support myself,” said Richette. “School at that point just wasn’t a priority, so I went to my senior prom and never came back.”

After one year of being disconnected from high school, Richette made multiple trips to the re-engagement center at SDP trying to find a program that would fit her schedule and address her needs. After enrolling in the A Plus Program, she worked hard and had the determination to get her diploma and enrolled in Job Corps.

“Everything works out the way it’s supposed to,” said Richette.

Thanks to the Hub, she started attending college full-time in 2017 majoring in paralegal studies and had an internship at PYN in the compliance department. She has joined the PYN team for two summers juggling a full-time schedule, waitressing on weekends and taking 15 credits.

“Since I’ve been at CCP, I feel like my GPA and my performance is well because of the support from everyone at PYN,” said Richette. “I’m very supported and have gained a network of people that I can lean on and ask for help with life, school, anything.

About **SNAPSHOTS** and **PYN**

Snapshots was written in part by summer jobs alumni who worked at PYN in 2017 and 2018.

PYN'S VISION:

To alleviate poverty and inequity through education and employment.

PYN'S MISSION:

To create coordinated systems which promote the attainment of academic achievement, economic opportunity and personal success.

Philadelphia Youth Network (PYN) is a solutions builder forging together significant players to alleviate a root cause of poverty by preparing 12-24-year-olds to become productive working adults. Our work is grounded in the understanding that young people need access to both education and employment, proven factors in being prepared for a career. With a track record of increasing impact, PYN funds and brokers action with the right partners to collectively address barriers. PYN constructs systems to create change, while innovating to meet evolving needs. Together with our partners, PYN dramatically changes the trajectory of individuals' lives by giving voice to underserved youth, and ultimately creating a pipeline for an educated, engaged workforce.

Learn more at pyninc.org.

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2007



2018



2014



2012



2005



2009



2015



2010



2016



2014



2006

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