

Mental Wellness & Mentorship 2024

YEA continued its programming to support our youth participants' mental wellness while guiding them in our mentorship program. This year included mental wellness workshops to build tools youth can utilize every day such as dealing with grief & loss and letting go of anxiety. Art and nature were included in many of the workshops with youth examining their emotions while conveying those thoughts through their photography at Bear Creek Park and meditation at Sunken Gardens park. Identity was another subject that participants explored through reflection and art with many participating in additional opportunities to learn about creative careers. Nominated youth were able to dive deeper into the connections of art and nature through multi-day trips to Steamboat Springs and Sand Dunes National Park. In addition to all this innovative programming, YEA participants were also guided through counseling with our Youth Advisor and were able to schedule 1:1 free therapeutic service with our licensed therapists. As one participant said, "I knew about mental health, but I really learned about what it means and how to deal with issues through the YEA mental wellness program."



Sand Dunes Youth Retreat

Fall 2024



In September, we had a special multi-day outing with a select group of YEA participants to the Sand Dunes in southern Colorado. The trip was exciting and included learning about geography, geology and wildlife biology. In addition, the focus was on combining art, nature and mental wellness and how art and nature can contribute to gaining skills in improving mental wellness for all of us. Led by Youth Advisor, Destini Montez, our young adults discussed emotions versus feelings, used photography to express emotions and created self-portraits that reflected their identity. All who went on the trip said that it was an amazing experience they would never forget with others reporting that the mental wellness program at YEA has taught them how to calm their anxiety and they have learned how to talk about their emotions more. They expressed that the trip made them feel free and opened their minds to new ways of thinking.



Steamboat Springs Youth Retreat

Summer 2024



A group of young adults were excited to be chosen to attend YEA's 2nd annual art, nature, and mental wellness retreat in Steamboat Springs. On this multi-day retreat, participants explored nature through Steamboat's botanic garden, hikes on Steamboat Resorts mountain top and at Dumont Lake. Utilizing photography and other art materials, youth were led in exploring emotions versus feelings and expressing their identity and specific issues they are dealing with in transitioning from teens to young adults. In addition, we were fortunate to meet with the merchandising manager for Steamboat Resorts who inspired youth to find their career path. Besides meeting other professionals living in Steamboat the group also got to ride the chair lift and gondola at the resort – a first! Participants remarked that this trip was a life changing experience and gave them time for reflection and embodying the tools they learned for positive mental health.



Exploring Identity Spotlight

Spring 2024



This spring, Denver artist Devin Urioste worked with youth artists through our partnership with Colorado High School Charter as well as with our Arts Street interns. Devin led discussions exploring personal identity through art. This included talking about different areas of identity from the way we look, hobbies we have, cultural identity and community.

With 34 Colorado High School Charter students, ages 14-21, Devin led them in creating upcycled t-shirt collages. Students deconstructed old t-shirts and cut out pieces that represented aspects of their identity. After collecting their pieces, students sewed them onto a plain t-shirt. Many of the students wore these in a final fashion show at their CHSC.

Identity was also the focus with eleven Arts Street spring interns, ages 14-17, who worked with Devin to express aspects of their identity creatively. They discussed the meanings of their names and created graffiti style paintings. They also created a personal identity collage and an oil pastel that represented their community identity. Finally, they created self-portraits infusing their identity knowledge, utilizing photography and digital designs. These pieces were entered in the U.S. Congressional Art Competition and the interns were able to attend a reception with their work displayed and meet U.S. Congresswoman Diana DeGette.



Art Mentoring: RiNo Youth Creative Career Day

Summer 2024

In partnership with RiNo Arts District, artist/instructor Devin Urioste produced an event for 16 Arts Street emerging artists, ages 16-23. To attend, young adults had to apply to a call for entries and were chosen based on their applications. The day included working with Denver professional artists to learn valuable skills that would benefit them in a career in the creative industries. Each artist held an individual session where the youth artists were able to create art, learn new skills and build connections with professional artists. Artists presenting were; Victor Escobedo, Moe Gram, Erica Astbury, and JayCee Beyale. Information included how to become a tattoo artist, developing a portfolio and public art proposals. Participants included: Parker A., Ace J., Mylea R., Lyla M., Kayla M., Eli G., Angel S., Makiya G., Isabella M., Daniella T., Crishawn C., Vanessa M., Yozmi R., Noah M., Attilina T., and Justine T.



Art Mentorship: Glassblowing Workshop

Summer 2024



Arts Street partnered with Metro State's Center for Visual Art for a unique opportunity for nine young artists to participate in a hands-on glassblowing workshop with Los Angeles artist, Corey Pemberton, at Flux glass studio on August 3, 2024. Our youth were inspired by Corey, who talked about being one of the few artists of color in the glassblowing world, networking and what it takes to succeed as a creative. After detailed instruction, each youth, working with a partner, shaped their own drinking glass. Although it was hot and hard work, our emerging artists were thrilled with the experience and as one said, "I will treasure my glass for the rest of my life."



Graduation 2024



Congratulations!

We are so pleased to congratulate all our YEA 2024 graduates. Our young adults continue to impress us by setting goals, overcoming obstacles and reaching their dreams. Many of our high school graduates are planning to attend college or have started their career paths. Elli'Anna G. (photo at right) is one of those students. She interned at Arts Street starting in September of 2023 and continued her internship through spring 2024. She is an amazing artist and team leader who excelled in school and graduated top of her class from Colorado High School Charter while also earning college credits from Community College of Denver. She plans to attend Metro State University of Denver in the fall of 2024 majoring in photography and business!



Mental Wellness Nature Excursions 2023

Thanks to the amazing funding from the Colorado Health Foundation, Arts Street was able to bring youth on excursions that went beyond Denver city limits including a multi-day trip to Steamboat Springs, an overnight trip to Colorado Springs and other day trips to green spaces near Denver. On each trip youth used different forms of art and creativity to explore their identity and mental wellness. They tried drumming outdoors which turned into a rainstorm and finally a rainbow! They did a “blind” charcoal drawing workshop with well-known artist, Greg Block. They experienced their first alpine lake. They climbed through Garden of the Gods and did portrait photography with masks they created expressing their identity and most importantly they spent time with other youth artists, artist mentors and learned about themselves.



Far Left: It's important when outdoors to be "Bear Aware".
Left: Photography excursion to the Botanical Gardens in Steamboat.



Above: Youth artist in Garden of the Gods wearing identity mask.

Below: Garden of the Gods team enjoying the view as they hike.



Above: After drumming so hard they brought on a rainstorm, youth enjoy a glimpse of sunshine and a rainbow.
Below: Looking only at her face in a mirror, Shamirra does a self-portrait, blind contour drawing.



Above: A gorgeous afternoon at an alpine lake outside of Steamboat Springs.

Graduation 2023



Congratulations!

We are so pleased to congratulate all our YEA 2023 graduates. This graduating class had many challenges over their time in school, with figuring out new ways to go to school during a pandemic and missing out on many social activities. However, they stayed motivated and positive and earned their diploma. Many of our graduates are planning on attending college or have started their career paths.

Sudri C. (photo at right), is one of our outstanding graduates. Sudri participated as an intern with Arts Street in summer 2022 and continued working on special creative projects through spring 2023. She is an amazing artist and team leader who excelled in school and graduated as Valedictorian from West High School. As a first-generation student, she will be attending University of Colorado in Denver majoring in engineering.

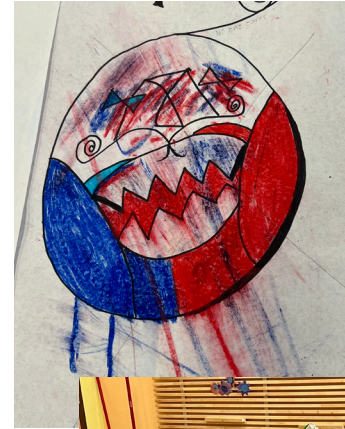


Mental Wellness, Opportunities & Successes

Mental Wellness for YEA Youth

YEA is thrilled with the addition of Destini Montez to our staff in June 2022. YEA was awarded a 3 year grant through Caring for Denver that provides support for mental wellness advocacy and workshops for all youth participants. As YEA's Youth Advisor, Destini will be meeting 1:1 with YEA youth and assisting them to reach their education, employment and mental wellness goals. In addition, she will be coordinating mental wellness workshops and more in-depth therapy through our partner Urban Collective Counseling. Destini has already made a huge impact with our youth, from providing emotional support to guidance on resources for basic needs.

Therapist Tamika Thomas of Urban Collective Counseling has worked with YEA throughout the years, but with our Caring for Denver grant, she has stepped into an even larger role. Tamika is providing mental wellness workshops for youth in all our industry academies and internships as well as providing 1:1 therapy and resources. Through her mental wellness workshops, Tamika provides education on mental health issues as well as tools for youth to take with them. Feedback has been outstanding with 95% of workshop participants saying they became more aware about mental health issues and 89% saying they learned a new skill to cope with challenges.



Top: Art piece from the "Draw your Inner Bully" workshop.
Below: Destini connecting with youth during class.



Building Equity in Access to Performing Arts

YEA recently formed a new partnership with COCETA, a non-profit whose mission is to provide access to Denver area performing arts events for underserved youth, especially those identifying at BIPOC. Through this partnership, youth from any of the programs in YEA will be able to attend events such as the ballet, symphony, immersive art, and theater. In September, 10 participants were able to experience Cirque du Soleil. Everyone was astounded by the performers, costumes, music, and stage design. Our youth were clapping and cheering through the entire performance. In October, 10 additional youth attended the Colorado Ballet's Dracula- experiencing ballet for the very first time. Meow Wolf and Disney on Ice are up next. We are so grateful for COCETA and their donations and are looking forward to introducing YEA participants to many new experiences in the arts.

Top: Youth awaiting Dracula ballet
Below: Cirque de Soleil performance.

Youth Successes

Arts Street celebrated youth artist and YEA participant Adama Bamba on his 21st birthday. Adama has participated in Arts Street since he was 15 and has evolved into a youth leader and program arts assistant. This summer Adama worked on the Edible Artscapes project, leading the video component and even teaching some of the creative technology workshops. This fall Adama is continuing to assist with Arts Street high school level classes while also attending college full time. Most recently, Adama was interviewed and his photography featured in Community College of Denver's Talon magazine (link to that article). Adama is majoring in art education, and we are eager to have him continue to grow with our organization.



Top: Photograph taken by Adama on the cover of the CCD magazine.
Below: Adama helping youth with Adobe Illustrator



Graduation 2022

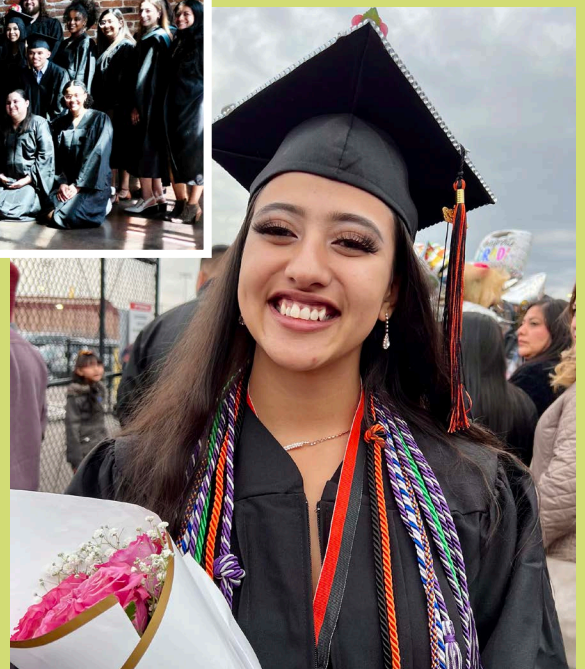


Congratulations!

We are so pleased to congratulate all our YEA 2022 high school graduates. This graduating class had many challenges over their time in high school, with figuring out new ways to go to school during a pandemic and missing out on many social activities. However, they stayed motivated and positive and earned their diploma.

Many of our graduates are planning on attending college and are already working to save up some money. One of those is Tony N., a West High School graduate. (photo to left).

Tony has completed several Creative Industries academies with Arts Street and has also worked as an intern during the school year at the Arts Street studio. Tony is currently employed at Safeway and plans to attend college in the fall 2022 and major in graphic design. An amazing artist, we are so proud of Tony and all our other amazing graduates.

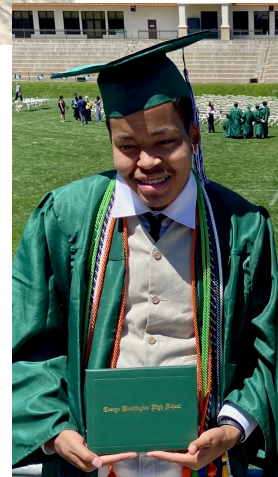
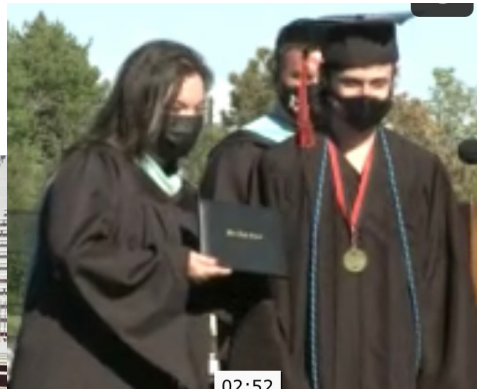


Graduation 2021

In May, YEA was able to celebrate reaching big goals with many of our youth, both virtually and in person. We saw youth graduate from high school, community college and even one YEA graduate who earned her Masters in Public Health! Congratulations to all the YEA youth who made it through a difficult year and who are on their next step of their journey towards a very bright future!!!!



Above (right to left): CHSC valedictorian Moriah, CCD graduate Zipporah, photo from graduation parade for Darrick.



Right to left: Screenshot from graduation live stream for Sam, graduate Alex with his diploma.



Left to Right: Masters degree graduate Zam Zam, CHSC graduation celebration and ceremony with Tyrone and Alex.

Graduation 2020



Working with youth virtually in 2020 made for even more celebration when graduation finally came. Congratulations to all of our grads, especially those at Colorado High School Charter who made it through a very challenging spring to get here.