

YOUTH OPPORTUNITIES UNLIMITED

PREMIER ISSUE

SPREADING

THE LIGHT

Empowering a New Generation to Write



Spreading The Light

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EDITORIAL OFFICES

www.younb.org

Victory Park Warming House, 224 Brock Avenue, New Bedford, MA 02744

OUR STORY

Leadership Empowerment
Economy, Work & Lifestyle



We are cultivators of “Aha!” moments and believers in natural curiosity.

Above: Youth on a guided trip take in sights near UMass Dartmouth SMAST on Clark's Point, New Bedford.

Since its inception in 2004, **Youth Opportunities Unlimited (Y.O.U)** has been dedicated to providing inspiring experiences for the youth of New Bedford. We believe that youth represent amazing untapped potential, and the key to realizing this potential is responding to their natural curiosity about the world around them.

Founded in 2004 as Trips for Kids, our mission has always been to broaden youth perspectives through transformative experiences. Our founders recognized the need for guidance and support beyond the home and classroom, and so with a few bikes, a renovation and determination, Trips for Kids began!

Our home base since inception has been the Victory Park Warming House on Brock Avenue in New Bedford and our playground is wherever our bikes and imaginations can take us! Despite inhabiting an area of impressive natural and cultural abundance, many children don't often experience the bounty and beauty of our historic, seaside home. We thus began in the early days with bike rides around the peninsula, exploring Fort Taber, Hazelwood Park and playing at the old "Poor Farm".

From the outset we've dedicated ourselves to creating opportunities that respond to youth interest. So when participants began requesting to use bike tools in the evenings, "Bike Shop" came to be! Then one rainy day and a few smoothies later, our Food for Thought program was born. Our most recent addition, the Children's Garden, was born of an interesting story beginning with guerilla gardening and the tomato-induced exclamation, "Let's plant some!"

After 12 years of successful operations, a change of name to Youth Opportunities Unlimited provided a more accurate portrayal of our work. From bikes and kayaks to our imaginations and our own two feet, these are the tools of exploration, discovery and adventure at Y.O.U. The specifics of what we do evolve in response to the youth that we learn with and through, but we remain dedicated to how we do what we do. We are a small non-profit making a big impact in the lives of New Bedford youth!

Whether you see us on our bikes or are passing by the Warming House, come get to know us and become a part of our story.



*JoAnn Tschaen, LCSW, **Y.O.U. Founder** (Director & Senior Advisor)*

Doreen J. Lopes President & Treasurer

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Executive Director

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Every now and then, I teach the boys how an Executive Director spins a basketball on her fingertips.

I'm a lifelong, sincerely dedicated, New Bedford resident who is deeply committed to youth. After many years of working with the Boys & Girls Club of Greater New Bedford, I've been able to bring my skills to Youth Opportunities Unlimited (Y.O.U.). New Bedford is beautifully diverse both in nationalities and local assets. However, many people do not understand the diversity or know how to get to access New Bedford's resources. I feel it is my job to help families and youth understand what this unique city has to offer. Growing up, I was very fortunate to have the right mentors and many moms who kept me on that right road. And now I feel it's my turn to pay it forward. I truly enjoy people. My church and community are my foundation. Making positive change for this city every day, both excites and completes me.

My style of communication is verbal; for me writing really takes serious effort. One of the reasons I tried this pilot is to help youth to practice writing. The love of reading and writing with 'no fear' is a dream this magazine makes happen. With Paula & Paul Deare of Eworkstyle Institute coaching, the girls were able to tell their stories in a beautiful and heartfelt way. This kind of collaboration with another non-profit allows us to pool resources and talents on creative pilot programs to everyone's benefit. What a great way to empower a new generation to write! For this emerging young leaders' pilot, Y.O.U. brought in an all-girl team of fifth and sixth graders from Our Sisters' School. As you will see from the photos in this publication, the girls took their stories very seriously. It is with great pleasure we bring to you *Spreading the Light* magazine.

Do enjoy!

Bernadette Souza



Field trips are key to learning, above I'm in red at Grey's Grist Mill with Y.O.U. girls & Carissa, right.



No fear means holding a beautiful 9' foot yellow Burmese Python snake on your shoulders, for photos.



Chance Perks
Director of Operations

A native of the New Bedford area, Chance is devoted to our city's coexistence with the natural world here on the South Coast. He is a graduate of Bristol County Agricultural High School and holds a bachelor's degree in Forest Management. Chance's first involvement with Y.O.U. began as a volunteer in helping to establish the garden that is now a key part of the organization and was then later asked to be an Executive Board member to help lead the organization with his unique perspectives.

Previously in Chance's adventure he loved getting his first exposure to youth leadership as a member of the Trustees of Reservations Youth Conservation Corps management team. As his career progressed he proudly served the community as the City Arborist and Superintendent of Park Maintenance and Forestry with the New Bedford Department of Public Infrastructure. Teaching members of the community, especially youth, is a favorite way for Chance to express his excitement for the great outdoors and to encourage folks to find their connection with the rhythms of nature. Chance is excited to welcome your kids to Y.O.U.!



Carissa Wills-DeMello
Development \Program Coordinator

Carissa's adventure with Y.O.U. began with a chance breakfast encounter with our Executive Director, Bernadette; a few days and a visit to the Warming House later, and she was onboard! Carissa brings a passion for connecting youth with their city, their environment and themselves to Y.O.U.. She is a graduate of Dartmouth High School and Brown University and has experience in community development and public health work.

Born and raised in the area, Carissa has a deep appreciation for the natural and cultural bounty of the South Coast. Having returned in late 2016 from the Peace Corps, she continues her service by sharing the values of culture and community that she admired most about her country of service, Fiji, back home. Here at Y.O.U. her role evolves with our growing organization—some days she's facilitating programs and working in the garden, others she's developing social media outreach and communications. With a propensity for creativity and a demeanor that our youth gravitate to, Carissa is surely a utility member of the Y.O.U. team!



Gina Bourassa
Instructor

As the longest-serving member of the Y.O.U. Staff (and a City native & resident herself) Gina has significant experience in helping kids to stay safe in an urban environment. Her many years as an employee of NB Public Schools have also enabled her to fully understand the challenges facing our local students every single day. She consistently uses her innate ability for nurturing for the benefit of the many kids who seek out her guidance & support. In addition to her many other skills, Gina is also an excellent cook & both the students & Staff are the lucky recipients of her wonderful culinary creations.



& OPERATIONS

Leadership Empowerment
Economy, Work & Lifestyle



Teaching the techniques of kayaking on a river with a young hatted member of Y.O.U.

Youth Opportunities Unlimited (Y.O.U.) functions as an independent platform for innovative youth development. Young people need significant support, encouragement, and guidance in order to realize their full potential to grow into engaged young adults and future community leaders. Our mission is congruent with the mission of the New Bedford public school system. We align our program timing and scope to meet and complement the extra-curricular and after school needs of our school system. Y.O.U. programs are also offered as an extension of the school day - focused on broadening children's exposure to the wider world around them. Through Challenging Opportunities, mentoring Relationships and educational Experiences (CORE) we create innovative experiences that are safe, fun, and educational. Y.O.U. offers unique CORE programs; which run weekdays, over a period of one to eight weeks – applications are available online.



Handing down the basics of how to manage growing fruit trees with a member of Y.O.U.

Our core programs include:

- Urban Explorers, Spring (Apr\Jun) & Fall (Sep\Oct);
- Explore Your Environment, Summer (Jul\Aug);
- Bicycle Maintenance & Repair, Fall (Oct\Dec) & Winter (Jan\Feb);
- Food for Thought, Winter (Feb\Apr) and
- W.I.N.D. Winter INdoor Discoveries (Feb\April).

Whether you are a parent in Greater New Bedford in search of enriching experiences for your children, a community organization looking to partner with us to create positive change or a supporter of youth looking to make an impactful financial contribution, there are many opportunities to get involved. To find out more contact us or visit us online at www.younb.org.



Showing youth how to harvest summer crops.

Chance Perks, Director of Operations

Y.O.U. PROGRAMS



Helping a young writer consider ideas, angles and outcomes for her story, told later in this issue.



Preparing a Food for Thought meal with fresh romaine lettuce from our Victory Garden..



Reviewing a draft of Spreading The Light



Youth Opportunities Unlimited is dedicated to creating safe, fun, and educational opportunities for youth. We aim to foster youth development in the Greater New Bedford area by broadening perspectives of youth and expanding their outlook. Most integral to our organizational culture is a respect for the natural curiosity of youth. That curiosity guides every program and every day at Y.O.U., creating an environment that naturally cultivates learning minds and self-esteem.

Within our day-to-day, support and respect permeate all relationships. At Y.O.U. we uplift one another. We celebrate individuality and friendship. We constantly challenge each other (staff and youth included!) to abandon the familiar and seek growth through new experiences. That foundational principle takes many forms, from a child taking his first bite of spinach to our team responding to youths' program critiques!

While Y.O.U. offers different programs which rotate throughout the seasons, they all share the common mission of broadening youths' perspectives on the world through inspiring experiences. Staff instructors follow the natural curiosity of our youth, ensuring that their interests are encouraged and cultivated. Y.O.U. believes that experiential education and learning in context are the best ways for youth to actually integrate and use what they learn.

Despite the fact that each program has a central theme, such as bicycling during Urban Explorers and cooking during Food for Thought, Y.O.U. programs do not generally follow a concrete agenda. We go wherever our bikes, our two feet, and our imaginations can take us! So through all that we do, we aim for youth to depart from their Y.O.U. experience with a "seed pod" - a new idea, expanded outlook, evolved perspective, or discovered skill, that they can go on to cultivate throughout their lifetime. These "seed pods" are planted by our passionate staff mentors, the books in our library, program volunteers, and the incredible South End landscape. Y.O.U. provides support and engaging experiences for youth to promote a culture of lifelong learning!

Carissa DeMello, Development\Program Coordinator

& INSTRUCTION

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Y.O.U. brings in highly trained & experienced seasonal staff, who are passionate about youth mentoring. Among the staff are certified teachers, college students, a trained bicycle mechanic, a nutritionist, a trained herbalist and a certified arborist. The variety of backgrounds and interests allow staff to connect with the diverse youth that Y.O.U. serves. Instructional Program offerings over the last several years have included the following:

"A Trip to Fiji" - a "Peace Corps immersion"; participants learned about service and cultural exchange through Fijian foods, music, crafts, and culture. Youth tried Fijian dishes like plantain in coconut milk; instruction included making "bark cloth" bags.

New Bedford Symphony Orchestra Composition - Youth were instructed in composing "fanfares" -- musical celebrations of their loved ones. They tried piano, xylophone, and wrote dedications to accompany a culminating musical celebration!

UMass Law Mock Trial - UMass Law School students introduced youth to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. They were instructed in basic concepts like "negotiate" and "communicate." Kids wrapped up the program with a videotaped mock trial of Gold E. Locks & the 3 Bears in the Law School's court room presided over by The Honorable Bettina Borders!

Kitchen Skills with Chef Bill - From vegetable-cutting to egg-whisking, kids were instructed in basic kitchen skill practices that took them from novice to adept chefs with healthy meal prep, whole foods and age appropriate recipes.

Back to Basics - Youth were instructed in the use of real hand tools as they built benches and pollinator houses. Students were also taught how to make hand-dipped candles and construct solar ovens. Students even learned to make bread from scratch!

Indigenous Cultural Experience - Local Wampanoag Elder Minoweh Iki-owen introduced youth to storytelling and music, forming the backdrop for instructional projects, such as spirit bag making. Youth were encouraged to celebrate their cultures after visiting her homestead.

Spread the Light - This literacy experience instructed youth in "self-defense through writing." Brainstorming, writing and editing sessions helped to develop students' voice and confidence, while focusing on courage, culture & pride of individuality.

Gina Bourassa, Y.O.U. Instructor



This young explorer found a heart shaped rock.



When handed a Kale bouquet by a Y.O.U. gardening member, it is a huge compliment.



Exploring our Environment near the ocean.



Y.O.U. CORE PROGRAMS

Explore Your Environment SUMMER

Our biggest and most popular program runs daily in one-week sessions every summer. As we bike around the south-end peninsula, stopping to explore many exciting local sites, highly qualified instructors ensure that every opportunity is captured for “learning in context”. Kids’ input guide our adventures, and E.Y.E. is always full of swimming, sports, and historic site visits.



Urban Explorers SPRING / FALL

New Bedford students join this after-school program, where we ride to exciting local venues to explore! We visit parks, beaches and historic places, and even plant & harvest garden fresh snacks. On rainy days, we get busy with whatever sparks youth interest: from arts, crafts, & building, to music, reading, & writing.



Victory Park Children’s Garden

In the Spring and Summer, it is not just the crops that are growing! The garden, orchard and berry patch never cease to inspire our program participants and visitors. In the Spring we ‘wake up’ the garden and plant carrots and mixed greens. During Summer youth take part in summer crop planting, maintenance and harvesting which we all enjoy in healthy, fresh, quick, fun meals.

FALL & WINTER

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Bicycle Maintenance & Repair

WINTER

This experience introduces the basics of bicycle care, developing youth's life skills and confidence. Participants are taught by a trained bicycle mechanic and use modern equipment and tools, designed especially for working on bikes. Students build bikes from the frame up and leave Y.O.U. ready to ride safely.

Food For Thought Cooking Program

WINTER

Through hands-on workshops at the Dartmouth Grange, youth acquire cooking skills and an appreciation of healthy foods with the guidance of talented local chefs. Every recipe is an opportunity for discovery, from new favorite dishes to surprising cultural connections. As we explore exciting recipes, we learn about the journey of food from soil to plate.



Y.O.U. serves children ages 9-16 in the Greater New Bedford area. Our mission is to create opportunities for exploration, discovery, and adventure that our participants wouldn't otherwise have. Whether children are cooking meals using ingredients completely new to them, gaining hands-on instruction in bike maintenance, or exploring local neighborhoods that they have never visited, we offer a safe and supportive environment that encourages all of our students to open their minds, follow their natural curiosity, and realize their full potential!

W.I.N.D. Programs

During the several weeks between Fall and Spring Urban Explorers, Y.O.U. programs head indoors. This is the time when youth take part in **Winter IN**door Discoveries, or W.I.N.D.

This seasonal span represents unlimited "Youth Opportunities" that include exploring wherever the "W.I.N.D." blows them! At Y.O.U., prior to finalizing programs, we often survey youth on what they might want to engage in during the coming season. As youth see their selections and ideas evolve into programming they become invested in their own growth and development. We find this process invaluable in guiding their development of new interests as well as the cultivation of new skills. In order to make this work, Y.O.U. often enlists the help of skilled volunteers and professionals in conducting these programs.

W.I.N.D. program offerings over the last several years have included interactive experiences based on:

- *Ecology*
- *Biology*
- *Arts & Crafts*
- *Fitness*
- *Mindfulness*
- *Nutrition*
- *Life Skills*

- *Carpentry*
- *Writing*
- *Music*
- *Cooking*

There is no single, definitive W.I.N.D. experience. W.I.N.D. programs are as diverse as the interests of the youth that we serve and the skills that our community offers! As in all Y.O.U. programs, W.I.N.D. builds upon the natural curiosity of youth, seeking to expand their horizons by offering new experiences.

Of course, we would not be able to do the work we do without the generous support of our Youth Opportunities Unlimited, Inc., sponsors listed on the back page. We are proud to be investing in our youth with these organizations.

For more information on Y.O.U. see Programs and Instruction pages 8 and 9 or visit us at www.YOUNB.org.



Y.O.U. Instructors pictured above.



Our Sisters' School



Above left: nine girls who participated in the magazine. Right, students wind down from the magazine photo shoot.

Two Y.O.U. Winter Program partners for Spreading the Light Magazine were Our Sisters' School and Eworkstyle Institute. We began this pilot with nine girls from Our Sisters' School (O.S.S.) who were already in the Y.O.U. program. The following is an introduction to Our Sisters' School from their website.

Our Sisters' School Motto is:
"Educate Girls, Empower Women."

Our Sisters' School opened in 2008 as a tuition-free, non-sectarian, independent school for girls from low-income families. In our 10th year, we continue to educate and inspire girls in grades 5 to 8 from the Greater New Bedford area to reach their full potential in a safe, supportive and challenging environment. The School's name honors New Bedford's storied history of women, called Sister Sailors, who joined whaling expeditions in the early 1800s.

Experiential and in-depth learning activities in our classes help our students develop excellent skills for success in high school, college and beyond. We offer many opportunities for girls to be leaders in the School and purposefully instill the confidence to be self-reliant and respectful toward others through our Core Values of Community, Citizenship, Leadership and Excellence.

33% of our alumnae attend independent day and boarding schools with full scholarships.

50% of our graduates choose to attend the local vocational technical high school.

17% of our alumnae attend local public schools.

All of our graduates are college bound.

Why all-girls? Evidence supports our belief that when you educate a girl, you educate the whole family

and the next generation. We are moving forward with vision and determination to preserve the best of our history while embracing our future.

To celebrate 10 years, we invite you to join us in the PEOPLE, PROGRAM and PLACE campaign to invest in strategic initiatives that will ensure that our wonderful school continues to thrive for future generations of girls.

Learn more about OSS and our anniversary campaign, visit us online at www.oursistersschool.org. ★



Partners

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EWORKSTYLE INSTITUTE

Eworkstyle Institute (EI), is a not-for-profit organization established in 1995, to support media literacy and stakeholder focused participation in creating and reporting on livable, walkable cities. EI empowers through writing for mixed media, communications coaching and knowledge work courses on building sustainable communities. EI training strengthens integrity, confidence and leadership. EI online media venues provide timely, reliable access to key information on economy, work, lifestyle, smart growth, environment and other significant topics related to strategies in local-to-regional and national-to-global developments. Eworkstyle Institute curriculum includes writing for print, radio, web and TV production in an information based economy. EI experience with a wide range of community residents from youth and seniors to professionals, students, entrepreneurs and instructors has been instrumental in developing comprehensive standards in communications, public relations & web media productions. We showcase innovative best practices in said forms of mixed media. Eworkstyle Institute also hosts medium to large scale local to global meetings. To find out more or to keep your skills current, join us online at www.eworkstyle.org.



PAULA ROBINSON DEARE: EDITOR-IN CHIEF, DESIGNER, PUBLISHER

Paula Robinson Deare brings communications technical knowledge, assistance and training from the print, radio and television industries to all ages underserved by those industries. Prior to entering Public Relations with Fox Broadcasting, she served as a newspaper graphic designer, magazine columnist, radio talk show host and producer/host for cable TV in metropolitan Boston, MA, USA. Active in the evolution of the communications frontier, Paula is a regular speaker on media empowerment. After building a number of multi-media technology production labs and a state-of-the-art lecture hall in Boston, Paula received recognition awards from the National Science Foundation, Massachusetts Teachers Association, City of Boston and State of Massachusetts. She then grew the place-based communications training curriculum into a web-based Institute. Paula holds an MIT Sloan School of Management certificate in Global Strategy and Innovation. A member of MIT Urban Studies & Planning Community Fellows, Paula was granted their Excellence in Media and Technology award. Paula Robinson Deare established Eworkstyle Institute in 1995, and currently provides its web based campus design, while serving as Media Literacy Instructor.



V. PAUL DEARE: EDITOR, PHOTOGRAPHER, WRITER

V. Paul Deare's background is in economic development and the growth of American cities, in conjunction with college level instruction. Paul has served as: a project consultant for the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture; co-founded the Caribbean Center for Understanding Media (U.S.V.I.); managed funding for the Massachusetts Council on the Arts & Humanities; cofounded BNN-TV Public Access Foundation; and served on the boards of WGBH TV and the Boston Public Library. He is an award-winning producer of public and cable TV as well as interactive videos. Paul has worked at all levels of community revitalization, from grass-roots to civic leadership in Massachusetts, New York, California, the Caribbean and China. He specializes in issues and policies of social equity, neighborhood development and economic recovery. Paul has worked both as and with funders, executives and stakeholders on the sustainable health and the well-being of communities and constituents in the United States and around the world. V. Paul Deare is President/Cofounder of Eworkstyle Institute's online campus and serves as its Sustainable Communities Instructor.





Above: Women in New Bedford March carrying signs. The large sign says, "Respect Existence or Expect Resistance."

As we developed this publication, inspiring women across the globe were uniting in movements in recognition of various forms of empowerment, to raise the voices and conditions of impoverished and under-represented people. You will see in the following pages, one of the largest portions of under-represented people in the United States is women and girls. Did you know 52% of women in the United States are functionally illiterate? Or that children raised in low literacy households have a 70% chance of having low literacy? Further, did you know that 70% of ethnic people raised below the middle class will be there for life? *US Census\Pew Charitable Trust

LITERACY IS KEY TO ALL EMPOWERMENT

The following programs are available online:

At UMass Dartmouth, there is a pre-college program called Spotlight that allows high school students be on a college campus over the course of a semester, visit www.umassd.edu/spotlight/.

The New Bedford Whaling Museum, the New Bedford Historical Society, along with historical societies in Marion, Westport, Fall River and more are jointly working to document the contributions of women from the South Coast. This project called Lighting the Way, is part of a national effort to include women in the history of the world. The goal is to lift women's efforts, voices & contributions to inspire generations to come. Out of Lighting the Way will come a trail, mobile app, website & curriculum. For more information or to add someone you know go to: www.historicwomenofthesouthcoast.org.

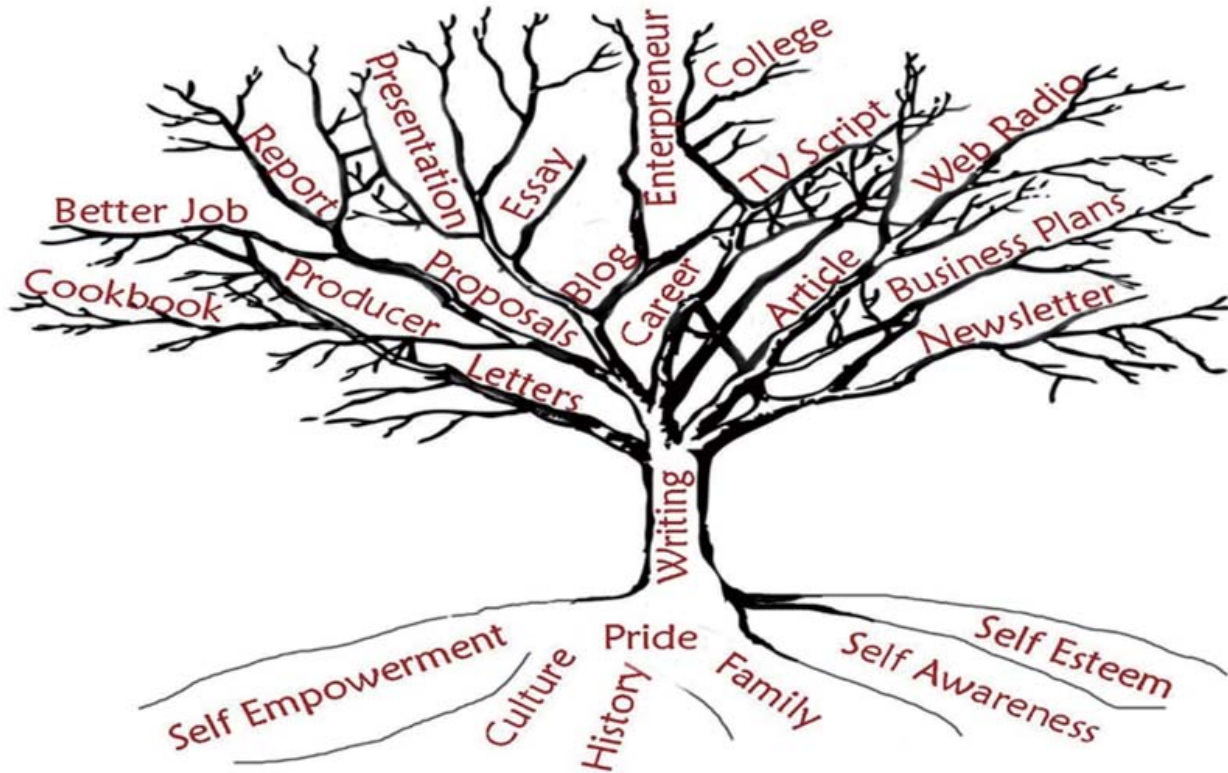
In order for women to be equally represented in the news journals and history as keystone inventors, politicians, researchers, scientists, and so much more; in order for women to receive equal pay and recognition for legacy contributions around the world, throughout history; we must define ourselves in defense of our heritage, skills and values. If we always rely on others to tell our stories, we are asking others to define us - to tell us who we are. We are asking for permission to be. How then can we ever be treated equally? The World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) and the United Nations have issued a Universal Declaration of Human Rights whereby cultural and intellectual property rights are enshrined as human rights. They state: "Everyone has the right to freely participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits. Everyone has the right to the protection of the moral and material interests resulting from any scientific, literary or artistic production of which they author." For more search Indigenous People's Rights: www.wipo.int/.

Eworkstyle Institute brings forward the young bright minds of selected writers in partnership with Y.O.U. We have used today's media to **Spread the Light** from nine girls telling their stories. We will continue to work diligently to make learning to use various forms of media fun, as we share the important experiences of new generations. At Eworkstyle Institute, we empower by showcasing those who are using their genius to solve local to global issues for under-represented people. For more please visit us online at www.eworkstyle.org. ★

WHY WRITING?

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Eworkstyle Knowledge Tree



Our Knowledge Tree demonstrates why we developed the concept of dialogue via writing about the pride of family and community. The act of writing leads to a product from which communications can be shared in many ways, to affect personal/community growth.

Girls are typically raised to take a back seat in order to keep an eye on others and to help everyone else along. As girls grow into women, they are more comfortable in the back seat than in front leading. Changing such behavior means learning to lead by sharing one's voice, a step in gaining courage.

In today's mixed media environment, tools for communicating are designed for entertainment and consumption rather than for the benefit of education, development or production. Yet communication, one voice at a time, is key to building human capital.

Research shows, literacy improvement comes via continual practice in conver-

sation, discussing issues and solutions.

There is a dual act of courage in writing what you experience: 1) people see who you are and what you think. 2) many people will want to hear more. The latter is where knowledge growth begins to move beyond innate, intergenerational talks with family and friends (over time) to accumulate into a body of ideas, experiences, outcomes and opinions that form fundamental values and personal/cultural identity.

What is wonderful about writing is one's voice does not disappear over time. To evolve dialogue to include research, while continuing to discuss and write about things that matter, individuals grow to become ambassadors and eventually global citizens who interpret the world for their families, communities and country. ★

Sources:

- Pew Research Center
- Proliteracy.org-



52% of women across the USA are functionally illiterate.



72% of children from parents with low literacy will be so.

The intensive workshops at the Y.O.U. Warming House covered the basics of writing a one page news document. Included was *Writing for Self-Defense* - a critical thinking practice in brainstorming and writing. *Writing for Self-Defense* required participants to define themselves in every way they believe true, with surety of values that are wholly untouched by others' definitions. *Writing for Self-Defense* allowed participants to create a body of personal armor, that strengthens with time to become a shield that keeps others' hurtful or negative definitions at bay. *Writing for Self-Defense* is both a practice and recognition that gives the power to approve or deny others' redefinition of self on a basis of deliberate, critical personal choice.

Eworkstyle's writing curriculum included: telling a story, composing a sentence, defining a paragraph, sequencing paragraphs and editing under a deadline. Stories written embraced the concept of writing for empowerment, which also helps participants define their identity and their own terms for life and living well. In four workshops totaling 8 hours, we worked on what the girls already knew, family and community roots. The girls embraced their cultural identities by including distinctive experiences, epiphanies, associations and lessons learned that formed their outlooks on life.

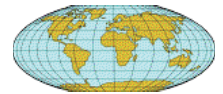
Eworkstyle Institute puts its educational stock in sustainable community-building. One method is partnering, as we did, with Y.O.U. to create a pilot as a motivation for young girls towards developing their self-awareness and voices through storytelling. This collaboration was incorporated into one of Y.O.U.'s winter after school events. The participants in this issue are fifth and sixth grade students from Our Sisters' School. This magazine constitutes EI's commitment to a product development showcase of lessons learned, best practices and human capital development toward building communities from the inside out. We add each proven curricula to our online campus. In this way, we collaborate with community-based organizations to develop an intergenerational literacy and empowerment campus for all age groups. We further plan to train trainers and license our curricula to create a culture of literacy in under-literate communities. In this way we invest in human capital and cultural equity. The aforementioned also allows Eworkstyle Institute to contribute to family socio-economic stability and the development of livable communities.



The new age of information warfare isn't new; literacy has always been used to disrupt and polarize critical thinking by disinformation, sensationalism, misinformation, under-education, burning books, etc. The old way of competing was to provide systematic underdevelopment. I know it's still being done, but underdevelopment happens - we cannot allow ourselves to freeze and let it run our families over. We need to arm ourselves with communications literacy; not only for education and writing, but also for all 21st century careers. Communications technological advances are continuing to progress at an extremely rapid pace. While some 60% of Americans own computers, only 19% are using them competitively as producers. We know the prospect for democracy is undermined when citizens are unable to research, discuss and act effectively and collectively toward solutions to issues. That is the reason we searched for and experimented with positive, fun and effective media solutions that demonstrate how the real pride, integrity and many struggles of the spirit, heart and culture could come through to the world in a way that impacts positive self and community development.

At Eworkstyle, we're sustainably investing in building human capacity to invigorate communities, resources and people. We have developed training methods to normalize youth and adults in the art of leadership. We inspire students to imagine and accumulate skills and education to lead community, national and global revitalization. Our *Writing for Empowerment Program* helps to amplify 'Traditional Knowledge,' with lessons, interlaced with technology and social enterprise modeling. We used the short time we had in the workshops to address the problem of too much humility. Our method, you hold in your hands. The act of writing in a publication, for families with oral traditions, is an approach to overcoming the fear of public scrutiny. Our goal is to give people of all ages, the confidence and skills needed to get and stay contemporary enough to compete for college and careers across sectors - to earn livable wages.

As you read our young writer's showcase, keep in mind that seven years go by quickly and these girls will be on the runway to college. They are the next generation of experts who will marshal resources, build models & share practices for the health and well-being of our communities and future generations. ★



WEB CAREERS & KNOWLEDGE WORK

Imagine going into a library and seeing all of the books, papers and resources strewn all over the floor. How would you find anything? That is an over-simplification of what we have today on the World Wide Web. We now live in a "Global Information Economy" which is based on sorting, organizing, storing and categorizing the world's continuously doubling information, so it can be used efficiently. Opportunities for careers in this century lie within helping citizens, organizations & governments, get precise and current information at any moment, in every area of expertise. Equally important, work today involves looking at the broad spectrum of problems in local regions, cities and neighborhoods and pitching in as citizens to help solve our shared global problems. The aforementioned web scenario has launched many companies from Google and Wikipedia to Netflix, YouTube and even Eworkstyle. In each case, issues and opportunities in storing types of information were studied to build never-before kinds of companies. Eworkstyle focuses on communications and self-help information. The World Wide Web is a new frontier for those with an interest in gathering, sorting and studying industry subjects and providing results via websites, blogs, vlogs, podcasts and web TV. *Knowledge Work* careers also include: politics, engineering, medicine, science, design, sports, social work, entertainment, tourism, recreation, law, art, history, human services, academia and more. In general, a *Knowledge Worker* is defined as one who "interprets, synthesizes and solves problems for a living." *Knowledge Work* requires a good education in one or more fields of study and a strong working literacy with writing, communications processes and tools.

BLUE CAREERS



New Bedford, MA hosts the USA's most valued fishing port. Seafood produces a stable livelihood for the more than four thousand fishermen and auxiliary workers who sell fuel, repair boats, do welding, painting, cleaning; and provide food, supplies and other necessary fishing industry support items. By 2012, the U.S. fishing industry was generating some \$1 billion a year in economic activity. In 2018, Federal regulations were approved for offshore wind developers to engage in a working dialogue with the fishing industry. The potential of offshore wind to create clean energy jobs in Massachusetts, may reduce the region's dependence on foreign oil, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions through the production of renewable energy. *Wind Power* reported, in the next 20 years, offshore wind could create about 91,000 more jobs in the USA than offshore drilling and enough energy to power over 115 million households. According to Mayor Jon Mitchell's 2018 State-of-the-City address; *"The New Bedford Port is the primary economic driver in the region because it supports nearly seven thousand jobs. The New Bedford Port Authority will be the epicenter where the fishing & wind industries will interact in the United States."* With that interaction comes the need for appropriate offshore wind industry support, as well as auxiliary support for the related marine science industries. Associated work will run the gamut from technicians and engineers to science and assembly workers across the USA. As the ocean based Blue Industry evolves, New Bedford will be in a prime position to attract and retain talent, investment and many resources across more Blue Industry careers from science and oceanography to sea life preservation.

GREEN CAREERS



Today's green careers cover green building practices for residential and commercial sites, from solar energy and geothermal heating to non-toxic supplies, safe roads and brownfield site management. Professional credentials in green building have gained national and global notoriety as the rating system for Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) has become the standard. Green careers also span those in businesses that produce goods or provide services that benefit the environment and/or conserve natural resources such as electric cars which cut down on greenhouse gases. Green jobs range from renewable energy and organic farming to policy and planning in environmental sciences. Related to green building is community preservation as well as the work of restoration in our national parks. Green careers include arborists and botanists working in biodiversity as well as experts and supporting teams in conservation, academia, policy, science, engineering and more. There are also urban planners, green tech entrepreneurs and preservation projects that can range from planting trees for soil captivation and clean air as well as the science of researching, making and merchandising biofuels distilled from plants. Green careers offer conscientious recyclers the opportunity to spend their professional lives working to restore the earth's natural resources. What green jobs have in common is the position of working with the earth's natural resources to remediate toxic materials in communities and/or near natural resources such as water ways, so that the air and land can be more environmentally safe toward the development of a healthy world habitable for human and animal life.

MIND OF A CHILD



- Language skills at age 3 predict measures for language skills and academic success at age 9.
- Children accumulate experience in an average 5,000 waking hours in each year, by watching and identically mimicking their parents language literacy communication habits & behaviors.
- Children from lower-income families will have experienced **30 million** fewer words than their middle-class peers by the time they start kindergarten.
- In the first four years of life, the average child in a low income family will have accumulated 5 times more instances of prohibits than encouragements.
- Vocabulary skills are associated with reading & writing comprehension.
- Accumulated experience with communications and various forms of media over the course of a child, teen, adult lifetime adds up to each individual's stored intellectual library of call and response behaviors.
- Av. 18 yr old has 11,000 hrs of class time & 22,000 hrs of media exposure (80% violent).
- Incarcerated youth with an 11th grade education on average have 4th grade reading skills.

Sources on this page:

- Boston Medical Foundation
- Early Catastrophy, American Educator

Literacy is more than just the ability to read and write. Literacy includes the ability to comprehend surroundings, use language, calculate numbers and interpret images and symbols to solve problems. To be literate is to communicate and understand language and cultural stories - whether useful for developing knowledge or the process of communicating\interpreting with family or peers.

Literacy starts with understanding and processing language in a way that communicates with others to solve problems. At the close of each year, a child of 2 or 3 years of age should experience some 30 million words in order to properly evolve. Research shows that solutions-oriented conversations coupled with reading\discussing ten pages per day, will create a progression of skills that develop over an average 5,000 waking hours in a year. The aforementioned habits can make the difference in whether a child achieves high grades in school or low ones. Try engaging children daily with a book, movie, plan, ideas & discussion.

The key to literacy is not only the practice of language, reading and writing, but also developing comfort with these habits. Literacy affects growth in all minds from infants to seniors. Literacy involves a progression of skills from understanding spoken words and decoding variable meanings; to awareness of speech sounds, accents and spelling as well as language comprehension. Literacy comes from experiencing the beginning, middle and end of insightful, critical discussions as they progress. Literacy involves taking mental notes from a combined litter of books, TV, and other forms of intellectual intake. Literacy is accomplished moment by moment - when an individual struggles with insights, learned material, informed decisions, inference, coherence and critical analysis to understand something. Literacy comes when that person accomplishes the focus and synthesis to have a 'eureka' moment based on a creative thought of his\her own. In this way, literacy makes us all unique in our ability to identify, understand and interpret varying contexts. Literacy involves life-long learning to enable each of us to develop our knowledge, potential and goals. Literacy allows us to participate fully in our own lives, the lives of our families, community and in the world.

*There are many factors that encourage or discourage communications literacy well before early childhood education enters the picture. Research has shown such factors can and do inhibit the development of individuals, well after the pursuit of elementary or high school and well into college and work life. Those factors include the overwhelming negatives a person experiences from those trusted and close along the way. Children from lower income families typically experience 5 encouragements and 11 discouragements per hour. Over an average 5,000 hour year these responses amount to 160k encouragements and 26k discouragements. Discouragements in low-income families are twice that of middle-class and three times that of upper-class families. Children from lower income families are **encouraged five-times less** than peers in middle-class families and ten-times less than peers in upper-class families.*

Literacy in general rests with individual exposure from early childhood throughout life. Literacy reflects the encouragements and discouragements we receive. Literacy combines with the number and kinds of words we hear and process on a daily, monthly and yearly basis. We now know that even-keeled, non-temperamental conversations are not only critical to early childhood developmental growth - these kinds of conversations positively impact human growth at all ages. Reading is important for children, but it is a one-way engagement. Having a positive, thought provoking, analytical conversation that is solutions oriented - with all parties involved can be a critical factor in how well a child, teen, adult or senior comprehends communicating and solving problems. ★

MODELS OF SELF

Leadership Empowerment
Economy, Work & Lifestyle

We showcased role models who overcame serious circumstances in order to reach and become more than what was expected of them. We taught Writing for *Empowerment* to help participants define their own terms for identity, life and living well. Writing is an evolution of learning to have the courage to share one's own voice. Communication, one voice at a time, is key to building human capital. Self-awareness, self-development and self-determination were reflections used to describe the autonomy needed within an individual to enable themselves to represent their interests and act on their own authority. Among others, the role models below demonstrated *Empowerment* as the process of becoming stronger and more confident, especially in controlling one's life and claiming one's rights. Self-empowerment gives individuals the determination and self-permission to overcome any sense of powerlessness, and lack of influence, as well as the ability to recognize and use their personal, family and community assets and resources.

MALALA YOUSAFZAY: photo by Simon Davis, Wikipedia.org

Malala became an activist for female education when she was 12 years old by writing a blog. Malala's blog was the story about her life during a civil war in her native home in Swat Valley, Northwest Pakistan where a terrorist group called the Taliban had banned girls from attending school. Malala's role models were her parents and family who had run a chain of schools where she was from. Malala's family was poor, but she was inspired by her father's thoughts and humanitarian work. A year after Malala's blog was posted on the World Wide Web, a journalist from the New York Times made a documentary about Malala's life. Malala rose in prominence, giving interviews in print and on television. Malala, the youngest Nobel Prize Laureate, was also nominated for the International Children's Peace Prize by Bishop Desmond Tutu.



RONI TOEM: photo by V. Paul Deare, Eworkstyle.org

Roni Toem was born in Cambodia in 1971. Her parents were teachers. Roni was born with Polio. Polio is a contagious viral illness that causes nerve injury leading to paralysis, difficulty breathing and sometimes death. Roni Toem was 8 years old when a vicious civil war tore apart Cambodia. A mass exodus evolved where thousands, had no choice but to walk toward safety. Because Roni was separated from her parents and family members, her walk - which lasted several months - was alone night and day among strangers. After spending time in a refugee camp, Roni came to America and secured her family. Then Roni decided to raise money for clean water wells in Cambodia. By 2005, Roni had raised sufficient money and hired contractors to build 150 wells bringing wellness to hundreds of villages in the land she used to call home.



LETITIA WRIGHT: photo by Gage Skidmore, Wikipedia.org

Letitia Michelle Wright is a Guyanese-born British actress. She is best known for her portrayal of Shuri in the 2018, Marvel Cinema superhero film *Black Panther*. Prior to *Black Panther*, Letitia played in eleven British TV series and 6 films. In one month, as of this printing, *Black Panther*, grossed over 1 billion US dollars and more than \$790 million worldwide. Letitia, in her role as Shuri, is kid sister of King T'Challa and princess of Wakanda. Letitia's character protects both the King and his alter-ego 'Black Panther.' The character Letitia plays is a barrier breaking young scientist with an amazing technology lab; where she creates devices beyond imagination. However, in spite of her success as an actress, Letitia has been vocal about her struggles with depression. Nevertheless, Letitia is already working on a new film project where she will again play Shuri in *Marvel's Avengers: Infinity War*.





I'd rather be in the gym than taking photographs, but OK.



I just discovered what story to tell - it is a defining moment.



IT Adventures 60' rope walk and obstacle course.



100 indoor arial activities.



"I am an 11 year old gymnast, leader and big sister."

I consider myself active, courageous, sassy, and opinionated. My story begins at the "IT" indoor ropes course in New Haven, Connecticut. IT Adventure Ropes Course – has Two 60' high ropes courses with over 100 activities like zig zag swinging beams, crisscross angle rope ladders, cargo nets, bridges, and plank-walking.

It was July 1st, 2016 when we arrived - around 1pm. I remember walking into the big open space. I could hear excited people shouting from every direction. We checked in to get our wristbands, in order to begin the course. As soon as I walked up the stairs to the highest point of the 60 foot ropes course, my adrenalin started to kick in. I had on a harness but, when I got up to the platform to begin the obstacle and looked down, I realized where I was stepping. There was nothing but thin wooden slats attached to ropes - no floor!

I looked around and thought to myself, "come on just take one step – you'll be fine." I took my first few steps holding on to my harness for dear life! While finishing the first obstacle, I was about to take my last step - but missed my footing! My bottom half was dangling in midair. At first, I panicked, but then I started to pull myself up. My dad was

just starting on the same obstacle I'd just came across, so he couldn't help me. As I struggled, I grasped onto the blue platform and started to lift myself up. As I continued to reach and yank myself up, I banged into two people's legs. With that first obstacle course on one side, my dad and I walked down the long pathway to get to the second side of the rope course. When I looked down, I could see my brother was OK on the children's course, so I continued.

I walked up a few flights of stairs to get to the 3rd floor, 45' in midair to ride on a 200 foot zip-line that goes through a water show. There was a long line of people. And to get to the zip-line I had to walk on a tightrope to get to a board where I waited my turn. I was really scared of falling (even though I was connected to a harness). When my turn came, I took a few steps back and ran and jumped off the board forcefully. As I zoomed through water, the zip-line made a clicking noise - I was convinced that I was going to fall! I zipped toward the other side, twisting and turning, until the zip-line made a sudden stop. I could have sworn that my line broke. It turned out that I had made it across safely – I stood up and walked to the end of the zip-line platform. - *continued on page 30*



"I love to exercise, do gymnastics and play soccer - I really like soccer!"

I was born and raised in New Bedford, Massachusetts and I go to a great school called Our Sisters' School. I enjoy hanging out with my family and friends. My nationalities are French, English, Irish, Scottish, Portuguese, Cape Verdean and Ukranian.

I want to be a lawyer when I grow up, because I love to debate and I'm very competitive! My mom helps people as a social worker, and I consider myself an activist. So being a lawyer I can help people too. When I am much older I want to own a Family Bakery called the Oris's bakery.

Last summer, I went on vacation with all of my dad's side of the family. We flew to Puerto Rico and went on a cruise to Antigua, St. Maarten, St Kitts and Barbados. It was loads of fun. ☆



To have come this far is a real benchmark, I'm proud of us.



I learned Sojourner Truth was a womens rights activist.



I like fun reads like, "Help, I'm Trapped in My Teachers Body."



Above: participants discuss & review examples of an autobiographical sketch.



It's not a gymnastic post, but it will do for now. . . .



Taking a break after a serious brainstorming session.



If I keep taking photos, I'm going to miss recess.



This magazine is going to be great when it's done.



Reading about Roni Toem.



"I was born on a rainy day in New Bedford, Massachusetts. My mom and grandmother let me know this and it stuck with me."

I'm kind of a rainy day person, the rain calms me. I currently live with my grandmother, but I've moved several times, as a baby and a toddler. My grandmother's house is comfortable and cozy. Life wasn't easy moving into my grandma's at first, because I thought I was missing part of my family, especially my dad, who I have not met. My grandparents' house is nice and big and I have my own large purple room, thanks to my grandfather painting it just for me.

I first started school across the street from my grandparents' house. We learned all day long, I don't remember very many activities and I was gone by 3rd grade. The next school I went to was the Carney, it was a very big school and I remember getting lost the first day. We did a lot of projects and activities there, it was a fun school and I made a lot of friends.

Last year, I got the opportunity to attend Our Sisters' School, it's very different because it's all girls. We have a lot of fun learning new things every day. They teach us core values around excellence, community, citizenship and leadership. I think my future is becoming stronger because of what I'm

learning.

I want to be a veterinarian when I grow up. I plan to study animal science in high school and when I get to college, I want to study veterinary internal medicine. My teacher told me I can take these studies at Tufts University.

My life is rounded out by my godmother, I've been lucky enough to travel with her to Chicago and Boca Raton, Florida. ★



IVONNE

Leadership Empowerment
Economy, Work & Lifestyle



Now, how do I begin? How do all great writers begin?



I can't just choose one book, how about this section?



I am determined to overcome my shyness - I have an idea. . .



Completed reading pose!

"My past, my future, my life, these different things connect to me and to my story."

Now, I don't know if my story is the most interesting or exciting, and I don't know if it is the most boring. But what I do know is that it is about me and that every person on this earth has a story to tell, myself included. A personal story is something that everyone deserves to know about themselves and others who know them, should want to hear.

I am going to write about a deliberate moment - possibly one of the most "me" moments in my life. This memory expresses me and the people who inspire and help me through this terrible and glorious life.

Now, the moment that I think clearly represents a young "me" is when I went

to Honduras. The country is a place that most people don't know about. Honduras is between North America and South America, it is considered Central America. I know, that is a lot of Americas!

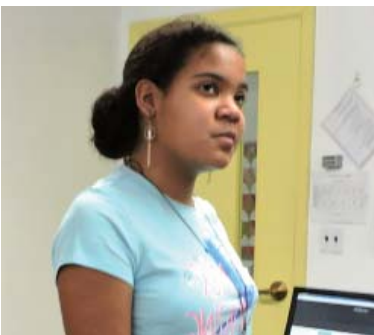
Anyway, I went to Honduras when I was about 5 years old, with my sister. This country is where my parents and my ancestors come from. It is a really poor country with lots of dangers. My trip was about six or seven years ago, so I don't remember that much, but I saw dirt roads and shabby houses. I also remember being really frightened by my cousins, aunts, uncles, and grandparents. Before this trip, I had never really met or seen that part of my family. I have always been shy around strangers so this time wasn't any different. I looked around and tried collecting my thoughts. I remember clinging to my sister and kind of hiding behind her. It just felt so strange and foreign, I was so lost.

We stayed a few weeks and by then I started to get comfortable. I had even started to hang out with my cousins. So, after all of my initial fear, I just got used to it. I got used to all of it, the scorching sun, the houses, everything. It started to feel like Honduras was a part of my life. ★





No "Undertale" ideas are too small to jot down immediately.



I believe I can achieve whatever I want to do in life now.



As a living museum impersonation of artist Yayoi Kusama.



My take on Yayoi Kusama's art.



"I was born in New Bedford in 2005. I am a black Cape Verdean."

My favorite sports are soccer and flag football. I'm in 7th grade at Our Sisters' School. I also like Undertale (UT) and making my AU (artificial universe). Undertale is a role-playing video game where, players control a human child who has fallen into a large, secluded region below the surface of the Earth, separated by a magic barrier. Players explore underground towns and caves to solve numerous journey puzzles. Players are confronted by monsters, some challenge combat; where decisions to eliminate, flee, or befriend are made. Players can also create an Alternate Universe (AU) which changes the situation they are in. In my free-time I work on my storyline and the characters.

I have many goals, like drawing one of my UT characters without reference and going to Disney world. Another goal is to sing in Japanese. I'm actually learning that now! My biggest goal is to get into Tabor Academy prep school. Some of my career goals include becoming a teacher, an illustrator or an animator. And part of reaching my goals is to reflect on the past to know what not to do and what to for my endeavors.

A lot has happened in the decade and 2 years that I have been on planet earth. I want to tell about one of the

craziest times in my life. I did not have many friends when I was little, I've always been an introvert. I used to wonder how people knew where I lived. By the time I was 4, I was moved into a foster care center. This is a group home for kids who do not have foster parents yet. I was placed there because my family didn't take care of me very well. Before that, as the older sister, I usually fed myself and my younger sister and stayed in my room bored not seeing my mother unless I traveled downstairs to the parlor (Living room).

The kids in my foster care location were between one and three, I had no one to look up to. So, even in foster care, I spent most of my time in my room worrying about my sister, who was only one. I remember hoping she was still with my grandmother and that they didn't separate us.

A couple weeks went by and a girl named G.A. came to the foster care program. She was 4 like me and we thought we were better than everyone! She was my first friend. We hung out and did puzzles. It turns out we both taught ourselves to read and write. When the others became old enough to want to read and write, they looked up to us for guidance. I felt important and needed. - cont on page 29

JULIANNA

Leadership Empowerment
Economy, Work & Lifestyle



"I am Brazilian, both of my parents are Brazilian."

My mom was born in California and my dad was born in Brazil. I have an older brother, older sister, and little sister. I also have a niece and her name is Cecilia.

What I like about myself is that my first language is Portuguese. Some other things that I like about myself is my hair, having strong arms and legs and being a lefty.

I know everyone is different, but I am different because I am the only Brazilian girl in my school. I really like the subjects of music, nature and art. When I get to and finish with high school, I want to go to college. I am

really interested in nature, and singing. I'd like to sing about trees, stray animals, and the homeless. I want to talk and sing about trees because trees are the key to our lives. They are the key to life because without trees there is no oxygen.

After college, I want to move to Brazil and become a Brazilian/English singer who travels the world. I also want to have a lot of animals. If I'm not able to become a singer. I am going to be a veterinarian.

My biggest lesson is, if you ever fall get back up and try again. ★



Getting my story into this tiny phone isnt that easy.



I have poured my entire brain into this computer.



I just have one question, no maybe five or six.



If I just had a cup of tea . . .



My favorite read, Percy Jackson and The Lightning Thief.



Find a comfy place to relax once the serious stuff is done.



The library is a great place to hang with friends & catch up.



My favorite activity is cheer!



"Who am I? I am unique and different. I am ME!"

At 3:31 P.M on December 16, 2006 at St. Luke's hospital in New Bedford, Massachusetts the world was never the same and it changed forever! An angel was born from her mother.

Granite Ivy Reagan is my pen-name. I am an independent young woman. I am an individual who loves soccer and going to church every Sunday. My love of food began shortly after my birth.

I am from a Portuguese family and love my heritage. I learned a lot about my heritage and love of food from my two VERY Portuguese vovas. Vova is Portuguese for grandmother. They have taught me the importance of food. I have learned that food can bring people together in ways words cannot. It's amazing really, food helps people bond and become closer than they may have been ever before! ★



MILLIENAYSA

Leadership Empowerment
Economy, Work & Lifestyle



"My siblings and I were born & raised in New Bedford but our roots are Puerto Rican."

I have a really big family but a small inner circle which is my siblings and parents, my madrina (godmother), my abuelo (grandfather), and my abuela (grandmother), who I miss. I have a 21 year old sister and a 28 year old brother. My two parents were raised in Puerto Rico and came to New Bedford when they were about 12. From the time my dad came to New Bedford, he has always lived in Blue Meadows. As a young man, he was a good kid but hung out with the wrong crew. When my mom and my dad met, each knew they wanted to spend the rest of their lives together. We're a very spiritual family, so my mom and my dad got married at the church. My mom already had a son, my kid brother Adrian whose father wasn't the best parent. He was six when my dad took him in. My parents had my sister Genesis/Nena a year later. Then they had me Millienaysa/Mona. My name comes from my mom, a beautiful, intelligent woman. She found the name naysa online then added Millie because she wanted one of her daughters to have her name.

I grew up begging my abuelo to eat and take care of himself. My abuelo has struggled with personal demons ever since my dad was little, but he is into God and he even played the guitar

for church. My abuelo was always good to me. He would wait for me at my bus stop with a cup of grapes and Goya cookies. He taught me how to iron clothes, wash dishes, and most importantly be the best person I can be and never give up.

I have always wanted to be an artist, even when I was very young. As I went through elementary school from 1st to 3rd grade, I was bullied on the bus by 2 older bigger boys and a boy in my class. After being bullied for 3 years, I developed insecurities but they are becoming less since I've gotten into an amazing inspiring school. OSS (Our Sisters' School) is an all-girls school that I go to with only sixty-eight brilliant girls. I have grown from a shy negative person to an outgoing, positive, kind, caring and creative person.

One hot July summer day, when I was 11, my mom was driving me around when my dad called. He told us that my abuela was in the hospital because she had a seizure, fell and had hit her head on the bath. My dad has often said, his mom was his hero because she took him out of the "gutter;" meaning the hood. We went to the hospital, but I didn't go in the room because I didn't want to see the condition she was in.

continued on page 30



Sitting here, I have the world at my fingertips through books.



I've poured my brain into this computer and it's not enough.



I can go anywhere in the world with my creativity!



My favorite read, FEMINISM!



I dream of going to college and becoming a leader.



"I'm competitive, athletic, smart, quiet and like to think things through."



My mom & sisters are my heroes.



My cultures are Irish, French Canadian, Portuguese and English. I am the youngest of six, three boys and three girls including me.

My mom is my hero because she showed me to be grateful.

I live in a safe community. At home my activities include playing games with my family, cleaning and cooking. I like to make food and eat food.

My talent is my flexibility which I use in athletics like running and cheer. My favorite things to do at school are fitness and cheer. I push myself in cheer. The hardest thing I'm working on is my split. What I want to learn next is how to do an *Ariel*.

I plan to go to college and I like art, but I dream of being a leader one day. ☆





JANAYE,
continued from pg. 24

One day I was doing a puzzle with G.A. and someone came into the door holding a little girl's hand. As soon as the little girl walked through the door, I recognized her immediately. The woman opened her mouth to call my name but before she could, I was already running to my little sister, so glad that she was safe and we didn't get separated. From there my sister and I stayed together, sharing a room. I remember her birthday. She had a little cake and all of the kids wished her a happy birthday. I don't think some of them could have remembered having a birthday party.

After about five months, I was starting to think that we would never leave. After almost a year, no one had come to take me. I remember thinking we would probably be put up for adoption. Not too long after that, a lady walked through the door. My sister recognized her automatically and ran as fast as she could in her direction. By the time she got to my sister, I realized I was also running toward my Mima (Grandmother). We were so thrilled. I so badly wanted to leave the group home. After a long twenty minutes of anticipation, my sister and I were walking out of the door in Mima's hands, I was so glad. Now my sister and I live with Mima, but that was not the end of my story. There are still lots of good things

going on. One of which I will tell you. It was the summer of 2015, and I was visiting my cousin June. She was telling me about an all-girls school called "Our Sisters' School." It sounded amazing! Just girls, not many kids in a class, and many, MANY opportunities. A couple of weeks later we went to apply. We got a tour of the school and we had an interview. We met the principal and she told us more about the school. The school day was about 11 hours, but we only had 3 academic classes and there were uniforms, which I was very happy about. We waited about 3 weeks before Mima got a call from the school saying I got in and that I would be starting 5th grade.

I went back to my old school for the summer program and let everyone know that I would be moving to a new school for my 5th grade year. I said goodbye to all of my friends and we looked back on all of the memories we shared. Finally in September of 2015, I went to the first day of Our Sisters' School. The first day wasn't at the school, it was at a camp in New Hampshire. During the three-hour drive, I sat next to a 6th grader named Felicia and got acquainted right away. When we got to the camp and settled ourselves in, I got to know some of my new classmates. I found out I really liked a girl named Breanna and we hung out frequently. We are now very close friends. Although, I missed my old friends

and my old teachers, I was determined to make friends.

2015 was the year Undertale came out and I was dying to talk about it. But I was scared people would think that I was weird, so I kept my drawings and thoughts to myself. One day, I was drawing and Breanna came over and asked if she could see. I was a little tentative to show my characters off because I didn't know her well yet and I had no idea how she would react - but I showed her anyway. She ended up loving them. This year, I have become completely comfortable talking about my art and UT. Bre was my first friend in this school and I will never forget her small act of kindness.

I have concluded, there are many memorable parts of my life. There are also times that I would rather forget, but they all serve an important purpose. To help me grow and move forward. I've learned, if I spend all of my time thinking of the bad things, I won't be able to get on with my life and create new, better memories. I may have had some tough times, but I will get over them. I will keep making more memories on the rest of my path. ★





ALEXIS

continued from pg. 20

My adventure concluded by bungee jumping with my dad. I was so scared to just jump off the edge with only a piece of cable holding me. The thought of falling with a machine attached to me just scared me - and that made me want to do it even more. I like a challenge! I stepped up as the person in front of me began to shake. When I saw them go down my nerves kicked in. I stepped up to the edge of the platform as the worker counted to three - and I didn't move. He counted again, but this time someone pushed me off! I screamed all the way down, and it felt GOOD!

I was proud for challenging myself throughout this whole adventure and I will surely continue being active and courageous as I grow up. ★



MILLIENAYSA

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I stood in the waiting room until they told us she had to be sent to Boston in a helicopter. I didn't know how to show my emotions, so I took it as a joke. A few days had passed, I hadn't seen my abuela, so my sister picked me up from my uncle Richy's and we drove to Boston. When I saw my abuela, she was sticking out her tongue and listening to music. At that time my faith in God grew. I had faith that everything would be okay that she would be fine, that everything would go back to normal. After about one-day, my abuela was sent back to New Bedford to St. Luke's hospital. A couple more days had passed and I hadn't felt the need to sleep at the hospital with my dad, his sister and other people in my family, but by the third day I did. The night I slept over in the hospital, I did my abuela's hair, talked to her and held her hand throughout the whole night. I woke up because I hadn't heard the sound she had been making. I thought everything was going good and I knew God had her in his hands, but my dad got up smiled at me and looked away. As I looked at her she started breathing slower and slower. A second later she was gone, I watched my abuela pass to a better, kinder world. ★

The Following Data Sources (partial list):

- US Census Bureau
- US Department of Commerce BLS
- PEW Research Center
- Southcoast Indicators Project
- American Library Association
- Department of Education

GIRLS TO WOMEN

- 80% of U.S. citizens have a high-school diploma or G.E.D. *US Census*

- Most women with a high school education earn less than \$16k.

- U.S. poverty rate is considered \$12,082 for a single person and \$24,250 for a family of four.

- 1/3 of all U.S. families are headed by single women who live in poverty, 15.6 million households.

- Women are 50% of the South Coast population

- 23% of families in New Bedford live below the poverty line, that's 1 out of every 5 mothers.

- Per capita income for New Bedford is \$15K & for Fall River \$21K.

- Research shows that income increases at approximately \$5k per educational benchmark for women vs \$10k for men; and transitions in & out of poverty happen after marriage, divorce, or sudden job loss.

- With extremely limited resources low income women must manage ways to: place\keep children\elders in school\day programs and arrange for self\family education, transportation, meals, overhead, entertainment and health needs.

- Women often work a second job to increase income and have to quit\change jobs\school when children or family need extended healing; they also continue routines regardless of exhaustion or illness.

- Communications literacy is key to earning a livable wage. For mothers, being competitive in a youth based culture, is like running a foot race with a child attached to each leg and family hanging on your back, it's nearly impossible without access to help and affordable resources. ★

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