We are adept at compelling change in many ways: with youth to grow their skill sets to advocate for change, with adults and organizations to change their operations to embrace the voice and input of youth, and with communities to change harmful policies that disproportionately and negatively affect young people.

**Over the course of the past two years,** YES! youth and adult staff helped to change 55 systems, policies and environments, across 13 states, through 53 partners and projects, impacting 1,951,978 people.

YES! has also embraced change and transformation from within. We have new leadership among board and staff, an expansion beyond public health policy change into other areas such as Environmental Justice, innovative partnerships and growth to a new office location in McDowell County, North Carolina, and exploration of new ways to deliver our work. YES! has also made an explicit commitment to racial equity through all of our work — which will be an ongoing transformation over the next 18 months.

As board and staff, we have developed a long-term vision for change that aligns with our core values of youth leadership, community empowerment and social justice that we have been committed to since YES!’s inception nearly 10 years ago. Our passion for justice fuels this vision, and through innovation, experimentation and collaboration together, we can change the world.

Mary Beth Loucks-Sorrell  
*Executive Director*

Sally Migliore  
*YES! Board Chair*
MISSION
YES! empowers youth, in partnership with adults to create community change.

VISION
YES! envisions communities where the valued standard is empowered youth leaders working alongside adults to create positive change.

YES! YOUTH EMPOWERMENT MODEL
YES! has developed a nationally-recognized model of social change through youth empowerment. The YES! Youth Empowerment Model® engages young people in work that challenges them to develop skills, gain critical awareness, and participate in advocacy opportunities that are proven to create change. This Model propels youth into roles of civic engagement and community leadership throughout their professional careers and personal lives.

Learn more about the YES! Youth Empowerment Model

IN THE PAST TWO YEARS, YES! STAFF HAVE HELPED CHANGE:

ACROSS 55 SYSTEMS, POLICIES AND ENVIRONMENTS
THROUGH 53 PARTNERS AND PROJECTS
IMPACTING 1,951,978 PEOPLE

ACROSS 17 STATES
THE LEADERS OF CHANGE

YES! works to build the skills and critical awareness of young people to be effective leaders that engage in opportunities to change their communities. Take a look at a few current and graduated YES! Youth Staff, what they have learned, and how they have changed their communities throughout the last two years.

JORDAN (right)
28 MONTHS EXPERIENCE AT YES!

HIGHLIGHT OF WORKING AT YES!:
Partnering as the North Carolina member of the national Youth for Healthy Schools Initiative through the Funders Collaborative on Youth Organizing (FCYO)

“For the past three years at YES!, I have learned many skills such as advocacy, public speaking, action planning and lobbying. The building of the water access campaign in Charlotte-Mecklenburg schools has allowed me to expand my knowledge of the quality and access to clean drinking water in local schools and communities. While working with the FCYO’s Healthy Communities Initiative, I was able to strengthen my action planning skills and gather with other youth organizers from across the country as we exchanged personal stories and ideas from our local experience. YES! has given me the opportunity to advocate for water and food access, and gain confidence when speaking to other community members and government officials about these issues. YES! has amplified my voice as a youth leader and given me the courage to push for change within my community.”

Read more from Jordan
HIGHLIGHT OF WORKING AT YES!:
Policy Wins and Training Youth Statewide and Nationally

“Being with YES! for over six years as both a youth staff member and a graduated youth leader, I have been able to gain perspective on the systems that surround food access. As a graduated youth leader, it is especially rewarding to be able to share my insights with training participants as they delve into their community work. Working toward the NC Healthy Corner Store Initiative and seeing the policy pass has allowed me to put into practice the advocacy skills that I developed at YES! and gain a meaningful result with a statewide impact. Because of YES! I feel confident and prepared to have conversations with legislators about issues like food access and social justice.”

Read more from Carmen

YES! YOUTH STAFF STATS:

19 YOUTH ON STAFF*

87% ARE YOUTH OF COLOR OR FROM RURAL OR LOW-INCOME COMMUNITIES**

27.5 MONTHS**

*total from 2016 and 2017

**used average of 2016 and 2017 data
JABARI
28 MONTHS EXPERIENCE AT YES!
6 MONTHS AS A GRADUATED YOUTH LEADER

HIGHLIGHT OF WORKING AT YES!:
Data Collection and Storytelling

“The transition from being a youth staff to a graduate of YES! and actually having other youth on the team looking to me for advice is amazing. Since I was once in their shoes, I feel like I’m better equipped to talk to them about questions they have. A lot of my time at YES! was spent doing photovoice projects, and the one that stands out the most to me was from the NC Missions of Mercy Clinics. These photos along with the data we collected made a direct connection to why dental clinics are always overflowing and how the NC health care system severely lacks equity and access to oral health.”

Read more from Jabari

MICHELLE
17 MONTHS EXPERIENCE AT YES!
18 MONTHS AS A GRADUATED YOUTH LEADER

HIGHLIGHT OF WORKING AT YES!:
Advocating to Secure funding for Teen Tobacco Prevention efforts in North Carolina

“YES! really opened my eyes to the efforts that tobacco companies have made to target specific groups of people, including minorities and youth. I am thankful for the opportunity I’ve had with YES! to be able to help other youth implement 100% Tobacco-Free Schools in their county and advocate for - and secure - more funding for youth tobacco prevention. I decided to become a Truth Initiative Fellow to further my work in educating youth about the dangers of tobacco use and creating healthier communities.”
HIGHLIGHT OF WORKING AT YES!
Presenting at National and Statewide Oral Health Advocacy Events

“Throughout my 2.5 years at YES! my passion for systems change has developed as an active youth leader of the access to health care team. I have acquired experiences among the most ambitious advocates attending both Oral Health 2020’s regional and national convenings in order to ignite a youth presence and representation within the existing national oral health network. On a local level, our youth team served as critical players in cultivating North Carolina’s first ever Oral Health Day at the NC Legislature. Along with over one hundred other community partners, YES! youth presented local policy makers with a refreshing perspective regarding the urgency of oral health disparities that cause millions of North Carolinians to suffer.”

Read more from Caroline

YES! YOUTH STAFF STATS:

100% FELT EMPOWERED**

100% BECAME MORE CRITICALLY AWARE**

100% LEARNED A NEW SKILL**

**used average of 2016 and 2017 data
A COMMITMENT TO ADVANCING RACIAL EQUITY

Why Youth Empowerment Without A Racial Equity Approach Won’t Work

Over the past year, youth and adults have been meeting to discuss Why Youth Empowerment Without a Racial Equity Approach Won’t Work*, and to find ways to make it happen for YES!. This September with a small capacity building grant, we embarked on what will be a multi-year process of organizational assessment, staff training and embedding racial equity into all areas of our work. We are committed to ensuring that the outcome of these efforts accurately address these 10 reasons:

1. OUR MISSION DEPENDS ON EQUITY
   Our training reinforces that racial equity means improved outcomes for all not predicted by race and that communities are more likely to thrive in an equitable society.

2. POWER IS NOT BALANCED
   Empowering youth of color and addressing structural racism elevates the voices of marginalized communities and helps us begin to realize a more balanced power structure.

3. RACIAL ECONOMIC FACTORS ARE CORRELATED TO STRUCTURAL RACISM
   Both historical and current day institutional policies such as redlining and gentrification created and perpetuate this racial gap and must be a part of our understanding of how we achieve equity.

4. ECONOMIC FACTORS DO NOT EXPLAIN ALL INEQUITIES
   Symptoms of racism such as unequal treatment, microaggressions, and internalized oppression really are things that are making us sick. Applying a racial equity lens will help us to recognize these symptoms and address the root cause.

5. RACIAL EQUITY FACILITATES YOUTH EQUITY
   Racial equity will help facilitate youth equity by undoing power structures that routinely leave out youth voices and voices of communities of color.

* Read the full article

Written by: Pam Diggs, MPH
Director of Programs, Youth Empowered Solutions
INTERSECTIONALITY
Our solutions must be broad enough to address social injustices in multiple forms because youth are diverse and increasingly multifaceted.

YOUTH DEMAND EQUITY
Forming effective youth and adult partnerships across the country that promote racial equity is an additional key to our success as a nation in the face of hate and injustice.

YOUTH ARE EXPERIENCING “DEATH BY RACISM”
Gita Gulati-Partee describes how death by racism more often occurs within a system that sanctions violence like allowing youth to drink water contaminated with lead. The good news is that Leading for Equity can help save lives and help youth reach their full potential.

EQUITY IS URGENT
Dr. King said, “this is a time for vigorous and positive action.” Those words are just as true now as they were more than 50 years ago given the gravity of the current situation and that death by racism is occurring all too often.

TO ENHANCE OUR YOUTH EMPOWERMENT MODEL
We can embed racial equity in our youth empowerment model by increasing opportunities, skill development, and critical awareness for youth of color and around structures that perpetuate inequities.

Read the full article
CONSULTING & CUSTOM SERVICE

YES! provides tailored consulting and training to engage youth as leaders in creating community change.

Niagara Falls Youth City Council
Niagara Falls, NY

MEET OUR PARTNER:
Create a Healthier Niagara Falls Collaborative (CHNFC) recognized the energy, power and potential of youth in their program. Through a partnership with Planned Parenthood, they formed the Niagara Falls Youth City Council that would build leadership skills and create opportunities for youth to improve their community.

PROCESS:
YES! traveled to Niagara Falls, NY to train the CHNFC leadership team, key community partners and the Niagara Falls Youth City Council to advocate for policy, system, and environmental changes.

OBSTACLES:
- Intergenerational power sharing was a new practice and there were limited opportunities for youth in Niagara Falls to engage in decision-making, advocacy and policy change efforts around issues that impacted them directly.
- The teen birth rate in Niagara Falls, NY school districts was nearly double the state average.

YES! PROVIDED:
YES! Adult Leader Training & Consulting: Participants learned about power structures, racial equity, recruitment and retention of youth leaders, how to launch a youth leadership team and using advocacy as a tool to create social change. YES! supported the development of the vision for creating a Youth City Council, on-going recruitment of youth leaders and an action plan for achieving their goals.

“
The YES! Adult Leader Training was transformational for me. I use the skills developed everyday and constantly think WWYD (What Would YES! Do?). Thanks to this training my group of youth are sought after in the community for their educated and excited advocacy.

Lynne Neveu
Adult Coordinator, Niagara Falls Youth City Council
OUTCOME:
The Niagara Falls School Board committed to making changes to health curriculum and support for greater access to healthcare, contraceptives and counseling through mobile health vans staffed by doctors and nurses. This change will impact 1,905 students over the next school year.

NEXT STEPS:
The Niagara Falls Youth City Council and CHNFC will continue to partner to lead more local policy and environmental changes impacting health and wellness in Niagara Falls, NY.

Mia was a freshman and recently recruited to join the Niagara Falls Youth City Council. She was full of energy, amazing ideas, honesty and a lot of passion. Mia helped lead the recruitment of her fellow peers to join the Niagara Falls Youth City Council and to attend the upcoming YES! Youth Leader Training.

YES! Youth Leader Training & Action Planning: Participants examined equity in the context of their community, explored key elements of advocacy; researching the issue area and policies, gathering data, cultivating community support, engaging policy makers and utilizing media as a tool to support their campaigns.

YES! also provided coaching on gaining buy-in and support of adults, navigating challenging situations and how to take action to change policies in their community.

THE LAUNCH:
Niagara Falls Youth City Council was successfully launched and engaged roughly 10 paid youth members that were passionate about creating change in their community. Their work following the launch of the council included:

• Researching issues impacting their community
• Examining the root causes of these issues and narrowing their focus
• Selecting comprehensive sex education to be their focused campaign
• Connecting with the Niagara Falls School Superintendent who began attending meetings monthly
• Conducting surveys of their peers and analyzing the data
• Presenting to the school board about their findings and making a request for comprehensive sex education

YES! Helped us learn about surveying our peers, how to ask their opinions, how to utilize the data to tell our story and how to develop speeches and presentations to meet with policy makers. We represent the voices of youth in the city, and we are just getting started. We have only been working together for one year, we have so much more to do!

Mia
15 Years Old, Niagara Falls Youth City Council

Read more about the success of the Niagara Falls Youth City Council
THE YES! YOUTH NETWORK

YES! utilizes the YES! Youth Network as a platform to support and engage youth-adult teams in North Carolina and across the country to build their capacity as change makers and support their commitment to empowering high school students to take action to change policies, systems and environments.

The YES! Youth Network provides ongoing Youth and Adult Leader trainings, consulting on the YES! Youth Empowerment Model®, advocacy tools and resources, mini-grant funding and collaborative advocacy opportunities. The platform also creates opportunities for diverse groups of youth and adults to work together towards collective policy goals.

HOW YES! WORKS:

- YES! hires high school students who work on teams, alongside adult allies.
- These teams implement the YES! Youth Empowerment Model, gaining critical awareness about why issues like poverty, food scarcity and unsafe drinking water exist; developing skills to tackle those issues like public speaking and facilitation, writing and movement building; and seize opportunities to take action to change things that are not working in their local community or state.
- Youth then develop and deliver trainings for youth in other organizations and communities who want to become advocates for change.
- YES! Adult staff train other adults who want to embed a youth empowerment strategy into their existing efforts.
- These youth and adults become part of a trained network of advocates who take action to change policies that benefit their communities.

Team of High School Students and Adult Allies

Team Implements the Youth Empowerment Model

Students gain critical awareness, develop skills, and seize opportunities to take action for change

Youth develop and deliver trainings for other youth who want to advocate for change

YES! Adult staff train other adults who want to embed a youth empowerment strategy into their existing efforts.

These youth and adults become part of a trained network of advocates

CHANGE TAKES PLACE IN THEIR COMMUNITY
YES! ENGAGEMENT MAP

Our engaged communities span 19 states: Arizona, California, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Minnesota, Missouri, New York, North Carolina, Oregon, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia and Washington D.C.

2262
YOUTH AND ADULTS EXPOSED TO THE YES! YOUTH EMPOWERMENT MODEL

92%
OF YOUTH TRAINED, LEARNED A NEW SKILL

54.5%
OF YOUTH TOOK ACTION AFTER A YES! YOUTH TRAINING

78.5%
OF YOUTH TRAINED ARE YOUTH OF COLOR OR FROM RURAL OR LOW-INCOME COMMUNITIES

*total from 2016 and 2017
**used average of 2016 and 2017 data

Learn more about where we’ve worked
In Fiscal Year 2016, a new audit firm recommended a change in the way that YES! recognized its income from recognizing deferred revenue over time for multi-year grants in previous years to recognizing all revenue at the time in which it was awarded.

Due to the transition in leadership and the new audit process, YES! ended Fiscal Year 2016 in a deficit. The organization compensated for this deficit by pulling from its operating reserves, which were built up in previous years due a surplus from its fee-for-service revenue. YES! ended Fiscal Year 2017 with a budget surplus of nearly $700,000.

### Revenue

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>FY 2016</th>
<th>FY 2017</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Corporate Contributions and In-kind</td>
<td>$21,288 (4.75%)</td>
<td>$17,842 (1.32%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual Contributions</td>
<td>$22,715 (5.07%)</td>
<td>$16,419 (1.21%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Custom Services</td>
<td>$216,562 (48.37%)</td>
<td>$95,133 (7.03%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grants</td>
<td>$185,000 (41.32%)</td>
<td>$1,221,771 (90.31%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Revenue</td>
<td>$447,722</td>
<td>$1,352,905</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Expenses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>FY 2016</th>
<th>FY 2017</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Program</td>
<td>$594,782 (77.72%)</td>
<td>$474,206 (70.91%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fundraising</td>
<td>$64,806 (8.47%)</td>
<td>$48,814 (7.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management</td>
<td>$105,701 (13.81%)</td>
<td>$145,753 (21.79%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Expenses</td>
<td>$765,289</td>
<td>$668,773</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
THANK YOU TO OUR FOUNDATION AND FUNDER PARTNERS

Allstate Foundation
Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina
DentaQuest Foundation
The Duke Endowment
Enterprise Holdings Foundation
Funders Collaborative on Youth Organizing
InSight Foundation
Kate B. Reynolds Charitable Trust
Mead Family Foundation
Missouri Department of Public Health
National African American Tobacco Prevention Network
United Way of Asheville and Buncombe County
University of North Carolina at Greensboro
Voices for Healthy Kids
Wells Fargo
Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation