

Bridging the Gaps



Educating Youth on Cardiovascular Disease, Smoking Cessation, and Oral Health

Student Interns

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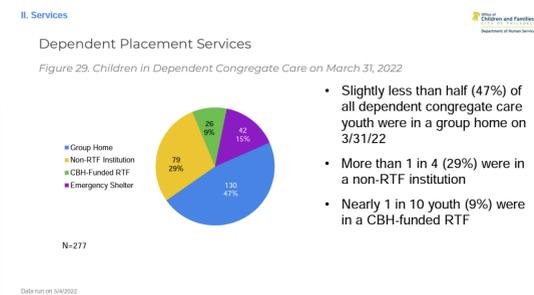
COMMUNITY PARTNER



Youth Service, Inc. (YSI) is a non-profit organization that provides immediate shelter and support services to Philadelphia's children, youth and families. The mission of YSI is to strengthen the family unit, help at-risk teens and promote child safety.
<https://ysiphilly.org/>

BACKGROUND/CONTEXT

Of the 277 youth in Philadelphia currently in dependent congregate care 42 (15%) are in emergency shelters like YES. YSI provides youth with food, on site medical care, education support, and youth centered activities to promote personal and professional development. It is YES's goal to find placement or reunite youth with their family through a 6 mo intervention program by identifying and mitigating issues of safety. Over half of all dependent placement youth were placed with kin as of 3/31/22.



TEAM'S EXPERIENCE

Our goal this summer was to present medical information in a fun way to the youth. Every week, we planned lessons and activities based on topics such as Mental Health, Sexual Health, etc. Our primary lesson focused on Cardiovascular Disease, Smoking Cessation, and Oral Health. We talked about the long-lasting effect of smoking on cardiovascular health and finances. For our activity, the youth created anatomical hearts using clay. Also, we had a group activity where we explored positive ways to combat stress, such as basketball and music. This activity presented the youth with ways to alleviate stress instead of smoking. Overall, the youth responded well to the lesson and were happy to find ways to positively deal with their stress.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS/CHALLENGES/JOYS

- Challenges
 - Mediating Arguments between the youth
 - Communication and Emotional Challenges
- Joys
 - Playing Basketball and Uno with the youth
 - Teaching the youth ways to positively cope with stress
 - Trips to Mutter Museum and Park
- Accomplishment
 - Re-presented Medicine to the Youth

REFLECTION

Obehioye Isesele: Working at YES gave me the opportunity to work with a group of great kids. YES allowed me to see how the lack of physiological needs can affect a child's physical and emotional wellbeing. I was inspired by the youth's tenacity to live life to the fullest despite the struggles they have faced in life. The staff at YES give so much of themselves to provide the youth with a safe home environment. They often have to deal with the emotional reactions of the youth that stem from their trauma, yet they still are committed to helping the youth through their pain. I am honored to have worked at YES and will cherish the memories formed forever.

Austin Lowe: The goal we set out to accomplish was much more challenging than expected. The youth at YES are worried about the now and wanted an escape from it. If only a single youth's habits were influenced by what we spoke about were changed, I would consider that time well spent. The lessons we taught on cardiovascular health and smoking cessation were secondary in importance to the time we spent bonding with the youth outside of these lessons. There, we were able to speak about the youths' dreams and goals and help them take steps toward them.

