



A YEAR FOR CHANGE

2020 Annual Report



“

None of us know what the next twelve months will bring, but I do know that I am grateful to all of you for the support you have given over the past year.

”

LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



As I reflect on our last fiscal year, the first thing that comes to mind is how resilient our members, staff, Board of Directors, and donors have been. I do not think about the turmoil of the pandemic or the unrest in our society, but rather on the grit and determination of those to whom YouthBuild Lake County is most important.

In October 2019, we welcomed 24 new members to the YouthBuild Program. From October through March, this group participated in academic, wellness and career readiness curriculum. We had just begun placing our members in work experiences and internship opportunities when Illinois underwent the stay-at-home order. But through that grit and determination, 90% of our members completed a work experience!

I am proud to say that we were the first YouthBuild in the country to smoothly transition to eLearning. Thanks to the funding provided by the Steans Foundation and PGIM, we purchased chromebooks and cell phones, with hotspot

service plans, for all of our members. Our staff researched best practices for remote learning and started teaching online. Our members learned the ins and outs of Zoom, Google Suite and WebEx. Our Board of Directors worked diligently to make our first ever Virtual Spring Benefit a success. Our donors participated in the Spring Benefit by purchasing auction items and raising their virtual paddles to donate to our mission moment. Our volunteers joined us for virtual mock interview sessions and last, but not least, our employer partners worked with us to create internships and work experiences that were safe for our members.

In April, we held a virtual Mental Toughness and welcomed 15 new members to YBLC. This cohort participated 100% remote until early June when we were safely able to bring groups of 3 members and 1 staff to our construction sites. This group of members is working hard to earn industry recognized certifications, completing their high school diplomas, and overcoming the unique challenges of working virtually. I am proud of all they have accomplished so far and will continue to accomplish.

None of us know what the next twelve months will bring, but I do know that I am grateful to all of you for the support you have given over the past year. Without you, our program would not have been as successful and meaningful to our members. Thank you for your continued support of our members, our mission and our goals.

With Gratitude,

Tameka M. Wilson
Executive Director

A New Look for YouthBuild

As we continue to embrace this year of change, we are excited to announce that YouthBuild has rebranded. YouthBuild Lake County operates under YouthBuild USA, which constitutes over 230 affiliates nationwide. In the past, each YouthBuild affiliate has been responsible for creating their own logos, color schemes, and branding guidelines. With the rebrand, each affiliate will now follow the same branding guidelines and share the same logo, but with customized program names. This allows the YouthBuild affiliates to be more unified and to be recognized cohesively on a wider scale. As we debut our new brand, we would also like to announce the launch of our new website. We are working with volunteer designers to help us map out and build our new site to match the rebrand and cannot wait for it to go live in December.

Hexagon: The shape of nuts and bolts provide a subtle nod to our roots in construction. Each of the six sides represent the core elements of our model— leadership development, support services, education, construction and other career pathways, alumni success, and love.

Primary Color: Blue, which is universally associated with trust, loyalty, and strength, remains our primary color. It has been updated to a darker, or “navy” shade, which is most strongly linked to these attributes.



Monogram: The letters and the banner within the B strategically link to form the shape of a home, signifying the strong emotional bonds that are created when one becomes part of the YouthBuild family.

Secondary Color: Orange is universally associated with friendliness, confidence, and optimism. Our bold shade of orange is intuitively known to be the color of construction.

OUR IMPACT



78%

Diploma Attainment



21

Internships Completed



4,828

AmeriCorps Hours Earned



13

Scholarships Earned



4

College and Vocational
Placements



129

Credentials Earned



25

Job Placements

SUCCESS STORIES



Junior, 23, had been working at a full time job before he came to YouthBuild. He knew that wasn't his end goal and was searching for something more in his life. "I was working a regular warehouse job. I didn't have my high school diploma and wanted to create better opportunities for myself." He had heard of YouthBuild Lake County from a friend and decided he needed to make a change in his life, so he took the first step and applied to the program. During his time here, he earned his high school diploma and also earned his OSHA 10, YRGE, and NCCER certifications. He also completed an internship with Habitat for Humanity ReStore. He is now pursuing a career in Information Technology, a YBLC career pathway. He is set to start classes at the College of Lake County this winter, where he will work to obtain his Comp TIA A+ Certificate and hopes to use that to pursue a career as an IT Support Technician.

"High school didn't really teach me how to do my resume or present myself professionally. YouthBuild taught me that and how to better myself and network. You never know when you are going to have that opportunity to make a professional connection and elevate your work experience," Junior said. "Not only did I get my high school diploma, but a few other certifications that gave me some great work experience. You can never stop truly learning, making better opportunities for yourself, and adding to your own growth."

Marisol, 25, was going through a difficult time in her life before she came across YouthBuild. "I had been working at a warehouse for a few years. I wasn't getting good pay and I knew that if I stayed in that job, I wasn't going to have a good future for myself and my kids." Being a young mother of two, Marisol wanted to create more opportunities for herself and her family. She decided to apply to YouthBuild Lake County after hearing about it through her sister, who is a YouthBuild graduate. In her time at YBLC, she earned her high school diploma and her OSHA 10, Flagger, and YRGE certifications. She also completed an internship in her field with Elevate Care Waukegan. Since YouthBuild, she has been enrolled at State Career College where she just graduated from a Certified



Nursing Assistant (CNA) training program. She is now preparing to take the exam to obtain her CNA certification. "I think one of the main things that makes me happy is that I got my high school diploma and a few other certifications that can really help me move on in life. I don't feel like I will be stuck in a job anymore. I have options available to me and I don't have to depend on anyone anymore. I can do things for myself now," Marisol said. "All I have to say is YouthBuild has a great staff and I appreciate every single one of them. They helped me out and made me a better person, and I will always be grateful for that."



Jose, 25, was trying to find himself before he came to YouthBuild Lake County. He had graduated high school, but had no job and no stability in his life. "I started to find myself in a bad lifestyle and bad way of living. I didn't have a stable place to stay and started to have some problems with drugs." He was introduced to YouthBuild through a former staff member and decided to apply to the program. In his time at YBLC, Jose served on the Youth Policy Council which allowed him to gain leadership experience, advocate for his peers and serve as the youth representative on the Board of Directors. He also earned his OSHA 10, Flagger, and YRGE certifications. He completed a paid internship with WKRS 1220 A.M Radio Station, where he was hired on after and now works part time as an audio engineer. He is enrolled full time at the College of Lake County where he is working towards his Associate's Degree in Digital Media and Design. "YouthBuild taught me how to be motivated and stay motivated. They taught me how to hold myself accountable and taught me a sense of professionalism and how to be prepared for the real world," Jose said. "I can't thank them enough. If I could do it all over again I would and if I could have found them sooner, I would have done it sooner. If anyone is hesitant to join they should do it. Your future self will thank you because you are setting yourself up for success."

Leonardo, 19, had been working as a cashier at McDonald's for a few years and got to a point in his life where he knew he needed to make a change. "I felt stuck. I had no path or anything that I was pursuing. I really didn't like my job and it was stressing me out a lot." Leo had dropped out of high school because he felt that the traditional school route wasn't for him but knew he needed to get his high school diploma somehow. He had heard of YouthBuild Lake County through his cousin, who had just graduated from the program the year before. He decided to give it a shot and applied. Originally, he was only looking to obtain his high school diploma. He had no idea all of the other opportunities YouthBuild would offer him. "They not only helped me get my high school diploma, but helped me balance my money and be smarter with spending overall." He was also able to obtain his OSHA 10, YRGE, Flagger, and NCCER Certifications. Leonardo was able to gain work experience through an internship with Santana Equipment, a YouthBuild partner. When his internship ended, he was offered a full time position with Santana Equipment where he now works as a painter. "I was able to leave McDonald's and now I have a path. I wish there was a YouthBuild in every city," Leo said. "The staff there is more than teachers, they are a support system. Knowing that I accomplished something and I have the support and potential to reach for more makes me excited for the future".



CONSTRUCTION



ReNew Communities

Over the past year, our members have worked tirelessly on multiple construction projects as part of their commitment to AmeriCorps. Due to the pandemic, our members stopped working on our construction sites in March and were not able to safely return until mid June. YouthBuild Lake County partners with ReNew Communities, a subsidiary of Matthew Homes, to rehab abandoned homes in North Chicago. After the homes have been remodeled, they are sold as affordable housing to underserved families in the community. This year, our members have been rehabbing two different homes with ReNew. YouthBuild members assist with interior demolition, framing, insulation, drywall, painting, flooring, windows, and various other tasks required for the rehabilitation of the home. "I love the mission and passion of the YouthBuild staff and students", said ReNew Communities President David Weil, Ph.D. "They are in the trenches doing the hard work of rehabbing old abandoned homes while building their own future in the trades. That's a win-win for everyone. Thank you YouthBuild members for bringing hope even during a global pandemic."





Love INC of Lake County

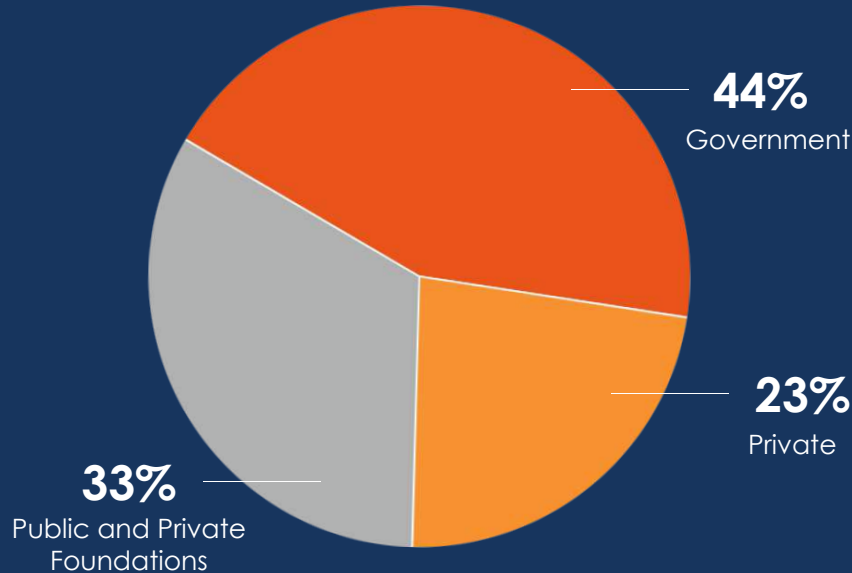
We also partnered this year with Love INC of Lake County, a non profit organization in Waukegan. This year, our members constructed bunk beds to donate to Love INC, who then gave them, along with new mattresses, to children in need. YouthBuild members built two meeting room spaces and a conference space, to be used by Love INC staff and volunteers. Prior to COVID, Love INC's office space was typically full, making it difficult for their volunteers to really connect & hear their neighbor's stories. The additional conference room was built to be modular - they can break it into two separate spaces. This will allow a place for their partner churches to meet privately with their neighbors for coaching/mentoring sessions, as well as other smaller meetings. "In this year when nothing seems certain and everything has changed, one thing that has been consistent and reliable is the great work of the YouthBuild teams! The thoughtful design and quality of the workmanship that went into our new office and conference space, as well as bunk beds built for children who are currently sleeping on floors, are truly at professional levels," said Love INC Executive Director, Pat Schwartz. "We saw a number of young people working on our projects and we are always amazed by their desire to learn. It is obvious that more than just trade skills and work toward a diploma are part of the YouthBuild program. The young people we meet are courteous, attentive, and demonstrate many of the soft-skills that will set them apart in today's competitive world. We have been truly blessed to benefit from our association with YouthBuild."



Illinois Municipal League

Our members built over 60 tool caddies which were distributed at the Illinois Municipal League's summer board meeting hosted in North Chicago. "As mayors from dozens of municipalities from across Illinois arrived at their hotel, they were greeted with beautiful gift caddies designed and built by YouthBuild Lake County members," said IML President and North Chicago Mayor Leon Rockingham Jr. "The gift caddies turned out beautiful. The YouthBuild organization provided the visitors to our community a wonderful keepsake." The tool boxes were filled with gifts representing many North Chicago area organizations, including Rosalind Franklin University of Medicine and Science, Jelly Belly Candy Co, and Hansa Coffee.

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About the Department of Labor

The US Department of Labor funds YBLC's YouthBuild program through a YouthBuild Grant. This workforce product was funded by a grant awarded by the US Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration. The product was created by the grantee and does not necessarily reflect the official position of the US Department of Labor. The Department of Labor makes no guarantees, warranties, or assurances of any kind, express or implied, with respect to such information, including any information on linked sites and including, but not limited to, accuracy of the information or its completeness, timeliness, usefulness, adequacy, continued availability or ownership. This product is copyrighted by the institution that created it. Internal use by an organization and/or personal use by an individual for non-commercial purposes is permissible. All other uses require the prior authorization of the copyright owner.

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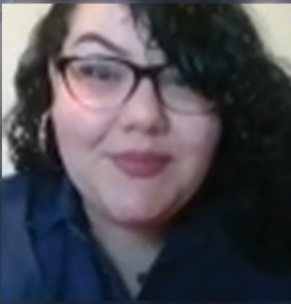
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