

***Celebrating 10 years of
Say Yes Buffalo
Scholars and Graduates***


SAY YES
— TO EDUCATION —
BUFFALO
sayyesbuffalo.org

2021-22
Report to the Community

About Say Yes Buffalo

Say Yes Buffalo is a landmark, cross-sector collaborative partnership committed to removing barriers to educational attainment, workforce participation, and economic mobility for students in public and charter schools in Buffalo, NY.

Say Yes Buffalo coordinates the partnership, convening representatives from the Buffalo Public School District, Erie County, City of Buffalo, Buffalo Teachers Federation, Buffalo Association of Administrators and Supervisors, institutions of higher education, community-based organizations and service providers, parents, local businesses and corporations, and local philanthropy. Say Yes Buffalo then facilitates collaborative planning and implementation of holistic, year-round services and supports for Buffalo's public school students and their families. Together, we work to provide the supports that children and families need to succeed in their education from birth through grade 12 and beyond.

Say Yes Buffalo is probably best known for our scholarship program—since 2013, we have provided a last-dollar postsecondary tuition scholarship to public and charter school graduates in Buffalo who meet residency, graduation, and admission requirements. Our tuition scholarship can be used at any of the 74 public colleges and universities across New York, as well as any of our 90+ private college partners nationwide.

With the Say Yes Buffalo Scholarship as our “North Star,” our partners understand that students need a range of supports across the entire developmental pathway to make sure they are prepared to graduate high school, enter postsecondary programs, and transition into employment. To this end, Say Yes Buffalo works with our partners to coordinate, fund, and deliver 16+ different programs for youth and families focused on:

- College scholarships
- College preparation supports
- Social services and family supports
- Academic enrichment
- Community school programming
- Summer camp programming
- Early childhood education
- Health care access and support
- Legal services
- Mental health care
- Mentoring
- Paid internships
- Paid workforce development & apprenticeships



To date, thousands of Buffalo students have received more than \$23 million in scholarships from Say Yes and more than 3,000 have earned a postsecondary degree. Our endowment campaign to ensure these scholarships are available to Buffalo students in perpetuity has achieved more than 75% of its goal.

See page 24 for more details on each program area.

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Mission Statement

The mission of the Say Yes Buffalo partnership is to remove barriers to educational attainment, workforce participation, and economic mobility for students in public and charter schools in Buffalo, NY. Our collective impact partnership, centered on racial equity and inclusion, provides a postsecondary tuition promise and cradle to career comprehensive supports to increase the rates of high school and postsecondary completion and the achievement of fulfilling professional employment.

Vision Statement

Our vision is for a more equitable and thriving Western New York economy in which all students will have the opportunity to reach their full potential.

Collective Equity Statement Developed by Say Yes Team at 2019 Retreat

"Equity will be achieved when we can all just wake up and live freely; be valued and respected; live free from structural impediments based off of perceived racial characteristics; and have fair representation and opportunity."

From the Chair of the Say Yes Buffalo Board of Directors

Dear Say Yes Buffalo Investors, Partners, and Friends,

We have achieved an important milestone. Say Yes Buffalo has been in service to Buffalo students, scholars, and the broader community for 10 years. It is an accomplishment for any business or nonprofit to survive ten years, but to get to where we are today is simply amazing. This accomplishment was made possible by the many people (whose names you can find throughout the pages of this report) who contributed their talents, efforts, funds, and time to make Say Yes Buffalo the dynamo for economic transformation that it has become. Chief among those contributions has been the vision and tireless work of Clotilde Perez Bode-Dedecker, who recently retired from the Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo. Congratulations on your retirement, Clotilde, and please accept the eternal gratitude from the entire Say Yes Buffalo family for everything you did to make this dream a reality.

I also want to acknowledge the visionary work and leadership of those who have preceded me in chairing the Board of Directors: Alphonso O'Neill-White and Bill Joyce. I am humbled and honored to fill your enormous shoes. Thank you, Bill and Alphonso for your passionate and unwavering stewardship of this remarkable organization.

So where are we today after 10 years? Our first classes of scholars have entered the workforce, started businesses and families. Our staff has grown to over 150 strong, most of whom work directly with students, families, and scholars to strengthen pathways to successful careers and open doors. High school graduation rates are up, college persistence is up, and the number of supports for basic needs, mental health and healthcare, mentoring, early childhood education services, internships, and apprenticeships are way up. Embedded in our mission is the promise of comprehensive support for a cradle-to-career pathway for Buffalo youth. This year, we've added three-year-old classrooms in partnership with Buffalo Public Schools and an earn-while-you-learn apprenticeship program for newly graduated youth with six leading Western New York employers.

While we celebrate 10 years of accomplishment, I assure you that we continue to identify areas of improvement and new programs and services that can help our community grow and thrive. We will continue this work until the barriers to educational attainment, workforce participation, and economic mobility for Buffalo public and charter school students are eliminated.

Welcome to our annual Report to the Community. I hope you take the time to absorb the information and read about the impressive impact that Say Yes Buffalo has had on our community. We've had a remarkable first 10 years, yet something tells me the next 10 years will be even greater.

Sincerely,



Steve Swift



From the Say Yes Buffalo CEO

Dear Say Yes Buffalo Family,

I'd like to personally thank all our partners, investors, and all our team members over the years. It's a big, big tent that shares the credit for 10 amazing years and I want to express my deepest gratitude.

However, when I think about this milestone and everything it means, I can't help but be struck by the eerie coincidence of what the number 10 symbolizes to so many people in Buffalo this past year: horrific pain, anguish and grief for those community members lost in Tops on May 14, 2022.

Allow me to take a quick step back and single out one of team members, Daphne Ross. Daphne grew up on the East Side, attended Buffalo Public Schools, and went on to study Communications at Canisius College. In college she worked as a cashier at the newly opened Tops on Jefferson Avenue, a store that was the answer to many years of organizing and pleading to address the food access desert on the near East Side.

Daphne rose from within Tops, assuming a communications role there before she was hired by Say Yes Buffalo in 2014. As we began to outgrow our office space in the Ansonia Building in the 700 block of Main Street, it was Daphne who insisted that we look to move to the East Side and invest in a community that had seen so much disinvestment. It was a natural fit philosophically, as so much of our work revolves around investing in the lives of young people facing opportunity gaps based on little beyond their ZIP code. When our longtime board member Nick Sinatra began developing properties on Jefferson, it all started to come together.

I will never forget those days after May 14, walking the streets around this community with the many partners, colleagues, and friends I've worked so closely with through the years. The pain, the sense of urgency, the palpable sense of evil this self-described white supremacist left in his wake, are things that I will never forget.

When we officially opened our new office at 1166 Jefferson Avenue on July 14, 2022 it was a joyous day. We know we can't heal this community and neighborhood by opening an office, but we're so proud to be here and so thankful for Daphne's vision as well as the leadership of Assembly Majority Leader Crystal Peoples-Stokes who made this dream a reality.

I would like to dedicate this 11th year of Say Yes Buffalo to the memory of those we lost, to the survivors, and to the hearts and souls of our neighbors in 14208.

Sincerely,

David Rust



Highlights



Say Yes Buffalo Completes Move to Jefferson Avenue

In the past decade, Buffalo has seen a wellspring of laudable investment in its urban core. Highlighted by the development of the Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus, Canalside, the Northland Workforce Training Center, a brand new AKG Art Museum, a soon-to-come world class park on the waterfront on the LaSalle Park site, and new homes and commercial buildings in almost every corner of the city.

But these buildings and this regional economy needs people who are ready to accept the challenges of the future with skills and leadership. Place-based development in Buffalo will only be sustainable if we couple it with people-focused development strategies like ours, among many others.

We've applied the same mentality to the location of our headquarters at 1166 Jefferson Avenue. Spurred on by the vision of our Chief Impact Officer Daphne Ross and the leadership of Assembly Majority Leader Crystal Peoples-Stokes, we're proud to call this new 7,890 square foot space in the heart of the Jefferson Avenue Cold Springs Business District home. We have long aspired to be part of the equitable revitalization of Buffalo, and to create a national model for community revitalization through investment in education. Being based in Buffalo's East Side is an important part of living our values and actualizing that vision.

Our level of commitment to the neighborhood and the entire Buffalo community has only been heightened by the horrific event at Tops a few short blocks from our office. Cutting the ribbon on our office two months to the day after the attack, we found cause for celebration for our collective future, even with our heavy hearts. We know there will be brighter days ahead for Buffalo and for Jefferson Avenue, and we are resolved to be part of that change.



Highlights

Say Yes Buffalo Opens Say Yes Little Scholars, a Pre-K Readiness Program for Three-Year-Olds



For years, our Early Childhood program has worked in partnership with Buffalo Public Schools (BPS) to improve Pre-K and Kindergarten readiness and the overall academic foundation of our student body. Thus far, this partnership has focused on increased participation in developmental screening protocols that can help support the healthy growth of our community's youngest members by identifying a young child's developmental strengths and weaknesses and engaging families in supportive services when appropriate.

But screening alone is not enough to help our community improve the proficiency of our youngest learners. Our community has needed more direct resources in the realm of early childhood education to offer to low-income families. After years of discussion, research, and collaboration with BPS, we launched a new program for three-year-olds under the Say Yes Buffalo umbrella of services: Say Yes Little Scholars.

Say Yes Little Scholars opened two pilot classrooms in two different community schools in Buffalo in early 2023. Four more classrooms will open their doors in the fall of 2023. This program will augment the limited three-year-old program that already exists within BPS, and three-year-olds will be able to move up into Pre-K classrooms in those same school buildings at completion of the program.



The sites have been carefully selected to be placed in areas of the city that have been identified as "child care deserts," where there are few or no existing child care centers or Head Start centers in close distance. This is vitally important as our program does not offer transportation.

Our team supervises and manages the program in close collaboration with BPS and utilizes day care assistance funds from Erie County, an innovative formula that makes it the first program of its kind in the state. The team also provides direct support to the families involved in the program to help build a foundation for successful, lifelong learners.

From the beginning of Say Yes Buffalo, we have been focused on one thing: strengthening the cradle-to-career pipeline along every step of the path. Our team is keenly aware of the challenges that young families face in our community, and we are resolute in our commitment to grow this domain of supports.



Highlights



Introducing CareerWise Greater Buffalo, a Modern Youth Apprenticeship with Major Employer Partners

On the other end of the spectrum of cradle-to-career supports from early childhood education is workforce development. In the 2021-22 school year, we launched another new program to offer to graduating Buffalo seniors in good standing: CareerWise Greater Buffalo.

Our organization is known for its scholarships, yet we realize that when 65% of our students' households earn less than \$50,000 a year, it is imperative to offer many pathways to success for those who are eager to join the workforce. CareerWise Greater Buffalo helps bridge the gap, bringing together paid employment for recent high school graduates with credential-bearing educational programming. Our new modern youth apprenticeship program combines paid employment at local employer partners, on-the-job learning and coaching, related classroom-based instruction at accredited educational partners, and wrap-around support for youth throughout the entirety of their placement.

Our team of Coaches provides initial recruitment support, application and interview preparation, and ongoing advisement, advocacy, and service linkages to apprentices throughout their placement. We also have team members focused on working with private sector partners to support them in developing a more skilled and more diverse workforce.

In our first program year in 2022, 25 students were hired across 6 pilot employer partners: M&T Bank, Rich Products Corporation, Wegmans, Moog, Tesla, and Harmac Medical Products.

Northland Workforce Training Center President & CEO Stephen Tucker (center left) poses with four trainees who received job training for their apprenticeships at the center.

THE BUFFALO NEWS ^(10/20/22)

Say Yes Buffalo's apprenticeships blaze career path for youths



Travon Powell, 18, uses a digital multimeter as he takes a mechatronics class at Northland Workforce Training Center in Buffalo. Powell is part of Say Yes Buffalo's CareerWise Greater Buffalo apprenticeship program.



Highlights

Say Yes Partners with Erie County to Award \$3.39 Million to Residents in Tax Credits and Refunds

With historic tax benefits in place to assist low-income families in the tax year 2021, Say Yes Buffalo was chosen as a community partner by Erie County to help organize, advertise, and manage the annual Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program. This program coordinated efforts with 211WNY and Erie County along with community partners to help drive community awareness and participation in this longstanding, free program.

In early 2022, this outreach resulted in 1,439 returns filed. With the help of community volunteers, \$3.39 million was awarded in tax credits and refunds.



Summer Camp Attendance at Pre-Pandemic Levels



Summer Camp Locations

Since 2015, Say Yes Buffalo has implemented a 6-week summer camp program for children in grades K-6 focused on enhancing academic growth, mitigating summer learning loss, promoting health and wellness, and keeping children safe through the summer months.

In 2022, we served 1,423 students across 27 camp sites, the highest number of campers since 2018. Our average student attendance and retention rate each increased by four-percentage points from last year, with average attendance of 81.6% and an 85.5% overall retention rate.

In the wake of May's horrific and racially motivated mass shooting, the camps—seven of which were located in the immediate vicinity of the incident—adopted a emphasis on social and emotional wellness to couple with the implementation of an evidence-based literacy and math curriculum designed to stem summer learning loss.

A total of 21 partner organizations oversaw 27 community-based sites in partnering nonprofits and faith-based organizations.



Highlights

Say Yes Holds Retreat at Highmark Stadium



Every year in late summer, Say Yes Buffalo organizes a retreat for the team. These are full day meetings in which the full team openly discusses the organization's priorities, budget, and future plans. After the emotional toll of a long school year in which students and families struggled to adjust to in-person learning, and the trauma of the horrific, racially motivated attack on the heart of Buffalo's African American community, our

leadership team explored options for a fun and relaxing day for our team. We're very thankful for the support we received from the Buffalo Bills to hold our retreat at the stadium and offer us tours of the facility. We're also thankful to the Oishei Foundation for taking care of our lunch. It's a day we'll take with us for a while.



Community Schools, Virtual No More

After almost a year of virtual Saturday Academies, our Strong Community Schools program was thrilled to get back in person and open the doors to the kind of dynamic programming we have become known for. Enrichment, support, and activity for the entire community and for the entire family.

With lessons learned about what community members are looking for in their Community School experience, our team is stronger than ever in implementing activities that engage students and their families.

A typical Saturday Academy experience consists of breakfast, lunch, and fun that engages all ages with physical activity, STEM, arts, and special presentations from a host of dedicated vendors who are leaders in their respective fields. Over 18,200 children, family members, and community members participated in Saturday Academies in the 2021-2022 school year.

A mother and son pose with new winter jackets they received at a December 2021 Coat Drive during a Saturday Academy at East Community High School

Highlights

Dr. Tonja Williams Named Superintendent

Since our founding, our most valuable partner has been Buffalo Public Schools (BPS), and we've worked to have strong relationships with every superintendent and school board member.

That relationship has never been stronger. Last year, we were excited to welcome Dr. Tonja Williams as the new superintendent of BPS. Dr. Williams, a graduate of BPS with a long career working on many levels in public education, has quickly established herself as a tireless and omnipresent advocate for students and the Say Yes Buffalo-BPS partnership.

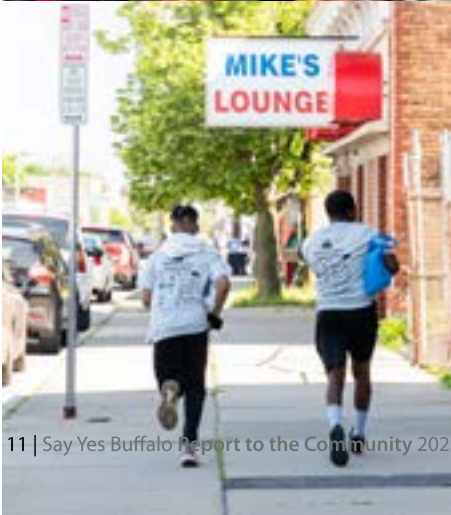
In this transition of leadership, that partnership has only become stronger as exemplified by the establishment of the modern youth apprenticeship program "CareerWise Greater Buffalo" and the Pre-K readiness "Say Yes Little Scholars" program. So much of our success as an organization is the fruit of this partnership, and we are happy to report that these relationships remain strong and focused on student and community outcomes.



Mentoring Team Leads "Mentor Race" Scavenger Hunt



In June 2022 our Mentoring team hosted an "Everything Buffalo Mentor Race" to raise awareness of the benefits of mentoring and to provide a bonding activity for mentees and mentors in our program. With the generous sponsorship of Molina Healthcare Charitable Foundation, 14 pairs took to the streets to complete a citywide scavenger hunt.



Impact Dashboard 2022

Overview

City of Buffalo

276,807 residents

62,282 residents under age 18

\$27,157 per capita income

27.6% poverty rate

10.5% foreign born

18.9% speak language other than English at home

source: census.gov



Buffalo Public Schools

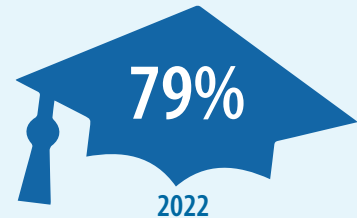
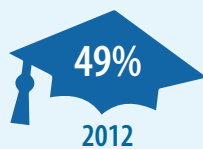
28,508 registered students

78% economically disadvantaged

23% receive special education services

19% English language learners

source: NYSED, 2021-22



High School Graduation Rate

Up 30 points since launch of Say Yes in 2012



College-Going Rate for Buffalo Students

Up 5 percentage points since launch of Say Yes in 2012

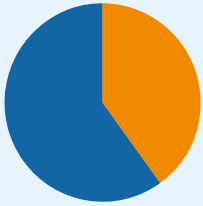


2,957 students have graduated with 2-, 4-year, and certificate degrees since our launch and 2,500+ students annually receive financial aid application coaching and supports from Say Yes Buffalo

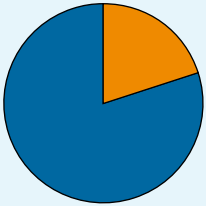


Say Yes Buffalo has disbursed over \$23 million in postsecondary scholarships to 6,000+ students to date. Say Yes Buffalo has also leveraged over \$170 million in public and private aid for Say Yes scholars (including Pell, Tap, and institutional aid).

Our Scholars

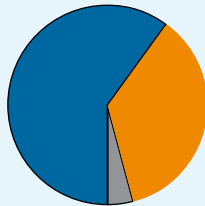


63% of our scholars scholarships have family incomes **below \$50K**
(34% had family incomes below **\$25K**)



80% of BPS graduates applied for the SYB scholarship in 2022

2,957
College Completers
IN SAY YES COHORTS 2013-2022



Bachelor's Degrees - 62%

14% Social Sciences, 13% Business & Marketing, 13% Communications

Associate Degrees - 34%

38% General Studies, 15% Medical, 8% Criminal Justice, 8% Business

Certificates - 4%

34% Medical, 19% Criminal Justice, 8% Business

47%

FAFSA Completion Increase

AVERAGE COMPLETIONS 2013-2022: 1,060; 2012 COMPLETIONS: 719



Impact Snapshot 2021-22

Program Outcomes

Community Schools

18,258

Saturday Academy
Participants

677

Oral Health Referrals

Adult Education

19

Adult Education
Program Offerings

588

Program Participants

Early Childhood

1,071

Children Screened

Parent Centers

101

Engagement
Opportunities

761

Total Participants

Legal Clinics

8

Virtual Legal Clinics

1,993

Total Participants

Summer Camp (2022)

1,423

Total Enrollment

80.6%

Attendance Average

Mentoring

91

Active Mentor-
Mentee Pairs

18

Schools Represented

Family Support (Preventive)

2,335

Face-to-Face Contacts
and Home Visits

67

Successful Case
Closures

Family Support (Health Homes)

230

Youth Served

30%

of Youth Served Have
Highest Medical Need

Scholarship

\$2.9M

Awarded

28%

FAFSA/TAP
Completion Rate
(Seven point increase over prior year)

Boys & Men of Color

73

Active Breaking
Barriers Participants

16

ZIP codes represented

Human Resources

11

Colleagues Earning
Internal Promotions

8

Colleagues Earning
External Promotions

Scholar Internships

11

Internships Completed

8

Total Internships Sites

Modern Youth Apprenticeship

25

Students Hired and Trained
for Paid Apprenticeships

6

Partner Employers

200

Students Applied
to Positions



Operational Budget

\$19.6M Total Budget

Less Passthroughs:

\$1M Summer Camp subcontracting

\$526K Apprenticeship subcontracting

\$290K Preventive Services (Child & Family Services)

\$3.3M Scholarships for Buffalo public and charter school graduates

\$2.3M Administering financial commitments on behalf of George Weiss, founder of Say Yes to Education, to Cleveland, Hartford, and Harlem

\$12.2M Budget Excluding Passthroughs

\$1.7M Overhead (18%)

\$7.6M Program direct expenses (82%)

	Program Direct Expense	Overhead Expense	Total Expense
Wages	\$6,661,000	\$1,048,000	7,709,000
Payroll Taxes	602,000	77,000	679,000
Benefits	986,000	89,000	1,075,000
Total Payroll Taxes & Benefits	\$8,249,000	\$1,214,000	\$9,463,000
Program Supplies	461,000	-	461,000
Events	275,000	36,000	310,000
Other Contractors	167,000	88,000	254,000
HR Consulting	159,000	11,000	169,000
Occupancy	46,000	100,000	147,000
Software	98,000	37,000	135,000
Depreciation	-	131,000	131,000
Technet Fee	105,000	14,000	119,000
Professional Development	63,000	18,000	81,000
Marketing	80,000	-	80,000
Business Insurance	20,000	41,000	60,000
Cell Phones	53,000	6,000	59,000
Printing	25,000	32,000	57,000
Staff Development	-	56,000	56,000
Professional Fees	-	55,000	55,000
Mileage	32,000	3,000	35,000
Dues and Subscriptions	9,000	22,000	31,000
College Access	30,000	-	30,000
Technology Equipment	28,000	-	28,000
Bank Fees	-	18,000	18,000
Parking	8,000	-	8,000
Agency Meeting	7,000	-	7,000
Recruitment	6,000	-	7,000
Other Expenses	314,000	80,000	394,000
Total Expenses	\$10,235,000	\$1,961,000	\$12,196,000
	84%	16%	100%



Investor Spotlight



Paul Wilkinson
Vice President & Chief HR Officer
Moog Inc.

Moog Inc. is a worldwide designer, manufacturer, and integrator of precision motion control components and systems that are used in satellites, missiles, commercial and military aircraft, and medical equipment, to name a few. Moog products played a critical role in the successful landing of NASA's Perseverance Rover on Mars, contribute to the performance of Formula 1 race cars, help control the motion of 1,000-ton, retractable roofs at Wimbledon, and can be found in some of the world's most advanced mechanical robots. The company is headquartered in Elma, NY, and employs 4,000 Western New Yorkers. In total, the company has operations in 26 countries and employs 13,000 people worldwide.

Moog continues to grow and remains one of the largest private employers in the region. The company constantly recruits and develops talent. Moog has proven its commitment to investing in our collective future by donating \$1 million to the Say Yes Buffalo Scholarship to date.

Paul Wilkinson, who serves as the Chief Human Resources Officer and chairs Moog's Corporate Social Environmental Responsibility Committee, believes supporting Say Yes Buffalo is essential.

"I have two young kids, and nothing is more important to me than their well-being," he said. "I can't imagine a world where I wouldn't be able to give them the education that allows them to be

successful. All of us at Moog want the best for our children, and we believe that every child should have access to education."

Learning and career development are paramount for the company.

"Early career initiatives are something we're focusing on," Wilkinson said. "There's a retirement cliff that's been hanging over us and we are expecting to see significant numbers of people retire. We're hiring, but we also need to create our own talent through internships, apprenticeship programs, and other talent streams. Working closely with Say Yes Buffalo lines up perfectly with that strategic imperative. We must make the investment now to create the next generation of talent for Moog."

According to Wilkinson, Moog also sees its involvement with Say Yes Buffalo as an important chance to improve the diversity of Moog's workforce.

"A more diverse and inclusive organization yields better results," Wilkinson said.

Moog and Say Yes Buffalo's partnership has been successful, and Moog continues to support efforts to grow and develop talent in our region.

"There are many causes here in Buffalo making a difference, and Say Yes Buffalo is up at the top," Wilkinson said.

Alumna Spotlight



Jesana Gadley
Frederick Law Olmsted #156, '16
Canisius College, '20

Jesana Gadley is a tech worker without any kind of background in tech.

The Olmsted High School grad is instead the kind of tech worker whose work involves introducing career pathways in classrooms and engaging youth with STEM programming as the Community Engagement and Strategy Lead for M&T Bank's Tech Academy at Seneca One.

Last summer, for example, she helped bring Buffalo middle school students into the tech hub for career exploration and STEM opportunities.

"We had 50 kids here over the summer to build robots," she said. "There were lot of girls present—a lot of Black and Brown girls—making STEM fun. I liked helping to provide that experience because 6th grade is about when young girls decide where their careers are headed, and what direction they can take."

Regularly, she brings a "Coder's Club" program into Westminster Charter School, where she herself attended before she entered Olmsted. She brought that same program into Buffalo Prep last summer as well, another program geared at providing additional educational resources to talented, underrepresented students where Jesana had been a "scholar."

The "full circle" element of her young career is not lost on her. She says she feels fortunate to have a job where she can give back. "I have benefited so much from the invest-

ment of others in me, it only makes sense to me to invest in others," she said. "I wear the BPS grad and Say Yes Scholar badge with pride."

At age 24, Jesana represents a new generation in the local workforce. She is one of almost 3,000 current Say Yes Buffalo alumni starting their careers and assuming leadership roles.

Despite earning a full scholarship through Say Yes Buffalo to attend Canisius College, Jesana is unequivocal that the greater impact made by Say Yes on her life has been the guidance, mentorship support, and encouragement she received from Stephanie Peete and Johanna Caplan, who formerly worked with her in the Internship and Career Pathways Program.

"I started looking at internships going into my junior year and I didn't think that I was qualified for most of them, but I received that push from my Say Yes mentors to do it and I got the internship at M&T," Jesana recalls. That confidence in her career skills hasn't abated. She enjoys saying she works in a tech hub without any kind of tech-related degree.

"I work with technologists but I know nothing in that world," she explains. My niche area is community and connecting people. I liked finding where there are challenges or areas of need and then figuring out how we can best address them."

Alumni Spotlight

From Scholarship Recipients to Team Members

Nicole Purnell
Assistant Teacher, Say Yes Little Scholars

Middle Early College '17
SUNY Erie '19

Working here, I feel I can be a good role model for others (like the three-year-olds I'm with every day!) and show them that African Americans can succeed.

Nyles Moore
Lead Teacher, Say Yes Little Scholars

Hutch Tech '16
Villa Maria College '20

Working for Say Yes Buffalo truly means paying it forward. Say Yes Buffalo has played a significant role on my academic journey and personal growth which allows me to help other students overcome barriers and achieve their full potential.

Natalia Rice
Training and HR Specialist

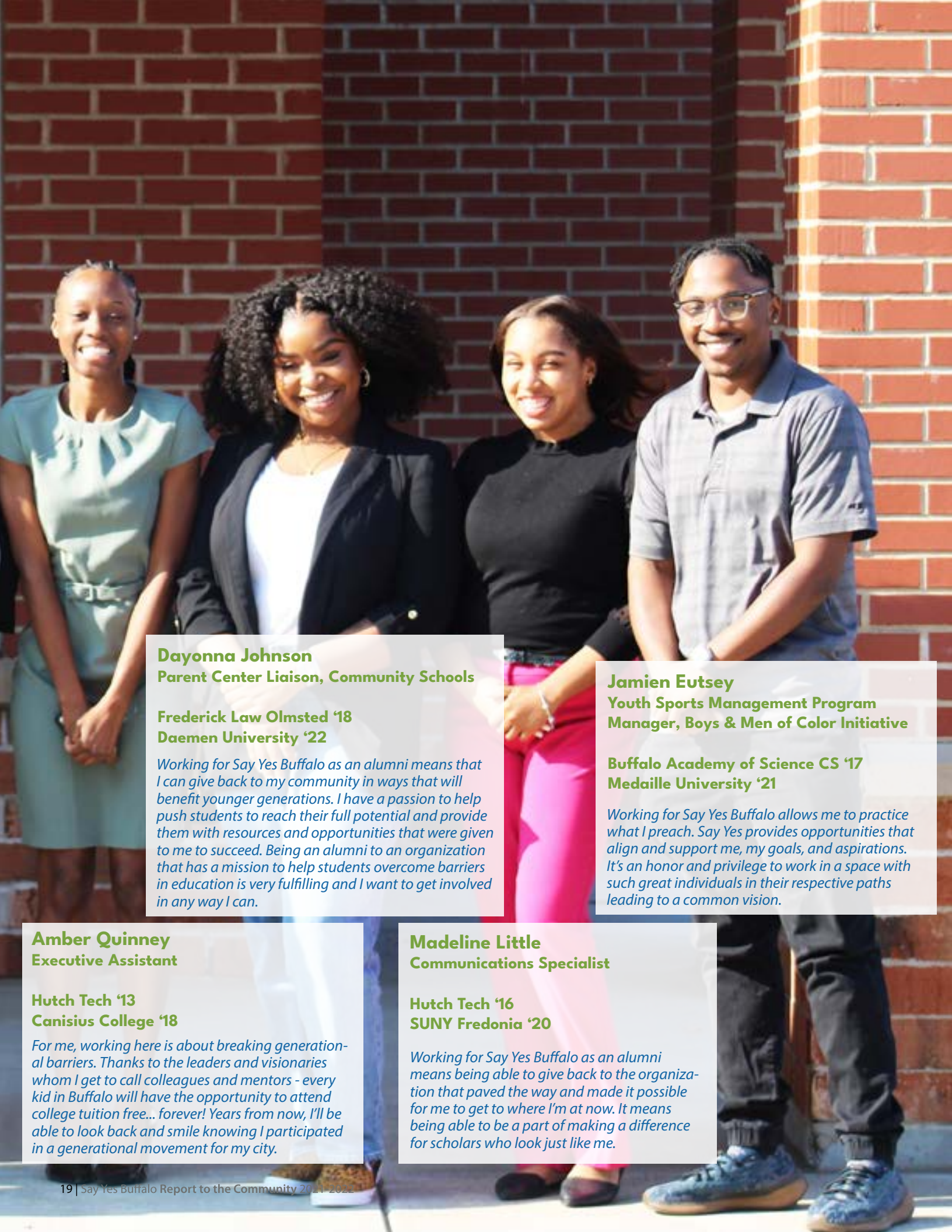
City Honors '16
Syracuse University '20

Working at Say Yes as an alum is an opportunity to give back to the organization that has been formative to my personal/professional growth and success. It's amazing to see Say Yes Buffalo continue to expand and evolve, and it's extra special to be a contributing team member.

Jennifer Ray
Career Coach, CareerWise Greater Buffalo

South Park High School '13
Medaille University '18

I feel so blessed to have the opportunity to give back to an organization that has given me so many opportunities. I try my best to take advantage of every opportunity Say Yes Buffalo has for me as a student, alumni, and employee over the years. In the three years I have been an employee at Say Yes Buffalo, I have realized being an alumna has had some real impact on how I speak about the organization to current high school students.



Dayonna Johnson
Parent Center Liaison, Community Schools

Frederick Law Olmsted '18
Daemen University '22

Working for Say Yes Buffalo as an alumni means that I can give back to my community in ways that will benefit younger generations. I have a passion to help push students to reach their full potential and provide them with resources and opportunities that were given to me to succeed. Being an alumni to an organization that has a mission to help students overcome barriers in education is very fulfilling and I want to get involved in any way I can.

Jamien Eutsey
Youth Sports Management Program
Manager, Boys & Men of Color Initiative

Buffalo Academy of Science CS '17
Medaille University '21

Working for Say Yes Buffalo allows me to practice what I preach. Say Yes provides opportunities that align and support me, my goals, and aspirations. It's an honor and privilege to work in a space with such great individuals in their respective paths leading to a common vision.

Amber Quinney
Executive Assistant

Hutch Tech '13
Canisius College '18

For me, working here is about breaking generational barriers. Thanks to the leaders and visionaries whom I get to call colleagues and mentors - every kid in Buffalo will have the opportunity to attend college tuition free... forever! Years from now, I'll be able to look back and smile knowing I participated in a generational movement for my city.

Madeline Little
Communications Specialist

Hutch Tech '16
SUNY Fredonia '20

Working for Say Yes Buffalo as an alumni means being able to give back to the organization that paved the way and made it possible for me to get to where I'm at now. It means being able to be a part of making a difference for scholars who look just like me.

Community Leadership Council

The Say Yes Buffalo Partnership gets much of its strength from the collaborative governance bodies that govern and guide its work. At the top of the structure is the Say Yes Buffalo Community Leadership Council, which is chaired by the Mayor, Deputy Erie County Executive, President of the Board of Education, the New York State Department of Education Regent, New York State Senator, New York State Assemblyperson for our region and the Say Yes Buffalo Board of Directors Chair.



HON. BYRON BROWN
City of Buffalo



DR. CATHERINE COLLINS
New York State Board of Regents



HON. TIMOTHY KENNEDY
New York State Senate



STEVE SWIFT
Say Yes Buffalo Board of Directors



HON. CRYSTAL PEOPLES-STOKES
New York State Assembly



LOU PETRUCCI
Buffalo Board of Education



LISA CHIMERA
Erie County

Board of Directors

The Say Yes Buffalo Board of Directors provides oversight for all Say Yes Buffalo programs and operations and focuses on fundraising and policy related to the program's scholarships. This board is comprised of private individuals who are volunteering their time to raise the funds needed to provide the Say Yes Buffalo Scholarship in perpetuity, and they are responsible for determining eligibility and administrative guidelines for the scholarship. Board members also hold organizational leadership accountable for implementation of high-quality programming, and advocate on behalf of the overall organization.



MELISSA BAUMGART
RP Oakhill



KENDRA BRIM
Tesla



TRINA BURRUSS
United Way of
Buffalo and Erie
County



BETSY CONSTANTINE
Community
Foundation for Greater
Buffalo



TEMARA CROSS
Say Yes Buffalo
Scholar Representative



BRIGID DOHERTY
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Katie Schneider
Photography



MARSHA SULLIVAN
Nardin Academy



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CINQ Care



DR. FRANCISCO M. VASQUEZ
Child & Family Services
(retired)



JOHN WALSH, III
Walsh Duffield
Companies, Inc.

Operating Committee

The Say Yes Buffalo Operating Committee meets monthly to monitor progress and ensure stability of programs. This body is comprised of City of Buffalo, Erie County, and New York State officials, parent leaders, the Board of Education, Superintendent, teachers' and administrators' union presidents, higher education officials and leaders from the region's two largest private foundations.



OTIS T. BARKER, SR.
Deputy Commissioner,
City of Buffalo



MARK BOYD
Chief of Staff, Office of
Assemblywoman Crystal
Peoples-Stokes



MARIE CANNON
Commissioner of Social
Services, Erie County



DR. CATHERINE COLLINS
New York State Board of
Regents



DR. KATHERINE CONWAY-TURNER
President,
Buffalo State College



BETSY CONSTANTINE
President/CEO,
Community Foundation
for Greater Buffalo



JODY COVINGTON
President, Buffalo Council
of School Supervisors &
Administrators



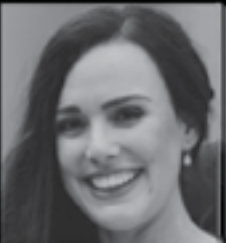
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Educational Leadership &
Policy Department Chair,
University at Buffalo



DR. KATE HAO
Curriculum Chair, Buffalo
Parent Teacher Organization



DR. MATTHEW GIORDANO
President,
Villa Maria College



MOLLY HIRSCHBECK
Communications Director,
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Chief of Administration,
Public Affairs, and Planning,
Buffalo Public Schools



BLYTHE T. MERRILL
Executive Vice President for
Programs, The John R. Oishei
Foundation



MARC MUELLER
Assistant Commissioner,
Department of Social
Services, Erie County



LOU PETRUCCI
President and Park District
Member
Buffalo Board of Education,



PHIL RUMORE
President, Buffalo
Teachers Federation



ED SPEIDEL
President, District Parent
Coordinating Council



DR. ADIAM TSEGAI
Officer in Charge,
SUNY Erie



DR. TONJA WILLIAMS
Superintendent,
Buffalo Public Schools



EMMANUEL WRIGHT
Student Representative,
Medaille University

Say Yes Forever Endowment Campaign Committee

The Say Yes Forever Scholarship Endowment Campaign Committee, chaired by Nick and Courtney Sinatra, focuses on fundraising for the Say Yes Buffalo Endowment Fund. The Say Yes Forever Campaign is a 5-year, \$65 million campaign that is seeded by a \$25 million anonymous challenge grant and will ensure the Say Yes Buffalo scholarship is funded in perpetuity. The committee is comprised of business, community, religious and parent leaders.



LAUREN BAYNES
Bounce Imaging



TRINA BURRUSS
United Way of Buffalo and Erie County



JAMIL CREWS
Say Yes Buffalo



JANIQUE CURRY
J.S. Curry & Associates, LLC



ALICE JACOBS
Delaware North



CHEYENNE KETTER-FRANKLIN
Say Yes Buffalo Alumni Network



DEJA MIDDLEBROOK
Say Yes Buffalo Alumni Network



DR. WENDY MISTRETTA
Buffalo Public Schools District Parent Coordinating Council



SHANNON PATCH
Delaware North



COURTNEY SINATRA
Community Volunteer



NICK SINATRA
Sinatra and Co. Real Estate



GELLENIA SMALLWOOD
Say Yes Buffalo



REV. JONATHAN STAPLES
First Shiloh Baptist Church



TANYA STAPLES
Say Yes Buffalo



STEPHEN SWIFT
CINQ Care



NICOLE SWIFT
Community Volunteer



MORGAN WILLIAMS-BRYANT
Girl Scouts of WNY

Programs & Supports

To ensure that students and families have the supports they need to succeed in their educations, Say Yes Buffalo directly implements a wide range of school- and community-based programs in coordination with the Buffalo Public Schools and other community partners. Say Yes Buffalo also facilitates collaborative planning processes and new partnerships among community-based organizations with the goal of making services more accessible and responsive to community needs across the City of Buffalo.



Birth - 12th Grade

The Say Yes Buffalo (SYB) partnership brings support services directly into school buildings, making them easier to access for students and families. The programs and services explained here are available to assist Buffalo Public School (BPS) students reach their full academic potential and prepare them for high school graduation, college, and career.

Say Yes Little Scholars

Launched in spring 2023, this preschool program expands the three-year-old offerings already in place in BPS to offer classrooms in multiple school buildings. The first program of its kind in the state, this program utilizes funds from the Erie County Department of Social Services' childcare subsidy to provide income-eligible households a quality educational option. Sites have been chosen to open in existing BPS schools where childcare options are limited.

School-Based Preventive Services Coordination

Through a close partnership with BPS and Erie County Department of Social Services, SYB embeds team members—called Family Support Specialists—within school buildings to provide case management and support services to children and families identified as having a high level of need. These school-based Family Support Specialists connect students and their families to health, mental health, after school, and basic needs programs, and advocate for families within the school buildings and across social service systems. Each year, our 20+ Family Support Specialists serve over 700 children across the district annually, and we have served over 1,500 families to date.

School-Based Health Home Care Coordination

In partnership with the BPS, SYB embeds health-focused Family Support Specialists within school buildings to provide Medicaid-billable Health Home Care Coordination. These services are available to children who qualify based on chronic health conditions, such as asthma, diabetes, developmental disabilities, and complex trauma. To date, over 365 students with significant health needs have been enrolled in our program, and we have served many more through outreach and referrals.

Mental Health Care

SYB facilitates and coordinates partnerships between the BPS, Erie County, and community-based behavioral healthcare providers to embed mental health services accessibly within every school building. Participation in counseling can be self-identified or referred by teachers, parents and other school building administrators. Services are provided by licensed clinical mental health professionals and are billed to the student's health insurance, which includes Medicaid.

In-School and Mobile Health Care

SYB works closely with school nurses and community-based healthcare providers to coordinate delivery of school-based health services, including physical screenings, immunizations, and reproductive care. In partnership with our Mobile Health Task Force, we established a Mobile Health Clinic bus to provide more accessible services to children and families. Some schools have in-school health clinics that provide students with basic health care, including physical screenings and immunizations. Services are provided by licensed medical professionals and are billed to the student's health insurance (private insurance or Medicaid). Families who do not have health insurance receive assistance obtaining it.

Legal Services

In partnership with the Erie County Bar Association's Volunteer Lawyers Project (VLP), free legal advice is available for all BPS students and families on non-criminal legal matters. In addition, the VLP facilitates monthly legal clinics online offering information and consultation on housing, taxpayer rights and family issues.

Summer Camp

Since 2015, SYB has partnered with BPS, the City of Buffalo, Erie County and dozens of community, faith-based, and parent organizations to operate a network of free summer camps across Buffalo, with the goal of creating equitable access to high quality summer camp experiences for students. Built upon a Positive Youth Development framework and a robust evidence base, our programs are fun, enhance academic growth, prevent summer learning loss, promote health and wellness, and keep children safe. We typically serve approximately 1,400 campers per year across 25+ community partner sites. Camp sites also proactively identify youth and family service needs, and staff are trained to provide linkages to basic needs, healthcare, and mental health services.

Early Childhood Development

The SYB Early Childhood program provides services, resources, and free supports to families, caregivers, and educators to support children, birth through 6 years of age. It provides free developmental screenings ("Ages & Stages Questionnaire") to monitor child development, education on developmental milestones, and activities to support healthy development. The program also provides connections to community-based organizations for resources such as diapers, clothing, parenting classes, counseling and free training to educators and community organizations around social-emotional development and supports.

BPS Community Schools

SYB is the Buffalo Public School's strategic partner in managing and delivering their community schools programs. A Community School brings together school and neighborhood resources to improve student learning and create stronger and healthier families. The Community School team integrates academics, health and social services along with community development and engagement. SYB embeds 21 Community Schools Navigators within BPS buildings to facilitate partnerships between community-based organizations and schools, and to lead implementation of Saturday Academy programming throughout the school year.

Parent Centers

The Parent Centers are a part of the Strong Community Schools Strategy and are located at four Community High Schools (Bennett, East, Lafayette, and South Park). The Parent Centers provide families with education, resources and programming that build parents' knowledge, skills and networks for supporting and partnering in their child's education. To achieve this goal a variety of activities, services, and learning sessions are offered daily.

Boys and Men of Color

The "Breaking Barriers" Youth Leadership Council is a program of the Greater Buffalo Racial Equity Roundtable's Boys and Men of Color Initiative that is aimed at accelerating positive outcomes for boys and young men of color across the cradle-to-career continuum. Participation is open to young men 12 to 24 years of age. Participants agree to a one-year commitment where they learn how to elevate their voice to advocate for social justice, racial equity and policy change in our community. For more information visit breakingbarriersbuffalo.org.



Programs & Supports

Postsecondary Supports

College and Financial Aid Application Supports

Free college and financial aid application support is available to all Buffalo public and charter school students through our partnership with the University at Buffalo. Team members are embedded in every school building and virtually to help students and their families with group and one-on-one assistance with their FAFSA and TAP applications as well as with the requirements and guidelines of the Say Yes and Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo scholarships.

College Kickoff for Incoming Freshmen

Each summer, Say Yes Buffalo hosts a free “College Kickoff” event to introduce students to college expectations and give them the tools to be successful. All graduating high school seniors are eligible to attend and all attendees are eligible to receive a laptop for college paid for by donors to the annual Technology Campaign.

CareerWise Greater Buffalo- Modern Youth Apprenticeship

Say Yes Buffalo has led the establishment of the new CareerWise Greater Buffalo Modern Youth Apprenticeship program in close partnership with the Buffalo Public Schools, local institutions of higher education, local employer partners, and other industry training partners. Our shared goal is to create a clear pathway for youth to access earn-as-you-learn apprenticeship opportunities that culminate in guaranteed full-time employment. The program combines paid employment at local employer partners, on-the-job learning and coaching, related classroom-based instruction at accredited educational partners, and wrap-around support for youth throughout the entirety of their placement. Say Yes Buffalo Career Coaches embedded within BPS high schools recruit eligible seniors, and our Apprenticeship Success Coaches provide ongoing support to apprentices throughout the three year program.



Internship & Career Pathways Program

Buffalo Public School graduates who have completed their first year of college are able to apply for paid internships throughout Western New York. Students receive support with coaching, workshops, and trainings on topics such as resumés, preparing cover letters, interviewing skills and networking. These opportunities have been cultivated specifically to provide a direct pipeline from college to career after students earn their degree.

Scholar Mentoring Program

Buffalo Public School graduates entering their freshman year at a Western New York college or university can apply to be matched with a mentor. The pair meets consistently for 18 months and the mentor guides the student through the transition to college.

Near Peer Mentoring Program

Current Buffalo public and charter schools students are matched with current Say Yes Scholars pursuing postsecondary degrees. The program runs for a year and aims to help students transition from high school into higher education with the example of someone who made the same transition in the recent past.

Summer Success Academies

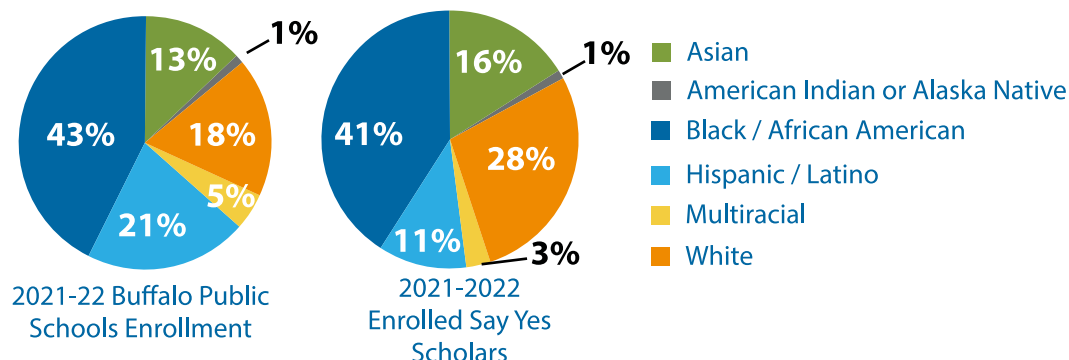
Say Yes Buffalo scholars who attend Buffalo State University or SUNY Erie have the opportunity to enroll in free summer programs prior to the start of their freshman college year to help acclimate them to college life and routines. Students are eligible to be paid for participating through the City of Buffalo’s Mayor Summer Youth Employment program.

Racial Equity & Inclusion Dashboard

Racial equity and inclusion are top of mind in all that we do as an employer, services provider, purchaser and partner. We've worked hard to create a workplace that models these tenets; led by our REI Committee, we've trained team members as diversity and equity coaches, developed REI 101 and 102 training courses that all team members are required to complete, we have embedded REI questions in our recruitment process, and are continuing to refine new metrics to track progress and hold ourselves accountable. We also have practices and policies in place—including purchasing guidelines that prioritize women and minority owned businesses—to help us maintain and grow our capacity to honor these equity principles.

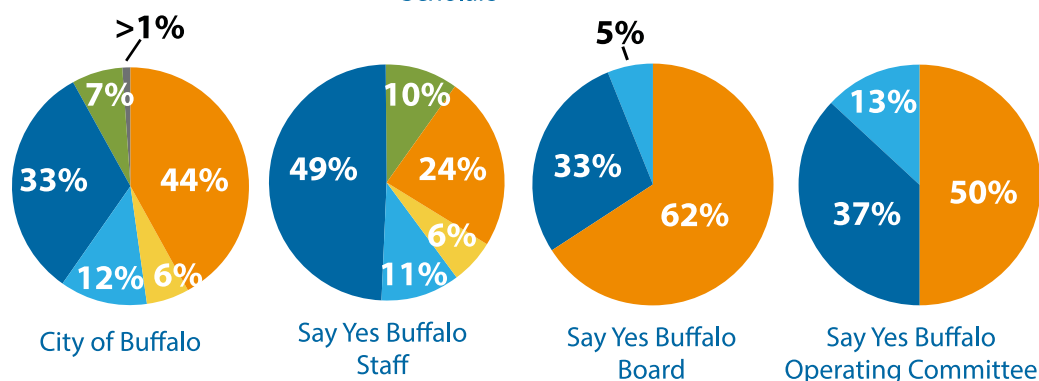
Our Scholars

Reflect the larger Buffalo community



Our Staff + Leadership

Reflect the larger Buffalo community



Scholarship Eligibility

Say Yes Buffalo provides scholarships and grants to eligible graduates of Buffalo public and charter schools to all State University of New York (SUNY) and City University of New York (CUNY) and nearly 100 private colleges and universities. Eligible students who enroll at a Say Yes participating college can receive a scholarship to cover up to 100% of the cost of tuition after federal, state, and institutional aid have been applied.

Say Yes Buffalo scholarships and grants are available to students who:

1. Reside in the City of Buffalo.
2. At minimum, complete grades 9-12, in consecutive years, at a public or charter school in the City of Buffalo or enroll in and complete the Buffalo Public School Adult Education College Career Institute.
3. Graduate from a public or charter school in Buffalo in June 2013 or after.
4. Enroll full-time at a Say Yes college within one year of high school graduation; and,
5. Apply for all federal and state financial aid programs available (FAFSA and TAP), including Selective Service as required by law.

Programmatic Funders

Public Partners

**Buffalo Board of Education
City of Buffalo
Erie County**

Private Foundations and Nonprofits

**The Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation
Health Foundation for Western and Central New York
First Niagara Foundation
The John R. Oishei Foundation
New America Foundation/Partnership to Advance Youth Apprenticeship
Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo
The Vogt Family Foundation
Dollar General Literacy Foundation
Hispanic Heritage Foundation
Buffalo Bills Foundation
George and Agnes Farris, Celia Lipton Farris & Victor W. Farris Foundation
The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation
The Starbucks Foundation
Buffalo Sabres Foundation
The Jacob and Valeria Langeloth Foundation
The Education Trust
Community Connections of NY
Cullen Foundation
Creatives Rebuild New York
National Grid Foundation
Children's Foundation of Erie County
Jobs for the Future (JFF)
Redlich Horwitz Foundation
Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo - Casey Family Foundation
Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo - Youth Employment Coalition
Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo - The Robert Bodkin Foundation
Molina Healthcare Charitable Foundation
Partnership for the Public Good
KeyBank Foundation
Blue Cross/Blue Shield of Western New York's Blue Fund**

Corporate Support

**Bank of America
Moog Inc.
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Thank You, Scholarship Investors!

The Scholarship Fund was established as a spend-down fund as we launched to support scholarships throughout our initial roll out. As planned, we fully supported the cost of scholarships through this fund until 2023. Over the last 10 years, we have worked to raise a Scholarship Endowment large enough to support the costs of scholarships in perpetuity. Returns from this endowment will support scholarship recipients from 2023 and beyond.

Over the last ten years, the Say Yes Buffalo Partnership has transformed the lives of thousands of Buffalo students through a universal postsecondary scholarship for public school graduates and comprehensive cradle-to-career supports embedded across the Buffalo Public Schools and Buffalo public charter schools.

The game-changing availability of the scholarship has kept our cross-sector partners focused on the goal of preparing youth to succeed in school from Pre-K through grade 12 and beyond. To ensure that both the scholarship and the comprehensive student supports remain available in perpetuity for future generations of students, we are working towards a \$65M Scholarship Endowment fundraising goal. We currently hope to secure the full amount by June 2024.

SAY YES BUFFALO SCHOLARSHIP FUND

Individuals and Families

Anonymous (45)
Jeffrey Adams
Dr. Kevin Ahuna
Durgham Alysiri
David Alfred
James and Kristin Allen
Joyce and Stuart Angert
Monica Angle and Sam Magavern
Esther Annan
Glenn Arthurs
Charles Balbach
Tereka Baltimore
Allan and Melissa Baumgart
Lauren Baynes
Betsy and Scott Behrend
Ms. Gina Bellavia and Mr. Eric Frank
Ericka N. Bennett
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Robert and Mary Ann Budin
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Susan and Robert Conklin
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Ricardo Humphrey
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Dr. and Mrs. Kenneth R. Kahn
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Michael Katilus

Thank You, Scholarship Investors!

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Kevin Wyckoff
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Jennifer Yungbluth
David and Susan Zebro
Michael and Elizabeth Zeisler
Benjamin M. Zuffranieri, Jr.
Rev. Vicki Zust

In Honor

Anonymous in honor of Courtney Stott and Nicholas Sinatra
Susan and Edwin Bean in honor of Dr. Matthew Phillips
Susan and Edwin Bean in honor of Dr. Robert Sawyer
Tish Brady and Paul Cesana in honor of David and Jennifer Rust
Nancy B. Cheyney, in honor of Peter F. Hunt
Adrian and Clotilde Dedecker in honor of George Weiss
Gisel Family Fund, in honor of Molly McFarland Wade
Molly and Rob Greene in honor of Emily Wyckoff
Beverly Jones, in honor of Carsheena S. Jackson and Diane McLaughlin
Lake Shore Savings Bank, in honor of Dr. Ellen Grant
Holly and Jordan Levy in honor of Peter F. Hunt
Tony and Kate Masiello in honor of Dr. Elizabeth Conant and Ms. Camille Cox
Dr. Harry and Phyllis Newman in honor of Mary and
Scott Newman, Allison Newman, Tineke Chan and Eric Newman
Scott and Mary Newman in honor of Harry and Phyllis Newman
Judson T. Price Jr. in honor of First Shiloh Baptist Church
Linda Ray, in honor of Mark Gawronski
Rich Products Corporation in honor of Kathy Gardner
Dr. Mary Schohn in honor of Betsy Behrend
Drs. Mary Schohn and Larry Lantinga in honor of Ruby June Behrend

Susan and David Schubbe, in honor of Vincent and Mary Walsh
 Thomas Tomaka in honor of David and Jeri Brooks
 Thomas Tomaka in honor of Patti and Dominic Montaldi
 Beth Vandenberg and Dennis Walczyk in honor of Luke Bradley Rust
 Debbie and Michael Walsh in honor of Emily Wyckoff

In Memoriam

Jeffrey Adams, in memory of Clarence E. and Audrey C. Adams
 Daytuan & Betsy Antonetti, in memory of Ines Serrano Rivera & Alberta Gibson
 In Memory of Susan Bean
 In Memory of Charles Billups
 Mrs. Beverly Blue in memory of Mrs. Sandree Blue
 In Memory of Janet Board
 Patricia Crawford, The Aloha Foundation, made in memory of Susan R. Bean
 Sue S. Gardner, in memory of Arnold B. Gardner
 Barbara Granite in memory of Sylvester Smith
 Cutler and Julie Greene, in memory of Finley R. Greene, Jr.
 Amy Martoche and Tim Hoover in memory of Sofa Grace Hoover
 Dr. Juanita Hunter in memory of Archie L. Hunter
 Yvonne James in memory of Doris James
 Diana Morrow Johnson, in memory of Dr. Cherita M. Johnson-Morrow
 Diana Morrow Johnson, in memory of Eli Morrow
 Beverly Jones in memory of Mrs. Sandree Blue
 Robert and Mary Ann Kresse, in memory of Susan R. Bean
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 Dr. Barbara Nevergold, in memory of Dr. Kenneth Seals, MD
 The Nyamekye Foundation, in memory of Gregoria Daniel
 In memory of Anita Sandeck
 Susan and David Schubbe, in memory of Vincent and Mary Walsh
 Joan and Roger Simon, in memory of Susan R. Bean
 Richard Tobe and Susan B. Tobe, in memory of Arnold B. Gardner
 Michael and Kelli Ventling, in memory of Susan Bean

Foundations

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