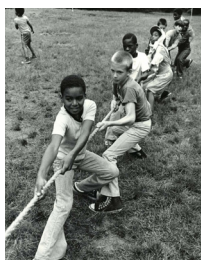
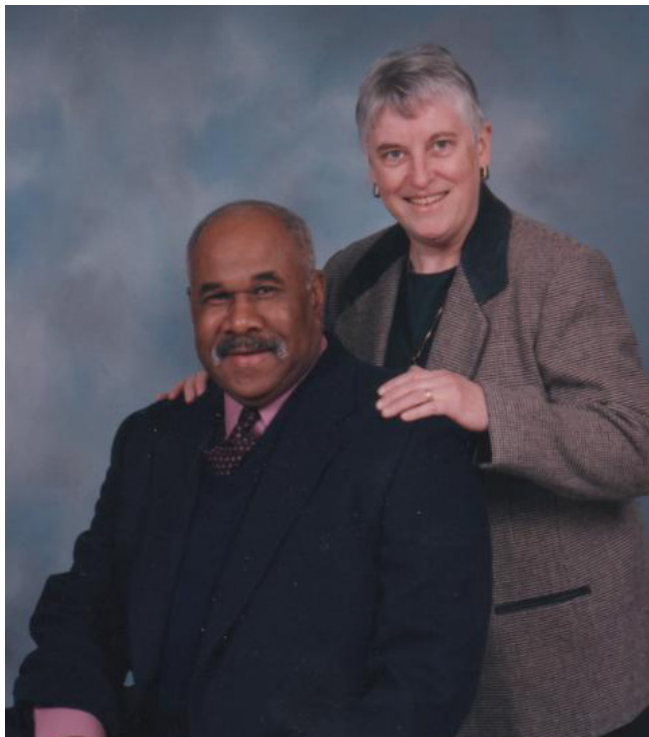




**Youth Enrichment Services**  
Oral History  
1968-2018







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## INTRODUCTION

This history was written to honor the memory of Richard Williams and his accomplishments in establishing Youth Enrichment Services (YES) as an enduring organization of community service. Richard drew on experiences early in his own life to help youth in the difficult times of the inner city and to show them that another path exists in life. YES has continued to grow and respond to current needs.

We would like to thank Davis Goode for the many hours he spent conducting interviews and writing this history. We also want to thank the multitude of people who contributed to YES over the last 50 years to make it what it is today. A few people are presented here but there are many more who are not mentioned. To them we offer an apology for the omission and heartfelt thanks for their contribution. Every volunteer who worked with a child, every Board member who gave of their time, every employee who contributed to YES should be proud.

As is indicated in Appendix D, a significant source of information that Davis used in writing this history was audio and video interviews. We would like to thank all the people who participated in the interviews. They provided a unique and personal touch to the history. Invaluable critiquing of the final version was provided by Mary Williams and Bryan Van Dorpe.

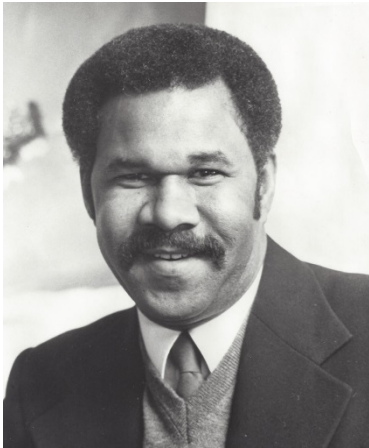
Contrary to what some may think, history is not static but is evolving and is written as time passes. We assume that this document will also grow to record YES as it evolves in the future. But that is a task for others ...

Joe Hill

# 50 YEARS OF YOUTH ENRICHMENT SERVICES

## Chapter I: Richard Williams

According to Youth Enrichment Services (YES) co-founder Mary Williams, Eric Carson circa 1970 was a “testy, tough, risk-taker.” Like so many other YES kids, Eric grew up in a Boston neighborhood with no opportunity to take a trip out of the city and learn to ski. His mother registered him for a YES trip in the hopes of keeping him out of trouble. Nearly fifty years later, Eric’s striking evolution was complete. Gone was the risk-taker Mary remembered. Instead, at YES’ fiftieth anniversary gala fundraiser she reunited with Eric, who is now a renowned orthopedic surgeon from the University of Virginia Health System. Mary’s shock and delight at Eric’s transformation was punctuated by his auction paddle, which shot up in a bid in support of the organization which helped make him into the man he is today.



YES founder Richard Williams would have beamed with pride at Eric’s growth since cultivating talent in kids like Eric was precisely Richard’s passion. At a young age Richard himself benefited from youth mentorship programs. He was born in 1939 in New York during a deeply unequal era, but he seized every one of the few opportunities available to him. He joined an African-American ski club and grew close to a mentor at the Harlem Boys’ Club. These relationships would prove critical as he encountered obstacles to his education.

He was pushed out of his school at a young age owing to the administrators’ belief that he could not learn due to his dyslexia, a common learning disability with no connection to natural intelligence. Rather than listen to his doubters, he obtained an education through his Boys’ Club mentor and independent study at local museums. Richard used his education to create greater justice and equality for his community. He lived along the demarcation line between segregated racial neighborhoods and began working to promote understanding and equality.

Richard had every reason at this time to abandon his mission due to the racism and inequality he experienced daily. From 1959 to 1965, he was a member of the Congress of Racial Equality, or CORE. He frequently traveled south for CORE to register minority voters, which often placed him in areas deeply hostile to African-Americans. His car broke down at one point in

a rural region of South Carolina. For a young, African-American civil rights activist, this was a terrifying prospect. Richard was approached by a nearby farmer, who offered to fix his car. However, the local demanded Richard work on his farm for five days as a form of payment. This exchange was eerily reminiscent of forced servitude, a similarity Richard surely recognized. Over the next several years, racial tensions further inflamed around Richard, but his commitment to positivity and equality endured.

After a brief foray with the Manhattan Christian Reform Mission, Richard moved to Boston in 1967 to lead the special projects division at the city's Youth Activities Commission. The YAC had a simple but critical goal: to keep Boston youth off of the streets in the midst of racial turmoil due to forced busing in the city. Racial tumult in Boston involved violent demonstrations, like the 1967 welfare protest. Mothers on welfare staged a sit-in to protest indignities they suffered on the part of the city. Conflicting reports surround the cause of the protest's violent turn, but soon city officials and police beat the predominantly black, female protesters. Unrest then spilled over to Blue Hill Avenue, a neighborhood of Roxbury. Over the next several days, looting, brick-throwing, arson and full-on rioting consumed the neighborhood. Although mostly buried in Boston history, the Blue Hills riots of 1967 marked a high-point of racial conflict in the city and foreshadowed the more persistent struggle over busing a few short years later.

Richard started work at the YAC in the 1960s, just before busing protests consumed Boston. For an entire generation of Boston youth, busing was their unfortunate introduction to the worlds of politics and race relations. Busing was government-mandated racial integration of Boston area schools, which suffered from chronic inequality. Per-pupil spending in white schools in the 1950s was \$340 compared to \$240 in black schools. Some Boston School Committee members blamed minority students' poor performance in schools on inferior intellect, similar to the thinking which led to a young Richard's exit from his Harlem school.

Victims of segregated schools soon found relief in the courts through the federal decision in *Morgan v Hennigan* in 1974. Although systemic inequality in Boston schools was clear-cut to the federal judge in this case, the actual integration of schools was a deeply complex process. For instance, it was clear that this "social experiment" of bussing was primarily pitting poor whites against poor blacks while uprooting their traditional neighborhood institutions. Many of the wealthier white regions remained insulated from mandatory busing. Forced integration also led to violence, which prompted a police takeover of the security of integrated schools. Battle lines were

soon drawn along racial, economic, social, and political lines in a conflict which raged well into the 1980s. In essence, Boston became a warzone as poor families with limited choices squabbled over schools and faced down centuries-long prejudices, leaving the city's youth in the crossfire.

The 60's were surely a difficult time with "white flight" in full force. People were fleeing from what they did not know, from uncertainty in their lives. Homes were sold for a few thousand dollars if they could get that ... if not they were abandoned. Looking forward into the 1970's, there was still no relief. A perfect storm would hit the country with a recession, high unemployment and inflation between 6% and 10%. These all weighed on the spirit of Boston.

Richard was well-prepared for this challenge. A seasoned activist who grew up in a neighborhood rife with racial tension and financially challenged, he knew both how to relate to individuals from different backgrounds and endear himself to those in positions of power. These skills would prove invaluable to the uneasy early years of YES.

## **Chapter II: YES with Richard**

When interviewing new volunteers and employees, Richard hurled questions like "how do you deal with your own racism?" Once these volunteers survived their introductory battle with Richard, he tasked them with toilet cleaning to remind them that no job and no person was beneath them. Richard had little patience for the volunteer with the loudest opinions or the one with four degrees on his resume. Richard would say he did not care how much you know, but how much you care, according to Mary. YES would not have survived without Richard's relentless commitment to the YES mission. Nonprofits, no matter how well-intentioned, are destined to see their funds dry up and their volunteers flee without a pragmatic, tough leader. There were many opportunities for such a fate to befall YES during its early years.



From 1968 to 1971, YES operated as part of the Youth Activities Commission (YAC), an entirely city-funded organization. Richard ran the special projects division of the YAC. Using his skills as a former jazz club owner, Richard devised diverse events like billiards tournaments and fashion shows for girls. Pool halls had become problem areas in the city, so Richard resolved to use YAC workers to intervene in these halls. His pool

tournament quickly turned into a massive success. According to Mary, who joined Richard in 1970, he drew on his contacts at the federal level, many of whom he met on civil rights campaigns, and the municipal level, like former Congressman Barney Frank, who worked for the city at that



time. He used these relationships to expand the tournament into a national competition in cities like New York, Detroit, and Miami. The fashion shows evolved as well. Not only did Richard procure 100 scholarships from local finishing schools, he secured corporate donations from clothing

companies such as Filene's, Lord & Taylor's, and the Ski Market. Richard was scarcely thirty years old at this time, but summoned the confidence and poise to negotiate with major corporate players and government officials.

Once city funding dried up, Richard had to leave the YAC office at 73 Hemenway Street and was told that all of the skis, boots and equipment would remain. Richard clearly saw an unserved need in Boston. To be sure, there were many charitable organizations in Boston at that time but none showed a youth that there was a pathway to another life the way that Richard could. In addition to caring for its own youth, YES would eventually service these groups (Boys and Girls Club, many church organizations, YMCA and YWCA, Rindge Tech just to mention a few). But for now, Richard and Mary had an eager group of Boston youth but no staff, donors or volunteers. They would work out their new address of 34 Fressenden St., Mattapan until they could establish their first permanent residence at 180 Massachusetts Ave in Boston. Richard and Mary now looked to hire their first full-time employee, Peter Haffenreffer.

Peter had a difficult task to manage when he joined YES. He recognized that YES's stakeholders would be supportive of youth diverse in both ethnicity and economic status. In terms of equipment, Peter remembers abundant support from ski organizations and equipment retailers. Mary notes that in the 1970's, skiing was an almost entirely white, upper-class activity due simply



to the cost of skiing. Once the ski mountains and retailers realized the YES mission of bringing skiers with no normal access to mountains, many supported YES whole heartedly. Peter says that at that time, there was not much competition for lift tickets and equipment, in part because YES simply used what



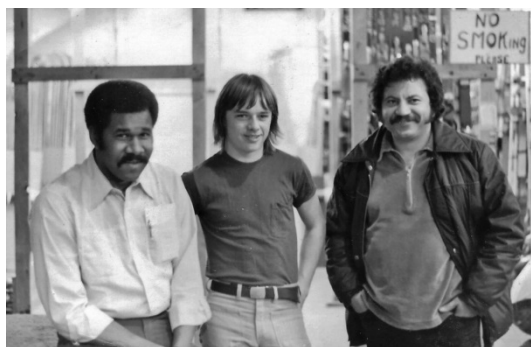
other skiers did not need. Peter also states that the YES leadership deliberately staffed their board with ski lift owners and suppliers to ensure continued access to skiing resources.

This work allowed YES to bring thousands of youth to ski within months of starting the program, according to a 1971 article in the magazine *Skiing Scene*. Richard's pursuit of donors was more aggressive than the process of securing supplies. Eric Carson says Richard used a direct, assertive approach when handling corporations and potential donors. He would not meekly request their assistance, but demand resources for YES kids. This well of confidence likely originated from his success negotiating with Boston elite a few short years earlier. Similarly, YES alumnus Jay McCloy says that when Richard attended ski shows, his energy and drive emerged in force. The YES booth would hum with raffles, giveaways and contests. But these goodwill and community-driven activities were not enough for Richard to financially and programmatically support YES. He



wanted a ski lodge in the Berkshires that would serve as a summer camp. He asked the Massachusetts Division of Forests and Parks to donate Swann Lodge to YES in 1975. This expanded summer activities such as canoeing and hiking.

Richard's entrepreneurial spirit was only one side of his success as a YES leader. He devoted labor hours and fundraising to support for YES kids outside of ski trips because for many of these kids, Richard was a father-figure. One example was Jay McCloy, who grew up in an East Boston project. He had never skied before YES, but it was soon realized he had serious talent. Jay won a local competition of ski instructors at 17 and was invited to the national competition, but he could not afford the plane ticket. Richard then came up with a raffle to pay for Jay's lift ticket, using the extra money to purchase Jay a winter coat. For Jay, the opportunity to pursue his ski talent led to many firsts: his first trip on an airplane, his first scholarship to go to race camp and his first winter coat. These trips also introduced Jay to people who would help inspire him to his later career in



engineering, like an MIT contact who brought Jay to their campus lab. Richard's mission was to get kids out of the city, according to Mary.

But many YES kids needed more basic support from Richard, such as a parent would provide in the form of emotional stability, consistent care and adequate clothing. John Hoffman says Richard knew many of the YES kids had no money and came from broken homes. He would therefore provide kids with hats, gloves, coats and for some, jobs. John worked in a YES ski shop and like Jay, received his first winter coat from YES. The role of father-figure that Richard embraced to so many YES kids grew increasingly important during challenging economic, social, and political times in Boston.

YES drew on a committed corps of volunteers, many of whom battled city tensions on the front lines. Constantine Leotsakos, like many YES volunteers, began his journey with YES as a participant. YES took Constantine on his first ski trip in 1979 when he was thirteen. Constantine graduated from a junior instructor to a volunteer instructor by the 1990s. During his tenure at YES, he noticed an important common theme: YES trips attracted kids from all different backgrounds, but skiing was the equalizer. YES trips gave youth the opportunity to interact with other youth with whom they would never regularly talk in a new environment that challenges youth to take safe risks and try new endeavors.

In October of 1989, the social and racial unrest in Boston hit a new low with the murder of a pregnant white woman by her husband. When he claimed a black man did it (and later falsely identified him), it grabbed the attention of not just Boston and its mayor, but the entire nation. The episode collapsed 73 days later with the husband's suicide and an admission of guilt by his brother, a co-conspirator. This case shocked an already tense city and added to the legacy of suspicion between the city's black and white communities. So for Constantine, a white man, walking into the predominantly black Bromley-Heath housing development at the height of the murder investigation, the tension was nearly paralyzing. But Constantine poked through the tension by asking the simple question, "Who wants to go skiing?" The contrast between a suspicious, edgy city and a bright, isolated mountain must have seemed incredibly vivid to YES kids. John Hoffman says that for a youth to leave the projects at five in the morning and find him/herself on a mountain five hours later, there was simply nothing better.

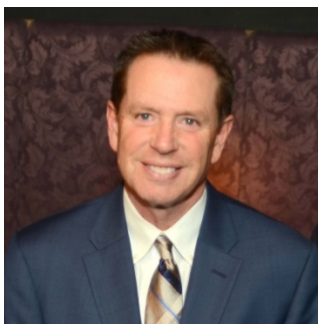
### **Chapter III: YES after Richard**

For thirty-four years, Richard brought tens of thousands of city kids to the outdoors-skiing, camping, biking and canoeing. Richard was firmly at the top of the YES pyramid, and his relationships, attitude and leadership guided the group for decades. Mary, Peter and others were crucial to the operation of YES, and when they lost Richard in 2002, it was up to them to keep YES from drowning without its leader. In the immediate aftermath of Richard's death, the situation appeared quite grim. Mary remembers that YES did not have enough money to last very long and she herself was drawing unemployment benefits to stay afloat.



Mary then found herself meeting with a representative from the Boston Foundation and the Yawkey Foundation, who invited her to apply for a \$10,000 emergency grant and a \$75,000 capacity building grant. Mary brought in a handful of YES kids to meet with the Yawkey Foundation president. He approved the grant, telling Mary that when he walked into the YES building, he could feel immediately that this organization was making a difference. After this timely grant, Mary began to slowly grow the YES staff. She then refinanced the mortgage at the YES headquarters.

At so many pivotal moments in YES history, there emerged a figure who deeply believed in the YES mission just as Richard and Mary did. Bernie Weichsel facilitated donations from the ski industry to YES from 1972 to the present; John Macomber provided YES with plans and construction for their new building in 1985 at 412 Mass Ave.; a generous benefactor loaned YES a ski lodge at Killington in 1998 and the Yawkey Foundation president helped Mary essentially restart the group by 2003.



Since 2003, YES has significantly changed its service model by focusing on increasing the quality of the experience for fewer children rather than serving as many youth as possible. Executive Director Bryan Van Dorpe joined YES in 2008 and immediately recognized YES was prepared to expand beyond the original goal of getting youth out of the city and onto mountains. Bryan says that the mountain had now become

the means to an end. YES uses the challenge of climbing a mountain and crossing a finish line as a means to help youth develop leadership skills, get into college and expand community involvement. To provide youth with this ambitious and diverse service model, every facet of YES had to adapt.

The YES fundraising strategy, volunteer corps, program portfolio and staff profile have all adapted over the past ten years. No longer does YES rely primarily on fundraising from local foundations. Support from these foundations became increasingly sporadic, so YES has developed a fundraising strategy focused on individual donors and events. These individuals are deeply committed to the YES mission and sometimes double as volunteers at YES. Just this past April, YES held its eighth annual Black Diamond Gala. The event raised \$600,000 for YES, and 350 people attended, including local celebrities, Olympic athletes and YES alumni. This strategy has helped YES establish a lasting donor network, which is supported by a development team. Volunteers at YES have proven critical to the mission of cultivating leadership skills in youth.



YES volunteers now provide such services as mentoring, coaching, job-shadowing and developing interview and college preparation skills. YES has seen its volunteers provide not just their time, but sometimes even internship opportunities at their businesses. YES has also recruited volunteers at local colleges, which add to the motivated and talented pool of volunteers.

The center of YES's evolved service model is an enriched youth experience. Instead of focusing on raw numbers of youth, many of whom would experience just a single YES trip, Bryan states that goal of providing youth with a pathway of success through teaching and modeling experiences, confidence, and leadership is an impactful strategy that enriches youth with lifelong values and memories, a true reflection of the emphasis of a youth development model. According to Peter Haffenreffer, the number of program days, which describes one day of activities for one youth, has increased to roughly 10,000 per year, while the number of total youth has decreased as a direct result of the repeat experiences. The most notable addition to YES programming in pursuit of an intensified service model is the YES Academy.

The YES Academy features three key programs: the Leadership Corps, Career Exploration, and the College Preparation Program along with gender-specific programming and the Richard

Williams Memorial Scholarship. These programs service youth age twelve and older. A rigorous application process includes an income based sliding fee scale that ensures YES reaches families with low and moderate incomes who would not otherwise have access to the opportunities YES provides. YES hired a community outreach coordinator to recruit youth from the neighborhoods of



Dorchester, Roxbury and Mattapan. Over the next five years, YES's Strategic Plan states the goal of heightening its impact with each individual youth, increasing diversity at all levels (governance, staff, and programming) building capacity, and reaching more youth more effectively.

Richard's tragic death left a yawning void in the YES leadership and prompted frightening uncertainty on the part of remaining YES staffers. Mary and her team could have justifiably declared 'mission accomplished' for bringing tens of thousands of youth out of the city and spreading kindness, understanding and respect in Boston for over thirty years. Instead, Mary reactivated YES, working feverishly to secure funding and resources just as Richard had done at the very beginning. Mary provided YES with sufficient security after Richard's death to not only continue services, but expand services to new heights.

#### **Chapter IV: Beyond the Founder and the Rise of the Board**

Richard was the prime mover at YES. He was the visionary, the fundraiser, the driver who brought YES to its place of recognition and accomplishment. It was his charisma, personality and passion that raised YES above other good causes in Boston to inspire both donors and volunteers. Richard did what he was born to do, and he did it admirably. However, when Richard passed away in 2002, YES faced a leadership transition challenge familiar to the nonprofit industry. These were dangerous waters that not all organizations navigate effectively.

Richard's absence in YES's leadership created not only operational difficulty, but structural uncertainty. Richard's hands-on approach at YES was highly effective, but contributed to founder's syndrome at YES, a common phenomenon in which organizations rely disproportionately on their founders for influence and guidance. In the absence of Richard, the



structure of YES realigned to a more consensus-driven approach through the development of a strong board of directors.

In the early years at YES, Richard was the Executive Director and the President of the board of directors. As is noted in Appendix B, YES had a Board of Directors and Trustees that showed a strong connection to the industry from the beginning. Mary notes that Richard was accountable and transparent to the board, but members of the board did not micromanage YES and allowed Richard to drive the mission. Richard viewed the board as members of his core team and deputized members for certain tasks based on their skill sets and connections. During the mid-1980s, YES faced a crisis as the Christian Science Church, the owner of the YES headquarters building, began requesting rent at 180 Mass. Ave.

According to Mary, Richard found an available property through a connection at the Boston Redevelopment Authority. Mary along with Larry Bragg and Board members worked to develop legal documents to purchase the South End property at 421 Mass. Ave. John Macomber headed the Construction Committee, completed architectural plans free of charge and supervised contractors to complete the construction. Board member Betty Woody helped procure a government grant for the project, while another board member helped YES obtain a bank loan to finance the project.



Although Richard was firmly in charge, YES board members in the early stages remained effective and cohesive. Mary says that by 2005, after Richard's passing, the board had expanded its responsibilities and involvement. The board developed a new strategic plan and ensured board committees continually referred back to this plan. The board became more deliberate in bringing on members with relevant skills and networks. Members then signed an agreement related to term limits, fundraising responsibilities and committee assignments. By 2007, the board was well-prepared for a leadership transition at the top.

When Mary retired, the board hired transition consultants and developed strategic plans, eventually forming an Executive Transition committee. Bryan Van Dorpe was hired as the executive director in the fall of 2008. The stable transition of leadership at YES was so successful that the Yawkey Foundation profiled YES in its 2010 grants report. The report stated that the

foundation was “honored to continue its support of YES,” which included \$600,000 in financial support from 2002 to 2010.

The board began to take its modern shape around 2007, according to Bryan. He joined YES as executive director one year later, and helped launch a total redesign of the trustee and board structure, expanding on the reforms initiated a few years earlier. The board and YES’s trustee network expanded to reflect the diversity of the city of Boston, while the roles and duties of these leaders were formally defined. One such duty was fundraising. YES required deep fundraising roots independent of the executive director and founder. By expanding fundraising responsibilities among a wider leadership circle, YES both minimized risk and increased its network. These board fundraisers were highly motivated in part owing to the fact that all were volunteers.

In order to secure long-term commitments from new trustees and board members, YES created an Advisory Council, according to Bryan. This council was meant to orient and involve new YES leaders so they could quickly be effective as they moved to the position of trustee or director. With the inauguration of a new YES model to increase the quality of youth experience, fluency and consensus in YES’ mission was critical. In order to support this shift to a quality experience model, Bryan notes that the board and trustees designed an outcome reporting process to track youth development across YES programming. At present, the YES board and staff are driven by the organization’s Strategic Plan for 2016-2020. Board members and trustees not only set policy, but secure resources for capacity building and programming.

Thomas A. McLaughlin and Addie Nelson Backlund profiled founder’s syndrome in their report “Moving Beyond Founder’s Syndrome to Nonprofit Success.” In this study, McLaughlin and Backlund argue that board members have several key responsibilities during transitions after the founder. First, the board must be independent in its operations and nominating process. The board must look outside the organization to build a network of donors and community leaders. Most importantly, the board must insist on a set of policies and procedures. The YES board has deliberately shifted towards greater independence and fundraising. The board has developed a set of policies and procedures, but these policies run parallel with the YES mission of improving the quality of life for under-resourced youth.

Although Mary and YES staffers saved YES from operational collapse after Richard’s death, the group still needed a more effective structure. By 2007, YES began to build an independent, resourceful, committed board of volunteers. Their commitment to the YES mission

ended any structural uncertainty resulting from Richard's death by establishing an enduring organizational structure. YES did not just survive the passing of Richard, it flourished.

## **Chapter V: Evolution of YES**

Youth Enrichment Services has touched tens of thousands of lives over the past five decades. Any local pundit or talking head will explain at length how the city of Boston has changed to a form nearly unrecognizable from that of 1968 Boston. In the decades that followed and through the 1980's, 1990's, and 2000's, Boston experienced other social and economic changes: the integration of public housing, growth and expanded role of colleges and other post-secondary schools, gentrification, etc. These changes, particularly the gentrification of many of Boston's working-class neighborhoods, brought new challenges to Boston's moderate and low income families with many not able to take advantage of this economic prosperity and were forced to relocate to subsidized housing or outside of the city. The importance of a longstanding, citywide organization like YES that is highly respected throughout New England and has survived much of the City's social change, is and has been critical to the families of YES's communities. To have a stable and positive organization that reflects a strong and successful youth development model and is an icon in the community fully illustrates YES's value to Boston's families.

Through political turmoil, financial stress, gentrification, and urban upheaval and renewal, YES has provided a service to Boston youth with a remarkably consistent theme: give youth opportunities that they normally would never have. This goal has expanded to new services, such as college preparation and summer activities, but the central mission remains. The powerful and simple goal of new and challenging experiences for youth is tremendously effective. Once a youth is provided with a positive experience, a role model and a challenging new environment, they will develop confidence and be motivated to accomplish goals. YES not only helps youth overcome challenges in their lives, but they build self-esteem, pride and a sense of accomplishment. Therefore, it should be no surprise that a random sampling of YES alumni and supporters provided quite similar comments on how YES's primary mission has positively impacted their lives.

Brian O'Reilly was involved with YES in the 1970's, when YES was just beginning to secure its foundation.

*“I have so many warm memories with wonderful people going to fun places. But the trip that stands out the most is the first ever camping trip along the Saco River in Maine with my Dorchester neighborhood friends... We were just poor city kids. We were so happy to get out back then.”*

Jay McCloy was also a part of YES during the early years and, through YES, found relief from the often difficult realities of the East Boston project where he grew up.

*“It shaped me better knowing that I could get out of the city and do things other than thinking there were no opportunities. It kept me on a straight and narrow path. I went to college - I’m the last of nine kids in my family and I was the only one to graduate high school and then I went on to graduate college and became a software engineer... Kids that I grew up with stayed in the projects.”*

United States Ski and Snowboard Hall of Fame inductee Bernie Weichsel has supported YES for decades through his connections to various ski mountains.

*“During the first Martin Luther King Jr. trip to Pats Peak it was great to see a mixture of kids in bringing city kids to the countryside and watching their enthusiasm for skiing and the outdoors. It showed that it was all worthwhile. And meeting over the years some of the graduates, who are now career people- doctors, other professionals. Kids who were put on the right path due to YES’ involvement.”*

Richard’s son, Mark Williams, grew up with YES and has served on the board of trustees and as chair of the YES alumni circle for several years.

*“YES has given me the ability to explore and be adaptable to different environments, different people, different cultures... To take people out of their immediate environment and explore something different is gravitating. If YES continues to do that, it will carry on its mission.”*

If one were to survey every YES participant, donor and employee of the past fifty years, their comments would likely strike a similar note. YES could not cure the city of its plentiful problems or rescue every youth from broken homes; the stories of inner city struggles of cities like Boston persist despite the efforts of organizations like YES that have survived and thrived as homes for youth. YES leaders were always realistic about what they could accomplish. YES forged a path to a mountain sanctuary with their peers where positive experiences provided lifelong learning and a pathway to success. Adult role models reflected positive attributes and

caring attitudes. On the slopes in New Hampshire, on the track in Boston, or in a kayak on the Charles River, most mistakes resulted in a bruised knee or an embarrassing face plant, and second chances were abundant. Peers were working together to overcome their challenges and very eager to learn a new skill and accomplish a new goal. Richard's YES was for an alternate reality, but it was just as real as the one Boston youth lived every day. Fifty years later, this reality continues to grow with impressive and lifelong outcomes.

As Mary reflected on Richard's life and how Youth Enrichment Services came to be, she shared these observations with us.

*I used to wonder what motivated Richard to start YES. He was inspired by Dr. King to dream and take on challenges. Richard would have been 80 years old next March. He met and listened to Martin Luther King Jr., John Lewis, and Malcolm X when he was in his 20's. He told me about some of those experiences, but not all. It*



*has been an eye opener living in the South these last 10 years. Tyler Perry's reflections on Dr. King in this article<sup>1</sup> summed it up for me when I read it this morning:*

*When somebody has walked this earth, and years and years after that person's death you're still impacted by their words and deeds, you get a sense that their positive influence will continue for generations to come. Many of the principles Dr. King employed to lead, guide and inspire others are ones I try to practice in so many aspects of my life, including my work. One quote that holds particular meaning for me is, "Life's most persistent and urgent question is, 'What are you doing for others?' "*

This was Richard.

1: (<https://www.aarp.org/politics-society/history/info-2018/tyler-perry-reflections-mlk.html>)



## APPENDIX A: YES TIMELINE

- 1968 Richard Williams, Special Projects Director of Boston's Youth Activities Commission (YAC) starts Operation Ski Lift with a simple premise: Give Youth a Chance.
- 1969 Inspired by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and his call to dream of possibilities, Richard expands the ski program and starts a summer job training program. The Vice President's Council on Youth Opportunities provides federal grant funding.
- 1970 Over 1000 youth ages 8-18 from under-resourced neighborhoods of Boston and Cambridge participate each year. They are recruited by the new street-workers at YAC and other chaperones from local churches and schools.
- 1971 In her senior year at nearby Northeastern University, Mary volunteers to be a ski instructor and volunteer recruiter. Hundreds of caring people teach skiing and job training skills. Sugarloaf ME, Pico VT, and Butternut MA give professional training to YES volunteers.
- 1972 On November 13, 1972 YES is incorporated in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts as a 501(c)3 non-profit, sustaining the programs after federal funds were cut at YAC.
- 1973 The Board of YES, which includes Richard and Mary, hires Peter Haffenreffer to lead the YES Ski Club and do fundraising.
- 1974 YES moves to a new headquarters at 180 Massachusetts Avenue and ends the YAC partnership. YES pays low rent to the Christian Science Church for the next 10 years.
- 1975 YES becomes curator of Swann Lodge in Monterey, MA and opens its outdoor classroom for schools and a residential summer camp. A free 25-year lease with the Dept. of Environmental Management, State of Massachusetts, makes this possible.
- 1981 YES goes digital with its first computer donated by Digital Equipment Corporation.
- 1982 Major research pinpoints the benefits of the YES experience. Alumni say they gain a wider sense of the world and their potential in it. They believe they can hold a

professional job, are more confident, and can grow beyond their own neighborhoods.

- 1984 A half million dollars from alumni and friends is raised for a new headquarters. Board member, John Macomber of Macomber Construction Company, provides architects and project managers to start the rehab of in the South End. The Boston Redevelopment Authority sells the building to YES for \$12,700. One year later, YES opens new offices, classrooms, and a ski and bike shop at 412 Massachusetts Avenue in Boston.
- 1988 The New England Ski Area Association and the Snowsports Industries of America respond to the rapid growth of YES. Over 3,500 lift tickets and \$95,000 in ski and camping equipment are donated annually.
- 1993 YES celebrates its 25th Anniversary in March hosted by Waterville Valley, NH
- 1997 Harvard Business School finds “YES has created a highly cost effective program which has significant measurable positive impact on the lives of urban youth”. Five years later, YES reaches the goal of 100,000 youth served.
- 2002 Death of founder Richard Williams. Mary Williams becomes Executive Director.
- 2004 The Richard Williams Memorial Scholarship Fund begins. Awards are made annually to YES teens who demonstrated leadership skills, academic promise and financial need.
- 2007 YES Academy is established. Boston middle school and high school students enroll in after school courses in leadership, career exploration, college prep and job training.
- 2008 Mary Williams retires after 37 years with YES. Bryan Van Dorpe, becomes the third Executive Director of YES with many years of experience in youth development.
- 2010 Yawkey Foundation’s Annual Report profiles YES as a positive example of founder-transition and that the organization processed the change successfully.
- 2013 YES pilots the Youth Excel Through Tailored Instruction (YETTI) program. In YETTI, youth gain deeper experiences by participating in multiple days on the

slopes with the same instructors and the same group of peers during the winter season.

- 2013 The YES career exploration course partners with the Jeremiah Burke High School.
- 2014 The National Winter Sports Foundation and the Weston Ski Track provides support to YES to expand its cross-country ski trips locally.
- 2015 YES Academy pilots a cohort program to 9<sup>th</sup> grade students, which offers students tailored guidance with the college admission process during their high school years.
- 2015 YES receives a multi-year grant from The Cummings Foundation \$100k for 100 Givers.
- 2016 A five-year Strategic Plan 2016-2020 is developed by YES stakeholders with a focus on diversity and equity, enriching programs, and increasing impact on young people.
- 2016 The Clay Soper Memorial Foundation partners with YES to pilot the Clay Connections program which teaches children to embrace acceptance, kindness and understanding of differences. This program is in memory of Clay Soper, a young adult volunteer with YES.
- 2017 YES starts a healthy eating initiative for 400 youth to have access to nutritious snacks and a healthy eating curriculum. Funding provided by a grant from Target.
- 2017 YES expands its Track and Field program to include a winter indoor Track and Field season in partnership with the Blackstone Community Center in the South End.
- 2018 YES celebrates its 50th Anniversary Gala in April, raising over \$600,000.

## **APPENDIX B: 1974 BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND TRUSTEES**

### **BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

Richard Williams  
President

Bertha Ellsmore  
Vice President

Mary Crowther  
Secretary-Treasurer

Peter Chvany  
Producer and Director  
Relations Communications Associates

Paul Cohen  
Manager  
Killington Ski Shop

Charles Coleman  
Owner and Manager  
Wilderness House

### **BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

John Henry Auran  
Senior Editor  
Skiing Magazine

Larry Cohen  
Owner and Manager  
Edelweiss Ski Shop

Carl Dearmin  
President  
Hanover Glove Company

Brian Fairbank  
Manager  
Jiminy Peak Ski Area

Al Lamson  
Vice President  
Garcia Ski and Tennis Company

Lew Levi  
Marketing Manager  
American Ski Company

Richard May  
Public Relations Manager  
Wildcat Ski Area

Dick Miller  
Boot & Binding Production Manager  
AMF Head Ski Company

Dan O'Connell  
Acting Director  
Director of Curriculum Development  
School Committee, City of Boston

Jane Pitman  
Director  
Jane Pitman & Company, Inc.

Louis Ranelli  
Owner and Manager  
Dale Academy

Gary Robinson  
Assistant Secretary for Human Services  
State of Massachusetts

### **LEGAL CONSULTANTS**

McCullough, Stievater and Polvere

## APPENDIX C: OVERVIEW OF YES PROGRAMS 2018-2019



# Youth Enrichment Services (YES) Program Overview 2018 - 2019

Youth Enrichment Services (YES) achieves its mission to "inspire and challenge youth with physical and mental activities that foster life-long respect for self, others, and the environment" by giving Boston youth ages 7 - 18 access to year-round outdoor and enrichment programming. Through YES, young people gain new outdoor experiences which help them to build confidence and gain leadership skills. YES programs help cultivate leaders and learners with the skills to succeed in school, work, and life.

For more information on the programs below, please visit [www.yeskids.org](http://www.yeskids.org).

### Operation SnowSports

PROGRAM	AGES	DATES	DESCRIPTION	CONTACT
Youth Excel Through Tailored Instruction (YETTI)	Ages 7 - 12*	January - March	YETTI offers youth the opportunity to ski or snowboard with the same group of peers and instructors for four pre-determined days.	<a href="mailto:programs@yeskids.org">programs@yeskids.org</a> Applications open on October 1.
YES Kid Ski or Snowboard Day	Ages 7 - 12*	January - February	The YES Kid Ski or Snowboard Day offers youth an introduction to skiing or snowboarding through one or two days on the slopes.	<a href="mailto:programs@yeskids.org">programs@yeskids.org</a> Applications open on October 1.
Cross-Country Ski	Ages 9 - 12*	January - March	The Cross-Country Ski program offers youth an introduction to the basics of cross-country skiing while building their strength and stamina. No prior skiing experience required.	<a href="mailto:programs@yeskids.org">programs@yeskids.org</a> Applications open on October 1.

\*Youth who are turning 13 after October 15th may participate in Operation SnowSports programs





## Outdoor Adventure

PROGRAM	AGES	DATES	DESCRIPTION	CONTACT
Outdoor Adventure Week-long Sessions	Ages 9 - 12	Summer	Outdoor Adventure week-long sessions introduce youth to different recreational activities such as kayaking, rock climbing, mountain biking, and fishing. Youth learn about environmental stewardship, build confidence, and gain leadership skills.	programs@yeskids.org  Applications open in May.
Track and Field	Ages 8 - 13 (Fall, Winter, and Spring)  Ages 4 - 14 (Summer)	Year-round	The Track and Field program offers both introductory experiences and competitive training for youth. Youth try new activities and challenges while experiencing the complete realm of track and field: running, throwing, and jumping. The Fall Cross-Country team focuses on long-distance, cross-country running.	trackandfield@yeskids.org  Applications open seasonally.

## YES Academy

PROGRAM	AGES	DATES	DESCRIPTION	CONTACT
Leadership Corps	Ages 13 - 18	<b>School-year:</b> October - March  <b>Summer:</b> June - August	The Leadership Corps program offers teens the opportunity to develop their leadership potential through hands-on leadership workshops, outdoor activities, and community service.  Teens can choose between four Leadership Corps tracks depending on their interests: - Outdoor Adventure (Career Exploration Focus) - Cross-Country Ski (College Preparation Focus) - Downhill Ski and Snowboard (Leadership Focus) - Impact Internship	leadership@yeskids.org  Applications open in September for school-year and May for summer.
College Prep	Grades 9 - 11	November - April	College Prep is a four-year program which supports teens in the college preparation process through college preparatory workshops and one-on-one college coaching sessions.	collegeprep@yeskids.org  Applications open in September for school-year and May for summer.

## **APPENDIX D: SOURCE OF INFORMATION FOR YES HISTORY**

### **INTRODUCTION**

This history was generated by Davis Goode with input from and editing by Joe Hill, Mary Williams and Bryan Van Dorpe. Davis drew on recorded oral history (video or audio) that he conducted with a number of people (listed below). The associated media releases are on file. The stories and statistics of Boston that Davis used from the 1960's and 1970's are well documented in literature and online. The sampling of YES history is recorded electronically in the form of newsletters, numerous photographs and brochures. The records and the audio interviews are stored in a cloud based program Dropbox. The videos are too large for economical cloud storage so they are physically stored at two locations, Rewatchable, Inc. (<https://www.rewatchable.com/>) and the YES offices.

### **INTERVIEWS**

#### **VIDEO**

Mary Williams  
Mark Williams  
Bryan Van Dorpe

#### **AUDIO**

Peter Haffenreffer  
Bernie Weischel  
Eric W Carson  
Brian O'Reilly  
John Hoffman  
Jay McCloy  
Constantine Leotsakos  
Jeremy Walsh

### **STORED HISTORICAL RECORDS**

#### **ORGANIZATIONAL DOCUMENTS**

YES Board Member Manual 1997  
Board Strategic Plan 2007-2010  
Board YES Leadership Transitions Contract, Suzanne Maas April 7, 2008  
Board YES Workplan 2007-2010  
YES 1972 Form 1023 for YES 501(c) 3 exemption from Federal Taxes  
YES 1973 Public Charities Financial report to the State of Massachusetts  
YES 1974 Letterhead with board listing and Mattapan address  
YES 1990 Certificate from Sec. of State of Massachusetts  
YES Articles of Organization 1972  
YES Bylaws 1972  
YES updates to Bylaws 1990 & 1997

#### PROGRAM DOCUMENTS

Miscellaneous newsletters and brochures from the 1970 to 2010

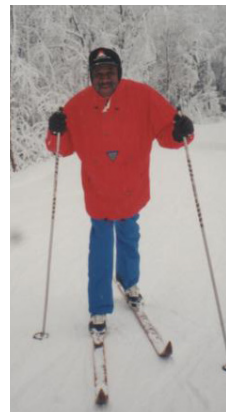
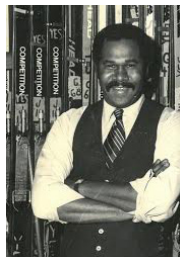
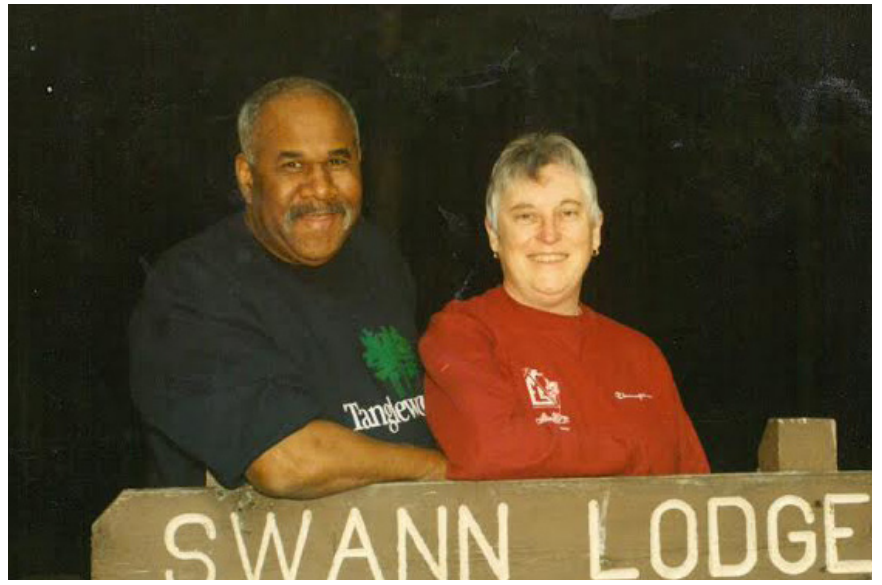
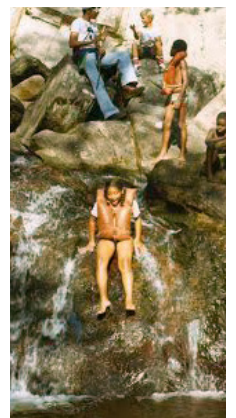
YAC 1970 Certificate of Appreciation to Richard

Suffolk Journal December 4, 1980

Yawkey Annual Report FY 2010, spotlighting YES

#### NUMEROUS PHOTOGRAPHS





**Youth Enrichment Services (YES)**  
412 Massachusetts Ave. Boston, MA 02118

[yeskids.org](http://yeskids.org) | [facebook.com/yeskidsboston](https://facebook.com/yeskidsboston) | [@YESKidsBoston](https://twitter.com/YESKidsBoston)