



Youth Enrichment Services (YES) Racial Equity Plan

***“Change does not roll in on the wheel of inevitability but comes through continuous struggle.”
– Martin Luther King, Jr.***

Dear YES Board of Directors, Trustees, Supporters, Volunteers, Community Members, and Staff:

The above quote from MLK, Jr. accurately depicts the constant struggle of those in our society who continue to be marginalized through systematic racism, exemplified today by the disproportionate health and unemployment effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as the unrelenting prejudice, discrimination, and microaggressions against the BIPOC community.

Youth Enrichment Services (YES) was born over 50 years ago and grounded in the values of racial, social, and economic justice. Skiing/snowboarding has been YES’s most identifiable trademark since its inception in 1968 and is primarily identified as a white and elite sport. As role models for our youth, YES takes its position seriously in helping to create a more equitable and healthy community. Nothing short of a unified approach by all can move us forward. We need to facilitate the conversations and action steps about eradicating racism and ensuring our youth grow up in a society where they are valued, not by their race, gender, or ethnicity, but instead through their ability to live with dignity, freedom, and respect of others. It’s not too late for us to make this happen!

YES’s Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion strategy will undoubtedly evolve, as we plan for the future. We the Staff, Board, Volunteers, and Community Members, will continue to modify and adapt the strategies below to ensure that the organization continues to make a difference in the lives of those most marginalized in our community.

YES’s most recent Strategic Plan (2021-2023) identified Equity as a core value and reiterated the organization’s commitment to recruit and retain youth, teens, and adults who reflect the diverse community that YES serves. Ultimately, we will achieve this by ensuring YES has diverse representation at all levels (Youth, Volunteers, Staff, and Board) of the organization.

The annual setting of goals will establish key priorities for the year, provide a roadmap to meeting said goals, identify areas of success, and identify areas of improvement. At the beginning of each fiscal year, the Executive Director and Leadership Staff will present YES’s Diversity Strategies and Goals for in four key areas (Youth, Volunteers, Staff, and Board) to the Board of Directors for input and approval. Board and staff will establish benchmarks for regular check-ins, measurement, and accountability. On the following pages of this report, you will find YES’s steps to achieving its diversity, equity, and inclusion goals.

Thank you for your support and holding YES accountable, as we work towards equality for all.

Sincerely,

Bryan Van Dorpe
Executive Director

DEI Strategy

YES's Definitions of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI)

Before the process of creating organizational DEI goals is initiated, the articulation and sharing of what Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion means to YES's family and culture is a necessary step.

- **Diversity** - Developing a team of stakeholders/people from differing perspectives and backgrounds to drive mission-driven programming and increase cultural awareness.
- **Equity** - Creating spaces and removing barriers so all people are treated fairly and have the same access to opportunities.
- **Inclusion** - Enabling a welcoming, respectful, and safe environment that fosters belonging for all stakeholders/people and groups.

Youth Participants

- YES's Outreach and Enrollment Coordinator, along with other direct service staff, focuses outreach and education to families, housing developments, community-based organizations, churches, and schools from the targeted neighborhoods of Dorchester, Roxbury, Mattapan, and Jamaica Plain.
- YES focuses its year round programming opportunities on cultivating strategic partner organizations who are underserved and from these targeted neighborhoods. Examples include the Mildred Hailey Housing Development, Academy Homes (Urban Edge), and the Mattapan Food & Fitness Coalition.

Recommended Next Steps

Continue to identify families and organizations in areas of most need. Provide opportunities for services in these neighborhoods utilizing local resources, in addition to traditional outdoor trip experiences.

Volunteers

- YES Staff create an Outreach Plan for Operation Snowsports, Outdoor Adventure, and the YES Academy to community organizations in targeted neighborhoods. Parent volunteer opportunities and learn-to-ski volunteer trainings are planned.
- The Volunteer Equity Committee that provides volunteers with a forum to plan outreach and inclusive events. Outreaching and recruiting at events in targeted neighborhoods include Franklin Park family events, Chez Vous skating parties, etc.
- The Alumni Relations Committee was created to strategically identify and re-engage volunteers who were involved with YES during its 53 year history and who would provide a unique historical perspective for YES's current initiatives.
- Former YES Kids and current graduates are recruited back to YES in meaningful roles as volunteers, career roles models for Leadership Corps members, and Committee members.

Recommended Next Steps

Continue strategic outreach to adults in their neighborhoods who best represent the diversity of YES's youth, while adapting volunteer roles that attract and fit the accessibility and experiences of a diverse cadre of volunteer recruits.

Staff

- For every open position, a diverse pool of candidates will be considered. Advertise in targeted neighborhoods and organizations of color.
- Job Posting is sent to the following sites to attract a diverse and qualified pool of candidates for all YES open staff positions:
 - ✓ *Association for Experiential Education*
 - ✓ *Be Visible*
 - ✓ *City Year Alumni Page*
 - ✓ *Latino Outdoors*
 - ✓ *Mass Promise Fellowship*
 - ✓ *Outdoor Afro*
 - ✓ *Posse Foundation*
- All YES staff participated in these in-service, monthly Staff Trainings that focused on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, which were created on the staff's feedback and issues confronted in the field of service.
 - ✓ 2017-2018: Introduction to Race & Equity. Focus on the difficult conversations among staff and the YES community.
 - ✓ 2018-2019: How to have these conversations and why they are critical to YES's mission and place in the community.
 - ✓ 2019-2020: Understanding and coming to grips with one's personal identify, whether is one of disenfranchised, privilege, etc. and how this relates to the youth we serve, the city we live in, etc.
 - ✓ 2020-2021: Systematic Racism and the History of Oppression – understanding its origin and how we as individuals and YES can take steps towards its elimination.
- YES Executive Director, Bryan Van Dorpe, is part of YW Boston's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Community of Practice This is an affinity group of nonprofit executive directors, leaders, and professionals who share best practices, ideas, and progress pertaining to DEI in the workplace.
- YES Executive Director, Bryan Van Dorpe is part of the Snow Equity Collective. This national group was created at the height of the pandemic as an inclusive group of youth-serving nonprofits located throughout the country who focus on youth development through outdoor activities, particularly on the snow. Other members include SOS Outreach, CHILL, Stoked Mentoring, and Winter4Kids. The first formal initiative was to plan and implement a national training for our volunteers on antiracism during the summer and fall of 2020. Currently, the Collective is looking to coordinate efforts on how our organizations can best measure and brand the sustainable impacts we have on youth.
- YES's Director of Programs and Operations, Laura Neubauer, has participated in Share Winter's year-long Winter Equity Training and Workshops.

- YES Staff Racial Equity Action Steps: Created in 2020, the YES staff review, adapt, and evaluate progress of these actions steps in attaining the organization's diversity, equity, and inclusion goals. Achievements made in FY 2021 include a Virtual and On-site Diversity Library of information regarding racism, sexism, homophobia, oppression, civil rights, and accomplishments of traditionally marginalized communities; a formal recognition of the Juneteenth holiday; reinstating the Youth Advisory Committee comprised of Leadership Corps members who address issues of diversity; and the creation of a calendar that recognizes and celebrates diverse and unrepresented groups and key anniversaries.

Recommended Next Steps

YES Staff will continue to adapt its job recruitment, DEI in-service trainings, and outside workshops/opportunities to ensure that DEI maintains a priority and driving principle, as it has since 1968.

Board Members

- Recruit targeted neighborhood leadership, alumni, and community supporters to all 3 levels (Director, Trustee, Advisory Council) of YES volunteer leadership.
- Identified skills and gaps for each level, and identified gaps, particularly around diversity.

Recommended Next Steps

- Identify and implement annual diversity training for Board with a particular emphasis on how to recruit and maintain a diverse membership.