

Summer Newsletter

ST. PAUL YOUTH SERVICES

Rewriting the Rules of Youth Engagement

Improving our community's collective ability to engage and support ALL youth.



Dr. Tracine Asberry
Executive Director

Dear Friends,

When we launched our strategic plan, [Rewriting the Rules of Youth Engagement](#), we knew we were embarking on something magical. We're truly reimagining how our community engages with and holds itself accountable for our youth.

For 45 years -- thanks to partners like you -- we've successfully disrupted the cradle-to-prison pipeline. Now we're also working with youth to dismantle it.

Our programs continue to get AMAZING results for kids. Dozens of organizations use our tools and training to become more youth-centric. And today I'm thrilled to announce our major new initiative: YouthPower.

More than ever, I THANK YOU for partnering with us on creating a community that truly wraps its arms around our youth! It will take a lot of work but there's no more important task ahead of us.

Stay Amazing!

Dr. Tracine Asberry
Executive Director

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ST. PAUL YOUTH SERVICES



Y O U T H
P O W E R

YOUTH OF COLOR ARE EXPERTS on their lives, needs, and the injustices they face, but too rarely at the table in developing strategies for racial equity.

Our YouthPower initiative is built on that premise: an organizing hub where youth of color can gather, reflect, express themselves, build skills, organize, and advocate for serious change on issues that affect their lives.

Youth participants will be compensated for their efforts and ideas. They'll also experience an affirming curriculum of Healing & Identity, Exploration & Innovation, and Policy Change.

15 BLACK BOYS AND YOUNG MEN ages 13-23 will kick off YouthPower this summer through a paid leadership institute. They'll have amazing experiences, set and achieve personal growth goals, and learn more about themselves and the world. They'll also create a blueprint for youth-led systems change including:

- a screening tool to ensure public policies have a racially equitable impact,
- a means of ensuring youth have seats at every table where policies are discussed, and
- an affirming space for youth of color of all experiences to come together to heal, grow, explore their interests, connect, and build power.

Why is this so important? Restorative practices, safe spaces, and opportunities to critically and creatively think and drive change are disproportionately withheld from youth of color, especially Black boys and young men.

In September, YouthPower's doors will open to ALL youth of color. We'll keep you posted on this exciting effort of *kids changing systems* instead of *systems changing kids*.

THANKS TO OUR YOUTHPower FUNDERS! We have many more activities planned for our youth: out-of-state travel, our Youth in Democracy Day event, and more. Let's connect to see how you or your organization can contribute!



Donate Today



BRANDON BROOKS BRINGS an amazing blend of skills, passion, experience, and the ability to engage each youth while building their collective power. He impressed our hiring committee (of adults and youth) with his smart, fair, and loving approach.

Brandon's currently earning a B.A. in African American Studies and Sociology at the University of MN Twin Cities. He most recently worked for Minnesota Education Equity Partnership's Black Male Achievement Network. [See why youth are so excited about him!](#)



YOUTHPOWER couldn't have come too soon.

Three years after [sharing with you the profound grief](#) Black youth felt in the wake of Michael Brown's murder, and less than two years after pledging [#JusticeforJamar](#), our children are again reeling from justice denied for the police shooting of a Black man. This time, Philando ("Phil") Castile was killed on video in front of his family during what was his 53rd traffic stop.

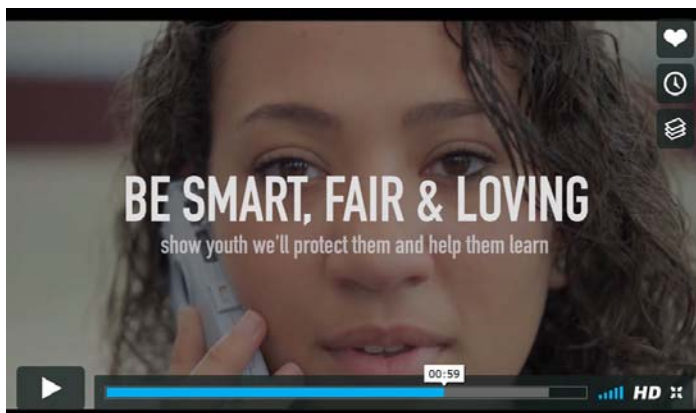
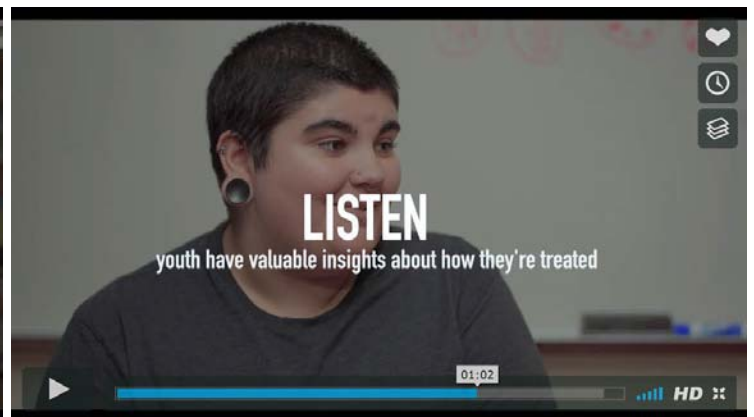
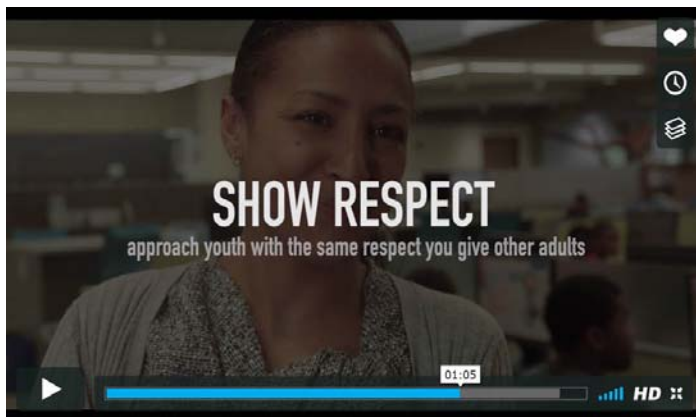
Anyone still too blinded by Minnesota Nice to believe white supremacy isn't embedded in our state's fabric is living in a fantasy. The impact? Ignoring systemic racism only allows it to grow.

We need all of our Youth Champions to actively fight racism and all other forms of discrimination. It's a public health crisis that kills, locks up, deports, orphans, diminishes, and terrifies our children and youth. Our kids need us to be adult enough to reflect on our role, change our laws and practices, and hold ourselves accountable for their safety and well-being.



St. Paul Youth Services will continue working with our youth to heal, stay hopeful, and organize. In the meantime, here are a few practices we encourage you to follow with us:

1. Always: Listen to youth. Hear them. Respect them. Protect them.
2. Act according to the belief that every young person is valuable.
3. Public policy decisions are made every day: make sure they're influenced by the people most impacted.
4. Act locally: Contact your police chief, sheriff, city councilmember, mayor, school board, park board, and other public officials to share your concerns and ask for their record on racial justice.
5. Don't accept words of condolence from public officials, foundations, and organizations without a commitment from them to act.
6. Reject the premise that "listening to one another" is a substitute for justice. It's most likely a stalling tactic from those least at risk. There are no two sides to racism.
7. Call out the many ways in which Black people themselves are held accountable for solving injustices they face. Educate yourself and others on systemic racism.
8. Recognize how proportionately large a response needs to be to achieve equity after centuries of brutality and continued oppression. Consider if your organization is truly structured to deliver one. (If not, we are available to help.)





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