



## 2023 Report

### Major Accomplishments

**Building Staff and Board Capacity:** YMWAP brought two new staff members on board in August--Lenward Gatison II and Ailson Lopes Carvalho. Lenward joined the Young Man with a Plan program staff as Assistant Director after serving the organization in a mentoring capacity for over five years. Lenward began working at YMWAP as Codman Academy's school-based mentor and remained engaged with the program and students even after leaving Codman. His previous employment includes roles as Dean of Students at Uncommon Schools and Wellness Director at Codman Academy. Lenward earned a B.A. in Psychology from UMass Boston, where he played varsity ice hockey for the Beacons. Ailson Lopes Carvahlo joins YMWAP in the role of Program Manager. A native of Dorchester, Ailson brings to Young Man with a Plan a deep dedication to serving youth. Prior to joining YMWAP, Ailson was an English/Science Instructor and College Readiness Advisor at College Bound Dorchester, as well as a youth services intern at ABCD and an Access Counselor intern at Bottom Line. He also serves as Defensive Coordinator for the Brookline H.S. Football team, where he attended high school. Ailson received his B.S. in Psychology and Criminal Justice from Bridgewater State University. The Board added Nina Ross of Rostam Capital.

**8th Grade:** Our pilot year was a resounding success. We engaged 4 schools (New Mission, Burke, Codman, BCLA/McCormack) and have 41 students on our roster with very consistent attendance. 8th graders are enthusiastic and bring high energy to the program. Extending our continuum into middle school not only meets a great middle school need but provides a pipeline for 9th grade.

**2023 Seniors:** YMWAP seniors have overcome many challenges and have made ambitious plans: all have been accepted into colleges that include Carnegie Mellon, Cornell, BU, Suffolk, UMass Boston and Lowell where they are planning to study engineering, pre-law, marine

biology, journalism, marketing, computer science, political science, game design, and accounting. We see greater knowledge of/diversity in career interests and intended majors.

**Family Engagement:** YMWAP took significant steps to build stronger bridges with our families. We incorporated more phone and text conversations both in the registration process and ongoing to support retention and to address issues that arise. We held Family Engagement Night in January with participation from parents and grandparents both in person and via Zoom. Students' family members attended April's Men of Color Career Night and a June community clean-up event.

**Near-peer Mentors:** Based on the success of our 2022 summer work site experience, the Boston PIC approached us to pilot a school-year employment program. Through this new initiative YMWAP employs 8 upperclassmen who assist with 8th and 9th grade recruiting, weekly groups, events, and tutoring. The pilot has worked well, and we will continue it in FY24.

**Men of Color Career Night:** In April 75 students and professionals from fields including law, technology, life sciences, cheffing, real estate, business, law enforcement, engineering, education, and entrepreneurship shared a meal, played cornhole and Giant Connect 4, and chatted informally. Then, in a "speed dating" process, the career professionals told small groups of students about their educational and career journeys. We were touched to see that two young men brought their fathers to speak on their careers.

**NCF Maternal Health Equity Project:** YMWAP was honored to be tapped by New Commonwealth Fund as a "trusted partner" in their Maternity Health Equity Project. Staff members Jaykyri Simpson and Ailson Lopes-Carvalho received initial training and were joined by five of our near-peer mentors to learn about the racial gap in maternal health, the history, current status, and the steps being taken to advocate for change and improve outcomes.

**YMWAP's Voice in the Community:** YMWAP staff are frequently asked to speak on the needs of Boston youth. In the past year YMWAP staff have presented at: The Possible Zone, Life Science Cares, Social Innovation Forum, Boston Beyond, The Philanthropy Connection, EdVestors, and Children's Hospital. Jaykyri serves on the EdVestors Racial Equity Task Force and is a collaborator in the NCF Maternal Health Equity Project.

YMWAP was the **one** nonprofit selected from the 60 grantees of Boston Children's Hospital Community Fund to speak on a panel at their annual May event. The topic was "Advancing Equity to Improve Youth Mental Health and Well-being." After the event, the Children's Hospital team wrote the following to Jaykyri: "I wanted to thank you again for your role in yesterday's event. We are proud of our partnership with Young Man With A Plan and so thrilled to be able to feature your incredible work. I think the excitement for your unique model was captured by Dr. Vuky's remark that we need your program everywhere in the City!"

**501C3:** We have achieved 501c3 status and will separate from our fiscal agent July 1. We are in the process of putting in place our own financial and HR systems and policies.

**Space:** We've signed a 5-year lease for an additional 3,000 square feet of space that allows us to expand holistic mentoring and a sense of belonging into two floors to include a fitness area with light workout equipment, space for yoga and meditation, a shower, kitchen, washer & dryer, study area, creative corner, and a college, career, and success planning area. Information on our growth is attached.

### **Partners**

YMWAP is a village, and we truly value our quality partnerships.

**Education:** YMWAP maintains tight partnerships with 8 Boston schools: Boston Collegiate, Boston Green Academy, Boston Community Leadership Academy, Boston Prep, Jeremiah Burke, Codman Academy, New Mission, and Tech Boston Academy. Executive Director Dr. Jaykyri Simpson leads teacher dialogues, and he coaches individual educators on effectively engaging students of color in the classroom.

**Employment and Careers:** YMWAP partners with the Boston Private Industry Council and both serves as a job site and places students in community jobs. We offer Men of Color Career Night and career exploration initiatives. Life Science Cares offers career exposure; our students had a second visit to Visterra, a life sciences company, to learn about careers in that growing sector. ALKU is offering a similar career exposure program for recruiting, sales, IT and HR careers.

**College Readiness and Access:** We engage a banking professional to teach college financial literacy and have partnerships with BFIT, Year Up, BHCC, and Bottom Line for college access and persistence.

**Safety:** YMWAP welcomes a BPD officer into weekly groups to discuss gang violence, neighborhood safety, and careers in criminal justice. Children's Hospital provides resources on mental wellness.

### **Outcomes**

In 2023 80% of students improved academics. As reported in their year-end surveys, 98% enjoy being part of the brotherhood and have learned to listen; 96% report better relationships with family, teachers, and friends; 94% are gaining a sense of purpose and are more accountable in fulfilling their commitments; 90% have progressed toward their goals. On the SAYO-Y survey from Boston Afterschool & Beyond: 96% agree that "Adults care about what I think" - "If I have a problem an adult here can help me" - "Other students listen to me here" and 94% agree that "Coming here has helped me feel good about myself" - "Coming here has helped me find out what I'm good at doing and what I'd like to do."

### **Challenges**

**Students in YMWAP continue to exhibit negative physical and mental health impacts from the Covid pandemic.** In response we have checked in more regularly with students, alums,

teachers, counselors, and families and normalized discussion of mental health, anxiety, depression, and therapy in our weekly groups. We are also building out a Wellness curriculum in 2023-24 with partners that include Children's Hospital, Menino Y, Mattapan Food and Fitness, Haley House and Mattapan Community Health Center. Curriculum will address fitness, healthy eating, stress reduction, and disease prevention. We have incorporated more games and movement in weekly groups. Cornhole is very popular!

**YMWAP students follow a recent national trend in being skeptical about the value of a college education.** We are sometimes at cross-purposes with parents who desire immediate household contribution from their sons. We have worked harder to form partnerships (Year Up, Bottom Line, community colleges, trades, scholarship opportunities) that help with post-secondary options, college costs and financing and to engage earlier and more often with parents on helping their sons achieve sustainable futures.

Worksite visit to biologics research company Visterra in Waltham , MA





ED Jaykyri Simpson with Josh Ozuna Rivera, winner of the ALKU \$30,000 Scholarship



Annual River Street Hyde Park Clean-Up



Men of Color Career Night