

ANNUAL REPORT

Year-Ending June 30, 2003

We began the new fiscal year with the implementation of the STAE @ Job Corps program in July. STAE (*Supporting Teens Achieving Employment*) provides *statewide* outreach and retention services for up to 25 DCF-involved youth ages 16-23 who are enrolled at the Connecticut Job Corps Center in New Haven. (Job Corps is a vocational training program sponsored by the CT Dept. of Labor.) This new program is funded by a contract with the CT Department of Children & Families and was awarded through a competitive bid process. We hired Sharmee Walton as our Job Corps liaison whose office is located in New Haven on location at the Job Corps Center. Sharmee assists with the recruiting of DCF youth for Job Corps and provides support through case management, weekly meetings, recreational outings, and incentive programs, once the youth are enrolled. Upon graduation from the program, we also assist with successful transition into the community. Though small, STAE @ Job Corps marks our first statewide service program!

A new minivan was leased in July to support the Job Corps program. This brings our fleet of vans to six as we provide transportation for all youth to and from our programs.

Also in July, we hired Dr. Theresa Kreibick PsyD, as a part-time Child Clinician. Dr. Kreibick is an invaluable resource that advises staff on client behavioral issues and case management, and conducts individual behavioral assessments as needed.

In August, several staff members departed Y-US to pursue graduate degrees. Several new staff members were hired during the year and today Y-US employs a total of 19 (including four teenage Junior Youth Workers).

In September, we were awarded a \$15,000 allocation from the [United Way](#) Vision Council, *Children are Successful* program to support our Better Horizons program. Although we had been an associate agency of the United Way for many years, we are now considered a "partner" agency due to the Vision Council funding. We are pleased and proud to be included in this new membership level of the United Way of the Capital Area.

Several grants were awarded to Y-US for use during this fiscal year. These included grants from the Fisher Foundation, St. John's Episcopal Church, J. Walton Bissell Foundation, Ensworth Charitable Trust (Fleet Bank Trustee), Elizabeth Carse Robinson et al (Fleet Bank Trustee), Daphne Seybolt Culpeper, and Swindells Charitable Foundation (Fleet Bank Trustee) all to benefit the Better Horizons program. Other awards included grants from the Hartford Courant Foundation to support the Junior Youth Worker program, Camp Burt-Tetlow Foundation to support the summer respite program, and the Aetna Foundation for holiday support. *Thank you to all our supporters, big and small, who allow us to better serve our children!*

Our friends at Bethel AME church in Bloomfield once again sponsored our annual Thanksgiving dinner and celebration this year. They provided all the fixings for over 100 children and families and hosted the meal at their facility. We were also able to provide many Thanksgiving baskets complete with turkeys, to Y-US families with the help of [FoodShare of Greater Hartford](#).

In December, our long awaited move to new program and office space at 1477 Park Street in Hartford occurred. We are now located in the heart of Parkville, which is one of the many neighborhoods that we serve. The expanded facility features an enlarged staff office area, a large open program space for the kids, conference and tutoring rooms and a new commercial kitchen to facilitate serving daily dinner and occasional group parties. Both the staff and our youth love our new space!



In February, we held an open house at our new offices to welcome clients, friends, and supporters and to celebrate our new space. Thank you to those who were able to join us.

The Junior Youth Worker program was a success this year as evidenced by the expansion of the program to four positions. Two teenage Junior Youth Workers (former Better Horizons participants) each worked two afternoons a week providing general assistance with program activities and office work. This year we also sponsored Drivers' Education for the Junior Youth

Workers, as this is often a barrier to our youth finding future employment. One of the lasting benefits of this program is that the Junior Youth Workers provide positive role models for the younger children in the program and give them something to aspire to.

In the spring, we were fortunate to have students from a [Central Connecticut State University](#) film production class volunteer to make a documentary video of Y-US as part of their curriculum. Dr. Karen Ritzenhoff of CCSU and five students proceeded to interview, film and edit over the course of a six-week period. We were all very impressed with their ability to jump right in and capture the "spirit" of Y-US in such a short period of time. The end result was a well-crafted documentary video of Y-US that will be used for many purposes including general public relations and fundraising. We hope to have the video on our website in the near future.

In May, Y-US participated in a foster parent appreciation day with DCF at Lake Compounce in Bristol. Y-US sponsored tickets for our biological families to attend as well. Approximately 100 children and parents participated in this event. A good time was had by all!

During the year, two Board members departed and two new members joined – Cynthia Campbell and Lisa Llanes.



As the year came to a close, we were finalizing negotiations to purchase our Bloomfield Retreat House, which is currently used six days a week for program activities and overnight respite care. Through the good graces of Sacred Heart Church we have had use of this facility for over a decade; however, the time has come to purchase the property and secure its long-term use for the future of our children. To that end we have launched a capital campaign "Y-US Building the Future" to help make this dream a reality.

As the year came to a close Y-US:

- ⇒ Operated four youth-development programs
- ⇒ Served over 300 at-risk children in this fiscal year
- ⇒ Had 19 employees
- ⇒ Completed the year with an operating budget of \$870K
- ⇒ Drove over 68,000 agency vehicle miles in previous 12 months

Respectfully submitted,

Louis Gilbert, Executive Director

Y-US, Inc. does not receive any membership dues or charge any service fees to its program participants.