



Ferguson
Youth Initiative
Ferguson, MO

2016 ANNUAL REPORT

FYI empowers teens from Ferguson and surrounding cities to become productive, positive, and contributing members of the community.



FERGUSON YOUTH INITIATIVE 106 CHURCH STREET FERGUSON, MO 63135

info@fyiferyouth.org | www.fyiferyouth.org



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Our Mission

FYI empowers teens from Ferguson and surrounding cities to become productive, positive, and contributing members of the community.

We emphasize youth leadership and enable teens to have decision-making roles in shaping and implementing community-based initiatives. Collaboration with other local youth programs is a guiding principle for us. We leverage volunteers, business leaders and local government to support FYI's projects and programs.

Our Contact Information

Ferguson Youth Initiative (FYI)
106 Church Street
Ferguson, MO 63135

PHONE: 314.749.5379

EMAIL: info@fyiferyouth.org

WEBSITE: www.FYIFergYouth.org



Our Programs

- **Book Exchange** provides a free and easy way for youth and adults to make a habit of reading. They simply take a book and leave a book. Book exchange boxes are installed throughout Ferguson parks and community outlets. Partners include the City of Ferguson and the Ferguson Municipal Public Library.
- **Earn-A-Bike** gives youth the opportunity to earn a free bike while they learn about bike safety and maintenance. Partners include St. Louis Bicycle Works (BWorks) and the Ferguson Bicycle Shop.
- **Earn-A-Computer** teaches youth programming and Internet safety. Afterwards they can earn a free computer. Partners include BWorks and the City of Ferguson.
- **Ferguson Community Service Program (FCSP)** provides youth an opportunity to perform mentor-guided service work in place of incarceration or fines for misdemeanors, or, as a condition of probation. Youth also receive counseling, support and inclusion in positive youth-directed activities. Partners include the City of Ferguson, the Ferguson Municipal Court, the Adolescent Resource Center and Provident.
- **FYI Annual Banquet** is our annual fundraiser to showcase the youth's involvement and their ideas to the broader community.
- **FYI Drop-In** provides an after-school open house at the FYI Backbay for free-standing and structured workshops. Youth have access to computers, tutors and art materials along with a space to work and play games.
- **FYI Pinewood Classic** transforms this age-old Boy Scout event into a community spectacular for all ages. It is a fundraiser that engages youth of all ages to be creative.
- **Next Steps** provides youth the skills to earn and sustain employment in addition to equipping them with college and/or trade-school planning strategies.
- **SLAM** offers teens opportunities on a monthly basis to perform "on-stage" in a comfortable, non-competitive space. In addition, youth are able to interact with professional artists and learn hands-on techniques.
- **Spot 394** transforms facilities into a pop-up youth center where young people can play games, listen to music and engage in other youth-centric activities.

Youth Clubs We Assist

Ferguson Youth Advisory Board (FYAB)
Ferguson Middle School - **FMS Student Council**
McCluer High School - **The Vision**
McCluer South-Berkeley High School - **IGNITE**

Ferguson Youth
Advisory Board

Our Story

FYI began in 2010 as a collaboration of Ferguson residents, city leadership, schools, churches and community organizations. More than 600 teens were invited to a youth summit in November of that year to share their ideas about activities that would best serve them. With their input to guide us, we set out to:

- create a youth-driven program,
- develop a communication network to engage young people, and
- expand collaboration among local groups dedicated to the development of the next generation of civic leaders and socially-minded citizens.

Less than a year later, we helped establish the Ferguson Youth Advisory Board to provide the City Council with a youth perspective and to encourage youth to be active in making a difference in their community.

In November 2012, we received our 501(c)(3) nonprofit status and actively increased our efforts to build a sustainable program to serve the youth in the community in perpetuity.

With the donation of an old firehouse by the City of Ferguson in 2013, FYI expanded its programming aimed at engaging youth from a wide spectrum of the community.

In February of 2014, we launched the Ferguson Community Service Program (FCSP) in collaboration with the local courts and social service providers to give teens a second chance. In the fall of 2014, FYI youth members hosted a youth summit to explore opportunities to improve youth and police relations. A collective committee of youth and adult representatives continue to develop programs based on ideas that emerged from that summit.

In 2015, we hosted the inaugural FYI Banquet to showcase youth in the community. In addition, Focus St. Louis, a regional organization devoted to leadership development and citizen engagement, awarded FYI the What's Right with the Region Award for our work in promoting stronger communities. We also hosted the Party With A Purpose Teen Summit.

In 2016, FYI underwent a strategic planning process. We worked with the youth and community stakeholders to re-align ourselves with current needs.

FYI Board Members

- Dwayne T. James, *Chair*
- Jackie Lewis-Harris, *Vice-Chair*
- Brandon Haynes, *Secretary & Co-Treasurer*
- Sharon Johnson, *Co-Treasurer*
- Wesley Bell
- Kathleen Hudson
- Mike Lonero
- Heather Robinett



FYI Executive Director

Aaron M. Harris was hired as FYI's Executive Director on December 5, 2016. Harris recently served as the Director of Youth Services for the Fathers' Support Center in St. Louis for six years.

"My main goal is to enhance the readiness of our youth for the next stages of their life," said executive director Harris when he started. "Readiness includes empowering them to make choices that are best for themselves and their community. Through partnerships with local employers, we look to provide training to ensure that our youth are job ready. In addition, I hope to broaden the impact of our Community Service Program to support youth that need that alternative option," added Harris.



Ferguson Free Book Exchange boxes are installed throughout Ferguson. Current boxes are located at:

- Ferguson Community Center (*indoor*)
- Forestwood Park near the back playground
- FYI Backbay (*indoor*)
- January-Wabash Memorial Park near the playground
- Jeske Park
- Nesbit-Newton Park

The outdoor boxes were built by Eagle Scout Logan Page in October 2016, and were installed by the City of Ferguson. The boxes are an attractive and educational addition to the gathering spaces in city parks and community facilities. Residents and visitors continue to exchange books with the Ferguson Municipal Public Library donating surplus books to keep plenty of books in the boxes.



This St. Louis BICYCLE WORKS Earn-A-Bike program gives youth the opportunity to earn a free bike while they learn about bicycle safety and maintenance from volunteers. The program aims to teach kids that they can set goals and reach them. Everyone deserves the chance to dream, and to follow those dreams, by challenging themselves, testing their abilities and reaching for more. The youth work independently and in groups to solve problems.

In 2016, more than 30 boys and girls between 8 and 18 years old graduated from the class.

The Ferguson Bicycle Shop donated \$1500 in 2016 as a partner of this program. Additionally, we were one of the benefactors of the 2016 Ferguson Twilight Run which provided \$640.



The St. Louis Byte Works Earn-a-Computer program covers:

- Introduction to Computers
- Internet and Safety on the Internet
- Word Processing with OpenOffice Writer
- Creating Presentations with OpenOffice Impress
- Computer programming using MIT's Scratch software
- Assembling the Computer and Connecting to the Internet

In 2016, FYI hosted two EaC classes during the summer months. The two classes resulted in 15 students receiving a computer, monitor, peripherals (keyboard, mouse), audio speakers, and a 4 GB flash drive.





The Ferguson Community Service Program (FCSP) provides youth an opportunity to perform mentor-guided service work in place of incarceration or fines for misdemeanors, or as a condition of probation.

With the mission to create a collaboration of all stakeholders in Ferguson, Missouri that demonstrates and includes youth and young adults in the values of responsibility and accountability in a constructive community service program, FCSP provides young people mentoring, job skill training, counseling and related supportive services as needed. It provides services to the City of Ferguson, its residents, businesses, schools and churches that will enhance and improve our infrastructure through cooperation, respect, and shared work. Additionally, by doing community service work, youth learn valuable lessons in responsibility, accountability, and consequences for their actions.

Since February 2014, 121 teens have participated in the FCSP program.
Of those, 70% have graduated.

2017 Goals

- Partner with neighboring municipalities to offer FCSP to teens in their court system
- Develop service opportunities that cater to the needs and aspirations of local teens

“Because of FCSP, I am now involved with FYI which keeps me from getting in more trouble. Before FCSP, I fought .. I no longer fight.”

- FYI Youth

FCSP provides youth (17-20 years old) a chance ...

- to perform mentor-guided service work in place of incarceration or fines for misdemeanor violations or as a condition of probation;
- to receive support, counseling, case-management, and mentoring to address behavioral and mental wellness, substance use, social / family / education / work issues;
- to be included in positive youth-directed activities.

2016 Highlights

- 23 entered the program with 14 graduating
 - 61% completion rate
 - 450+ hours completed in community service
- A VISTA serving as the FCSP Program Manager. Duties included marketing of the program, coordinating volunteer responsibilities and expanding the program to incorporate neighboring municipalities.

2016 Partners

- City of Ferguson
- Ferguson Municipal Courts
- Adolescent Resource Center (ARC), a program of Queen of Peace Center
- Provident Counseling Inc.

the FYI BACKBAY Drop In

Schedule

Program began October 21, 2015

January - May 2016

Thursdays 3:30 - 7 P.M.

Fridays 2:00 - 6 P.M.

June - August 2016

Wednesdays 3:30 - 7 P.M.

Thursdays 3:30 - 7 P.M.

Fridays 2:00 - 6 P.M.

September - December 2016

Fridays 2:00 - 6 P.M.

2016 Highlights

- 186 youth in the doors
- 80 counselor hours
- 30 structured workshops including Air-Brush Instructional, "Let's Talk Books" Teen Summer Reading Club, String Art Tutorial and ACT Prep.
- Themed activities, including tutoring sessions, game nights and movie nights.

2016 Partners & Funding

- \$20,000 Grant from St. Peter's UCC Benevolence Trust to fund part-time staff person in addition to funding a counselor during the summer months.
- St. Louis Community College at Florissant Valley provided practicum students to supplement volunteer needs and serve as mentors / tutors.



The Drop-In provides an after-school open house at the FYI Backbay for free-standing and structured workshops.

In 2016, the Drop-In provided a safe space with adult support where the youth were heard, respected and valued. Youth had access to art materials and a space in which to work; access to computers; Xbox, Wii and Playstation games; foosball, air-hockey and other free-standing game tables; a lending library; and access to tutors as needed.

A part-time staff coordinator along with other adult volunteers supervised the youth. During the summer of 2016, a counselor was also hired to be on-hand and of assistance for participating youth.

" I come to Drop-In to get out of the house and to hang with my friends. It is something to do. "



2017 Goals

- 50% increase in youth coming in the doors
- Drop-In expanded to three (3) days/week starting Summer 2017
- Satellite location in northeast Ferguson



Spot 394 transforms facilities into a pop-up youth center where young people can play games, listen to music and engage in other youth-centric activities.

In 2016, we hosted a SPOT 394 at the University of Missouri-St Louis Recreation Center in July. The event included swimming, basketball, music, movies, and pizza. This event exposed the teens to the college campus environment.

SPOT 394s are also hosted at the Emerson Family YMCA, City of Ferguson Recreation Center, and McCluer South Berkeley High School. In 2016, more than 150 teens purchased the \$1 ticket to attend these safe, fun, enjoyable, and teen friendly events throughout Ferguson.



Next Steps mentors teens (ages 14 to 19) and provides them with skills in career readiness, job discovery, financing their future, and entry into a post-secondary institution.

In 2016, we partnered with University of Missouri Extension - 4-H Youth Futures and Nestle' Purina to host the inaugural year of this program. More than 15 teens started the program and seven completed the five month curriculum which included:

- Stress & Time Management
- Study Skills
- Goal Setting
- Resume Building
- Interviewing Skills

Seven students gained summer employment!



SLAM (Style, Literature, Art, Music) offers young people inviting and positive opportunities to connect with others through healthy, creative expression and recreation on a monthly basis.

Once every month, we give young people the mic, the stage and/or whatever platform needed. Also, teens gather to witness professional artists in action.

In 2016, more than 100 teens attended our SLAM events. They painted, sang, recited poetry, and interacted with professionals from Northern Arts Council, Natalie's Bakery, and more.

This is a FREE event with funding coming from monetary or in-kind donations. We thank the teens and artists that share their talent.





Ferguson Youth Advisory Board members provide insight and feedback on issues relating to youth in the community. They are the official youth voice of FYI and help determine how we use our energies and resources to benefit the public. FYAB members receive perks, including free admission to all FYI events, discounts on FYI apparel, and special access to adventure activities and job opportunities. They are also eligible for the Gail Babcock Scholarship in their senior year.

It is the intent for FYAB to be a diverse cross section of the youth in Ferguson. FYI and the City of Ferguson works with the Ferguson-Florissant School District and neighborhood associations to market this amazing opportunity to local youth. The board in 2016 worked the Executive Director and the Board of Directors to plan all of the events showcased in this report. They also were the face of FYI in presenting the benefits and impacts to their peers and the community.

In 2016, three FYAB members graduated from the Board after serving for a collective nine years. Two of the teens went on to college while the third began his professional career.



Our programs are managed by an Executive Director, a Board of Directors, committed volunteers and sponsored by grants, private donations and fundraising campaigns. Our 2015 budget was \$160,125 which includes more than 62% allocated for programming. In 2016, major grants and funders included:

- Ferguson Bicycle Shop
- Montrey's Cigar Lounge
- University of Missouri Extension - St. Louis County 4-H
- Nestle' PURINA
- St. Peter's Benevolent Trust

In December 2016, we hosted the inaugural FYI Pinewood Classic Fundraiser. We also received more than \$5,000 in monetary donations.

